



A COMMONPLACE BOOK

ATLAS *of* ATLAS

Edited by Emma Nicolson & Gayle Meikle

25, MOUNTAIN COURT,
WESTBEND, WESTBURY
JA 15 3JY.

27. 3. 13.

Dear Mr. Maizlish-Mole,

We have just returned from 2 glorious weeks on Skye and wanted to thank ~ and congratulate ~ you on your wonderful maps of your beautiful islands. We spent many a happy minute (or so!) waiting for buses (always reliable, and dispensing truly fabulous views every time!) and studying your work. We LOVE your sense of humour, and are baffled by the accuracy and knowledge displayed in your great skill. Thank you for such beautiful diagrams ~ just magical!

Yours,

Jane & Andrew WISKIN

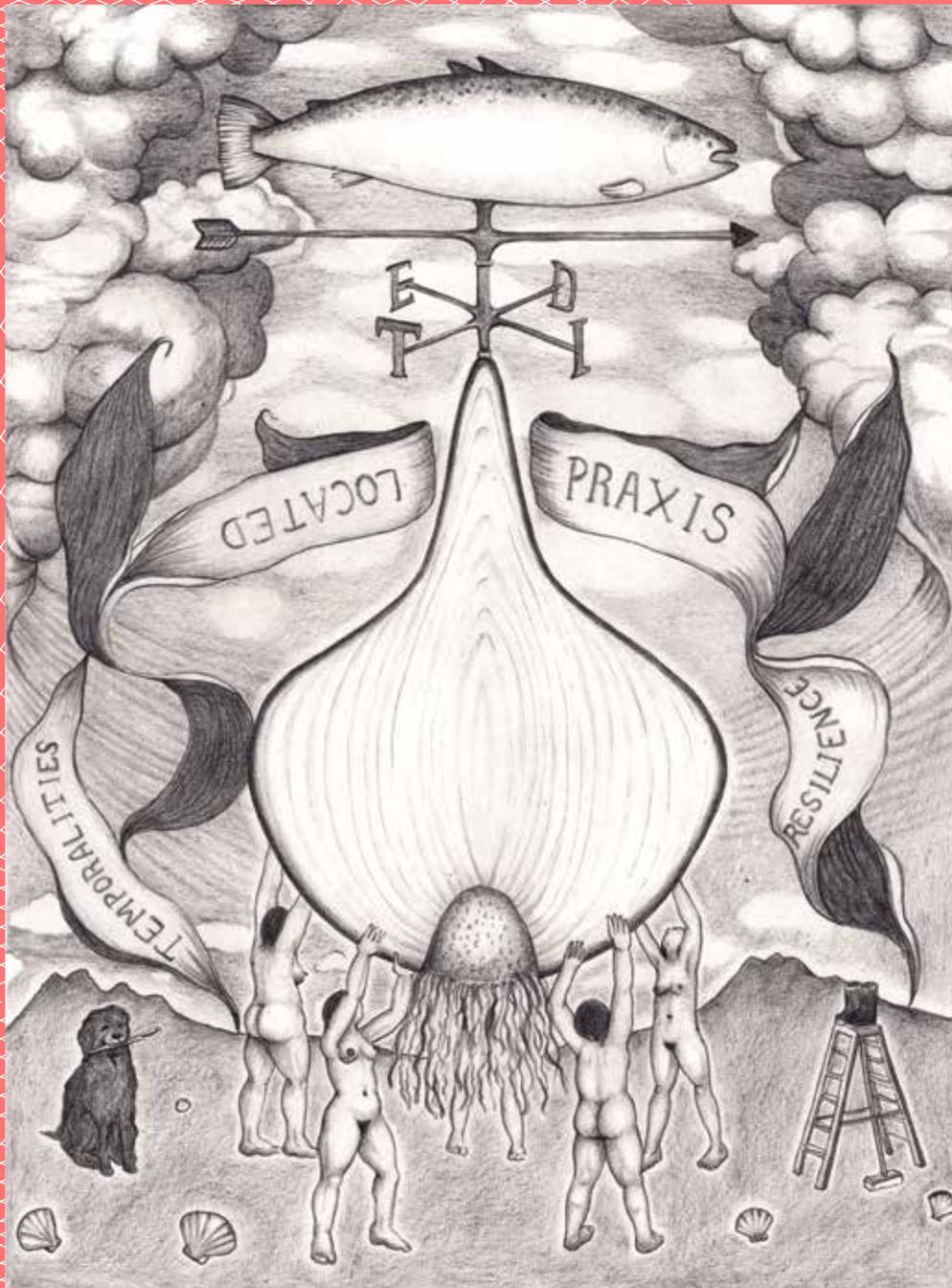
Foreword

As the stewardship of ATLAS Arts passes on to a new team, it has been a pleasure to reflect on the threads and bodies of work assembled here. We have inherited an organisation with far reaching roots — and a vibrant set of relationships — from which we'll continue to grow.

Moving around the island today, I can see how the artworks in this compendium live on. I witness traces and legacies in a cared-for apothecary tower, a community bringing a crofters' memorial to life, and in a plate of freshly cooked mussels at Portree High School. With countless friendly faces welcoming us in our first few months, sharing their thoughts, advice and memories of pre-dawn bus trips and hill-side performances — we have a solid foundation to begin our new journey with ATLAS.

This book has been published in the midst of a global crisis that has raised urgent questions for the future of the planet, and huge shifts in the way we all work, organise and look after each other. With a focus on working locally on a global scale and a programme already invested in these questions ATLAS is ready to meet these challenges, all thanks to the work and practice herein this book. I look forward to carrying this knowledge forward with new artists and contributors in the years to come.

Ainslie Roddick, Director of ATLAS Arts (2019 -)



Left: *ATLAS Onion*,
Catherine Weir, 2020

The ATLAS Onion

We use the onion as a metaphor to talk about the process of making artworks public.

An onion is everyday.

An onion adapts to different climatic conditions.

Onions are one of our most ancient of vegetables.

Onions are rich in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals.

An onion is often used when cooking, when you live 'far away' cooking becomes critical to your hosting.

An onion brings richness.

An onion is the most cultivated food-stuff in the world.

All regions cook with onion.

All parts of the onion can be used, if you leave the bulb in the ground, it will grow again.

An onion has longevity.

An onion is used in food reserves.

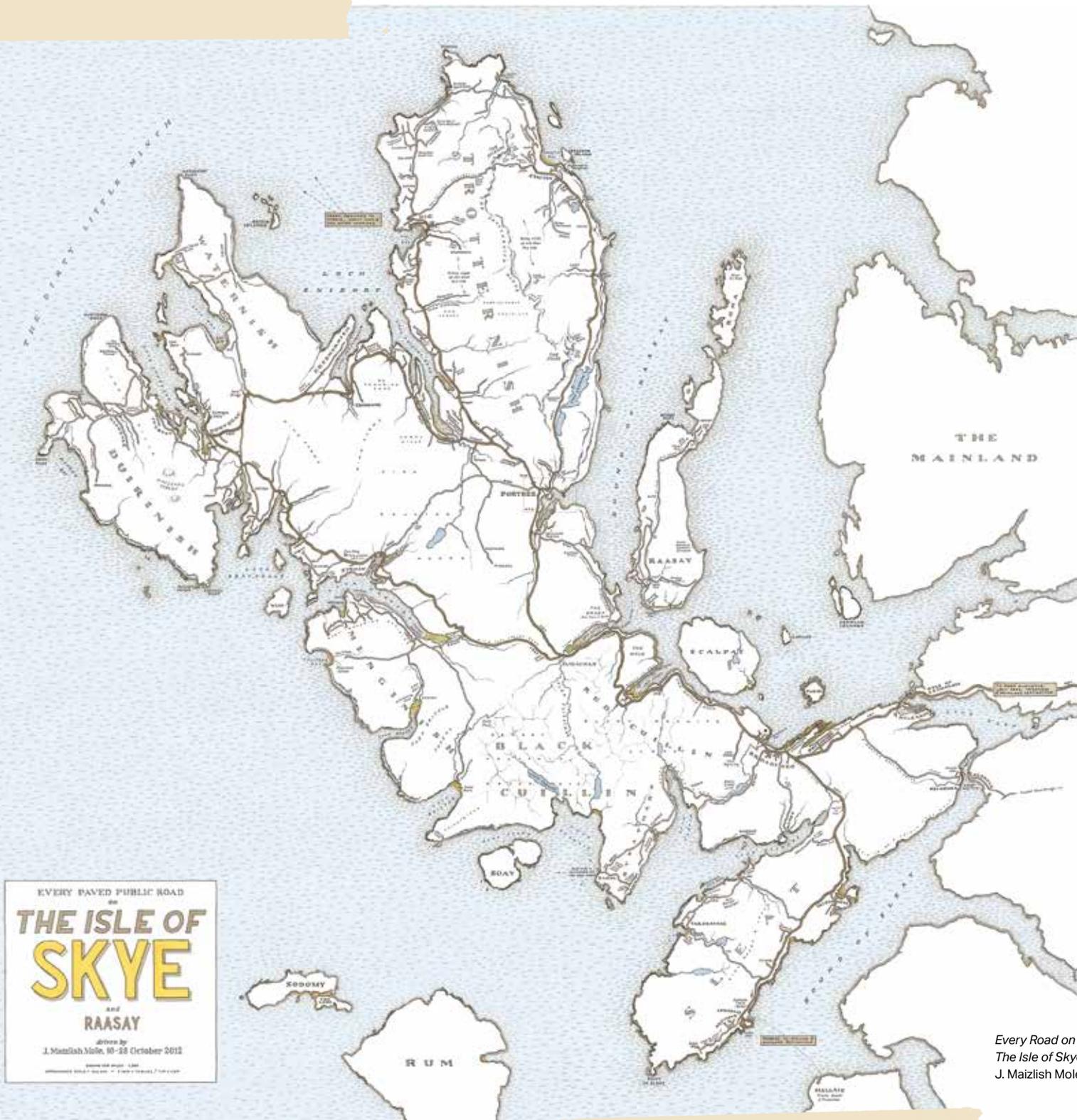
An onion has a historical association with the eyes.

An onion can make you cry.

An onion will bolt or grow mould if not cared for.

An onion is rooted.

Wire texture (used throughout): Garmin GPS drawing of Ann Martin and Jason Singh's walking path recorded during their trip to India, *Footsteps*, 2015.



Tha fàilte romhaibh — Welcome

Tha fàilte romhaibh. Tha mi da-rìribh toilichte foillseachadh an leabhair seo fhaicinn. Anns na duilleagan a leanas, tha mi an dùil gum faigh sibh boillsgeadh beag de shlighe deichead ATLAS Arts. Air mo shon-sa, tha mi moiteil agus taingeil gun d' fhuair mi an cothrom a bhith air an t-slighe còmhla riutha. Airson buidheann sam bith a bhith soirbheachail, feumaidh lèirsinn agus tuigse a bhith anns a' ghnòthach. Thàinig Emma NicNeacail le gach cuid agus mar chathraiche còmhla rithe 's e tlachd a bha ann dhomhsa an cuideam a chuir i air coimhearsnachd, foghlam, dùthchas agus seasmhachd fhaicinn a' toirt buaidh air na h-ealain gu h-ionadail agus gu h-eadar-nàiseanta. 'S dòcha gun robh ATLAS na bhuidheann beag ach cha do chuir sin riamh bacadh oirnn a bhith adhartach, comasach ann a bhith a' dèiligeadh ri dùbhlain, agus fortanach gun robh stiùiriche, luchd-obrach agus bòrd stiùiridh taiceil a' co-obrachadh gus program taitneach a chur air beulaibh an t-sluaigh. Tha mi an dòchas cuideachd gum faic sibh a' tighinn am follais tron leabhar seo an fheallsanachd shònraichte a bha Emma NicNeacail a' cleachdadh ann a bhith a' toirt spèis agus urram dhan luchd-ealain a bhiodh ag obair còmhla rithe. Ann an sgìrean ionadail gu h-àraid, tha e riatanach gu bheil na h-ealain ag obair làimh ri làimh ris a' choimhearsnachd. Nach cùm sibh ur taic ri ATLAS Arts. Tapadh leibh.

Welcome. I am really pleased to see this book published. Hopefully you will find in its pages a glimpse of a decade of ATLAS Arts. I'm proud and thankful for the opportunity to have shared that journey. For an organisation to be successful it needs vision and an understanding of context. Emma Nicolson arrived with both and as chair I was gratified to see the emphasis she placed on community, education, sense of place and sustainability and, through her tenure, effecting arts at a local and an international level. ATLAS might be a small organisation but it was always an ambitious one, ready to meet challenges and fortunate to have a Director, staff and Board working well together to produce an attractive programme for a diverse audience. I hope you also get, as you work through the book, a sense of the underpinning philosophy that Emma Nicolson brought to bear, through respect and esteem, to her relationship with commissioned artists. In a rural setting it is especially important that arts and community walk hand in hand. Please keep supporting ATLAS Arts. Thank you.

Norman Gillies, former Chair of ATLAS (2012-2020)



Toiseach Tòiseachaidh — Getting Started

This book is written in the spirit of care and custodianship, conscious of dùthaich (country). Gàidhlig writer and scholar Michael Newton informs us that the word dùthaich is derived from a much older word that meant place (dùth') but that dùthaich refers to a particular social relationship to land, country and territory. He continues:

Arguably the most abstract and complex of the terms derived from 'dùth' is dùthchas. This term originally had a narrow range of concrete meanings, primarily 'hereditary right or claim' and secondarily 'native land'. However, this too acquired further metaphysical usages relating to the individual such as 'hereditary trait,' 'innate quality,' 'inalienable right,' and 'familial tradition' by the early medieval period. The flexible and fluid quality of 'dùthchas' made it particularly useful for discussing the customs, values, beliefs, and duties prescribed by tradition, especially when they were perceived to be challenged or threatened. A wide range of meanings and usages of 'dùthchas' have continued in Gaelic to the present day.¹

As a starting point we wish to respectfully acknowledge that ATLAS Arts is making a relatively new contribution to the cultural landscape of the Isle of Skye and its rich Hebridean cultural context, including close relationships with the Isle of Raasay and Lochalsh. The landscape of this whole area, and well beyond, is full of Gàidhlig names, sometimes in anglicised form. In that native language of this whole area, the Isle of Skye is known as An t-Eilean Sgitheanach, or more colloquially, Eilean a' Cheo (Island of Mist, or Misty Isle). Other names are also inscribed within these landscapes, particularly a wealth of names from the social interactions and infusion with the Norse. Many of those Norse remained, settled and became the Gall-Ghàidheil (Stranger Gaels), emerging with influence whilst also adapting with the culture of the Gaàidhealtachd. They were also the inception of many of the historic clans that came to prevail in the region, including the MacLeods and MacDonalds. All these names and places, and the places within places, resonate with the social dynamics and histories of struggles with land and language; they deeply inform the diversity of Scotland's Gàidhealtachd, its cultures and histories, and equally inform and share its futures. We are committed to honouring and not erasing the people of the Gàidhealtachd's dynamic social, cultural and spiritual relationships with its lands, waters and seas, and the continuity of their rich contributions to society.² This is intrinsic to understanding ATLAS's engagement with the Island of Skye and the Hebrides. We write this to articulate the way in which ATLAS began, in doing so, we record the activity of ATLAS from its inception to the end of 2018. During this time, ATLAS developed a distinct approach and identity to making art public.

1. Michael Newton *Warriors of the Word: The World of the Scottish Highlanders*, Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2019.

2. ATLAS's inaugural Director, Emma Nicolson previously worked in the arts sector in Australia, where it is appropriate and respectful to commence public events or meetings with an Acknowledgement of Country. This is a common social practice done in the absence of any formal Welcome to Country — which would be made by Traditional Owners from the relevant Indigenous language group or nation — an Acknowledgement of Country can be a simple statement to acknowledge the Indigenous land you are living and working on, the language/s, people and Elders, past, present and emerging. There are several hundred Indigenous languages or nations in Australia: aiatsis.gov.au and reconciliation.org.au.

Left: *Here is Where*, a musical tribute to mountaineer and broadcaster Tom Weir, Wounded Knee and 7VWVW, 2013.

Photo: Emma Nicolson

Tòiseachadh Ùr — A Fresh Start

Established in 2010 ATLAS was actually formed by circumstance and expedience, from a lacuna left from a previous arts organisation. An Tuireann was an arts organisation which had served the community of Skye and Lochalsh for twenty years, and it had recently ceased operation. A study commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council, Hi~Arts, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Highland Council revealed a lack of provision for visual arts in the region in light of An Tuireann's demise. ATLAS, an acronym of Arts Team Lochalsh And Skye, was a project created to fill this gap. From this ATLAS grew into an itinerant organisation, which became a charity in its own right in 2012. This was a new type of arts organisation for the region. An organisation 'without walls', which shifted emphasis from a building-based model that had undone its predecessor, to a more fleet-of-foot approach that would grow and contract with the demands of the programme.

Artistic programming for ATLAS focused on issues of contemporary urgency and rural life in order to help create a stronger sense of identity and place and to foster cultural wellbeing throughout the region. Our aim was to give voice to the rural, through a sensitive and deep engagement with the issues of our location, championing its value and relevance for the twenty first century. The Island of Skye and its surroundings served as an impetus, and inspiration for commissioning new work, research and artistic endeavour.

Activities for ATLAS during this time took the form of a multi-stranded programme incorporating; events, weekends, field trips, meals, films, performance, public art, soundworks, poetry, music, dance, exhibitions, residencies and publications. It comprised a small dynamic team of Director Emma Nicolson, Producer Shona Cameron, Office Manager Suzy Lee and Project Coordinator Rosie Somerville. In addition to this core team, we relied on temporary labour who joined ATLAS as and when the programme demanded. These were: Administrator, Avril Souter; Project Curator, Gayle Meikle; Curatorial Fellow, Alexandra Ross; Development Trainee, Becca Clarke; Digital Researcher, Catriona Hood; Interns; Aoife Carolan, Camilla Crosta, Finn Croy, Grace Morton and Talitha White; alongside, freelance artists, practitioners, technicians; and volunteers. Our work was supported by a Board of Directors chaired by Prof Norman Gillies including Sorcha Dallas, Rebecca Waterstone, John White, Steven Haddow, Anna Jobson, Sophie Morrish and Sue Pirnie, together with community partners, friends and loved ones.

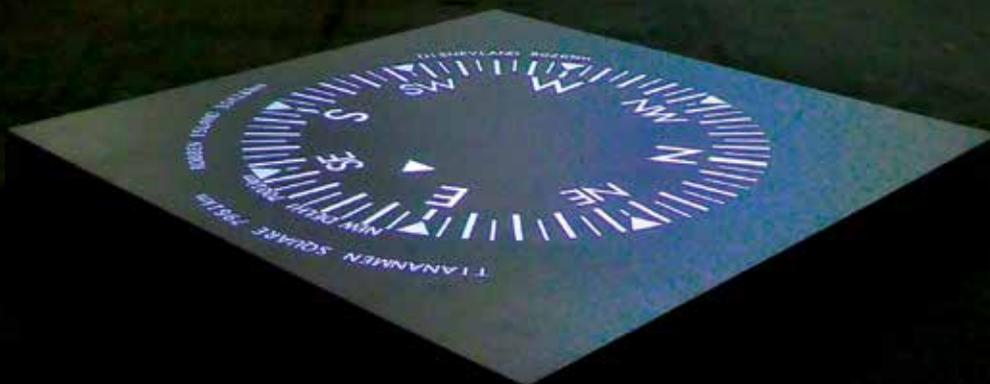
A guiding principle of ATLAS is to take a nuanced understanding of 'place', viewing it as a set of shifting relations that encompass social, political, economic and material components. We engaged artists with 'place' as



Left: *Belief*, Thomson and Craighead, 2013.

Photo: Portrait Skye

Commissioned by ATLAS Arts, alongside Creative Scotland, New Media Scotland (Alt-w fund) and *Animate Projects – Belief* is the final work in the *Flat Earth Trilogy* by the artists.



Portree premiere for poetic monologue on Crofters' War

A new spoken-word artwork inspired by the Crofters' Wars in Staffin on Skye is to be premiered live in Portree.

'Place of Pillars' by Ruth Barker is a poetic monologue composed as a live performance. It will be performed for the first time in Carmina Gadelica at 6pm on Friday 29th July.

Ruth Barker is a Glasgow-based artist who works with text and performance. Her practice throws together moments of strange poetry and autobiographical sketches, with echoes of humanity's oldest stories. Barker's performances are described as hypnotic, ritualised events, layered in structure and intensity, and use repetition and moments of unexpected humour.

This commission is part of a wider collaboration between Atlas Arts and Staffin Community Trust exploring the Crofters' Wars in Staffin through local stories and memories.

The events are free but booking is advisable at placeofpillars.eventbrite.co.uk. Full details available from atlasarts.org.uk or call 01478 611143.

Atlas director Emma Nicolson said: "Ruth spent time visiting sites and meeting people in Trotternish. Her melodic tale gives a voice to women and creates a free-flowing and richly-textured narrative exploring nature and history. We are delighted that this work to be presented in Skye will also travel to this year's Edinburgh Art Festival."

Describing the artwork, Ms Barker said: "The work is a slipshod stretch in unsuitable shoes, it is a meandering and unreliable ramble across the peat landscape of Skye's Trotternish peninsula, from the township of Flodigarry ('the floating enclosure'), to the river Lealt ('the half stream'). It is a circuitous loop through the Staffin crofters' uprising, past handmade dinosaurs, via biro

marks on a folded map. It is a route of thought — not so much a train as a sheep track bumping its way between the lochans."

Emma Nicolson added: "With

sparks of humour, familiar landmarks, and an idiosyncratic eye for detail, Barker's writing has a firm rooting in the day to day of contemporary Scotland."



'Place of Pillars' incorporates local stories and memories

22 July 2016

a mutable concept that occurs through different modes of exchange. This could manifest through long or short-term visits, interdisciplinary collaborations, interventions, and critical platforms between artist, audience and site. We therefore encouraged artists to take a view that goes beyond literal aspects of place and identity, to explore the relationship between artistic practice, place, resources and community, their challenges and their possibilities. Time and again, projects such as *Celestial Skye* (2011), *Mapping Portree* (2012), *PANORAMA* (2013), *Are you LOCATIONALIZED* (2015), *Ceumannan // Footsteps* (2015-2017) and *Ragadawn* (2018), played with the perception of the islands as a space to visit, to look at and to romanticise. Instead these projects introduced a disruption to this perception to reveal a more complex and vital place.

Essential to our curatorial work was a gentle evolution, dialogue and engagement with the artists' experience. Our ATLAS onion, as we came to describe it, was a way to describe this curatorial approach. The layers of the onion indicate a layered conception of practice, in which we considered the many routes into and out of artworks, as well as the process of making art public. In writing this book, we revisit the onion; the commissioned drawing by Catherine Weir and accompanying frontispiece lists all the reasons why we have made the onion an emblem for our way of working at ATLAS.

Above: Press clipping for *Place of Pillars*, Ruth Barker, 2016, West Highland Free Press

Below: The artist David Lemm sketching the Cuillins.

Photo: Shona Cameron



We have continued this association through the structuring of the book, using the Commonplace Book, arguably the onion's literary equivalent, as our inspiration. Popularised in the Renaissance period, this has been a mainstay literary form (W.H Auden's 'A Certain World: A Commonplace Book', the most well known). The Commonplace Book takes shape as a curated collection of written extracts, reflective notes, explorative ideas and biographical inserts. An idiosyncratically organised depository of information devised for future reference. Typically, the book is organised through a personal narrative, combining copied passages of existing writing, alongside diaristic entries and litanies.

Like the Commonplace Book, this book is part biographical note, part documentation, chronicling the activity of ATLAS from 2010-2018. It has been created as a marker of a moment in time, but compiled over many years (we first began discussing this project in 2016). We have invited a range of contributors, some are deeply connected to our projects ('A conversation between Stephen Bungard and Frances Priest'), others are included because they share affinities to our way of working ('Feminist Kinds of Critical Spatial Practice'). The book creates an archive of insights into realised and unrealised work. In doing so, we present a diverse range of material from academic writing, snippets of conversations of those involved in our work, to project documentation. This range in material situates the past activity of ATLAS at the beginning of a new era for ATLAS under the fresh leadership of Ainslie Roddick.

Below: Participant looking at moss, *Land Line Five Walks in Skye*, Caroline Dear, 2016.

