A place of their own.

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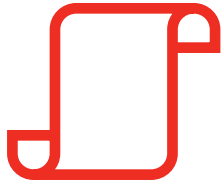
Multivoices: a script by researchers

1

JO: In this publication, researchers working in and across art, architecture, ethnography and creative writing discuss how multiple voices are activated and hosted in their work. Contributions are varied in style and include autobiographical experiences, project descriptions, the presentation of fieldwork and reflective writing. In many of the texts, artistic and creative methods—incorporating drawing, performance, photography and participatory mapping—have been designed to negotiate differing voices. Here value is placed on the creation of new, hybrid voices, which escape easy disciplinary delineation. In contrast, 'disciplining' voices have been held responsible for narrow understandings of academic fieldwork, the emergence of confessional writing as a form of critique, and more broadly the adoption of consumerist logic within higher education.

The term 'voice' is used to describe individual speech acts, literary texts and subject positions. It also offers a number of conceptual and concrete frameworks for imagining, articulating and valuing the formation of a collective (chorus). The act of giving voice to a group or idea has brought into question power relationships and how collective claims are negotiated and supported, especially when there is pressure to fit complex and multiple experiences into predetermined disciplinary or procedural expectations. The use of auto-biographical and autoethnographic 'I' voices reoccurs as a response to this, alongside the gradual acceptance of speaking subjects within research and practice.

Speaking with—and valuing—multiple voices, including autobiographical accounts, has frequently resulted in the blurring of life and work. As a result, 'the domestic' is considered beyond matters of private concern in a number of the projects discussed. The home

is considered as a space productive of knowledge in two very different ways: through the opening-up of family life to academic scrutiny, and through the development of original research methods to protect the domestic intimacy of research participants.

⎙

As part of PhD research into artist live/work projects I have been following a project called Artist House 45, which is both an artwork and house. I have embedded myself within East Street Arts, an artist-led organisation responsible for establishing and managing this project, an approach which has involved attending staff meetings, contributing to organisational away days and working part time from their main office in Leeds. My interest in incorporating multiple voices in research emerged from attempts to write about and through these embedded experiences.

⎙

A shower of glitter covers me, twinkling past my face if not caught by my hair. Glancing down, I notice that my lap is covered, my black jeans now gold. I am in Huddersfield, with East Street Arts; we have been placed into groups and tasked with the design of a pub through the course of a day-long pub crawl. Equipped with a participatory design pack, we have been instructed to co-design our dream pub, and one that East Street Arts might try to realise in the future.

Our pack includes pots of glitter, glitter sticks and glitter pens, stickers of cats, sparkly cut out lettering, felt tip pens, and £60, now spent, for rounds of beer. These were to be used to embellish the interior of a blank hand-drawn pub. Inevitably our pub was decorated with glitter, had lots of cats at the bar and hosted The Glitter Tits, a fictitious house band. A demonstration, if ever needed, that participatory designs are a product of the participatory tools and methods offered up for engagement. Glitter in hand, the mundane took a back seat and paper seemed less interesting than people.

Glitter falls free from my hair each time I scratch my head or tilt my gaze at speed. These distractions, I reminded myself on reflection, are behavioural clichés of the awkwardly removed researcher—along, of course, with introductions. I am observing East Street Arts, admiring as they travel and transform. And right now I am contributing, helping to deposit a trail. I am not an outside custodian with rigid instructions to find

meaningful things to sparingly and studiously embellish, draw attention to, ding (in theory). 'I wasn't expecting you to empty the whole container …' Is there a stable way out of this, my, position comfortably collapsed between participant and observer—abundant, clinging-on?

⎙

This publication developed out of a one-day symposium called 'Multivoices in research: co-interpreting art and architecture', which I organised on 6 May 2017. The symposium was structured around a shared meal to encourage open, direct and informal discussion as well as a series of invited presentations. Exploring how prepared contributions can continue to sit alongside convivial discussion and dialogue when live events were 'written up' or committed to print has been a central motivation for this book.

With this in mind, and working with the graphic designer Jon Cannon, I posed the question: how can multivoices share and negotiate (page) space?

2

JC: The main idea that runs throughout this document, is to use a simple two column text grid on each page, as a way to distinguish between the speakers' prepared presentation text, and the verbal responses and conversations shared afterwards by members of the group.

The presentation text is set in the left column, and the conversational response text is always set on the right. This allows us to play with time and narrative.

The idea is to mix the verbal responses from different times in the day into the text in order to create a new, seamless group conversation (or script if you will), without compromising the original presentations.

Finally, there is a performative element to this book in the form of *Scissors, paper, stone* by Vulpes Vulpes.

The handwritten text on both left and right pages (including the outside covers) is to be read aloud at the same time by two people, preferably with differently pitched voices, in the rhythm of 'scissors, paper, stone'. It is handwritten because it serves as a separate work to the presentation/response narrative and I want the performance to function in its own way, making each copy a Vulpes Vulpes performance.

3

MJC: I liked to call myself a writer before I did my PhD, and while I began to call myself an academic once I'd done my it, I recently drifted back to calling myself a writer. I never used or sympathised with the writerly concept of voice until I came to the final year of the five long years I took to complete my thesis, where, in a period of concentrated and intense effort associated with the impending five year deadline, I found an 'academic voice' and began to write in a way in which I would describe as direct, lucid and candid.

4

PM: In some disciplines, like being an artist, or from a feminist or located practice the 'I' voice is totally validated, but in others it feels like we are still having to justify it. 'This is proper research, this is real stuff!' But of course it is; we open out into the world as researchers, or artists or architects, or graphic designers.

5

MJC: A literary voice is a pattern of constraint that directs text. Academic voice is a series of unspoken practices and performances that guide its production. We can all produce words without a constraining voice, be that through writing or thinking, and we can do this without censure in a stream-of-consciousness way. I can speak now and I will speak freely. I will free-speak:

I can see the room and it is white and I can see the green and I can see those four things and really I am just describing the room and I can go over this and I can focus in on all your faces and maybe describe how you look to me or I can try and be imaginative and try and think about

something coming through the wall maybe a ghost surprising us and floating around the room and possessing us and throwing the tables over and we would all be dead and then what would happen?

Eventually I am going to stop, I sort of run out of places to go. But we can write like that, freewrite like that. We can talk like that too, but I don't think that this is speaking with a voice. It is only through adopting constraints on production (and that might be via editing in your head or on paper, through reflection) that we tame or temper this flow that we can just turn on whenever we speak and whenever we write.

One does wonder what is accessed when one goes into that state. My previous analogy of ghosts seems apt: free-speaking without pause or censure operates in a mystical or religious register, manifesting the spirit. It seems counter-intuitive to suggest that one could free-write, or free-speak, or produce words endlessly in an academic voice. That voice is disciplined. That voice commands a body of writers, all writing to purpose within the discipline, communicating with each other, with the past and with the future. Within the mass of academic voices which is a discipline, there's room of course for individual identities just as there is room for discussion, argument, difference, but there is also an implicit understanding of the conventions that must be followed, obeyed, when finding this voice within a chorus.

I catch myself advising students, especially PhD students who are struggling with writing academic prose, to keep going, to keep reading and writing, to keep letting go of their work, editing and deleting till their voice manifests. Almost like a ghost out of nowhere, suddenly, squinting back from the words on the page. I have been guilty of extolling this subtle possession, willing a communion with the discipline, like it was something vital and sacred.

