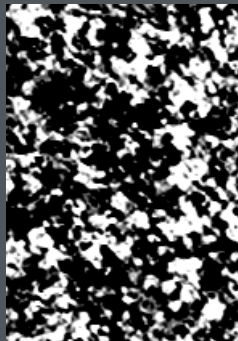
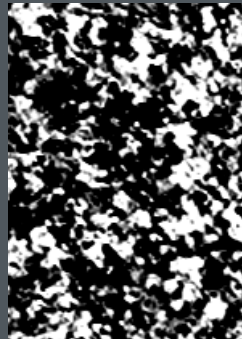
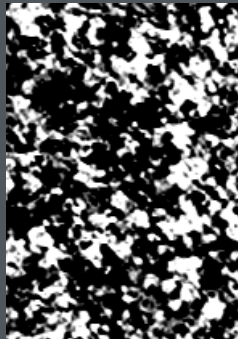
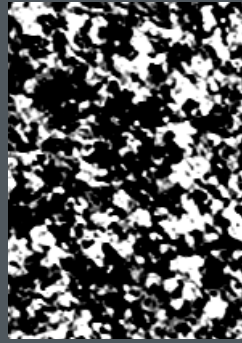
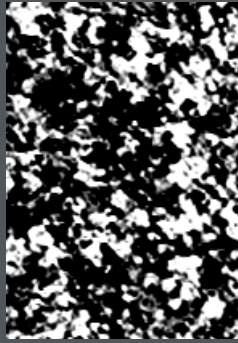
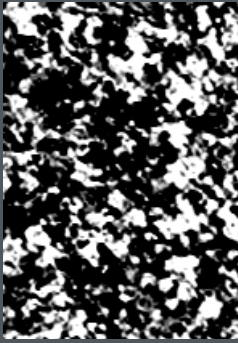
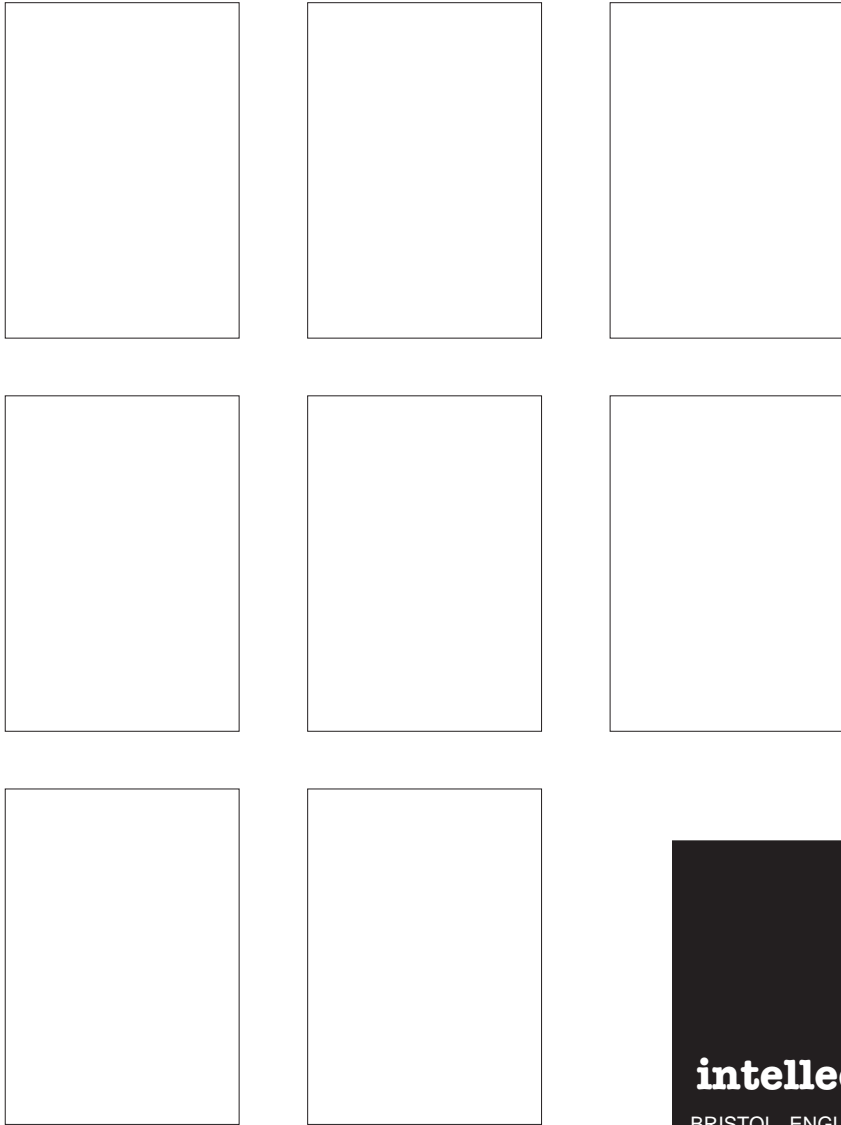


Advances in Art & Urban Futures Volume 2
Recoveries and Reclamations



Edited by
Judith Rugg
Daniel Hinchcliffe

Advances in Art & Urban Futures Volume 2
Recoveries and Reclamations



Edited by Judith Rugg and Daniel Hinchcliffe

First Published in Hardback 2002 by
Intellect Books, PO Box 862, Bristol, BS99 1DE, UK

First Published in USA in 2002 by
Intellect Books, ISBS, 5824 Hassalo St, Portland, Oregon 97213-3644, USA

Copyright ©2002 Intellect Ltd

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission.

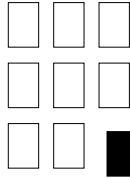
Consulting Editor: Masoud Yazdoni
Book and Cover Design: Joshua Beadon – Toucan
Copy Editor: Holly Spradling

Set in Joanna

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

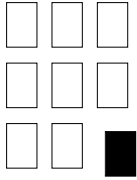
Electronic ISBN 1-84150-828-4 / ISBN 1-84150-055-0

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Cromwell Press, Wiltshire



Contents

Series Introduction	5
Malcolm Miles	
Foreword	7
Jane Rendell	
General Introduction	11
Judith Rugg and Daniel Hinchcliffe	
Contributors	15
Section One – Issues of Regeneration and Cultural Change	
Regenerating Public Life? A Sensory Analysis of Regenerated Public Places in El Raval, Barcelona	19
Monica Degen	
Utopia from Dystopia: The Womens Playhouse Trust and the Wapping Project	37
Judith Rugg	
New Urban Spaces: Regenerating a Design Ethos	49
Paul Teedon	
Section Two – Artists' Reclamations/Ecological Spatial Actions	
Art, Science and Ecological Enquiry: The Case of American Nineteenth-Century Landscape Painting	61
Kirk Savage	
Three Rivers – Second Nature The River Dialogues	67
Tim Collins	
Seeing Through Place Local Approaches to Global Problems	77
Malcolm Miles	



Skinningrove: A photo Essay

Malcolm Miles

91

Section Three – The Unseen Public Space

Collective Assemblages, Embodiment and Enuciations

Helen Stratford

107

From Birmingham to Bogota:

**Tracing the Metaphor of Submerged Space Through the
Architecture of 1960's Birmingham and the Artistic
Practice of Doris Salcedo**

Jane Calow

119

Section Four – Identities and Communities

**Differences, Boundaries, Community:
The Irish in Britain**

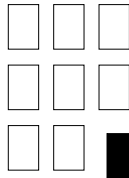
Mary J Hickman

131

**Renewing Methodologies for Socio-Cultural Research
Global Refugees, Ethno-mimesis and the Transformative
Role of Art**

Maggie O'Neil and Bea Tobolewska

141



Series Introduction

This is the second annual volume in the series *Advances in Art & Urban Futures*. The series is a vehicle through which to disseminate research and seminar papers from events through the past year at the University of Plymouth and elsewhere. The aim, as last year, is to contribute to critical understandings of the relation between art practice, cultural theory and the ways in which cities and their cultures are shaped.

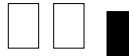
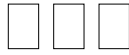
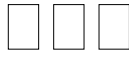
The theme of this volume, edited by Judith Rugg of the University of Plymouth and Daniel Hinchcliffe of Bath University, is *Recoveries and Reclamations*. Since the volume collects material from a range of contexts, and seeks to present a trans-disciplinary approach, the theme is necessarily open-ended. The connecting strand it offers, however, is that of regaining something in a world in which it seems much is lost or taken away – whether public access and bio-diversity regained in post-industrial landscapes, or identities re-wrought through cultural practices. If the structures of power and money responsible, for instances, for social deprivation and industrial pollution are global, a question which arises is how local actions might address this, and how the local might impinge on the global. In diverse ways such questions have been approached during 2000-01 in seminars at the School of Art & Design in Exeter (University of Plymouth), and in a collaborative event with Newcastle University. What emerges is that conventional disciplinary frameworks are inadequate to the task, and that new frameworks are required for a post-globalization world. This volume offers what might be seen as notes towards such a discourse, and something of the same theme will continue in volume 3, titled *Cultures and Settlements*, due for publication in 2003.

Volume 1, and the series, was launched at a symposium organised by John Butler, Sarah Bennett and Gill Melling of the University of Plymouth, supported by the European League of Institutes of Art, in Exeter in November 2000. This volume continues the international scope of the series by including texts from researchers at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh.

I would like to thank the editors for seeing the volume through to publication, Jane Rendell for her foreword, Nicola Kirkham for her careful and invaluable assistance and attention to detail, and all those who have contributed texts and participated in the seminars and other events at which the papers were first presented.

Malcolm Miles

*Series Editor, and Reader in Cultural Theory in the School of Arts & Design,
University of Plymouth*



Foreword

Art is often viewed as the form of cultural production least invested in maintaining the status quo, as the route to different possible futures. But art does not simply offer a chance to work in ways that more mainstream activities do not. It is not that art, by definition, is a place where it is possible to be radical and critical, but rather that someone somewhere has made this their choice. Certain artists do choose to value critical engagement over commercial success; but this is not to say that all artists are politicized. While there are many who are critical of aspects of contemporary society, a certain cynicism is also rife. At best this cynicism may foster an intelligent critique of cultural institutions, at worst it can act as a paralysis for change. I think it would be fair to say that politicized artists do occupy key roles in bringing about change. In engaging in the not-yet, in choosing to raise questions rather than provide answers, in creating uncertainties rather than pronouncing the truth, they maintain a special relation to the future.

Time is very much to the fore in this book; as well as the future, a number of texts involve ‘bearing witness’ to the past. Recoveries and Reclamations locates time within the dialectical triad – space, time and the social – long favoured by Marxist geographers and philosophers, such as Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja and Doreen Massey. Many of the authors in this book have written about art works and cultural activities in ways which reference space, time and the social as key co-ordinates in critical art practice. The making of history, the processes of remembering and forgetting, are considered to be intrinsically involved with place making and taking. Social awareness is framed in terms of time and space. Becoming aware is a social process, one that involves others in critical discussion, but it is also a temporal process, involving the writing of multiple histories, and a spatial process, situated in contested and diversified ‘public’ realms.

Theoretical debate in a number of disciplines has influenced the ways in which space is understood by many of the writers here. The notion of the ‘socio-spatial dialectic’, a critical device developed by cultural geographer Soja, has been particularly influential in suggesting an inter-active relation between people and places: that people make places and places make people. Psychoanalytic theory and feminist philosophy has shifted the ways in which we conceive of the relationship between the ‘internal’ space of individual subjectivity and the ‘external’ space of the surrounding environment in terms of a series of boundaries between private and public, inner and outer, subject and object, personal and social. Such discussions have allowed the reconceptualization of my own thinking about art as social space.

Understanding art as a form of critical spatial practice is especially valuable in engaging with work that takes place outside the gallery. Although the gallery is a valuable social space in its own right, the possibilities offered by operating in diverse sites can prove more challenging. Often run in tandem with gallery-based initiatives, such projects seem to produce work that reference debates concerning the relation of art to design and architecture, as well as fine art to social and community art.

The editors identify two actions as central to the development of discussion around urban futures: recovery and reclamation. For something to be recovered it must have already been covered. But oddly recovery itself does not cover, but rather seeks to uncover, to bring to the surface or into the light, to make present events and stories that have been lost over time. 'Officially', this is the job of historians for whom the writing and rewriting of history is an attempt to recover the past by finding evidence, establishing and interpreting facts. Such actions seek to bring order and make sense of the world, but they are also potentially destabilizing since the addition of new stories involves retelling much of what we already know, but in new ways. Unofficially, we are all historians, we make history every moment of our lives, private and public. In public there is more at stake, social relations are more complex or as Lefebvre would say 'overt'. Designers and planners have operated for centuries as history makers often in the service of dominant regimes of power, and increasingly we see artists placed in this role. The question we must ask is: how it is possible to subvert forms of domination and suppression?

Most commonly we use the word 'recover' to refer to our physical well-being – to recover is to 'get better'. Despite conflicts between western and eastern traditions in medicine, most of us would say that we understand very well what it is to be healthy. In terms of our health it is relatively easy to know what better is. But given our cultural differences from one another, it is harder to define the condition of 'getting better' in economic, political and social terms, as something we can all agree on. Yet there is an often unspoken consensus among radical left-wing artists and critics that getting 'better' is concerned with maintaining, and at times establishing, certain forms of human rights: freedom, accessibility and democracy. Recovery is a process that implies a direction, towards 'getting better'.

Reclaiming is something other. In claiming we express our rights to certain things – to claim is to assert ownership or at least connection to a person, object, place, event or even idea. To reclaim is to take back, it implies that something that was ours has already been taken. Over time history can take from us; events that occurred in the past can end up buried in the present. The process of unburying what has been forgotten, whether intentionally written out or unintentionally allowed to fade, is a political act. This is difficult work, making clear a particular interest involves commitment and engagement. The term 'intervention' is often used to describe this process of manifestation – of making tangible acts of recovery and reclamation. But the word brings with it an implication of disruption. Interventions rely on being seen 'against' their context in order to perform their

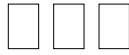
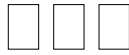
operation. Certain actions can make visible existing conditions that have previously been marginalized, neglected or abandoned. These are acts of transformation, ones that have the potential to challenge and provoke, sometimes accidentally, other times intentionally. The question we must ask here is: how much do we need to intervene to make a difference?

The essays in this collection and the spirit in which they have been brought together, do indeed provoke all kinds of questions about art and politics in the present moment. By placing artistic practice and movements of social engagement and resistance side by side, they ask us to consider art as a cultural activity, one that is potentially potent and politicized. The concept, developed by anthropologists, of material culture, the cultural making and using of 'things', allows us to look carefully at previous distinctions of high (of which art might be part) and low or popular culture. Recent theoretical work around 'the everyday', life as it is lived both as a state of alienation/domination and as a place of liberation/resistance, has had a similar effect in considering the value of everything we do, dissolving the boundaries between intentional cultural practices such as art and repetitive day-to-day actions like walking down the street. But while it is interesting to start to place together all sorts of things, and the things we do, this should not be taken as an attempt to minimize difference, but rather as a challenge to critique far more precisely the distinctions between different forms of art and/as cultural practice.

In what ways is any cultural activity art, and in what ways is art a cultural activity? The notion of social sculpture here is useful in reconsidering aesthetics to include the form of the process as well as the product of art. If a process can be considered beautiful, judged for its formal qualities and sensual characteristics like an object, so too can sets of interactions between people. But where is the artist in the making of social relationships? Artists may take a managerial role in bringing people together to perform certain kinds of event. Like choreographers, they may choose to determine the patterning of such actions. Following the lead of conceptual artists in the 1970s they may even build chance into a programme in such a way that although the final form cannot be predicted in advance, unpredictability itself can be controlled. Or artists may step back, operate somewhat at a distance, and simply ask an audience to take notice. In requesting that we pay attention to certain objects and actions as they exist, is also a call for re-thinking the world, re-valuing cultural practices and re-understanding political actions. Surely this is exactly what art is about.

Jane Rendell

The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, 2001.



Recoveries and Reclamations



General Introduction

This second volume of *Advances in Art and Urban Futures* investigates the multi-disciplinary terrain of space and culture, extending the boundaries of urbanism and addressing issues of public space. Questions around definitions of public space and public art, seemingly so important in the 1990s, have been overtaken by those concerning the nature and diversity of cultural intervention in the formation of public space and its position within a theoretical discourse. This volume, in bringing together a range of contributors from a diversity of disciplinary backgrounds, demonstrates that critical understanding of cultural interventions in public space is now relevant to a range of disciplines. Contributions to this expanding debate are offered here by sociologists, architects and architectural historians as well as artists and cultural theorists and this multi-disciplinary interest is indicative of the significance of the nature of cultural intervention in the construction of the public sphere at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Recoveries and Reclamations suggests a new and wider awareness of the issues concerning re-development, pollution, ecological damage, refugees, race and gender which continue to constitute the fallout of capitalist expansion. Artists, now informed by a range of practices and theoretical positions, play a significant part in the recovery of space and the reclamation of place in local and global terms and, as this book demonstrates, are developing a continuing counter-hegemonic practice.

In the first section, *Issues of Regeneration and Cultural Change*, Monica Degen examines the negativity associated with designated ‘problematic neighbourhoods’ and the insensitive changes imposed on them by planners and politicians, causing the eradication of ‘authentic’ public space. In the construction of new public spaces through ‘aestheticisation’, smells and sounds disappear, which are so important to the identity and sense of community of public space. Drawing on the work of John Urry and Henri Lefebvre, amongst others, she investigates the importance of the sensory in formulating the production of place and social spaces. Regeneration can also mean opportunities for intervention and Judith Rugg looks at how the Women’s Playhouse Trust may create possibilities for cultural change in its development of the Wapping Project in East London. Although set in a context of the manufactured ‘placeness’ of Wapping and geographically marginalised, can the Wapping Project, she asks, make a significant contribution to addressing the imbalances of gender in the arts and increase women artists’ exposure to new audiences? The tendency of re-development to form new kinds of spaces at the expense of and separate from the wider whole, is investigated by Paul Teedon. By focusing particularly on Bankside in London, he demonstrates that re-development creates only a veneer of urban change

and is in the hands of a 'design elite.' Essentially an exploitative exercise, the creation of 'signature buildings' in creating this veneer is different in Bankside where a conglomeration of buildings and the rejection of more critical interventions by groups such as artists/architects, Muf, reinforce notions of centrality and dominance.

In the second section, *Artists' Reclamations/Ecological Spatial Actions*, Kirk Savage explores the background of the relationship between art and science. Looking at American landscape painting and the erosion of the American landscape in the nineteenth century, he suggests an historical context of the artist as scientific observer and ecologist, previously seen to be a contemporary phenomenon. The importance of rivers as a subject for art is extended by Tim Collins's discussion of the ecological arts project '3 Rivers – 2nd Nature' at Carnegie Mellon University, USA. In examining questions of the social spaces created by industrialisation in rural as well as urban areas, Collins asks what conceptual tools artists can use in bringing about ecological change. Water pollution is at the centre of two projects in the UK discussed by Malcolm Miles. Collaborative environmentalism between artists, scientists and local communities is formulated through projects in County Durham and Cleveland. Referencing ideas on how global issues are collapsed into the local and the everyday, Miles asks if local actions can impact on a global level.

In *The Unseen Public Space*, Helen Stratford discusses art as dematerialisation. Posing ideas of theory both as language and action and drawing on notions of assemblage, she looks at the work of Mierle Laderman Ukeles. Returning to the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Stratford maps a series of reflections on the body and the virtual, thought manifested in creative actions and the artist as an agent of change. Jane Calow, in using the buried spaces of underground walkways in Birmingham, investigates the relationship between the imposed order of public space and the unseen hegemonies of re-development. Finally turning to the work of Colombian artist Doris Salcedo, Calow looks at her collaborative work with the families of 'the disappeared' and the notion of collective and private experience as ultimately something that cannot be seen within public space.

In *Identities and Communities*, the issue of minority communities as 'imagined' is addressed by Mary Hickman in her discussion of the Irish in Britain. She unravels the relationship between the political position of migrant groups and dominant myths concerning issues of displacement and difference which ignore a framework of identity and power. Within the context of post-modernity, she argues, cultural diversity and ethnicity are even more problematic than has been previously suggested. Maggie O'Neill and Bea Tobolewska examine the participation of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in research that enables them to communicate their feelings and experiences in the creation of artworks, challenging media stereotypes of asylum seekers and helping to build a new community and sense of self-regeneration in the East Midlands.

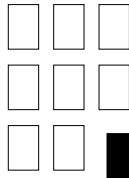
In the General Introduction to volume 1 of **Advances in Urban Art and Futures – Locality, Regeneration and Divers[c]ities** – John Butler and Malcolm Miles state that the book raised 'the question of a re-politicisation of culture in a period of the

de-politicisation of politics itself' (p14). This was, they felt, a topic for further attention, which has been realised through this volume. **Recovery and Reclamations** contends that cultural activity can play an active role in bringing about social transformations. This can take the form of interventionist, interactive projects by artists or architects working with local people and professionals from other disciplines (as described by Miles, Collins, Rugg, Stratford). It can also take the form of cultural analysis which re-presents repressed or under-represented histories as written texts. In Monica Degen's chapter she describes how some residents believe that social problems have either been covered up or pushed out by creating 'designer environments'. She gives a contextual analysis of sensory experiential encounters within the regenerated and non-regenerated city. This is in stark contrast to the way in which newly developed areas are usually given representation through official channels; i.e. postcards and pamphlets depicting distanced vistas not concerned with individual human scale, but rather with 'monumentality'. Meanwhile, Kirk Savage presents an account of artists as ecologists, which as he puts it, seems to fly in the face of much of the recent scholarship on American landscape painting. The common thread running through all the contributions in this volume is the fact that they discuss cultural representation as a potentially transformative activity that by intervening in the dominant spaces of hegemonic process can challenge its narratives by offering the possibility of giving voice to alternative ones. The use of histories as narratives that can confirm the present, plays a particularly important role in struggles to fix the meaning of spaces, places and objects. Such processes leave open the possibility that those events that have been selectively discarded by the dominant order can be recovered and re-presented by art practice to challenge these hegemonic processes. Jane Calow cites how Raymond Williams identifies representational forms (art, architecture and other forms of cultural production) as both constituting and constitutive of sets of values, forms, ideas and practices. This position therefore involves rejecting the notion that art is a discrete practice reflecting events elsewhere and instead is seen as an activity which gives representation for particular social groups and possesses the potential to influence and bring about change through a wider understanding of the field of cultural production. The implication of this is that cultural practices re-present certain positions within society whilst also giving the possibility of producing new representations. As such, architecture, art and writing are fields invested with power that is demonstrated by the interest of both the public and private sector in the sponsorship of cultural events including those employed in culturally-orientated urban regeneration schemes. Cultural forms of representation can not only challenge the dominant present with other versions of the past but also with alternative accounts of the present and possible indicators for the future. As Malcolm Miles points out, cultural narratives within everyday life are already there, they just need to be made visible.

We hope that **Recoveries and Reclamations** will make a useful contribution to the developing critical discourse surrounding urban futures. As artists, architects and

urban theorists from various disciplines, it is essential to maintain an ongoing review of the changes, often invidious, brought about by a rapidly changing world and to keep its implications critically focused.

Judith Rugg, Daniel Hinchcliffe



Contributors

Jane Calow is an artist and Research Fellow in Contextual Fine Art, University of West of England, UK.

Tim Collins is a Research Fellow in the Studio for Creative Enquiry, Carnegie Mellon University, USA.

Monica Degen is a Doctoral Research Student in the Department of Sociology, Lancaster University, UK.

Mary Hickman is Professor of Irish Studies and Sociology at the University of North London, UK

Daniel Hinchcliffe is Visual Arts co-ordinator at the University of Bath, UK.

Nicola Kirkham is a research assistant in the Art and Urban Futures Research Unit and acted as Editorial Assistant on this volume, University of Plymouth, UK.

Malcolm Miles is Reader in Cultural Theory at the School of Art & Design, University of Plymouth, UK.

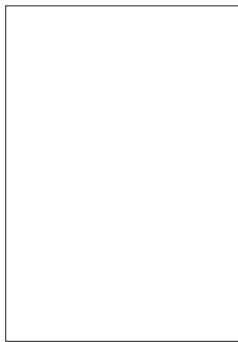
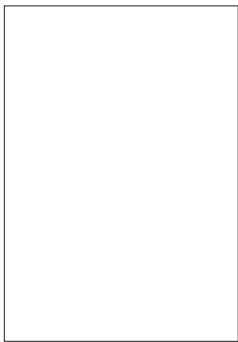
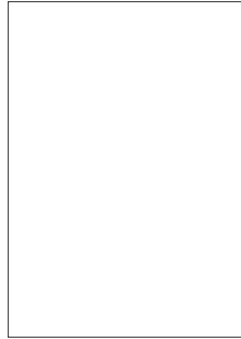
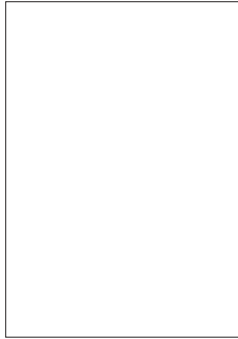
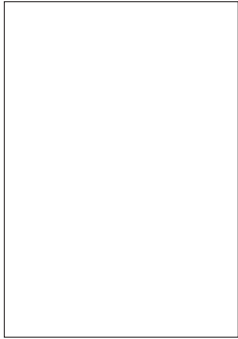
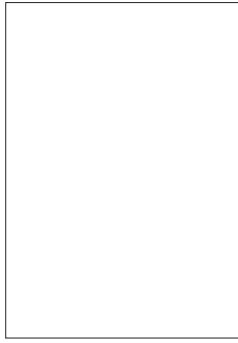
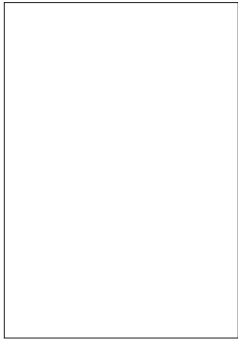
Jane Rendell is a lecturer at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London, UK.

Judith Rugg is Senior Lecturer in Fine Art Contextual Practice at the University of Plymouth, UK.

Kirk Savage is a professor in the Fine Art department at the University of Pittsburgh, USA.

Helen Stratford is a practicing architect and Researcher in Architecture and Critical Theory at Nottingham University, UK.

Paul Teedon is Senior Lecturer in Urban Studies at the University of Surrey, UK.



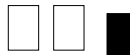
Issues of Regeneration and Cultural Change



Monica Degen



Regenerating Public Life?



A sensory analysis of regenerated public places
in EL Raval, Barcelona

Introduction

Barcelona has changed. Once a grimy industrial giant, today it struts along the global catwalk, every inch 'the city of style' (La Vanguardia 9/2/01 quoting *The Times*). By radically transforming and re-designing its urban landscape the Catalan city has successfully re-invented itself, but at what cost? In this paper I examine one of the most recent and arguably most radical regeneration projects in the area of El Raval and attempt to answer just that question.

Better known as 'Barrio Chino' (Villar, 1996) and historically the city's red light district, El Raval is a marginal historic area at odds with its tourist-attracting geographical neighbours; the Ramblas and the Gothic quarter. But it wasn't always this way. As the cradle of the industrial revolution in 19th-century Barcelona, El Raval was a place in which the noise of machinery and its workforce never abated. Built up with factories, warehouses and cheaply built working-class housing, the industrial Raval offered a busy street-life that stimulated the growth of numerous small businesses, shops and markets alongside equally numerous cabarets, brothels and other sex related establishments. During the second half of the 20th century however, as industry declined, El Raval too gradually regressed from an 'active place' into a 'place of loss'. From the bohemian, erotic locale evoked by Jean Genet in *Diary of a Thief* it became the dangerous, drug and crime-ridden neighbourhood of the late 1970s. Those who could, left the area. Remaining behind were the old, the mentally ill, the unwanted citizens of Barcelona living in dilapidated housing and streets filled with "closed metallic shutters of bars and commerce, and abundant flyers advertising flat rental, and hostels that were working as 'hot beds', so-called because the clients took turns in the rooms 24 hours a day" (Villar, 1996:230).

Unsurprisingly, when the regeneration of el Raval started in the 1980s the priority was to change this 'marginal' public life, a process to be achieved by gradually transforming its public space. The official strategy was *esponjamiento* meaning 'loosening the weave', referring to the destruction of the most degraded parts of the neighbourhood, the cutting through the central, most marginal area of El Raval in Hausmanian fashion to create a second Ramblas and the creation of a cultural quarter in the north to attract new uses and residents. The cultural quarter was to be headed by the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona (MACBA), designed by Richard Meier, and surrounded by a large square: the Placa dels Angels, used to stage open air events.

Both planners and politicians regard regeneration as a process that simultaneously tackles physical, social and economic conditions in 'problematic' neighbourhoods, as a recent definition illustrates:

[Regeneration entails] a comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change. (Roberts & Sykes 2000:17, emphasis added)

Implicit within this statement is a negative judgement upon an area's existing public life and space because of its perceived social, economic and physical decay. The regeneration is directed at dismissing the aura of marginality and deterioration that has identified a place in the past by revitalizing, or more accurately by changing, its public life.

The first step to transforming an area is to change its physical infrastructure. On the one hand, to physically strip it of its negative image and associations in the public imagination, on the other, to invite new uses by making it an attractive place for investing capital in the form of businesses, residences or leisure outlets. This physical re-design and spatial re-structuring of place can be interpreted, as Miles (2000) argues, as a *cultural re-coding* of the place. It involves demolishing obsolete buildings (as has happened around the Liverpool Docks), introducing new flagship projects (such as the Tate Modern at Bankside in London), or re-adapting old buildings to new uses (such as transforming a church into a bookshop here in el Raval). Hence, one can state that regeneration effectively means altering the 'look and feel' (Hall and Hubbard, 1998) of particular neighbourhoods in order to symbolically re-value its landscape.

These physical changes in the public spaces of a city are discussed by some post-modern commentators in terms of a set of visual strategies, which can be summed up under the heading of 'aesthetisation'. The key features of aesthetisation are described to be: The importance attached to imagery in the city; the prevalence of spectacle in the city; the self-conscious creation of a city lifestyle and the stylisation of whole city areas (Harvey 1989, Jameson 1991, Featherstone 1991, Zukin 1995). The aim of this paper is, in part, to expand and explore this notion of aesthetisation by drawing upon the original Greek meaning of the word 'aesthesis' which refers to "the perception of the external world by the senses" (Collins Dictionary, 1986). My study seeks to examine the actual articulation of aesthetisation in the everyday life of regenerated public spaces by analysing the multi-sensory experience derived from place. I will argue that analysing the spatial constitution of public spaces from a sensory perspective provides an insight into complex and subtle forms of power relations in regeneration projects; ways of including and excluding certain practices, memories or meanings of place that are important in the constitution of public spaces and public life. In the first section of the paper, I will briefly discuss my theoretical framework for a sensuous analysis of place before moving on to examine



Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona

the sensuous landscape of el Raval and discuss the implications this has for the experience of public places and el Raval's public life.

Sensing the city

The argument I propose in this article revolves around the notion that our geographical experience and imagination are based upon the interplay of body, senses and place. The combination of different senses contributes to our spatial orientation, an awareness of spatial relationships and the appreciation of the qualities of particular places (Rodaway, 1994). How we structure a space and define a place is based on our sensory perception. While in the western world there has been a clear dominance of the visual, in our everyday perception most of us 'see' aided by the interplay of all the senses. And of course these senses do not create perceptions in themselves, but require a frame of reference, an object or objects that they define. We do not sense in a vacuum but need to be confronted with a material world to sense: a flower we smell, a path we step on and touch, food we taste, ... Thus it can be said that our environment affords us certain *sensescapes*.

Recently, Urry (2000) has used the notion of 'affordances' of environments or objects, to draw attention to the fact that senses connect hybrid objects, the human and non-human. The term 'affordance', first developed by ecological psychologist James Gibson (1986), suggests that the composition and layout of environments 'affords' certain types of behaviour, that there is not an objective reality but merely affordances or qualities in the environment perceived relatively to the observer. Affordances are the values and meanings of our surroundings that individuals sensuously perceive. These affordances are not inscribed in space but rather activated through the individual's sensory experiences, by the moving through, touching,

smelling, hearing or sight of objects and places. It is the senses that connect human capacities with objects. Examples of affordances are: a large open square that allows the gathering of large groups of people, a tinted glass building that allows viewing the outside but not inside, or a particular building that affords and triggers certain memories. Based on these principles we can view the experience of place as an active dialogical expression between the users of space and the possibilities that the constitution of that place engenders. Space is *performative* in that it affords certain practices and sensory experiences, but at the same time it is also *performed* through the actions and experiences attributed to this particular place. As I will demonstrate, the reconfiguring of public space involves a reconfiguration of affordances and resistances, which is a very sensuous enterprise.

But how can we operationalise this sensory framework to discover power relations in the environment? Lefebvre's concept of rhythmanalysis (1991,1996) provides a valuable model as it refers to the ways in which the predominance of particular sensescapes demarcates a place. Thinking in terms of rhythms offers us a way to capture the ephemeral process of sensory experience. It provides a tool to measure the power relations inscribed in the urban landscape as particular sensescapes that fluctuate in their intensity and relationships. Who or what is seen, heard, touched, tasted and smelled is connected to questions about what is included or excluded in the experience of public space. It is an expression of power and the "ability of certain groups to superimpose their rhythms on others." (Allen, 1999:65).