Photo: Rosie Somerville

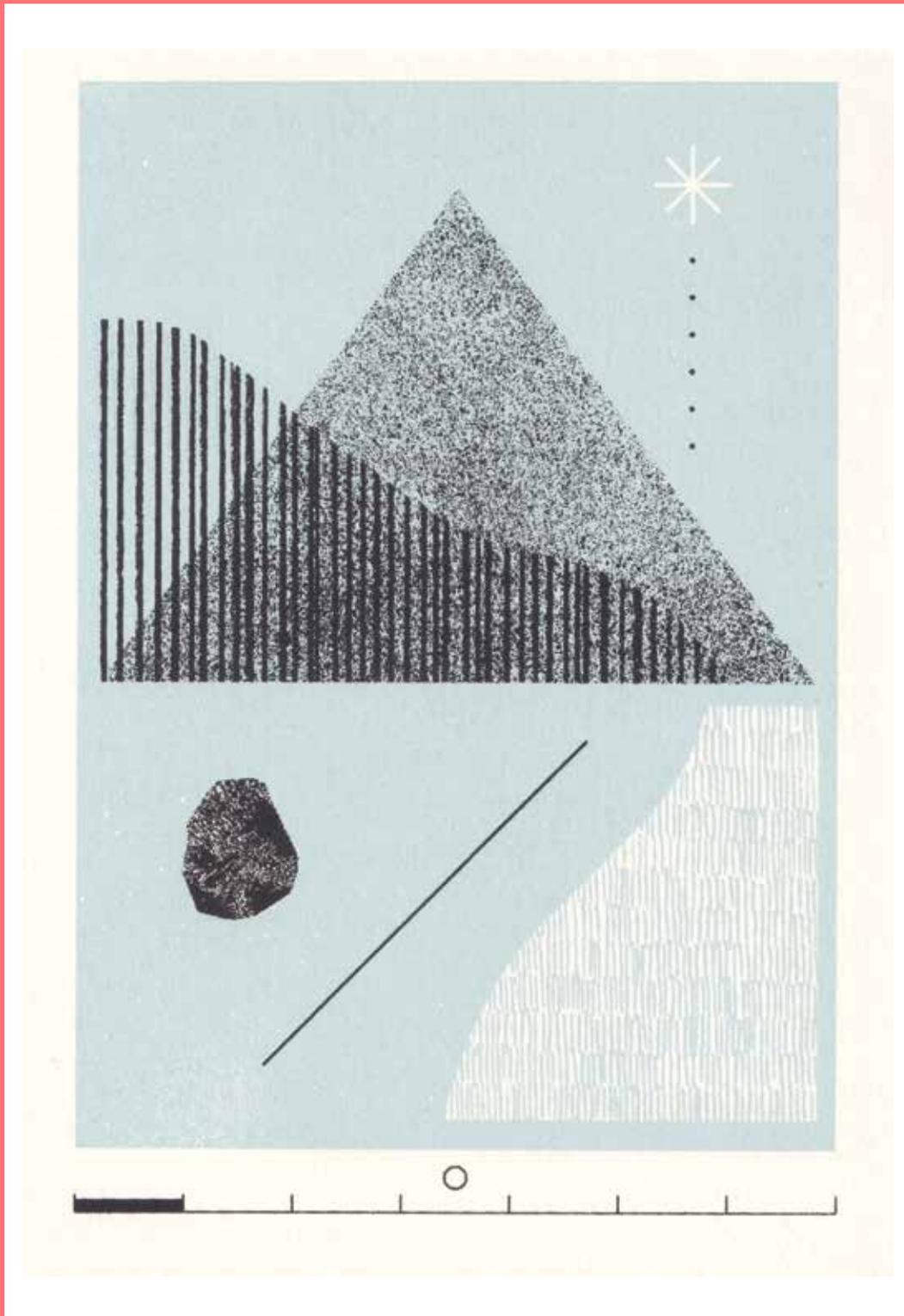
The project was a series of five walks over five days that offered a unique chance to explore our relationship with the landscape. Led by Skye-based artist Caroline Dear, each featured a specially invited collaborator and encouraged observation and conversation.



To punctuate the range of practice we have introduced four key words, these are: Located, Praxis, Temporalities and Resilience. These terms will expand on the sensibilities we have attributed to the ATLAS onion, digging a little deeper and spotlighting the projects that we feel articulate this approach to the fullest. Nevertheless, in no sense are these categories definitive — many of our projects fall between and across this categorisation.

The aim of the 'mini' Lexicon is to open out our practice; to highlight the relationality of what we produced to the people, places, histories, stories and environments we connected. In the spirit of this relationality, we invite you to dip in and out of the book, meandering across and between each section, choosing your own path through the Commonplace Book of ATLAS.

Emma Nicolson & Gayle Meikle



LOCATED:

A sustained engagement with place (and emplacement) and acknowledging the plural readings of identities and their connection to land. In doing so, this opens up the potential for discovering multiple senses and contradictions of a place, its tradition, knowledge and values.

Are you **LOCATIONALIZED**

(2014), Tatham and O'Sullivan

Edible Places: Temporary Spaces

(2014), Keg de Souza

Left: *Landscapes*, David Lemm, 2015, part of the ongoing ATLAS Editions series.

ATLAS Arts works with a range of artists and makers each year to create a series of limited edition artworks, available for sale in our shop. Sale proceeds support the next round of artist editions, and, from 2021, sales of new editions are shared with a charity or organisation of the artists' choice.



Left: A view of the Apothecary's Tower overlooking the harbour, *Are you LOCALIONALIZED* by Joanne Tatham and Tom O'Sullivan, 2014.

Photo: Ruth Clark



A maquette of the gable end in North Uist, *Are you LOCALIONALIZED*, 2014.

Photo: Joanne Tatham and Tom O'Sullivan

Located

As a venueless organisation, a core aspect of the work at ATLAS is a sustained engagement with the concept of site. This way of working is informed by the histories and legacy of site-specific public art, and we are one of many organisations in the UK that have challenged what it means to make artworks public in this way (for example Art Angel, Deveron Projects, HICA, Situations). Nevertheless, for us, the words 'site' or 'public-art' do not convey the complexity of the relationships and circumstances the works we commission perform amidst, or the curatorial role the organisation has in exploring this set of relations. Instead, we use the term 'Located'

because the artworks, albeit publicly situated, engage with the context of their site in a richer and more lively way, revealing a plural understanding of their location.

Two projects that express this dynamic engagement are *Are you LOCALIONALIZED* by Joanne Tatham and Tom O'Sullivan and *Temporary Spaces, Edible Places* by Keg de Souza. Both of these projects were commissioned by ATLAS in 2014 and are cartographically connected to the Hebrides, however, the way in which each artwork performs in dialogue with its surroundings provides an alternative reading of the region's identity. We have used the documentation and materials generated from these projects to punctuate a collection of writing selected to lay open ATLAS's use of the term Located.

It is with the astute observations of Ernesto Pujol that we begin, his readings provide insight into the responsibilities

rural arts organisations have to their audiences and the kaleidoscopic intricacies of place. James Oliver's examination of the Gaelic significance of Dùthchas, focussing on contemporary questions of our relationships with place, across time and space. 'Topologies' by Gavin Morrison, originally commissioned as a companion piece to *Are you LOCALIONALIZED*, connects the architecture of Skye to Corsica using Johnson and Boswell's accounts of the trips they took to both places. The symbolic association of towers in the architecture of the broch with Corsican military turrets reflects the architectural style of Tatham and O'Sullivan artworks but also the historical sophistication of the built environment on the islands and its global interconnections.

This is further supported by Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart's essay, which challenges the view of the Scottish Gàidhealtachd as a peripheral,

Artist Keg de Souza and the children of Kilmuir Primary School inside Keg's artwork, *Temporary Spaces, Edible Places*, Keg de Souza, 2014.

Photo: Emma Nicolson

backwards, idealised, homogenous other. Instead, through an examination of the material culture of the Gàidhealtachd, Stiùbhart reveals a culturally engaged and flexible society that has strong historical connections to empire and global trade at all levels of society. A legacy of which is revealed in Keg de Souza's artwork *Temporary Spaces, Edible Places* where she collaborates with children from Kilmuir Primary School to explore their understanding of the commons of food and its connection to people, place and reciprocity. Keg's conversation with artist and collaborator Lucus Ilhein unpacks the richness of knowledge the participants had of crofting life, land use, sustainability and the nature of the commons — but also speaks to the situation building of de Souza's practice and its vitality in opening up complex conversations around heritage, place, politics and identity.



Revisiting an Atlas of Small Places

Ernesto Pujol

We should arrive at places with humility, whether as artists or curators, knowing that what looks small to the eye may be titanic: Atlas the hero can hide under the guise of Tom Thumb. There are networks, tangible and intangible, and inhabitants, visible and invisible; but only a creative methodology of maker humility and vulnerability will respectfully reveal what all need to see. Perception is the beginning of understanding, and there is much misunderstanding about small and distant places that, nevertheless, hold a wisdom that is key to a sustainable future.

I travelled across the ancestral lands of the Scottish Highlands in 2014, as part of *Fernweh: A Travelling Curators' Project*, our journey culminating with visiting ATLAS in the Isle of Skye. We arrived in the midst of an almost mythical storm in May that baptized us, washing off the mainland from our minds. That short but meaningful flowing experience changed me. I returned to the United States wishing to experience life in a town or village. Soon after, I moved into an eighteenth-century farmhouse, a beautiful ruin, and began to live in a hamlet without the curatorial authority and financial backing of an art center or project. I had been an ethical pilgrim artist most of my life, but my new desire, born in Scotland, engaged me in the process of becoming a rooted citizen artist.

Even though every place dreams-to-myth itself unique, the Isle of Skye looms large in my psyche. I love its rugged editorial solitude, confronting us with exactly where we stand and what tools we possess, or not. There is little to hide behind or under; a piercing wind of honesty blows, rejecting the superfluous. In a culture of distracting fantasies, Skye is disarmingly real. What follows is a fragment from a travel journal I kept, later published as a text entitled 'An Atlas of Small Places'. Skye is an atlas of the human condition, a testing cartography to those whose identity is invested in curating the making.



Curator Mary Jane Jacobs speaking at *Fernweh*, 2013.

Photo: Suzie Lee.

Island Entry, Thursday May 2, 2013

ATLAS Arts, Village of Kilmuir, Isle of Skye,
Trotternish peninsula, facing the Outer Hebrides

We cross the bridge and arrive in the Isle of Skye through dramatic weather that heightens its mythical landscape, a wilderness often described as remote, where houses are scattered. Scottish Gaelic is spoken by over 50% of the population. Dinosaur fossils are easy to find on the surf. After a dry winter, streams have sprung as an incredible amount of rainfall falls in a short time. Cold windy conditions turn a May day into winter. Is an island still an island if it is joined to a mainland by a bridge? Or is the anxiety of being surrounded by water on all sides broken?

I am an American artist born on the island of Cuba and raised on the island of Puerto Rico. The native people of Hawaii believe that there is a global sisterhood of islands. No matter what island you were born on, large or small; no matter what sea or ocean you were surrounded by, hot or cold; the very fact that you were born on an island makes you understand something about global island culture. To be born on an island gives you a special connection to everyone else born on islands. When I ask our driver if he considers this place remote, he answers that remote is an urban term for everything outside the urban. The people who live on this island are not remote from each other. Islanders bond.

What topics present themselves to a curator of small places? What topics find the curator who walks between them? I visit the Isle of Skye and they rain hard on me:

1. Retired people move to small places, seeking Nature, safety; their roots. However, what happens when they need important health services and the nearest hospital is 200 miles away? Does Paradise suddenly become Purgatory — or Hell? Why can't a doctor and a nurse come once a month for one week to deliver services? What about this internal Third World within the First World? What about our internal globalism of need?

2. There is a notable absence of young professionals in many small places. They sometimes seem populated by children and seniors. The young cannot wait to get out. They seek opportunity through further education and jobs. Therefore, how can small places retain the young, or recover them, because most do not return? Does a young curator and the young artists the curator brings fill in that gap inadvertently with their agency? Young professionals activate a place with new ideas, establishing bridges between the past (history and myth) and the present, building a native future. What happens when art projects are asked to fulfill that role?

3. There is a landscape of closed shops throughout villages and town centers. Small places often have fragile economies, vulnerable to tourist hunger. Small places can easily be consumed, their culture becoming a store-window culture, commercially cartoonish, cheapened. How can economic diversity be fostered and sustained through curatorial and artistic interventions? How can contemporary art connect with local craft?

4. There is a culture of loss and mourning through Scotland and many small places. There is a haunting tragic past and a beautiful grief. This is a melancholic culture. Is it the role of the curator and the artist to mourn metaphorically, helping catharsis, dispelling the spell of sadness? Is it the role of a project to help give healthy closure to this mourning and help people move on? Can the past burden the present, forever occupying the present, bigger than the present? Can this be a sign of a collective depression that needs an intervention? Can the curator become a citizen and be that courageous? When has a place 'mourned enough' and is stuck in the past?

5. Can a landscape be so beautiful, a vast wilderness, a landscape so shaped by ancient ancestral human presence that it looks like a garden, a grassed and thus manicured garden that seems to leave little space for intervention?



So the curator and the artist engaged in social practice feel like they are asked to be like Atlas, carrying the weight of the world, as the community sits on its edge, as the art world gasps and feels uncomfortable with the weight of the mandate. Vulnerable and (hopefully) humble. Of course, they have chosen this freely. Nevertheless, what resources can we place at their disposal for such a task? In addition, an atlas is a collection of maps. Thus, can curators and

their artists also connect different small places, as they engage in this pilgrimage of meaning, weaving a quilt of sites, creating an enormous Commons, a true globalism?



One resource that strikes me is the fact of revisiting. Even when an institution decides to do without a gallery, a white cube, making the town the venue, the island the venue, with much room to roam for cultural experiences, one can still treat streets, shops, homes and hotels with gallery-style programming if one does not think through the dynamics of family intimacy.

A traveller may be someone who avoids intimacy by not staying anywhere long enough to forge deep and complex bonds. But the social practitioner is a traveller of intimacies. Therefore, after an artist works hard at earning the trust of a small place, and a small place takes a risk with that newcomer, producing a successful project through which everyone learned something, why not call back that artist to revisit that place and keep digging through its psychic material building on the bonds already established? Why must it always be 'a new show'? If we want our sons and daughters to return to visit us, why not have the artists return to visit us? This can be a very selective process, of course. We are free to call back only those whose projects had impact, a lasting effect in the memory of the community, generating new myths.

Images above: Attendees of the *Fernweh* dinner including Ernesto Pujol, Fernweh, 2013. Photos: Suzy Lee

Summer 2014.

A conversation overheard on the Caledonian MacBrayne Lochmaddy-Uig ferry.

The architect: We've seen a number of number of things across the Hebridean isles of Skye and North Uist. In Portree there's a tower and then some sort of reception or information desk and on North Uist at Taigh Chearsabhagh Art Centre and Museum, there are a series of framed photographs, a printed text and another outdoor structure. Are we meant to consider all of these things together as one artwork?

The intern: The title Are you LOCALIZED encompasses all of those elements you just mentioned and in that sense there is a strong argument in favour of regarding them together as one work. The question remains however - what shape and form does such a work take? Personally, I suspect it may be useful to regard the relationship between the component parts and the whole as if chapters within a book, or perhaps as different events at a summer festival. Certainly, the challenge for a viewer is to find a way to read such geographically and formally disparate elements together. I would also wish to establish where the limits of such a work might be. I mean, given the significant distances involved between the different elements, how should a viewer regard the spaces in between?

The architect: You mean are they part of the work? Indeed. I mean here we are midway across the Little Minch, shielding our eyes from the setting sun. Hmm and space, of course, is also time.

The intern: Yet having said all I just said, it's also worth saying that each element also encourages a viewer to think of it in isolation, caught as it were within its material limits. Each photograph, enclosed within its hand-made, hand-polished wooden frame, invites a viewer to enter into an exclusive relationship – or at least exclusive in the sense of one at a time...!

The architect: Are you proposing a form of serial monogamy as a way of understanding the work? Figuratively speaking of course.

The intern: Of course each photograph also shows another artwork by another artist – but I'm not at all sure where this takes your analogy.

The architect: These other artworks, I suppose we could describe them as public sculptures of one sort or other, are located either on Uist or on the campus of Loughborough University. I wonder what kind of relationship there could be between these two places? It's a long distance one, that's for sure... I'm thinking about distinct cultures and cultural identities, about distinct languages and landscapes. I suppose they're both quite specific communities, albeit in different ways and with different ways of talking. After all, one is in the English Midlands and the other in the Western Isles. The text that accompanies these works provides all sorts of contextual information about the public sculptures, although it doesn't address the two different locations as a thing in itself. It's complicated.

The intern: As always, it's as much about what isn't directly spoken as about what is. I wonder if the title of the work feels like an accusation to you? What do you think you're being accused of?

The architect: I'll admit I'm not quite sure what locationalized means... I mean I understand all about locationality - I'm an architect after all, but I'm not sure how to apply this question to myself.

The intern: Perhaps you feel guilty because you're uncertain about what you're being asked. I wonder if you feel ashamed of something. The z makes it sound like an Americanism or some kind of business-speak.

The architect: I mean, is the question even directed at me? Maybe the finger points elsewhere. After all, whose location is this to be locationalized within or in relation to?

The intern: This matters. After all, the work has been commissioned as part of GENERATION, an exhibition celebrating 25 years of contemporary art in Scotland, in galleries and venues from Orkney to Dumfries. Scotland's celebrated Turner Prize winners and nominees will be rubbing shoulders with some of the rising stars of the visual arts scene in this countryside celebration staged to coincide with Glasgow's hosting of the Commonwealth Games. GENERATION is also a key event in the Year of Homecoming 2014, when Scotland welcomes the world to enjoy an exciting year-long programme of events and activities to showcase all that's great about Scotland.

The architect: The artists' Portree tower is built around an existing tower on Meall na h-Acairaid. Why do you think the artists have chosen this site? Is it significant that the artists' tower is being sited to coincide with the Skye Highland games taking place there?

The intern: The artists were invited to create a new and evolving artwork to augment the local annual Gala and Highland Games days on the Isle of Skye. The Games are one of the highlights of the Skye calendar and are enjoyed by thousands of visitors each year as well as by the local population. The Skye Highland Games were inaugurated in 1877 and have become very much part of the local culture and tradition. In addition, the enhancement of the harbour area has been identified as one of Highland Council's long-term goals and a priority for the rejuvenation of Portree. The Apothecary's Tower is a wonderful landmark in the harbour area that goes unattended and vandalised. It is hoped that a legacy of the project will be a renewed interest in the area and highlight the tower's potential as a tourist attraction. By highlighting the need for improvements to access, way finding, and interpretation of the area it is intended that this project will contribute to Portree being recognised as a contemporary/world class tourist destination.

The Apothecary's Tower,
Portree on Skye, *Are you
LOCATIONALIZED* by
Joanne Tatham and Tom
O'Sullivan, 2014.

Photo: Ruth Clark



The gable-end wall at
Taigh Chearsabhagh,
Lochmaddy on North Uist,
Are you LOCATIONALIZED
by Joanne Tatham and
Tom O'Sullivan, 2014.

Photo: Ruth Clark



The architect: The ATLAS Office overlooks the harbour on the lower floor of the Skye Gathering Hall. The artists have sited a desk there – well, I’ve described it as a desk, but I suppose it might just as well be a sculpture. Why do you think it’s there? What is its function?

The intern: It serves a purpose in that it provides a place from which to distribute various texts, posters and information about the artwork, but I’m loathe to assign this as the function of the piece. It’s certainly not a reception desk is it? I mean what kind of organisation would have a reception desk with such a nose? It protrudes quite awkwardly... penetrates even. It’s hardly conducive to reception is it? I think the function of the desk, or perhaps I should say role, is more akin to that of a narrator. It’s just that it doesn’t narrate through utterance, but through the texts and posters it displays.

The architect: ...but surely information about an artwork should not be part of the artwork?

The intern: I don’t agree with you at all on this. Why can’t the work speak for itself?

The architect: The outdoor structure at Taigh Chearsabhagh also speaks but I’m not sure what that tells us about itself or about the work. I’m wondering, do you think we should call these things sculptures? Is that a useful thing to do?

The intern: I doubt it, but if we must then I think we should think about the different ways in which sculptures can behave. The desk, for example, behaves very differently to the tower. They have different roles to play. The wall in Uist does have some behaviours in common with the Portree desk, not least in that they both transmit words - albeit through different modes and means.

The architect: The tower and the wall are both large external structures, so in what ways do they behave differently to each other?

The intern: Well, as I just said, the wall speaks. It also has a face. We create personal relationships with elements of the so called objective world, whether pets, cars or teddy bears, who we recognise as subjects. The tower on the other hand, does not behave in such a way as to invite this kind of relationship. It is mute; it has no face.

The architect: Is the tower a folly?

The intern: It may be. In architecture, as you’ll know, a folly is a building constructed primarily for decoration, but either suggesting by its appearance some other purpose, or merely so extravagant that it transcends the normal range of garden ornaments or other class of building to which it belongs. Dr Alexander MacLeod, or “an Dotair Ban”, the fair-haired doctor, as he was known, is credited with the construction of The Apothecary’s

Tower and the landscaping of this area in the 1830s. Some old maps refer to the sloping promontory it’s upon as Fancy Hill, which may derive from the gardens of trees and shrubs laid out around the tower. The tower has been described as either a beacon, a memorial or an apothecary’s tower; the latter indicating to passing vessels that medical supplies and assistance were available in the vicinity. Severely damaged in gales in October 1978, the stone was retained and the tower was reconstructed to include an interior stair.

The architect: Some structures are popularly referred to as follies because they failed to fulfil their intended use. Their design and construction may be foolish, but in the architectural sense, they are not follies.

The intern: Of course, but I don’t think this is about trying to establish whether or not The Apothecary’s Tower is a folly. Surely this is more about whether or not this is a useful way to describe the artists’ tower?

The architect: Are you asking me if the artists’ tower has a function?

The intern: No, I’m asking you whether it is constructed primarily for decoration.

The architect: It certainly seems to function as a symbolic sort of thing...

The intern: Towers are invariably, inescapably phallic symbols. In the popular imagination, the most shamelessly sexual building form is the tower, an idea so widespread it is beyond cliché. Of course, all of this goes without saying.

The architect: The tower is a phallus we can enter through a narrow slit of a doorway, climbing up a spiral staircase to achieve a marvellous panorama of Portree Loch and across to Ben Tianavaig and Raasay and beyond. The conversation meanders, but I return to this – does the work relate to place? Is the work locationalized?

The intern: I understand the temptation to invert the accusation but that’s not the question that’s being asked. Nevertheless, I think we’re correct to consider the work’s relationship to its location. At its most basic, it seems only right to be curious about this. We need to consider motivations as well objectives. We need to think about psychologies and agendas. We need to think of all the reasons why such things ended up here together – well, in as much as they are together given they are 50 miles apart.

The architect: So why do you think these things are here? Or here and there?

The intern: The artwork aims to generate a forum for debate and curiosity in the local environment and engage both local and new visitors to the area. It seems important to demonstrate that a critical approach to contemporary art can occur in areas considered geographically remote from the urbanised centres of Scotland. The different contexts for each element of the work will offer up opportunities for further layering, and ways for artists and visitors alike to experience the work. Resolutely contemporary, this project seeks to recognise, but also move beyond, even to unsettle, and to question cultural perceptions about contemporary life in the Scottish Islands. The work asks Are you LOCATIONALIZED.

Original design by Emlyn Firth



MEETING OF CROFTERS: JOHN McFERRON SPEAKING.



1. This is part of my sliontheadh ('genealogy', also i version addresses seven generations in Glendale.

Left top: Colin Macpherson of Glendale addressing Crofters before the Marines arrive. Illustrated London News/ Mary Evans Picture Library

Bottom: Neil Bromwich recording George Macpherson *Celestial Radio*, Zoë Walker and Neil Bromwich, *Bàta Brèagha // Bonnie Boat*, 2011.

Photo: Zoe Waker

Acknowledging Relations: Dùthchas, Seanchas and Ethical Emplacement

James Oliver (Seumas Olaghair)
(Seumas Chatriona Dhomhnuill Aonghais Bhig)

Acknowledging relations

Is mise Seumas Chatriona nigh'n Dhomhnuill Aonghais Bhig mac Dhomhnuill mhic Pheadar mhic Mhurchaidh.¹ Tha mi às an t-Eilean Sgitheanach, bho Gleann Dail.

Although I am from Skye, I was already living in Melbourne when I first heard of ATLAS. A friend recommended that I look out for Zoë Walker's and Neil Bromwich's project *Bàta Brèagha // Bonnie Boat*, of which the centrepiece was a glittering yacht named *Celeste*, literally shimmering with its new coat of over 60,000 tiles. The project incorporated *Celestial Radio*, broadcasting radio from the yacht whilst it was moored in Portree Bay. It was the film-based installation of *Celestial Radio*, which also premiered at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney in 2012, that drew my attention to ATLAS. Within this broader work (and as part of the radio broadcasts) was a sound piece on the Crofting Wars. This smaller work resonated with me in particular, not least because of its creative crafting, but also due to the familiar language, voices and stories about those times — all of which still resonate in relationships between people and place, including in my home area of Glendale.