The reason why I no longer call myself an academic is due to this relationship between discipline and voice. I began my PhD in mid-2005 and ended it in 2010. I saw, through this period, the entrenchment of the consumerist framework that had been threatening academia for the last twenty years. As a consequence, the discipline in which I learnt to write, Folklore, disappeared. The centre at which I studied, NATCECT (the National Centre for English Cultural Tradition, University of

Sheffield) was closed and I became the bearer of the last PhD awarded in Folklore in England. Not in Scotland or Wales, where you can still get one—the Welsh and the Scottish still need their 'internal native others' to understand their sense of national identity.

For some time I laboured and wrote under the mask of different disciplines: Education, Sociology, English literature, Popular music, Art. But it was clear that I was never going to be accepted into those disciplines. My voice didn't sit well into the tonalities of their respective choruses. So I began to hate this literal disciplinary ghost, those unknowing conventions and practices I had adopted and absorbed during the process of my PhD. I connected them to the marketisation of education and I became cynical and angry with all the academic voices around and within me. I knew they were phoney and hypocritical and felt they were there to serve increasingly commercial interests.

6

CL: If I look at my CV it is all over the place, it looks like a mess. It doesn't look like one person, it could be five. In my Masters I focused on feminist legal theory, I studied law for a lot of the time which resulted in an exhibition on my approach to law. It is kind of hard to get other people on board with that way of thinking. Sometimes an academic is like, 'no, just do this, this is too much. You don't need to do all this for a PhD. Please just write something.' And I think, 'nooo I want to do this, I wouldn't be sat here without all of these voices.'

7

LC: It's odd and frustrating how much effort it takes to get people on board with that, when people make an effort to put people from different backgrounds, different sectors, different expertises together.

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PM: But not in the one person.

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CL: When I am on my own and thinking about it, I think 'this is amazing, this is great.' But when I enter all of these individual spaces suddenly people are like, 'yeah I don't really want to know about that I just want to know what affects me and my discipline, my way of thinking.' I am like, 'well ok, but I also want to tell you about this because it is integral to …'

10

BNA: Baby $S_CR_{EE}E_{EE}E_{EA}M_S{}_{!!}$

12

MJC: My voice, the voice I write in, started to rebel. I began writing in a different way, adopting a much more personal tone, a much more reflective tone, always putting myself— or versions of myself—in what I still thought of as academic work. Instead of writing about the world I started writing about myself experiencing the world through an academic register. This was both a retreat from the vocal discipline that is academia and recognition perhaps that within the academic discipline I trained in, in this supposed chorus, this disciplined voice of Folklore, it was only me. There wasn't anyone else around! The other voices proved to be fictions that disappeared as the university I thought was there purged itself in the name of the market. Well in the name of the Browne Report, the Higher Education Act.

You will have noticed that I have put myself in the centre of this story. This has become an habitual method of communication with the imagined academic chorus. I work in universities still, but in creative writing. I find it lonely. My work lacks the register of confidence, of authority, that led me to believe my words contributed to something more than the sum of its parts. I once believed my PhD meant something! I miss those feelings of potential power. Writing the self has made me better at recognising the limitations imposed on my subjectivity by the university. The problem is it makes me so emotional and guilty—writing about research in a personal way always makes me feel guilty. It makes me feel that I shouldn't get so close to the changes that higher education has experi-enced. I want to take back some of my words and eliminate them.

Part of me is suspicious of the personal tone I now take with the academy. It reminds me of the great shift from collective politics to personal, identity politics that has taken place as neoliberalism has developed.

I wonder whether my own experiences with voice are symptomatic of some wider issues. It's almost as if I can't think out of myself now.

11

CL: Yeah, exactly. That is how I feel. Sometimes I just want to be like '$A_AH_HH_{.}$'

It ties back to what you were saying about interdisciplinary practice and this chorus. Tying it to this chorus. Sometimes I feel like I am singing alone. I actually want to be part of a chorus but I want to also bring something individual.

My range of thought has shrunk to the self. I can't access any voices that are not my own. The discipline has gone. Perhaps now, that is what fiction is for.

13

JC: For me it is a bit of a treat to write about myself. As a practicing graphic designer I never do it. It is always completely in the voice of someone else. It can get quite confessional and a bit dark, so I have to be careful with it.

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LC: Why do you have to be careful?

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JC: From being embarrassed, really. It is confessional and kind of compromising that, if you are trusted with money, you might go for a walk on Tuesday instead of being at your computer.

16

BC: This text is about reflection as a method of writing and being in the context of library research and practice. It is a reflection on reflection, and as such comments on its emergence in UK higher education, where it has become a skill to be acquired and a style of writing to be engaged with. But also more abstractly as a 'mode of being' which Barnett (1997) in his classic book *Higher education: a critical business* saw as replacing criticalness or criticism as the preeminent mode of thought in HE. On my course in librarianship for instance it is one of the key forms of assessed writing, weighted up to 75% in some modules. I think this is true across several other disciplines, certainly in nursing, education, business studies and planning. So, I wanted to think about this rise, and this role, because it is so far from the ways of thinking and writing that I have generally encountered. That is not to say I haven't enjoyed having to write reflectively and learning to write reflectively, despite its limitations, it has been a positive experience thus far. Reflection has forced my voice out in that it requires the first person, emotional responses, empathy, knowledge of the social and perhaps political context of described events.

'We cannot reflect in an armchair: reflection only takes place in practice.' (Rolfe 2014, 1180)

Donald Schön, whose work many with a planning background will know, is one of the most frequently cited authors on reflective practice and writing. Ambitiously, over a number of books and articles he attempts to create a new knowledge of practice, encouraging a move away from

an instrumentalist, positivist conception of knowledge, which he sees as a built on dangerous binaries and questionable foundations. To do this he advocates reflection as a new way of thinking about knowledge production around professional practice (Schön 1983). He argues that there are three stages to this. Firstly, knowing-in-action: these are the skills that we come to perform implicitly and are not necessarily describable or sayable without prompting. Secondly, reflection-in-action: this is thought about the effectiveness of what we are doing—judging its successes or failures and making any changes needed— at the same time as we are doing it. Finally, reflection-on-action: this is the most complex component and involves turning thought back on itself. It is about evaluating the effectiveness of our knowing and reflecting-in-action and going on to think about untaken paths, approaches or behaviours (Schön 1987).

Rolfe (2014) argues that Schön, 'is not referring to the retrospective contemplation of practice, not suggesting that we write about our practice, and is not advocating models or frameworks to structure our reflection' (1179). This is to see reflection-in-action as the key and central component. And more than this to see such live reflection as research itself, as productive of theory. Practice as research then, but research that is not recorded or captured or written, and therefore is not voiced at all, yet is clearly embodied and situated.

This is also research that is not simply abstracted knowledge and is not simply aimed at the production of knowledge. Indeed as Rolfe (2002) again mentions, if reflection is just about the generation of knowledge it will continue to be at the bottom of the hierarchy of knowledge. I think both Rolfe and Schön are on shaky ground epistemologically—which I won't get into here—but the idea of research being expanded to include the exercise of interactive and interpretative skills in the solving of complex and ambiguous problems is appealing.