In the next section I will discuss the transformation of sensescapes in el Raval. I am focusing on the flagship area of the regeneration process: 'Eje Cultural' (Cultural Quarter), in which the regeneration began and from whence it is expected to virally expand into surrounding areas. My findings are based on an eight month ethnographic study in el Raval, which included 70 interviews with old and new residents, shop owners, workers in the new cultural establishments, residents' associations, tourists, city council representatives, planners and architects. To provide anonymity to the interviewees their names have been changed. I shall begin by discussing the sensory contrast between the regenerated and non-regenerated before moving on to explore the sensory manipulation of time in regenerated spaces and to offer an analysis of the everyday practices in regenerated spaces.

El Raval : a neighbourhood of contrasts

El Raval is a densely populated area (according to the 1996 census, 34,871 registered people live in this area which has the highest proportion of old people, working class and immigrants in Barcelona (27.8%)). The process of regeneration cannot occur uniformly but rather must make incursions at different points and develop at different speeds. Thus the present, past and future are dramatically contrasted in the sensescapes of the area. Smooth, cream coloured designer buildings stand alongside elaborately designed 19th-century grey facades. On the opposite side of the road huge advertising hoardings portraying the future image of the neighbourhood stand amidst the rubble of half-demolished buildings. Residents often refer to their



Contrast between new and old

neighbourhood as a 'bombarded place' and it's easy to appreciate why: a walk through the derelict streets offers a vista of gutted houses and lonely walls that's immediately reminiscent of a war zone. Flowered pink wallpaper rustles in the wind, the shadow of a bed frame marks a tiny bedroom, blue tiles from a washbasin are all that remain of communal toilets. But if this is a war zone, then it's an ongoing conflict, as the ravaged landscape is constantly accompanied by the intense sounds of construction, foretelling its own story of new apartment blocks. Through it all, adjoining neighbours stand silently on their terraces to observe the demolition. And this is perhaps the most emotive scene, as, in the process of the dismembering of el Raval's physical past, we witness the destruction of a living social history, something altogether different to the conserved history of churches and charity houses that will remain. An artist living and working in the neighbourhood explains:

That the outside walls are gone, it is as if the houses had opened their shells and you can see the soul of the neighbourhood, you can see how life really was inside all this (Nuria, artist and new resident of El Raval).

In the act of demolishing the houses, suddenly the memory of the people who lived in these places becomes alive and valued, albeit fleetingly and soon to be buried under new construction. In 1998 an art project started by two local artists and supported by the Museum of Modern Art, transformed el Raval into 'La ciutat de les Paraules' (The City of Words) and tried to make some of these social histories visible by drawing and writing poems on some of the leftover walls. As the artists explain:

'The City of Words' has given a proper name to small places hidden in the Raval neighbourhood, and, for a moment, has turned them into singular spaces recovered on behalf of surprise and discovery. The project started with two very simple proposals: we asked local residents to hang their favourite words from their balconies, and we encouraged artists to work out the relationship between art and literature by using the Raval neighbourhood as a blank canvas. (in: La Ciutat de les Paraules, Edicions de L'Eixample, 1998)

During the interviews carried out for this study, planners, politicians and city council- run housing associations positively associate the change of the sensory physiognomy of the neighbourhood with the 'normalization' of people living in it. Planners describe this action of opening up the neighbourhood as a necessary strategy to provide permeability of the place. If El Raval is to gain presence for the outside world, its social and public life need to change, as the following quote illustrates:

Why this insistence on public space? Because public space resolves two problems in a neighbourhood that apart from having the narrowness of a historic city centre has a second problem, namely that it has had the function of receiving the residual activities of the city for many years. The permeability, the facility of penetration by



Walking through the bombed city





[and left] Contrast between old and new balconies in El Raval

the exterior, for those who are outside the neighbourhood, for the rest of the city, the opening of the neighbourhood to the city was the principal worry [...]. (A former El Raval councillor)

The notion of public space that the councillor refers to is one that serves as a means to an end: the marketing of the neighbourhood. Public space is seen here as the opportunity to provide accessibility to the neighbourhood with the ultimate aim to substitute the existent public life for another. As a planner explains:

these types of urban changes have a lot to do with improving the social set up of the place. It opens up for other social groups. Before nobody wanted to live in the Old City and now we have changed it, people like us are moving in. (planner, Barcelona Urban Planning Dept.)

What this quote illustrates is that aesthetic manipulation and social change are here regarded as linked features. Changing the sensescapes of the place is expected to substitute the existing "undesirable" spatial practices of the place with new ones.

The 'frontstages' (Goffman, 1959) of the regeneration such as the flagship area where the Museum of Modern Art is situated, sums up the desired sensory rhythms envisaged by planners and politicians for regenerated spaces: light and spaciousness. The surfaces of the Placa dels Angels are smooth and reflect light, no trees or street furniture disrupt its uniformity, create boundaries or distract the senses from the self-referential visual celebration of the place. People look small and lost in these squares as the main attraction is the appearance of the place itself and reflections: reflections on the wet, concrete pavement, reflections on the glass wall of the museum. This leads me to describe it as a narcissistic urban landscape - a celebration of its own monumentality. Thus, the aesthetic strategies applied make this square stand in sharp contrast with older, dirtier and more chaotic, non-regenerated spaces of the area. Beautiful in its own terms it is a 'public landmark of difference' within the neighborhood. One could easily argue that this square and surrounding buildings could be anywhere and are interchangeable. It was conceived as a prestige area to attract investment and visitors to the place. This standardization of aesthetic strategies makes spaces such as the Placa dels Angels recognizable environments for tourists, they fit into Zukin's (1995) description of commercialized spaces for visual consumption.

Critical voices such as self-organised resident groups are cynical about the physical changes and resist the official agents' representations that the physical transformation of the place leads to social improvements. They believe that the social problems have either been covered or pushed out by creating designer environments; the real needs of the place are pushed backstage. This statement implies that the architect did not know the sensescapes of the place and could not read the gestures of the place that inform the character of the neighbourhood:

I believe that too often the hippest designers and architects predominate but then the reality is a different one. When they set the floor for this square for example, the architect wanted the square to be this way - well he should have known the neighbourhood before taking that decision. I like design but I sometimes get very angry because with so much design they sometimes get it wrong and they do things that are wrong, that are not practical and the life of the barrio needs other things and not so much design. (Marta, Asociacion del Ponent)

An example of this argument is the anger at the lack of balconies in new buildings, in the words of an established resident: "this paranoia of architecture to get rid of balconies" (Paco, established resident). The absence of balconies is deeply felt as it is regarded as a common feature in the neighbourhood and also part of the relationship both new and old residents have to the immediate outside environment. The balcony helps to 'open up' the neighbourhood as it permits one to step outside and get a sense of space in this densely built area. Balconies in the old houses can be regarded as extending the private living space of people into the public sphere and thereby diluting strict separations between public and private. Established residents use the balconies as extensions of their living space. They decorate them with birdcages and plants and use them as storage space or just as a place to sit and observe life passing by on the streets below whilst listening to the radio or chatting to the neighbour on the opposite balcony. A local journalist reflects on the implications of these physical-aesthetic changes:

... they are demolishing old buildings and constructing new ones. The contrast is brutal. There's the old building with the gas canister on the balcony, an old lady leaning out of the window. It's an old building but it is open because the windows are open, the balcony can be seen, the entrance door is ajar, it is transparent. Next to it you have a stone building with glass and metal, perfectly rectangular, geometric, with automatic doorbells, the windows hermetically sealed, without balconies. They are more interested in aesthetics than utility. (Mr. M., journalist)

This quote highlights some important issues. First, that the new buildings which correspond to a predominantly visual aesthetic promote strong boundary settings rather than transitional spaces which promote a multi-sensory encounter. This physical change is then refracted on the social life of the streets and the sociability patterns of residents. An important 'contact point' (Sennett, 1996) with which people in el Raval can enter social relations with each other disappears, chance encounters are restricted and private and public space become clearly separated. This supports and extends Sennett's contention that: "By controlling the frame of what is available for social interaction, the subsequent path of social action is tamed. Social history is replaced by the passive 'product' of social planning" (Sennett, 1996: 96). The second issue the journalist's remark highlights is that, as Sennett (1986, 1990)

argues, architects are imposing their vision of bourgeois privacy or 'ideology of intimacy' and thus creating buildings and places "that do not suggest in their form the complexities of how people might live." (1990:xi)

Ironically, interviews with new residents and tourists - the desired newcomers to el Raval by official agents - show that much of the area's attraction actually lies in the sensescapes afforded by non-regenerated environments: "...that is something I don't see everyday: the narrow streets, the dark passageways, lots of balconies." (Irish tourist). For both new residents and tourists the sensuous character of the area becomes part of the packaged experience they consume when choosing to settle or wander around the 'Old City' of Barcelona. A new resident sums this up by stating: "It has much more magnetism than other neighbourhoods", and concludes:

It comes from the narrow streets; from the old shops. It isn't the same as a commercial neighbourhood. Here you can walk into a narrow street, I don't know, it is like in the old times, you can sometimes go into some place and you are suddenly in the 1960s. Also you have hidden places here that nobody knows about, with the typical little bar. I just find el Raval a really nice place, but not well used and which isn't been treated well.
(Antonio, new resident, 5 years living in el Raval)

Paradoxically then, the marginality that the regeneration strategies aim to dispel is precisely what attracts many newcomers to the area. 'Marginality' is regarded as charming, as an added ingredient to the authentic, bohemian character of el Raval which is often referred to as 'colourful'. From a critical position one could argue that part of the process of normalising 'marginal' parts of the city is internalising its margins, as commodified sites.

The sensory manipulation of time

In regenerated neighbourhoods the already transformed space is marked by a sensuous absence of contrasting traces of time. From the planners' view, regeneration projects try to create the ever present and old historic buildings are robbed of the physical traces of time or more literally 'cleansed' of history, being sandblasted to fit in with new designer features. The Placa dels Angels for example, is bordered on one side by Richard Meier's building and on the other by the rear of a sandblasted 16th-century cloister. Perhaps more important than this generic cleansing, however, is the selective removal of history, as exemplified by the poor, non-regenerated 18th-century housing-terraces alongside the museum, now hidden behind a Chillida mural. By hiding certain visual features in this way whilst simultaneously exalting others, what I define as a 'designer heritage aesthetic' is created. The building facades that are maintained after the regeneration are factories, warehouses, schools and cloisters, all those that refer to an important historical or cultural past of the area. Sights or buildings that might evoke awkward questions, reflect social inequalities or echo uncomfortable memories such as working-class housing, brothels and cheaply made buildings with a poor infrastructure, are

bulldozed over. Moreover, the most recent past: el Raval's social and physical decay in the 20th-century, is brushed away, and not referred to. Only one type of memory remains: the religious and industrial past. The conserved shells of history are filled with new functions: a church becomes a bookshop; the charity-house, once also a lunatic asylum, becomes a cultural institution.

As Bruner (1994) points out in his study of a reconstructed historic site in the USA: places are reinvented to conform to 1990s sensibilities. The present day's obsession with the past and sandblasted brickwork can be regarded as a reaction against the cosmopolitan and homogenizing impunities of modernism, with its brick facades, vernacular architecture and national virtues (Samuel, 1994). In addition it is necessary to promote a forward-looking spirit and demonstrate controlled development. Hence, the 'grand' historic landmarks are recovered and blended with 1990s sleek architectural-designer landmarks, often produced by famous architects. The effects are twofold: on the one hand, creating a competitive image of the city will prove the productivity of the city so "City images become essential in this marketing game: the kind of image that spatial pattern languages can foster and sell" (Boyer, 1993:125). On the other hand, new businesses located in these areas profit from the symbolic power of the area as their location reflects knowledge of cultural values and enhances the company's image as a young, trend-setting business.

A further spatial consequence of subjecting these areas to a planned aesthetic framework is the relocation or closure of certain businesses and the attraction of other businesses. My ethnographic observations in el Raval suggest that the power of urban design in creating new spatial geographies results in an increasing number of local shops closing down and being replaced by businesses providing for 'outsiders'. The attraction of the museum and spatial re-arrangement of streets has created new walking patterns and a new public is coming into the area that does not need to buy their daily food in cluttered little shops. In turn, these changes of shops and businesses attract different spatial practices and an increased gentrification in the use of space. Everyday, spontaneous street life is replaced by cafes, galleries, bookshops and designer stores that freeze organic public life then try to recreate it artificially with planned events as I will illustrate later.

We can see in the above examples how aesthetic politics and urban design can determine issues around inclusion and exclusion of "who belongs in specific places" (Zukin, 1995) and consequently what types of sensuous experiences and spatial practices are encouraged. Furthermore, the uniform imposition of 'designer heritage aesthetics' supports Zukin's (1995) assumption that the forces of globalisation, such as regeneration, erase any authentic space in favour of reproduced, easily identifiable and increasingly homogenized space, thereby diminishing local identity. On the other side of the coin, whilst old, historical features have been smoothed out - painted, sandblasted to fit as 'heritage' artefacts into the new aesthetic strategy, they can also be interpreted as important markers of time and memory in these places. It is the collage of these chronological indicators that marks the unique locality of

these spaces, making them visually distinguishable and identifiable with a particular place. In the regenerated buildings we can often appreciate features that have survived, almost untouched, to establish a link between past and present: an ageing wooden door, the plate on a convent or a Virgin figure which residents often refer to when geographically describing the place. The importance of these chronological markers is that they connect neighbourhood places with imaginary historical spaces. These visual links to memory are supported by allusions to other senses, all of which work to establish a place's identity: the calming sound of convent bells, the shrieks of sea gulls, the rough walls of a church. Similarly, culturally specific practices, such as the brass bands marching through el Raval on Sundays or immigrant children playing on the square in front of the museum, symbolise the connection between local people and particular places. These features contradict and subvert the imposed visual order and yet are often recalled by people who live in these areas when describing the place. Thus, although there is clearly a tendency towards a homogenisation of spatial aesthetics in regenerated public spaces, these can nevertheless become locally translated and adapted to the culture of the place and thereby become representative of a particular place identity.

Everyday life: practices in regenerated public spaces

Around the frontstages (Goffman, 1959) of the regeneration one can often see groups of schools or individuals drawing the place. Likewise, the squares and adjacent landmarks are often chosen locations for professional film-teams or photograph crews. The regenerated areas are extremely clean and indeed the sight of dustmen is almost as common as that of visitors photographing the area. However, these spaces are also linked to their surroundings and embedded in the everyday life of the surrounding neighbourhood. El Raval, as stated at the beginning, was a dense neighbourhood before the regeneration started. When one walks on the street of El Raval one is immediately immersed in it, part of it. The pedestrian literally weaves her way through the narrow streets, negotiating space with others: young and old, Spanish, Moroccan and Filipinos on their way to the market or to one of the many local grocery shops. It is a rich sensuous encounter, not only based on tactility, but enhanced by the voices that fill the air, the music issuing from shops and balconies; the views into the window displays of small, diverse stores. As interviewees highlight, on a single street one can move from the scent of designer perfume, to the musty smell of second hand books via the sweet aroma of Pakistani pastries. There is a sense of spontaneity to the area, typified by the high number of apparently chance encounters that occur all around you: people greeting each other, neighbours stopping in door entrances or leaning over balconies for an impromptu chat, older citizens gathering around benches to watch life pass by.

The regenerated Placa dels Angels offers a 'filtered' version of the above described neighborhood's public life. It reflects, in a diminished manner, the everyday rhythms of its surrounding streets. The spatial dynamics of the square

encourage only brief encounters, mostly based on sight, as the size of the space does not promote close interaction and minimizes bodily contact. Placa dels Angels differs from traditional squares in that it does not have benches that invite the passers-by to stay, it has been designed as a space of transit. Yet this design is subverted as people appropriate the space by making the most of the environments' affordances: people use the museum niches to have a break and sunbathe, skaters use the museum slopes and in the afternoons a cosmopolitan crowd of mothers and children play on the square after the adjacent school closes. In a more active demonstration of appropriation, the locals have renamed the square as "the square of the nations", symbolizing the importance of immigration upon the character of the neighbourhood.

But, what happens in el Raval after dark? The Placa dels Angels is illuminated with blue-white lights, its architectural designer landmarks lit spectacularly against the night sky. It would seem 'visual imperialism' is at its zenith. Yet, as soon as the galleries, bookshops and cafes close and the cultural office workers leave their institutions, the 'undesirable' features of the marginal El Raval progressively reclaim the place. The streets and the square become quiet and deserted. Junkies, homeless, and drunkards take over the museum's square and surrounding streets. North African men meet on street corners, local youth play football loudly on the square as others roar past in 'spoiler-ed' cars and mopeds. These sounds echo in the square and take over the neighbourhood. Each morning, new graffiti appears on the walls, sometimes only paintings, at others, more political statements – needless to say, both are quickly whitewashed the next morning.

To counter these activities, or the transgression of designer space, the city council is resorting to cultural animation. It is trying to control the nights of El Raval by promoting late opening hours for galleries, museums, bars and bookshops and organizing music events on the square and surrounding cafes. The idea appears to be that, by stimulating more civilized activities in the area, less space will be available for 'undesirable' activities. During events these squares are filled with 'organised' noise and stage lights. Crowds of people sit comparatively passively around the square watching the performed event with the illuminated buildings serving as both a free backdrop and a constant reminder of the regenerated values. The public space is transformed into a performance space in which an artificial community is created, united by the spectacle, a safe and controlled sensuous experience. In a similar vein to Zukin's (1995) account of an increasingly controlled and 'civilized' Bryant Park catering for the middle classes, one can argue that: "the cultural strategies chosen to revitalize [el Raval] carry with them the implication of controlling diversity while recreating a consumable vision of civility." (31) These pacification strategies are used to conceal or remove 'undesirable' practices as much as 'sensuously polluting' features of place. Yet, what is achieved is an increasingly temporally and spatially segmented public life. Marcuse and van Kempen (2000) have defined this phenomenon as the metaphor of 'the layered city', referring to a temporal layering of activities and groups in the same environment that never meet. In Barcelona these

layers emphasize the pre-existent, geographical quartering of the city to create an increasingly fragmented public life in which different cultural practices are hemmed in by their own boundaries and spontaneous encounters are diminishing.

Conclusion

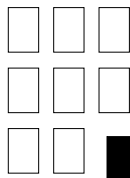
In looking at the regeneration of El Raval I have several conclusions. First and foremost, I have illustrated the importance of the senses in shaping social relations and the experience of public places. Second, I have demonstrated that urban regeneration can be understood as a process that aims to transform the public life of an area through the manipulation of its sensescapes, i.e. by remodelling the built environment and attracting new activities and social groups.

A sensuous examination of El Raval's regeneration clearly illustrates which features, practices and experiences have been discouraged or hidden: namely the dark, 'marginal' El Raval and its working class popular history. Similarly, we have seen how selective sensuous experiences are fostered by the regeneration strategies: purified, ordered experiences. Both of these procedures indicate the pervasive control of micro-relations which regeneration strategies command in everyday life, both physical and social. However, a closer analysis of the daily life in el Raval and users' experiences has revealed clear tensions between the standardisation of aesthetic strategies, here defined as 'designer heritage aesthetic', and its subversion by local specific sensescapes and spatial practices. Although preferred sensory experiences can be designed in the affordances of spaces by specific groups of society, the transitory and fluid nature of public space provides a subversive potential, as according to Delgado (1999): urbanism is always subverted by the urban. Thus, a dialogue is carried out between the innate performativity of space and people actively performing space. The mainly visual hegemony of regenerated public space in el Raval is constantly subverted by other, more transgressive senses such as smells and sounds. Hence, the impassive white museum and its potentially inhospitable square becomes integrated into the daily life of el Raval by the skaters using its slopes; screaming children playing on the square; mothers sitting in colourful saris on the museum's stairs; the old man resting with his shopping in one of the corners of the Macba and the nearby laughter of a crowd attending a gallery opening. Ultimately then it can be argued that, regardless of the intentions of the regenerators, homogenisation and control of public space can only ever be partially, never completely, achieved.

References

- Allen, J (1999) 'Worlds within Cities' in Massey, D., Allen, J., Pile, S (1999) (eds.) *City Worlds*, Open University and Routledge, London.
- Boyer, C (1993) 'The City of Illusion: New York's Public Places' in Knox, P. (1993) (ed.) *The Restless Urban Landscape* Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

- Bruner, EM (1994) 'Abraham Lincoln as Authentic Reproduction: A Critique of Postmodernism' in: *American Anthropologist* 96 (2), pp397-415.
- Collins Dictionary of the English Language. 2nd ed. (1986) William Collins and Sons Ltd., Edinburgh.
- Delgado, M (1999) *El Animal Publico*, Anagrama, Barcelona.
- De Certeau, M (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California Press, Berkley.
- Edensor, T (1998) 'The Culture of the Indian Street' in Fyfe, N.R. (1998) (ed.) *Images of the Street*. London, Routledge, London.
- Featherstone, M (1991) *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, Sage, London.
- Fyfe N.R. (1998) *Images of the Street*, Routledge, London.
- Garcia, S (1998) 'The example of Barcelona's inner city area Ciutat Vella' in: *The Hague: Upgrading the Route between Hollandsche Spoor Station and the Agora wit Spinlein/Nieuwe Kerk/Bezemplein*, The Hague: The Hague City Council.
- Knox P (1993) *The Restless Urban Landscape*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Gibson, J (1986) *The ecological approach to visual perception*, Lawrence Erlbaum Association, New Jersey.
- Goffman, E (1959) [1990] *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* Penguin Books, London.
- Hall, T, Hubbard, P (1998) *The Entrepreneurial City*, John Wiley and Sons, Chichester.
- Harvey, D (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Jameson, F (1991) *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Verso, London.
- Lefebvre, H (1991) *The Production of Space*, Blackwell, London.
- Lefebvre, H (1996) *Writings on Cities*, Kofman, E. & Lebas, E. (eds.), Blackwell, Oxford.
- Marcuse, M & van Kempen (2000) *Globalising Cities: A New Spatial Order*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Massey, D., Allen J., Pile S (1999) *CityWorlds*, Open University and Routledge, London.
- Miles, M (2000) *The Uses of Decoration*, Wiley and Sons, Chichester.
- Nast, H & Pile, S (1998) *Places Through the Body*, Routledge, London.
- Roberts, P & Sykes, H (2000) *Urban Regeneration*, Sage, London.
- Rodaway, P (1994) *Sensuous Geographies*, Routledge, London.
- Samuel, R (1994) *Theaters of Memory*, Verso. London.
- Sennett, R (1986) *The Fall of Public Man*, Faber and Faber, London.
- Sennett, R (1990) *The Conscience of the Eye*, Norton, London.
- Sennett, R (1996) *The Uses of Disorder*, Faber & Faber, London.
- Urry, J (2000) *Sociology Beyond Societies*, Routledge, London.
- Villar, P (1996) *Historia y Leyenda del Barrio Chino*, Edicions La Campana, Barcelona.
- Zukin, S (1995) *The Cultures of Cities*, Blackwell, Oxford.



Judith Rugg

Utopia from Dystopia:

The Women's Playhouse Trust and the Wapping Project

Set amongst a wasteland of derelict warehouses and abandoned docks, Wapping Pumping Station in Wapping Wall, East London was purchased by the Women's Playhouse Trust in 1993 to become its permanent HQ and to house a radical programme of predominantly women artists' work in theatre, dance and the visual arts. Since that time the conversion work to the building has been overtaken by that of the surrounding area whilst debates about the ethical (and economic) issues of fast track redevelopment raged around it. The conversion of Wapping Pumping Station into The Wapping Project – a centre for innovation of women artists' work and modeled on the Dia Arts Centre in New York – will mean that it will be the first building in the world to overtly address the contribution of women to the arts. The emergence of the building, however, has not been without difficulties. The first organisation to take the Arts Council to court in a unique sex discrimination case and repeatedly a refusee of lottery money, the history of the building's regeneration reflects the very difficulties it exists to address. Jules Wright, the Trust's director is confident that the building will develop an alternative and powerful strategy to affect cultural change in art and gender. This paper discusses the politics of cultural regeneration in relation to the Women's Playhouse Trust's struggle to create a sustainable site for change and examine the contradictory relationships between urbanisation and cultural production and gender.

The Women's Playhouse Trust was established in 1981; from its inception the Trust has been 'looking for the perfect home'. It sees its role as an enabler, risk-taker and catalyst in promoting collaborations between different disciplines including theatre, music, text, dance and the visual arts. Since 1984 the Trust has commissioned writers, composers and choreographers to work in 'found' spaces which it converts to its purposes. From 1992 this has been extended to include visual artists, filmmakers and architects. Part of its manifesto is to 'liberate' contemporary arts from conventional spaces in giving opportunities for women artists to work in expansive spaces outside galleries and to develop a 'risk taking' curating policy.

Derelict since 1976, Wapping Pumping Station was one of the last hydraulic pumping stations in Britain and the last of the London Hydraulic Power Company to contain equipment and to supply hydraulic power as a public utility. Initially steam driven, coal was delivered to the adjacent Shadwell Basin which was used to fire 6 steam boilers and their pumping engines. As electricity became cheaper, hydraulic power became obsolete and pumping stations gradually closed. The building's late 19th- and 20th-century role in creating the power for most of



The Wapping Project

London made it one of the most important buildings of the city. New technologies and communications systems have replaced steam power as the primary energy of capitalism and against the backdrop of industrial decline, the Women Playhouse Trust's 'new' building (in terms of use) represents both a postmodern concept of architecture and a cultural world which is women-centered. The building is technically within Docklands - 150 acres of riverside area in east London excluding Canning Town - half of which was derelict before 1981. Tower Hamlets is one of the poorest boroughs in London and has a history of dependence on subsidies. By 1990 it had 30% unemployment and one of the highest rates of homelessness and morbidity rates in Britain. (Widgery, 1991). The area has become synonymous with the manipulation of government neglect, the imposition of global capitalism and what Richard Rogers has called 'a hymn to greed'. The London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC), the sole landlord and planner of Docklands was an unelected creation of the Tory government for regenerating inner cities and had power to ignore procedures, 'red tape,' planning and social issues.

Set on the edge of London's East End, The Wapping Project evokes a past outside of its own frame. The growth of the suffrage movement, the 1930s fascist and anti-fascist marches, the rise of the British Nationalist Party, the gradual industrialisation of Docklands and the development of the M11, the East End is an area fraught both with political and social upheaval and the 'communal identification with place' (Massey, 1995). The area's massive re-development in the 1980s provided the preconditions for the conversion of Wapping Pumping Station as a centre for the Women's Playhouse Trust. 'Creeping gentrification' (Zukin, 1989) grew from a situation of a dilapidated infrastructure, outmoded industries and artificially depressed property and land values, eventually creating the conditions for redevelopment when investment capital returned and transportation was regenerated. In what the LDDC euphemistically called 'urban renewal' the consequences for the people who lived there have been well documented and the area that became 'Docklands' has subsequently become separated from conflict through the process of gentrification and redevelopment. In destroying its past and in its attempt to create a superficial veneer of wealth and power, it has lost its sense of place. Many of the apartments and buildings within Docklands have remained empty as their owners see them as investments not as homes, subsequently, there is a feeling of the place as a 'ghost town' with little sense of community. Part of the 'sea change' in city economies in the late 1980s and 1990s, identified by David Harvey in the gentrification of urban regions, the civic indifference it embodies and which is demonstrated by global organisations means that there is no longer a notion of the collectivity of place.

Canary Wharf is a stone's throw away from The Wapping Project and the separateness of the area from 'real-life' created by estate agents, developers and venture capitalists in the 1980s and 1990s is reflected in the pristine sandstone London brick of the new apartment buildings in its vicinity. Its newness replaces its lived past and the emptiness created by urbanism and the clearing of territory



The Wapping Project

creates a void and a need "to search for post historical grounds on which to base an 'authentic' home for society" (Vidler, 1992). Set within the Wapping conservation area its rough edges polished by new cobbled streets, and opposite the tourist landmark, the Prospect of Whitby pub with its flagstone floors and wood panelled walls, the area is in danger of becoming so anodyne as to create a cultural vacuum for itself. The Wapping Project is set in an area which has been largely re-created for tourism - coaches filled with European tourists park outside the building in order that their contents may visit the Prospect of Whitby pub. During an 'Open House' weekend where public access is granted to buildings of historical and architectural interest in a phenomenon akin to storming the gates of the citadel, coachloads of tourists were to be found in the pub despite a large banner declaring 'Open House' hanging outside The Wapping Project. Tourism's tendency to fix the meaning of places and their identities and its reliance on nostalgia to create meaning in places has become, in turn, identified (Harvey) as a response to the globalisation of capital. Part of the pernicious effects of tourism is its lack of engagement with reality and a defense against change. Loss, manifested in the unfamiliar is subsequently overcome by fixed familiarisation: the cobbled streets are the markers of a Dickensian (Hollywood) scene, the tourist a passive receptor for the picturesque. The internationalisation of finance and the spread of international tourism are linked. Canary Wharf is an area whose identity is bound up with the globalisation of capital and Wapping's local identity is drawn into its vacuum creating a tension between the global and the local. It may be a simple case of time – space compression vs. spatial accessibility but perhaps The Wapping Project represents our 'placeless times' (Vidler, 1992). In the recognition of the individual against the toil of the many, manifested most visibly in the growth of use of mobile phones, for example, an essence of postmodernism is the dematerialisation of sites of production. The conversion of industrial buildings and the relationship between art and the industrial which is an emerging 'theme' in contemporary developments of centres for art in a post-industrial age for the display and production of culture is part of the internationalisation of culture and by its nature relies heavily on tourism. In turn, galleries have become retail outlets, evolving into sites of consumption.

Through its redesign and use as a centre for the showcase of women's cultural innovation, The Wapping Project addresses the issue of how space can be said to be gendered through use. The Women's Playhouse Trust's objective to build its own house is part of its manifesto to create a permanent space for the production and reception of (mainly) women artists' work and impose a different use on an industrial building. The building may be one deliberately spared from destruction by considerations of historicism so essential for the process of redevelopment, but it is now being recreated through cultural production and recognition that gender is significant in the restructuring of spaces and places. The conceptual production of space is partly dependent on its function, representation and its experience in the everyday. The media focus that accompanied the conversion of another power station into a centre for art ensured that the Tate Modern would be culturally created



The Wapping Project

in our consciousness so that its former existence is now part of its mythology but the creation and representation of The Wapping Project as home to the Women's Playhouse Trust may prove to be more difficult. Historically women have had less access to space than men and subsequently have less control over their environment; in their restricted access to space, women have been culturally subordinated. Men and women have been allocated different spaces culturally and it is part of the Trust's manifesto that in allowing women material space in which to make and show work, it is giving opportunities for them to receive audiences and recognition.

The home is an important site of ideological meanings and suggests a place of importance in the creation of identity. The Wapping Project, as the Women's Playhouse Trust's home reverses the binary categories of the 'male', public space of production and the female, private one of reproduction and the house. In abolishing the distinctions between public and private, the tendency to collapse notions of the private and its associations of negativity to the feminine is exploded by the Women's Playhouse Trust's home. The role of The Wapping Project as a home for women's artistic work evokes the Bachelardian idea of expansiveness, an antidote to the Victorian notion of home with its small, specialised rooms, associated with feminine domesticity and as a space which traditionally negates and isolates women. The building's internal space is one of fluid boundaries: between restaurant and performance space and between audience and artworks, which contradicts the notion of home as bounded, simultaneously dismantling the notion of cultural enclosure. Part of the Trust's instructions to the architects, Shed 54, were to create a space where parts of the building, which had different functions (office, plate



Canary Wharf from Wapping Wall

stacking for the restaurant etc.,) were not separated from public access. Its home will be a space in flux and its site-specific works will reinterpret space in the same way as a theatre space continually changes its meaning through narrative. The idea of the building as home for a women's company is "one that promotes varied and ever changing perspectives" and "new ways of seeing reality" (hooks, 1991). The associations of home with nostalgia and stasis evokes feelings of fear and anxiety and is the antithesis of The Wapping Project in the context of its use. The Women's Playhouse Trust is collapsing associations of the home as a private space and its associations with domesticity and the feminine with the public elements of performance. The building, as a space of cultural production will be in a constant state of becoming, and will bring the previously hidden and repressed work of women artists into the public domain.