The symbolism of boats, the Gàidhealtachd, the Hebrides and Highlands, and Australia was not lost on me, nor I imagine on others. In effect, it also acknowledges relations: a socio-cultural set-piece of geo-political migrations and mobilities; colonialism and globalisation. A set of relations that has produced many stories and poems, songs and laments.

I write this essay from Boon Wurrung Country, part of the bay area (Narrm) of what has come to be known as the City of Melbourne. The Boon Wurrung people form part of the Kulin Nation,² an alliance of five language groups who have been the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land in south-central Victoria for millennia. In colonial terms, Melbourne has been built at the head of the bay of Port Phillip on the Yarra River. These places' names also have different, much older names, still in use. Spellings vary but in Boon Wurrung there is: Birrarangga (Melbourne), Birrarung (Yarra River), Narrm (Port Phillip Bay). Indigenous cultures in Australia are very multiple, rich and living, but they have all too easily been disparaged or flattened and ignored. Nevertheless, this also reveals the traumatic and enduring colonial legacy from strategies to eliminate and of intergenerational displacements from land and language.

Dùthchas, Seachas and Ethical Emplacement

Recently I have been involved in projects writing about 'ethical relations', in contexts of islandness³ and also the Gàidhealtachd.⁴ I approach these from my position as a Sgitheanach and Hebridean, but also as a member of a diaspora from 'place'. This is not unique to the Hebridean or Gàidheal, but such relationships with community and place, amplified across time and space, present a double ontology: of being informed by a lived and emplaced relationship 'on the ground', and also by a more abstractly and socially networked relationship 'in the mind'. Again, this is not unusual to the way that many (most?) people develop their relationships within or with community.⁵

As Hebrideans — (or Highlanders) (or Scots) (Brits or Europeans) (... and like many if not most people) — we can have a strong sense of place and identity. This can nurture a positive sense of cultural ownership and responsibility, in traditional or Indigenous Gaelic communities too. We can therefore think about this in terms of dùthchas. Hugh Cheape describes this as:

A term often proposed in the literature is, typically, dùthchas, as offering an insight into Gaelic cultural identity; this refers to an instinctive trait denoting the individual's sense of belonging to a home place. For the Hebridean, dùthchas has dimensionality as a putative total field of understanding embracing landscape, a sense of geography, a sense of history and a formal order of experience in which all these are merged.^{6]}

2. The Kulin Nation in south-central Victoria is an alliance of five Indigenous tribes of people, with five related languages, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kulin_people (Kulin is pronounced in a very similar way to the Cuillin/*An Cuilltheann* name on Skye). See also: <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-melbourne/melbourne-profile/aboriginal-culture/Pages/aboriginal-culture.aspx>. There is record of at least 38 Indigenous languages in the state of Victoria before colonization, see: <http://vaclang.org.au/>, and several hundred across the continent: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>. For further information on Reconciliation Australia, see: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>; and on Treaty in Vitoria, see: <https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/treaty>.

3. Oliver, J. (2021a). Islandness: articulating and emplacing relationality. In K. Burnett, R. Burnett and M. Danson (eds), *Scotland and Islandness: Explorations in Community, Economy and Culture*, 239-248. Oxford: Peter Lang

4. Oliver, J. (2021b). Our pluriverse and Gàidhealtachd: emplacing ethical relations. In J. Oliver and I. MacKinnon (eds), *Scotland's Gàidhealtachd Futures. Scottish Affairs*, vol. 30 (2).

5. see Pahl, R. (2005). Are all communities communities of the mind? *The Sociological Review*, vol. 53 (4), 621-640.

6. Cheape, H. (2021). Cha ghabhadh na b' fhearr fhaighinn ("It couldn't be better"). Gaelic perspective on island cultural heritages in Scotland's Hebrides. In K. Burnett, R. Burnett and M. Danson (eds), *Scotland and Islandness: Explorations in Community, Economy and Culture*, 53-73. Oxford: Peter Lang; also cross-referencing the work of Prof. John MacInnes in Newton, M. (ed.) (2006). *Dùthchas nan Gàidheil: Selected Essays of John MacInnes*. Edinburgh: Birlinn.

7. John MacInnes, in Newton, M (2006). *Ibid.*, page 279

8. Rosaldo, R. (2014). *The Day of Shelley's Death*. Durham: Duke University Press.

9. Oliver (2021a). *Ibid.*, page 247.

10. Angus MacMillan originated from Skye, son of a former tacksman, and was an infamous leader of massacres of Indigenous Australians in early colonial Australia. Further reading, see Don Watson's *Caledonia Australis* and Cal Flynn's *Thicker than Water*.

11. Cheape, H. (2021). *Ibid.*, page 69.

Crucially, whilst a cultural concept, dùthchas is not a metaphor:

...just as 'landscape', with its romantic aura, cannot be translated directly into Gaelic, so 'dùthchas' and, indeed, 'dùthaich' cannot be translated into English without robbing the terms of their emotional energy.⁷

Dùthchas is that ontological dynamic of embodied experience and emplacement ('on the ground'), and complex entanglement ('in the mind') with relationships of belonging and dwelling, heritage and inheritance, a human ecology with 'place' (including, where relevant, land). It is something like the ontological ethics of what the anthropologist and poet Renato Rosaldo refers to as 'the cultural force of emotions.'⁸ This sense of belonging and responsibility, when conceived of as praxis, as emplaced ethical relations, 'is political, social and cultural imagination in action.'⁹

One balmy evening in Melbourne, at a pub of choice for university staff members, I was warmly introduced to a well-respected senior academic and Aboriginal Australian. My other Australian colleagues introduced me, as proudly as any Sgitheanachs could have: 'James is from the Isle of Skye!' This drew a long look from my new acquaintance, and I was thinking to myself, 'well, they probably don't really know where that is.' But they obviously did: 'your name's not MacMillan, is it?!'¹⁰

How then do we share our histories, how do we remember, and how do we understand and relate to each other and our social and cultural disruptions? Asking the questions is always a start:

A further word that does not seem to have been much scrutinised is seachas — similarly complex but a different order of response. The usage of seachas occupies a spectrum of meaning between 'talk' or 'conversation' and access to a whole integrated cosmos of knowledge, perhaps too lightly translated as 'traditional lore'. Seachas holds a key to the shared knowledge and memory of a community...¹¹

As the emplaced experiences and articulations of our islands and Gàidhealtachd continue to diversify and expand, both 'on the ground' and 'in the mind', organisations such as ATLAS provide a crucial role in co-creating space for our ethical storytelling, evolving with and through dùthchas and seachas.



Topologies

Gavin Morrison

Samuel Johnson's description of the Broch at Dun Beag — within his account of the Hebridean tour he undertook with James Boswell in 1773 — is a descriptive listing of form, cultural precedents and possible ascriptions of meaning. In this way, he describes a building much as he described words in 'A Dictionary of The English Language':

An ancient building, called a dun or borough. It was a circular enclosure, about forty-two feet in diameter, walled round with loose stones, perhaps to the height of nine feet. The walls were very thick, diminishing a little toward the top, and though in these countries, stone is not brought far, must have been raised with much labour.

[...]

Some suppose it is the original seat of the chiefs of the Macleods. Mr. Macqueen thought it a Danish fort.

[...]

Savages, in all countries, have patience proportionate to their unskillfulness, and are content to attain their end by very tedious methods.¹

The writing of landscape creates a lexicographic topology. Just as Johnson's dictionary entries employed other literary sources — each word description was followed by examples of its use within the literary canon — his account of the Dun Beag is built upon that of Thomas Pennant, a traveller and writer whom Johnson admired. Pennant and Johnson shared a fastidious interest in the details of the broch, describing its structure and speculating on the history of its construction:

a beautiful *Danish* fort on the top of a rock, formed with most excellent masonry. The figure as usual circular. The diameter from outside to outside

1. Samuel Johnson, *Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland in The Works of Samuel Johnson*, Vol II New York: Alexander v Blake Publisher, 1838, p639.

Left: Dun Beag Broch, Isle of Skye

Photo: Emma Nicolson

sixty feet: of the inside forty-two. Within are the vestiges of five apartments, one in the centre, four around: the walls are eighteen feet high. The entrance six feet high, covered with great stones.

[...]

These fortresses are called universally in the Erse, Duns. I find that they are very rare in the country from whence they took their origin²

Johnson's companion at Dun Beag on the 22nd September, 1773 was James Boswell. He also took to describing the visit to the broch, although his account pays less attention to the structure but rather describes the view from its ruined walls over Loch Bracadale to the jagged silhouette of the Cuillins. Of those mountains he says: 'They resemble the mountains near Corte in Corsica, of which there is a very good print.'³ This general equivalence of the Scottish landscape to that of Corsica, eludes to Boswell's visit to the Mediterranean island in 1765 where he met the leader of the nascent republic Pasquale Paoli. Not long after Boswell's visit, the island was overthrown by a French invasion — despite Boswell's attempt to provide military aid to the Corsicans by sending cannons from the Carron Iron Works in Falkirk — and in 1769 Paoli was exiled to London. Boswell's friendship with Paoli continued during this period of exile, and in 1771 he organised a trip to show Paoli Scotland. They had travelled — along with the Polish ambassador Count Tadeusz Burzynski — from Edinburgh through Falkirk where Paoli 'had a peculiar pleasure in viewing the forge where were formed the cannon and warlike stores, which a society of gentlemen in Scotland sent to the aid of the brave Corsicans'⁴ and onto Glasgow. From there they went north, to Loch Lomond. Looking east, Paoli said the hills reminded him of Corsica and reminded him of his inadequacy, divorced, as he was, from his homeland and its politics:

this reminds me that I am no longer worth anything⁵

Corsica was of particular significance for Boswell's literary and intellectual development. His portrait of Paoli that is central to his book, 'An Account of Corsica', portrayed the General as an enlightenment hero, bringing law, education and humanity to a savage island, and could also be seen as a precursor to Boswell's most famous work, 'A Life of Johnson'. Scant attention is paid to the landscape of the island, instead the protagonist is Paoli and the depiction verges on the obsequious, the reminders are constant that Paoli is a great man. Yet in both 'An Account of Corsica' and 'A Life of Johnson' there is a fastidious attention to the intimacies, idioms and idiosyncrasies of speech, a precise transcription of dialogue. This cartographic attention to describing a man's character in the landscape of

2. Thomas Pennant, *Tour in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides* Vol I Chester: John Monk, 1772, Vol I, pp292-3.

3. James Boswell, *The Journal of a Tour of the Hebrides*, Philadelphia: John F Watson, 1810, p223.

4. Pasquale Paoli, "An Authentic Account of General Paoli's Tour to Scotland, Autumn 1771" in *The Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*. Vol.40, 1771, pp434-5.

5. "que cela me fait souvenir que je ne vaut plus rien" Pasquale Paoli quoted in James Boswell note from 9 Sept. 1771

6. James Boswell, "Letter of 24 February 1788 James Boswell to Rev. W. J. Temple" in, ed. James Boswell and Thomas Seccombe, *Letters of James Boswell to the Rev. W. J. Temple*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd., 1909, p218.



Broch building workshop with artist Ross Hamilton Frew and pupils from Portree High School, *Are You LOCATIONALIZED*, 2014

7. James Boswell, *An Account of Corsica*, London: Edward & Charles Dilly, 1768, p272.

8. James Boswell, *A Life of Johnson*, London: Wordsworth Editions, 1999, pp234-5.

his words, was a search for something primary, to find the essence of his subject and to gain a 'view of his mind in his letters and conversations, is the most perfect that can be conceived.'⁶

When he reached Corsica at the tail end of a protracted Grand Tour through Europe he was already regularly corresponding and confiding in Johnson, having met him shortly before departing England for the continent. Johnson's words accompanied him, their idiomatic form infiltrating Boswell's own thoughts. Shortly after landing in the north of the island he stayed with a Signor Antonnetti in Morsiglia. Boswell was impressed with the sophistication of the furniture and paintings in the house, not being as crude and rustic as he had anticipated, in particular he was drawn to a copy of Raphael's St Michael and the dragon and said of it, 'There was no necessity of it being well done. To see the thing at all was what surprised me.'⁷ Though the subject is different Boswell adapts the form of Johnson's infamous misogyny: 'Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all.'⁸ Of course it was Boswell who recorded Johnson's utterances, he put the words back in the writer's mouth in 'The Life of Johnson,' an act of literary ventriloquism that gives us Johnson's voice through Boswell's writing. How much of Boswell persists in the articulation of Johnson can not be known, but in some sense the authorship of those words is shared between Boswell and Johnson. In 'An Account of Corsica,' the recurrence of the form of expression is a plagiarism of an uncertain author, yet the book would also be the source of a plagiarism, or more generously, an uncredited quotation. On Corsica in 1793, before Napoleon became Napoleon, when he was

merely a young officer in a post-revolutionary army, he wrote a petition to the municipality of Ajaccio that unity must prevail and that the French Corsican motto should be, 'nous périssons nous nous si heurtons.' The expression was not his own, but one that he found in the French translation of Boswell's book — a copy of which was in the library of Napoleon's father — and used without acknowledgement. Boswell cites the motto in English, 'We shall go to pieces if we dash against each other'⁹ as coming originally from the 'sagacious Hollanders' as important wisdom for any infant nation.

In that same year and also in Corsica, Napoleon seized Torra di Capitellu, on the opposite side of Ajaccio bay from his family home. However, after the initial success of overthrowing its occupants they became besieged for five days, and, as Walter Scott reported, were 'obliged to feed on horse-flesh.'¹⁰ Upon his rescue, Napoleon responded by attempting to blow up his shelter and prison: 'its remains may be looked upon as a curiosity, as the first scene of his combats.' The tower was one of many built around the coast by the Genoese, a class of tower developed by a military engineer known as Il Fratino. Originally from Lombardy, Il Fratino served in the French army, was captured by the Spanish, lent to the Genoese, and then sent to the island in the 1560s where he and his brother were charged with improving the defences. He developed a cylindrical defensive tower of around fifteen meters in diameter with very thick walls, its door facing landward and elevated off of the ground for added security. Upon its flat roof a cannon could be mounted.

In February 1794, HMS Fortitude and HMS Juno from the British fleet sailed into the bay of San Fiorenzo with the intention of taking the town, which necessitated the capture of another of these towers: Torra di Mortella. The vessels were repeatedly repelled, inflicting sixty casualties and six deaths. Finally, after two days, a land attack by the army succeeded where the combined naval arsenal of 106 guns failed. The tower's capacity for defensive resistance, with a garrison of thirty-eight men and only three cannons, had irritatingly impressed the British. Yet their interest in it did not cease with its capture: drawings and a model were made which became the basis for the design of towers around the British coastline. The towers were eventually known by a corrupted version of their Corsican name, transposing first and last vowels to give, Martello. These sentinels, also occasionally known as bulldogs, were intended to ward off the French by a plagiarised form of homeopathic architecture.

There was, for a time, some speculation that this was not the first migration of tower architecture from the Mediterranean to the British isles. A theory persisted that the Brochs' builders had arrived in Scotland with a Celtic migration from the Mediterranean. In particular the Nuraghi towers in

9. James Boswell *An Account of Corsica*, London: Edward & Charles Dilly, 1768, p187.

10. Walter Scott, *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.1 Philadelphia: JP Ayres, 1827, p279.

11. Walter Scott, "Peveiril of the Peak" in, *The Complete Works of Walter Scott*, New York: Conner & Cook, ol.4, Chap. Xxxviii, 1833, p14.

Sardinia were cited as precursors to the Scottish form. These structures were often constructed in similar locations and also used parallel walls to create internal spaces and staircases. However the Nuraghi appear mostly to have had a roof over their central void, which is not the case with the Scottish Brochs. It seems likely that this conflation between the Scottish and Mediterranean towers started after Duncan Mackenzie — a Scot — who studied the Nuraghi and other monolithic structures in Sardinia, one of the first non-Italians to do so. Although he himself made general note of similarities between Scottish and Sardinian ancient cultures, he did not argue for the Nuraghi being the antecedents for brochs, but his raising awareness of these buildings in his homeland and within the wider anglophone culture seemed to occasion the speculation of links between the buildings. Roger Grosjean, a prehistorian, who worked in Corsica from the 1940s, attributes the Nuraghi to a civilisation called the Torrèens. A name taken from the Corsican, Torri, for tower. He contended that the Torrèens arrived in the east of Corsica and moved westward establishing communities across the southern part of the island. It was during this phase that they developed the building of the defensive Nuraghi towers. In particular around the mouth of the Filitosa valley in the south west, and coincidentally close to where Boswell met with Paoli. Boswell makes no mention of the towers but did explore the area on horseback. The Corsica type are more elemental and brutal than the latter examples found on Sardinia. It is argued that the Torrèens sailed from this part of Corsica, to inhabit the northern tip of Sardinia — where most of the Nuraghi are to be found — as at the closest point the two islands are less than ten kilometres apart. It was not until the 1950s that it was established conclusively that there could be no common lineage between the Mediterranean Nuraghi and the Scottish Brochs. Carbon dating determined a thousand years lay between the Nuraghi and brochs, severing any possibility of any common lineage.



Glendale, Isle of Skye
Photo: Emma Nicolson

Boswell and Johnson's words reach out from Dun Beag to start an entanglement of that landscape with histories and equivalences. The act of looking, describing and explaining silently reshapes topography and implicates uncertainties. It was Walter Scott's conviction that 'Martello towers are for the sole purpose of puzzling posterity.'¹¹ The shape of everything is found in the contour of the words used to describe it.

A Conversation Between Keg de Souza & Lucas Ilhein

Keg: *Temporary Spaces, Edible Places* involves a temporary inflatable structure that I host performative picnics in. The structure is made out of a gingham tablecloth material; it pops up and it has a gingham floor — very picnic-like — that we sit on top of, and eat local food as a way and a means to discuss place. In Skye, based at Kilmuir Primary School, I invited the kids there to bring in their own crofting recipes — so traditional crofting recipes. I cooked those recipes and served them as a picnic with the kids, as we ate these various foods, from a crofter's pie, to Scotch pancakes, we discussed each of the foods; and as this discussion unfolded, I mapped the conversation onto the ground, in the form of the large-scale mind-map. The event was based in a school, it was a way to think about the ways that we teach and learn, in this case, it was more about the kids teaching me about the place, as an outsider, coming there and learning from people who have vast knowledge of the place.

Lucas: The way that you're talking about it seems to indicate that there were various phases to the project. This event where they ate their traditional foods that you had cooked for them — that didn't just happen out of the blue. You had a

period leading up to that, where you spent time with the kids?

Keg: Yeah, yeah. So of course, coming in as a stranger, into a very tight, small community, I had to get to know them. One of the first mapping activities we did was, everybody drew their own croft from an aerial viewpoint; and placed their croft drawing down in relation to each others' and filled in details between, to create a large unified map from their perspectives.

Lucas: Looking at the documentation, they have this surprisingly deep knowledge of these processes that are connected with the sustenance of their own lives — like, that's the thing that immediately seems striking to me, compared to, say, kids here in Sydney, in Wollongong, who I imagine would struggle to give you recipes for things, and would struggle to tell you about processes of growth and harvest and things like that. So it seems like, from your map of crofting, that these kids have a pretty deep knowledge and connection to these processes, the relationships between human life and the growth of animals and plants that sustain human life.

Left: *Temporary Spaces, Edible Places*, Keg de Souza, 2014.

Photo: Emma Nicolson

Keg: What people gather on this land is phenomenal. When you look at all the things that the kids foraged, from berries to nuts to edible flowers — to all types of seaweeds; and it's not just like one type of berry, or one type of seaweed, it's a whole array. They're not just things that they know exist out in the landscape; these are things that these kids actually go and forage. A lot of them said, 'I gather it with my Seanair' (grandad) or "I go with my mum," or, you know, 'My mum makes this kind of cordial with them.' They had these stories that were actually living examples of foraging for sustenance, and accessibility in food. For example, discussing this idea of 'the commons'; and you know, you can have quite an in-depth conversation about common land with them. In Scotland, they have the right to roam, and that concept is well known by these kids, I'm like, I said 'So, I was just reading about the right to roam,' and they said, 'Oh yeah, you can go on anyone's property, but you'll have to close the gate so you don't let the sheep out,' and so it's like they understand the legalities of it too.

Lucas: Right, it's part of their everyday life. So, you're putting yourself in a situation to be their student, by showing up as an outsider, and being ignorant of their ways; and I'm just curious what effect that has on those kids? I'm imagining that there's something important about that deep listening you're doing with them?

Keg: I think, from observing their reaction to, say, the map that was produced, or me cooking the recipes that they provided for me, as an outsider; and also producing a little publication that had, you know, pictures of them, their stories, drawings they'd done, and my reflections upon these various themes, and experience of being in that place. They could see this activity as an accumulation of their knowledge, as a way to showcase how much knowledge they actually have about

the place that they live in. I think it is kind of interesting for them to see how an outsider can take in what they have shared, and really value the way that they live.

Lucas: We've talked a fair bit about the actual agricultural and social context of that place — but in terms of your art processes, how do you see what goes on in there? How do you see, like, those social interactions which happen in the inflatable space you've created? Is it a kind of performance?



Keg: Yes, it's a performance. It's definitely got that kind of durational exhaustion of a durational performance where, you know, for that many hours, I'm moving around bodies and plates and stuff; mapping this conversation onto the ground, and so creating this really large-scale drawing. The performance leads to drawing and is led by conversation or another way of putting it, the conversation choreographs the performance and the map at the end leaves a retrospective score, in a lot of ways — and yeah, it is very performative, and it is very centred around conversation... but, it is, the picnic performance, like the structure itself, is really ephemeral. After the event, that's kind of it, what is left is this large drawing that documents the conversation and exists as a trace of the event. I also see this temporary pedagogical platform that exists inside the inflatable as part of the work. Open learning tactics are key in my artistic practice.

Lucas: Making a temporary small architectural structure that people gather inside is something that you have done many times in various different contexts and places. What effect does that have on the kinds of interactions that people have?

Keg: I'm really quite interested in the way these temporary spaces can transform space — especially in the way that we teach and learn, but also the way that these interactions happen within these spaces, within another space. I think the creation of a sort of soft, inflatable, temporary space inside the rigid, built architecture of the classroom is a really important part of these conversations that happen inside. By building a temporary structure, it really focuses the event or the conversation that's happening inside to be about that space. In this case it became really about the food and the picnic.

Lucas: 'Temporary Spaces, Edible Places': you've used the same title for some other projects in different contexts?

Keg: Yeah, I've hosted these picnics in various places, the first one I did was actually in London. Often my process is, with making a work, I go to a place, and I'll start by having conversations with people around, and the project shapes from there; but with being in Victoria (London), it's like a commercial, central, bustling part, and come night-time, it is really quiet and quite dead.

Lucas: Victoria was very different compared with your experience of Skye — the way you were able to identify a 'community' in the rural environment?

Keg: So that's the question, because even the buildings around, Delfina (Foundation) where I was based, they're all quite empty. You know, they're offices, or there's a lot of wealthy people who own properties in that

area, but they're not really occupied — they're not lived in. It feels very quiet. My approach in that situation was to think more broadly about the place I was in; so thinking and this way I cooked English food, in the most 'classic' sense, things like the ploughman's lunch. You can look at the ploughman's lunch, and you see, there's the pickles and chutneys, and they had links to colonisation, and they come from South Asia, but they're also adapted for the English palate, and then you look at cucumber sandwiches, and you can talk about class and aristocracy and these kind of things. So the food really opens up avenues to think about broader themes as they relate to the place.

Lucas: Already the way that you're speaking about the London project, the kinds of concepts that you're talking about in terms of colonisation, commercialisation — they seem like more 'adult' themes than the kinds of things that you talked about with the kids in Skye.

Keg: I don't try to distinguish between 'adult' and 'children' themes. In Skye, those themes that were in London were there. Each of the dishes had these flags that I create, and they have stamped texts on them, with some of the themes, like, 'class' and 'commercialisation' and 'the commons'. I didn't censor it, or taper it in other ways. It's actually interesting, if you compare the map that was created in London and the map that was created in Skye, the map in Skye is so much more dense, because of that vast knowledge.

Lucas: I'm trying to understand, also, the difference between an urban context and a rural context — that the same artwork, I suppose, brings these different things to light in different places?