Another side to this might be that reflection represents the very worst of impulses to confess in late modernity, particularly in its written form. Although I have attempted to point towards how reflective practice might be a helpful and interesting paradigm unfortunately in my discipline the vast majority of interest in reflection is in the armchair reflection style critiqued above. As Cotton (2001) mentions reflection in this form is 'at best a form of repressive self-surveillance, and at worst a deliberate managerial strategy

to produce a docile and compliant workforce' (595). Both Cotton and Gilbert, writing about reflection in nursing, see it as a new form and operation of power. As a means of surveillance and normalisation of practice in which 'modern "technologies of the self" have shifted the locus of such planning, vigilance, inspection and correction from an authoritarian outside agency to the very subjects of this control themselves' (Rolfe and Gardener 2006, 597).

Others argue that reflective practice can actually limit thought and not fulfil its function as there is a tension between wanting to write about how one really feels and what really happened and wanting to get a good mark in work. Reflection then could be seen to be being taught more and more as the mechanical application of a model or framework, and reflective writing as being judged and assessed according to rigid guidelines and inappropriate criteria. This then helps us think about how we are called upon to give an account of ourselves. Our own voice in our practice and research can be brought forward to encourage incremental change and move us towards becoming more compliant practitioners.

Barnett, R. (1997) *Higher education: a critical business*, Buckingham, UK: SRHE/Open University Press.

Cotton A. H. (2001) 'Private thoughts in public spheres: issues in reflection and reflective practices in nursing' in *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 36(4), 512–519.

Schön, D. (1983) *The reflective practitioner*, New York, USA: Basic Books.

Schön, D. (1987) *Educating the reflective practitioner*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Rolfe, G. (2002) 'Reflective practice: where now?' in *Nurse Education in Practice* 2(1), 21–29.

Rolfe, G. (2014) 'Rethinking reflective education: what would Dewey have done?' in *Nurse Education Today* 34, 1179–1183.

Rolfe, G. and Gardener, L. (2006) '"Do not ask who I am …": confession, emancipation and (self)-management through reflection' in *Journal of Nursing Management* 14, 593–600.

17
JU: I was wondering about the question of trust. Ben you were talking about how reflection is replacing critique and one of the things you raised in relation to that was talking about emotions and feelings and experiences, which is often also a process of trust.

18
BC: The biggest fear, or resistance I have to reflection maybe, is thinking about reflection as a confession. Confessing is confession to someone. Traditionally confession comes from the admittance of sin, the admittance of wrongdoing. Through that admittance there is the possibility of salvation or some kind of possibility of living again, doing again and trying to do better this time.

If the person being confessed to, the person being reflected to, is too guiding and too restrictive with the 'I' voice that is emerging through these reflective practices, then you lose the 'I' really, you lose the voice. You maybe become a great librarian or a great nurse, or a great …, but defined by these very strict admissions. I don't necessarily trust that as a means of professional growth.

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JO: Framing reflection as confession challenges what you are being asked to do as a student. I am not far away from having taken 'Reflections in urban design practice' modules.
(LAUGHS)

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JO: Cristina, are you prepared to respond? Or comment on it as an educator?

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CC: And Goran can join me!

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GV: One of the assignments we give to students is to write a reflective essay, in which they are supposed to reflect on their own practice and future practice, but also on the whole module.

Sometimes when I read and mark these assignments I start thinking about the good ones, 'oh the good ones.' I do start wondering how much they are trying to please us and how much is actually their own reflection. I don't know yet if it becomes too much of a mechanical activity, or a performance. I don't know. Although we do keep an opening, allow them to be critical.

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PM: But it is also learning how to do that, learning how to find your critical voice. That is something that you have to practice and you have to learn.

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KQ: I'll give some unsophisticated thoughts on my experience of doing ethnography in relation to voice—more in the hope of pointing to possible avenues for futur e consideration rather than establishing anything of concrete value.

The broad aim of my research is to understand the life of the academic library as a site of mediation between the university and the public. I am intrigued by the myriad discreet processes that accompany the structural orientation of knowledge and space in the site. While full of caveats, I am pursuing the research in the belief that libraries can represent opportunities for rupture and political becoming within the defining paradigm of the neoliberal university. Much of the literature I have been drawing upon is related to radical pedagogy, post-structural understandings of neoliberalism, but also—and increasingly—affect theory and thinking about intimacies and their relationships in public.

My research opens up some broad questions of educational possibility in libraries, and I have chosen the methodology of ethnography to investigate a joint-use library in Worcester called The Hive. The Hive has integrated public and academic library collections and integrated staff and user groups. As such it throws up all kinds of dissonances relating to worth, attachments and belonging. What 'counts' in public and academic education? How can atypical educational experiences be fostered at the (often fractious) moments of encounter?

I have been visiting this library 2–3 times a week for the last year, have conducted a range of semi-structured and unstructured interviews with staff, and have been engaging in serendipitous exchanges with library users. Most of the data has been collected through written fieldwork notebooks but I've also experimented with doodles and drawings, both as data collection and data analysis.

Thinking about multiple voices, I wondered about the extent to which ethnography as a methodology is often criticised for its subjectivity and singularity, in comparison to case studies for example. There's a lack of cut and dry transferability to the outcomes of ethnography, the experiences garnered from it

are time and personnel limited. Ethnography is also so bound up with the voice of the writer/ researcher that it almost seems further away from opening up the potential for 'multiple voices'. On this point, however, I feel as though there's something transformatory to what Les Back (2007) calls the 'art of listening'. The fact that the knowledge produced through ethnography is mediated through me makes it my voice, but the slow, lack of urgency associated with the methodology and its reliance on 'deep culture' gives an opportunity to listen and observe others in their relationality and interconnectedness in a way that separating multiple voices out through large interview sets would not do. Voices are multiple at the point of recording and attending to them slowly encourages generous analysis.

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KQ: Ethnography also starts to speak to the lie that merely giving 'voice' to others is representative, emancipatory, or disruptive

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MJC: Writing is hosting another voice as well, I think. There is that difference between speaking and writing. Speaking, tapping into the spirit and writing being artifice.

26

LC: And drawing too.

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CB: I am doing a PhD project at Yorkshire Sculpture Park about including visitor voices into the narrative of wellbeing and happiness there. I am doing a bit of work with drawing and reflecting whilst drawing as a group. The difficulty then is that you end up with all these bits of paper and sketchbooks—what do you do with them afterwards? At the end of the day it is going to be packaged into a thesis. My background is in anthropology and I am in an art department now. I still want it to be packageable back to the discipline that I came from through written work such as journal articles.

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JO: Are you using drawing to collectively reflect and interpret the project?

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CB: Yes definitely. If you get a group of people who aren't used to talking about their experience in a room the conversation just stops, it is really difficult and boring. If you have pencils and paper and you go and walk around and draw and talk about it as you are doing it, then once you do go back in the room there is much more conversation.

to power relations. A lot of what I observe and garner from working at The Hive does not come from people's stated opinions or stated analysis of their lives. This is not to say that I don't agree that all people are capable of theorising about themselves and their lives (as Hannah Jones argues, it is insulting and something of an academic expertise hangover to take that line uncritically). I don't think it's likely, however, that encouraging infinite voices does a lot to alleviate unspoken, obscured and ignored injustices in people's lives—sometimes living lives limits our ability to see and feel acutely the social structure we are part of and contribute to. So again, it's interesting to map the gaps between statement and observable reality through careful integrative observance of individuals as they intertwine and mix. In a sense I hope this helps my ability to 'give voice' to others even if it means it's still coming from my own!