At the same time, notions of the uncanny as a feeling of unease, alienation, insecurity, depersonalisation and urban estrangement is a consequence of the fragmentation of communities and the rise of centralised power and have been associated with the essential instability of house and home (Vidler, 1992). Wapping has been made strange by redevelopment and through the creation of homelessness which inevitably accompanies it and in the repression of the familiar – the 'old' East End. Docklands has become a *tromp l'œil* for a wealthy and privileged lifestyle, thereby creating what Baudrillard saw as the 'elision between reality and fiction' (Baudrillard, 1993). The uncanny is further evoked by the architectural re-design of Wapping Pumping Station. In contrast to modernist architects who sought to eradicate any sign of the past, Shed 54 were instructed to consider the original

function of the building. In the return of this repressed use of the building, identified in the preservation of its machinery and in its new, rusting Cor Ten steel ramps and industrial-size suspended staircase and doors, the 'new' building evokes the *unheimlich*. Freud identified unheimliness (*unheimlich*) as the familiar becoming defamiliarised. The references to industrial use are in apparent antithesis to the new use of the building: as a space for art, therefore creating a site which is distinct from both art gallery and industrial building. The building as a home for a women's company is self-consciously undomesticated and the conversion of a power station into a centre for art and 'home' for a women's company could not be a more unhomey notion. Previously, women would only have entered such spaces, if at all, as workers into a private, enclosed space, a dangerous area exclusive to the production of power. In its link to its industrial past, the building risks alienating its present: polished steel doors, for example, may reflect the former industrial use of the building but larger than human scale and weighty to shift, they embody architecture's ability to create the 'conditions of estrangement' (Vidler, 1992). The machinery, along with the steel tracks embedded in the yard, create a sense of industrial abandonment and in turn evoke a sense of alienation, of its past to its present. But although the conversion design attempts to fix part of its previous identity as an industrial building, it is also a way to create a fluid space and a backdrop for interpretation by artists, making 'The identity of any place including that called home ... is for ever open to contestation.' (Massey 1992:13).

As a headquarters for the Women's Playhouse Trust, The Wapping Project has embodied the Foucauldian idea of heterotopic space. In danger of becoming isolated and removed through its geographical and ideological location, yet dedicated to addressing just that, through its 'otherness' the building in its function, representation and use manifests several aspects of heterotopias. In its function of 'home' and references to the industrial, The Wapping Project juxtaposes different spaces that are incompatible to each other and that are also linked to different times (past and future). As a performance space, it creates a place of illusion, which is essentially compensatory in its foregrounding of women's work and in the addressing of its absence from dominant historical and contemporary discourses of art. How space is articulated, its location and sense of place informs ideas about identity; space is not a passive receptor of meaning but creates meaning through use. The Women's Playhouse Trust's intention is to create a dynamic arena through the interactions between audiences and performance and its identity will develop through these interactions. Its intention is to create a space to allow women the opportunity to make 'audacious and compelling work' and to challenge and expand audiences for that work. Its manifesto includes the objective to create new work and 'reclaim a dispossessed past' part of which is the neglect of women's creative work in an historical and contemporary context. In colonizing a space for women and appropriating cultural control instead of creating a cultural space on the margins, women's artistic production will be centre stage. Participation will replace cultural exclusion.

The Trust seeks to represent that which is absent (i.e. women's cultural production) and is interested in both the participation of women as audiences and producers. As such, the building embodies what Stuart Hall has termed the 'politics of articulation': a centre to redress the silence imposed on women's work.

Marginalisation is echoed in the geographical position of Wapping, essentially a place on the periphery of Canary Wharf and which seems both to suffer cultural and geographical dislocation. Although London can be said to be expanding eastwards, Wapping is no Hoxton with its manufactured cultural identity and Holiday Inn. But marginalisation assumes an edge which must be maintained in order for a site of resistance to exist. Several productions commissioned by the Trust address the sense of alienation experienced by people in urban environments or by women. For example, *Shiny Nylon*, produced in 1994 and staged in S - Shed, Royal Docks, a 'vast, fog - bound warehouse space', focused on issues of powerlessness and homelessness in the lives of edge-of-the-city dwellers. Other commissioned work addresses the marginalisation of cultural forms. In June 2000, for example, Christie Brown produced a ceramic installation *Fragments of Narratives*, a work which was site-specific to the building and which aimed to address an audience outside a craft interest. The work could also be said to reference the historical feminist concern for the elevation and recognition of craft forms as a medium in which to communicate ideas beyond the material in the sense that so-called craft forms such as china painting, embroidery and quilting were used by women rather than men and their marginalisation was part of women generally being 'hidden from history' (Lippard, 1995: 175). Although contemporary art now utilises many different media, one could say that there is still a convention attached to the use of those traditionally associated with craft including ceramics. In recognising the marginalisation of women from the dominant culture, the Trust is creating an oppositional site in counter - hegemonic terms.

The Wapping Project is however, in one sense potentially a site for the circumvention of art as a fixed cultural product. Recently, the so-called 'cultural industries' have been identified as integral to the new economy, replacing an urban manufacturing base that has been steadily eroded for the past 30 years. Yet the financial support of such industries through state funding is linked with power and control, simultaneously creating an illusion of liberalism and expanded patronage. The three-year history of the judicial review between the Women's Playhouse Trust and the Arts Council of England resulted in a stalemate. In August 1998, the Trust, in withdrawing its action against the Arts Council, which it brought after a failed grant application, accepted the difficulties in proving cases of alleged discrimination in the allocation of funding by the State.

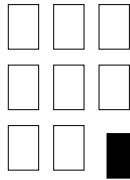
But how are the Women's Playhouse Trust and its building part of a strategy of urban conversion? The cultural possibilities exploited by the Trust in converting Wapping Pumping Station into an indigenous artistic centre was made possible by the creation of a bouyant investment climate and as has been pointed out (Zukin, 1989) in order for art to function within capitalism there has to be in place a market

(and therefore a potential audience) that is sympathetic and receptive to cultural production and performance. Furthermore, the relationship to the property market and the conversion of property to 'higher use': in this case an art centre from a derelict industrial building creates the conditions for a mutually reinforcing relationship between urban re-development and art markets. It remains to be seen whether the Women's Playhouse Trust can perpetuate this relationship through the promotion of women's experimental artistic production. Perhaps The Wapping Project will become the kind of urban space where people can have real encounters and thereby circumvent the sense of alienation brought about by the 'globalisation of space,' yet will it become a site of resistance or will it merely be a 'home' in the traditional sense: cut off and contained from the 'real' world? As suggested earlier, will the collapse of the *heimlich* with the *unheimlich* reveal an inherent instability of 'house and home' and only exacerbate the sense of exile, alienation and estrangement of the Project from its constructed, re-developed environment? Jules Wright intends the Women's Playhouse Trust's productions to have a "political agenda", the equivalent of those nineteenth-century women 'thronging the streets' and threatening bourgeois order (Wilson, 1992), collapsing notions of the inside and outside. However, in its commissioning policy of women artists reclaiming the main streets of public art and its denial of the notion of public art as something that exists exclusively in outside spaces, the Trust is anxious that its home does not, after all, become a place of containment. The ability of the mainstream to appropriate the radical is seen by Wright as manifested in, for example, The Wapping Project's original position in London's dominant listing magazine under The Wallace Collection. No longer interested in public funding and the bureaucracies that surround it, the WPT maintains its position of independence, but will its proposed radical programme make a sustainable contribution to cultural change or will it merely occupy the 'sacred spaces of ritualised pleasures'? (Zukin, 1989).

References

- Bachelard, G (1994) *The Poetics of Space*, Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press
- Baudrillard, J (1993) *Simulations*, New York: Semiotext
- Bird, J (1993) 'Dystopia on the Thames' in Bird, J, Curtis, B., Putman, T., Tickner, L. (1993) (eds.) *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change* London: Routledge, pp120-135
- Curtis, B and Pajaczkowska, C (1994) 'Getting There: Travel, Time and Narrative' in Bird, J, Curtis, B., Putman, T., Tickner, L. Robertson, G., Masn, M. (1994) (eds.) *Travellers' Tales: Narratives of Home and Displacement* London: Routledge
- Foucault, M (1996) 'On Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias' in N. Leach (1996)(ed.), *Rethinking Architecture*, London: Routledge pp.348-367.
- Frow, J 'Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia' in *October* 57, pp.123-151

- Hall, S (1999) 'Cultural Identity & the Diaspora' in Rutherford, J. (1994) (ed.) *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, London: Lawrence and Wishart
- Harvey, D (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell
- Hooks, B (1991) 'Choosing the Margin' in *Yearning: Race, Gender & Cultural Politics*, London: Turnaround
- Lippard, L (1995) 'Sweeping Exchanges: The Contribution of Feminism to the Art of the 1970s' in *The Pink Glass Swan, Selected Essays on Art*, New York: The New Press pp.171-182
- Massey, D (1994) 'A Place called Home?' in *New Formations, The Question of 'Home'* no.17, summer pp.2-15
- Massey, D (1995) 'Space, Time & the Politics of Location' in Lingwood, J. (1995) (ed.) *Rachel Whiteread's House*, London: Phaidon Press
- Sabbagh, K (2000) *Power Into Art: Creating Tate Modern*, London: Penguin Press
- Urry, J (1990) *The Tourist Gaze*, London: Sage
- Vidler, A (1992) *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*, Cambs Mass.: MIT Press
- Women's Playhouse Trust Business Plan (1995) unpublished paper, WPT archive
- Widgery, D (1991) *Some Lives*, London: Sinclair-Stevenson
- Wilson, E (1992) 'The Invisible Flâneur' *New Left Review*, no. 191, pp.90-120
- Interview with the author and Jules Wright, April 24, 2000
- Zukin, S (1989) *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*, New York: Rutgers University Press



Paul Teedon

New Urban Spaces: Regenerating a Design Ethos

Introduction

As we enter the 21st century there is a well-developed concern – for example in urban studies - with the image projected on the international stage of individual cities. We know that the agenda is one associated with investment, with jobs and particularly with tourism. Nevertheless, in the UK there has been a proliferation of regeneration schemes which, whilst conforming to strategies consistent with the development of flagships (Smyth, 1994), have undertaken this in a way that is aesthetically referenced. It is a truism to declare this is a partial view. But in a very real sense it is partial because increasingly the transformation of cities has been confined to selective (and select) parts of the urban environment. This cultural turn has followed area-based strategies in the same way that ‘urban policy’ developed from the 1970s onwards (Pacione, 1997). These are particularly exemplified by the emphasis some cities have placed upon the development of ‘cultural quarters’, and recently restated in the London case by Mayor Ken Livingstone’s draft London Plan (Greater London Authority, 2001), which has called for the creation of more of such areas.

A new trend that emerged in the latter part of the twentieth century was for the development of new kinds of urban spaces. These have been increasingly characterised by a high level of design content. If we seek to formulate these it is apparent that they are firmly located within a discourse of place marketing and as perhaps an inevitable consequence of Haider’s (1992) ‘place wars’. These spaces then are positioned as places lying within a competitive spatial framework; one seeking to attract jobs investment and tourism. Yet as we look at these more closely these spaces also redefine the nature of urban environments in their totality.

As we examine the proliferation of these new spaces around the UK it is noticeable that a wide variety of agencies have been drawn into the creation of imaginative locations for their activities. Whilst it clearly might not have been the primary intention these have sought to some degree, to create attractive spaces, these increasingly have been formulated as ones that need to be designed. There has been the evolution of a discourse that has revolved around the input of high quality design, something further engendered by the creation of agencies such as the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (cf CAFE, 2001).

As we survey recent urban regeneration experience around the UK we can find that examples of such spaces have proliferated. It not only represents a roll call of former heavily industrialised cities (for example, Newcastle, Bristol, Birmingham, and Glasgow) but also increasingly one of the great and the good from the

architecture and design elite. What these all illustrate is the impact of the design industry, and in many cases a design elite, upon urban centres. These centres then have become the focus for such design impacts, often creating design oases in otherwise somewhat down-at-heel urban environments.

We should acknowledge from the outset that there has been immense variation in the expression of these initiatives. In some cases they have been associated simply with single signature buildings, more commonly however such initiatives are associated with a wider framework of regeneration of a distinct area often, incidentally, in the form of cultural quarters. These frequently include signature buildings and increasingly also pay attention to other forms of design or architectural detail or indeed other forms of artistic expression.

Such involvement of high profile architects is not in itself a new phenomenon as Larkham (1997) has illustrated. However, there has been a different emphasis, as their involvement in the process of urban regeneration appears to be more explicit, with design itself becoming part of that process. A pattern is emerging which is seeking to draw in architects and designers as part of regeneration in a way that seeks to exploit head-on an aesthetically referenced design process. Hence, these go beyond the traditional expectation of the professions as merely providing a technical function. Hence, the design is central to the regeneration strategy itself.

These projects have been aided in recent years, as National Lottery funding has become available for the development of capital projects. This was particularly evident in the Millennium Commission's desire to support developments seen as culturally significant. These have in turn become culturally significant because in many cases those involved in the design process have themselves been members of a design and architectural elite.

Introducing Bankside

One place where this has been particularly evident has been in the Bankside area of Southwark in London. This area which borders the Thames, has seen high profile designers and architects directly involved in the regeneration process and it is a place where high quality design has been central to this regeneration debate. This is an area particularly affected by de-industrialisation which, until the mid-1990s, the local authority (London Borough of Southwark) was reluctant to accept. Eventually it was conceded by LBS's Council Leader, Jeremy Fraser that "we aren't going to get big manufacturing to return. The docks won't reopen." (quoted by Barker, 1995:27).

It is significant in the Bankside case that these architectural developments have not been restricted to a single example of high quality design, for example in the production of a single signature building, but has been multi-layered. It is clear that a general ethos has been created that architecture and design, which pays close attention to the production of elements of high aesthetic quality, is becoming the norm and expected. This has not simply been generated by one agency, although it is fair to say that the local authority has actively sought to encourage this. This has largely

been a result of the input of the architecturally trained Director of Regeneration and Planning, Fred Manson (Melhuish, 1996), a man described to the author in one interview as "visionary" in his approach. Another commentator identified him as the "driving force" (particularly with regard to the SUDI - see below).

An Initial Impetus: The Southwark Urban Design Initiative

The initiation of this trend is seen particularly in LBS's support of the Urban Design Initiative in the mid-1990s, a design competition undertaken in collaboration with the Architecture Foundation. This sought to instigate the use of high quality design in areas of the urban environment needing improvement to the public realm. The initial suggestions sought to develop what might be seen as flights of fancy, with no real prospects that they would be put into place, if only because there was no realistic prospects of funding being available. Nevertheless, it did serve to raise the profile of high-quality design as an instrument of urban regeneration. Where this project differed was in the clear intention to develop some of the proposals with funding of some £4m. As Hill (1996) reported, the Urban Design Initiative aimed to revitalise the area adjacent to the Thames between Blackfriars and Bankside.

This marked the start of a new debate and a new form of urban regeneration in Southwark, and as we look back also reveals a transformation in the national debate. In a nutshell what it demonstrates is an example of a more fully-fledged integration of high quality design in the process of urban regeneration. It followed initiatives undertaken elsewhere such as Brentford (Hill, 1996) and Croydon (Melhuish, 1996). However, in the case of Bankside the initiative was carried through both in the development of work suggested by the original participants in the competition, but also emerged in a number of other, and wide ranging, design-based projects and major architectural schemes.

The design project drew in some 100 portfolios of which 7 architectural practices were chosen to work in areas of the borough seen as being in particular need of regeneration, most of these were in the Bankside area. Yet it was also identified that in initiating their proposals the chosen designers had to interact with the local community and engage actively in a consultation exercise.

Melhuish (1996:3) identifies those chosen as "small, high-profile design teams". In many ways this sets the tone for the future debate in the area. There has been a concern to encourage innovation in the design, but to proclaim the need for it to be of high quality. Indeed we could easily argue that this has been the case whoever has instigated the project.

Here then Patel Taylor/Group Signes talked of creating, in a residential square, "a new room for the city" (Patel Taylor/Group Signes, 1996:4), whilst Muf, at Southwark Street, spoke of "forming a 'foreshore' at the raised ground-floor level (elevated above the incoming tide) of the buildings on the north side of the street" (Muf, 1996:6). Elsewhere in the area, East proposed placing a large mirror on the London Bridge viaduct to reflect the image of the Cathedral to the street (East, 1996:6). Perhaps the most grandiose proposal was made by Eric Parry Associates who suggested the development of a "grand new covered public space the London

Bridge Forum" (EP Associates, 1996:7) creating a huge canopy to cover the space. Florian Bergel Associates meanwhile proposed the creation of a "canopy of lights" and of "four public 'urban gardens'..." (Florian Bergel Associates, 1996:10), and even spoke of the creation of a "souk" of shops and restaurants on a roof garden at a large office building (St Christopher's House).

None of these major proposals were adopted, nevertheless Pat Taylor, Muf, East and EP Associates were employed to work on smaller regeneration projects at the named sites with designated funds where improvements were made to the pedestrian environments. EPA produced an obelisk directing those emerging from London Bridge into Southwark and also provided wider pavements in an area seen as potentially dangerous. East improved pedestrian walkways on Borough High Street and included designed 'thresholds' into retail outlets where the names of these shops, banks etc were embedded in the paving and synthetic mats indicated the proximity of bank cash points (for blind customers). Muf, meanwhile made considerable efforts to engage with the local population to determine their aspirations in life, as a result of which it produced a video '100 Desires for Southwark Street'. From this consultation process it attempted to evoke a south-facing beach on the north "sunny side" of Southwark Street and reflected in the pavement design, based upon the use of Thames shingle.

Hence, the aim was more than simply providing improved paving but was to improve the (design) quality of the location. These initiatives specifically and expressly required a high design content and drew in those designers and architects seen as being at the cutting edge of design debate and capable of placing sophisticated interpretations of the townscape into their proposals. This emerged from a local authority-sponsored initiative intent on regeneration but one formulated as aesthetically referenced rather than simply a more traditional and functionalist approach.

The finished projects sought to exploit innovative design themes, which whilst functional, represented a real aestheticisation process with the intention of making the area easier to 'read' for both the local community and tourists. Whilst some of those directly involved identified their projects in rather functionalist terms, others in the local community were somewhat dismissive of the "arty-farty" impact (as one interviewee regarded them). The same interviewee was particularly relieved when Southwark Council refused planning permission for the placement of the mirror on London Bridge's railway viaduct.

Whilst the results were not universally appreciated, it nevertheless set out a stall which indicated that Bankside and Southwark were locations for the design and architecturally conscious. As we look back, it is apparent that this acted as a catalyst for a number of significant design-based initiatives.

Art for Architecture's sake: the development of Tate Modern

This area has seen the development of significant new additions to the cultural infrastructure, and Tate Modern represents perhaps the most significant of these.

Located in a remodelled power station it represents a signature building both for the area that is (now) referred to as Bankside and, of course, for the commissioned architects Herzog and de Meuron. Indeed as the project began to gather pace a significant part of the debate about the development revolved around this architectural re-use of its design.

Amongst architectural critics it is apparent that in the mid-90s this was a major debate. This was particularly true of the critic Jonathan Glancey who identified the project's significance in global terms, particularly as it reflected on the state of UK architecture, whose traditions he described as "xenophobic" (Glancey, 1994:26). The profile was raised because the Tate chose to appoint architects on the basis of an international competition. This architectural discussion then placed Bankside in the centre of a major cultural debate and was particularly important given that the (proposed) design of the Tate was praised by a large proportion of the cultural elite. Whilst not all welcomed the transformation of the existing power station, this hardly matters as the debate itself placed Bankside higher in the public consciousness. As the *Evening Standard* argued, at the time of the Tate's opening, it has "made London in this millennium year one of the most dazzling stars in the constellation of world cities" (*Evening Standard*, 12th May 2000:13). Bankside, as a place of urban regeneration, could only benefit (it was perceived) from such eulogising.

To that extent the appointment of the (formerly) little known, in the UK at least, Herzog and de Meuron has been a great success. We should be in no doubt that visitors to Tate Modern have been attracted by the building as much as they have been by the art within. The *Evening Standard* proclaimed, the day after the opening, "Tate Modern is art itself" (12 May 2000:3). The completed gallery massively overshot its expected visitor numbers: 35,000 on the first day (Glancey, 2000), 1 million in the first six weeks (Jones, 2000) and reached 5.3m in the first year (to May 2001).

Herzog and de Meuron have clearly benefited from this significant commission as they recently won the 2001 Pritzker Architecture Prize. They have since gone on to work on the Laban Centre in Deptford, the de Young Museum in San Francisco as well as an extension to the Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis. They have been lauded by the architectural press after their "impeccable transformation of the former temple of power into a mesmerising mall of art" (Glancey, 2000). As a consequence this has had the effect of enhancing their reputation as part of an increasingly globalised architectural and design elite.

So not only has the Tate been a major flagship development whose design content is seen as aesthetically and architecturally significant but it has also increasingly sought to project itself as a partner in the area's regeneration. Its involvement, at one level, has been met with enthusiasm as it has actively engaged with the local community. For example, it has made its facilities available to a local resident's group for meetings and has also initiated a scheme for training local people through the Bankside Arts Training Trust. It is now engaged in the further exploitation of its role in the urban regeneration process by employing major

players in the Richard Rogers Partnership to undertake a planning role for the area including and surrounding the Tate. This role has no statutory powers and is seen as presumptuous by some members of the local community. As Rowan Moore observed "It's a novelty for museums to turn into town planners, but it's admirable that the Tate should be taking an interest in its neighbourhood." (Moore, 2001:29) based on the Tate's urban study (Richard Rogers Partnership, 2001).

Wobbling into the 21st Century: the Millennium Bridge

Tate Modern then in terms of economic development clearly represents a (globally) significant flagship. At the same time, however, it represents a signature architectural expression associated with architects increasingly seen as part of a professional elite.

This area of Bankside therefore has been characterised by the development of culturally significant buildings but more particularly is increasingly associated with the work of designers and architects considered to be at the apex of their profession. A number of projects both proposed and actually developed, have drawn in this elite, epitomised by the development of the Millennium Bridge. Again the origins of this lie in a design competition sponsored by the Financial Times and Royal Academy. The result of this saw the commissioning of the bridge from (Lord) Norman Foster (described by Rowan Moore as "the establishment futurist" (Moore, 2000c:8) and (Sir) Anthony Caro ("widely regarded as Britain's greatest living sculptor") (Holliday, 2000:5). Again the association of these two major figures from the cultural elite imprinted a high-quality design mark on the area. Additionally it linked two iconic buildings in London, notably St Paul's Cathedral and Tate Modern. Or, as John Walsh described it "unites the noble bosom of St Paul's with the brick phallus of Tate Modern in a happy synthesis of yin and yang" (Walsh, 2000:5).

This new designed walkway between such significant structures was always likely to present an irresistible pedestrian route, given, for example, its description as "supremely elegant" (Kennedy and Meek, 2000). So it proved to be on the opening day (10 June 2000). The bridge attracted such a huge audience (estimated to be about 150,000) on this day that the promenaders generated a massive swaying of Foster's Blade of Light. The bridge was, as a consequence, closed 2 days later and acquired the sobriquet of the Wobbly Bridge the *Evening Standard*. There was, as a consequence, much ribaldry in the press about the wobbling "Like clinging to the mast of a windjammer rounding Cape Horn in a Force Niner" according to John Walsh (2000:5) writing in *The Independent*. But it has not received the (often viscous) treatment meted out to the Millennium Dome or indeed other problematic Millennium projects such as the British Museum's Great Court and its 'wrong stone' debacle (another Foster project). There has been controversy about this site, but this has largely been restricted to who will foot the repair bill (estimated at £10m according to Burleigh, 2000). Indeed, the *Evening Standard* was quick to launch a campaign for the reopening of the bridge arguing that the risks were insignificant, and drew direct comparison with the attraction of the Leaning Tower

of Pisa (Burleigh and Nettleton, 2000:7). As Rowan Moore, writing in the *Evening Standard* (Moore, 2000a:9) said "I'd rather have their [Foster and engineers Ove Arup] flawed beauty than fully functioning mediocrity" a structure he also described as "graceful" in the same piece. The bridge is likely to reopen at the end of 2001.

And so to the skies?

What we have seen in the area then has been the generation of a significant architectural debate inextricably linked to its regeneration. More recently we have also seen the renewal of a debate about the role which tall buildings can play in urban areas. In June 2001 the Architecture Foundation organised an exhibition revealing how London might look if a number of proposed skyscrapers were to be constructed. At the same time English Heritage and CABE (2001) have jointly published guidelines on the role such developments might play. One of these proposals, for which planning permission has been sought, is the construction of a 66-storey tower (309m tall) in Bankside at London Bridge station. Renzo Piano (co-designer of the Pompidou Centre in Paris) has produced the most recent design for this structure. For one critic "the nicest skyscraper you could hope to meet" (Moore, 2000b).

London Bridge Station has already been the focus for much prestige architecture and design work as part of the Thameslink 2000 project. This would see major infrastructural work undertaken, in order to enhance rail services. However, the Thameslink 2000 debates (at the time of writing) are still unresolved as the results of a public inquiry are still awaited. Regardless of this outcome LBS has been keen to see the station rejuvenated and in the latter stages of the inquiry withdrew its opposition to the construction of a new railway viaduct, through a conservation area, because the project would see the significant refurbishment of London Bridge Station. The station represents a major gateway into the area of Bankside and the proposals significantly have included concourse design work undertaken by Terry Farrell. The expectation would be therefore that any development would be of a high-design quality. A similar element of this project would see major design work at the west extreme of the Bankside area with the remodelling of Blackfriars rail bridge, possibly with a glazed roof, preliminary design work for this has been carried out by Alsop and Störmer, the 2001 Stirling Prize winners.

Developments at London Bridge have been the focus of much attention we have already seen that with the work undertaken at London Bridge Gateway (by EPA). Again regardless of the intrinsic merits of these projects it raises north Southwark's profile as a place which is at least architecturally aware and (maybe) sophisticated.

Conclusion

I have outlined the developments which have been undertaken in the Bankside area of London alone. But the area has become somewhat saturated by projects, which not only have high-design content but by implication have drawn in major figures in an international elite. This is a group which Sudjic provocatively argues is

becoming smaller, arguing that: "There can never have been a moment when quite so much high-visibility architecture has been designed by so few people. Sometimes it seems as if there are just 30 architects in the world" (Sudjic, 2001, p.6).

Whilst there has been no clearly laid out strategy for the development of architectural significance and boldness in the Bankside area, the coincidence of interest shown in the area has produced a place with high-design impact. As I have shown elsewhere (Teedon, 2001) the area previously (un)known as Bankside has become associated with significant inputs of high-design quality. This in turn has had the effect of reformulating the conception of urban regeneration towards one which aims to be design conscious and architecturally aware. Hence, signature buildings in architectural terms alone, might produce a flagship within an economic development strategy. Nevertheless, in Bankside it is clear that whilst Tate Modern has been a major catalyst for this (as it also proved to be in St Ives), it has also been surrounded by other major design-based initiatives.

It appears that there is a growing tendency for cities to attempt to entice these major architectural and design practices to work in their area. We have seen some evidence elsewhere (in the UK) of the impact high-quality design has had on particularly urban spaces. Notable examples including Michael Wilford's design of the Lowry Centre, Glasgow Year's of Architecture in 1999 (co-ordinated by Deyan Sudjic) and Walsall's Art Gallery designed by Caruso St John who worked on street sign redesign in Bankside.

There appears then to be a growing trend towards having a project with a 'name' attached, or at least of having someone involved perceived to be part of an architectural avant-garde. There is evidence to suggest that having a named member of this elite is becoming an important element in the definition of an effective regeneration strategy. It might be too early to speculate whether this is becoming a prerequisite.

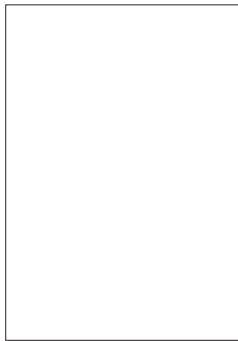
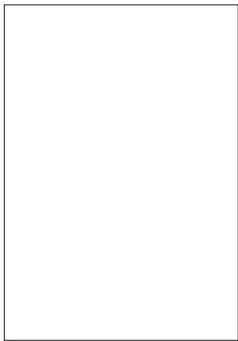
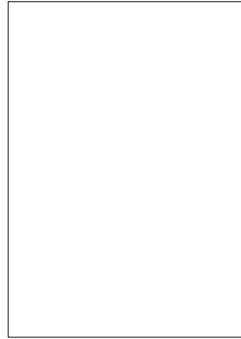
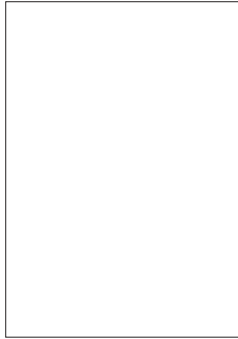
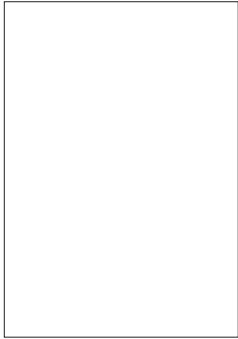
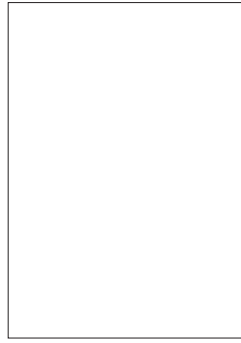
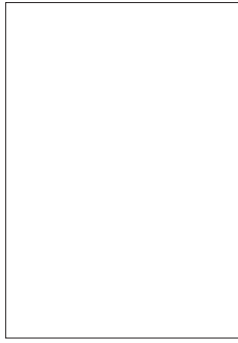
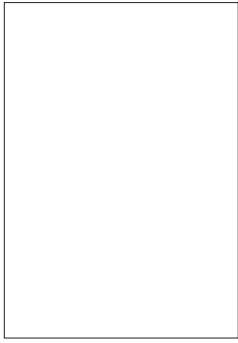
Clearly we need to be careful here of not overstating the impact which good architecture and design can have on the regeneration process. It might appropriately be argued that 'world cities' (and/or those which have such pretensions) represent a different context than most provincial/non-metropolitan cities who have been arguably more devastated by earlier processes of de-industrialisation. Nevertheless it seems that increasingly the only game in town is architecture and aesthetically conscious design. It remains to be seen whether it produces 'fur-coat cities', where the architectural flagships are beautiful but the economic regeneration is hardly noticeable.

References

- Barker, P (1995) 'Smiling all the way to the Bankside,' *Evening Standard* 24 July p.27.
- Burleigh, J (2000) 'Three ways to cure wobble', *Evening Standard* 13 October, p.7
- Burleigh, J and Nettleton, P (2000) 'Movers and shakers call for re-opening of the wobbly bridge,' *Evening Standard* 11 July, p.7


- CABE (2001) *The Value of Urban Design*, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment.
- East (1996) Borough High Street in Architecture Foundation: Future Southwark: A Building Design Special report in *Building Design* June 7 p.6
- English Heritage and CABE (2001) *Guidance on Tall Buildings: Consultation paper*, London, English Heritage and CABE June.
- EP Associates (1996) Colechurch House in Architecture Foundation: Future Southwark: A Building Design Special report in *Building Design* June 7 p.7
- Evening Standard* (2000) 'Shock of the new' 12 May p.3
- Evening Standard* (2000) 'So much for London to celebrate' 12 May p.13
- Florian Bergel Associates and Architecture Research Unit (UNL), (1996) St Christophers House in Architecture Foundation: Future Southwark: A Building Design Special report in *Building Design* June 7 p.10
- Glancey, J (1994) 'From power house to art house', *The Independent* 23 November, p.26.
- Glancey, J (2000) 'An Instructive tale of two power stations: his and hers'. *The Guardian* 17 May 2000, p.20.
- Greater London Authority (2001) *Towards the London Plan: Initial proposals for the Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy*, Greater London Authority, May.
- Haider, D (1992) 'Place wars: new realities of the 1990s', *Economic Development Quarterly*, 6, pp.127-134.
- Hill, J (1996) 'Tales from the Riverbank', in *Surveyor* 11 April.
- Holliday, R (2000) 'Planners ruined our wobbly bridge design' *Evening Standard* 23 November, p.5.
- Jones, J (2000) 'Tate Modern gets a million visitors in just six weeks. Meanwhile at poor old Tate Britain...' *The Guardian Arts* 28 June p.12.
- Kennedy, M and Meek, J (2000) '£5m bill to damp down bridge's bounce,' *The Guardian* 17 November, p.2.
- Larkham, P (1997) 'Remaking cities: images, control, and postwar replanning in the United Kingdom', *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 24, pp. 741-759.
- Melhuish, C (1996) n.d. in Architecture Foundation: Future Southwark: A Building Design Special report in *Building Design* June 7
- Moore, R (2000a) 'Risk taken in the name of beauty,' *Evening Standard* 13 June, p.9.
- Moore, R (2000b) 'Tower set to raise the stakes in London,' *Evening Standard* 9 November
- Moore, R (2000c) 'An amazing year that London must build on,' *Evening Standard* [ES 12 December, p.8.
- Moore, R (2001) 'Hotel (with ace museum attached),' *Evening Standard* 5 June, p.29.
- Muf Architects (1996) 'Groundswell: a proposal for Southwark Street,' in Architecture Foundation: Future Southwark: A Building Design Special report in *Building Design* June 7, p.6.
- Pacione (1997) *Britain's Cities: Geographies of division in urban Britain*, Routledge:London.
- Patel Taylor/Group Signes: Bankside Riverside in Architecture Foundation: Future Southwark: A Building Design Special report in *Building Design* June 7 p.4
- Richard Rogers Partnership, (2001) *Bankside Urban Study*, Richard Rogers Partnership May.
- Sabbagh, K (2000) *Power into Art*, London:The Penguin Press, Allen Lane.