Keg: Yeah, definitely. Skye's the only place I've staged one of these picnics in a more

rural setting. I've done the project, also, in New York and Vancouver, so looking at these other city contexts; and again, you have crossover themes of migration, displacement, colonisation... I think it's interesting to compare New York with Vancouver in that way, because in Vancouver, I actually invited people on that picnic to also bring food that they saw as Canadian food, and a lot of people brought Indigenous food whereas, in New York, I had corn, squash and beans which were once the three main Algonquian agricultural staples and people asked why they were included in the picnic. I guess this is partly due to the Indigenous population being decimated so much further in the past, that so many people don't have an association with that history. New York is also a true city context, the food that we eat in many Western cities is somewhat homogenised. It's slightly different, but you know, in both picnics (Vancouver and New York) there were some similar things that were part of every day in Western urban contexts. In Skye, the food was really specific to the place.

Lucas: In that sense, by replicating the same process in different places, it throws into sharp relief the differences, both cultural and geographic differences, between those places. Like you, I've also worked in urban and rural contexts on various art projects. For example in my 'Bilateral' works I spent two months living in the tiny wheat and sheep town of Kellerberrin in Western Australia in 2005, and then the same amount of time the following year focusing on my home suburb of Petersham, in Sydney. In both of those projects I wrote a blog post each day which tracked the development of my relationships with my neighbours in each place. Comparing the two, I found it much easier to see the shape of social structures in the small town than the city suburb. I'm pretty sure this was related to my being an outsider in Kellerberrin — I stood out like a sore thumb. Not only that, a group of locals

affiliated with the host organisation, IASKA, took it upon themselves to show me around. So there was a formalising of the process of getting to know the local place and people. That formal introduction just wasn't possible in the same way within the city, where people live more anonymous lives. I had to create the framework for myself. I guess, when you think about these kinds of projects, you know, sometimes we talk about say 'The artist interacted with the community in this particular way,' but it's kind of also important to zoom out a bit, and say remember: this is only really possible because you've got these cultural producers (like Emma and ATLAS, like IASKA), who understand that the broader community relationships. Another way of thinking about it is that the local hosts are able to then almost sometimes 'use' the artist's presence as an outsider as a way of making an intervention into the ordinary life of the place.



Keg: Yeah. Also, ATLAS obviously has more long-term relationships and investment and community based in and around Skye, so they build all these relationships with the various communities that they work with there and it's really the only way that I, or the other artists they work with, could come to Skye and create meaningful projects with people there, through the guidance of their deep connections and understanding of the context.

Lucas: Yes, the existing connections of the local host can definitely help make things move along more quickly. By contrast, a very slow project I'm in the middle of at the moment is based in Mackay, in Central Queensland. It's called *Sugar vs the Reef?* and it involves artists working alongside sugarcane farmers amongst a quite complex social/ecological situation — the troubling proximity between large-scale industrial agriculture and the Great Barrier Reef. Compared to all the other things I've done, this is such a slow project — I've been working on it since 2014, and it will go until at least 2019. The process of developing relationships with all the human players in this environment — farmers, scientists, Traditional Owners, local politicians, educators, natural resource managers etc — is an integral part of the project. In this case, the situation doesn't seem to want to be rushed. It takes time — and extended visits — for that relationship of trust to build itself between people from different professions and places. We still have no idea what the 'outcomes' (artistic, social, environmental) will look like — although the slow development of mutual understanding between the people we are working with is probably an outcome in its own right. Actually, now that I think of it, Keg, the project that most resembles *Sugar vs the Reef?* in its slowness is one that you and I worked on together with the artist group SquatSpace — *Redfern Waterloo Tour of Beauty* (2005-2016). This was the bus and bike tour which we organised semi-regularly over many years, introducing people in Sydney in an unmediated way to the highly contested urban environment of Redfern. The relationships we developed with the people who agreed to speak on the tour were always in process, slowly evolving. As artists we needed to demonstrate, repeatedly, our ethical approach to exposing a vulnerable community to a wider public discussion.

I think the members of SquatSpace have all learned from this deeply formative long-term project, and we fold aspects of what we experienced with us there into our ongoing methodology of social engagement. Coming back to your work in Skye, is there something that you learned from your experience there that has been important for your work after that time?

Keg: Well, I think we touched on some things. For example, my projects are often experiments, so they are based on ideas and I don't really know whether they're going to be successful or not. For myself in Skye I think this pedagogical experiment was really successful, in the way it removes the age bias, and reveals ways that children can teach us, in validating their knowledge as being really important, as opposed to the usual 'older people teach younger people' format. Also most of my previous projects have been in urban environments so obviously in Skye this was a vastly different context. This rural setting, and especially Kilmuir being a crofting community, revealed their deep connection to food and place, making me consider context more deeply. Possibly my main take away from working in Skye was expanding my approach to open learning. By using the same format for a project that I usually do with adults and finding out what these children could teach me about their deep, connected and unique knowledge to place through their lived experiences, placed their young, rural voices parallel to these other contexts.

Previous page: Pupils entering Keg's artwork. **Left:** A boy mapping his food experience, *Temporary Spaces, Edible Places*, Keg de Souza, 2014. Photos: Emma Nicolson

fresh butter: 'they taste neither Sugar, nor Cinnamon, nor have they any daily allowance of Sack bestowed on them, as the Custom is elsewhere.' However, from passing allusions we can see that Martin's contemporaries were acquainted with exotic flavourings such as nutmeg and sugar: in North Uist, for example, the atmosphere was so moist that sugar loaves were in danger of dissolving unless appropriate precautions were taken. Such comments remind us that by the end of the seventeenth century the Scottish Highlands were already exposed to and participating in global imperial flows of capital and trade, affecting not only the clan élite and the gentry, but permeating the entire social structure.

A contemporary Gaelic source from Martin's island presents a similar picture. The anonymous composer of Òran do dh'Fhéill Phorthrigh decries the newly-founded Portree Fair. Composed in 1694, just as Martin was beginning his career as a Hebridean ethnographer, these mordant verses — an early Hebridean moral panic over late seventeenth-century island youth culture — offer a Highland variation on a contemporary Lowland genre criticising the spread of local fairs, as much venues for sport, diversion, and pleasure as for trade and commerce:

*Gu ro bheag mo chuid sòlaist, bho latha thàinig mi bhon-dé a Phort-Rìgh,
Nach fbcas Ingbean MhicLeòid ann, no Baintighearna MhicDhombnaill seo sbios,
Ach luchd nan striopairean lachdainn, mar gum biodh trùp each air tràigh Lit'
'S gu math spòrsail air faich' iad, brògan àrda m'an casan gu sgrìob...*

*Siud a' bhuidheann bha spòrsail 's lìonmbor frionas, 's e 'n coitcheann sbios,
'S math gum fòghnadh an clò dhuibh fad 's a bhiodh sibh beò anns an tìr,
Sin is earasaid pblaide, crios leathair a' mbairt mun tòin sbios
Dham bu dùtchas an gradan, bhith 'ga bbleith air an Abraich na stoidhle.*

*Cheart aindeoin an tuil, 's ann an taobb-sa a' chaoil a tha spòrs;
Cbì sinn buachaillean chaorach an-diugh ann an aodaichean sròil,
Gartain shìoda m'an glùinean 'gan dèanadh bhon bhùthaidh le stroc,
Bitbidh fad earball an t-sionnaich r'a chlaigeann mar bburraidh gu spòrs.*

*'S lìonmbor ceannaiche lachdainn thig thugainn le paca gun bbrìgh,
Le còrnaibh tombac' anns na pocannan glas' air an druim
Agus clàragan maide 's iad tuiteam m'an aclairsean sìos,
Stuth, is sreangannan còcrach, 's iad gearradh an sgòrnan ri gaoith.*

Right: Participants with invited guest Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart, *Land Line Five Walks in Skye*, Caroline Dear, 2016.

Photo: Rosie Somerville



*I am not happy since I came the day before yesterday to Portree,
That the chief of MacLeod's daughter wasn't seen down there, nor Lady MacDonald,
But folk wearing fine cloth with dun-coloured stripes, like a troop of horses on Leith shore;
They were sporting on the green, taking strides with high boots about their legs...*

*That group was cheerful, but very impatient, gathered down there,
Ordinary tweed should be enough for them, as long as you'd live in the land,
That and a tartan plaid, a belt of cow-leather down about their backside,
The folk who were brought up on gradan*, grinding it on the Lochaber quern was their style.*

*Despite the flood [of rain], this side of the kyle there's entertainment;
We'll see shepherds today in satin clothes,
Silken garters about their knees made from a shop with a stroke,
A whole fox-tail hanging for fun from someone's skull like an idiot.*

*Many a dun-coloured pedlar comes to us with a useless pack,
With horns of tobacco in the grey bags on their back
And little wooden frames falling about their armpits,
Stuff (fine cloth), and hemp strings cutting their throats in the wind.*

* dried grain

Martin Martin did not need to travel to London to see the operation of an imperial economy or a consumer society. Already, by the end of the seventeenth century, the use of snuff was clearly widespread throughout the Hebrides: Lewis men 'will tug at the Oar all day long upon Bread and Water, and a Snush of Tobacco'; 'an ancient woman' of about sixty in Harris recovered her hearing with the powder; even the people of the remote Island of Barra 'love it mightily'. Around this time, the poet Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh made a song praising the acting head of her clan, Iain MacLeòid, Fear Chontulaich, for presenting her with a snuff mull, a brà thombac: such an object was well enough known among contemporaries for her to play with the conceit of comparing her new snuff mull with the estate mills to which Highland tenants had to take their crops to be ground to meal, for a price:

<i>Ge do thèid mi dom leabaidh,</i>	<i>Although I go to my bed,</i>
<i>Cban e cadal is miannach leam,</i>	<i>I do not want to sleep,</i>
<i>Aig ro mbeud na tuile</i>	<i>Because of the great flood</i>
<i>'S mo mbuileann gun iarann air,</i>	<i>From my mull, with no iron,</i>
<i>Tba mboldair ri pàighe,</i>	<i>There will be multure* to pay,</i>
<i>Mur a cailltear am bliadbna mi,</i>	<i>Unless I pass away this year,</i>
<i>'S feumail domb faighinn,</i>	<i>It's very useful for me to get,</i>
<i>Ge do ghabhainn an iasaid i.</i>	<i>Even if it were only on loan.</i>

*grain due to the miller

One particularly good example of Martin Martin's ambivalence towards foreign luxuries is when he describes a domestic treat: the drink made of frothed hot milk or whey known as omhan. The inhabitants of Skye apparently 'generally use no fine Sauces to entice a false Appetite, nor Brandy, nor Tea for Digestion; the purest Water serves them in such Cases.' But some islanders had clearly heard of chocolate: when they asked Martin which was the better, chocolate, or the goat's milk variant of omhan, he diplomatically replied that, judging by the effects, he would prefer the local drink. Nevertheless, he mentions that some islanders added not only local butter to omhan to improve the taste, but also exotic nutmeg.

According to Martin, it was only the inhabitants of the remotest Hebridean island, St Kilda, who lacked foreign luxuries. He writes an extended anecdote about a St Kildan who, having been taken on an awe-inspiring and occasionally alarming excursion to Glasgow, apparently wished his native place 'were blessed with Ale, Brandy, Tobacco and Iron' like the inhabitants of that great city.

The tobacco trade would of course rise significantly during the eighteenth century. From the late 1720s onwards Argyllshire was at the epicentre of a major, potentially very lucrative tobacco smuggling enterprise. Hogsheads

of leaf tobacco ostensibly destined for the export market — and so duty-free — were shipped from Glasgow and Greenock, then quietly reloaded up the Highland coast at Bonawe, opposite present-day Taynuilt. The tobacco was processed, stored in cellars, then either shipped elsewhere in Britain; sent overland by intermediaries to Edinburgh; or else sold on to packmen for local Highland markets. The region's remoteness from centres of power, its rugged geography, may have opened the region up to commodities, and commodity trading, licit and illicit alike, as much as closed it off.

By the nineteenth century, taking snuff had become a habit associated mainly with old women, pipe-smoking having taken over for men. An anecdote in the Maclagan Manuscripts in the School of Scottish Studies Archives describes a man alone in a remote shieling in North Uist. A large, wet cat comes in, soaked through, and says 'Thoir dhomh snaoisean': 'Give me a snuff'. When he gives the cat a snuff it promptly turns into a woman. The very fact that the cat hankers after snuff, of course, implies it's really an old woman.

Traditional evidence demonstrates the obvious fact that, just as elsewhere, taking tobacco, whether as snuff or in a pipe, is a social practice, a badge of friendship and attachment. The cat expects the man to share his snuff with it. According to tradition, when the early seventeenth-century hero Colla Ciotach was about to be hanged, he requested to be buried alongside his friend Campbell of Dunstaffnage, 'so that when he was weary he might turn to Campbell and get a snuff.' Here, snuff is not only a token of friendship, but also a sign of shared clan gentry status. So, when the poet Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh was presented with a snuff mull by a powerful figure in her clan, she was not only gifted an object, but a symbol freighted with social meaning.

The best evidence for the prevalence of tobacco — or, not to put too fine a point on it, the nicotine addiction of large swathes of the Highland population — is the plethora of Gaelic songs bewailing the drug's absence and its devotees' consequential suffering, whether the shortage is due to bad weather, high prices, lack of money, or wartime austerity. Various resourceful attempts were made to burn Indigenous substitutes of varying degrees of effectiveness and repulsiveness. The relative poverty of islanders, and the uncertainty of transport in the Hebrides, meant that tobacco supplies were not always dependable, and so the introduction of imperial trades was accompanied by creative utilisation of ersatz substitutes, in the same way as the introduction of coffee to mainland Europe was accompanied by the development of simulated acorn alternatives.

Martin's 'Description of the Western Islands of Scotland' suggests another local substitute stimulant used in the Highlands, one rather more prominent in the region today: Scotch whisky. Martin's account suggests that, when he was writing, ale-drinking was widespread in at least some of the Hebrides. Perhaps whisky distilling is not as ancient a practice as we might believe: it may well be that, as in medieval England, the local alehouse once stood at the centre of Hebridean communities.

A hint of the prevalence and popularity of Hebridean ale in Martin's time is to be found in an anecdote he gives concerning a charmer or witch, possibly in the Isle of Skye. By the time later folklore collectors took to the field in the nineteenth century, many Gaelic witchcraft incantations focused upon either taking away or preserving the toradh or goodness in milk and milk products. Martin's charmer, however, was intent not on charming away the goodness out of a rival's milk, but rather from his ale, evidently with the intention of putting the unwanted competitor out of business. At one time, then, ale was understood as being integrated with the domestic economy of charming. In the same way, Martin describes how the good favour of the household brownie or gruagach had to be obtained for success in brewing just as much as for success in milking: 'some when they churn'd their Milk, or brew'd, pour'd some Milk and Wort through the Hole of a Stone, called *Brownny's Stone*.'

Martin's 'Description...' suggests that knowledge about making ale was widespread throughout the Hebrides. A technique of preserving yeast in an oak rod boiled in wort and kept in barley straw is described in Skye and Tiree. Again, the inhabitants of both islands preferred to store ale in clay vessels rather than in wooden ones. These containers were clearly more than mere bottles: examples from Tiree could hold as much as twelve gallons of the stuff.

It is probable that the three ale-houses Martin records on that island catered as much for visiting sailors as for locals; this might be implied by the fact that Martin's landlord there knew several stratagems to produce a stronger and livelier brew for thirsty visitors. In passing, the relative abundance of drinking establishments in the Hebrides in Martin's time might be suggested by his recording that the small island of Gigha was remarkable for possessing only a single alehouse. Finally, evidence for the widespread knowledge of ale-making in the northern part of Lewis is indicated by the custom by which every family in Ness was expected to brew a peck of malt for the Halloween ceremony in which a cup of ale was poured into the sea for the mysterious 'Shony', in order to encourage a good harvest of seaweed the following year.

The one island where Martin specifically states that ale or beer was not produced was St Kilda: the poor barley yield there, scarcely able to keep the population alive, was quite insufficient to employ for brewing as well. Rather than considering it as an isolated case, it is tempting to view St Kilda as a harbinger of the near future for the rest of the Hebrides, when the pressures of a rapidly increasing population on limited agricultural resources — and perhaps a new taste and new markets for spirits — would shortly bring the golden age of Hebridean brewing to an end.

Spirits certainly were distilled in the islands in Martin's time, although the idiosyncratically strong liquors produced in Lewis — *treas-tarraing* and the life-endangering quadruple-distilled *uisge-beatha ball* — were clearly something of a one-off in that island, with its abundance of oats; they were not even to be found in the adjoining Isle of Harris. What is crucial here is that in his 'Description...', Martin focuses upon the medical uses of whisky. In Lewis, North Uist, Skye, and Mull, large drams of whisky were used to cope with the moist climate. In North Uist and Skye, whisky was used against diarrhoea and dysentery (sometimes drunk with powdered seal liver or sea-bean), while islanders in Skye had also begun drinking it against the recently spreading 'spotted fever'. Tansy was mixed with whisky or whey as a cure for worms. By and large, it appears that spirit drinking was considerably more widespread in the northern Hebrides than in the south. Martin reports the general opinion that, as a result of the moist and cold air, both natives and visitors drank 'at least treble the Quantity of Brandy in Skie and the adjacent Isles, than they do in the more Southern Climate.' It is notable that caramel root was thought of as adding a good aromatic relish to spirits (Martin states that it was preferred by islanders to spices) as well as being a sovereign cure for hangovers.

But how old is whisky distilling in the Highlands? There's no reason to suppose that the process was known earlier than the late Middle Ages, and undertaken primarily for medicinal purposes, just as it was in Martin's time. Recreational drinking of whisky is emphatically an early modern phenomenon: whisky comes into vogue at the same time as other local forms of *aqua vitae* across Europe, such as vodka, brandy, and, of course, gin. The mania for gin in eighteenth-century urban London coincides with the upsurge of whisky drinking in the Highlands. Put very simply, the rise in popularity for distilled spirits in Europe and beyond during this period parallels a similar enthusiasm for intoxicants and stimulants imported from across the globe. Whisky may have taken over from Hebridean ale because it was easier to produce in large quantities, less perishable, easier to transport, more lucrative to be sold or smuggled — a trade which, as we've seen, suited remote and inaccessible parts of the kingdom — and because it was an awful lot stronger. Whisky of course retained its original medical functions, as well as possibly taking over from ale a crucial role as a social

bonding agent on important occasions — christening parties (its function later replaced by tea), betrothals, weddings, wakes, funerals, New Year's, and harvest homes. It also creates a new breed of folk hero in the whisky smuggler.

Just as much as whisky, however, another international commodity has come to shape the life and culture of the Gàidhealtachd: the humble but heroic potato, with its roots in the South American Andes. The potato did not become a major part of the regional diet until the late eighteenth century, the dawn of the agricultural revolution. Better communications enabled the introduction and adoption of new methods of improved agriculture, scientific, experimental, efficient, rational: moss burning, clearing fields, draining, trenching, innovative crop rotations, fertilising with lime and marle, drill husbandry, the introduction of new tools. Houses were improved and rebuilt. March dykes, roads and bridges were constructed. Across the region, land prices, wages and rents steadily increased. New villages were planned in which inhabitants could learn and practise trades, their livelihood supported by small crofts and allotments. A new spirit of individuality, of emulation, of industry, was afoot. The potato was crucial to the vision of an improved Highlands, a modern wonder food entailing considerably less labour than grain crops, less worry about weather, less preparation, and significantly more sustenance per acre. It was not popular with everybody, however: witness Breadalbane man Raibeard Stiùbhart's hostile altercation with a recalcitrant tuber in his 'Òran a' Bhuntàta', 'The Song of the Potato':

*Chunnaic sinn roimbe seo le fàilte,
Aran is càise ga fhaotainn,
Chan fhaigh sinn a-nis ach am buntàta.
'S gur léir a bblàth air ar n-aodainn.
Thug e ar spionnadh 's ar clì uainn,
Is chan fhiach sinn ann an caonnaig,
'S ann a bbios sinn am foir na luatha,
Sinn ga shuathadh, am fear saobach...*

*'S fhuasad aithneach' air do phearsa,
Gur ann an Sasainn bba do dbaoine.
Bha'n sgrìobach ort, bha thu carrach,
'S beag mo thlachd thu thighbinn an taobh-sa,
Gabb mo chombairl' 's theirig dbachaigh;
Ruig an t-aiseag 's gheibh thu saor e;
No ma db'fhanas tu 's an tìr seo,
'S cinnte mi gun tèid do phlaosgadh.*

*Before this we saw with a welcome
Oatcakes and cheese being eaten,
But now we only get the potato
And it shows on our faces.
It's taken away our vigour and strength,
We're no use in a fight.
Instead, we're beside the ashes,
Scraping away at it [in its jacket?]*...

*It's easy to recognise from your appearance
That your people are in England.
You had the itch, you were scabby,
I've no pleasure you've come this way.
Take my advice and go home;
Go to the ferry, you'll get it cheap;
Or if you stay in this land,
I'm certain you'll be burst open.*

Right: *Skye Island*, John Thomson, 1777- c.1840; Johnson, William, 1806-1840, 1820
Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland'



Nevertheless, the humdrum, unsightly potato kept alive Raibeard's community for at least half of the year. Because of its introduction, tenants — above all the women of the community — no longer had to spend so much of their time caring for crops in the summer, let alone harvesting them, drying the grain, grinding it into flour, and baking. Dug up, cleaned up, thrown into the pot, the potato was the original fast food. As pointed out by the naturalist and improver the Rev. John Walker, the people now had 'time to employ in Manufacture.' They could now be industrious, working to improve the land, working in trades, working for wages.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the most profitable occupation in Scotland was linen preparation, spinning and manufacture, a trade second in size only to agriculture at the time. The demand for linen yarn in Scotland, Ireland, and England, particularly from the 1740s onwards, meant that its manufacture soon spread to the Highlands. Prepared flax was 'put out' to these districts, spun by women into cuts of yarn, then collected by agents or sold at local fairs. This work required little capital investment, and could be carried out at home in between other tasks, thus making it ideal for married women and for maid-servants. The transformation of the Highlands, with the introduction of a global commodity, the highly calorific miracle food the potato, altered traditional work patterns and facilitated the rise of a new industry. There may be interesting parallels here with near contemporary experiences in southern and central China, where the introduction of the sweet potato and the resulting intensification of agriculture meant that labour-consuming rice cultivation could be substituted by silk production.



But what did these changing work patterns, the growth of industriousness, mean for Gaelic society? For generations, the figure of the bard, the chief's official poet, had been central to Gaelic culture. The bard was not only the upholder of the culture, but also a spokesperson for the

community and community values. Not only regulators of literary culture, bards, in their role as seanchaidh (or community historians), were the keepers of historical memory. The bardic mode of cultural transmission, its perspectives on the past, the strength, range and purity of poetic language: all these were, in the eyes of many contemporaries, seriously threatened by the spread of the new industriousness, enabled and fuelled by the introduction of global commodities. Making, remembering, and singing

Left: Loch na Cairidh, *Land Line Five Walks in Skye*, Caroline Deer, 2016

Photo: Emma Nicolson

traditional songs, cultivating a sophisticated and allusive culture, upholding a web of communal memories: all this required time, leisure, concentration, and a knowledgeable, clued-up public. In a new individualistic era of manufactures and industry, these were in increasingly short supply.