In concrete terms, a finding at The Hive has been the propagation of a closed representation of identity. I've felt this to be the case through observation of staff interaction with library users, the ways library staff talk about diversity and difference ('I get diversity, but it's just a fact that Worcester is white, so it's not relevant unfortunately. I think we should serve those people who are actually here and come to the library': so those actually existing people of colour in Worcester are not only overlooked as not important but become actually invisible) and the ways knowledge and entertainment are given authority and acceptability through their placement within the library collection so that people of colour are invisible in the accepted canon of the library. This couldn't be garnered through straightforward interview data but through active and critical listening. It couldn't be garnered through 'experience' because that experience is mine too (white and heterosexual).

This final point is fledgling in my mind and perhaps not of huge relevance but I thought I'd throw it in. I'm interested in the role of the spoken or performed 'voice' in ethnography and its relation to reliability. The methodology demands participation and interaction between voices and in that sense it relies on cover (whether covert or not, I think) and performance. I'm thinking about this in relation to shyness and gendered interaction. I have a learned (not natural) aversion to being talked at in public spaces by men. I, like many other women have had this happen too often and too irritatingly and even dangerously to find

it comfortable. It's telling that no woman has ever got into a conversation with me out of the blue in the course of the year I've been at The Hive, but men have multiple times. (I recognise my experience may also be racialized and may also differ from women of colour.) My natural tendency is always to shut down these interactions if I can (this might sound harsh but I think one can just get a sense quite quickly where a conversation is going), but in the context of my research I have been enjoined to actively go against this impulse, so my voice becomes performed and distorted in so far as I am continuing an unwelcome interaction for the purposes of research. Happily, sometimes these have been really revelatory and pleasant, and I've wondered whether my former coldness could be thawed.

Back, L. (2007) *The art of listening*, Oxford, UK: Berg.

31

CL: My research aims to unpack our understanding of the home and the private life which is contained within it. I work within a Japanese context (mainly in Tokyo) and look specifically at the *kyosho jutaku*, which roughly translates as 'micro home'.

Japanese architects began designing and building small scale houses in the late 1990s—largely as a response to the rising land and housing prices; so they provided new families and single people an affordable way of staying in the city. An interesting thing to note is Japan's unique housing market, where the second hand housing market is very weak, with people much preferring to buy the land, demolish the existing building and start again. In most European cities, for example, the cost of doing this would be phenomenal, but in Japan it is possible to hire an architect, use cheap materials and achieve an originally-designed house with a relatively small budget.

People may assume that design drives the creation of the *kyosho jutaku*, but economics, social movement and strict housing law play a large role. The innovative shapes, for example, usually come as a result of the 'sunshine laws' which limits the amount of shadow cast by houses onto the streets.

Many incorporate space for cars as Tokyo, for example, demands that all car owners have off-street parking. While these technical restrictions may limit architects, from a design point of view the sky is the limit, there are no style guidelines. Materials like

wood and concrete are very popular, many *kyosho jutaku*'s have no room divisions, or even windows (with many preferring a central skylight) and multipurpose space is common.

This freedom of design is very appealing to architects and many internationally acclaimed architects, like Kengo Kuma or Ryue Nishizawa, continue to work on private *kyosho jutaku* projects. From a western media perspective these houses are often considered solely in terms of their design.

They are viewed as architectural objects that deconstruct domestic spatial configurations, using advanced and unique materials which challenge common understandings of form.

They are rarely (if ever) considered as private homes, as interior spaces for relationships, familial connections, intimacy, memory, history. My research is trying to show that these alternative living spaces can house alternative lifestyles, and question how small space can encourage new ways of looking at privacy.

My main research question considers how the feminist public/private binary can be located within these homes; how the binary becomes blurred and re-imagined. The concept of the nuclear family in Japan has long been ingrained into society via state support: in order to uphold the nation, you must uphold your duties as men and women. After the economic bubble burst in the 90s, there was a movement of young people who questioned ways to live, and essentially questioned how much control to give the state over who they became.

32

PM: For me, and for *; a place, of their own.*, our practice had to come from the home because that is where I was. It is a gendered space obviously, and definitely gendered in different cultures and different spaces. But mostly the home is the domain of women. Not necessarily through choice.

To actually say that things happen in the home—thinking happens in the home, doing happens in the home, you make and create life in the home—is really important. Great art doesn't just happen over there or in the gallery. You don't have to go on a residency for six months on the other side of the world to be brilliant. You can do it in the kitchen and still be brilliant, and still make an impact. You can still do something really important and valuable and validating. The politics of that are important to me.

34

CL: The current recession, the declining birth rate, the surge of career women and the high levels of single women have all been social factors in the production of these tiny houses, particularly in urban Tokyo. I'm interested in assessing the extent to which these houses are symbols of the future of Japanese social lives: ones which celebrate fluidity and the collapse of tradition.

My methodological approach aims to centre this notion of privacy. The Japanese have a word, *uchi*, which means sacred. Many use this word to describe the interior of their houses, a space that cannot be penetrated by outsiders or non-blood relatives.

It is not unusual in Japan to never invite your friends to your house—many young Japanese for example, describe the restaurants of Tokyo as their kitchens and the cafés as their living rooms. Therefore, I have made a decision to not physically engage with the occupants of the houses and instead to connect through an online hypertext platform.

I am hoping to collect a significant amount of visual and textual data (photographs, drawings, stories, maps, interview transcripts with architects, field diaries, etc) and upload them onto an online platform to allow the project to have more of an impact. It will aim to represent this blurring of the private/public binary and will hopefully allow for contestation as I interact with occupants through this format; allowing them to add, question and continue the flow of information. In this way, the data will be representative of my outsider (public) positionality but also potentially representative of the private.

This brings me to the practice of fieldwork and ways of problematising it—especially when you are working on a project like this, where power and privilege dynamics (in the form of language, race, gender) are highly visible and the notion of privacy is a dominant aspect of the work. In academia I think there is this firm structure of researcher going into the field, collecting data and returning to analyse it. In

TL: When people find out that Andrew and I are living in an art space they say, 'oh so do you have exhibitions in your house?', and we are like, 'no we just live there, it is a studio as well as a house.' We do invite people in, but this can be misunderstood. The Arts Council guy was like, 'yeah alright, I'll go and visit them, what are their opening hours?'

some cases, that just doesn't work. I don't think this attitude is unique to researching, I've seen similar approaches in art residencies for example.

Considering the way your body moves through space, particularly if you are operating within a country and culture that is not your own, is very important; considering your positionality and how entering certain times and spaces may cause damage or cause disruption that goes beyond the framework of your own work is essential. I think it is a misconception that meaningful, thoughtful and important social research cannot come from a process that does not involve traditional fieldwork or physical engagement with participants.

What I am grappling with at the moment is how to effectively 'story' these private lives without having any proximity to them. I hope that through establishing an online sharing space—a database for stories and multiple voices—I can start to create an alternative way of co-analysing and co-producing these private lives; with people who get to decide what is private and what can be shared.

Sharing is the final thing I want to touch on. One element of research that I am particularly interested in tackling through this project, is the way academia and academic research is privatised and often requires understanding of formal language and access to academic publishing spaces.