- Smyth, H (1994) *Marketing the city: the role of flagship developments in urban regeneration*, E & FN Spon, London.
- Stamp, G (1989) 'A prayer for the brick cathedral facing St Paul's,' *The Independent* 11 October.
- Sudjic, D (2001) 'One ambitious bus shelter and he thinks he's the new Frank Gehry,' *The Observer Review*, 20 May, p.6.
- Teedon, P L (2001) 'Designing a Place called Bankside: On Defining an Unknown Space in London', in *European Planning Studies*, Vol.9, No. 4.
- Walsh, J (2000) 'Welcome to the Indiana Jones Memorial Bridge,' *The Independent* 12 June, p.5.



Artists' Reclamations/Ecological Spatial Actions

 Kirk Savage

 **Art, Science and Ecological Enquiry:**

 The Case of American Nineteenth-Century
 Landscape Painting

Introduction

One of the consequences of the professionalization of disciplines over the past century has been the almost complete isolation of the arts from the sciences. By contrast, the research currently in progress at Nine Mile Run, Pittsburgh seeks to build bridges between these now remote islands of inquiry. A basic premise of the Nine Mile Run Greenway Project is that the study of both natural and social systems requires a more integrated approach than the logic of specialization and sub-specialization allows. We are therefore interested in what can be learned by returning to earlier methods of inquiry that flourished before the hardening of disciplinary boundaries.

This paper will turn its attention to one historical case of cross-fertilization between the visual arts and the natural sciences: American landscape painting of the mid-nineteenth century. This case is especially important because it coincides with the beginnings of ecological consciousness in the US and because it is implicated in the struggle between the competing demands of "nature" and development. Landscape painting was practised in the USA from its founding, but it did not become widely popular until the 1820s and 1830s when artists such as Thomas Cole, originator of the so-called "Hudson River School" pioneered a "national" style of landscape painting that depicted distinctively American scenery allied with an almost microscopically close observation of nature. Cole and his kindred spirits treated natural scenery reverentially, as God's own creation, and accordingly they placed great stress on sketching from and in nature. By the 1850s, the painter Asher B. Durand, Cole's successor as leader of the Hudson River group, rejected the whole idea of conventional art instruction and recommended instead "the study of Nature" (Durand, 1855). This attitude toward the natural landscape was part of a larger phenomenon that recent scholars have dubbed "landscape tourism" (Truettner & Wallach, 1994:29-31), which became more popular as the virgin [i.e., pre-European contact] landscape increasingly disappeared. The subjugation of Native American populations, the development of the railroad, and the ever-expanding frontier of new settlement and development made "nature" less remote, safer and easier to reach and enjoy for both artists and tourists. The reverence for nature, therefore, cannot be disentangled from the very forces that were encroaching upon nature and destroying it. I will examine the work of mid-century American landscape painters in three different ways, each of these relevant to this inquiry.

The artist as scientific observer

Through much of the nineteenth century, artists were included in scientific expeditions exploring the North American continent. They were considered critical to the task of scientific documentation; they drew and painted little-known landscapes, and the flora and fauna (and sometimes native inhabitants) within them. As Barbara Novak has written, "the artist [on such expeditions] was explorer, scientist, educator, frontiersman and minister" (Novak, 1995: 137). Perhaps the most astonishing example is the work of the Swiss artist Karl Bodmer, part of the scientific expedition through the Northwest in the 1830s led by the German Prince Maximilian, who was himself a student of the great scientist Alexander von Humboldt. Bodmer's watercolor drawings record with exceptional clarity and freshness the particular beauty of people, plants, animals, and geological formations along the upper Missouri River (Goetzman, 1984).

Artists played an important role in such enterprises because they were in effect the instruments of empirical observation. Careful visual observation underlay the natural classification systems developed and refined since the eighteenth century; since visual artists were trained to observe and record their observations, their work merged with scientific inquiry. The same could be said of landscape painting with no explicit scientific purpose. Cole and other artists walked the landscape extensively and studied it minutely on site. They were interested in both macro and micro processes, the geological forces that shaped the landscape and the botanical diversity that flourished within it. Landscape painters kept books on geology and botany in their libraries and sometimes even corresponded with leading scientists of the day. For example, Thomas Cole (Cole, 1835) helped procure a collection of fossils for the eminent scientist Benjamin Silliman (Novak, 1995:57), whilst Cole's most celebrated pupil, Frederick Church, was an avid enthusiast of Humboldt (Avery, 1993). Typically, Hudson River School artists painted a detailed foreground to showcase local flora and often represented views with striking geological features to suggest the processes of change. Their work amounted to a kind of scientific expedition of the landscapes they visited. One critic in 1859 went so far as to declare that the landscape painter "is a geologist. Continually meeting with different strata, the query naturally arises, why this diversity? He meets with immense fissures and volcanoes, and he asks himself whence did they originate and by what convulsions were they produced? To him, therefore, belongs the study of geology, as he more thoroughly than any other can imitate what nature has produced." (Anon. [see note in ref. below], *Crayon* 6, August 1859:256).

This notion that artists had a special closeness to nature, by virtue of their ability to recreate nature's own creations, was commonplace in the mid-19th century. Landscape painters were trained not only to observe the landscape but to convey its feel, to suggest the experience of being in it. Scientific observation in the modern sense suggests detachment, an emotional distance from the object under investigation; landscape painters following Cole were interested instead in collapsing distinctions between observation and emotion. Thus the changing

moods of the landscape, in different atmospheric conditions and times of the year, were equally if not more important than its topographical facts.

The artist as ecologist

These reflections prompt us to wonder whether the work of landscape painters led them (or their audience) to an ecological understanding of the landscapes they studied. Amy Myers has argued that much of nineteenth-century scientific illustration was essentially anti-ecological, focused instead on the classification of "specimens" isolated from context or habitat. Yet she identifies an important "subcurrent" running from the work of William Bartram in the 1810s to the illustrations of Audubon in the 1840s, which employed landscape to suggest the organic unity of living things (Myers, 1986:121). Recently ecologist William Graf has argued more strongly that landscape painters created an ecological view of nature. Painters such as Bodmer and George Catlin, Graf writes, tacitly brought a "systems" perspective to the study of nature, especially of rivers. Instead of breaking down riparian environments into isolated components, these painters "depicted western rivers as complex, interactive mosaics of physical landscapes and biological communities with human significance" (Graf, 1993:11-35).

Water was indeed a crucial element in most landscape painting of the period. Cole, in a famous essay declared water to be that element "without which every landscape is defective" (Cole, 1835:103). Flowing water introduced narrative complexity (movement, time, change) but also suggested the natural interaction of geology, biology, and meteorology. This was commonplace not only in America but in perhaps the most venerable of landscape painting traditions, that of China, in which for centuries artists have been depicting water draining from mist-wrapped mountains into lakes or river basins that sustain variegated riparian ecologies. The impulse to show complex natural processes as an organic unity seems so deeply ingrained in the notion of landscape painting that it is hard to see how painters could avoid depicting rivers as "complex, interactive" systems. Certainly rivers were of endless fascination to nineteenth-century Americans, and some artists even published portfolios of views exploring certain rivers from their source to their mouth (Nygren, 1986:49-54). Perhaps the most ambitious attempt by any American artist to represent "a complex, interactive" ecological system was the work of Frederic Church, particularly his celebrated painting *Heart of the Andes* (1859). Church was specifically inspired by Humboldt's book *Cosmos* (1849) and by his belief in nature as "a unity in diversity of phenomena; a harmony, blending together all created things, however dissimilar in form and attributes" (Humboldt, 1849:I:24). That belief led Humboldt to explore the equator in South America, where the global range of bio-diversity from polar ice cap to tropical rainforest could be surveyed in one single region. Following in Humboldt's footsteps, Church made his own expedition through South America in the 1850s and from hundreds of painstaking studies created a composite panoramic image of the equatorial region leading the viewer from a highly detailed tropical foreground through a

temperate grassland to the snow-capped, cloud-swept Chimborazo peak (20,000 feet) in the distance. Not surprisingly, a spectacular river occupies the centre of the picture, linking the distant snow to the tropical dampness and suggesting one great meteorological cycle of evaporation and precipitation that holds the diverse climates and their ecologies in delicate balance.

Humboldt himself was very interested in landscape painting, and his eloquent meditation on the subject in *Cosmos* was certainly an inspiration to Church. Humboldt actually called for landscape painters to move beyond the familiar scenery of Europe and explore the tropical world because there, he declared, was "the true image of the varied forms of nature" (Humboldt, 1849:II:452). He recognized that the art of landscape was not simply one of observation but of deep thought as well: "the combined result of a profound appreciation of nature and of [an] inward process of the mind" (Humboldt, 1849:II:94-95). This description of the painter's process could apply equally well to his own process of ecological exploration.

The artist as developer

The preceding discussion seems to fly in the face of much of the recent scholarship on American landscape painting. That scholarship emphasises the complicity of landscape painting in the dominant nineteenth-century ideology of national "progress" which justified not only the subjugation of native inhabitants but also the wholesale destruction of virgin forests, wetlands, and other longstanding ecologies of the continent. Cole was perhaps the only artist of the period who did not accept the gospel of progress and who openly lamented the onrush of development (Truettner & Wallach, 1994:72-77). Cole's successor, Asher B. Durand, whilst extolling nature as the artist's true studio, painted a panoramic vision entitled *Progress* (1850), which optimistically charts the taming of the landscape by industry and transportation and relegates the foreground wilderness to the "primitive" (and therefore defunct) era of the Native American. The creation of a "national" landscape was part of the larger drive to claim the continent for the forces of "civilization"; in this view, landscape painting was an act of possession and domination, hardly an ecologically friendly embrace of the environment (Miller, 1993).

Probably the most famous landscape image of technological progress in the nineteenth century is George Inness's *Lackawanna Valley* (c. 1855), a fresh green pastoral view of the river valley in Scranton, Pennsylvania dominated by the railroad roundhouse in the middleground (the railroad, of course, commissioned the painting). Rows of tree stumps in the foreground attest to the recent clearing of land, but the removal of the trees at the same time creates the pastoral view and allows the figure reclining in the foreground meadow to enjoy the sweep of the landscape. This is a vision in which nature, properly tamed and removed of inconvenient obstructions, can coexist with industrial development. Photographs taken from roughly the same spot during this period are not nearly so pastoral; they show several buildings in the foreground space that mar the meadow and block the fictional view Inness created.

Within a few years, the rapid industrialisation along the Lackawanna River in Scranton made Inness's view seem decidedly old-fashioned, as the river became an industrial sewer and the surrounding landscape fed the needs of development. Interestingly, in the early 1990s, Inness's picture came back into ecological consciousness when it was used by a citizen's group, the Lackawanna River Corridor Association, which organised to bring the river back to life. The group used the image to help argue for an industrial heritage site in the river corridor; for them the painting made the landscape of Scranton emblematic of a larger national history of transition from rural countryside to urban industry, and it inspired their efforts to make a new transition to a post-industrial landscape (telephone conversation with Alex Camayd, former vice president of the Lackawanna River Corridor Association, August 13, 1997).

The efforts of this citizens' group pose the question: what are we to make of such images as *Progress* and *Lackawanna Valley* - do they negate the evidence of ecological insight that seems to permeate much landscape painting of the period? This is not a question that has been posed in recent literature, so my own answer must be somewhat provisional. I would suggest that the nationalist ideology of conquest, although inescapable, does not cancel the ecological perspective on nature offered in the pictures themselves. There is, I think, a profound duality in the nineteenth-century enterprise of landscape painting an art form that generally accommodated itself to the prevailing norms of "progress" but at the same time offered viewers a kind of experiential merger with the organic unity of nature. The impulse to dominate nature, to impose the human will on nature, coexisted with the competing impulse to merge with nature, to become part of its interactive system. Ecological consciousness arises from the conjunction of these two impulses; the love of wilderness is fuelled by the forces that are destroying wilderness and "civilising" it. It was commonplace in the mid-nineteenth century to remark that the people who actually worked and struggled to survive in nature were heedless of its charms; the romantic impulse to merge with nature was therefore an urbane impulse, coming from within the very "civilisation" that was clearing nature for profit (Nygren, 1986:56). Both impulses can be seen at work in the paintings; yet what we might call the "ecological impulse" offers us today a way of learning from the paintings, finding ways to understand and perhaps transform places that have been marred by the hand of civilisation.

Conclusion

Despite the role of landscape painting in the possession and control of nature, we have identified a powerful cross-current of ecological inquiry built into the very enterprise of landscape painting which interacted in certain ways with scientific research, but also broadened the scope of scientific inquiry and humanized it. The painter's approach involved close, sustained observation of particular sites, from geology to botany; and equal emphasis on the subjective experience of natural places as dynamic, changing environments and a faith in the interrelatedness of

living things and natural systems – in other words, the modern notion of ecology.

This points to ways in which artistic and scientific inquiry can reciprocate and enrich one another as the two domains of creativity confront real environments shared by human and natural systems. Nine Mile Run is certainly such an environment, and the kind of integrated inquiry we have been discussing will be essential to cope with its particular challenges.

References

- Anon, (1859) "Relation between Geology and Landscape Painting," *Crayon* 6, August [Note: the author is only identified by the initials N.P.C.]
- Avery, Kevin J (1993) *Church's Great Picture: The Heart of the Andes*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Church, Frederick E (1979) *The Heart of the Andes*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Margaret E. Dows, 1909 (09.95)
- Cikovsky, Nicolai (1970) *George Inness and the Hudson River School: The Lackawanna Valley*, *American Art Journal*, 2, Fall, pp 36-57
- Cole, Thomas (1835) 'Essay on American Scenery' in McCoubrey, John W (1965) (ed) *American Art: Sources and Documents*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Durand, Asher B (1853) *Progress*, The Warner Collection of Gulf States Corp., Tuscaloosa, AL.
- Durand, Asher B (1855) *Letters on Landscape Painting*, *Crayon* 1, January
- Goetzman, William H (1984) *Karl Bodmer's America*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press,.
- Graf, William L (1993) 'Landscapes, Commodities, and Ecosystems: The Relationship between Policy and Science for American Rivers' in Water Science and Technology Board, Commission on Engineering and Technical Systems, Commission on Geosciences, Environment, and Resources, National Research Council, *Sustaining Our Water Resources: Water Science and Technology Board Tenth Anniversary Symposium*, November 9, 1992, Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Humboldt, Alexander von (1849) *Cosmos: A Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe*, 5 vols. London
- Marx, Leo (1964) *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Miller, Angela (1993) *Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics 1825-1875*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Myers, Amy R W (1986) 'Imposing Order on the Wilderness: Natural History Illustration and Landscape Portrayal' in Nygren, Edward J *Views and Visions: American Landscapes Before 1830*, Washington, D.C: Corcoran Gallery.
- Novak, Barbara (1995) *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825-1875*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nygren, Edward J (1986) *Views and visions. American landscape before 1830*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Wadsworth Atheneum. Hartford, Conn, Washington, D.C.
- Truettner, William H & Wallach, Alan (1994) (eds) *Thomas Cole: Landscape into History*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Wilmerding, John (1984) *The Waters of America: 19th-Century American Paintings of Rivers, Streams, Lakes, and Waterfalls*, Historic New Orleans Collection.



Tim Collins



Three Rivers – Second Nature

The River Dialogues

Introduction

'3 Rivers – 2nd Nature' (3R2N) is the second of two ecological-arts projects within the Studio for Creative Inquiry, at Carnegie Mellon University, USA. This is a five-year project, which focuses on the three rivers and fifty-three streams of Allegheny County. '3 Rivers - 2nd Nature' consists of an interdisciplinary team of artists, scientists and a policy expert, collaborating on a study of the green and blue infrastructure which attends the region's river systems (green and blue infrastructure refers to the structural elements of a naturally functioning river ecosystem). The project addresses water quality, riverbanks and botany, public access and use, stream restoration and daylighting (the act of removing streams from underground pipes and culverts, restoring ecological form and function to a stream, which has been managed as a stormwater problem). Our project teams produce strategic knowledge and a public platform for creative discourse about places. Our work is designed with transformative social intent with creative engagement. We are artists whose role is defined within the public realm, creating open-ended dialogues with aesthetic and scientific components that are open to supplementary response. We act as neither designers nor primary authors: our material "product" is the social space for creative public-dialogue.

As we emerge from an industrial culture, we must face the water problems, which follow the use of the rivers as a sink for wastes. We must consider the form and function of the post-industrial economy, and its attendant public space. The vegetation, which has prospered, as the economy languished and the riverside industrial sites crumbled provides an important component of a new urban/nature aesthetic. As we enter the post-industrial era in pursuit of renewed sewer infrastructure and the redevelopment of waterfronts, we must ask ourselves several critical questions: is it possible to consider the benefit of restored ecosystems as we rebuild infrastructure? Cities are defined by the "grey-infrastructure" that enables dense habitation; this infrastructure is close to a century old in most American cities. Is it possible to introduce the concept of "green-infrastructure" (the water, landscapes, soils, microbes, plants and other features of a natural environment which provide benefit to human communities through biological and physical process), as an important component of an urban experience? The other question we must ask ourselves is, what form will the public space of rivers and riverfronts take, as we redevelop brownfield sites? During the last century, the bustling economies of the industrial corporations swallowed huge tracts of land. At the turn of the last century private industries 'captured' seventy-two public roads in Pittsburgh that once led to

the rivers. Today, public access and uses are minimal, but expanding. In most cities the redevelopment dialogue is dominated by the issues of private capital, public space - its attendant issues and values are subordinate.

These dual issues of redevelopment and public space are complicated by the politics of post-industrial culture. We endeavor to provide our targeted communities with a set of tools that reveal the "public-value" of our waterfronts. As artists we have neither the political nor the economic power to mark our waterways or riverbanks in any meaningful way. (Certainly not in way that could compete with the industrial ruins.) We have chosen a specific area of creative action; we address the perception, meaning and values of urban ecology and its emergent aesthetic value. The context for our efforts is defined by the rivers and the remnant estates of industry that dot its shores, barren of their original economic intent but providing a powerful spatial reminder of the technical dominance over land, water and air for private profit. Recently new development, industry and retail have begun to appear. The public space lost to the industrial era has the potential of being lost to another generation, as long as it remains without advocacy. The question that our projects address is "who advocates for the values of clean water, bio-diverse riverbanks, public access, free flowing rivers, streams and rainwater?" Can artists working as cultural agents affect the public policies and private economic programs, which mark and define urban ecosystems? Given the issues of scale, ecology and institutionalized planning, what is the artist's role? How do we define the artist's practice in relationship to the post-industrial realm?

Background

The context for our effort is the waterfronts that defined Pittsburgh for centuries. They have been a place of value for indigenous peoples who used the confluence of three rivers as a transportation hub, as well as a source of food and a provision of natural rhythms that sustained and gave meaning to life. The waterfront and its steeply hilled confluence provided the defensive position allowing Europeans to control vast tracks of land without roads, and defend that land against attack from other Europeans. The waterfront provided the transportation staging areas and the natural infrastructure that aided the westward expansion of the United States and its transfer of goods and people. Later, Pittsburgh was on the eve of a century of industrial dominance. The rivers provided the transportation link between iron-ore fields to the north and coal-mines to the east. In each era, the rivers and their banks were transformed, their spaces marked by the material production of the era. The ecological nature of the rivers and riverbanks have been subsumed three times in the past, to their value as gateway, transport system, and as a sink for the wastes of urban industrial production. Today the space remains marked by material artifacts of industry. Over the last 30 years the soil and the water have begun to recover, a range of ecological functions is emerging. The space of our rivers are being notably marked by nature and colonized by wildlife for the first time in 200 years. In these post-industrial waterfronts, nature emerges out of benign neglect. In 1996, a bear

ran through the streets and slag-filled river valleys of the City of Pittsburgh (Silver, 1996). The bear makes it clear that the industrial downturn has created an ecological space of opportunity: vegetation and wildlife is returning, hills once barren from smoke and pollution are vegetated with broadleaf plants for the first time this century. The related economic downturn has also created a social-space of opportunity. Henri Lefebvre has said, "social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others" (Lefebvre, 1996:73). The social space emerging in the wake of the industrial revolution is incredible, providing each city in the industrialized world with a spatial impetus for change. It's relevance to democracy, to aesthetics, and to the dynamic tension between the public and private realms is enormous.

A working definition of the public realm

Let me take a moment to consider the definition of the public realm. The public realm is a complicated and contested concept, which is most often defined in relationship to the equally contested meaning of the private realm. This dichotomy minimizes the complex manifestations of the public in modern society. Jeff Weintraub describes the public realm within various conflicting philosophical frameworks and concedes that "the public realm is commonly defined in opposition to the private realm of the market and civil society" (Weintraub, 1997:36). Complementing Weintraub's theoretical approach, David Brain, a sociologist focused on architecture and material artifacts, analyzes patterns of social relationships and the way they are inscribed in the material artefacts of our cities. He explores the public/private dichotomy as a physical space where activities are visible rather than hidden. The social characteristics of urban life are defined as "common interests and decisions compared to the region of intense personal concerns and selfish interests" (Brain, 1997:242).

Brain's attention to the material world provides a simple clarity, which balances Weintraub's thoughts on the theoretical complexity of the term. His definition makes it easy to imagine places in our cities where architecture enables or constrains visible versus hidden, social versus personal. He provides us with a good understanding of the spatial forms of public space, while alluding to the social form. This definition falters in what it doesn't address: the conflicts which arise when we consider the complex issues of social life, and the challenge to define common interests and to make collective decisions. This is the true challenge of public space. The material approach of Brain, and the theoretical approach of Weintraub taken together provide us with some insight, but it does not adequately represent the dynamic conflict which occurs when common (public) interests are placed in opposition to market (private) interest. I will now consider two theorists who address these issues of the discursive form of the public realm

Nancy Fraser commenting on Habermas (Habermas, 1991) identifies the inequities of a single-public in stratified and egalitarian societies. She also argues

against the exclusion of issues deemed private. Fraser presents a four-point program by which she proposes to address these inequities through critical theory. "First, this theory should render visible the ways in which social inequality taints the liberation within publics in late capital societies. Second, it should show how inequality affects relations among publics, how publics are differentially empowered or segmented, and how some are involuntarily enclaved and subordinated to others" (Fraser, 1992:137).

Bent Flyvbjerg, (an urban planner) provides an approach to the public realm, which addresses the conflict. He provides an interesting theoretical analysis, which places the idealized discursive approach of Jurgen Habermas in critical tension with Michael Foucault's approach to power and his opposition to idealism (Foucault, 1995,2000). Flyvbjerg finds common ground between the thinkers in terms of their agreement on reason as the only approach to political process. He cites the tension between Habermas' interest in the procedures of discourse (without interest in the outcome) and Foucault's focus on conflict and power in the fight against domination. Flyvbjerg concludes "that while conflict has been viewed as dangerous, corrosive and potentially destructive of social order....social conflicts produce the valuable ties that hold modern democratic societies together and provide them with the strength and cohesion they need. Indeed the more democratic a society, the more it allows groups to define their own specific ways of life and legitimates the inevitable conflicts of interest that arise between them" (Flyvbjerg, 1998:209).

The lack of conflict or tension in the previous definitions of Brain and Weintraub is problematic in that it masks the true nature of the public realm. Flyvbjerg and Fraser provide us with a description of the content and issues typical of the social form of public space. It's a messy place of conflicted agendas, dominant and subordinate actors with a range of power and ability to have their voices heard. It is not a static physical space in the city, but a dynamic space, which is defined and bounded by the discursive participation of interested parties. It is an ephemeral space, which forms and dissolves with the interests of its participants. Interested parties often deem its content private, beyond the realm of public attention. This discursive public realm suffers from a weakness, typical of issues, which have no primary advocacy or invested interest. This weakness is also defined by the way the space of the city subsumes the affects of the discursive public realm. There is a lack of markings, which might illustrate the historic role of the public, its conflicts, its struggles and its accomplishments in the design and planning of the city.

The '3 Rivers – 2nd Nature' project would identify the public realm as an assembly of citizens discussing matters of public concern or issues of common interest (in keeping with Habermas). It is our belief that the post-industrial public realm must be manifest in its discursive/social forms and the role of the artist on '3 Rivers – 2nd Nature' can be defined by a five-point agenda:

- To create opportunities to experience public space

- To expand the intellectual understanding and discourse about public space
- To examine the issues which are identified as public versus those that are private
- To enable a forum that provides access and a context in which everyone can speak
- To examine the ways that the forum can be charged and enabled as a force for change

Ideas for strategic action

My intention in this section is to consider the concept of systems intervention and the discipline of planning as a source of knowledge for artists interested in social-aesthetic practice. Given our own practice I am particularly interested in how these ideas relate to our programs of strategic knowledge, and the creation of a public platform for transformative discourse. Systems and planning have a certain amount of overlap, as one of the rational forms of planning is based on systems analysis and its application.

There are two primary approaches to creating a public platform for transformative discourse from the bottom up through individuals and communities or from the top down through policies and decision-makers. Given the power which defines these realms, how does the artist engage either realm in a meaningful way? One can assume that most artists are without political or economic power. We can "borrow" power through strategic alliances with organizations to begin this work but once "in" we need to be equipped to act strategically if we are to achieve an effective transformative discourse. Donella Meadows, a systems analyst, provides a concept tool to help us address this question and its relationship to the top-down/bottom-up framework. Meadows outlines the most effective places to intervene in a system, providing us with a chart of leverage points, which can bring about significant change. The following illustrates the places to intervene in a system from the least effective to the most effective (Meadows, 1997:78):

9. Numbers [the knowledge of what does what, how fast or how slow]
8. Materials [the materials and their paths through the system]
7. Regulating negative feedback loops [information switches regulating the system]
6. Driving positive feedback loops [driving growth, explosion, erosion and collapse]
5. Information flows [the knowledge which informs the systems management]
4. The rules of the system [defining its scope, boundaries, degrees of freedom]
3. The power of self-organization [adapting to change, by reorganizing/changing]
2. The goals of the system [what the system is designed to accomplish]
1. The paradigm out of which the goals, rules or feedback structure arise.

Meadows's leverage points provide us with guidelines for action. She shares our commitment to social transformation and would no doubt be intrigued at the idea of artists using this leverage chart as a toolkit to inform the development of strategic

knowledge and the creation of an effective public platform. At the same time she would caution us to understand that systems are not intuitive, they are dangerous to generalize about but at the same time they provide an important new way to think about complex issues.

The relevance of this model for the arts emerges when we consider the range of an artist's effort which can be described as cultural work that expands what we know or have experienced rearranges the frames of perception or creates new images, texts or metaphorical relationships. As artists plan a systems intervention it is important to set goals - are you interested in poignant commentary or looking to cause social change? It is important to understand that the artist's power is minor in relationship to those that control most social, political or economic systems. The artists seeking change will need to be more strategic than those that choose to comment or critique, they will need to understand the value of partnerships and collective authorship. When targeting change, artists will need to address the issue of power and advocacy, who will support this new systemic vision and who has the power to enact change?

Planning is the discipline, which focuses on the history, management and forecasting of change. Planning began in the eighteenth century as a rational scientific approach to the changes instigated by the industrial revolution. Its history, theories and applications provide important background and framework for artists working in the public realm. I am most interested in the work of John Friedmann, author of 'Planning in the Public Domain: From Knowledge to Action' and Leonie Sandercock, author of 'Towards Cosmopolis: Planning for Multicultural Cities.' These authors outline the history of planning in a series of steps, which describe a continuum of planning activity. They begin with rational planning in service to the state, move through the idea of policy and systems analysis - calculated best solutions for both the state and capital, then into various definitions of the radical forms which address first social learning then radical mobilization.

Friedmann and Sandercock provide important background for the re-consideration of the artist's role in society. They describe a discipline, which emerges from the rational ideals of the objective application of scientific knowledge and quantitative analysis and which serves two masters: capital and the capitalist-state. The latter is charged with managing the "public good" in relation to the former yet the interests of the former take precedent in most decisions. This is the dynamic which has brought us to the post-industrial condition where the citizens of former industrial regions are as idle as the abandoned estates of industry. Where the earth is stained, local air and water quality is improving, but the global affects on climate after a century of carbon-based energy production is becoming painfully obvious. We are at a transition point - and the question that must be raised is who will advocate for the public interest and the public good the form and function of the post-industrial public realm? Who can take on the role of passionate advocacy for those values which are not and cannot be represented by the interests of capital? Friedmann points

out the import of radical planning, but questions the value of traditional planning-training for this emergent area of practice.

The radical forms differ from the rational forms in a range of ways. The radical forms put the planner into a dialogue with communities, rather than an 'expert' relationship to the state or capital. Sandercock defines radical planning in terms of direct intervention to empower those who have been systematically disempowered "*The idea of planning for a heterogeneous public rather than for the modernist public interest*" (Meadows, 1997:182). Friedmann identifies the radical as in the service of people, organized for political action on their own behalf. Both authors define the radical planner on the basis of their oppositional relationship to the state or corporate economy. This is a new dialectical process between the researcher/planner and the subject/actor. Friedmann states the need for "the transformation of industrial capitalism, the recovery of a political community, and the achievement of collective self-reliance in the context of common global concerns" (Meadows, 1997:412). The challenge is to wrest power from the state and capital, to expand the traditional forms and paths of knowledge which have been the foundation of rational planning. If artists are to use the ideas of modern planning to their ultimate benefit, we have to understand that the pedagogy of planning is steeped in rational utilitarian practices. Therefore the value of their radical theories emerges in terms of opposition to standard planning practices.

Artists have to be more pragmatic and have significant models for oppositional practice from John Heartfield and Leon Golub to Hans Haacke. Planners traditionally work in relationship to the state and capital, they understand and own power. By comparison artists traditionally work in relationship to their own areas of inquiry, or the discipline of art itself. It is only recently that the ideals and theories of art have included a shift back to the social arena. Lucy Lippard has been a lone advocate for socially relevant art for 20 years or more. Suzi Gablik, in 'Has Modernism Failed' and 'The Reenchantment of Art' follows with theoretical texts, which outline a reconstructive, post-modernist approach. In the shift from objects to relationships, Suzanne Lacy and, more recently, Tom Finkelpearl raise important questions in reaction to the infusion of state-sponsored public art. If artists are going to make a commitment to liberate the creative voices of communities of place and knowledge we have to be strategic about what we are going to do, be pragmatic about how we are going to do it, and take responsibility for the communities we work with. We need to provide communities with the appropriate conceptualising tools so that there is hope of achieving their goals.

'Three Rivers – 2nd Nature' is a research project within a university. Artists envision the project, develop partnerships and raise the funds to hire the project teams. We oversee the project work at the theory and application of our ideas; we develop and apply strategic knowledge and work with scientists to conduct field studies on post-industrial land and water to understand remnant and emergent ecological functions. We work with policy researchers to understand the relationships between ecosystems and infrastructure (rivers and sewers) and with

anthropologists, historians and urban planners to understand the changes in the use of waterfronts over time. We develop ongoing strategic partnerships with other universities, non-profit organisations, municipalities and regulatory agencies. We are seeking to create a meaningful platform for transformative discourse and recognize the need to empower alternative and diverse visions. Whether through sheer luck or strategy (or both) we have been successful in the past. The 'Nine Mile Run' Project resulted in a six million dollar investment by the federal government to restore an urban stream system in the midst of a post-industrial landscape. The long-term interests of that project are being shepherded by a new citizen-based, non-profit organization formed this year. The work on '3 Rivers – 2nd Nature' began a series of "river-dialogues" to discuss the results of our fieldwork and to discover its value to citizens who see the potential for accessible public space in the post-industrial waterfront. Their interest and advocacy will shape the future of the project.

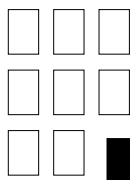
"The emphasis is less on what planners know, and more on how they use and distribute their knowledge; less on their ability to solve problems and more on opening up debate about them. In this model planning is about talk, argument and shaping attention" (Meadows, 1997:175)

This model of planning is useful to us because it follows Meadows's ideas on the intervention of knowledge and because it explicitly mitigates the primary authorship of the artist. This results in a collective ownership that I believe empowers these ideas to move forward in important ways. Change is not an accident that artists or anyone else is likely to trip over. It isn't a concept that can be mined from within community. It has to be strategically identified, relentlessly pursued and rationally enabled.

References

- Brain, D (1997) 'From Public Housing to Private Communities: The Discipline of Design and the Materialization of the Public/Private Distinction in the Built Environment' in Weintraub, J & Kumar, K (1997) (eds) *Public and Private in Thought and Practice*, Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, P. 242.
- Dewey, J (1934) *Art as Experience*, New York: Perigree Books.
- Eaton, M M (1997) 'The Beauty that Requires Health' in Nassau, J I (1997) (ed) *Placing Nature: Culture and Landscape Ecology*. Washington D.C: Island Press.
- Flyvbjerg, B (1998) 'Empowering Civil Society' in Friedman, J., Douglas, M (1998) (eds) *Cities for Citizens*, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- Foucault, Michel (2000) *Power*. Michel Foucault. edited by. Faubion, James D translated by Robert Hurley and others, New York, New York: New Press.
- Foucault, M (1995) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Vintage Books.

