**Tim Shore**

**An action repeated**

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No additional authors

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**Abstract**

An action repeated by thousands of hands, thousands of times at the pace established for each shift. (Cities & Signs:5, Invisible Cities, Italio Calvino)

The presentation is about my research made in developing a commission (New Expressions, Visual Arts Network) to make an artwork in collaboration with a museum. The work will explore the meaning and experience of the working day for the mill workers of the early textile mills.

Where is the evidence of child labour in the Derwent Valley Mills of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century? Where might one look and what traces might one find in the new manufactories of Arkwright, Evans and Strutt?

My research has focussed on the material evidence of child labour and the lives of the children that were employed in the early factory system. In the attic of Walter Evans’s Long Mill (1782-3) at Darley Abbey there is a schoolroom that remains intact, but emptied of content.

Evidence of children’s work or rather children’s working lives is nevertheless recorded in the fabric of the building - in a small flight of stone steps that lead up from the factory floor to the attic schoolroom. The habit of innumberable small footsteps have worn, in infinitesimal increments over decades of time, shallow hollows out of the stone. In the schoolroom itself are a series of chalk numerals drawn in an elegant script on to the shoddy walls of the schoolroom cloakroom.

The shallow hollows in the stone and the chalk marks on the wall are indexical images that allow an observer to imagine and empathise with the many repeated actions made a long time ago.

I will present a series of images that document the project’s shift in scale from the macro to the intimate and precise.