I want to think of ways of making research more accessible and thus hopefully giving it the ability to have a greater impact. I want to destabilise the way research is not only conducted, but how it is consumed. There are two ways that I am looking to do this within my own work.

Firstly I want to develop a small publication alongside the PhD which will hopefully contain the visual material received from the occupants, as well as excerpts from my own storytelling diary discussing the process of researching from afar and the successes and struggles that this process presents. I am hoping that the publication will be in both English and Japanese to gain a wider audience and initiate cross-cultural dialogues.

Secondly, I am going to Tokyo to talk about my project with a number of visual artists working within an urban context, who may be interested in creating a collaborative exhibition that can reach people and encourage them to

interact with this subject matter in a creative and innovative way. I want these houses to be thought about and acknowledged as living entities and not just merely design shells that act as examples of this common western thinking around Japan—that everything is 'weird and wonderful'.

I want people to engage with this visual material and ask questions about who these people are (what activities they do every day, how they raise children, whether they work, whether they live alone, etc) and start to comprehend the multiplicity of ways people can construct their own understandings of privacy and intimacy, ones that could potentially challenge globalised social structures such as gender performance.

35

PM: This text is about a particular part of my practice which I undertake with my partner and family. My partner, Sam Vardy, is an architect and I am an artist.

We both work together as artists, with our four kids, Fionn, Oisín, Roma and Mala, aged between three and fifteen.

We are *; a place, of their own*. I was trying to think about some of the words we use to describe ourselves, there are many, but we typically think of ourselves as some of these things some of the time and most of them several times at once:

A collective, architect, researchers, child, brother, family, artists, mother, father, co-habitants, sister, partners, activists, 'I's and 'non-I's, collaborators …

36

AW: Doing something alongside your children really snaps the model of what childhood is, where they are acted on or shown the way or filled up with knowledge. Has there been a rebellion?

37

PM: No which is really brilliant actually. Our 15 year old, he is really engaged, which is fascinating to me, I didn't expect him to still be this interested and wanting to be part of it. It is because he values it I guess.

It is just what we do as a family, a point where we all come together. You could watch TV, you could go for a walk, you could go shopping, or you could do something like this. And that was it. We were talking about what you could do differently with time and space with

your family. How can we do something that is interesting and creative, but also critical? And actually I really like the theory! It wasn't about making it accessible. It was about acting, doing it, performing it. Then writing about it, for me. This practice became the research, or at the very least informed it. There is a complete collapse. Philosophy about multiple belongings and becomings allows you to do that.

38

PM: Our practice—whether 'out there' or at home—begins from the starting point of exploring with care, what a family might mean or what it means to 'do family'.

There was a desire to think about how to do family otherwise or differently to how we experienced it ourselves. The work became about acting. It was about creating situations or events or encounters where we could work together through some of the complexity of life generally.

We were playing with our experiences (investigating, interrogating, grappling) and validating that experience; validating the experience of being a family and exploring the radical potential of being a family. Part of that was naming it. We named it *; a place, of their own.* and it became an ongoing experiment in thinking and making and living. It is always messy and unpredictable, shifting and slippery.

'Projects' worked for us and each project was about creating something of a moment. We wanted to frame the unstable things that we were trying to grapple with, hold onto the complexity of what we were trying to explore, for at least a moment.

At that time, my research was about being a mother as an encounter and at the same time as doing the PhD I had three children, so I was pregnant for all of the PhD with young children.

That became very much the focus of my research. The home took on this whole other significance for us, all the walls collapsed, in doing the shopping, going to work, birthing, breastfeeding, reading and making. We started off trying to develop a practice from these ideas.

We conceive of home not as a fixed entity—bricks and mortar—but a space of multiple belongings as well as multiple becomings. We explore this through our projects which reach across the six of us, but also beyond, to multiple others outside of ourselves.

39

LD: I was thinking about bringing it back to the frame of the artist. Artists have in some ways got a freedom to do what they want and steal the clothes of other people, in order to create new voices or reframe voices. There is more of a freedom to create a new voice. I have also seen people come from other disciplines and decide to become an artist in order to break away from their original disciplinary frames. But they still use the tools they had from those disciplinary frames.

40

CC: I read something this morning, it was tweeted from a linguistics conference:

Ofelia Garcia on translanguaging & need to view multilinguals as possessing one lang repertoire (not several monolingual systems) #amli2017

Charlotte Taylor @_ctaylor_

This relates to the idea of our own various voices, each constrained by different cultural norms. When you mentioned people coming from different disciplines and becoming artists, but then still also using the tools they have in their vocabulary, I wondered whether this is a new voice altogether or if it is a summary of other voices.

41

CL: This is interesting because I am writing my thesis using English and Japanese. These two completely different languages look at things completely differently and really struggle to translate. I have been forced to create a voice that is a combination of both. I cannot create a monovoice, even if I want to at times. How can I create a third entity and be comfortable in that in-between space? I am based within the School of Architecture and the School of East Asian Studies and I am constantly in this in-between. I am never really sure how to think about things in my Japanese brain, my English brain, my architecture brain, my art brain. It is a process of being comfortable with that and dealing with people that are not comfortable with that at times. Saying it is ok.

42

PM: There is an unfinished-ness about our projects because we have the ideas and then we think, 'right we just need to do it.' There is an urgency when working together with young children. Projects feel quite raw and unfinished; they are a working-through. Projects punctuate the daily mundaneness of family life and turn it

into something else. This is just what we do; for us and the kids, it is part of our family life. It is essential even now, we can't not do it! However difficult it is, this has become integral to how we function as a family. This is our work and our home and it is just who we are.

Our conception of home and ourselves is dynamic, multiple and nomadic and so is our practice. Part of what we like to do is to go outside of the home into different spaces. We see what happens when we go into different spaces with our ramshackle family. We like to go to other territories and act within them, with others, to create new encounters and thinking and relationships. We go to edges and borders and create new networks. *(un)familiar surroundings* (2010) was located in the now demolished Castle Market, in Sheffield.

Castle Market was subject to redevelopment since the 1960s, but the scheme ended in the recession. When many of the office and retail spaces lay vacant we gained access and occupied them with our then nine-year-old and our one-year-old, and I think I was also a few weeks off having another baby. We found a way to spend a day and a night in Castle Market. We just wanted to spend a day there as a family, and ask: what would you do if you put the family somewhere else? The project also engaged with the politics of occupying empty spaces in Sheffield. We spent a day filming, making and drawing the space. Doing the normal things that a family would do, which was play and eat and sleep and breastfeed and all those other normal, everyday family stuff.

We started *Difference / Border / Same* in 2011 and it is ongoing. It is a border project, which stemmed from continually thinking about belongings. How do we make sense of who we are and who we are becoming? My family are from a border town in Ireland, from Ballyshannon, which is right on the border in the south. I have a Catholic father and Protestant mother and I was born in Ireland. I went back and forth from Ireland to the UK when I was a kid and I moved over here when I was quite small.

Back in 2011 we wanted to do a walking practice around the border between the Republic and Northern Ireland. When I was a kid there were these borders that you would see and you would go to checkpoints and you would be checked and it was very formal. These all eroded and when I had my own children, it was about saying, 'ok this is where you are from. How does this shape who

we become?' We went across the borders. There were lots of markers of the border that you can't see anymore: you would make one step and the phone signal would change, the language would change and the speed would change from miles to kilometres.