- Fraser, N (1992) 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy' in Calhoun, C (1992)(ed) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Boston Massachusetts:MIT Press.
- Habermas, J (1991) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Boston Massachusetts:MIT Press.
- Lefebvre, H (1996) *The Production of Space*, Malden Massachusetts:Blackwell Publishers.
- Meadows, D (1997) *Places to Intervene in a System*, Whole Earth Magazine, Winter 1997
- Silver, JD (1996) *An Ursine Odyssey: Black Bear Wanders Lost in the City*. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Thursday, Dec 12.
- Weintraub, J (1997) 'The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction' in Eds. Weintraub, J & Kumar, K (1997) *Public and Private in Thought and Practice*, Chicago, Ill:University of Chicago Press.
- Weintraub, J & Kumar, K (1997) *Public and Private in Thought and Practice*, Chicago, Ill:University of Chicago Press.



Malcolm Miles

Seeing Through Place

Local Approaches to Global Problems

Introduction

This chapter examines two cases of local environmental action: the creation of a wetland at Quaking Houses, County Durham in 1995-9; and an artist's residency at Skinningrove on the Cleveland coast from March 2000. Both projects are elements in *The Seen and Unseen*, a programme of Helix Arts in Sunderland to develop collaborative solutions to pollution involving artists, scientists and local people, authorities and agencies. Both sites are industrial villages, Quaking Houses an ex-mining settlement amidst open fields, and Skinningrove adjacent to a steelworks on an otherwise undeveloped coast. The projects are set in a context of globalization, described, then reconsidered through a history of environmentalist art. From this emerges a concept of cultural development in which people empower themselves to shape and sustain the built, social and cultural environments in which they live.

Terms, Selves and Places

The underlying question is whether local actions can impact both local problems such as the pollution of water sources, and the global structures of power and money which produce such problems. Part of the difficulty is the polarisation of the terms local and global themselves. To call something a global problem lends it inevitability, like weather or progress. Yet global commerce is one point on an axis, which extends also to local economies and trading systems; when governments design protocols to limit global carbon emissions, this is connected to levels of domestic energy consumption and how many cars it is considered politically acceptable for a suburban middle-class family to have. The global happens locally, and the separation of the global from the local is a device convenient to the project of asset-stripping on a planetary scale which characterises the current phase of capitalism.

Globalization, however, takes place in the everyday as well as the realm of high capital and its culture. It is not only that home-workers in remote areas are networked to sites of economic and cultural capital in Tokyo, New York or Los Angeles, but also that residents in a south London street have world-wide lattices of sociation (Albrow, 1997) while the Internet enables a global organisation of protest at meetings of the trans-national bodies which command the free-market economy. So, though Bauman (1998) accurately charts the human consequences of globalization as insecurity and social polarisation, and Sennett (1998) links flexible employment patterns to a corrosion of character, the post-industrial world is one in

which the local finds a new importance as antidote to the global, and begins to challenge the power of global capital. If this seems fanciful, an example is the action of small groups of environmental activists in the UK against genetically modified crops.

Trashing a GM crop is, of course, a skirmish in a bigger struggle. While supermarkets in Europe compete with each other in removing GM foods from their shelves, trans-national companies continue their assault on the non-affluent world in an attempt to gain a monopoly of seed production, in the process destroying what remains of poor people's abilities to feed themselves. How, then, do local responses impact the global economy? Perhaps in two ways: by establishing that people have a capacity to organise themselves in what becomes an extra-parliamentary opposition of mass support on specific issues; and by intervening in wider narratives of society and economy, because it is through such narratives that the dominant society is seen and either normalised or questioned. Progress is inevitable – that is, because the dominant narrative says so; but road protest through the 1990s says it might not be and despite the construction of various by-passes has changed expectations of what happens when a scheme – usually for the benefit of the construction industry rather than motorists – is announced. Similarly, activist campaigns including *The Land is Ours* in the UK (Schwartz and Schwartz, 1998: 54-65) and *Earth First!* in the USA (Lee, 1995; Wall, 1999) have inserted counter-narratives into the totality of conditions for change.

At root this suggests a shift in the model of power. A further insight into the relation of narratives to power is seen in investigation of the global city – the 24-hour network of financial services around the globe. Despite its spatial fluidity, the global city reproduces the centre-margin model of EW Burgess' (1925) concentric ring diagram. Burgess surrounds his central business district by zones of transition, deriving his model from biology and citing anabolic and katabolic metabolisms as analogous to social organisation and disorganisation. This sets the city, reduced to a template, outside history in a narrative of progressive technological development beyond challenge. If conditions for groups of recent migrants were hard, that was life - others had made their way. But Burgess' view of biology as pseudo-Darwinism is challenged by a narrative of ecologies as systems of mutual inter-dependence in which centres and margins are interchangeable and also by complexity theory (derived from chaos theory) in which slight variations of conditions contribute to multiple possibilities of outcome (Byrne, 1997: 51). The stories of ecology and complexity, then, re-frame city development as interactive and historical – that is, open to human intervention even if outcomes cannot be exactly predicted. David Byrne writes that "People can make history but not in circumstances of their choosing" (Byrne, 1997: 55), and in a later work:

If we are going to understand the socio-spatial structures of our urban areas, we have to take into account the complex interaction of general global processes and specific local factors. ... the general effect of the global processes as control parameters is non-

linear. The changes they produce are not changes of degree but changes of kind ... [They] do not descend mysteriously ... [but] are undertaken by social actors present in the locality (Byrne, 2001: 125).

Human actors then, contribute to the plot even if they cannot set the scene; and in postmodernity are, like the authors who died in postmodern critical discourse, not the unified subjects of proscenium-stage drama but socially and culturally constructed, mutable and multiple selves who recover a critical space in which new cultural narratives reflect the subject's own complexities.

Contributing to such narratives becomes an act of potential transgression in which a world other than the given is foreseen; at this point the inevitability of capital's progress is ruptured. It is less romantic than world revolution and lacks the promise of immediate gratification of desires, but Ernesto Laclau's re-working of the concept of emancipation into an idea that "a democratic society ... will not be a totally free society, but one which has negotiated in a specific way the duality freedom/unfreedom" (Laclau, 1996: 19n) suggests a dissolution of power, which may be more effective than confrontation. The local, then, resists globalisation by de-centering its power through new, democratic narratives. This is like Raymond Williams' idea for a long revolution. The question is: do we have long enough?

The Wetland

Quaking Houses, or 'Quakies', is a village of four streets named First Street, Second Street and so on. It begins and ends abruptly, a rectangle of the built in the unbuilt, its history going back to the mid-nineteenth century and its name possibly derived from a Quaker hamlet within the earlier settlement of South Moor. Its chronology falls into three phases: first expansion – in 1920 a Memorial Park was established on land donated by the colliery, adding a paddling pool and bandstand to amenities which already included a cricket ground (Kemp and Griffiths, 1999: 21-3). Then decline in the 1950s when the village was identified in the Durham County Development Plan as a site of de-population, scripted for no future investment (Kemp and Griffiths, 1999:27). Finally, the 1980s destruction of the deep-mine coal industry by the Thatcher government resulted in a holding of the ground in the 1990s.

Village-level organisation began with opposition to extension of an open-cast pit and forming of the Quaking Houses Environmental Trust (QHET) in 1989. The latter was a response to water pollution when construction of a by-pass disturbed drainage systems from the Morrison Busty spoil heap, visibly contaminating Stanley Burn which was declared unsafe for children to bathe in. The main pollutants were aluminium hydroxide producing white foam, acidity causing red-orange iron oxyhydroxide deposits, and aluminium giving the water a milky cloudiness. Members of QHET, including ex-mineworkers Terry Jeffrey and Chas Brookes, began to campaign for a solution to the poisoning of the burn from 1993. In 1995 a pilot wetland at the outflow by the tip was begun by local volunteers working

with Paul Younger, a water engineer from Newcastle University, and officers from the National Rivers Authority. John Griffiths writes of the matrix of conditions which led to the making of a wetland – a passive treatment technology – that it, included factors "from the personal and small-scale, to the influence of national political questions" (Kemp and Griffiths, 1999: 49). Amongst them was Younger's experience working for the United Nations Association on self-help water cleansing schemes in Bolivia, and involvement in the treatment of pollution from redundant tin mines - a pilot project in Cornwall based on experience in the Appalachian region of the USA used a passive treatment system of bioremediation like that of a natural wetland (Kemp and Griffiths, 1999: 50-53). The wetland at Quaking Houses is composed of composts of horse and cow manure with straw, and composted garbage and a cell of limestone cobbles mixed with substrate under an aerobic flow of water. Bacteria in the compost and limestone dissolution cause pollutants to settle into the mud while reducing acidity which leads to aluminium deposit as alkalinity rises - a neatly holistic solution providing largely cleansed water. Younger writes that other projects for treatment of multiple contamination in South Africa "demonstrate the wider applicability of the kind of lateral thinking which characterises the engineering design at Quakies" (in Kemp and Griffiths, 1999: 114).

Artist Helen Smith joined the project in January 1997. The inclusion of an artist stemmed from a research study funded by Northern Arts in 1994, which began with a brainstorming session hosted by the Civil Engineering Department at Newcastle University. This brought together Artists Agency in Sunderland (since renamed Helix Arts), members of PLATFORM – a London-based group for interdisciplinary creativity, ecology and democracy – and scientists including Younger, for whom art could "help to illuminate or illustrate" things which might otherwise remain unseen, and reveal "sources of hope and optimism". Younger added that people with creative skills might draw attention to bio-diversity as "of far greater merit in terms of the long-term viability of the ecosystem in which we live than we can ever hope to quantify" (cited in Kemp and Griffiths, 1999: 67-8). *The Seen and Unseen* was established and a support group formed including members of QHET. Jamie McCullough was appointed as artist for the project in 1995 but withdrew six months later. By this time some work on the design of the wetland had taken place, and when Smith took up her appointment the project was already at an intermediate stage. From the outset the concern for drawing attention to bio-diversity established an educative or communicative role for the artist which runs against the grain of much art education based on a taxonomy of medium and the convention of the object. The support group stated in 1995 that "we were not looking for an artist who would work purely as a designer or landscaper, or creator of public features; rather as an artist who would work in a much more experimental manner" (cited in Kemp and Griffiths, 1999: 72). Experimental art, from earthworks to the purely conceptual, or art as quasi-social research, has a history dating to the late 1960s when it was largely a resistance to the art market, but opportunities for

artists to extend their practices in this way through public appointments remain relatively rare.

Smith's innovation was to facilitate communications – as the art-work – through IT training for young people and by working with local people of all ages in broadcasts for Sunderland University's Radio Utopia (a project within the *Visions of Utopia* festival also co-ordinated by Artists Agency). This produced material for 'sound-scapes' in which local narratives are intermixed with facts of pollution, accessed through solar-powered listening posts manufactured at the University of Northumbria, Newcastle and sited in the village.

It was not all plain sailing. Differences of working methods and terminologies contributed to misinterpretations on both sides and relations were strained by the time Smith, like McCullough before her, withdrew in 1999. This may have been due to a personality clash on the parts of some of those involved or to unrealistic expectations. Willow craftsman Lee Dalby was appointed as a third artist to carry out workshops with young people and to make willow forms for the pond and its islands – the latter a retreat from the experimental spirit of the brief though Dalby interacted effectively with local young people. In the end, the wetland has been successful as a scientific solution to water contamination, and Smith's listening posts show that artists can facilitate the construction of local narratives. Whether the wetland has a long-term viability rests with local people more than with scientists, who will move on to other projects just as artists do, and the involvement of local people in the construction of their own narratives may be instrumental in creating a sense of ownership. If not everything worked, this reflects the complexity of even a very localised situation. It could be remembered too, that not everything in science works 100% – precision guided weapons do not always hit their stated targets.

Skinningrove

The project at Skinningrove began when local people contacted the project at Quaking Houses seeking ideas for the decontamination of the beck which ran iron oxyhydroxide-red through their village. Both are small settlements afflicted by the draining of industrial wastes into water sources and the demise of industries, and in both villages the strength of local feeling is enough to keep people living there despite high unemployment, poor public transport, and distance from shops and cinemas. A collaborative forum was held in March 2000 in Skinningrove's redundant primary school building, itself a sign of the village's official neglect symbolically brought back into local use. This was in effect a planning-for-real, or action planning workshop at which the agenda was set by local people and holistic solutions developed through a multi-focus dialogue. It emerged that local people were well aware of the problems and had a fair idea of solutions but were prevented by bureaucracies from implementing them.

The forum operated as a set of workshop groups of about ten people in each examining issues specific to the foreshore, minewater pollution, and a broken, disused sewage pipe in the beck. A local paper reported that more than 200 people



The Wetland

participated; discussion still continues through the Link-Up network's regular meetings open to all the village's 460 inhabitants. The forum report states that it "examined the process of working collaboratively by using it in a real situation" (Helix Arts, 2000: 3). Amongst the partners was the Loftus Development Trust charged with renewal of the local economy and environment. Problems addressed included previous failed solutions such as the fishtail groyne, which, designed to prevent a build up of sewage discharged into the bay, made matters worse by causing cliff erosion, interfering with boat launching, and facing in the wrong direction. The forum report states:

"Unless the problems of the sea defences are solved other problems can't be tackled. This needs to be understood in the village so the issues and different solutions need to be highlighted. Also solutions need to come from, and have the backing of, community consultation including children and young people" (Helix Arts, 2000: 7-8).

As at Quaking Houses, this suggested a communicative role for an artist, several of whom made presentations during the forum enabling local people to ask how they worked rather than inviting them to make designs for specific projects. Jean Grant, whose background includes engagement with the area of alternative education developed by A S Neil at Summerhill, was selected and the project at Skinningrove named Re-visions. She sees the forum as "an example of very good

practice" (e mail to author, 16.5.2001) which enabled local people to be fully informed as to their own possibilities for action. Grant writes: "Everything was made much easier because the village has a great feeling of ownership of me, they chose me; although sometimes there are comments that I should make a memorial or something there is an understanding that I am here to work with them to change things" (e mail to author, 10.5.2001). Following Grant's appointment, a house was rented as a base for the artist, whose means of getting to know people – which began at the forum – involves person to person contact and walks around the village and shoreline with residents. Grant adds: "Door knocking is more important than turn out at meetings, the consultation is informal, sitting on the front step, others stopping to add their point of view" (ibid).

At the initiative of local residents working with the artist, Thomson's Steps – a long-overgrown flight of stone steps once leading from the village to the steelworks – has been cleared of dense overgrowth. Meanwhile a filtering system was installed to remove orange deposits caused by acidity from the beck, and ideas discussed for lighting on the steps using renewable energy. But in June 2000, three months after the forum, the village was devastated by a flood during which storm water and raw sewage ran through living rooms up to a depth of five feet, making many houses uninhabitable. The driftwood on the beach was declared unsanitary and burnt by villagers. The impact of the disaster was extreme and lasting, leading to lengthy repairs to houses and cancellation of the annual bonfire the following November. Stranded residents took video footage of the worst inundation before the arrival of media crews; Grant subsequently used some of the images to compile documentation taken by local people to their elected representatives in London, while photographs of the disaster by local young people were later displayed in the artist's house. It is difficult to appraise the project against this background and the national attention it brought, and whatever ideas might have quietly evolved without it are now in its shadow. Yet the same issues remain after resources committed by local and national authorities to mitigate the likelihood of future flooding are translated into environmental modifications – for the most part as inept as the fishtail groyne. Despair is easy in Skinningrove and villager Tommy Evans' proposal for a millennium event in a mass flushing of toilets at midnight to reveal the leakage of the sewer pipe seems in retrospect light-hearted.

The issues include the identification of appropriate tactics, the relation of the artist to a pre-existing local culture, and the need to empower dwellers through things they do themselves. Given the globalization of communications, access to the internet might seem an obvious starting point. Yet when an open-access computer was installed in the artist's house it was seen by some children as an unknown technology repeating the exclusionary conditions of school (from which several were excluded for violent or non-standard behaviour, and from which several routinely take time off for activities in the local black economy such as poaching). Many of them have, however, become active in the project through more embodied skills, notably in making a series of high-backed seats or thrones,

from driftwood. Large quantities of driftwood wash down the beck each year, used as free fuel for fires and collected for the bonfire. Grant organised the planking of trunks at a local saw-mill upstream from Skinningrove and worked with young people to design seats using manual technologies. The first intention was to site the thrones in an area chosen by young people along the seafront – providing a place for them to congregate; but the opacity of the planning system prevented this and the seats are now sited on allotments.

Few places can have a more striking local culture than Skinningrove, with its intricately crafted pigeon lofts on the hills surrounding the bay, its allotment gardens, and bonfire. But a high rate of local unemployment and remoteness from urban centres in an area poorly served by public transport also breed depression. The tending of allotments for growing food has declined, though lofts and gardens remain important personal spaces. The strength of local culture poses a difficulty in that an artist from outside cannot compete with it or immediately be part of it, and Grant has tried to integrate herself gradually. Inevitably this engages some people more than others in a village, which though small retains internal differences. In addition, a change of personnel at the Development Trust, originally a supporter of the residency, has hindered access to funds. Grant writes that her skills are "experiential, interpretive", and that "being seen, being heard and being acted upon is very important to people in over-controlling situations" (e mail to author, 16.2.2001). She describes herself as "an activist" influenced by work in the non-affluent world, citing Vandana Shiva (*ibid*).

This requires the kind of long-term funding few art projects achieve, as yet including this one. Most public sector support goes to projects of short duration with outcomes more easily audited, or photographed. But if culture is, as Raymond Williams argues "a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values ... in institutions and ordinary behaviour" (Williams, 1965: 57, cited in Byrne, 2001: 39), the pigeon lofts at Skinningrove are part of that and the work of the artist is not to construct a cultural identity for the village – it already has one of its own making – but to devise ways in which that identity is recognised, including by its makers. Paolo Freire writes that "It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors" (Freire, 1972: 32). Part of the process is the creation of narratives which give such aspirations form.

Re-visions is, at the time of writing, in what could be either its early or late stage according to whether or not further funding enables it to continue. Like the wetland, it involves defined local support mechanisms. Unlike the wetland, there is no scientific collaboration and the proposal for renewable energy seems as yet remote and disconnected from any wider story of the village's future. This leaves the artist's residency dependent on collaboration with local people while separated from contact with other kinds of professional expertise, and leaves open the question of what an artist could add to a scientific programme. In Quaking Houses the answer was the facilitation of local narratives; at Skinningrove there would seem as much a need for this if people are to overcome the marginality imposed on them



Notice in window of artist's house

by the geographical and economic isolation which is one root of their environmental problems. How else will an alternative story to that of decline and de-population be inserted into the planning process? Yet the question continues to nag and forms an undercurrent to histories of environmentalist art in general. Does such work add further solutions to those of science or does it problematise the concept of solutions? Does the intersection of discourses disrupt their assumptions or leave them intact? Is sustainability as much cultural and social as economic?

Art as Environmentalism?

A history of art in the non-built environment might say that much of it colonises its site for aesthetics. Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970) in a salt lake in Utah has become an icon of earthwork art; but Michael Auping notes that Smithson was refused permission in 1969 to drop broken glass on an island in Vancouver following protests from environmentalists and sees his work as "not really mediating between ecology and industry, but ... hiring himself out to decorate an area of landscape" (Auping, 1983: 97). The limitations of earthworks are indicated by the terms of the critical discourse around them, as in Rosalind Krauss' essay on sculpture in an expanded field the borders of which are not-architecture and not-landscape (1983), which seems a meticulously-argued tinkering with the edges of the question. In contrast, a dual approach of performance-based provocation and site-based practical solutions to pollution has been developed by Mel Chin. In *Revival Field* (1989) in Minneapolis-St Paul, Chin used hyper-accumulating plants such as alpine pennycress to draw out toxins from the soil of a waste dump, likening his practice to carving in removing material (waste) to reveal form (a rejuvenated earth). The technology is now proven though its rate of cleansing is slow (Barak, 1998), and Chin is happy for others to take it up (conversation, Aachen, 26.5.1999). The work of PLATFORM, too, includes a pilot scheme for renewable energy on the river Wandle in London, and a range of actions from agit-prop to performances on climate change. Jane Trowell (2000) describes their work as viral, a term coincidentally employed by Chin (Chin, 1999: 69). In *I see ... the insurgent mechanics of infection* (1993) Chin began a public lecture at the DIA Center for the Arts, New York by picking up a Remington M700 .30-06 bolt-action rifle with telescopic sight, aiming above the heads of an audience who may or not have known it was loaded with a blank. This problematises questions of authority, and Chin's work emphasises the interconnectedness of environmental problems and issues of power which rest, as Freire (1972) argues, in the hands of people who free themselves.

Cultural Development

How do they do that? Or, how do artists act as facilitators of the process without becoming just another kind of expert? Patricia Phillips wrote in *Artforum* in 1988 that "The idea of the public is a difficult, mutable, and perhaps somewhat atrophied one ... the public dimension is a psychological, rather than a physical or environmental, construct" (Phillips, 1988: 93). Rosalyn Deutsche (1991) extends

the trajectory, citing Lefebvre's concept of the production of space and the sphere of everyday reconstruction of spatial meanings through experiential rather than conceptual knowledge. In later texts, Phillips (1995a and b) argues that for women artists transgression of the boundaries of public and private space is liberating, while Doreen Massey (1994) maintains that space rather than time is the dimension of change. So, there is no single public for art (or anything else) but a space of mutability not unlike that proposed by Laclau (1996) where narratives frame perceptions of the world, and can be questioned. A role for artists then, is in revealing the contradictions of dominant narratives and enabling people to imagine their own narratives, their own futures. This leads to a concept of cultural development which links the definition of culture adopted by Williams with critical positions on economic and social development in work in non-affluent countries. The forum at Skinningrove attempted this, but a more sustained model is that of the Nine Mile Run Greenway project in Pittsburgh (Miles, 2000: 129-151) and its successor Three Rivers Second Nature coordinated by the Studio for Creative Enquiry at Carnegie Mellon University, discussed elsewhere in this volume by Tim Collins.

The roots of this kind of art practice are less in earthworks than in '60s activism. There are also parallel histories of radical planning – from Paul Davidoff's concept of advocacy planning (1965) to Leonie Sandercock's (1998) discussion of planning for a multi-ethnic society in which conflicting interests have no simple resolution – and of work in the non-affluent world. Sandercock adopts the post-modern multi-situated self, and Richard Peet and Michael Watts contend in *Liberation Ecologies* that understanding that such multiple positions are socially and culturally produced emphasises the imagination of what could be rather than what is. They write that "multiple realizations about all levels of environmental problems" stimulate "a series of creative reactions which may (or may not) emerge as fully formed social movements", which leads to both practical struggles and a possibility for a new imaginary in which "the environment itself is an active constituent of imagination" (Peet and Watts, 1996: 37). Similarly, Naila Kabeer writes:

...there have always existed alternative ways of viewing development which have evolved out of grassroots experience. What distinguishes these alternative views is that they are based on close, face-to-face interaction between organizations and their constituencies so that ideas and policies are shaped in the crucible of everyday practice rather than in the upper echelons of remote and rule-bound bureaucracies. Empowerment is one such contribution from the grassroots (Kabeer, 1994: 223).

This implies, too, a recognition of cultural narratives within everyday life – as Lefebvre intended by the idea of moments of liberation within routine, and Beuys by saying that everyone is an artist. These narratives do not need to be created, because they already exist latently; but they need visibility.

Cultural development, in conclusion, is a means whereby local people's stories of their lives and aspirations for a better world drive cultural production in the

broadest sense, rendering the planning process cultural. This de-centres the power both of the dominant forces in society, whether commerce or the state, and of artists and arts organisations. If the officials of arts funding bodies are like colonial district officers supervising taste, cultural development realises the potential of a world of complexity in which local and global inter-penetrate. As in ecology, there are no centres and no margins, and worlds other than the given are envisioned. Hope, however, needs examples to demonstrate its possibility, which is why small-scale local projects such as the wetland at Quaking Houses and the artist's residency at Skinningrove matter.

References

- Albrow, M (1997) 'Travelling Beyond Local Cultures: Socioscapes in a global city', in Eade, pp37-55
- Auping, M (1983) 'Earth Art: A study in Ecological Politics', in Sonfist (1983) pp92-104
- Barak, P (1998) 'Revival Field', adapted from Comis D (1995) *Agricultural Research*, USDA-ARS, November, p9, published on web: www.soils.wisc.edu/~barak/soilscience326/revival.htm
- Bauman, Z (1998) *Globalization - The Human Consequences*, Cambridge:Polity.
- Bennett, S and Butler J (eds) (2000) *Locality, Regeneration and Diversities*, Bristol: Intellect Books [Advances in Art & Urban Futures, vol. 1]
- Burgess, E W (1925) 'The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project', in LeGates and Stout (1996) pp89-98
- Byrne, D (1997) 'Chaotic Places or Complex Places? Cites in a Post-Industrial Era', in Westwood and Williams (1997) pp50-70
- Byrne, D (2001) *Understanding the Urban*, Basingstoke:Palgrave.
- Chin, M (1999) 'I See ... the insurgent mechanics of infection', in Marras (1999) pp68-79
- Davidoff, P (1965) 'Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning', in LeGates and Stout (1996) pp421-432
- Deutsche, R (1991) 'Alternative Space', in Wallis (1991), pp48-66
- Eade, J (ed) (1997) *Living the Global City: Globalization as local process*, London: Routledge.
- Felshin, N (1995) *But Is It Art?* Seattle:Bay Press.
- Foster, H (1983) *The Anti-Aesthetic: essays on postmodern culture*, Seattle:Bay Press.
- Freire, P ([1970] 1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Harmondsworth:Penguin
- Helix Arts (2000), Collaborative Forum [report], Sunderland, Helix Arts
- Kabeer, N (1994) *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*, London:Verso.
- Kemp, P and Griffiths, J (1999) *Quaking Houses: Art, Science and the Community*, Charlbury, Jon Carpenter
- Krauss, R (1983) 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', in Foster (1983) pp31-42
- Laclau, E (1996) *Emancipation(s)*, London:Verso.
- Lee, M (1995) *Earth First!* Syracuse N.Y: Syracuse University Press.
- Le Gates, R and Stout, F (eds) (1996) *The City Reader*, London:Routledge.

- Massey, D (1994) *Space, Place and Gender*, Cambridge:Polity
- Miles, M (2000), *The Uses of Decoration: essays in the architectural everyday*, Chichester:Wiley.
- Peet, R and Watts, M (1996) *Liberation Ecologies: environment, development, social movements*, London:Routledge.
- Phillips, P (1988) 'Out of Order: The Public Art Machine', *Artforum*, Dec. pp92-96
- Phillips, P (1995a) 'Maintenance Activity: creating a climate for change', in Felshin (1995) pp165-194
- Phillips, P (1995b) 'Peggy Diggs: Private Acts and Public Art', in Felshin (1995) pp283-308
- Sandercock, L (1998) *Towards Cosmopolis*, Chichester:Wiley.
- Sennett, R (1998), *The Corrosion of Character*, New York:Norton.
- Schwartz, W and Schwartz D (1998) *Living Lightly: Travels in Post-Consumer Society*, Charlbury:Jon Carpenter.
- Sonfist, A (ed) (1983) *Art in the Land*, New York:Dutton.
- Trowell, J (2000) 'The Snow Flake in Hell and the Baked Alaska: Improbability, Intimacy and Change in the Public Realm', in Bennett and Butler (2000) pp99-109
- Wall, D (1999) *Earth First! and the Anti-Roads Movement*, London:Routledge.
- Wallis, B (1991) *If You Lived Here*, Seattle:Bay Press.
- Westwood, S and Williams, J (eds) (1997) *Imagining Cities: Scripts, Signs, Memory*, London:Routledge.
- Williams, R (1965) *The Long Revolution*, London:Penguin.



Malcolm Miles

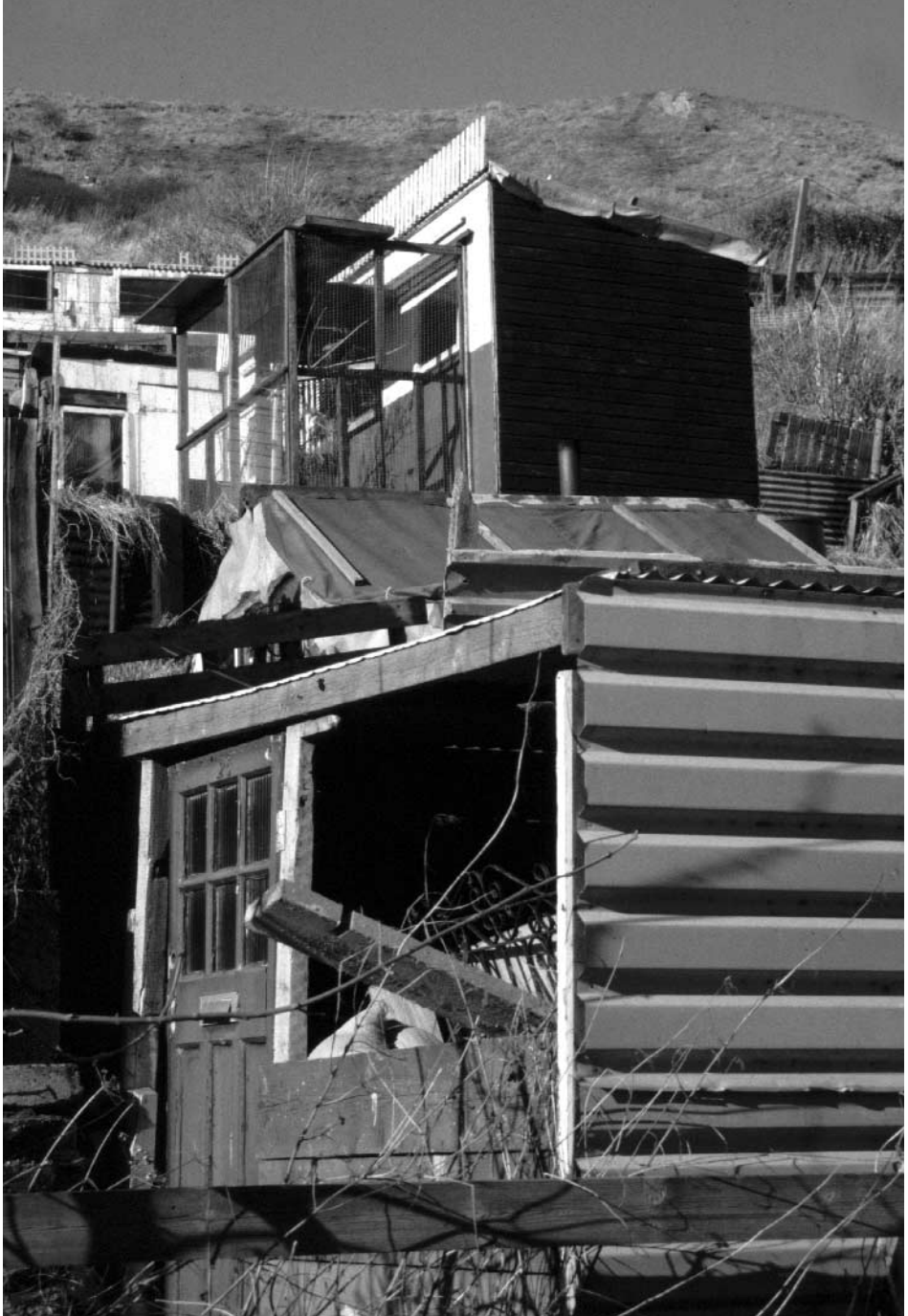


Skinninggrove: A Photo Essay

The following images were taken during a morning's walk along the shoreline at Skinninggrove in February 2001, while researching the preceding essay. Looking at the images again while working on this publication, they bring back a sense of somewhere almost forgotten, almost but not quite empty. At first glance they may suggest a place deserted; yet Skinninggrove is home to a group of people who may still feel like a community. Signs of local culture are evident immediately on entering the village, in the pigeon huts and gardens which cover the adjacent hillsides. But a dereliction is there, too, in the closed pier (which has a core of slag from the steel mill) and the danger notices which seem to be everywhere, as well as the usual kinds of detritus on the beach. At the same time, there is a noticeable absence, for the most part, of graffiti or vandalism. If Skinninggrove is a marginal place, in time and space, it is so because it has been marginalised by forces from outside – written off, too small a dot on the map, not enough votes to worry about. It is from this long-ebbing tide of neglect as much as the floods of 2000 that dwellers in Skinninggrove need to recover.