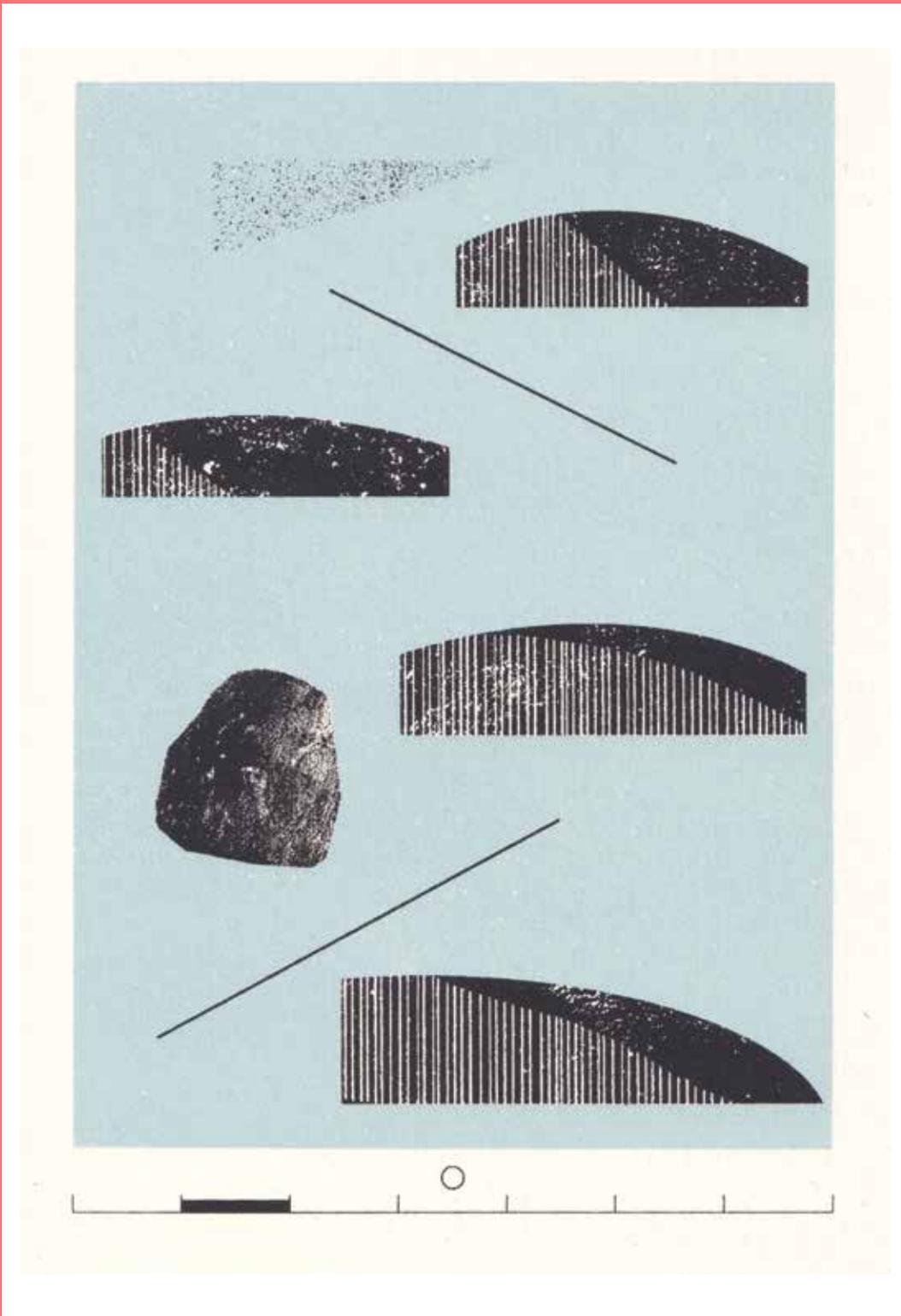
Participant holding an image of crofters on Skye, *Land Line Five Walks in Skye*, Caroline Deer, 2016

Photo: Rosie Somerville

At the same time, many traditional labour songs, composed to help keep time and pass time during the long boring hours spent grinding the corn or waulking the cloth — work increasingly done throughout the Highlands by water-powered mills rather than by hands and feet — were no longer needed. To a younger generation, such songs must have increasingly seemed old-fashioned, echoes of far-off times of poverty and unremitting toil. Late eighteenth century Gaelic adolescents preferred fashionable, passionate love songs or lively new-

fangled dance tunes, whether stepped to the trendy fiddle, or rapped as puirt-à-beul, a stylish, rebellious and frequently bawdy youth culture.

I hope that these brief thoughts and observations demonstrate the value of investigating imperial trades, their various local substitutes, and their diverse uses, effects and meanings across the Scottish Gàidhealtachd. The historical Highlands are far too often regarded as peripheral and backwards, inhabited by a noble, hardy and martial people far removed from the commercial mainstream, a perspective borne out in much contemporary Gaelic song. Again, established historical perspectives on the Highlands are often shaped by a traditional communitarianism, with Gaeldom viewed through the lens of an idealised communal society rather than as discrete individuals. Yet beyond the stylised generics of much early modern Gaelic poetry and popular Highland history, there may be other, more realistic perspectives on the past, perspectives informed by the history of consumption. An Indigenous Gaelic history of material culture remains to be written. This history would focus upon commercialism, comfort, and the desire for luxuries and curiosities. It would stress the diverse ways over the past four centuries in which Gaelic society has adopted and assimilated once exotic imperial trades and their associated ritual practices, imported outside stimulants and intoxicants, compensated for their absence with Indigenous substitutes, and added one world famous intoxicant of their own to the mix. Such a history would stress local agency, adaptability, cultural flexibility, internal diversity, and engagement with global trade at all levels of society. It would make us reassess our notions concerning just how 'traditional' many of our supposedly traditional customs and beliefs really are.



PRAXIS:

A relationship of practice and dialogue that acknowledges the curatorial responsibility of 'taking care'. This responsibility is informed by the Indigenous sense of custodianship. In this praxis, we attempted to pay attention to and valourise the island's imaginary; its stories, traditions, values, features, resources and future.

Bàta Brèagha // Bonnie Boat

(2011), Walker and Bromwich

Patterns of Flora | Mapping

Seven Raasay Habitats

(2014), Frances Priest

Atelier: Skye

(2016), The University of Edinburgh
and ATLAS Arts



Praxis

ATLAS's artistic programme has developed so that each project offers several entry points into an artwork. This is achieved through a matrix of events that generate layers (the ATLAS onion) of social interaction and engagement with the art, artists and the organisation. Through this method, we build constituencies of interest around each project by developing ways for artists to work alongside other specialisms or groups within the community. Over the years, we have brokered relationships between artists and communities around crofting, dance, the environment, heritage, media, music and tourism, and with community trusts and local councils.



Poster, Women of Skye, 2018

This relational approach on the part of ATLAS brings an implicit responsibility to the artist, the artwork, the site of the artwork and the constituents who encounter the process. The praxis of ATLAS combines this responsibility with a sensibility towards custodianship. In particular, we recognise the precarity of the Gaelic language, its culture and heritage. There is an active Gaelic community in Skye: a traditional stronghold for the language and culture and many of our projects involve a discrete element of Gaelic. We aim to valourise this threatened language and connect the experience of native speakers to an international context. This can be appreciated with *Bàta Brèagha // Bonnie Boat* (2011), our first major commission, which featured *Celestial Radio* by Walker and Bromwich. The artists collected stories, poetry and music from the island and broadcast these around the waters of Portree. The following year, the work travelled to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, taking Skye's stories and culture with it.

Left: *Travelling the Archive*, Nicky Bird, 2016.

Photo: Nicky Bird

Bàta Brèagha // Bonnie Boat is one of the projects we spotlight in this section, alongside *Patterns of Flora* by Frances Priest (2014). These artworks required a deeply investigative, cumulative approach informed by an openness to emergent outcomes driven by interaction with the community. This intense back and forth often becomes close to a form of symbiosis. Through *Patterns of Flora* Frances developed an empowering relationship with the botanist Stephen Bungard, which led to a rich understanding of the flora and terrain of Raasay. Frances and Stephen recount the development of their relationship in a conversation demonstrating the project's momentum and the ripple effect of transformative experiences for the community and the artists we work with.



Critical to this activity is the need to fulfil our duty of care both to the artists we work with and the communities we work within. Part of this 'duty of care' is to persuade funders and stakeholders to appreciate how artists need time to develop relationships with a place. We advocate for understanding the time it takes for an artwork to come into fruition, particularly if it effectively engages with a locality. This includes recognising the benefits of investing in research visits and residencies. This approach requires considerable energy, grounding and support from the organisation.

In 'Ethics in Practice' Emma and Kirstie Skinner discuss her route to ATLAS and the importance of ethics to her praxis. Their conversation traverses Emma's biological ties to Skye, the deep impact of witnessing aboriginal activism in Australia and her ambition to foster a critical engagement with contemporary art at local, national and international levels. 'A Careful Practice' written by Gayle Meikle locates our practice within contemporary curatorial discourse outlining our distinctive approach as a practice of care embedded in our remote rural setting.

Our praxis aims to support the *island's imaginary: its stories, traditions, values, features, resources and future*. As a venueless organisation projects have taken place amongst the built environment of Skye and we have hosted events all over the island in locations ranging from local laundrettes, village halls, boat sheds, to Dunvegan Castle. The work of theorist Jane Rendell examines art and architecture's role in public space, specifically, how these disciplines can be used to critique and question the normative uses and ideas about a given place. We have included an extract in this section from Rendell's 'Feminist Kinds of Critical Spatial Practice' as it provides a linkage to the broader field of located practices that inspire our praxis.

'Making Research Material' by Neil Mullholland uses the project *Atelier: Skye*, (2016), co-devised with ATLAS, to map interdisciplinary approaches to research and teaching that occur by engaging with hybrid combinations of participant observation, ethnography and artistic research methods. In his view, ATLAS's embeddedness in its location as a venueless organisation offers varied opportunities to engage and experiment with the material-turn in contemporary art practice.

Our reflexive approach to programming allowed each project to bring about new circumstances and processes building on our learning as a fleet of foot organisation.

Left: *Early Warning Signs*,
Ellie Harrison, 2017



Feminist Kinds of Critical Spatial Practice¹

Jane Rendell

The past decade has seen a flourishing of activity in feminism and architecture, driven by interdisciplinary concerns, which have re-located architecture in the expanded field of spatial practices. The rise in practice-led research as well as the influence of the writings of Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau on spatial practice has produced an understanding of practice as a process which occurs not only through the design of buildings but also through activities of use, occupation and experience as well as writing and imaging. It is possible to draw connections between de Certeau's 'strategies' and Lefebvre's 'representations of space', on the one hand, and de Certeau's 'tactics' and Lefebvre's 'spaces of representation', on the other, and suggest a distinction between those practices or strategies that operate to maintain and reinforce existing social and spatial orders, and those practices or tactics that seek to critique and question them.

I favour such a distinction and in 2002 I introduced the term 'critical spatial practice' as a term that emphasises the 'critical' as a reflective and emancipatory activity emanating from the approach to critical theory taken by the Frankfurt School. This has also involved rethinking the role of theory, not to prove a hypothesis nor prescribe a particular methodology or solution to a problem, but rather as a mode of practice in its own right. If 'critical spatial practice' refers to self-reflective artistic and architectural practices which seek to question and transform the social conditions of the sites into which they intervene, as well as their own disciplinary procedures, what are the particular aspects that a feminist approach to critical spatial practice highlights?

I suggest that collectivity, subjectivity, alterity, performativity and materiality are thematics that highlight modes of operation that feature strongly in a predominantly feminist mode of critical spatial practice. These modes of working are highly appropriate for tackling the three-stranded collapse of ecology, energy and economy that faces us now — the disasters produced by climate chaos; the resource crises, including peak oil, mineral depletion and food scarcity; and the unacceptable inequalities created by a capitalist global economy driven by credit and debt.

1. This essay is an adapted and shortened version of Jane Rendell, "Only Resist: A Feminist Approach to Critical Spatial Practice", *The Architectural Review* (online), 2018. The full article is developed from two longer and interrelated essays, Jane Rendell, "Tendencies and Trajectories: Feminist Approaches in Architecture", in ed. S. Cairns, G. Crysler, H. Heynen, G. Wright, *Architectural Theory Handbook*, London: Sage, 2012; and Jane Rendell, "Critical Spatial Practices: Setting Out a Feminist Approach to some Modes and what Matters in Architecture," ed. Lori Brown *Feminist Practices*, London: Ashgate, 2012.

Left: Film still from *Eglantine*, Margaret Salmon, 2016

Collectivity

In Hanley, in 1998, muf won an open competition set up by Stoke City Council with the Public Art Commissioning Agency. The brief was to make a lifting barrier to prevent illegal traffic entering the town centre as part of a larger urban regeneration project. But in dialogue with the council planner at the outset, muf opened the brief out to reveal how 'art can contribute to a safer, more social environment'. muf's critical mode of operation has continued to evolve and invent new feminist approaches to critical spatial practice precisely because its way of working is itself a critique of architectural design methodologies that emphasise form and object making. There was a period in the first decade of the twenty-first century when muf was frequently criticised in mainstream architectural discourse for not producing any 'architecture', but this was because the discourse was unable to recognise architecture as the production of anything other than stand-alone object-buildings. Rather, muf's working method highlights user participation in the design process and the importance of collaboration. For muf, the design process is not an activity that leads to the making of a product, but is rather the location of the work itself.

In the 1970s/80s, several socialist design-build collectives were in operation, offering alternatives to the capitalist version of building production, including the feminist architectural co-operative Matrix. The early 1990s saw the rise of various practices, such as muf, but also FAT and Fluid, which highlighted their collaborative intent by choosing non-proper nouns as names to challenge the use of the name of the leading director as the usual single architectural signature of authorship. Currently there are multiple versions of feminist collective practice, such as ArchiteXX, FATALE, MYCKET and Parlour, tackling issues of sexual discrimination and gender equity in the profession and education. And these initiatives are not alone. In sister projects around the world challenges are being made by collective feminist architecture groups to the lack of female representation in university curriculae and professional judging panels.

Subjectivity

The 1990s saw a rise in the relevance and pertinence of identity politics focusing on class, gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality. Emerging through — and at times diverging from — this discourse has been the work of post-structuralist feminists, which has been particularly important for architecture in offering ways of thinking about position, situation and location. In this work, new ways of knowing and being have been discussed in spatial terms, developing conceptual and critical tools such as Donna Haraway's 'situated knowledge' to examine the interrelations between location, subjectivity and knowledge.

Feminist critique has been particularly effective in mobilising the possibilities of Derridean deconstruction in architecture to allow an ongoing critique of binary oppositions, but most specifically the separate spheres or the 'public-private' division of gendered space manifest in different cultures at various historical periods. This work has drawn attention to the spaces both marginalised within gendered binaries in mainstream architectural discourse such as the domestic and the interior, and/or positioned as the term which exceeds such a binary distinction, such as the margin, the between, the everyday, the heterotopic and the abject.

The domestic and interior have been perhaps the most thoroughly explored of these 'other spaces' as they have been directly associated with the private sphere, and as such subordinated to the public city, in both patriarchal and capitalist cultures, and within the discourse of modernity. The work of Jos Boys, Ben Campkin, Barbara Penner and others has been key in reconsidering such marginalised experiences and spaces in architecture, as those associated with sanitation, queer night life and disabilities. And due to much feminist research and practice by Suzi Attiwell, Gini Lee, Julieanna Preston, Ro Spankie and Mark Taylor, and others, the discipline of interior design has critiqued its marginalisation — as women's work compared to architecture — and in drawing on a rich and densely textured field of references, celebrated its difference from the mainstream profession.

Alterity

Doina Petrescu's 2007 edited volume, 'Altering Practices', focused the debate in feminism and architecture around the 'poetics and politics of the feminine'. In taking account of the feminine, the book acknowledges the role of aesthetics, as well as ethics, in feminist architecture, and on an understanding of those practices which aim to change, transform or alter existing conditions to create other realities. The notion of practising 'otherwise' or 'otherhow' relates to the political and poetic perspective taken by Petrescu in her practice with Constantin Petcou and others, as *Atelier d'architecture autogérée* / Studio for Self-managed Architecture (aaa). This participatory collaborative platform has been engaging with ecological issues through projects such as ECObox and RURBAN. And in my view, 'what it takes to make a relationship to make a thing', a phrase articulated earlier by muf, becomes in the work of aaa 'what it takes to make a thing to make a relationship', showing that the making of architecture can be a process for the re-making of subjects, as well as, or even instead of, objects.

Lesley Lokko has been addressing issues of otherness in architecture in connection to race, ethnicity and black identities, since her edited volume, from the late 1990s, 'White Papers, Black Marks: Architecture,

Race, Culture', which recognised the often contingent and situated conditions of race and identity. Working through differences of scale, that book showed how racial discriminations and resistances to oppression take place from the macro to the micro, from strategic planning and policy making to architectural details and small-scale art projects. And today Lokko is an important architectural educator at the forefront of debates on decolonising the curriculum.

Performativity

Although architecture has been informed by psychoanalysis at the level of theoretical interpretation of buildings, images and texts, what is new in the feminist work in this area is the degree to which understandings of subjectivity are informing the position of the writing subject and construction of text themselves. In my own work I have argued for 'site-writing' as a practice which acknowledges the situatedness of criticism, and takes into account the spatial qualities of writing, as well as the questioning the terms of reference that relate the critic to the work positioned 'under' critique. This is an active writing, composed of a constellation of voices that spatially structure the text, constructing as well as tracing the sites of relation between critic and work.

Across the arena of experimental and critical writing, new possibilities are being invented by feminists, often performative, which think again about the need for distanced objectivity in academic writing styles. Spatial practitioners draw inspiration from this intensely creative and theoretically rigorous strand of criticism, and in architecture there is a growing feminist interest in the critical and interdisciplinary performative qualities of writing, particularly powerful in the texts of many feminists based in, and educated in, Australia and New Zealand, such as Karen Burns, Dorita Hannah, Naomi Stead and Linda Maria Walker. The work of feminists at, and passing through, KTH in Stockholm, such as Katerina Bonnevier, Brady Burroughs, H el ene Frichot, Catharina Gabrielsson, Katja Grillner, Rolf Hughes, Helena Mattsson, Karin Reisinger, Helen Runting, Meike Schalk and Malin Zimm, has been especially important in developing feminist approaches that intersect theory and practice through collaborative pedagogical and activist endeavours, that operate through different writing modes and other forms of performative and participatory practice.

Materiality

Considering the possibilities that the medium of critical writing affords repositions the modes in which we practise theory and criticism, inviting them to become more than a description of content, but to define critical positions. Understanding writing as an act of construction, offers a new way

of connecting with architecture through a particularly feminist and material aspect of critical spatial practice.

Feminist understandings of 'materiality' or matter show how material is not only the social and economic context for architecture, but also an active ingredient in the processes of making architecture. The important work of feminist material philosophers, such as Karen Barad, Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway and Isabelle Stengers, has provided a foundation for challenging the rise of new forms of architectural theory such as speculative realism and object-orientated ontology for their gender blindness. An important new generation of thinkers, such as Claudia Dutton, H el ene Frichot, Stephen Loo, Peg Rawes, Undine Sellbach and Katie Lloyd Thomas, consider matter from an ecological perspective where humans are interconnected with animals, insects and things. Their work rethinks the treatment of material processes in such architectural traditions as the specification. Feminist architects have also invented new kinds of details that maximise the environmental potential of architectural materials, most famously, Sarah Wigglesworth's *Straw Bale House* (2001) in Islington, and Ruth Morrow in her use of textiles in making concrete.

Conclusion

One of the most important aspects of feminist practice is its commitment to recognising the work of others, whether it is citing and thanking those who have come before, acknowledging those who are at work at the same time, but somewhere else (perhaps unseen), or by setting the scene for those who we know will come after. As feminists, we have learnt, and keep on learning, that unless the references to feminism are made clear, we will be written, or may write ourselves, out of history. The Guerrilla Girls pointed to the dangers of appropriation, of 'seeing your ideas live on in others', and we must certainly keep alert to the need to name feminist concerns and to keep them and the creators of feminist discourse visible. Today this means making networks and forging alliances across difference. We are currently witnessing an amazing rebirth of what some are calling 'fourth wave' feminism. This current work, led by many brilliant young feminists, recognises the international dimensions of the feminist struggle and connects resistance to sexism with the fight against racial discrimination and heterosexism. Here we see the interconnectedness of feminism with movements such as LGBTQ and Black Lives Matter, and the key position intersectional theory now plays in showing the cross-cutting nature of oppression and the need to hold these different liberation movements together. Because struggles against oppression operate at both macro and micro levels, connections need to be constructed between the large scale and the small detail too, as well as linking up concerns of the marginalised in the north and the south.



Celestial Radio, Zoë Walker and Neil Bromwich, *Bàta Brèagha // Bonnie Boat*, 2011.

Photo: Murdo Macleod

Zoe Walker & Neil Bromwich in Conversation with Emma Nicolson

Island Songlines: Emma Nicolson

A radio station on board a glittering, mirror-tiled yacht *Celestial Radio* transmits light and sound broadcasting over the airways on 87.7 FM. A flickering sequence; on, off, on, off, a vibrating movement like the pattern of a wave form or a blinking signal, the moment you begin to listen and make the journey the work starts to exist.

Celestial Skye was a site-specific broadcast through which artists Zoe Walker and Neil Bromwich take listeners on an epic journey through time and across the Islands of Skye, Raasay and Rhona. Exploring the continuing significance of people who are no longer here, weaving in voices of the present to reflect on the island life today.

As an ATLAS Commission the project was ambitious in terms of its size, scope and scale, taking place over the best part of a year; but for many *Celestial Radio* and the shimmering mirrored yacht was a unique experience that occurred throughout the course of a day and a night.

Audiences were invited to sit, walk, contemplate, listen to the work and be transported by the language of the landscape and the stories created from it. Where like circular time, the past and the present are mixed and an in between reality is created.

The voices of male and female narrators draw the listener into the cultural and physical landscape that surrounds them, the story is a map for a journey — it is a line that follows a chain of events in the life of a place.

Imbued with symbolic powers, rich with stories and firmly embedded in the cultural consciousness landscape is hugely important to this community. The structure of someone singing an aural map comes from an Australian aboriginal tradition; it is a description of the landscape and of a dreaming; it is a way to tell people about their environment that — landscape is the narrative and you can travel from one point of the narrative to another through the aural map. Almost like a personal GPS it's a relation of place, narration and time, quite a mind-blowing structure and parallels the one that Walker and Bromwich conjure up from Skye through this extraordinary board broadcast.

In this work the spectacle of the mirrored yacht is not a diversion from something else but a starting point, an invitation allowing a shift in your imagination to happen, a displacement like a magic trick like the meticulous individual placing of the mirrors on the boat the place created by Walker and Bromwich is and a bleak mirror if you face the mirror you see elsewhere.

The conversation that follows took place in 2011 and accompanied a map and guide.

Emma: Can you tell me about the origins of the *Celestial Radio* project and how it came into being?

Zoe: *Celestial Radio Project* came into being in Essex. It was commissioned for a site between St. Peter's Chapel and Bradwell Nuclear Power Station; it was positioned between these two symbols of seemingly opposing belief systems. We were interested in triangulating these two or finding a meeting point. We also discovered that one of the Radio Caroline ships, the *Mi Amigo* had sunk off the shoreline there. So, we were interested in rekindling the idea of early pirate radio operating outside of licensing laws... We are often interested in rekindling these spirits of resistance to the main stream...

Neil: Celestial Radio has become an actual radio station that moves around different places in the world and it reflects the landscape that is passing. It is covered in mirrors and it reflects the ideas that are coming out of a place and we are often looking at visionary thinking and people that are trying to change things.

Emma: Is there something in particular that attracts you to the medium of broadcast/the power of radio?

Neil: Like a lot of other people radio holds a special place for me, I remember as a child this old radio set my parents gave me. It had Medium Wave and along the dial were all these different names like Luxemburg, the Light Programme and Home Service. You could turn this knob, hear these different voices that were coming through and this very tangible thing which is the static that is constantly there between stations and

you became very aware of this medium that is — radio waves. And actually, radio waves are all around us, that is the amazing thing that we are actually walking through them, and fifty percent of them are the remnants of the big bang or the veil which is drawn over the big bang. It's amazing that you're not only listening to people's voices in the here and now, you're also listening to time, listening to the universe in some ways. It is a very magical medium, I believe and it paints pictures in your mind unlike a visual medium, like film or television.

Emma: You made the first *Celestial Radio* in 2004 now seven years on how do you feel the work has evolved or shifted over time?

Zoe: We didn't make it as something that was going to tour but it has subsequently gained a life of its own and it has taken us to a lot of really amazing places. With each broadcast we respond to a new landscape.

Neil: When we first did *Celestial Radio* we invented a story of how the boat came into being, we had this back story in our minds that in a way it was like an escape capsule from Radio Caroline when it broadcast its last broadcast from *mia omega* when the DJs were taken off in life boats and this myth of these DJs out there somewhere in the north sea over fifty miles off shore playing this music and really getting into this strange space on a ship which never comes into port. Which was a very interesting mythical space and we wrote this myth that *Celestial Radio* was a chip off the wreck of the *Mi Amigo* and in a way it shows the power of stories because it's almost become true. We had this idea that these DJs had been travelling

around since the early seventies searching for the answers to life's big questions. In a way we became that myth.

Emma: The Celeste is covered in tiny mirrors and this creates a fascinating dazzling visual effect, a fracturing and doubling of everything around the boat. What is the significance of the mirrors?

Zoe: The mirrors are there to reflect what is around them so the boat is either a dazzling object if the sun is shining you can see it from miles away... when we were in Essex people drove right round from the other side of the estuary just to see what it was. Also when it's not sunny it reflects the landscape so it disappears. They are also symbolic flashing out a Morse code type message flashing out when the sun hits them it was also...

Neil: Can I add the sound is the sound of human voices and music, and the light is made by random forces of the universe and we felt that between those two things there might be some answers given...

Zoe: The mirrors have been very carefully placed, fracturing the image, and the idea of going into two worlds and the mirror as a sort of portal. A lot of our work is looking at having an access to two worlds in a way and the fact that we can shift between realities and finding ways to exaggerate that or allow people to enter into those other spaces really, and I think that *Celestial Radio* does that through the mirrors and the sound.