Those different markers were the only things you could use to tell a border between the north and south existed. The kids engaged in different ways depending on their ages and what was going on. We talked about what we were doing and we all engaged in different parts of the project. We had lots of discussions about Brexit, what it meant to us as a family. I have never had British citizenship. The idea of borders and nation states (in the past and in this uncertain future) is very much part of the conversations where my family are from. The border people. What is going to happen in 2019?

So we decided to go back and revisit this as *; a place, of their own.*, we went back to Ireland. We wanted to reimagine what those borders might be. A lot of the borders in Ireland run along rivers, they run right through the middle of the river, so you can't see them but you can trace them on a map. We spent a lot of time with the children, thinking about how they could reimagine the borders, reimagine the space. We brought all these materials that they could work with. We found spots that we all agreed on and spent time with each one of them.

Our seven-year-old decided that he was going to make a river as a portal to an underwater dimension. Our five-year-old wanted to erect a vertical tower for workers. Our eldest had the idea of fictioning an encounter with mutations into a non-human world. This performance emerged from thinking about otherness. How do you know you are human through otherness? *Becoming Animal* is about how we relate to other humans and the starting point was the relationship with non-human animals. The thinking behind this project stemmed from being in a domestic space, parenting young children about what it means to be human, what human they are going to become, and the experience of otherness.

I am interested in that theoretically but also as a parent through the practice of mothering. In this relationship animals seemed really central, a real entry point into how you understand humanity. Animals are objectified in their every sense, pretty much. Your first toys are animals, you have animals in the food choices that you

have with your children (I am vegan and Sam is vegan and our kids are variously vegan and vegetarian). We also got very interested in the nursery rhymes that we tell our children— they are awful, they are horrific. It became a portal. There is a wonderful field of animal studies, which is really important in thinking about humanity and post-humanity, in terms of subjectivity, but when it happens in your everyday it becomes very interesting. Those really high theoretical concepts play out in your kitchen. We turned it into a performance film. We thought with the children about how we consume animals, how we objectify them, and how this happens in the home.

How this connects to how we relate to each other as a family, to humans, to non-humans and how we relate to the earth and the earth as other. We devised a performance with the children over a period of time. Again we devise these things in the home and then we go out into the world and we interact differently with the space and with audiences.

As *; a place, of their own.* we question where art happens and what happens in the home. For us it has become a critically engaged practice and it is something that happens as part of our everyday, in our collective becoming as a family.

43
GV:	My research is situated in a particular neighbourhood in Sheffield called Page Hall. It is a relatively small neighbourhood that has been experiencing significant changes in the last decade or so.

By this I mean particularly demographic changes, with many people from Eastern Europe, mostly of Roma origin, moving into an already diverse neighbourhood. This has clearly had many implications for the life of the neighbourhood and has also created some tensions.

One such area of tension is related to the use of outdoor public spaces, specifically the intensity of its use by certain groups. Amongst other issues, this has been picked up by local and national media and also by local politicians, further exacerbating tensions. One of the main reasons for my interest in the neighbourhood was to try to find out what was really going on there, by spending time listening to the voices of local people and at the same time offering opportunities for them to be heard. This approach was in fact informed by my previous professional as well as personal experiences.

44
CL:	You said that if anyone was interested you would talk about your personal connection.

45
GV:	Oh yes.
	(L A U G H S)

46
GV:	Well, I have been researching in a high-profile and over-researched context. So, when I was thirteen, my hometown in Croatia was totally destroyed during the War of Independence. It's a bit too complicated to explain briefly here, but let me try. After the open conflict, the town was first occupied by one side, then became a United Nations Safe Area and finally it was reintegrated into Croatia again which in total took about a decade or so. This was the context I actually grew up in, and later worked in too. It's obviously a very different context than the Page Hall neighbourhood in Sheffield, but on a different level, it is still quite relevant.

Unsurprisingly, over the years, this context attracted many academics, not only from the region but from all over the world really, to carry out research. I actually participated in several of these studies but I'll mention just one now. This was a piece of research done by someone from a well-known university in the UK, which was about, roughly, people's experiences during the war. I took part in an interview, which was quite personal, but I agreed to participate because it was to be anonymised. If it hadn't been, I wouldn't have agreed to do it, especially at that time. Several years later, while I was living in London, I was invited to go to an exhibition about this research.

I walked into this room, a typical gallery kind of space with white walls, and was struck by these big quotes on the walls, a few of them quotes from me. As I said, very personal ones. It came as a shock, mostly because I wasn't prepared for it but also because it felt as if I had been used actually.

In a way, although very personal, at that time and in that space, I would have preferred to have these quotes identified as my own, for example. Yes, I know this opens up a very different discussion about ethics, consent and the process of research. But this is just one example of how personal experience related to ethical complexities in research involving voices, actually influenced my own

research approach. This is also partly why I was interested in finding ways of sharing at least some sort of benefits with participants, even during the research process. The approach I took was very different from my own earlier experience of engaging with someone from the UK, who had flown in, taken my personal story and, in this case, put it on the wall in a gallery. Yes, it is all much more complex than that but this is precisely why the process of engaging with others' voices needs to continue to be discussed and further explored.

GV: My particular focus in this research was on local public spaces and the ways in which they are not only being used but also perceived by local people. I also considered the relationship between those spaces and encounters between residents as well as how this may be relevant to urban design and planning. Because this neighbourhood could be described as high profile and having myself lived for years in a context which I would describe in similar ways, my approach was to try to do the research in a sensitive and ethical way.

This partly meant not doing research 'on' people but doing it 'with' them, or at least trying to share some benefits with participants. In other words, I have been trying throughout the research to offer something in return for their participation and to create some 'impact', no matter how small or even personal, during the actual process of the research rather than just at the end, as often happens in academia.

This was supported by taking a responsive approach, which involved a readiness to be flexible and to embrace the unexpected as part of the research process. For example, I helped a local student with her essay about the neighbourhood and I was involved in co-designing a logo for the newly formed Roma United FC. My initial plan was to do something called photovoice.

This is a participatory action research method, which aims to give a voice to people though a camera lens, by inviting and enabling groups to reflect and engage in discussions about their own lives and issues that matter to them. Photovoice facilitates the negotiation of differences, whilst also offering the chance to present findings to decision makers in a public event or exhibition. Photovoice usually involves a number of sessions working with a group over a period of time. My idea was to work voluntarily in a few local organisations as part of the process of gaining access to the field,

enabling me to form a group of people from different backgrounds, bearing in mind various issues and concepts, such as intersectionality and superdiversity. However, although I made several attempts at doing this, with some showing more promise than others, it never fully worked out for various reasons.

For example, I went on a field trip to the seaside with youngsters from several local youth clubs with the idea that it could be an enjoyable introduction to a photovoice project; however, due to the fluid and unpredictable nature of youngsters' use of youth clubs, I never managed to see the same group again. Such experiences made me rethink and change my methods and the approach, so instead of photovoice I adopted several different methods to reach out to and invite different voices. This made my research much messier of course, highlighting some of the challenges of conducting engaged research within such a sensitive context. Nevertheless, it also reflects my main priority of not being pushy as a researcher, even if that means making the research untidy.