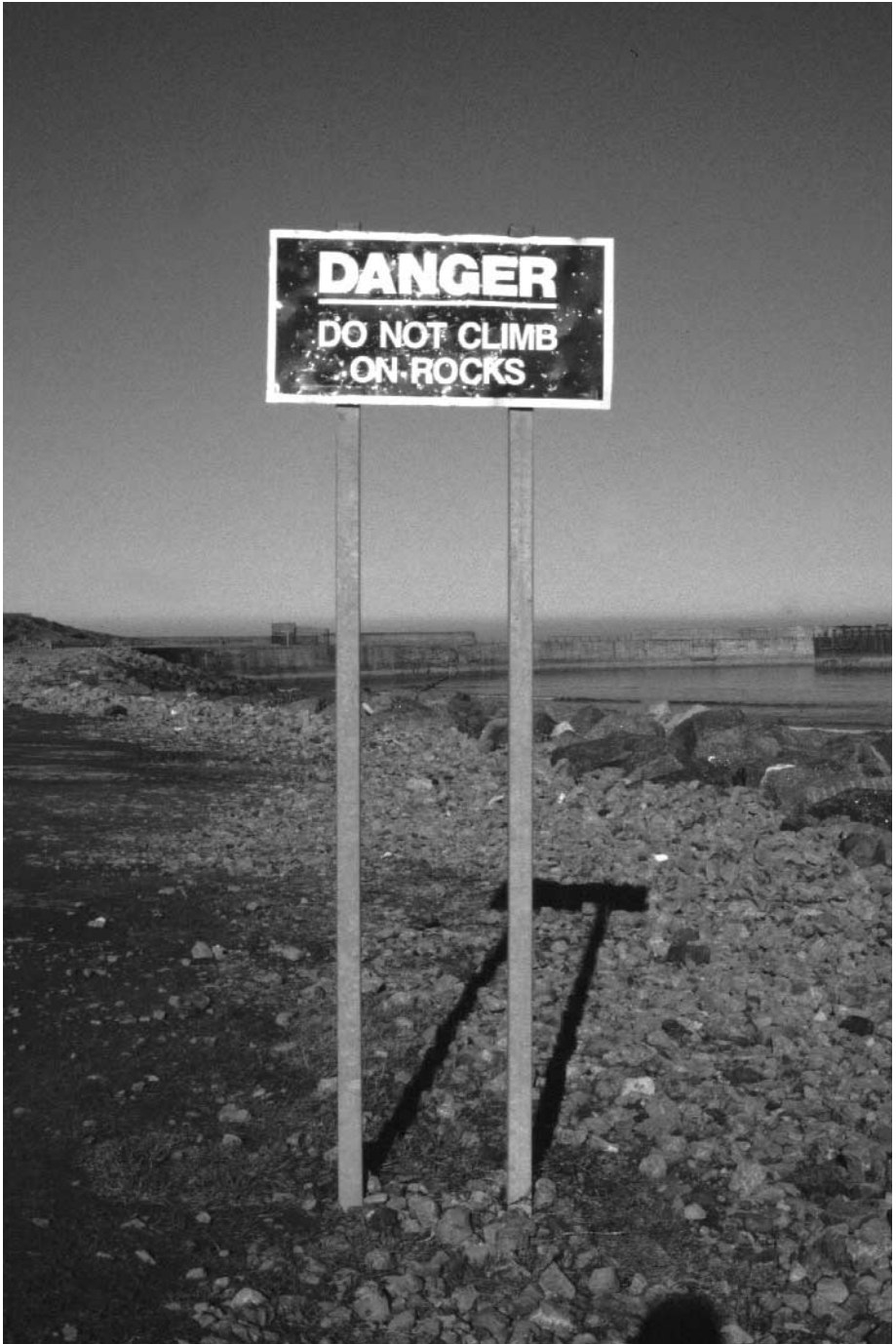
Pigeon huts and gardens



Pigeon huts



Looking south, fishtail groyne in centre ground



Welcome to the beach



Treasures



The road to the pier



Driftwood



Generations of signs



No more embarkations

100 Miles



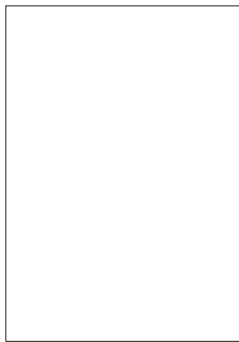
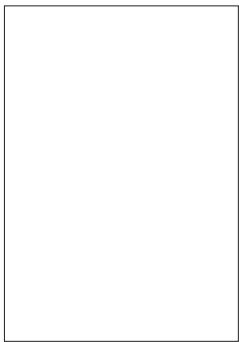
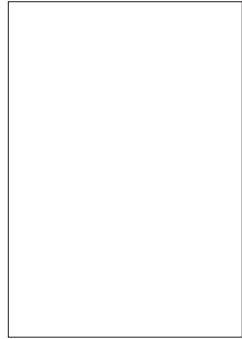
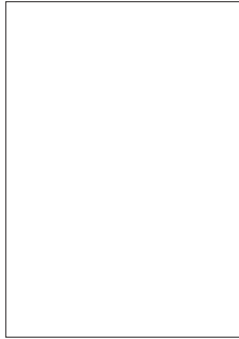
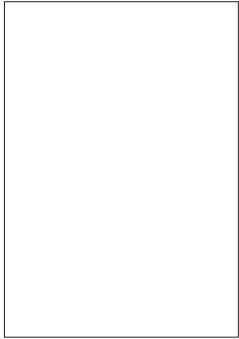
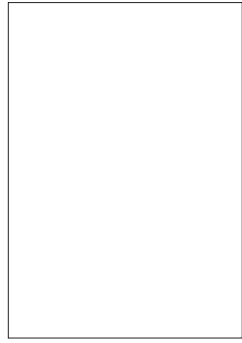
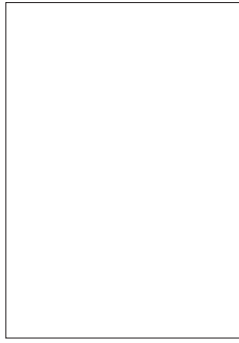
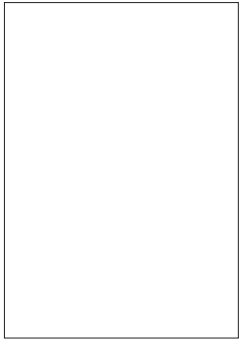
A gap in the fence



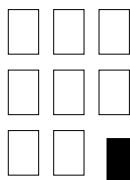
Lucy Milton (left) and Jean Grant (right) on beach



Looking north



The Unseen Public Space



Helen Stratford

Collective Assemblages, Embodiment and Enunciations

This paper is an investigation into the role of language and perceptions in supporting a certain way of being or placing, exploring the intersections of power relations and spatial practices in relation to gender, focusing specifically on feminist spatial practice. This investigation seeks to redefine, rethink and ultimately challenge the binary relationship between theory and practice, in order to open different ways of understanding and inspire new modes of spatial practice. It is divided into three parts: the first section 'Theoretical Action' explores Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's pragmatic approach to language. The second section 'Active Theory' explores feminist readings of the concepts of assemblage and figurations. In the final section, 'Practical Thinking', this paper goes on to investigate the implications of these concepts for spatial practice, in terms of its capacity for critical action, through the work of artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles.

Theoretical Action:

In *The Idea of Critical Theory* Raymond Geuss describes how a critical theory is itself always part of its 'object-domain' (Geuss, 1981: 55). Unlike the 'objectifying' structure of scientific theories there is no clear distinction between the theory and the 'object' to which the theory refers. A critical theory does not describe *how* to do something which is subsequently *applied*. Instead, its theory is an argument, an act which deconstructs normative beliefs and attitudes of agents.

This notion of theory which engages in a "reflective process of interpretation" (Geuss, 1981: 93) is taken further through the work of Deleuze and Guattari. For them, theory is action. In 'Intellectuals and Power,' Deleuze comments, "representation no longer exists there is only theoretical action and practical action which serve as relays and form networks" (Deleuze, 1977: 207). Theory is "exactly like a box of tools ... It must be useful. It must function" (Deleuze, 1977:208). Theories are 'localized counter-responses' that are necessarily instruments for 'combat'. For Deleuze, theory "does not totalize." It "is an instrument for multiplication" that also "multiplies itself" (Deleuze, 1977). This creative ability of theory is made possible through their treatment of language as a mode of practice, which situates it within a larger theory of action (Bogue, 1989: 136).

For Deleuze and Guattari, language is not simply a medium for communication. In 'Postulates of Linguistics' they explain how its fundamental role is in issuing *Mots d'ordre* – statements that impose social obligations. *Mots d'ordre* are not merely associated with commands or certain 'explicit statements' but concern any statement which maintains implicit presuppositions and "every act that

is linked to statements by a 'social obligation'" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987:79). For Deleuze and Guattari, "every statement displays this link, directly or indirectly" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Furthermore, for them "the only possible definition of language is the set of all order -words, implicit presuppositions, or speech acts current in a language at any given moment" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 79). *Mots d'ordre* do not merely describe or represent, they intervene in the world, functioning to organize its 'social character.' They effect what Deleuze and Guattari describe as "incorporeal transformations of bodies," forming part of a "collective arrangement of enunciation," which is defined as "the set of all *incorporeal transformations* current in a given society and attributed to the bodies of that society" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 80).

Incorporeal transformations are attributes or events assigned to bodies. Bodies here imply groupings that work across a whole spectrum of scales, including a single organ and a human body, as well as institutions of politics, law and so on. In language terms saying something is often a means of doing something or allocating designations. An example is "the transformation of the accused into a convict", which "is the pure and instantaneous act or incorporeal attribute that is the expressed of the judge's sentence" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 81).

Incorporeal attributes and *Mots d'ordre* help to "actualise particular events in the social field" (Patton, 2000: 28). They have clear implications for practical actions in terms of setting up a framework of comprehensibility which influences a body's powers and capacities to act. Deleuze and Guattari are concerned with the ability of this framework to stifle the capacity of a body to affect and be affected - its efficacy to "block what a body can do" (Fraser, 1999: 168).

In their pragmatic approach to language, theory itself becomes a means of provoking certain actions and so can readily engage in a "reflective process of interpretation" through which social obligations can be unpacked. Yet *Mots d'ordre* cannot be reduced to the words through which they are expressed: for Deleuze and Guattari, there are a whole manner of assemblages which serve to support certain incorporeal transformations.

The shifting complex or 'mechanic assemblage' is a key concept throughout *A Thousand Plateaux*. It includes social, linguistic, conceptual and 'practical' assemblages. Of key importance for spatial theory and practice is the notion that assemblages are composed of discursive and non-discursive components: they are both assemblages of enunciation/utterance and assemblages of bodies/matter (Patton, 2000: 9, 42-6). Here, a situation of qualitative difference is coupled with a situation of interdependency. Furthermore, these complex arrangements of discourse and practices both define and are defined through their location or 'circumstances.' Assemblages of enunciation cannot be divorced from the very place in which they are uttered, "'I swear' is not the same when said in the family, at school, in a love affair, in a secret society, or in court: it is not the same thing and neither is it the same incorporeal transformation" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 82). It is in this sense that assemblages are spatialised. Yet, places here do not merely refer to external

circumstances, they are also assemblages of socially mediated practices from which meaning or identities are drawn.

Active Theory

Debates in recent feminist critique have centred to a large degree on the problem of privileging either side of the mind/body dualism, highlighting the need to express or think beyond a mindset whose descriptions replicate the binary of traditional logics and politics (see Bradiotti, 1994a; Butler, 1993; Gatens, 1996a; Grosz, 1996; Irigaray, 1985, 1993). Moira Gatens describes how it is this 'thinking beyond' which is key in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. For her, their approach "does not posit bodies on one side and language on the other. Rather bodies and states of affairs are interleaved with the 'collective assemblages of enunciation/utterance'" (Gatens, 1996b: 180). This points towards what Rosi Braidotti describes as an understanding of embodiment which is "neither a biological nor a social category, but rather a point of overlap between the physical, the symbolic, and the material social condition" (Braidotti, 1994b:161).

In her paper "Through a Spinozist Lens: Ethology, Difference, Power," Gatens observes how Deleuze and Guattari follow Spinoza's notion that "to think differently is, by definition, to exist differently: one's power of thinking is inseparable from one's power of being and visa versa" (Gatens, 1996b: 168). In this univocity of being there are networks of assemblages which in their very multiplicity have no definite causal relation between them but which together interact to support a certain way of being. Yet, this materialisation of bodies through language and assemblages is not simply a passive inscription. In fact, the conception of human being as a component of a dynamic inter-related aggregate makes it possible to express the potential of being otherwise. For Deleuze and Guattari the expression of a certain possible world is always accompanied by the possibility of expressing a different world. Here, they follow the Nietzschean concept of thought as a creative and transformative action – an exploration of that which escapes common sense, rationality and representation.

Gatens describes how "the order-word expresses a possible world as if it were the only and inevitable world" but she goes on to state that "it is an utterance that should be seen as an attempt to pass of the virtual as actual" (Gatens, 1996b: 181). She draws on the feminist theories of Sharon Marcus to compare this 'virtual' or 'obstinate real' to a script which holds the possibility to be re-written. She describes how, "words ... express both the attempt to capture bodies in stable forms ... and the possible becomings of bodies" (Gatens, 1996b: 182). Ultimately, for Gatens the tools which attempt to "pass of the virtual as the actual" can be re-employed to decompose those relations which organise affects and powers in stable forms, in order to recompose other becomings – different acts, affects and desires. She goes on to describe the expression of these other 'possible becomings' as *pass-words* which "rupture the habitual organisation of a body's powers and capacities and express new powers of affecting and being affected" (Gatens, 1996b: 183).



When maintenance workers were asked to designate one hour of their daily work as 'art' or 'work' identical activities were frequently awarded with different utterances. **I make maintenance Art one hour everyday**, 1976, Chemical Bank, 55 Water Street, Downtown Whitney – Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York

For Rosi Braidotti, figurations are ways of "bringing into representation the unthinkable" (Braidotti, 2000: 171). She describes figurations as invented "unconventional and even disturbing conceptual personae" by which Deleuze "thinks" (Braidotti, 2000: 170). Yet she stresses their material basis and political accountability aligning this 'thinking' with feminist theories of 'politics of location' or 'situated knowledges' (Braidotti, 2000: 171, see also Haraway, 1991 & Rich, 1987). In this way feminist figurations are *pass-words* that find expressions not simply in words but through performative practices based in memory and narrative. Here, bodies themselves can utter and through these utterings they can resist or challenge the imposition of certain frameworks or narratives. It is in this politically located performativity that feminist figurations become intrinsically spatialised. As Deleuze and Guattari describe, "a performative statement is nothing outside of the circumstances that make it performative" (1987:82). The circumstances of a figuration gives it meaning, a subject and an addressee as well as credibility making it a 'veritable assemblage' (1987: 82).

Practical Thinking

Like the theoretician for Deleuze and Guattari, the role of the artist for Mierle Laderman Ukeles is not privileged and detached: art must play an activist role in



Shifting the location of a habitually hidden action to an exposed and public space. **Wash,** 1973. Sidewalk performance at A.I.R Gallery, New York City – Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York

empowering people to act as agents of change. This agenda stems from a feminist concern with challenging the privileged and gendered notion of pure creation and the myth of the independent artist. Ukeles' 1969 'Manifesto for Maintenance Art,' proposes the dismantling of the notion of art as fixed and complete through the literal transformation of everyday activities into 'art'. In her manifesto she proclaims, "Avant-garde art, which claims utter development, is infected by strains of maintenance ideas, maintenance activities, and maintenance materials" (Ukeles, 1969: 623).

'I Make Maintenance Art One Hour Everyday' was a project executed in 1976 for a branch of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Ukeles sent letters to three hundred maintenance staff at the Chemical Bank in Water Street, downtown Whitney, asking them to designate one hour of their daily work as 'art'. The time of the hour was their choice and, to outside observers, the activity of floor washing, window cleaning and so on remained unchanged. Everyday, over five weeks Ukeles took Polaroid photographs recording the various practices of the workers. At the same time she asked them if they were doing 'art' or 'work.' The photographs were subsequently exhibited alongside the worker's remarks revealing that identical activities were frequently awarded with different utterances. In her extensive paper on Ukeles entitled 'Maintenance Activity': Creating a Climate for Change,'



Through her appointment as the 'unsalaried, official Artist in Residence, at the New York City Department of Sanitation, Ukeles directly investigated how sanitation is 'trapped in a miasma of essentially pre-democratic perceptions.' **The Social Mirror**, 1983. – Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York

Patricia C. Philips observes how "For one worker, washing a window on the south facade at ten in the morning was 'art'; for someone else performing the same task alongside it was 'work'" (Philips, 1995: 174). This project engendered shifts in the status and meaning of 'work' and 'art,' and challenged the social construction of aesthetic and cultural values that coagulate them into binary oppositions. Furthermore it highlighted the fragility of such oppositions which "attempt to capture bodies in stable forms" (Gatens, 1996b: 182). In this way, like the passwords it explored how language itself opens possibilities for a re-appreciation and re-appropriation of everyday life. Conversely, the projects *Wash*, *Handshake Ritual* and *Flow City* explore how certain inquisitive, invasive practical actions help to actualise certain conceptions.

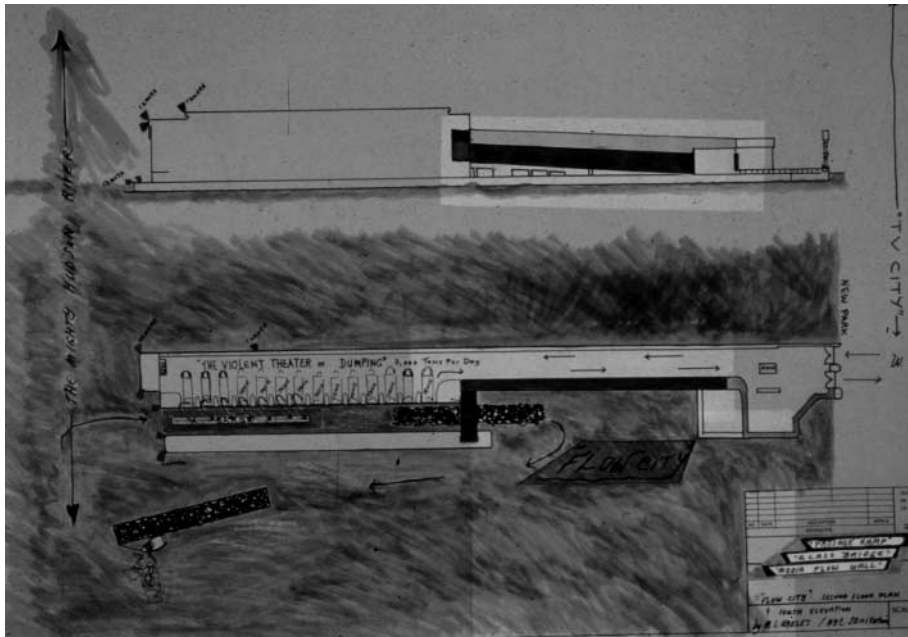
Wash was a street performance conducted in 1973 at the A.I.R. Gallery in New York City where Ukeles fastidiously scrubbed the pavement of the public space outside the gallery. Through shifting the location of a habitually hidden action to an exposed and public space *Wash* forced spectators to conceptually and tacitly engage with the gallery threshold in a very different way. It unveiled the socio-spatial and temporal assemblage which supports the utterances of public/private, clean/dirty, acceptable/abject activity. In this performance the collective assemblage of a human body and its 'circumstances' implied a certain enunciation regarding the status of



The offer of a handshake to city sanitation workers invented new subject positions, which enabled them to speak. **Handshake Ritual**, 1978-9, New York City. – Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York

maintenance activity in society. Figurations for Braidotti are 'materially embodied' representations which mark different steps in "undoing power relations in the very structures of one's subject position" (Braidotti, 2000: 170). Wash pushed the static conceptions of 'woman' and 'women's work' together in a space to examine the processes of subjectification and the power differentials at work within both conceptions. Braidotti describes how, "the practice of accountability as a relational, collective activity is linked to two crucial notions: memory and narrative" (Braidotti, 2000: 171). The potential to create new narratives which transform and create new subject-positions forms a key element in the performance Touch Sanitation.

In 1977 Ukeles was invited by the New York City Department of Sanitation to be the "unsalaried, official Artist in Residence" (Ukeles, 1995: 184). *Touch Sanitation* formed the basis of a project which directly investigated how sanitation is "trapped in a miasma of essentially pre-democratic perceptions." It involved multiple components spanning a period of six years. One performance within it was entitled *Handshake Ritual* and for Ukeles was a means to "peel away and separate ourselves from the ancient, trans-cultural alienating notion and aura of the caste-stigma of waste-worker, of 'garbage-man'" (Ukeles, 1984: 624). She describes how these designations or incorporeal transformations have always translated into "'their' waste, not 'ours', they're 'dirty', we're 'clean'" (Ukeles, 1984: 62). *Handshake Ritual*



In the juxtaposition of representational, directly lived and symbolic aspects, of habitually disregarded everyday processes, "everyday things" are "flushed up to consciousness." **Flow City**, 1983, New York City – Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York

was performed from 1978 to 1979 and involved a collaboration with 8,500 city sanitation workers. Over a year and a half Ukeles shook hands with every worker and face to face to each one said "Thank you for keeping New York City Alive" (Ukeles, 1995: 184). During the project her discussions unveiled accounts which confirmed many denigrating and detrimental perceptions. Some workers described how they suffered a barrage of insults when working, others recounted how fears of condemnation had resulted in efforts to hide their profession from neighbours (Philips, 1995: 183). This project offered the space for these workers to voice their individual narratives. It unveiled the speech-acts which positioned them as 'dirty' and at the same time the offer of gratitude expressed in the handshake invented new subject-positions which enabled them to speak.

Flow City is an ongoing project which began in 1983. It is designed around creating a setting within the 59th Street Marine Transfer Station. At a transfer station refuse collected from homes and businesses is loaded onto barges before being shipped to a landfill site. The primary focus of *Flow City* is a viewing platform entitled 'Glass Bridge', which enables participants to conjoin three contrasting views of city life and urban ecology. To the east lies the abstracted, pristine and static stereotypical panorama of New York City. To the west visitors can directly register what Ukeles describes as the "the city in flux" (Ukeles, 1995: 187). Here, the practices of refuse disposal are witnessed directly in the work of the station's

maintenance staff. To the south Ukeles plans to install the 'Media Flow Wall,' comprising a bank of video monitors programmed with live cameras and prepared sources. Here, the process of waste disposal throughout the city will be documented by artists, ecologists and scientists.

Flow City creates a space which occupies a liminal position between its participants and the dynamics of city life. Although the project has yet to be completed as designed it still grants access to a space from which visitors are normally excluded. This space allows the juxtaposition of representational, directly lived and symbolic aspects, of habitually disregarded everyday processes. Here as Ukeles describes, "everyday things' are "flushed up to consciousness" (Ukeles, 1969 in Philips, 1995: 171). In this way Flow City forms a transformative assemblage which engenders the potential for shifts in the conceptual imagination.

Patricia C. Philips observes how for Ukeles the conception of Flow City rests on the conviction that "if people can directly observe how the city works, they can then direct their actions and ideas toward the construction of a meaningful public life" (Philips, 1995: 188). Here, one's power of thinking is expressed through one's power of being. Ukeles comments that Flow City strives to "lift the veils between ourselves and our waste" in order to "see who we are, where we come from, and what we can do" (Ukeles, 1995: 189).

'Being', for Deleuze and Guattari, is mapped in terms of assemblages of extensive and intensive capacities which depend on degrees of relations embracing things and contexts as well as people. Through the feminist readings of Moira Gatens and Rosi Braidotti this "field of transformative effects" (Braidotti, 2000: 159) becomes politically located. For Gatens, the interleaving of bodies and states of affairs opens the way towards new materialisations which work on a conceptual level but are not divorced from the body in their implications for actions. For Braidotti, these new materialisations, pass-words or figurations are necessarily politically located, reconnecting theory with the practices of daily resistance.

In initiating localised counter-responses to everyday processes of stratification which coagulate 'work' and 'art,' 'maintenance' and 'creativity' into binary oppositions, Mierle Laderman Ukeles' work operates at a molecular level. This molecular level indicates not a difference in scale but a difference in kind. The writings of Deleuze and Guattari attempt to affect shifts in power relations through theoretical action. The work of Ukeles attempts to realise shifts in conceptions through practical action. These subtle shifts in perception, are not readily quantifiable. Philips observes, "That a change of consciousness, an enhanced awareness of public life, takes place is unassailable but never instantly provable" (Philips, 1995: 185).

Through their location at the interplay of the material social condition, the physical and the symbolic, Ukeles' projects indicate how places of enunciation play a key role in the stratification of power differentials. They demonstrate how places are assemblages of discursive and non-discursive practices, and equally how these practices are also places – spaces in which identities are located. Ultimately for

Ukeles, public art itself becomes a transformative space which, like the immanent theories of Deleuze and Guattari, works in-between, in order to move beyond the binary coagulations of theory/practice, conceptions/actions, mind/body.

Acknowledgements


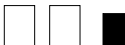


I am grateful to Dr. Jane Rendell for advice and direction on this paper. Her discussion of public art as a space between theory and practice can be found in Jane Rendell 'A Place Between', introduction to *Public Art Journal*, Devon, Volume 1, No. 2, October 1999, pp. 1-5. Likewise, I am grateful to Katie Lloyd Thomas and Brigid Mcleer for invaluable conversations about the form and content of this paper which assisted me in formulating my understanding of performatively generated places.

References

- Bogue, Ronald (1989), *Deleuze and Guattari*, London:Routledge.
- Boundas, Constantin V. and Olkowski, Dorothea (1994) (eds.) *Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy*, New York:Routledge.
- Braidotti, Rosi (1994a) *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, New York:Columbia University Press.
- Braidotti, Rosi (1994b) 'Toward a New Nomadism', in (eds) Constantin V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski (1994), *Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy*, New York:Routledge, pp. 159-186.
- Braidotti, Rosi (2000) 'Teratologies', in Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook (eds), *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, Edinburgh:Edinburgh University Press.
- Butler, Judith (1993) *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, New York:Routledge.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix (1987) *A Thousand Plateaux: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Volume 2, Minneapolis:University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles (1977) 'Intellectuals and Power' in Bouchard, D.F. & Simons, S. (1977) (eds.) and trans. *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Felshin, Nina (1995) (ed.) *But is it Art?* Seattle:Bay Press.
- Foucault, Michel (1977) *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, (ed.) and trans. D.F. Bouchard and S. Simons, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Fraser, Miriam (1999) *Identity Without Selfhood: Simone de Beauvoir and Bisexuality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gatens, Moira (1996a) *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power, and Corporeality*, London:Routledge.
- Gatens, Moira (1996b) 'Through a Spinozist Lens: Ethology, Difference, Power', in (ed.) Paul Patton, (1996), *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, Oxford:Blackwell, pp. 162-187.
- Geuss, Raymond (1981) *The Idea of Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grosz, Elizabeth (1994) *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*, Bloomington:Indiana University Press.

- Haraway, Donna (1991) 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century' in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, New York: Routledge, pp149-82.
- Irigaray, Luce (1985) *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Gillian C. Gill, Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
- Irigaray, Luce (1993) *An Ethics Of Sexual Difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Oakes, Baile (ed.) (1995) *Sculpting with the Environment: A Natural Dialogue*, London, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Patton, Paul (1996) (ed.) *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Patton, Paul (2000), *Deleuze and the Political*, London: Routledge.
- Philips, Patricia C., (1995), 'Maintenance Activity: Creating a Climate for Change', in (ed.) Nina Felshin, *But is it Art*, Seattle: Bay Press, pp. 165-193.
- Rich, Adrienne (1987) *Bread, Blood and Poetry*, London: Virago.
- Stiles, Kristine and Selz, Peter (eds) (1996) *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, Berkeley, London: University of California Press.
- Ukeles, Mierle Laderman (1969) 'Maintenance Art Manifesto' in Stiles, Kristine and Selz, Peter (1996) (eds) *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, Berkeley, London: University of California Press, pp. 623-624.
- Ukeles, Mierle Laderman (1984) 'Sanitation Manifesto!' in Stiles, Kristine and Selz, Peter (1996) (eds) *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, Berkeley, London: University of California Press, pp. 624-625.
- Ukeles, Mierle Laderman (1995) 'Mierle Laderman Ukeles', (1995), in Baile Oakes (1995) (ed.) *Sculpting With the Environment: A Natural Dialogue*, London, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, pp. 184-193.

 Jane Calow

 **From Birmingham to Bogota:**
 Tracing the Metaphor of Submerged Space Through
 the Architecture of 1960's Birmingham and the Artistic
 Practice of Doris Salcedo

This paper is written as a ‘journey’ that explores metaphors of subsumed space. Firstly through the consideration of architecture in Birmingham (the underground walkways of the 1960s, subsequently filled in with sand in the 1990s) and secondly, through the artistic practice of Colombian artist Doris Salcedo, who works with domestic furniture and concrete. Questions of the relationship between individual and shared consciousness will be explored along the way.

The idea for this journey began with a chance encounter in the middle of the city of Birmingham. I was crossing a road, part of which was sealed off by a wire fence with men working behind the fence. Not an unusual occurrence in a city going through a period of regeneration; it turned out that they were filling in the underground walkways built for pedestrians in the 1960s with a mixture of sand and concrete. This led me to take a speculative journey that started with the consideration of subsumed spaces, initiated by the burial of the underground walkway in Birmingham and finishing with the use of space within the artwork of Doris Salcedo.

In the process of making this journey I want to draw upon art practice as well as architecture as a means through which to begin to explore public and private space and their relation to individual and shared consciousness. What will hold the thread between a submerged and now impassable pedestrian walkway in Birmingham and the work of an artist from Bogota is an examination of the metaphor of subsumed space.

The Submerged Walkway

‘No wonder utopias chose architecture and urban planning as both the vehicle and the master-metaphor of the perfect world that would know of no misfits and hence of no disorder; however much they differed in detail, they all lovingly detailed the carefully segregated and strictly functional urban quarters, the straight, unpolluted geometry of streets and public squares, the hierarchy of spaces and buildings which, in their prescribed volumes and austerity of adornment, mirrored the stately sovereignty of the social order. In the city of reason, there were no winding roads, no cul-de-sacs and no unattended sites left to chance – and thus no vagabonds, vagrants or nomads.’
(Bauman 1992, p. xv)

Zygmunt Bauman suggests that behind the motivation of the will to control, and the imposition of order and evocation of reason, it is possible to detect an underlying anxiety, present within the emergence and heart of Modernity. This underlying anxiety carries with it the suspicion that the world is somehow chaotic, for without some notion of the possibility of the eruption of chaos or disorder what motivation might there be behind the imposition of order? What Bauman suggests is that the fear of chaos within Modernity could never quite be allayed: 'The lid of order would never seem tight and heavy enough. Escape from the wilderness, once embarked upon, will never end'. (Bauman, p. xv) Once I began to excavate past projects in Birmingham, it was easy to discover something of the anxiety touched upon by Bauman, where one grandiose scheme was proposed for the transformation of the centre of Birmingham after another, with echoes of the never-endingness, the slippage that Bauman refers to. With regard to the dual characteristics of Modernity, the submerged pedestrian walkways can be looked at from the perspective of two specific historical moments – that of the building of the walkways in the late 1960s and that point at which, in the late 1990s, they were filled in. Within the very form that the submerged walkways took in relation to road planning, a set of hierarchies can be traced. The place of the pedestrian was subordinate in the 1960s and 1970s to the motorcar, and its place within the identity of Birmingham as a major city of car manufacture. By the 1980s the submerged walkways did not just exemplify the subordination of pedestrian to car – no longer a subordination to be celebrated, given an adjusted attitude to pollution and the demise of the car industry – but were also places deemed unsafe to walk and now associated with the idea of an underclass, an underworld. In order to control this underworld, by the 1990s, some of the underpasses are filled in, in an attempt to obliterate past development and particular histories. So far a pretty unremarkable account of something that has occurred in different forms in cities throughout Britain – well documented and very familiar, I am sure. But I think there are at least two lines of inquiry that are worth exploring further. One is to consider what can be understood by the idea that the planning and execution of certain forms of architecture, as Bauman puts it 'mirror the social order' and the other is the relation between the subterrain and surface in some forms of architecture and the art practice of Doris Salcedo.