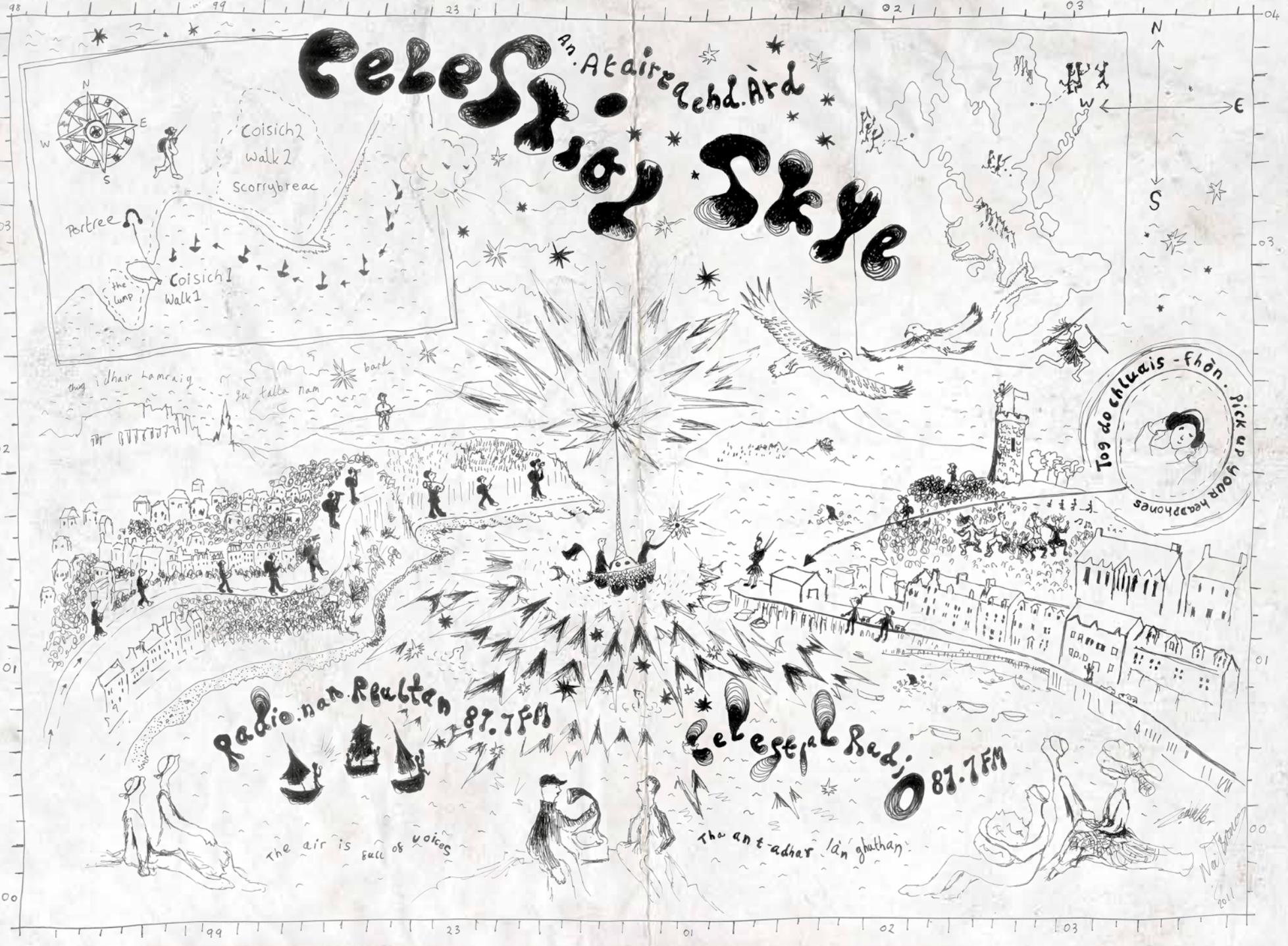
Neil: One of the key influences was the Jean Cocteau film *Orphée* where there's some amazing scenes, at the beginning of the film which is set during the war, someone tuning the radio dial in a car and they hear the voices of the dead, and you remember there was that surrealist poetry that was used during the war to transmit codes to British secret service or OSS from Germany and that idea of this strange surrealist poetry was there,

but then another amazing scene was when Orphée pushes his hand through a mirror into another world and that was a very simple visual effect done with water.

Emma: ATLAS invited you here to create a sound work that explored Skye looking at the themes of visionaries and emergent hope. Skye has a complex and fascinating history, how have you made sense of your experience here?

Zoe: Well, it has been fascinating, it is a complex history so it's quite a challenging thing to take on, to be honest, but amazing because it has such a rich history. What we have been looking for is visionary thinking historically and acts of heroism, overcoming adversity, which I guess are obvious themes when looking at Skye, but themes that need to be re-examined and celebrated.

Neil: The idea of islandness is interesting as well, something that Meg Bateman said in one of the interviews about the idea of island 'ness' she says it is a fascinating thing to people. We live on an island which is Great Britain but there is an island within an island here, it has all the same mechanisms that exist so I think that idea of somewhere that is potentially self-sufficient and can evolve a kind of philosophy, it has more of a chance to develop its own identity and culture. What we're interested in with *Celestial Radio* is the ideas that are beyond purely material wealth and things that have value in a bigger sense and it's interesting for me to see how communities have existed with a strong and resilient culture. I think people come looking for that sense of authenticity within a culture which you know is quite different. It's interesting here, there's a far bigger communication between age ranges than you get in a city, the sense of community and there's support and an enrichment of a culture. That's one of the big things I've gained from Skye.



Emma: One of the things you said is how surprised you were at how many poets and musicians there are living on the island.

Zoe: We've been looking at the role poets have had in being able to change and shape culture to a degree, trying to look at the strident poet, through Sorley and Mhairi Mhòr through the Highland Clearances and her voice coming through. We're interested in someone involved in poetry or literature having that level of influence.

Emma: Your work often involves collaborators, who have you worked with in the creation of *Celestial Skye*?

Zoe: The main collaborators are Maoilios Caimbeul and Hector MacInnes and Leighton Jones, Maoilios is writing the script and Hector and Leighton (*Dead Man's Waltz*) are doing the sound.

Neil: Hector and Leighton have talked about the fact that they don't feel they can commit themselves to one genre of music. They're interested in theatre so there's a strong connection there between the visual aspects of what we do and they're interested in theatricality and visual arts and our interest in sound and music and the power of that medium so that's an interesting cross over. One of the most enjoyable days we've spent was with Maoilios Caimbeul walking through the Quiraing. That walking of the landscape and talking — all of us enjoying that experience really fused together our ideas.

Emma: What is the significance of the two narrators in this piece? Would you like to talk about those voices, they are male and female is it you?

Zoe: One of them is like the voice of the bard.

Neil: In a way you cannot help think they are like us I don't think they represent us but in a bigger sense male and female is very much part of the work, don't you think?

Zoe: They could be mirroring us? They've got personas one of them is the voice of the bard and the other is like from the warrior queen 'Sgathaich'. That's the imaginative framework of the characters.

Neil: I think archetypes are important in storytelling.

Emma: Your work is full of hope or an admiration for change and triumph and acts of heroism... these acts are I guess in opposition to a negative force but there's no apparent anger in your work, do you consider negativity?



Neil: A lot of our work is looking for meaning in the world and through human actions. I would say there is a quite a philosophical quality to the work which is trying to seek answers that might have been answered in the past through religion or philosophy or through science. So I think finding value in things that you can believe in is really important because that gives you a moral code in order to live life. It gives you some hope and helps you cope with things... I think people get angry when they cannot cope with things or when they feel there is no hope.

Emma: That's been at the core of your work...

Zoe: Yes it has, it's not that I don't have negative thoughts, I am more interested in trying to change things through peaceful action or through positive change, rather than through violence.

Emma: Is pleasure or beauty important to you?

Zoe: I am very interested in having a strong aesthetic that draws people in so that they can enjoy the work on a visual level. So it does have quite a beauty to it I guess.

Emma: Could you tell me what you mean by the pursuit of happiness?

Neil: Interestingly 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness' is a phrase from the American Declaration of Independence. It's also a line from an essay that JJ Charlesworth wrote about us... But it does underpin a lot of the work; I think that we do both believe in an idealistic way that everyone should be free to pursue their own happiness. I think it is an interesting idea what this pursuit of happiness means because you cannot have happiness yourself without feeling that other people around you are happy and I think asking that question about happiness is important and people have started to make league tables of happy countries and Britain doesn't come high on those tables in terms of gross national happiness...

Emma: There is a wonderful sense of engagement with other people's experiences, how do you distinguish your work from anthropology or ethnography — in that it seems to involve the study of others?

Zoe: That's an interesting question, I have been thinking about that more here because we have become almost investigative journalists on Skye.

How do we distinguish that were doing something different? I suppose we're fictionalising elements, creating a narrative, so in a way, we're presenting a new story that comes from other people but obviously we're influencing which I think an anthropologist would in theory try not to do that, although they probably are...

Zoe: In this broadcast we're focusing on moments in history or people that have lit the spark of hope, we're trying to reignite those things so that its more of an evocative rallying call...

Emma: The geopoetic writer Kenneth White describes the Gaidhealtachd as the 'mindscape within the landscape'. Do you feel you have explored this notion in some way? How might this be made more visible to an audience which is non-Gaelic speaking?

Neil: There's a real kind of resonance between the way we approach landscape and particularly *Celestial Radio* and what you are talking about here... mindscape within the landscape... I think both of us would consider ourselves as almost landscape type artists... in some ways. All the work we've ever made has been connected to landscape in a really big way. I think the mindscape landscape is an amazing idea... you do absorb from a landscape some very powerful resonances.

Emma: Do you feel as if you are pushing boundaries yet linking with tradition with this work?

Neil: Well one of the most important things is the music, one of the great things about *Celestial Radio* here is to work with local musicians and an exciting young band like Hector and Leighton of *The Dead Man's Waltz* and collaborating with a different art form — neither of us are musicians it's almost a different world that you're working with so it does mean giving over a huge amount of creative authorship to somebody else and that's always quite a frightening thing when you start working with a new collaborator particularly in an area where you yourself have little control... that is one of the boundaries that is most exciting in a way...

Previous page: A compilation of images from *Bàta Brèagha // Bonnie Boat* including: *Celestial Radio* map by Walker and Bromwich; Photos: Colin Hattersley, Mark Pinder, Emma Nicolson. **Left:** *Celestial Radio*, Zoë Walker and Neil Bromwich, 2011. Photo: Murdo Macleod



Patterns of Flora | Mapping Seven Raasay Habitats: Project Introduction

Shona Cameron

Patterns of Flora | Mapping Seven Raasay Habitats is an ATLAS Arts commission by Frances Priest in collaboration with botanist Stephen Bungard and Raasay House. The work celebrates the unique and diverse plant life on the Island of Raasay and aims to stimulate cultural and environmental tourism.

We were keen to work with Frances Priest after she featured in our *Talking Art Series* in early 2014. Showing interest in Owen Jones' seminal 'Grammar of Ornament' publication and looking to design her own series of patterns inspired by a Scottish landscape, we saw the opportunity to commission Priest to explore the flora of the Hebrides. This evolved to focus more specifically on the Island of Raasay and thrived through a close rapport between Frances and botanist Stephen Bungard, who was willing to share his expert knowledge of the island's plant life.

Raasay House was seen as an ideal setting for the project due to its tragic past — it reopened in 2013 following a devastating fire. With original features and decorative design destroyed, *Patterns of Flora* reintroduced ornamental detail through bespoke ceramic artworks, reanimating the spaces of the house and celebrating the exceptional botany on the island.

The commission produced a bespoke collection of ceramic artworks (door-handles, fingerplates and tiles) to be permanently sited in the historic clan house. The designs were based on seven different plant habitats (bog, coast, freshwater loch, limestone, moorland, mountain and woodland). To compliment this a special map was designed to offer an imaginative survey of the habitats, and to accompany the project two new ATLAS Editions of the map were produced. There was also a signed series of handmade parian vases and an editioned colouring book of the original drawings.

Working in partnership with Raasay House, we brought new cultural activities that showcased the distinctive qualities of the island, in particular the plant life, to this small community. With maps available in Skye, the

Left top: *Patterns of Flora | Mapping Seven Raasay Habitats*, Frances Priest, ATLAS Editions, 2015.

Photo: Ruth Clark

Left bottom: bisque fired door handles, *Patterns of Flora | Mapping Seven Raasay Habitats*, 2015.

Photo: Frances Priest

project gives increased incentive to travel to Raasay, explore the natural environment and visit Raasay House. Moreover, the installed artworks have animated the public rooms and corridors of the historic house, reinvigorating the spaces, injecting decorative details that were lost, offering a talking point for visitors and staff. The ceramic works are tactile, thus encouraging direct engagement; these are artworks to be enjoyed for more than their beauty.



Stephen Bungard leading a botany walk at the *Patterns of Flora | Mapping Seven Raasay Habitats* weekender, 2015.

Photo: Shona Cameron

To celebrate the completion of the project, in June 2015 we held a launch event at Raasay House. The weekend brought a diverse range of people together to celebrate, inspire and be inspired by the themes of the project. The acclaimed writer, Sir John Lister-Kaye, opened the weekend with a book launch and reading. The next day saw a range of activities including botanist-led walks, Tai Chi, cyanotype workshops, haiku poetry and kayaking; activities that sought to encourage greater appreciation of the environment. The weekend also served to highlight the creativity and partnerships involved in the project, drawing attention to the historic Raasay House and its incredible story as a phoenix rising from the flames, and to encourage cultural tourism that raises Raasay's, and Scotland's, profile at home and abroad.

The artworks are now a permanent installation in Raasay House and are a gift to the island's community for future generations to enjoy.



A conversation between Frances Priest and Stephen Bungard

Stephen: I thought I'd start with asking you how you came to choose plants as a subject for your work at that time? What pushed you towards using plants as a theme?

Frances: Well, I think, you, is the simple answer. I had originally suggested to ATLAS the idea of developing a language of ornament connected to a Scottish location. Over the past ten years I have made work informed by the use of ornament and pattern in decorative art and design, exploring cultural and personal identity, place-making and storytelling. A much loved book that I have returned to recently has been 'The Grammar of Ornament', first published in 1856 by British architect and designer Owen Jones. The book is a compilation of Jones' own encounters with ornament, laid out as a manual of design propositions and exquisitely illustrated pages organised into regional styles. The book is very much of its time and speaks of a design culture appropriating influences from around the globe. I have a strong sense of how intrinsically linked decorative languages are to their place of origin through my own travels, and much of the work I have previously made has used existing languages of ornament as a starting point. With my proposal to ATLAS I think I wanted to attempt to make something from scratch and connect to a location much closer to home.

The day that we first met and walked together on Raasay, with you dashing me around different bits of the island in your car, I really enjoyed how you directed my looking in a very particular way. I've always enjoyed the Highlands, and the Scottish landscape, but mostly in terms of big vistas, mountains and seascapes, enjoying the texture and colour of these physically large areas of land with the occasional pit stop to look at the detail of some lichen or sphagnum. Prior to our meeting I was lucky enough to walk in the Cullins, wearing ropes, a hard hat and following in the footsteps of an expert mountain guide, heading out with you was an entirely different proposition that shifted my interests from the macro to the micro. On our walk together I remember you stopping every few metres to pull back a clump of heather or grass, to reveal some tiny plant. The whole process literally unearthed a richness at a scale that I had not previously focused on or even been aware of. I found the whole process very exciting and it made me want to consider how I might connect my work to it and to you.

How does our working together compare to the work you might ordinarily undertake, for example survey work or contributing to research?

Stephen: Well it was completely different from that, but I mean, I also run the Skye Botany Group,

and apart from myself, there's nobody that is as deep into it, in a scientific way. It's a very... eclectic group, we all get out and have fun, and enjoy looking at a few plants, I make records as ever. You can't keep me out there without a recording card! But I'm quite used to going out there with lots of different people. Sometimes I do work with a one-metre grid, counting every plant. There's some real detail in there; but I'm also quite happy to wander about the hills, making odd notes, with people just enjoying the scenery.

Frances: Your processes are necessarily very systematic and ordered, using grid references and GPS points for example, and the level of detail at which you engage is extraordinary. I can remember you showing me pictures of sedges, and the difference between these sedges was very difficult for me to appreciate because they were so subtle. By contrast, I became very aware of how unsystematic I am in my thinking; and that I am quite intuitive in the way that I work, feeling my way around thinking to arrive at an approach, rather than having a very logical process with a defined outcome. I wondered how you found that?

Stephen: At the end of the day, you were so enthusiastic about what you were seeing, let's be honest, we just hit it off! We just got on, that was what made the project a success. But also, one thing that impressed me was, you shot up the Cuillin one day, you came back and sent me a photo of a plant you didn't recognise, and I told you what it was, and it turned out to be a new record; I thought, 'Well, this is great! You know, I've got a new recorder here.'

Frances: I'd forgotten about that, yes! Of course, what was the plant?

Stephen: Parsley fern. You've touched on this but my second question is how did you choose Skye and then Raasay?

Frances: That was really quite a slow-burner and came about through the relationship that I formed with Emma Nicolson and ATLAS Arts. When Emma first began ATLAS, she organised a series of artist talks, inviting people whose work she found interesting, and who were maybe interested in making



work in response to place and people. Emma very kindly invited me to give a talk, and also interviewed me for Cuillin FM. So that's when I first met Emma, and first found out about ATLAS. I hadn't spent much time on Skye before so I needed an opportunity to visit again and actually get to know the place, and think about what I might make some work around. All of that took a little bit of time to fall into place, I was fortunate to be awarded an artist's bursary from Creative Scotland, which allowed me the time to undertake research. This coincided with my re-looking at 'The Grammar of Ornament' and that was starting to frame and influence my thinking about what I might do.

I think Emma directed me toward Raasay because of Raasay House, as a potential location to site some work. It has such an interesting and at times challenging history, dating back to the early 1500s as a clan house, through ownership by wealthy individuals in the mid-nineteenth century, to its current status as community-owned building housing a business that is an important part of the economy on the island.

I think the very recent history of the fire in the house in 2009 was also significant for me, understanding what challenges the community had overcome and realising that the interior spaces had lost most of their original decorative detailing and connecting all of that to the architectural history of the building. One surviving detail of the fire are the beautiful encaustic tiles in the entranceway of the house, an original part of the Georgian style frontage added in the mid-nineteenth century by Henry Wood. Connecting all of these threads together with meeting you made sense and made me think 'This is what I can hook the work to, these are the reasons to make the work.'

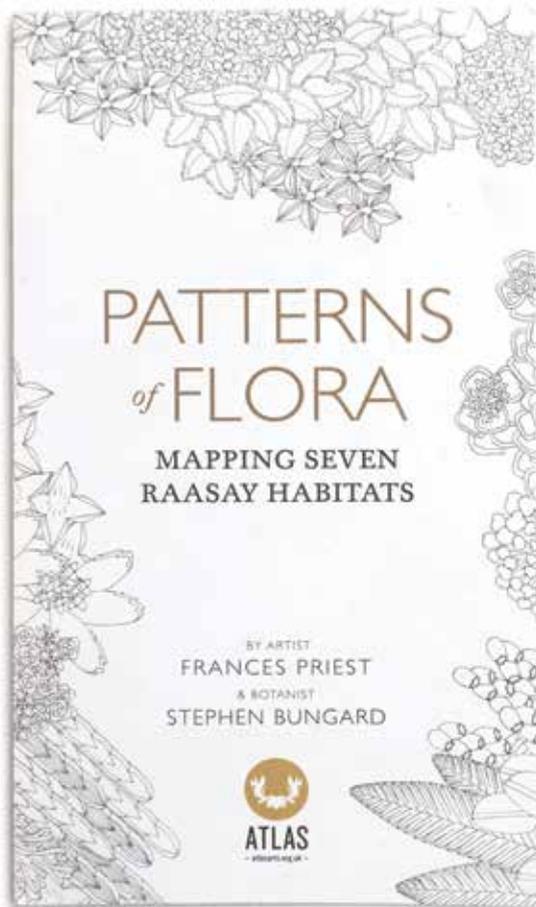
Frances: I wanted to ask you about your perspective on the process of choosing the seven habitats and the specific list of plants to represent each habitat? And in turn, when the designs came back to you, did they make sense or were there some surprises?

Stephen: I'm looking at your vase now, which I know from here, just by looking, I know it's the coastal one. I can see plants in it — even across the room. Whilst they're not botanical diagrams, it's immediately clear to me (what habitat they represent) — that's really very nice, I think. I don't think I was surprised, in a sense of thinking, 'Gosh, is it really like that?' There's an element of artistic license, in that you can't actually find all those plants in one single spot, you know? You can find all these on the coast, but not necessarily altogether in one smallish area... Which I was entirely happy with at the time, and I remain entirely happy with now. It shows the essence of a coastal habitat. It doesn't say this is a little bit down off the coast at Arnish, it says, this is what coastal habitats look like, in a sense, I still think they're lovely.

Frances: Thank you! Because it was almost like the designs revealed themselves to me, through this scientific process of slowly

pinning it down to habitats, and then to plants within the habitat; and I think we started with five, and then actually, as I developed the designs, five different forms within the design was just too complicated, so then we narrowed it down to three for the coloured designs, and then there was a second black-and-white design that had the five in, which is in the map. So it was almost like the process drove the final designs, in a way, and I only had a bit of a hand in it, if you like, which I quite enjoyed. Some of the decision-making was done already through working with you, and through the nature of the environments themselves. But what I was very struck by were the colour schemes that came out of that process, and there are very particular colour schemes for each design, which —

Stephen: Some of those are absolutely spot-on. I mean, the one with the bog, they're a sort of orangey colour; I recognised that habitat, without even thinking about it; and likewise, the coast one, with the cliffs and thift you know, that is absolutely right. My memory of how it all worked is, I started with, 'There are these habitats out there.' In a sense, I'm not choosing them, I'm just listing them. We started with six and went to seven. I remember saying, 'Actually, we really ought to include this one' or, 'There's another one here if you want', or whatever, yes. Again, the next stage was quite a filtering, really. There are an awful lot of plants in any one of these habitats. I think I filtered it down to a relatively small number for each, a case of, 'Alright, have a think about these.' I'm not quite sure how I did that! I think they had some sort of interesting shape or colour, or something. And then basically, I think, you went from there; because I'd given you, whatever, say ten plants per habitat, you narrowed it down to whatever you ended up using, five or something.



Frances: I, then, started matching up those lists to the sort of scattergun drawings I'd made, as I'd been trotting around Skye and Raasay, just looking at things and thinking 'Oh, I like the shape of that', or, 'I like the colour of that', or, 'I like the texture of that', and making drawings. I started making drawings on Post-It notes, actually. I can remember sitting in a little studio with all these little squares, with tiny little quick drawings of each thing that I'd seen, and then looking at the list that you'd given, and trying to match them up; and if I didn't know what the plant was, I could ask you, 'What is this?'

Stephen: Yes, yes. Well one thing on what we were just saying — you know the map of the walks? That required quite a lot of to-ing and fro-ing between us.

Frances: Well it was a lot of work for you, because you ended up having to actually go out on some of the walks, because do you remember I came up and the weather was awful, so we couldn't — that was when there were picnic benches blowing across the front of Raasay House! [laughing]

Stephen: A gentle breeze on Raasay port, hmm.

Frances: I got stuck on Raasay; the ferry was cancelled.

Stephen: You did, yes.

Frances: And the other funny story was when — must have been in the autumn, and you took Shona [Cameron] and I to a couple of locations — was it a freshwater loch?

Stephen: Yes, a freshwater loch, yes.

Frances: And we had to scramble under barbed wire fences, and wade through a bog, and Shona and I are kind of looking at each other, thinking, 'We can't send the general public through here!'

Stephen: I worked that out by the time we got there! And I knew, myself, once I thought about it. Once we were going, I was thinking, 'You know, actually, this is alright for us today, but hmm...'

Frances: I mean, that was brilliant as well, because that just highlighted the lengths you would go to, to find a botanical specimen...

Stephen: Well, that was the problem; I'd never even thought about it being a difficult walk! You know, I mean, compared with going up the Cuillins or something, or right across miles and miles with no roads; I had never thought of that little trip as being a difficult walk until we actually did it, and then I thought, "Hmm, actually, expecting everybody to scramble over wet, slippery fences, and under barbed wire as you say, was probably not a good idea."

Frances: My hope is that people have used the map, and have gone on the walks, and that they would be a little bit intrepid for somebody who's never been to Raasay before. You don't know what you're going to come across, and hopefully that experience might reveal a little bit of, you know, what your daily experience is.

Stephen: People certainly like the maps. We took some to the BSBI (Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland) Scottish Annual Meeting in November, and they went like hot cakes. I mean, not everybody's going to come to Raasay, I just think they thought they looked like beautiful things, and might give them ideas of what to do in their own area.