So, in collaboration with local organisations, I organised various workshops, mostly with children and youngsters. Although I had not originally intended to focus on these groups, they were in fact one of the main users of these public open spaces and the actors who were shaping the social life of the streets and local neighbourhood. Most of the workshops were not only focused on my research but also an opportunity to provide additional fun or educational activities for local young people. For example, I co-organised designing and making sessions, which offered participants a chance to learn different skills, such as SketchUp, a 3D modelling program.

Other workshops doubled as an official work placement for the young people. Another example were workshops on collaborative mapping—because the collaborative mapping involved different age groups, including very young children, we first had to learn about maps—what they are, what they could represent, how to read them, how they might be useful and for what—in order to then do participatory mapping and include the voices of the young children too.

In my research I also included my own voice. However, this went beyond the need to be a reflexive researcher, being transparent about my positionality. It was intended to be an additional voice alongside those of the local

population, one which changed from being the voice of a total outsider to, increasingly, an insider voice. All of these voices have been negotiated in different ways in my research. For example, in the second part of the interviews I undertook with adults and professionals in the later stages of my research, I would also express my own ideas, feelings and views if I was asked to. Indeed I would also share perspectives from other conversations and interviews if asked, whilst of course taking care not to breach my ethical code. This I saw as part of the reciprocity I alluded to earlier, although it was a different kind of sharing.

I would argue that this approach to the research enabled many local voices, including some who are less heard (such as those of youngsters), to be heard at least in this indirect way. It perhaps even enabled participants to be more open and detailed in their comments, as it gave them the opportunity to react to and engage with other quite varied points made by locals. For example, it provoked reactions ranging from agreement and surprise to disagreement. My intention is that these multiple voices from the neighbourhood, including my own, will be negotiated and represented in the final report. By including these voices and enabling them to be heard in the spirit of ethnography, I hope to open up further negotiations, discussions or dialogue with whoever might read it.

Finally, I would like to finish by referring to Chantal Mouffe and argue that this research in a way exemplifies that we do not need to aim at achieving some kind of fixed consensus, but rather engage in continuous dialogue, recognising, acknowledging and accepting such agonistic views, whilst trying to find a platform for working with and within them.

48

JC: I am a graphic designer. I could talk about my work for four hours or ten seconds, so I am at a bit of a crossroads. I have specifically chosen to discuss identity work, to provide a bit of a thread.

I'll be mixing my own work with other projects which have informed my thinking; there is an interesting connection between identity work for someone else and then my own identity and where that line blurs. Doing graphic design is a bit of a weird one because you have your own voice in there, which means that you are personally interested in it, and then you have expectations from someone else. You have to do a weird dance between the two.

51

JC: Milton Glaser's *I love New York* (1977) is absolutely amazing. I have put it in at the start because thematically it is what I am trying to put into my work. It's a game. Everyone figures it out as a miniature puzzle, it is open. Puzzles are a big part of what I do. Another amazing piece of work that runs through what I am doing is *Base of the world* by Piero Manzoni (1961). It is a plinth that has been turned upside down and the idea is that the world becomes the work of art. It makes you suddenly stop taking things for granted and I think it is a really profound piece of work. A sort of sleight of hand.

I am really into ideas and I know a lot of people talk about ideas these days and the word idea for me is a bit like the word love, in that if it is devalued in the wrong context ... that is a whole other conversation.

I am going to start with a project for Studio Polpo. I did their identity for them, but I am just going to discuss the logo here. To be absolutely super brief about it, without banging on for twelve hours, it's 'P', the letter P, reoccurring. Architecture is part of real life and real life informed the logo.

49

JU: I like what you say about doing a weird dance between what you want and what others want to get out of a project. You are actively devising different tools that move between these positions. In those dialogues, even in those darkest moments, there is space to go the other way. The metaphor of dance is really nice in that respect because there are always other steps or other performances, other ways of doing it. Even though you say it is dark, there are always different possibilities.

50

PM: It seemed that there was a moment in your talk where you transitioned from being a graphic designer to being an artist. It was really interesting how you then gave yourself different permissions. The validity of your experience depended on the discipline in which you located yourself. It felt like you had to apologise for it in graphic design and it felt like this was an uncomfortable place to be. But as your talk progressed you said 'ok this is a space that I can now become. I am becoming an artist.' I find that really interesting, probably because I had a similar transition quite a long time ago. I think it is really generous to share that transition actually. It really is a vulnerable space, a scary place, especially when you are very much in that process.

'P' for Polpo: essentially a moon on a stick.

It can also be adapted ... EU Remain, for example. The logo can almost invert an object in real life, in a Manzoni way. It has a playfulness about it. People are speaking through me, but I am allowing them to speak. I like providing people with a toolkit to speak with, an adaptable identity.


The Clearing is a live-in dome in the grounds of Compton Verney Art Gallery. It is an alternate version of the future. It is a collaboration between writer Tom James and artist Alex Hartley. Again I did the identity. Quite often there is a bit of a chicken and egg situation with identity work, because you have to do the design work before the project actually happens. You have to pre-empt how it will come about.

The main vehicle for this project is a website. It is where people find out what's happening in the dome and read journals from the people that have stayed there—the most interesting part of the project really. The idea behind *The Clearing* identity was to make something that was futureproof to the loss of all tech-nology; capable of surviving if someone drops a nuclear bomb, or nuclear bombs are sent simultaneously.

How can you maintain an identity when all you really have is sticks and stones and things to scratch at? I started with Native American and cub-scout trail elements and built up.

Another aspect was the typeface Courier, which is on everyone's machine. Essentially the identity is made up of a load of glyphs and components.
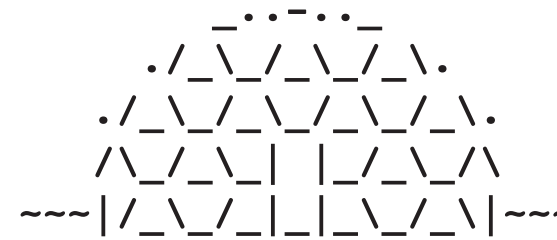
The idea was to make the identity out of the components of the typeface Courier, which could then translate into being drawn, into being painted and then into being sticks and stones and stuff. That is the logo. It is something that you can type, and make out of absolutely nothing.

The Clearing had a series of workshops which ran over the course of the year. The parts and components of the Courier typeface then informed the graphics for the workshops. There are things like how to make a fire, how to find and capture a rabbit, looking after chickens, working with wool, making bread, making a radio, first aid, reading stars and then how to die in the future.

As a side note having being involved in this, when I did get back home I couldn't work for a week. When you are involved in building something or working with people as part of a team it is quite difficult to then get back on your computer. I just couldn't work.

52
JC: Everyone was collectively invested in *The Clearing*, in this very basic need for shelter. When you are talking about putting a roof over your head, what is graphic design then? There is a big argument for it being useless.

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53
CL: I think this idea of value is really interesting. I have all these different voices and I put different values on them. One of my main struggles has been seeing academia as valuable. I have all of these other ideas and I want my PhD to have so much more impact than just the production of knowledge. I want to have an exhibition, I want to write a publication, I want to do all of these creative things with my PhD and I don't want it to just be this lump of words at the end of it. I want it to reach people in different ways. I put value

on this, because I feel like academia is so inaccessible on certain platforms in terms of language, as well as more pragmatic access to research. But if I go to a supervision meeting suddenly they will be like, 'yeah, yeah, yeah, but we just want you to write 3,000 words, can you just do that?' and I am like 'yeah but right now that isn't as valuable to me as thinking about these other voices that I am trying to grapple with.' Even though I want each voice to be equal in value it is not always realistic I don't think.