Subjectivities and Social Planning

When Bauman talks of architecture and planning as 'the master-metaphor of the perfect world', deployed in order to 'mirror the stately sovereignty of the social order', he presents some interesting issues; for example, the mapping of social values and ideals onto tangible objects, such as buildings – and pedestrian underpasses. He is not implying that architecture and urban planning *reflect* what happens elsewhere at another level of society, for as Raymond Williams has pointed out, representational forms (architecture included) don't 'reflect' what is acted upon or decided elsewhere, but rather, forms of representation – and here I might

add architectural style – can be both constitutive and constituting at the same time. (Williams, 1977: 95-100) An often referred to example of the analysis of how representational forms can be constitutive that springs to mind is that of ‘The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon’ (1852) by Karl Marx, cited by Griselda Pollock in her consideration of the nature of representation. (Pollock, 1987: 6) Napoleon originally drew upon the notion of empire associated with classicism in order to establish a modern state structure. What might be considered as constitutive, is that classicism as a vehicle is called upon with the intention of bringing in something new, and is thus actively deployed as one of the means by which the constitution of new sets of values, practices, ideas and forms may take place. References to the past and the making of the new may happen in simultaneity. The ‘new’ architecture of the 1960s as exemplified by the submerged walkways, when covered over in the late 1990s, re-emerge resplendent with cobbled areas, ‘Victorianised’ waste bins and lampposts. Raymond Williams has addressed the understanding of the significance of cultural forms through historical analysis, concepts of ideology and the exploration of meanings of cultural values, practices and ideas (including analysis of the notion of culture itself), in addition to which he offers careful analysis of how selective traditions operate. (Williams, 1977: 115-120) But what is missing from his analysis is an exploration of what he described as the point at which values, styles etc. are assimilated, absorbed, desired, feared or rejected at the level of lived social relations. To return once more to the submerged walkways; what motivation was it that perceived their construction as desirable in the 1960s and that had to be undone in the 1990s? I don’t think that in order to find a bit of the answer to this question we can fall back on pragmatism alone – i.e. the underpass was found in practice, through lived experience, not to work. Are decisions that are made about urban planning, particular forms of architecture, even at civic levels exclusively predicated upon the pragmatic, the rational or the practical? This denies thresholds of desire, control, pleasure and imagination. Birmingham is undergoing a process of regeneration in order to redefine itself, and architecture becomes a form of representation, harnessed as a means through which Birmingham may present itself as confident. We lay values of the self and the body as metaphor upon the city, upon buildings etc. but what can be said about the relation between individual experience and social, collective experience? We have models via, for example, sociology through which to begin to construct ideas about collectively shared experience. Models employed within history as a discipline allow the possibility of the consideration of social response to events. Many texts apply human values, of the individual, the body (as universalised) as metaphor, to the qualities carried by objects and places etc. Architectural style may be attributed with human characteristics such as confidence, aggression, brutality and anxiety, yet I think that this presents a difficulty. How exactly do cultural forms carry the particular sets of human characteristics that are laid upon them? It is all very well to say that these values are culturally and historically specific, but it seems to me that the discourse of culture

gets a little circular. Nor in this context do I find two models of modernism and postmodernism very helpful, as filters through which to consider the conception and construction of objects, the values they carry and the encounter with the objects through usage. Put crudely, modernism implies that meaning is always embedded within the object, where a postmodern approach might conclude that meaning is never to be found within the object. Neither position seems satisfactory as a means through which to explore the complex relation between the desires of planners, architects etc. and the manifestation of those desires in concrete form – be it architectural building style or the values carried by a pedestrian walkway. The models of analysis and critique that we have to date as far as I can see do two things: the first is to offer models through which we can look at what is already there, or has already happened, from an historical perspective, the other is to consider architecture in relation to direct personal encounter, but what is necessary is a third set of formulations looking at the complex dynamics of denial, control, desire and fear. What I would like is some way to think through the interiority of the decision making that produces certain cultural forms rather than others, a form of theorisation that somehow fills out our understanding to date of the constructs of ideology and culture, with an intention to move away from either exploring the effects of this or that cultural form, or to dwell upon the consumption of objects. Rather, the challenge might be to attempt to find a means that explores processes and practices, decision making etc. as active and as motivated. It is a long time ago now that art historians such as Tim Clark and Janet Woolf put forward the suggestion that artists as well as art forms were culturally produced, and by so doing contested the position adopted by conventional art historians. Conventional art history tends to present artistic products as produced solely and exclusively by an individual, reflecting that individual's life experience. In arguing that art must be seen as produced within a social, cultural and historical moment and that the artist is also a product of that moment, it became possible to rethink the autonomy of making. The implications of this contention was that the artist, as culturally produced, would not always be in control of all the values etc. that the work that she/he produced might carry. It also redefined the artist in relation to society, as not in sole control of the process of making. It might be possible to think about the wider implications here with regard to other forms of making, other disciplines and to go beyond the notion of cultural production – what is introduced here is the possibility of objects carrying what at first might appear to be all sorts of accidental or extraneous values. This is stretching the implications within this early work perhaps – Clark is considering the place of artistic production in relation to the place of ideology in particular – but nevertheless, it allows the consideration of the relationship between individual and shared cultural values and how shared values etc. are played through at the level of individual consciousness. Surely decision-making etc. is not always rational, that the conception and construction of objects, architecture etc. are also caught up within, and motivated by, complex structures of desire and fear? The problem is how to explore these structures and to think through the interaction between individual and

collective social experience. Psychoanalysis as a tool of cultural analysis has been applied to certain architectural forms, but what is not explained is the relationship between individual and social consciousness and the unconscious. I am loathe to use the word 'collective' because it brings to mind Jung's concept of the collective unconscious which is highly deterministic and unsatisfactory because of emphasis upon innate qualities. Some work was undertaken in the 1970s to consider the development of the social and the historical in conjunction with psychoanalysis. (Hirst and Woolley, 1982) that perhaps needs returning to, because psychoanalysis has a tendency towards universalisation and ahistoricism. Even given that this is the case, it offers a tool through which to begin to examine the internality of actions and motivations – through the work of Bion on inter-subjective relationships, and as Juliet Mitchell has pointed out, Freud, who maintained that the unconscious of one human being can react upon another without passing through consciousness (Mitchell, 1998: 107). Most recently, issues of the inter-relation between subjectivities has been addressed through Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger's revolutionary and groundbreaking theory of the Matrix:

'A matrixial encounter engenders shared traces, traumas, pictograms and fantasies in several partners conjointly but differently, accompanied by diffused matrixial affects; it engenders the unconscious readjustments of their connectivity.'
(Lichtenberg Ettinger, 1995:23)

Zygmunt Bauman's observation that architecture and urban planning emerge in Modernity as the vehicles through which to produce social order and that 'the lid of order would never be tight enough to escape entirely from the wilderness' suggests that however hard an attempt might be made to squeeze out the unintentional, it will always return in some form or another. Whether through the anxieties that produce the wish to bury traces of past architecture, or through a will to bury past histories and memories.

The surface and the submerged as metaphor – the relationship between the lost and the living:

The underground walkway filled with sand and cement is truly submerged, but contradictorily, also preserved - at a future moment it could be excavated. Perversely, by using this material rather than obliterating the decisions of the 1960s completely by the architecture of the 1990s – the aspects of 60s deemed unpalatable in the 90s architecture are still there, buried, but with the possibility of being unearthed. At a very physical level, there is something eerie – *unheimlich* – about a space that was once walked through, now airless and buried. The idea of burial may seem fanciful, but the idea is never far away with regard to the subterrain. In *The Architectural Uncanny*, Anthony Vidler looks at what he calls 'the dark side of space'. He describes how he wanted to find a more subtle and complex approach to the understanding of subject-space relations than that

offered by conventional modern urbanism: '(flood dark spaces with light) or architecture (open up all space to vision and occupation)' (Vidler, 1996 :168). Quoting from Foucault, Vidler describes the late eighteenth-century preoccupation with dark and shadowy areas borne out of a fear of "darkened spaces, of the pall of gloom which prevents the full visibility of things, men and truths" (Vidler, 1996: 169). According to Vidler, never was this awareness more clearly expressed than through the architecture of Etienne-Louis Boullée, who experimented with the precepts of the sublime and applied the constructs of the sublime to architecture. The best example of this being a design for a palace of justice, with the justice halls lit from above and prisons set beneath in a half-buried podium. He wanted to create an architecture that spoke of death and of burial, a buried architecture of both light and dark:

'...it is in the intimate association of the two, their uncanny ability to slip from one to the other, that the sublime as instrument of fear retains its hold – in that ambiguity that stages the presence of death in light, dark space in bright space. In this sense, all the radiant spaces of modernism, from the first panopticon to the Ville Radieuse, should be seen as calculated not on the final triumph of light over dark but precisely on the insistent presence of the one in the other.' (Vidler, 1996: 172)

Many of the public monuments commemorating the Holocaust use subsumed spaces and black holes or inverted spaces as means of commemoration. It is possible to trace through many of these commemorative works that relation between light and dark, the surface and the submerged, referred to by Anthony Vidler. The phenomenon of the black hole as memorial is discussed in *Public Monuments Art in Political Bondage* (1998) by Sergiusz Michalski. The very black hole of the sublime, the abyss used as a vehicle of fear and control within modernity – the implied threat of punishment inherent in the architecture of the palace of justice (that if the citizen should stray from the law, they would experience the abyss) comes back to haunt modernity as a form of reproach. The other side facing modernity with the consequences of the will to control – the black hole as public memorial to the dead millions of holocaust. (Michalski 1998: 176)

Lastly, in the work of Doris Salcedo – because in many respects her work touches upon the preoccupations outlined within the text so far –we see the relation between collective/social and individual subjectivities and that between light and dark, what is concealed and what is disclosed.

*'Je cherche dans des coffres qui m'entourent brutalement
Mettant des tenebres sens dessus dessous
Dans des caisses profondes, profondes
Comme si elles n'étaient plus de ce monde'*

(Roughly translated:)

I search in the coffers that surround me
Putting disarray in the darkness
Of the cases that are deep, deep
As though they had departed life
(Superverville, 1964)

Doris Salcedo works in Bogota and in her recent art practice has been working with families and friends who have had people close to them disappear under the military regime in Colombia. In the construction of her work Doris Salcedo uses domestic wooden furniture, concrete and clothing. The refusal of the Government to accept the disappeared means that they are never acknowledged or made reference to within the public domain of Colombia. The only place that they are spoken of and their loss recognised is within the domestic spaces of their families and friends – creating a complex relation between public and private collective experience. These two spaces collide in the work of Doris Salcedo, who makes work that speaks of the burial of the dead and places the domestic space within the public realm.

The work of Doris Salcedo speaks of ‘the outside’, externalising and representing within public space that which has no representation, is literally out of mind, thought and visibility in Colombia – the condition of ‘the disappeared’. *Untitled (Cement Cabinet)* (1995) was part of the *Claustrophobia* exhibition held at the Ikon Gallery Birmingham in 1998. The cabinet stood at the far end of the gallery, slightly to one side of a window. It is a small piece, but its quietness soon moves through to an insistent pressure of silence, which resonates an insistent physicality. It carries that silence into the space that surrounds its occupation. It is an old cabinet, made of mahogany, with glass panels at the front and sides with delicate, plain tapered legs. It stands just beneath eye-level, with legs about twenty centimetres long and holding the main body of the cabinet off the ground. The space between the legs of the cabinet emphasises the contrast in strength between cabinet and its heavy contents. Inside the front glass panels, upon slender shelves, it might be expected to encounter the display of favoured domestic objects – but behind the glass panels of this cabinet are layers of undulating concrete. On close encounter vestiges of lace curtain, clothing, are embedded and fragily enlayered deep in the concrete. It is the ordinariness, the very *everydayness* of the clothing that comes as a shock. The legs of the cabinet ought to buckle under the weight of its contents yet whilst it remains fragile, it is also almost immovable. Her work does not only offer up the place of silence and the silenced, at the same time it offers up the artwork as the space of the enactment of ritual that cannot be performed elsewhere – that is, the funerals, the rituals, the social burying of the disappeared. Her work squeezes and squashes space – ramming one piece of furniture into another, filling spaces with concrete, enlayering of clothes, stopping up the keyholes of wardrobes with concrete.

The end of the journey: Trace, Liverpool Biennale 1999

Experiencing the spaces between the pieces in the exhibition meant moving, standing between, what had been domestic objects within spaces the width of corridors or passageways to be found in a domestic home, spaces between objects in a room that are walked around every day – negotiating the edge of a bed, the table, the corner of a wardrobe. These spaces were invoked within the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool; a vast early-twentieth-century, echoing public edifice. Through the associations carried by the media, Doris Salcedo works with and through the manner in which space is used within and between pieces, a weaving of subjectivities between place and time occurs. Between the artist and the families she has worked with, between the spaces the disappeared inhabited in life, between private and public life, between geographies, between the living and the dead, between the repressed and return – all of this jostles for the recognition of different layered space – space for representation, experienced space and psychic space.

Conclusion

In exploring the metaphor of the subterranean through the submerged walkways of Birmingham, I have touched upon the idea of burial and the presence in architecture from the eighteenth century onwards of a dark side to space and architecture and the anxieties that go with it. I have also raised questions about the difficulties that are inherent within notions of the relationship between individual and shared consciousness and the place of the unconscious, and how human values become mapped onto architectural space.

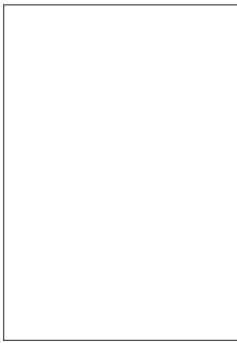
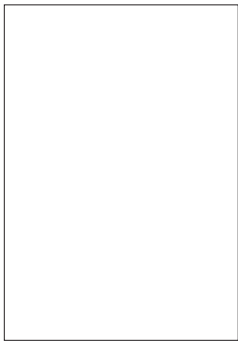
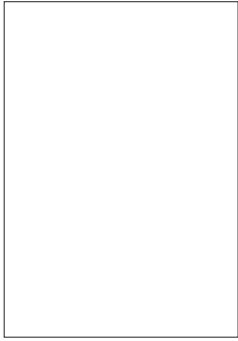
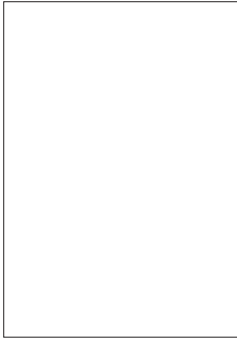
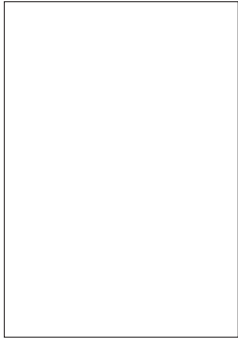
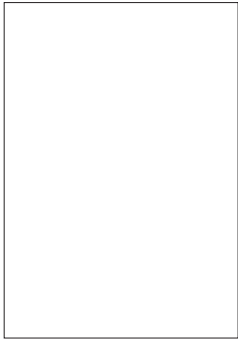
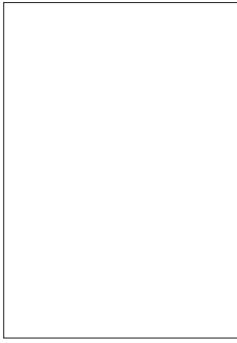
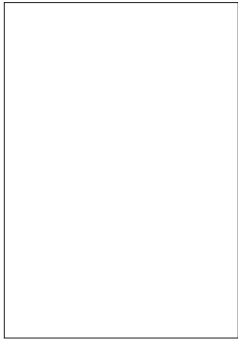
In the art of Doris Salcedo, rather than burial being an act of concealment, through the use of concrete, clothing and domestic objects from inside the home and by placing what is private within the public sphere – representation is given to the disappeared of Colombia.

While in some senses occupying the same place, the act of burial in Birmingham seals spaces that were once occupied, where the work of Doris Salcedo takes the unknown space of the dead, the disappeared, and through the act of burial brings their presence into being.

References

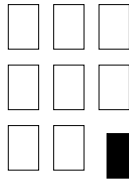
- Bachelard, B (1969) *The Poetics of Space*, London:Beacon Press.
- Bauman, Z (1992) *Intimations of Postmodernity*, London:Routledge.
- Clark, T J (1974) 'On the Conditions of Artistic Creation', *Times Literary Supplement* 24th May
- Clark, T J (1984) *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers*. London:Thames and Hudson.
- Hirst and Woolley (1982) 'Psychoanalysis and Social Relations', in *Subjectivity and Social Relations* eds; J. Donald and V. Beechey (1985), London:Open University Press.

- Lichtenberg Ettinger, B (1995) *The Matrixial Gaze*, Feminist Arts and Histories Network, University of Leeds.
- Michalski, S (1998) *Art in Political Bondage*, London:Reaktion Books.
- Mitchell, J (1998) 'Memory and Psychoanalysis' in *Memory*, eds; P. Fara and K. Patterson, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marx, K (1852) 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonapart' in K Marx and F Engels, *Selected Works in One Volume* (London: Lawrence and Wishart 1970)
- Pollock, G (1988) *Vision and Difference*, London:Routledge.
- Williams, R (1977) *Marxism and Literature*, New York:Oxford University Press.
- Woolf, J (1981) *The Social Production of Art*, London:Macmillan.
- Vidler, A (1996) *The Architectural Uncanny*, Boston Massachusetts:MIT Press.



Section Four

Identities and Communities



Mary J Hickman

Differences, Boundaries, Community:

The Irish In Britain

The issue of community is an important one for a minority population in Britain because of its relationship to issues of the nation, identity, ethnicity, migration and racism. However, to date, discussions about the Irish community either involve assertions that such an entity exists, or counterarguments suggesting that the degree of differentiation and dispersal of the Irish population negates the idea that we form a community. It is, however, important to refute the idea that differentiation necessarily negates community. At the same time, I would agree with the detractors of community that it is necessary to do more than just assert that the phenomenon exists. It is necessary to create a framework for understanding the basis of community and within that context establish what is meant by an Irish community.

Benedict Anderson describes nations as ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson, 1991:56). All communities, he insists, which are larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact, are imagined. Until recently, the nation represented the largest community that most individuals imagined themselves as belonging to. All communities are distinguished not so much by falsity or genuineness but by the style in which they are imagined. The politics of forming a nation is the process by which the identity of a ‘people’ or ‘community’ is forged. The ‘people’ and its biography are mythical. Most nations, all products of the modern period, are based on imagined histories which posit back a unity, sometimes to antiquity, of its people.

The nationalist myth elevates to a birthright the fantasy of being rooted. For all those who are displaced by migration (frequently forced and structural), or who are refugees, the search for roots becomes inevitable, and often, depending on the context, this can be a poignant and difficult search to accommodate (Feuchtwang, 1992). In this sense then, we can say that the notion of the Irish community in Britain is a myth—it is a myth in just the same way that all nations, or ethnicities, as imagined communities, are based on myth and all migrant groups live the contradictions of maintaining or not maintaining that myth in the diaspora. Thus, Irishness is both a world and a set of representations, carried around in the heads of actual people, and can be displayed across a number of texts and visual representations (Harris, 1991).

All migrant groups from former colonies or, generally, from the ‘South’ coming to the ‘North’ (in the Brandt Report’s sense of those terms) have to engage with and resolve problems of difference. They migrate bearing the traces of particular cultures, traditions, languages, systems of belief, histories that have shaped them,

and are obliged to come to terms with and make something new of the cultures and economic location they come to inhabit, without simply assimilating (Hall, 1991). When the country they migrate to is the former colonising power, how much more acute and sensitive the situation is. Any comparison of the Irish in Britain with the Irish in the USA and Australia in the nineteenth-century will bear this out. The contrast in terms of control of the Catholic Church and open participation in the political system is striking. It is not that the Irish did not face opposition in those two societies, but the response by the Irish was different.

It has been a main function of national cultures to represent what is in fact the ethnic mix of modern nationality as the primordial unity of 'one people'. This has been achieved by centralised nation-states with their incorporating cultures and national identities, implanted and secured by strong cultural institutions, which tend to subsume all differences and diversity into themselves (Hall, 1992). The Irish first came in very large numbers to Britain during the period which was most critical for the successful securing of a national identity and culture in Britain (and by that means a class alliance): i.e., the nineteenth-century. In that period the Irish were both the most sizeable and most visible minority element in the population. In migrant communities in Britain, 'Irishness' as an essentialist notion has shaped itself against other forms of political and cultural identity, especially Englishness. The consequences have been profound for the subsequent history and experience of the Irish in Britain.

The strategy of the British State and the Catholic Church has been incorporation; for example, through the education system. By incorporation I mean the active attempts by the State to regulate the expression and development of separate and distinctive identities by potentially oppositional groups in order to create a single nation-state. The incorporation of the Irish Catholic working class in Britain was based on strategies of denationalisation, and was not the consequence of an inevitable process of assimilation or integration. In Catholic schools, the priority placed on religious instruction, the effort which went into religious instruction, and the manner in which the religious pervaded all the rituals of school life were all part of a strategy for reinforcing the religious identity of the pupils at the expense of their national identity. There was a corresponding silence in the curriculum content of Catholic schools about Ireland (Hickman, 1995).

It is not surprising, therefore, that a contemporary account suggests the pressure experienced by the second generation to marginalise Irish identity. Tom Barclay, in his memoirs of a bottlewasher, recounts his childhood in Leicester in the 1850s and 1860s. After describing his mother's recitation of old bardic legends and laments, he continues:

But what had I to do with all that? I was becoming English. I did not hate things Irish, but I began to feel that they must be put away; they were inferior to things English. . . . Outside the house everything was English: my catechism, lessons, prayers, songs, tales, games. . . . Presently I began to feel ashamed of the jeers and mockery and criticism (Hollen-Lees, 1979:190).

'Becoming English' was not based on an inevitable process of cultural assimilation but on acquiring a perception of the inferiority of Irishness compared with Englishness. The cultural pressures to become English and reject Irishness that Barclay cites primarily emanated from the Catholic Church. His world outside the home was defined by the Church and the school, and the latter contained textbooks which glorified England and were silent about Ireland. In another example, Bart Kennedy describes his Catholic schooling as being "taught a great deal about the glory of God and the glory of England, and very little about the art of reading and writing. . . . It was a great privilege to be born in England, the teacher said." (Fielding, 1993)

A low public profile for the Irish became characteristic in Britain as a result of these incorporatist strategies. One person I interviewed, when asked what the term Irish community meant to him, said, 'hidden people'. This low public profile is the main achievement of the state and institutional response to the Irish presence in nineteenth-century Britain. For example, Catherine Ridgeway, discussing her early years living in England in the late 1920s and early 1930s, commented:

During that period I didn't mix much with Irish people. Mostly English. I think my uncle and aunt put me off. They said, "Don't get involved in Irish clubs or anything like that", because there was still the political background all the time. As the years went on and I was learning more about the political situation, I still didn't get involved, because you always had at the back of your mind that if anything crops up and you are involved, you might be deported or something like this (Lennon, 1988:50).

This quotation, and there are many others to support it, demonstrates that the low public profile is not just a product of events in Northern Ireland since 1968. The Irish in Britain have been positioned as a potential political and social threat since the Act of Union in 1801 brought Ireland into the United Kingdom.

It was the expulsion of a specific sector of the Irish peasantry, almost exclusively Catholics, that became represented as the problem of Irish migration in Britain. This occurred despite the fact that for over two hundred years a range of social classes have migrated from Ireland to Britain, including both Protestants and Catholics. This process of construction of the Irish 'minority', however, does not solely rest on the fact that historically the structural location of the majority of Irish Catholic migrants has been as part of the casual, unskilled and semi-skilled working class. As important in understanding the 'place' of the problematised 'Irish' is the discursive effects of Anglo-Irish colonial relations and their articulation with the religious signification of British nationalism. In that context it is unsurprising that references to the Irish community in Britain in nineteenth- and twentieth-century discourses usually refer to working-class Irish Catholics, part of whose response has been to construct a community life based on the very features that encapsulated the threat they represented: religion, national politics

and class organisation. Obviously, at different times and in different contexts these elements of ‘community’ are articulated together differently.

The incorporation of the nineteenth-century Irish immigrants was never completely successful because, although the state and its agencies managed to regulate the expression of Irish identity, it was not able to eradicate it from all those of Irish descent. Identity is an arena of contestation, and the result for many was a complex identity with different elements to the fore in different contexts. Both these points are illustrated by Anne Higgins, who was born in Manchester in the 1930s. This is how she described her childhood:

We were under a kind of siege being Irish Catholics in Manchester in the thirties and forties. We lived initially in a very poor inner-city district where there were many other Irish families. The parish school we went to had mainly Irish teachers and pupils, we knew Irish Catholic families in the street, we met Irish people at the church, and we didn't have to associate with English people if we didn't want to. In point of fact, my mother made friends easily and a next-door neighbour who was a staunch English Protestant became her best friend in no time, but we mixed mainly with other Irish people (Lennon, 1988:146).

Reflecting on her own identity at the time of being interviewed in the 1980s, she said:

My religion, political beliefs and national identity were all inter-related when I was a child. I've had to rethink my position on all of these over the years but I'm glad I have been able to carry with me, much of what was important to me as a child (Lennon, 1988:155).

Anne Higgins speaks for many in this statement. Identity is not fixed, it changes over time and in different circumstances. But the elements she refers to—national identity (Irish), religion (Catholic) and political beliefs (support for the Labour party)—hardly deviate from what clearly emerge as the chief characteristics of the readers of the *Irish Post*, the biggest-selling newspaper for the Irish in Britain, in its recent survey (*Irish Post*, 5th December 1992 to 16th January 1993). The proclaimed Irish identity, Catholicism and to a lesser extent support for the Labour party of the mid-twentieth-century migrants are rooted in the material basis of the 1950s migration and settlement in Britain. The experience of the emigrants of that period can be understood in terms of the co-existence and intersection of their class position (both in Ireland and in Britain) with their ethnicity (as asserted by them, be it in the Countries associations of the 1950s or the welfare or cultural organisations of the 1980s, and as assigned to them by their continuing problematisation as a social and political threat). The imagined community of being Irish in Britain, as so far discussed, is one that has been constituted by the sense of a forced migration and the differences and boundaries which were immanent in the problematisation of Irish immigrants. The making of a sense of community for this

generation of migrants at some level has been secured through a common experience of loss (Barber, 1992). This is the concrete reality of a distinct (although not homogeneous) community.

It is important to emphasise another aspect of community or cultural identity, one which recognises that as well as many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are' or 'what we have become'. Cultural identities, far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, are subject to the continuous 'play' of culture and power. Every regime of representation is a regime of power, and the dominant regimes of colonial experience had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as 'Other'. This inner expropriation of cultural identity can cripple and distort if it is not resisted. Cultural identities, therefore, are points of identification which are made within discourses of history and culture, and therefore are not essences but positionings (Hall, 1990).

In Britain, the experience of anti-Irish disadvantage and discrimination has exerted its own influence over the development of Irish identity. Thus the particular articulation of religion, class and national identity that historically has constituted the communal identity of being Irish in Britain can be understood as, in part, an aspect of this resistance of colonial regimes of representation. Irish identity was also formed in resistance to a racist British nationalism, for which Irish migrants were a specific Other. In other words, individuals and collectivities that are prey to racism (its 'objects') find themselves constrained to see themselves as a community (Balibar, 1991). For example, during the past twenty years stereotypes and problematising discourses about the Irish have led to the toleration of the civil liberties abuses, which amount to a form of 'state racism', sustained by Irish people in Britain through the operation of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). In 1974, after the IRA carried out the Birmingham pub bombings in England, the Prevention of Terrorism Act was rushed through Parliament. It gave the Secretary of State considerable new powers to control the movement of people between Ireland and Great Britain. The Act provided extensive powers to establish a comprehensive system of port controls, and a process of internal exile which gives the Secretary of State the power to remove people who are already living in Great Britain to either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.

Although the legislation was extended in 1984 to cover international terrorism, the port powers were devised, and have principally been applied, to control Irish people travelling between Britain and Ireland (Hillyard, 1993). The Prevention of Terrorism Act is '... a discriminatory piece of law in that it is directed primarily at one section of the travelling public. In effect it means that Irish people in general have a more restrictive set of rights than other travellers. In this sense, the Irish community as a whole is a 'suspect community' (Hillyard, 1993:13). The evidence suggests that the use of the powers is targeted at two particular groups: principally, young men living in Ireland and Irish people living in Britain. The introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism Act created a dual system of criminal justice in Britain.

Of the 7,052 who had been detained under the Act by the end of 1991, 6,097, or 86 per cent, have been released without any action being taken against them (Hillyard, 1993). People are suspects primarily because they are Irish. The usefulness of the PTA has always hinged on the fact that it can suppress political activity, build up information on Irish people and intimidate the whole Irish community.

A nun who was very active in the campaigns to get people like the Guildford Four (four people wrongfully imprisoned for an IRA bombing at Guildford in England) and the Birmingham Six (six people wrongfully imprisoned for the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings) released has recorded the following account of the pressures on Irish people, especially in the 1970s and early 1980s:

There were widespread arrests. . . . People picked up under the PTA had no rights whatsoever in those early days. They disappeared. Eventually, we found out that they could be held for seven days. Police denied that they were holding people. Detainees were questioned at all hours, day and night, and solicitors were not allowed in. It was a very anxious time for the families of those detained. . . . It was terrible from 1975 to 1981. That was the worst period; I call it the 'bad time'. Police with dogs, guns and vans swooped on houses in the early hours of the morning, frightening young children, damaging property and making innocent law-abiding citizens the targets of suspicion in their streets and neighbourhoods. If they were any way involved, and when I say 'involved', I mean any way Irish at all, they were raided or taken in (Lennon, 1998:196).

The way in which the PTA was implemented fueled anti-Irish racism, with the oft-repeated injunctions of the police after various incidents to 'Keep an eye on Irish neighbours and watch out for Irish accents'. In the campaigns in the late 1980s to obtain the release of the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six, many Irish people in Britain (and critically some British people) who often had very different views on events in Northern Ireland came together to right these self-evident injustices. In such circumstances, a sense of community is fostered out of particular historical experiences and in response to specific social constructions of the Irish in Britain. Cultural identity, however, also represents hybridity. In this emphasis the diaspora experience necessarily recognises heterogeneity and diversity, because identity lives with and through difference. Compared with the late 1970s and 1980s, in the 1990s there is a greater representation of the Irish 'community' as diverse, if we can take the changes in reportage in the Irish Post (the bestselling newspaper for the Irish in Britain) as one gauge of this. In the early 1980s, references to Irish women's groups were at best nervous; nowadays they are routine. The area of sensitivity today, in many Irish arenas, including the Irish Post, is much more likely to be acknowledgment of the existence and campaigns of Irish gay and lesbian groups.

These examples, though, still refer to the 1940s–60s rural emigrants from the Republic of Ireland and their children. They are not, however, the only elements in the

Irish population in Britain (nor were they ever the only element), although they still remain the largest grouping. The other major constituent elements are those who have migrated from the Northern Ireland, Protestant and Catholic, and the large flow of migrants from the Republic in the past ten years. Compared with the nineteenth-century, the experience of any Protestant from Northern Ireland coming to Britain, but especially to England, is very different. Anyone with a northern accent is viewed as Irish. There is hardly any research published about them as a group, although some studies are now underway. But the numbers from Northern Ireland have increased substantially in the last twenty years, and they form a significant element in what constitutes being Irish in Britain today.

However, the largest augmentation of the Irish population in Britain has come from the Republic of Ireland since the early 1980s. Much has been made of the fact that these migrants are very different from the 1940s–60s generation who left Ireland. The recent migrants have higher levels of educational qualifications and in the main are more likely to come from urban backgrounds. Some of these differences have been exaggerated, but nevertheless, this migration is significantly different from the previous two main phases in the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. For example, it is assumed that attitudes of the new migrants to the Catholic Church are different, and it is expected that this is bound to have an impact on what constitutes ‘community’ for the Irish in Britain. There have been a number of studies of these new migrants in terms of employment, housing, etc., but only a small number which examine attitudes and perspectives, especially about religion and national identity. One study focused on recent migrants of largely working-class origin from the Republic, in their twenties and thirties who left Ireland without a Leaving Certificate. Contradictory sentiments about Catholicism emerge from their responses. Many of the new migrants from the Republic make a direct link between Catholicism and unhappiness, and bemoan the impact they perceive Catholicism to have on their own lives and on Irish society as a whole. But for many it would appear that although they have jettisoned their adherence to Catholic beliefs, they recognise that Catholicism has had a part in shaping their Irish identity. These responses prompt the speculation that the respondents have a strong sense of Irish identity as apart from Catholicism, but that Catholicism touches their lives because of its place in Irish society and politics, and the role it has played historically in the Irish community of which they are now a part (McGlacken, 1992).

Another study indicates that young Irish middle-class migrants comment, whether from the North or the South, that they find Britain ‘shockingly secular’. A sense of spirituality, although not necessarily attachment to organised religion, emerges as an important marker that differentiates the Irish from the English. None of these Irish migrants described themselves as an agnostic or an atheist (Kells, 1995). This sample was markedly more middleclass than the other, and although both samples are small, they suggest that further research in this area would be fruitful. Research needs to be carried out on the repercussions for the Irish community in Britain of the changing role of religion as a part of Irish national and

cultural identities, against a backdrop of the secularisation of Irish society and the changes in Anglo-Irish relations heralded by the current peace process.

Conclusion

I set out at the beginning to indicate a framework for understanding the basis of community and within that context establish what is meant by an Irish community. Broadly, I have situated the discussion within the context of the inevitable problematic that immigrant groups encounter of coming to terms with and making something new of the cultures and economic location they come to inhabit, without simply assimilating. Until the late 1960s, the agenda in Britain was assimilation/incorporation. The strong incorporatist tendencies of British national culture made an indelible mark on the experience of Irish migrants to Britain, and still shape the positioning of the Irish within that national culture.

The agenda, however, is now about plurality; cultural diversity is the hallmark of post-modernity, and it is now more apparent that symbols that represent the differences and boundaries that constitute the Irish community in Britain do not necessarily have the same meaning for all Irish people or those of Irish descent. This differentiation is a strength rather than a weakness. The greatest danger surely arises from forms of national and cultural identity that attempt to secure their identity by adopting closed versions of culture and community. The point is that 'community' is highly symbolised, with the consequence that members of the community can invest it with their often very different selves. Its character is sufficiently malleable that it can accommodate all its members' selves. The imagined community which divides the world between 'us' and 'them' is maintained by a whole system of symbolic 'border guards'. These border guards are used as shared cultural resources with shared collective positioning vis-à-vis other collectivities. They can provide the collectivity members with 'imagined communities', but also with 'communicative communities'. Membership in a people consists in the ability to communicate more effectively, and over a wider range of subjects, with members of one large group than with other outsiders (Anthias, 1992). So although people will have different imaginings of the 'community' in their heads, some symbols or practices will unite larger groups of them, effectively forming alliances on an ethnic basis. Question marks remain over Irish identity in Britain in this respect, but there is no doubt it is a more inclusive notion of community than in the past. The essentialised Irish community which was formed in resistance to anti-Irish racism and in opposition to constructions of English/British identity entailed 'silences' which an emphasis on hybridity allows now to be 'voiced'.