Previous page: Stephen Bungard and Shona Cameron peering into a rock pool. Photo: Emma Nicolson

Left hand page, clockwise from top left: *Patterns of Flora | Mapping Seven Raasay Habitats* walking map, Frances Priest and Stephen Bungard (design Andy McGregor), 2015; Installation view of vase and decorative window insert at Raasay House, Photo: Ruth Clark; Decorative door knobs for Raasay House both *Patterns of Flora | Mapping Seven Raasay Habitats*, Frances Priest, 2015



1. Claudia Zeiske was the founding director of Deveron Projects, which was formerly known as Deveron Arts. Mary Jane Jacobs is a North American curator who specialises in the curation of socially-engaged art practices and projects developed beyond the gallery walls' relationship with audiences.

2. I use aesthetics here not as shorthand for a valorisation of the visual or as an ideal articulation of beauty and taste (as read through Kant, Descarte, Hume, etc.). Rather, I use aesthetics in an anti-imperialist sense to which aesthetics are employed as a training in taking notice and being of the world resulting in alternative ways of knowing, as per Rasheed Araeen's 'Ecoaesthetics: A Manifesto for the 21st Century' (2009) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's 'An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization' (2012).

Left: Comment card by school pupils of Balivanich Primary School. Let's Talk About Space, a musical-duo who sing songs about space, toured to all primary schools across the islands of Uist and Barra part of the public programme for *Vija Celmins ARTIST ROOMS*, 2014

A Careful Practice

Gayle Meikle

My relationship with ATLAS Arts began in May 2013. I was invited by Claudia Zeiske of Deveron Projects to participate in *Fernweh*, a travelling curator project led by Claudia and Mary Jane Jacobs;¹ it snowed during our visit to Uig. It had been an intense project so far and the endurance of travelling on public transport across the Highlands, coupled with the unexpected May snow, magnified the sense of bleakness I felt as our minibus travelled towards the very Northern tip of Skye. Luckily this feeling soon dissipated, replaced by the warmth I experienced during our brief time on the island. For our arrival, Anne Martin laid out homemade jams, pots of tea and large scones: a Highland welcome. In the evening, over more food and wine, I remember a spirited and somewhat sprawling conversation between the participants of the project and invited guests of ATLAS Arts about what remoteness, rurality and contemporary culture means to those sitting around the table: 'Remote from what?' John White asked holding up a remote controller to make a point about different perspectives on isolation. It was in this meeting that Emma mentioned a forthcoming job with ATLAS Arts and Taigh Chearsabhagh located in North Uist. I applied.

I recount these memories to make visible qualities in the curatorial approach of ATLAS that I think are connected to care: the hospitable welcome, a sense of stewardship that is woven into ATLAS's practice and love. A love for the transformative encounter of an artwork and the recognition that artists (not as seers but as people who have developed their expertise and practice in aesthetics,² criticality and making) can contribute to the formation of identities of a given place.

The transition of curating practice from the traditionally perceived role of caring for collections (within an art historical context) to contemporary curating that performs care in relation to subject and context as well as object, has been developing since the late 1960s. In curatorial discourse, countless contributors have made the connection of this development to the etymological root of the word curator (for example, see Fokianaki, 2020; Groys, 2009; Huberman, 2011; Reckitt, 2016, 2017; Sheikh, 2016). In doing so, care is used as a catch-all term that evokes multiple meanings and deployments. Anthony Huberman uses care to articulate the distinctive ability of small arts organisations in experimenting with



forms of instituting; whereas Helena Reckitt writes of the immaterial labour attached to curating; and Simon Sheikh remarks on care's connection to the future through education. This continual exploration of care in the discipline's discourse has developed into a resurgence in programming activities: podcasts, collectives, workshops, symposia, residentials aimed at re-examining organisational working practices and instituting, using the language of care as its vernacular: Eastside Projects' *Policy Show* (2017); Swimming Pool's *Curatorial School* (2019); *Floating University: Climate Care* (2019); *For All I Care* (2020) by Wellcome Collection and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art. These are some examples of this work. In museum practice, care is more keenly attached to collection and archival work, however, over the last decade scholars have begun to focus on the role museums play as sites of wellbeing. Nuala Morse (2020) an emerging voice in this field, examines the role ethics play in this care work.

Whilst a timely exploration, the ubiquity in which care is used also has a potentially nullifying impact; particularly when we consider the colonial and exclusionary

legacies of care in museum and gallery practice. It is well known that inadequate infrastructure of 'care' is the main retort for the refusal to repatriate objects to their communities of origin. At the same time barriers of access to culture (both in production and representation) remain stuck: 'If museums amass knowledge and care for things, then we must ask ourselves, in the midst of the social upheavals and global health pandemic of recent days, months, and years, for whom do they do this?' This statement, one of fifteen points eloquently made by Yesomi Umolu in her 'On the Limits of Care and Knowledge: 15 Points Museums Must Understand to Dismantle Structural Injustice', penned as a retort to the anti-racist solidarity statements from museums and galleries in the summer of 2020, addresses the good intentioned but seemingly superficial engagement with the violent and dispossessing roots of Western museum and gallery practice. Umolu advocates for 'deep work'; the kind that extends beyond hastily organised inclusion policies or the whispers of care in programming content. I infer this call to action as a transformation from the language of care to a *practice of care* that is more fully embodied in the world, and beyond the gallery walls.



Rurally-active arts organisations have a lot to contribute to the conversation of care. Many, like ATLAS, are active sites of engagement for their communities. The dispersed and

Facing page: Artist moving image screening in a Portree Laundrette part of SPINCYCLE - SKYE, 2013; Performers act out *Summer 14*. A conversation overheard on the Caledonian MacBrayne Lochmaddy-Uig ferry for *Travelling Dialogues* part of the public programme for *Are You LOCATIONALIZED*, Joanne Tatham and Tom O'Sullivan, 2014



Above: A child plays with *Dualachas Chroitearachd Cairt-Chluiche | Cultural Crofting* playing cards developed from the exhibition *Beatha air an Fhearainn - Life on the Land* by artist Sharon Quigley and Craigard Day Centre in North Uist, 2014

3 Lind, M., Wood, B. and Bismarck, B. (2011). *Selected Maria Lind writing*. New York: Sternberg.



Above: Artist Vija Celmins talking to Rebecca Waterstone member of ATLAS board at the event *An In Conversation with Vija Celmins*, 2015

relatively small audiences mean that 'a guaranteed art audience' can be hard to come by; instead, a different tact for situatedness is utilised. I worked with ATLAS to develop a visual arts programme for Taigh Chearsabhagh, a museum and art gallery on the Island of North Uist. The building is a cultural venue but also serves as a local post office, university art studios, office space for local businesses; and when I worked there it was the only cafe in the village. This multidimensional use of space means that the building serves as a critical resource in the island's infrastructure. Its cultural activity sits beside and intertwines with civic services, providing opportunities to connect to audiences in diverse ways.

On the other hand, ATLAS is a venueless organisation and as such its situatedness has manifested in a different form. From 2010-2018, ATLAS sought out and occupied space/places on Skye and its surrounds: water ways; coastal

paths; tourist information points; architecture; laundrettes; village halls; and local supermarkets have all been used as sites

of activation in the engagement of artworks. This active formation of relationships and getting to know different places, people, matter and terrains cultivates a deep knowledge of and longevity in engagement with a place.

At times ATLAS's work could be described as stealthy, remaining relatively hidden only to become visible when the artworks are made public. However, perhaps it is better to think of ATLAS's work in light of Maria Lind's (2011) definition of the curatorial, a type of curating that performs something in the world. Lind defines this activity as a: 'viral presence consisting of signification processes and relationships between objects, people, places, ideas, and so forth, a presence that strives to create friction and push new ideas.'³ Much of ATLAS's work is unexpected; the pink cladding around the apothecary tower (*Are You LOCATIONALIZED*, Tatham and O'Sullivan, 2014), or the oyster table on the bay (*CLIMAVORE: On Tidal Zones, Cooking Sections*, 2017), drawing attention to and framing the sites of their activation. ATLAS constructs a scaffold around the act of artistic production, practice and research; connecting this activity to the material-discursive space it occupies.

I am calling this approach to curating practice a *careful practice*. It is gentle in execution, it sits with and engages with its surroundings, being attentive to and reflexive towards the site in which artworks are made manifest. An example is Maizlish Mole's map of Portree (2012-2013) commissioned with the Portree Area Community Trust (PACT) after the Trust asked ATLAS to advise on a new information board and tourist map campaign. Mole inhabited the role of a traditional cartographer walking and recording every inch of Portree. The result was 50% useful information

and 50% artistic response collecting the local knowledge and relationship to the town. ATLAS's role in this project was to nurture and sustain the relationships between the Trust, local businesses, council offices and the artist. This consistent dialogue with the communities warrants a hospitable attitude keenly tuned to the place's challenges and opportunities. It also means acting as a tour guide and 'introducer' for those visiting, often driving from one end of the islands to the other, connecting artists with places, activities and people. A large part of this activity is preparing meals for and with our visitors and sometimes having artists stay in our homes.

In the main, this hospitableness is unglamorous and labour intensive; it blurs the boundaries between domestic/private and professional/public work. The criticism often levelled at the contemporary art sector of long hours and low pay are largely documented.⁴ In my view, this attention to the maintenance of relationships is synonymous with the endurance required to physically encounter the work of ATLAS. It takes time to travel, whether located on/off the island. An understanding of this came when I organised the first *Broad Reach* screening event at Taigh Chearsabagh (Out of Place, 2014). I quickly realised that the majority of the audience would travel a minimum of one hour by car for a 40-minute screening. Driving long distances is an everyday occurrence for many living in a Hebridean and West Highland rural

environment, and in most big cities travelling an hour to experience culture is commonplace. Yet, this realisation made me acutely aware of the commitment undertaken on part of our audiences, but also barriers to access due to lack of transportation infrastructure (infrequent buses, a timetable that doesn't run beyond 6pm and few taxi services). The *Broad Reach* programme was mindful of this inequity, experimenting with different ways to accommodate long drives and lack of public infrastructure — making sure the kettle is boiled, and there are always a few biscuits also helped in this endeavour.

In 2014 we brought Vija Celmins' ARTIST ROOMS⁵ (a UK-wide touring programme supported by the National Galleries of Scotland, Tate and the Art Fund) to the Uists. The monograph exhibition centred the artist's interest in natural phenomena; particularly her studies of waters and skies, a relevant subject that echoed the flattened landscape of the archipelago. We chose to envelop the exhibition in a programme of events aimed at exploring the sky at night. Critical to this programme was our engagement with primary schools in the form of school visits to the centre and a tour from Let's Talk About Space, an education music science project, to all schools across the island chain. We were mindful that travelling to the arts centre took up a lot of resources (time and money) which is in short supply; so we allocated money in the budget to allow for travel of this

4. Unpaid labour in the form of internships, overtime, and pro-bono work is endemic in the sector. If you are interested to read more about this issue, the 'ArtsPay Survey 2018' by ArtsProfessional, alongside the writing of Angela McRobbie and David O'Brien explore the intersection of low pay, precarity and access in the arts and culture sectors.

5. Antony d'Offay (who donated the collection to National Galleries of Scotland and Tate) attended the exhibition, and we held an 'in-conversation' event with him and the artist Vija Celmins. Subsequent evidence of racist behaviour, intimidation and allegations of sexual misconduct by Antony d'Offay has come to light. I strongly condemn this behaviour, and had it been public knowledge at the time, I would not have worked with him. This behaviour is an example of the violent and uncaring practices that Umolu considers synonymous with the history of Western museums and the powerful individuals who occupy these spaces. I decided to include our work with ARTIST ROOMS because it is more than the privilege and legacy of one man. It belongs to the collective work of others who, in the lending of significant works to regional galleries, coupled with the funding of education programmes, ensures access to works of art that many would not see otherwise. Anthony d'Offay retired from his role as Ex-Officio Curator and involvement in the programme in 2017. Tate & National Galleries and Anthony d'Offay agreed to formally end their relationship in 2020.



6 Umolu, Y. (2020). *On the Limits of Care and Knowledge: 15 Points Museums Must Understand to Dismantle Structural Injustice*. See news.artnet.com

kind and I coordinated the visits, liaising with schools, ferry and bus companies. As a result, every primary aged child in the Uists and Barra had the chance to see the exhibition, and for many, it was the first time they had encountered contemporary art.

This is not a radical act and is in some ways very ordinary.

Nevertheless, the geographical dispersal of our audiences and the intermittent infrastructure (fuel and transport poverty are a major concern) means basic barriers to access remain high. The ARTIST ROOMS collection is deemed of such importance that the nation's taxpayers pay for its care. I believe that everyone should have a right to this access regardless of location, a conviction that is deeply rooted in understanding the role of the museum/ art centre as civic space. Here I rejoin the territory of the language of care: Yesomi Umolu's 'for whom do they do this?'⁶ reverberates as I type. In rural organisations this civic space comes in multitudes, a hybridized form of representation and access, and sometimes care work is as mundane as booking a bus.



Top: Let's Talk About Space pose with children from Daliburgh School, Vija Celmins ARTIST ROOMS, 2014.

Photo: Gayle Meikle

Above: Jamie MacCuish playing with tape, *Beatha air an Fhearainn – Life on the Land*, Sharon Quigley and Craigard Day Centre, 2014.

Photo: Sharon Quigley

Right: Let's Talk About Space performing at Daliburgh School, Vija Celmins ARTIST ROOMS, 2014.

Photo: Gayle Meikle

Those who work at ATLAS have a deep knowledge of the place that they engage with. This comes from being embedded in that place, getting to know the terrain and the communities but also knowing that they are not specialists in the place of Skye. Instead they are facilitators who erect scaffolds of support in relational encounters between the location, the artist, artwork and audience. This relational approach requires a curious outlook and a love of culture that extends beyond contemporary art, but also a desire in recognising the worth of contemporary art in society.



In 2015, I fleetingly asked Emma: 'Do you love the artists you work with?' She replied: 'Yes, in some way you need to fall in love with them.' I can see the love that Emma feels for the artists, for the art that is produced, and for the sites in which it is all proliferated. Emma's approach to curating, and indeed my own, is a strong belief and drive in the importance of the symbiotic value within the location in which these artworks are made public; and the conversations, ways of working, and knowledges that develop when artistic practice is in concert with the spaces it inhabits.



1. Bourriaud, N. *Relational Aesthetics*. (2002). Paris: Presses du Réel

2. *ibid*, pp.13.



Left top: Emma's grandfather and great aunt's house Gedintailor, Isle of Skye:

Photo: Nicolson family collection.

Bottom: Emma and Dilli photographed in the Cuillins, *Panorama*, 2013.

Photo: Daniel Warren

Ethics in Practice:

A conversation between Kirsty Skinner and Emma Nicolson

Recently I have been taken with the term *Eudaimonia* which in Aristotelian ethics, is the condition of human flourishing or of living well. What does this mean? How do we do this? What does this mean in relation to living and working within an island community?

Numerous people have written about contemporary practice and the social process of making art, the dynamics of island living bring into sharp focus the many ethical considerations involved in this approach. Art that is outward looking, open, encompassing practices such as generosity, reciprocity, altruism, compassion, cooperation and humanity has in essence a uniting goal, a sharing of ethics for the common good of the creative cultural endeavour.

In 'Relational Aesthetics', Nicolas Bourriaud¹ identified an approach to contemporary practice that offers the opportunity of 'learning to inhabit the world in a better way', instead of trying to construct it based on a preconceived idea of historical evolution. Otherwise put by Bourriaud, 'the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing realm, whatever the scale chosen by the artist.'² Taking this out of a gallery setting, and more specifically into a rural setting enacting this viewpoint, relational aesthetics, social practice and sited practice mutates into something more connected and exploratory. Whilst this relational view was framed in the early 2000s by a curatorial practice based in a gallery context there is some merit to thinking about the use of contemporary art in the context of the present. Moving beyond the artworld this call to thinking about the relational qualities of practice to a specific site or context not only extends the spaces and boundaries of arts practice and those who manage the production, but the social experience; human-to-human and beyond human.

This conversation with Kirstie Skinner charts my personal drives and motivations in relation to some of the support I received along the way. We reflect on the arc of my own biography and how the ideas and values I've been exposed to have influenced me and shaped my interests in

developing an ethic of making art, one that draws on social relation, connections and the role institutions play. Put pragmatically, how our career trajectory informs our inner protocols and creates a space to consider a situation, measure values against decisions and importantly how that might impact other people. Perhaps then, the word ethics shouldn't be a noun, it should be a verb. I believe that you are practicing ethics every time you bring artists, artwork and audiences together in order to be accountable to them.

The conversation that follows took place in Kirstie Skinner's home in Edinburgh while I was on a trip down from Skye.

Kirstie: What drew you to the prospect of founding ATLAS on Skye? You had both a professional and personal relationship with Skye beforehand; to what extent was that a factor?

Emma: It was very much a factor. I had just returned from Australia, and was embarking on a PhD looking at the making of contemporary art in a Highland context, and this initiative was proposed in Skye, following the closure of the arts centre, An Tuireann; and initially it was a project housed by Hi-Arts, then acting as an arts development agency in the Highlands, and funded by Creative Scotland to look at the gap in provision for visual arts in that area — in the West Highlands and the Isle of Skye: a huge gap, following the closure of An Tuireann. So the proposal was very, very open: a project looking at the creation of contemporary art on the Isle of Skye, and it paralleled my interests within my PhD. So I was invited to apply, and very, very excited at the prospect of the potential within the project; and my relationship to Skye has been formed by my father's family — my father comes from the Isle of Skye, and has traced our family back to the twelfth century there, so that's always been a very pertinent factor. My love of mountain regions is really important, and I've always been drawn back to those mountains, and that history of the island has been very significant.

You know, weirdly, studying at Edinburgh College of Art in the late 80s, I did my dissertation on the visual in Gaelic poetry, and interviewed Sorley MacLean, and it was Sorley MacLean — who was quite elderly, then — who really opened my eyes to my own family history, and to the significance of the Gàidhealtachd, and introduced me to a spirit of resilience formed in the 1930s and Scotland's role the Spanish Civil War... all that, within his work, really sparked my imagination; that kind of strength of character, and...

Kirstie: And that's interesting: so that predates, and possibly led you to join the board of An Tuireann, then? That was how that already happened?

Emma: Yes, absolutely, it was latent, if you like. It was always there as an interest, and you know, collecting books and texts on that area [Skye] but it was never a part of my career until then.

Kirstie: And it's such an interesting move, to come from one of the biggest metropolitan centres in the world (Sydney), and the MCA [Museum of Contemporary Art Australia], to come back to an island; but anyone who knows you can see how those two things can coexist in a very natural way.

Emma: It's quite frustrating to be asked the question — and it does happen: "What took you from Sydney to Skye?" and I love the urban context, and Australia's one of the

most urban countries in the world — then to go to a remote, rural context does seem quite strange; but I was resolute that the level of work that's produced in an urban context, and in an international context, could equally manifest in a remote rural context, in that there are really powerful concerns that can be explored through contemporary art in that location.

Kirstie: And we're going to come back to that later, about the richness of that context; not just for artists and art production for the community that's there, but for everybody else as well — that microcosm, that kind of context, creating something powerful for people to engage with, that makes things visible that are less visible in the overwhelm of a city, perhaps. It also felt like ATLAS was an opportunity for you to forge a new curatorial approach, drawing on the different roles that you'd held, previously, at Kirkcaldy Art Gallery, the National Galleries of Scotland, MCA in Sydney; and we should talk about the distinct aspects of the ATLAS project in more detail, but first, I'm intrigued to find out whether you look back at past situations and recognise the particular opportunities and constraints as being generative for you now, or whether you feel it's just the culmination of your experiences that influence you now?

Emma: I think it is really interesting to look back at the events in my career in relation to what was going on within the art world, I suppose, at that time; and maybe I wasn't so aware of it, and the different trends, and the kind of educational turn, if you like, that took place in the early 2000s — but in the 90s, when I was working in Kirkcaldy, I was what's called an outreach officer, and it was that mixing of education and curatorial. For example, I was curating exhibitions about the loss of the mining industry, I suppose that role led me into making historical events within Fife significant in a contemporary way,

or to a contemporary or local audience, if you like; and so looking at the environment, and looking at mining, and looking at the potteries and all that kind of thing — but also working within formal and informal education, in and outside of the gallery setting. So it was a really good, thorough grounding, and my director there had a big impact on me, she gave me a lot of freedom, but also held me to account, and I think that was a very nurturing, learning role. And then entering the National Galleries was much more structured.

Kirstie: I can imagine that, although you were senior in the Education Department, it was a more formal education role, and actually, you were part of a team of people that were forging the education provision for the Galleries in a way that hadn't happened before that. So there was a great degree of potential for innovation —

Emma: Yeah, absolutely.

Kirstie: But it was very strictly within education, and you were not termed curators, for example; there were small amounts of scope for making curatorial presentations.

Emma: Yes, and I was fortunate enough to be permitted that opportunity, because it was things like the acquisition of Titian's *Venus...*, and the Heritage Lottery Fund in, you know... 2005? And it was all about access and broadening audiences, and how do we achieve that with a fifteenth century painting? How do we make it relevant today? And so I was brought in at the behest of the Heritage Lottery Fund to work alongside with the curator of the Italian Collection to create a touring exhibition; and that's the first time that the National Galleries combined really historical work with work across the collection from a more contemporary era. So although it was quite a modest exhibition, it was quite progressive for the institution, and it was a step-change, that led to another

couple of exhibitions. So that gave me a taste, I guess, for what might be possible beyond; but also, as you know, working at that time in the Education Department, the engagement with audiences became more invigorating, and much more interesting, when working with contemporary artists, and it was really working with the London Institute, who came and delivered Artists as Educators, a kind of learning programme that made a dramatic change, and that influenced a whole range of artists.



Kirstie: And this was training artists to help you deliver your education provision through engagement, on tours and workshops and that sort of thing?

Emma: Yes, it was broader than that; it was kind of generating a pool of critical-thinking artists that we could then work with. Many of them we didn't work with, but it was an open call to artists, so it was a kind of education programme for artists, and it looked at discourse analysis, and it gave a really strong theoretical underpinning to pedagogic work.

At that point the Tate was delivering that sort of thing, and Camden, but it wasn't really happening in Scotland — and in fact, I then took that out to Sydney and delivered, not the same, but a similar kind of programme out there.

Through the Edinburgh Galleries Artist Training Programme, working with Lesley Burgess and Maureen Finn, I was introduced to the pioneering work being done at Camden Arts Centre, the Whitechapel, and Sally Talents work at Serpentine. This all led to taking a more analytical and research-based approach and the value of artists sharing the creativity in their practice and how that might be applied in multiple ways.

Kirstie: So you moved from National Galleries to MCA as Senior Manager of Learning and Access. Another large institution; was that a similar set of constraints and opportunities?

Emma: No, it was totally different, and partly, that was one of the reasons for going out there, was to work with Liz Ann MacGregor, who had really developed her career on that sort of interest in engagement in the 90s, when she was working at the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, and did an amazing outreach project with Yinka Shonibare, working with the communities there and exploring artists as agents of change within the community, and I think, certainly, her approach was what drew me to the job; and, you know, she went out to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, and completely turned it around. It had a charge on the door, and she did a radical thing by forming an alliance with a telecommunications firm very quickly, and removing the charge on the door, and having only one fee-paying exhibition a year; and it's now the most popular museum in Sydney. Changing the perception of the museum; and that was through building audiences in the western suburbs, which is the kind of poor and diverse region of Sydney, as well as

strengthening it. So I think it was a completely different environment.

Kirstie: And dedicated to contemporary art, of course, and therefore artists being very much part of it.

Emma: Present: artists on the staff, artists on the board — living artists being right at the forefront of every decision, really. In Australia I was introduced to new viewpoints and connections across the southern hemisphere and these were formative to my vision for how ATLAS could evolve. While there I was inspired by organisations like Melbourne-based Next Wave, Sydney's Performance Space, Urban Theatre Projects and the Tasmanian-based organisation Big hART, set up as an innovative experiment to find new ways of dealing with disadvantage. In particular, Big Hart's performance work *Ngapartji Ngapartji* in Alice Springs was an inspiration, at the core of which was a concept of kindness. Apparently there is no suitable translation for the Pitjantjatjara concept, '*ngapartji ngapartji*' its closest equivalent is possibly, 'I give... you give in return,' it is about the power of gifting. A multi-layered, award-winning theatre piece, an online language and culture teaching site, community workshops and documentary. Beyond being a piece of theatre, the work pushed for a National Indigenous Language Policy and recognition for Indigenous victims of the Maralinga atomic testing — the all-encompassing depth and integrity of this work has been a lasting inspiration for me. At the MCA I also connected with the work of Clare Doherty of Situations, Creative Time in New York and worked with Jeanne Van Heeswijk as a mediator, an intermediary between a situation, a space, a neighbourhood and the people connected to those.