54

CC: It goes back to your point about what success looks like. You are inheriting the model of success of maybe your supervisor or department or institution. That is a hoop that you will have to jump through to get the PhD, but then you can situate it in something a lot bigger. I suspect that in many art departments this would not be a problem at all. In non-art disciplines the range of outputs is generally quite limited, in terms of what is valued.

55

MJC: That is why Folklore was closed down, because it was seen as a subject without any value. And I loved that fact about it. Within the disciple there were people who celebrated the valueless and I do want to celebrate valueless knowledge. I don't want it to be mapped onto some market at all. I used to love that in the National Centre of English Cultural Tradition John Widdowson had collected soot from all of the factories in Sheffield. There was a filing cabinet full of soot, which struck some managers of the university as valueless. We need to reclaim the valueless.

56

JC: I have started out in a place where I am doing things for other people and as I move through the projects it is getting more and more about my own voice. There is only so much you can put into a project for someone else before your own voice starts to stifle it.

For me that is tricky. In my experience there are two types of graphic designer. There are ones who have drawn and made stuff forever, since they were essentially a foetus and there are people that chose to do it as a career.

There are quite a lot of differences between how people work, I was one of the people that have done it since I was a very little kid.

For example it was nice coming on the train today because I used to be really into trains as a kid, because of the logos and the graphics on

the trains. I'll leave it up to you to work out if I am still into trains.

The next project *Hope Empty*, is more personal and is linked in with wellbeing. I call this an accidental self-initiated project. I did this accidentally in the sense that I didn't really know what I was doing. It's kind of embarrassing, I was maybe feeling a bit dark and did this project to express how I felt both in myself and politically, commenting on a whole other bunch of things that were going on. The project is a series of dials to show where I was in my life at the time. There are a bunch of them, it gets pretty morbid.
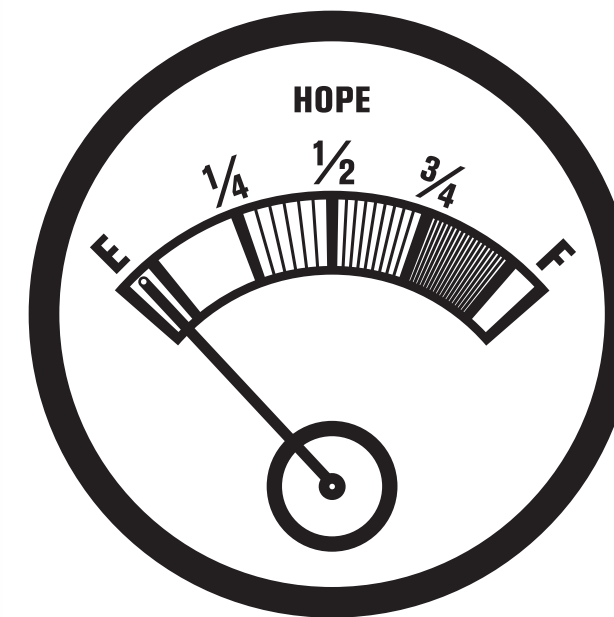
57

JC: Here is an example of what happens when the graphics get optimistically adjusted. From full of regrets to NO regrets. (It's easy …)
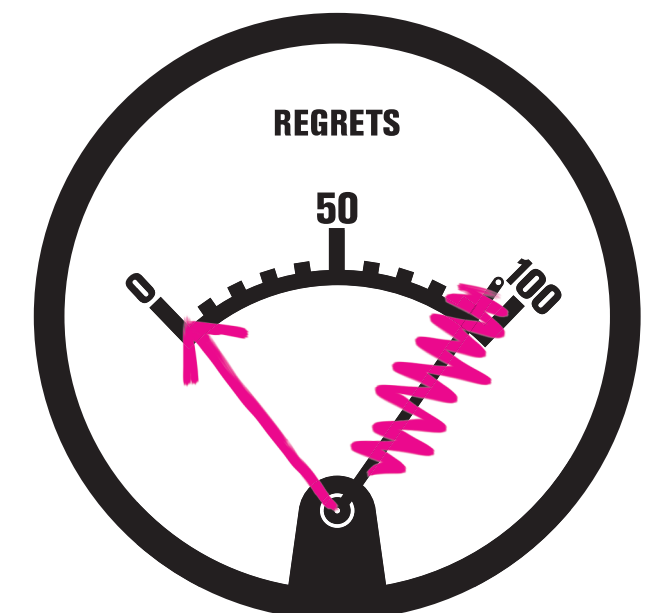
58

That was where I was at and it was a deep and personal thing, but the only way I could express myself was to do it using graphic design, the tools that I knew. A dialogue started to happen

though, people started to respond to the project. Because I was a miserable git people started to amend them to read a positive message, which I was obviously deeply against.

I documented every single one that I put up with a photograph. I also started to document the ones that people were amending and changing, which then started to take the project in an interesting direction. It went from this solitary act to having a conversation with people. Their response was graphic design; I put the conversation out in pictures and it came back in pictures. And then people started to take it a bit further, they would do their own cut outs. Probably one person! It sort of worked; it is not often you have a nice rounded ending like that but that one kind of did.

Marcel Duchamp's *3 Standard Stoppages* sets up where I am going with my final project. Basically what Duchamp did was create a system of rules by dropping three pieces of string that were one metre in length, one metre from the floor. These were then used as a series of new metre rules that he could work with. The reason I like this is because he is creating his own universe, this world that you have to invest in. It has rules but they are his rules, they are still logical but it is skewed. You are very much on his terms with it. It is also quite strange.

I am really into children's books and it is a goal of mine to write a children's book. It is a project I am working on called *Project Infinity*, a work in progress. The idea is that every object around us makes a secret sound that the human ear can't pick up on. That is the premise, in the same way that Duchamp re-imagined the length of a ruler of one metre and it then became his universe.

Did you know that everything around us makes a secret sound, a secret world that everyone can hear if they want? Did you know that a pencil secretly sounds like a ticking clock, that a piece of cheese secretly sounds like an aeroplane, that a blank piece of paper secretly sounds like whispering and a full piece of paper secretly sounds like singing? Did you know that only people with imagination can hear these secret sounds?

This project is an exercise in using your imagination. I present a really strange alternate world, but you invest in it. I am proposing to make a series of objects that people can use as hearing devices, to hear the secret sounds that objects are making. Of course the pencil

doesn't sound like a ticking clock, but if I suggest that it does, and you use one of these listening devices, you can imagine that it does. I want to make different listening devices. Maybe there are expensive limited editions, maybe one of them is a rolled up page from a Roald Dahl book. This is the other end of the spectrum. This is really, really my voice. And it has a logo as well, obviously; an ear that is also an infinity symbol. Maybe the logo came first!

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an attempt to respond to the urgency of searching for different kinds of political praxis, to open up radical new imaginaries and subjectivities through research-based interventions, films, performances, texts, drawings and digital works.

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	60
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Edited by Jonathan Orlek