References

- Anderson, Benedict (1991) *Imagined Communities*, London:Verso.
Anthias, F., & Yuval-Davis, N. (1992) *Racialised Boundaries*, London:Routledge.

- Balibar, Etienne (1991) 'Is There a Neo-racism?' in Balibar, E & Wallerstein, I (1991) (eds) *Race, Nation, Class*, London:Verso.
- Barber, Fiona (1991) 'No Great and Recognisable Events: The Representation of Emigration, Gender and Class' in O'Leary, C (1991) (ed) *Wave/Another Country: Irish Exile and Dispossession*, Huddersfield: Huddersfield Art Gallery.
- Feuchtwang, Stephan (1992) 'Where You Belong' in Cambridge, A & Feuchtwang, S (1992) (eds) *Where You Belong*, Aldershot:Avebury Press.
- Fielding, Steven (1993) *Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England 1880-1939* Buckingham:Open University Press.
- Hall, Stuart (1990) 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' in Rutherford, J (1990) (ed) *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London:Lawrence & Wishart.
- Hall, Stuart (1991) 'Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities' in King, A. D (1991) (ed) *Culture, Globalisation and World System*, London:Macmillan.
- Hall, Stuart (1992) *Our Mongrel Selves*, *New Statesman and Society*, 19 June.
- Harris, Jonathan (1991) 'Passages:Transportations' in O'Leary, C (1991) (ed) *Wave/Another Country: Irish Exile and Dispossession*, Huddersfield:Huddersfield Art Gallery.
- Hickman, Mary J. (1995) *Religion, Class and Identity*, Aldershot:Avebury Press.
- Hillyard, Paddy (1992) *Suspect Community: People's Experience of the Prevention of Terrorism Acts in Britain*, London: Pluto Press.
- Hollen-Lees, Lynn (1979) *Exiles of Erin: Irish Immigrants in Victorian London*, Manchester:Manchester University Press.
- Irish Post (5th December 1992 -16th January 1993) *Survey of the Readership*. (published weekly), London.
- Kells, Mary (1995) *Ethnic Identity Amongst Young Irish Middle Class Migrants in London*, Irish Studies Centre Occasional Papers Series, No. 7, London:University of North London Press.
- Lennon, M., McAdam, M. & O'Brien, J. (1988) *Across the Water: Irish Women's Lives in Britain*, London:Virago.
- McGlacken, Sinead (1992) unpublished research dissertation for B.A. Honors Degree, Irish Studies Centre, London:University of North London Press.



Maggie O'Neil and Bea Tobolewska



Renewing Methodologies for Socio-Cultural



Research: Global Refugees, Ethno-mimesis and the Transformative Role of Art

Introduction

'The Splinter in your eye is the best magnifying glass' (Adorno, 1978:50)

The above statement encourages us to focus upon what is ordinarily overlooked, the small scale, the minutiae of lived experiences. In focusing upon the small scale we can often reach a better understanding of the broader picture. For Adorno, it is only by trying to say the unsayable, the 'outside of language', the mimetic, the sensual, the non-conceptual that we can approach a 'politics' which undercuts identity thinking and criss crosses binary thinking and resists appropriation.

This paper seeks to explore renewed methodologies for writing/doing ethnography in the twentyfirst century by developing hybrid texts, by drawing upon the inter-relation/inter-textuality between art and ethnography – as ethno-mimesis (see O'Neill 2001). The research discussed in this paper was conducted in participation with a community association, the 'Bosnia- Herzegovina Association' and a community arts organisation, 'City Arts'. Our project draws upon processes of participatory action research (PAR) and participatory arts (PA) as praxis, as purposeful knowledge within the context of the need to raise awareness of the situation of refugees and asylum seekers; and to challenge myths and media stereotypes. PAR/PA is intentionally action-oriented, performative and progressive (O'Neill et al., 2001). The project is also potentially regressive in that it may facilitate the transformation of pain into enjoyment, where suffering can simply be consumed or enjoyed and something of its horror is removed.

However, the research does not simply memorialise the testimonies of the participants but through re-telling, re-writing, re-constructing and re-imagining the loss, displacement and exile faced by the people involved; and re-presenting their stories or testimonies through artforms, processes of re-generation and re-construction emerge and act as a spur to the processes of community development in the East Midlands. Challenging and resisting dominant images and stereotypes of 'refugee's and 'asylum seekers' documented through the mass media can also serve to raise awareness, educate and empower individuals and groups. The life history interviews with the participants in the research throw up a number of major themes: their lives before the war; through the war and finally living in the East Midlands, feeling safe and building communities.

All but one of the participants in the research were living their lives as Bosnian Muslims in or near to Banja Luka when war broke out in Bosnia. They arrived in

Britain mostly as refugees from Red Cross camps in Croatia. There were five participants in this aspect of the research, three women and two young men. One of the women, from Croatia, is studying for a degree, and came to Britain on a student visa. The two young men are attending school, currently one is doing his A levels and the other his GCSE's. The two women are attending college and are very active members of the community association.

This project is situated in the tension between a modernist project of transformation through praxis and a postmodern project of hybridity, intertextuality and performative praxis. Hillis-Miller (1992) argues against binaries (as in the reversibility of the politicizing of art into the aestheticizing of politics) and argues for new forms of consolidation and solidarity which can develop into processes of inclusion and belonging. To illustrate, the work of Exiled Writers Ink! is one such example. Jennifer Langer, herself the daughter of Jewish asylum seekers to England, started a writers group through her work in FE colleges in London. The group were given funding for basic expenses by the Arts Council and the London Arts Board to take their Exiled Writers Roadshow around the country. The Roadshow is a powerful reminder of the cultural contribution asylum seekers make and has become a valuable and inspirational resource and contribution by and for refugee communities. The work of Exiled Writers Ink! also helps bring important messages to the wider community that contradict very powerfully the damaging and stereotypical messages we receive from the press and can 'interpret' from some of the 'official' responses.

The role of the arts in processes of inclusion and community development is vital and we argue that a combination of PAR and PA as ethno-mimesis is a useful response.

Hybridity/Intertextuality

This paper combines socio-cultural theory; experience, through life stories; and practice (photographic forms) defined as ethno-mimesis to explore and better understand key themes and issues evolving from ethnographic work with refugees and asylum seekers from Bosnia-Herzegovina living in the East Midlands. A pilot project has been completed and we have begun a further twelve month project developing the work

The research stresses the importance of stories and storytelling. Walter Benjamin famously said that a fragment of a story of a life can tell us so much more than one hundred pages of information about a life. The work also stresses the importance of alternative ways of re-presenting these stories in visual form. We are interested in mimetic re-presentations; in exploring the language like quality of art. The research stresses the importance of working with people as subjects through PAR (participatory action research) and PA (participatory arts), which involves a social research methodology and a way of representing experience through artforms. The research process includes the stereotypical subjects of research as co-creators of the research. PAR/PA creates a space for the voices of the marginalised to become involved actively in change or transformation. The research also stresses the

important role that the imagination, art and aesthetics has in struggles for democratic transformations. For Drucilla Cornell (2000) the role of aesthetics in "the elaboration of new configurations of ideals in law and political philosophy" (p 7) is important. Moreover, in discussing rights and representation she tells us that "representations are imaginative acts in which we envision the world" (p4).

Our work in the East Midlands has helped to challenge stereotypes/myths and seeks to foster cultural citizenship – to foster belonging and inclusion. Our use of 'citizenship' draws upon Jan Pakulski's (1977) definition – the right to presence and visibility; the right to dignifying representation; and the right to identity and maintenance of lifestyle.

Global Refugees and the British Context

Kushner and Knox (1999) tell us that refugees are constructed as the problem, their social and spatial marginality mark them out as invisible and few are willing to face the moral responsibility for caring for them. Academics have been slow to respond to the importance of refugee studies; and this work has been carried out largely with a social policy focus.

Kushner and Knox (1999) also tell us that several stages have been identified as part of the refugee experience from study with Chileans:

- feelings of confusion and disorientation (mixed with a sense of relief and elation at having escaped danger) and feelings of guilt at abandoning those left at home;
- attempts at settlement can be met with disillusion when expectations and hopes are not met ;
- problems may be exacerbated by emotional anxieties stemming from loss and isolation – loss of social status, and lack of political participation compared with the levels before flight;
- adaptation and acculturation may take years depending on age, language, culture, gender, whether one is alone or part of a family. Indeed, Kushner and Knox feel it may not be achieved until the 2nd or 3rd generation.

The identity of 'refugee' is problematic – it shifts as Kushner and Knox say from proud and self sufficient to shameful and a crime, and ultimately it can represent failure. The need to achieve a sense of belonging is crucial and the Bosnians achieve this, in part, within the context of a post kinship diaspora by building a community association, and inviting their neighbours to join them in festivals and celebrations, and by being 'inclusive' and neighbourly.

At the point of reception into the UK asylum seekers abstract from history. There is a 'being in exile.' For many, this exile is combined with cultural repression, illustrated in the troubles they experience in the UK. The recent Asylum Act October (2000) instantiates in law a rational individualist diaspora, producing instrumental thinking in operation. In examining the governments approach to responding to

asylum seekers it becomes clear that the State wants individuals/individualistic tourists to enter Britain, not families, or individuals seeking asylum. To this experience is added their post-kinship diaspora, bringing archaic depths loss of kinship, history, and loss of politics.

From the late 1990s Britain has been criticised by human rights groups, and comes near the bottom of the league table for granting asylum applications. The latest Asylum and Immigration Act of 2000, defined as firm but fair by Jack Straw, has created a tier of destitute people. Opposition to the term 'asylum seeker' is marked by racism alongside profiteering. Increasingly complex procedures enable a tokenistic refugee policy when the global refugee situation continues to escalate. The current Act engenders a 'culture of disbelief' towards asylum seekers – they can be sent back to a third 'safe' country if they travelled through it to reach the UK; they are dispersed in clusters; they have 1 choice accommodation (no choice); they live on vouchers (worth 70% of state benefit) – to be exchanged at certain supermarkets (not the cheapest) and a no change policy is in existence (supermarkets do not give change if the voucher amounts to more than the goods purchased), although the government have been moved to review this in the face of the overwhelming evidence and reaction against this policy; or they are given board and lodgings but no cash; and have no rights to employment.

The weight of evidence from history and from experience is that refugee groups re-vitalise our cities, arts, culture, economy and polity. How many of our parents, grandparents, great-grandparents were refugees or migrants? The important buzz word of the National Arts Board in the UK is 'cultural diversity' – which is surely enhanced by welcoming refugees and asylum seekers.

War in Bosnia

Donna Hughes et al. (1995) describes Bosnia as the most ethnically mixed republic of the former Yugoslavia and although conflicts have been driven on all sides by nationalism it was the Serbs with greater military force who initiated "ethnic cleansing", the forceful removal of Croats and Muslims. Banja Luka was scene to the worst excesses the mass slaughter of Muslim and Croat civilians. Muslims were thrown out of their houses, those who escaped were sent to the camps – food supplies to the region and camps were sporadic and people suffered because of this. Holocaust survivor Rabbi Hugo Gryn stated just before his death in 1996 that historians "will call the twentieth century not only the century of great wars, but also the century of the refugee. Almost nobody at the end of the century is where they were at the beginning. It has been an extraordinary period of movement and upheavals" (Kushner and Knox 1999: 1). The extraordinary period of war, exile, and re-settlement for those participating in the research in the East Midlands is embedded in the history of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was a multi-national socialist state made up of six republics – Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia and two autonomous provinces within Serbia Vojvodina and

Kosovo. The demise of Communism in East Central Europe and growing nationalism among the republics led to Croatia and Slovenia declaring independence in 1991. War broke out but the fighting is described by historians as longer and bloodier in Croatia. In April 1992 (three months after a peace-keeping plan enforced by UN troops was accepted) Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence and the response from President Milosovic was war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In 1993 the United States Committee for Refugees said:

In B-H the most extreme elements of the nationalist Serb community - aided and abetted by their patron in Serbia (Milosevic) have chosen to wipe out, liquidate, remove rather than live with those who are somehow 'different'. Their methods are crude, but effective: artillery barrages of civilian centres; forced population movements; appropriation of property. Those who survive and are not driven out face imprisonment, rape, forced separation from family. Nationalist Croat forces and, to a lesser extent, troops of the mostly Muslim Bosnian army have also committed violent heinous acts (Hughes et al. 1995:511).

Hughes tells us that largely through mass rallies and the state-controlled media people were taught to hate those who were different.

It all began with "sweet" stories about national states, national rights, life within ethnic boundaries" (Women's Parliament 20 May 1992). Nationalism was constructed on a highly imagined community inhabited by people whose identities had little to do with accurate history, geography or real attributes (Hughes et al. 1995:511)

Banja Luka was scene to "the worst excesses" the "mass slaughter of Muslims and Croat civilians" (Misha Glenny, 1996:204). The International Red Cross and UN High Commission for Refugees were instrumental in securing the safety of the people in camps and evacuating them to Croatia and "to other parts of unwilling Europe" (Glenny, 1996:208).

Muslim and Croat women were herded into schools, hotels, warehouses, camps and raped repeatedly, the EC commission estimated 20,000 women were raped. In Vogosca near Sarajevo, Croat and Muslim women were killed following rape. At Omarska women worked during the day and raped according to a schedule once every 4 nights. Serbian paramilitary conducted systematic rape against Muslims and Croats. Reports claim that the raping and prostitution of women were also perpetrated by the UN 'peace keeping' forces (see Hughes et al. 1995; Glenny, 1996). One of the participants in our research tells of his time in Omarska.

Conditions in Omarska and Kerater..it was terrible hard..indescribable what they were doing.. all the horrible things..beating..they didn't give them anything to eat..lots of people died from beating..or no food..they lost so much weight..some lost

30-40 kilos..some could hardly walk anymore..they couldn't wash..there was like an epidemic..nits..some people were very hurt as well..... there were a few soldiers that were OK but most were really nasty..sometimes they would cut someones ear just to check if the knife is sharp enough..and you had to watch..after all that time they were not even scared anymore..they were waiting everyday to have their turn..they were taken and beaten..they couldn't even know where they took and killed the people..

Methodology: Ethno-mimesis

Participatory action research (PAR) provides a renewed focus upon the role and purpose of academic involvement in the public sphere, especially in relation to facilitating processes of social inclusion and re-generation with and for the communities involved in the research. The impact of this research upon social policy (via the inclusion of the stereotypical 'subjects' of research usually seen as 'outsiders' or 'outlaws') may appear to be small but has much wider repercussions in terms of the impact upon the groups and communities involved. For example, PAR promotes: individuals and groups self esteem; facilitates the development of skills and empowerment, and the sense of ownership in creating change, in creating praxis. Praxis is understood here as 'knowledge for', or purposeful knowledge. The research that led to the production of this text takes an ethnographic approach to working with groups of refugees and asylum seekers rooted in the principles of participatory action research. Interpretive ethnography grounded in the stories of the participants and co-creators of the research (participatory research) rooted in critical theory is our chosen method. This method produces cultural texts that re-present and re-imagine the 'refugee experience' through ethno-mimesis. Ethno-mimesis is a combination of ethnography and artforms. Life story interviews are re-presented in artforms by the participants/co-researchers, facilitated by artists, through participatory arts. Ethno-mimesis is therefore a combination of ethnography, participatory action research and participatory arts. Such hybrid methodologies can hopefully re-present the contradictions of oppression and the utter complexity of our lived relations in the transition between the twentieth and twentifirst centuries.

For Norman Denzin the new ethnographies can help to transform the 21st century because "a text must do more than awaken moral sensibilities, it must move the other and the self to action" (1997:xxi). Alternative re-presentations, visual re-presentations create multivocal, dialogical texts, and can make visible 'emotional structures and inner experiences' (Kuzmics, 1997: 9) which may 'move' the audience through what can be described as 'sensuous knowing' or mimesis (Taussig, 1993).

The inter-relationship between research and praxis is fraught with tensions. Renewed methodologies which incorporate the voices of citizens through scholarly or civic research as participatory research can not only serve to enlighten and raise our awareness of certain issues but could also produce critical reflexive texts which may help to mobilize social change. Ethno-mimesis seeks to speak in empathic

ways with people and communities, re-presented through cultural texts in ways which counter valorizing discourses, and the reduction of the Other to a cipher of the oppressed/ marginalised/exploited.

Adorno, mimesis and the transformative power of art

The key concept used, drawing upon Adorno and Benjamin, is 'mimesis' and the dialectic of mimesis and constructive rationality. Following Adorno 'mimesis' does not simply mean naive imitation, but rather feeling, sensuousness, spirit, the playfulness of our being in the world in critical tension to constructive rationality, reason, the 'out there' sense of our being in the world. This inter-relationship between mimesis and constructive rationality is the central dialectic in *Aesthetic Theory* (1984; 1997), his unfinished book which laments the growing rationality and the retreat of mimesis in an almost totally administered society.

For Adorno, the effects of instrumental reason, real domination and the importance given to use-value via exchange value in social relations and the subsequent disenchantment of the world depict almost total domination. The only hope lay in art and interpretive philosophy as critical theory. The usefulness of Adorno's oeuvre is that his work give's voice to the critical, moral, creative potential of non-identity thinking, kulturkritik, and the social role of art in dialectical tension with the role of subjective experience, within the context of a social world marked by identity thinking and instrumental reason. Robert Witkin (1998) concludes his book on *Adorno and Music* as follows. "No one has done more to persuade us of the moral dimension of all cultural construction and of the sociality that is the basis of anything truly creative and liberative" (p200).

Hilde Heynon (1998) writes:

The mimetic moment of cognition has to do with the possibility of approaching the world in a different way than by rational-instrumental thinking. Mimesis, however, is not simply equivalent to a visual similarity between works of art and what they represent. The affinity Adorno refers to lies deeper. It can be recognised, for example, in an abstract painting which, in mimetic fashion, depicts something of reality's alienating character (p175).

Taussig understands "mimesis as both the faculty of imitation and the deployment of that faculty in sensuous knowing" (1993:68).

Global Refugees: participatory arts, exhibition, and legacies.

Our project combines life history interviews and artforms to explore and represent the experience of being in exile, a refugee, an asylum seeker in the UK. Although the wars in Yugoslavia have been documented in the mass media, individual accounts are rarely given room for articulation. The visual art aspect of the project involved three artists, Maggy Milner, Karen Fraser and Simon Cunningham. The aim

was to focus the visual work created by the individuals in the group on a series of three themes, representing their experiences and life a) before the war, b) during the war and subsequent transition, and c) after the war and settling in the East Midlands. The main responsibility was to ensure that the voices of the refugees were heard and seen by the non-refugee viewer. The end results were displayed at the Bonington Gallery Foyer, Nottingham Trent University, throughout November 1999, encompassing Refugee Week, and Staffordshire University Art and Design Gallery in January 2001.

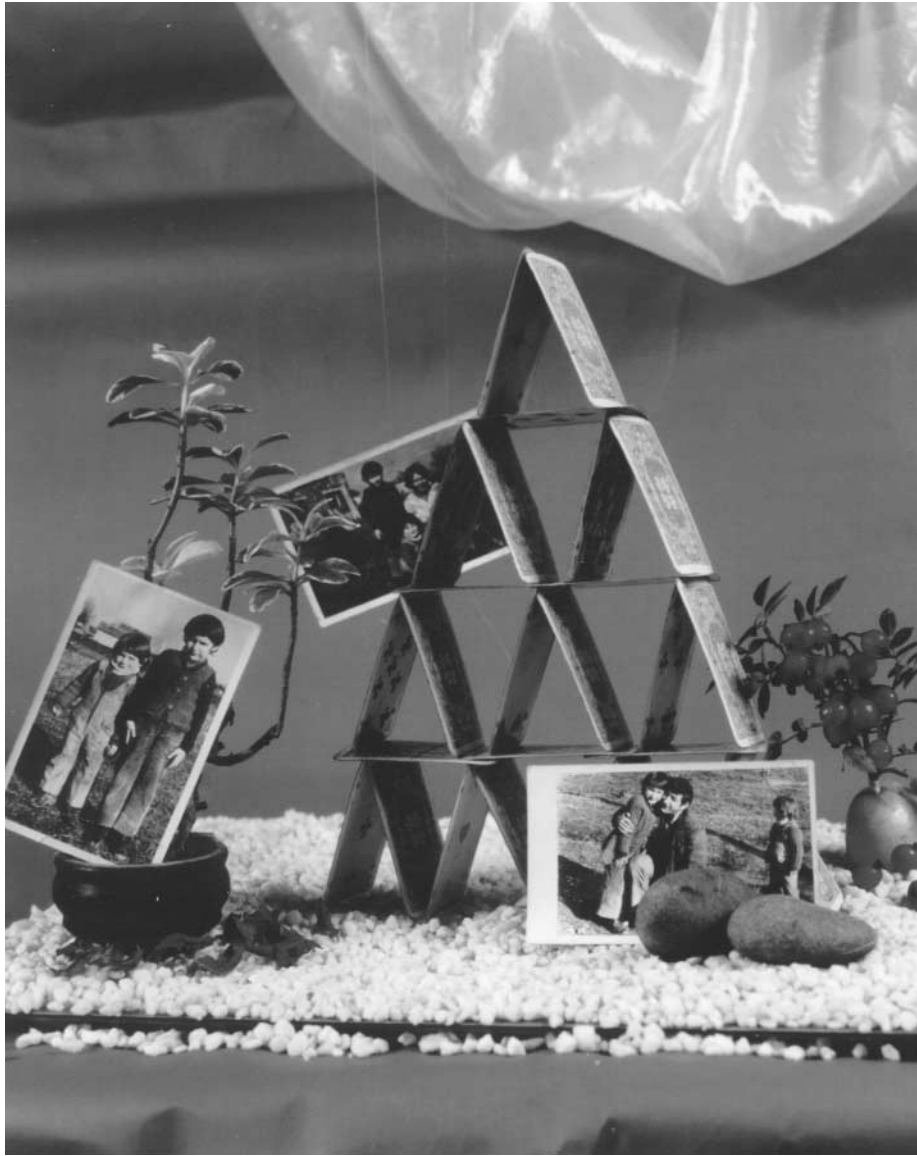
The artists worked with the participant group to plan the project using photographs, art books, and examples of their own work – thereby showing examples of what art might be. The Launch/Private View brought together the Bosnian community living in the East Midlands creating a forum for debate and a palpable sense of pride in what had been achieved.

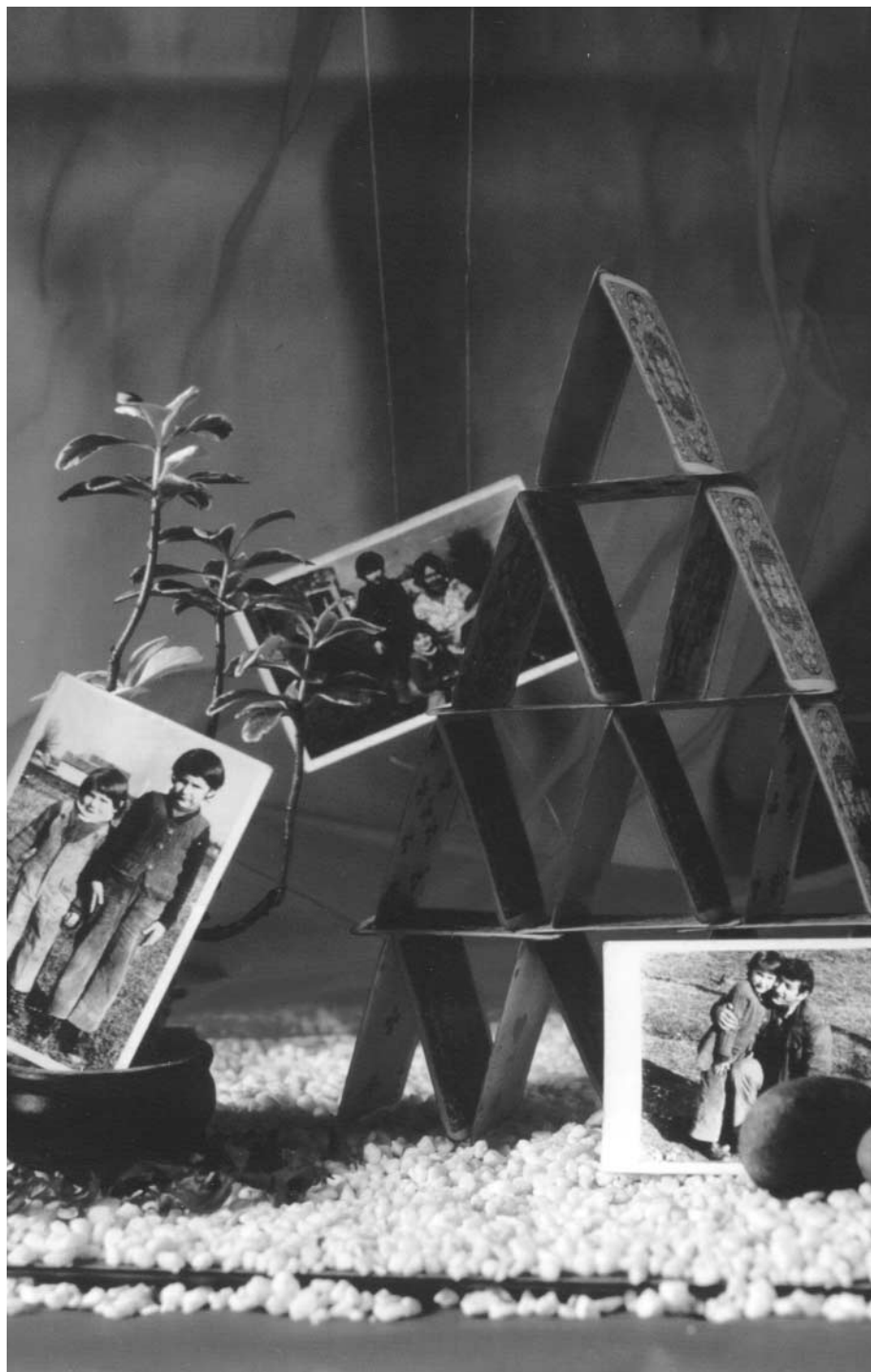
Combining visual documentation with the research project enabled the participants to articulate responses that were difficult to verbalise and to compress multiple viewpoints into a singular framework. Collective activity reduced the isolatory nature of 'being refugees' and the empathic knowledge between themselves was important when faced with working with the artists, who were initially strangers. Many stories emerged through the visual process. Giving oral narratives of their experiences had opened up a dialogue, and had in a sense started the ball rolling for the artwork, as though something positive needed to come out of revealing their experience. For instance: the project enabled (F) to recount the help she received from her Serbian neighbours and through the visual documentation process she was also able to articulate her thanks in return. Archiving these experiences therefore reinserts these complexities into otherwise rather flat canonical versions of history.

Two young men who produced a 'Timeline' in the group were keen to work together, being from the same area of Bosnia. Having met in the UN camp, they had already shared many experiences and were keen to discuss these. The boys used images and objects that related to their experiences, which they could then photograph. Through subsequent sessions they discussed and photographed various objects that they brought in, they enjoyed telling the related stories as an integral part of photographing the objects and developing the work. The boys began to develop graphic awareness, utilising images, text and drawing, which encouraged them to illustrate their experiences as a visual timeline of a sequence of events.

(V) whose images are included here, created a series of 5 digital images visually exploring her experiences and the situations she and her family were placed in, using the metaphor of a house of cards – a pack of cards was one of the items that she managed to take with her. Another participant created a 'washing line' on which were pegged three groups of three nappies, bearing images taken from her personal photographs. Each group represented one of the three main themes; before the war; through the war and living in England.











The role of the artist throughout was very much one of an active listener and enabler. This approach enabled the Bosnians to voice their thoughts and experiences and to evaluate these as an on going process as the work progressed.

Legacies

The BHCA made a successful 'Millennium Festival Awards for All' bid leading to a celebratory event with traditional food and music and inviting the wider local community. Part 2 of the project 'Global Refugees' is now underway, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board. The current project is focusing upon traditional Bosnian handcrafts. We are working with contemporary artists to bridge and merge ideas and processes and to assist community development processes through arts based work. The work uses life stories, textiles and photography, and the community darkroom, with skills being shared amongst us.

A further development is also 'Towards A Cultural Strategy' Research Exchange Partnership, funded by the Arts and Humanities research board between Maggie (Staffordshire University) and Bea (City Arts, Nottingham), focusing on the current cultural provision and planning for refugees and asylum seekers in the East Midlands region. Other legacies include a changed focus of 'City Arts' work long term. A focus is now aimed at supporting refugee artists (of which there are quite a few in the East Midlands) to utilise their skills and overcome blocks presented by language, lack of knowledge of the system, or lack of access to funding.

The interviews with the participants show a number of common themes; their life before the war ; through the war, displaced, catapulted out of history, in exile; and in the UK involving re-settling and building communities. The artforms attempt to challenge myths and stereotypes, remind the viewer of the fragility of peace and possibly our own taken for granted assumptions about our lives and lived cultures. (V) said at the opening of the exhibition at Staffordshire University:

we want to show how quickly things can change and how much we hope this will never happen to you. Everything changed so quickly. One morning my best friend said that her parents had told her she could not play with me anymore because I was Muslim. Soon afterwards my father arranged safe passage across the border and we ended up in a refugee camp in Croatia. We were then given a choice: Britain or America. My mother chose Britain because it is closer to home.

V's work completed with the help of photographer Maggy Milner depicts a house of cards reflecting the fragile nature of our lives that can be thrown into turmoil very quickly. It is hoped that our collaborative work serves to educate, inform, empower and illustrate the vital role the arts have in developing opportunities for renewal, for creating or facilitating 'belonging', for re-imagining and re-building identities and communities.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the work of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Association and the three artists who facilitated the art work: Maggy Milner, Karen Fraser and Simon Cunningham – all based in the East Midlands. We would also like to acknowledge the support of City Arts, Greg Foister community development worker for Nottingham City Council, and Staffordshire University School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Thanks also to Judith Rugg for editing the chapter.

References

- Adorno, T.W (1978) *Minima Moralia: reflections from a damaged life* translated by E, F, N Jephcott, London & New York: Verso
- Adorno, T.W (1984) *Aesthetic Theory* translated by Christian Lenhardt, London: Routledge
- Cornell, D (2000) *Just Cause: Freedom, Identity, and Rights* Maryland & Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield
- Denzin, N (1997) *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the Twenty-first Century*, London: Sage
- Glenny, M (1996) *The Fall of Yugoslavia* London & New York: Penguin
- Heynon, H (1999) 'Mimesis, Dwelling and Architecture: Adorno's relevance for a feminist theory of architecture' in O'Neill, M [ed] *Adorno, Culture and Feminism* London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Press
- Hillis-Miller, J (1992) *Illustration* London: Reaktion Books
- Hughes, D et al (1995) 'Feminist Resistance in Serbia' in *The European Journal of Women's Studies* Vol 2, Issue 4, November, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications
- Kushner, T and Knox, K (1999) *Refugees In An Age Of Genocide*, Frank Cass: London.
- Kusmics, H (1997) 'State Formation, economic development and civilisation in north western and central Europe' *Geschichte und Gegenwart* 16 (2), 80-91
- Langer, J [ed] (1997) *The Bend in the Road: Refugees Writing* Nottingham: Five Leaves Press
- O'Neill M et al (2001) 'Renewed Methodologies for social research: ethno-mimesis as performative praxis' in *Sociological Review* (forthcoming)
- O'Neill, M, Campbell, R, Webster, M and Green, K (2001) 'Prostitution, ethno-mimesis and Participatory Arts: Processes and Practices of Inclusion in 'Disciplines, Fields and Change in Art Education Volume 3, Art Therapy, Psychology and Sociology'', University of Central England: Article Press
- Pakulski, J (1977) 'Cultural Citizenship', *Citizenship Studies* 1 pp73-86
- Taussig, M (1993) *Mimesis and Alterity* London: Routledge
- Witkin, R (1995) *The Social Structure of Art* Cambridge: Polity Press

This second volume of the series 'Advances in Art and Urban Futures' brings together contributions from artists, sociologists, architects and cultural theorists in addressing the recoveries and reclamations being made within urban and rural landscapes as a result of the fallout of redevelopment in the twenty-first century. Texts include the examination of 'authentic' public space in Barcelona; the relationship of the work of Doris Salcedo to the unseen spaces in Birmingham; the implications of gender in the creation of The Wapping Project in East London; the self-representation of asylum-seekers from Bosnia – Herzegovina; the issue of the 'imagined' community in relation to the Irish in Britain; the significance of assemblage in the work of Mierle Laderman Ukeles and the global importance of local actions in collaborations between ecologists and artists. 'Recoveries and Reclamations' addresses some pertinent issues facing all those interested in a multi-disciplinary approach to developing critical interventions in public space.

Contributors

Jane Calow	Nicola Kirkham	Kirk Savage
Tim Collins	Malcolm Miles	Helen Stratford
Monica Degen	Maggie O'Neil	Paul Teedon
Mary J Hickman	Jane Rendell	Bea Tobolewska
Daniel Hinchcliffe	Judith Rugg	

intellect

www.intellect.net.com/