Kirstie: Just following on from that question about audiences — and obviously, all curators are thinking about audiences, but it does feel

like audiences have a very central role for ATLAS. Fast forward to the Skye context: is that something you've just come to embody, or is it partly because you don't have a building, and therefore audiences have a very particular relationship to what you're doing? Or is it because you're in a small community, so you can build and you can expect very long-term relationships with audiences?

Emma: Audiences are crucial in the way that I approach things, I think it is important to have a dynamic relationship to art, artists and audiences. I guess I've always wanted to make a difference, and you do that through engaging with audiences; and it's not about numbers, it's the quality of the experience. You know, I've witnessed working in museums where 'dwell time' is three seconds looking at an artwork. What level of engagement is that? Or the kind of 'ticking it off', that you've seen it. I mean, it's easy to walk through the Louvre and go, 'check, done that now.' With ATLAS, being a new organisation, formed in this century, we're a new generation of arts organisation, that is about engaging with people, and the artists that we work with are those that are interested in communicating their work in that way; but it's also been, I guess, seven years of looking at different approaches to doing that. It's a very complex community. There is an Indigenous population, there's relocators, there's young families, there's elderly, and then there's this huge influx of tourists, and those tourists are multifaceted as well: they're visitors from the UK or abroad or outdoors specialists or organised coach tours. How do we relate to all these different dynamics within the island? And it's the perception of the island as well, bound by water, remote, beautiful, scenic, iconic wilderness; when in fact, it's a working, practical, dangerous, weather-worn environment. For some an island is a place where one goes to lose oneself, others go to find themselves.

Kirstie: It's an extraordinarily rich environment, isn't it? And I think perhaps one of the things that all of these different audiences that you mentioned might share is an interest in seeing things more clearly, or seeing aspects of the island, and life on the island, being drawn out in some way, and being made visible.

Emma: Absolutely, islands are intriguing, disputed territories and a very rich environment in which to develop relationships between artists and audience. Initially I'd call it, 'contemporary art by stealth' which really excited me. We're not plonking something somewhere, and going, "This is art." Now, we are at the point where we're seeing groups within the community come to us, and ask us to help them to initiate projects. I call this approach the ATLAS Onion — it's like layers and layers and layers of different routes into the work, and different partnerships; and partnering is vital for us, to make something effective. For example, the project with Frances Priest at Raasay House; that's an old clan house that's owned by the community, and is operated by another community trust as an outdoor education centre. Unfortunately, it has been burnt to the ground twice, and very little of the original architecture or decoration is left in the house. When the conversations with Frances occurred, and she was interested in devising a project around the grammar of ornament, she wanted to base that on an island, and she was thinking of Skye. We suggested that she go and look at Raasay, and there happened to be a botanist on Raasay who had mapped the entire island and all its plant life — who was also interested in working with Frances. When that relationship was established ATLAS then approached the two community Trusts, building that trust to allow the artist to change some of the features in the house - 'We want to give you ceramic handles and finger plates and window inserts, and door handles for your

library; and they will be artworks, and there will be maps and interpretation, etc.' It takes sensitive negotiation and genuine interest — building that trust with the community. The result is that these artworks really engage all their visitors, from the souvenir that is now sold out to the botanical walks created by the artist and the botanist.

Kirstie: And that's a really interesting example of how your openness, and your interest in connecting artists to people that they will get something from; your interest in making connections and making space for conversations between artists and other people in the island. It's very distinctively ATLAS. I can't imagine there's ever been a situation where you've worked with an artist that hasn't met at least ten other people on the island.

Emma: Yes, absolutely, yes. Those relationships have been so valuable.

Kirstie: Who all have these extraordinary and fascinating roles, and have this store of knowledge and understanding, that the artist comes away completely enriched by the experience.

Emma: It's like an incredible gastronomic book of ingredients, and every recipe is different. I mean quite often, with artists, we've hosted meals, where we've introduced them to a whole range of people, and it's been left open where they forge those synergies. The meal is a catalyst for identifying those areas they're curious about. A lot of the artist feedback we get is about the freedom and the trust that we imbue them with, to take forward their ideas, that they wouldn't necessarily be able to achieve elsewhere — or that it really is an unusual freedom that they have, when they come and work with us; and we work with them along the route, but it's always very open-ended about what might occur, and it's about ensuring that we are true

to their vision, but also aware of the context, and we kind of act as custodians.

Kirstie: You help them navigate.

Emma: Yeah, critiquing the sensitivity and the ethics of the location that they're working within. It's not like we're aware of all of those things ourselves, but we know we can ask, and invite, people who will share that information. We act as a catalyst.

Kirstie: So what's interesting about the process is it sounds quite radically open at the beginning, and one of the reasons for that, and what you've found by having that openness, is that you learn, along with the artist. So you're guiding the artist, and you're making introductions, but actually it's through their eyes and through their distinctive practices, that you're learning aspects of the island too?

Emma: Absolutely, and we might have particular sites or locations or communities that are an initial spark for something, but it is radically open at the beginning.

Kirstie: So maybe it's worth asking, just in practical terms, what prompts you to approach particular artists, and how is it that you work with them? How do you brief them? Is it an invitation to just come?

Emma: Yes. So some of our artists have done a huge amount of research into the island; and certainly, for example, in the early days, and we kind of reintroduce it occasionally. We had a series called *Talking Art*, and that was about inviting artists to the island to discuss their work, and to profile different ways in which artists work with social practice, or with art in the public realm, and to raise awareness of those approaches within the community. And those visits have allowed for conversations to develop. So a conversation with an artist might occur, you know, a year prior to them being invited back to the island

to develop a project. A lot of our projects have taken two to three years to come into fruition, and artists have made several visits throughout that time, in order to work out how their work might manifest.

Kirstie: And what is it about — is it a spirit in their practice that you find yourself connecting with, that draws you to certain artists? Or is it thematic, or a connection to Skye, or...?

Emma: It's rarely a connection to Skye.

Kirstie: I was thinking of John Akomfrah, actually.



Emma: Oh, well yes, yes, that's true. When I saw his film *Vertigo Sea* in 2015 at the Venice Biennale I was riveted and immediately recognised scenes of Skye in the work. I discovered that he had a long relationship with the Island and had been visiting and making work there for over twenty years. That's how we began screening some of those early works and investigating presenting *Vertigo Sea* in Skye — which would be so amazing for those locals who over the years have worked on his films.

Kirstie: An unexpected discovery.

Emma: Yes, absolutely.

Kirstie: I mean, it's worth saying that, across the whole of your tenure, the artists that you've worked with are all pretty exceptional,

and are bringing very interesting things into the mix; and there's a very wide variety, I would say.

Emma: There is a wide variety, but when you look at it statistically, and you look back, there's a high proportion of women, and there's a high proportion of artist duos –

Kirstie: Interesting.

Emma: And I think that is something that we're keen to unpick; why that's happened, and whether or not that's got anything to do with the way they make work. I think with the artist duos, what makes it really interesting is that they're quite open to that kind of dialogical approach, and critiquing is part of the way that they make work — it's a conversation. ATLAS likes to have that conversation with artists, and be almost a collaborator within the work; not the creative ignition, but to be part of the process. I think that artist duos have a really interesting and open approach to making work, and they have opposing views within there, so I really enjoy working with that dynamic.

Kirstie: I guess there's a sort of spirit of deconstruction that happens in relation to what we were saying before about revelation, and revealing assumptions, shedding a light on the way things were done habitually; and that shares a spirit with, I guess, early feminism, in its embrace of that sort of deconstruction, looking at metanarratives.

Emma: And the relationship to the everyday, as well, and to daily life, in a way. You know, that kind of bringing to the fore the working... There's an interesting sort of dynamic on the West Coast, or on the islands, of this, what I call 'time mulch', which is a kind of flattening of time, where the historical, mythical are all at the forefront. There is no kind of chronological sense of time; and in a way, all of that — the geological, you know, the basalt against the sandstone of Skye — is

an interesting kind of squashing of all these things, and I think that, in a way, there's something in that, in the way that we work, because we might pick up a thread. Well, we inevitably, you know, whether we're looking at possible futures, there is always some kind of relationship to the land and the history and the people.

Kirstie: Yeah, there's an experiential thing, that all of these different things are sort of embodied, in a way. I think this is very interesting, and we're obviously talking a lot about the uniqueness of ATLAS on Skye, and the relationship to the island, and your sensitivity to context; but this also reflects on, and contributes to, wider debates, and I've always thought that ATLAS is not just about art in rural contexts, but about how art can be in the world. You mentioned dialogical: you were talking about that in relation to the creation of the work, and the push and pull between interlocutors in creating the work; but there is also a wider push and pull, sometimes, with the work itself, as it reaches audiences.

Emma: Yes. I think the diversity of the work, for many of the artists that we are attracted to, are questioning and challenging the context; highlighting concerns within the context that maybe are not so visible. For example, Keg De Souza, whose art looks at the politics of space, being embedded in a Gaelic primary school for four weeks, working with them on the commons, and how crofting, and the history of crofting, relates to our understanding of the commons today — but getting the children at the school to kind of identify that themselves, and how that then grows outward within the community, and manifests itself in Keg's own work, through hosting a picnic, and creating a publication, and a legacy within the school that gets them to think about their community in a slightly different way. To *Are You LOCATIONALIZED*,

by Joanne Tatham and Tom O'Sullivan, that really was an incredibly special work, in that it was a durational piece for the viewer, that it was multi-sited: it was one work across two islands, so you really had to work hard to be able to view two things; but also, that it critiqued the context in which it was placed. I mean, they related to each other, but they very much related to the context, and sparked a whole range of reactions.

Kirstie: It was fascinating how that work activated a whole series of debates within the community.

Emma: It had its own agency, the work.

Kirstie: Yeah. You were no longer negotiating those debates; they were happening between people, with some wanting to defend it, others wanting to attack it, but it was very interesting grounds on which they were attacking Tom and Joanne's gesture of wrapping the Apothecary's Tower in a pink temporary cladding. Suddenly the discussion about public art — art sited, or just our public space — it was interesting to see how rich those debates were.

Emma: They continue today, and that neglected part of the village is no longer neglected, and there's on-going work being done to look after that area, where it had been overgrown and derelict.

Kirstie: It's interesting that you were talking about custodianship or care, before; and in a way, your care around that site, the resurrection of the footpath up there, and that sense of caring by making visible, and allowing others to access that area, was obviously a potent first step. It was striking at the award ceremony, where that work was awarded the Saltire Award for a Temporary Public Artwork, in Edinburgh; that tribute was paid to the fact that the way the project operated could be a model used elsewhere. I'm interested in ATLAS, and particularly

the experience you bring as an axis for international debates.

So there's a whole level of debate — and intellectual and philosophical debate — around these questions, that also relies on a sort of grounded and embodied exploration of those questions in reality. How important is being part of those debates to you? And maybe to refer back to you embarking on a PhD, but then possibly finding that you didn't need to do the theory [laughing] because you were –

Emma: Doing it in practice.

Kirstie: Yes.

Emma: Absolutely. Those debates are really, really important, and we want to bring more people in. We want to engage with that level of conversation more in the future; and certainly with the artists like Cooking Sections, whose project will take place over three years — so it's a much longer-term engagement, and we hope it will have a much deeper engagement with the local community, and an impact; and will connect concerns within the community to global discussions around aquaculture, and climate change, and health, and food; and the politics of all that. So universal themes, and global issues, that are very prescient within our community, and kind of operating on two levels, really. I think, increasingly, with the kind of groundwork that we've done with the different projects, the works that we're looking at, and are interested in, are looking at possible futures. The politics of today, and the kind of flux that we're in, means that the potential for contemporary art to open up the debate about the future of our context, of our island, of our nation, you know, are massive! And that's where I see our curatorial conversation headed.

Making Research Material

Neil Mulholland

Over the past twenty years, researchers have been increasingly preoccupied with materiality as a field that unites the arts, humanities and social sciences. The 'material turn' in scholarship, one that calls into question the binarism and anthropocentrism of critical theory and the cultural turn, is a profound acknowledgment and reconceptualisation of the role of materiality in shaping culture, society and more-than-human cognition.

In their different ways, such materialists broadly agree that the social constructivism that underwrote most contemporary art in the 'Long Nineties'¹ failed to grasp the heterogeneity and non-oppositionality of material relations. As a riposte to both the anthropocentrism of the social turn and to epistemological claims of representation, materialist encounters have been particularly fruitful to the broad sensorial histories, theories and practices of the visual arts. The focus on 'thing-power' has enabled artists to retool themselves through their materials. Artists think with materials. Artists make research materials. The question remains, however: is contemporary art making research materialist?

Artists, art critics and curators certainly appear to be broaching many different materialist approaches, developing processes that echo wider materialist ruptures. For example, Chris Fowler and Oliver Harris describe a well-known schism between materialists who regard materials as singular and composed, and those that view materials as processes, as things that grow and move: 'Do objects exist and then enter into relations? Or are the relations themselves primary? These are central yet seemingly irreconcilable approaches that cut to the heart of material culture studies.'² This correlationist/realist division is, equally, very evident within artistic research. Practice-led research tends to be more focused on methods, processes and their correlations while practice-based researchers demonstrate ways that artefacts may embody knowledge in and of themselves.

The myriad of (often conflicting) materialisms in the visual arts reflects, more broadly, the ways in which various arts, humanities and social sciences disciplines have approached the material turn in distinct and

1. Lars Bang Larsen, "The Long Nineties", *frieze*, Issue 144, 2012.

2. Chris Fowler and Oliver JT Harris "Enduring Relations: Exploring a Paradox of New Materialism", *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol.20(2), 2015, p128.

Left top: Dugald Ross talking to participants of *Atelier:Skye* in the Dinosaur Staffin Museum, 2016; **bottom:** Participants photographed in the distance of one of the sites explored in *Atelier:Skye*, 2016.

Photo: Emma Nicolson



different ways. Are the differences of approach irreconcilable; need they be reconciled? Fowler and Harris argue that the very presence of such differences 'opens up a productive space to pursue the emergence of entities from relations and relations from entities.'³ Certainly, materialist practice-based and practice-led researchers in the arts both consider materials as central to technê: a craft-like, context dependent knowledge. So, following from Fowler and Harris, the intermedial zone between practice-based and practice-led research is a pivotal one, wherein artefacts may emerge from technê, and technê from artefacts. While differences of approach continue to persist here, there is much that might be gained by bringing these disciplinary differences together in a shared research environment. What shape might such a shared intermedial environment take? Could it adopt a familiar model?

3. *ibid.*, p129.

4. See stemtosteam.org.

5. See anthropos-lab.net.

Laboratory

The Lab is a scientific paradigm (sometimes borrowed by the social sciences) that operates a 'Principal Investigator <-> Team of Researchers' model and is often funded through STEAM collaboration.⁴ Things are investigated in the lab firstly, 'created' secondly.⁵ While this paradigm facilitates collectivist research, it is, ultimately, methodologically controlled. This is because labs tend to operate teleologically within a positivist tradition, in pursuit of sharable research outcomes: their experimental methods should be repeatable, knowledge falsifiable.

Studio

Research is conducted in artists' studios. A collectivist model of research, wherein we might find a frisson of disciplinary differences, is repressed in studio protocol. Studios tend to be solitary, cell-like, spaces; researchers are highly individuated in their foci. Shared maker-spaces (or 'workshops') do, of course, exist and there are many examples of successful artists running large professional studios that employ a wide range of fabricators, researchers and assistants. The dominant paradigm, nevertheless, remains that of the solo practitioner, and this is a major barrier to the formation of the kind of shared ontology facilitated by the laboratory model.

So, such laboratory and studio models are disciplinary, each has their own material protocols and methods, each their distinctive weaknesses and advantages. Constructing an intermedial environment is not a case of cherry-picking the most desirable protocols around which to engineer a methodological consensus. In such a framework, disciplinary protocols will continue to fabricate radically distinct objects from the same material. An intermedial environment, then, would be an interstitial space in which the weakness and advantages of different materialisms may perform a productive tension. Herein it is materials that might constitute 'common

research objects' through which to formulate concepts, equipment, and techniques that may enable the ability to work in a more collaborative manner. Thus, materials are key to navigating the intermedial zone. Materials are the methods of Atelier.

Atelier

I've been working with colleagues Dr Angela McClanahan in the School of Art and Dr Richard Baxstrom in Social Anthropology in the University of Edinburgh to design and play-test models of making and enquiry that might cohabit what are often separate, or opposed, material research practices within the arts, humanities and social sciences. Given the disciplinary protocols of its participants, to some extent, our Atelier project has manifested the 'inventive methods' approach that characterises much contemporary artistic-anthropological research ('AntArt'): hybrid combinations of participant observation, ethnography, new materialist and artistic research methods. Atelier's AntArt participants are situated researchers, they identify sites (objects) for practice and conduct fieldwork within them. From a materialist perspective, 'sites' can encompass a wide range of objects and activities. A site of enquiry may encompass all facets of artistic production, distribution, consumption and salvage. A useful counterpoint to pursuing the hermeneutics of 'resolved' artworks, advanced anthropological research has been exploring the modes of action by which art takes place. AntArt is frequently focused on the meta: on artistic R&D, programming and commissioning as its field of study. In our Atelier, however, AntArt has frequently collided with object history, a method established by behavioural archeologist Michael Schiffer in 1972.⁶ The persistence of object-biography as a more anthropocentric method certainly testifies to a particular artefactual or abiotic trope widely practiced by artists and curators when making, selecting or commissioning works of art. This materialist schism has been a largely productive one.

From a similar perspective, our model collides the expectation that social science research design is a group endeavour with the expectation that arts organisations curate programmes of research and dissemination.

The research programme of each Atelier has been cyclical. Broadly speaking, it has three, iterative, stages:

- (i) A small interdisciplinary group of researchers design and curate a research 'Atelier'.
- (ii) The design group recruit a broader interdisciplinary group of researchers to play-test the 'Atelier'.

6. Michael B. Schiffer, "Archaeological context and systemic context" *American Antiquity* Vol.37(2), 1972, pp156-165. This approach was further elaborated by Igor Kopytoff "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process" in ed. A. Appadurai *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp64-91.

(iii) The small group of interdisciplinary researchers review the play-test and recalibrate the research design of 'Atelier' as a doxa for further practice. Return to (i) and begin the cycle again.

This programme has brought an array of disciplinary approaches into a productive and creative exchange, one facilitated by materials. The doxa this has generated are the unique products of the precise interstitial spaces produced in each Atelier's very particular constellation — which is to say that the doxa are largely determined entirely by the protocols of the participants to date.

Of course, we might find different Atelier research designs and disparate groups of participants producing radically different intermedial environments. 'Atelier' can take many dialogical, organisational, temporal and spatial forms including, but not limited to: workshops, charrettes, hackathons, salons, Open Spaces, PAR (Participatory Action Research) events, re-enactments, performances, concerts and exhibitions. By participating in an Atelier, an historian of the archive, an actor, a conservator of the book, an archaeological site re-enactor, a digital organologist and an art fabricator may share their material methods of enquiry into and through common materials, reciprocally, inflecting and deepening each other's material practices of the arts. Sharing such tailored research training may yield a richer understanding of disciplinary differences and of broad transdisciplinary possibilities, thus enabling more nuanced materialist, artistic research.

This is only possible because the Atelier generates a focus. Atelier facilitate this by carefully selecting 'common' objects of enquiry in the research design phase, curating them into a sequence that takes place over a few days of field work. This experiment is autotelic rather than goal-oriented. It creates the illusion of outcomes. There is, of course, no common object. The common object is a Great MacGuffin to generate frisson. In the hands of different disciplinary protocols, each common object branches and forks into many different objects. In this sense, the Atelier 'makes' then shares research 'objects' through collaborative interdisciplinary work. The objects are multiplicitous fictions rather than absolute entities; they are not the true focus of enquiry.

What Atelier shares, then, are the processes of making these objects. The processes of making are transdisciplinary methods.⁷ Such methods are recipe-like doxa for practices that are informed, but not constrained, by discipline. Doxa emerge by researching with materials, tools, technologies, materialist theories and methods. The doxa relates to our perception of material enquiry as an iterative and cyclical process, a set of workshops that can be continually re-performed like a musical score. Playing the

7. This relates closely to practice-led knowledge produced in Anthropological and Artistic Research, to how we understand and document the flows of un/making and the agency of works of art.



Above L-R: Neil Mulholland, Angela McClanahan-Simmons, Anne Martin and Richard Baxstrom in the Dinosaur Staffin Museum.

Photo: Emma Nicolson

8. Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*, Harvard University Press, 1996, p192.

9. Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, Durham: Duke UP, 2007, p33.

10. Paraphrasing: Tim Cresswell, "Review Essay. Nonrepresentational Theory and Me: Notes of an Interested Sceptic" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* Vol.30(1), 2012, pp96–105.

doxa leads to its rules being revised and updated, offering fresh material insights. Like a recipe, the doxa is an open source, it is free to be released, discharged, copied, distributed, transmitted, displayed, performed, cooked, played, reproduced, published, transferred. Rather than seeking disciplinary or institutional unity, we seek a 'shifting disciplinary structure that holds open the question of whether and how thoughts fit together.'⁸ The productive frisson of this dialogism between disciplines and institutions generates new, dissensual, knowledges in our respective fields and communities.

ATLAS

Contemporary art organisations have, for some time, attempted to produce an interstitial space that sits between the art studio and the scientific 'lab'. They engage the material resources within their field (which can be human, geographic and/or methodological) to facilitate a programme of research. In this schema, the artist isn't any more, or less, at the centre of the conception of the arts than are the communities and the fields within which they are enmeshed.

In part, this has been a response to the considerable R&D and programming pressures faced by artists and contemporary arts organisations internationally. Artists and arts organisations are required to do more with less: to entangle their work in ways that widen participation and maximise impact. Such demands can sit neatly with the social aspirations of a number of artists; with the desire to do things with, not to, the wider community (the 'social turn' in art). However, the pursuit of a social practice has led many artists to recognise that agency is not limited to humans, leading them to engage with what the theorist and physicist Karen Barad calls, 'the mutual constitution of entangled agencies.'⁹ By embracing politics as one set of relations among others, they find themselves aligning with more recent materialist debates. To paraphrase the human geographer Tim Cresswell, where social constructivism held that 'the social' constructs everything (including neoliberalism and the 'world of matter'), the inverse axiom is that the social is one thing equal among many other things.¹⁰ From the superordinate perspective of the new materialisms then, social relations involved in engaging with 'the wider community' are an active part of the world of matter, not something passively set against it.



11. Francis Russell, "Slave to the Rhythm: The Problem of Creative Pedagogy and the Teaching of Creativity", in ed. Greg Thompson and David Savat, *Deleuze, Guattari. Schizoanalysis. Education: Deleuze Studies* Volume 9, Number 3, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015.

Left: Nicholas Oddy, Glasgow School of Art, looking at a rusted car in the landscape, *Atelier: Skye*, 2016.

Photo: Emma Nicolson

This is highly significant since it suggests that the paradigm that has supported contemporary art since its inception in the 1950s — social constructivism — is being persistently challenged by artistic, curatorial and critical practice. Contemporary art's dalliance with the anthropocene, mandatory *mise en scène* for every debate today, is a case in point. The anthropocene, in part, pulls the rug (anthropocentrism) from under the institutional theory of art, challenging the consensus that underwrites the production, distribution and consumption of contemporary art (social constructivism). This is coupled with changing perceptions of 'creativity'. As Francis Russell writes:

... it would appear to be the case that the logics of utility and productivity that seemingly shape the contemporary thinking of innovation and creativity hold as their telos the application of creativity as a means of enabling greater innovations and furthering efficiency and productivity. Hence it appears that for contemporary thought, creativity, which 'man' once struggled to wrestle from the clutches of a transcendental creator, has now become effaced outside of the logics of innovation, utility and productivity.¹¹

Hence, at the very point when the social functionalism of contemporary art is being challenged, there is growing concord that 'creativity' (rather than 'art') is as functional as it is ubiquitous. Arts organisations, thus, find themselves having to resist increasingly instrumentalist plaudits for 'creativity' while challenging contemporary art's 'creative exclusivity'.

ATLAS is of particular interest in this particular balancing act since it does not operate from a gallery, workshop or studio. ATLAS's post-studio approach to programming does not presuppose a particular form or artistic practice or delimit the methods of the people it works with. Instead, its materials comprise the collective institutional wisdom of its partners, its audiences and, crucially, the geographical riches of its environs. ATLAS is a porous organisation, a host through which materials may flow.

It shares a material reflexivity that enables us to consider the people, things and places within its custodianship to form its source matter and the temporary locus (*studium generale*) for a comprehensive 'community of scholars'. ATLAS generates integrated, experiential and situated knowledge across its rich and varied geology, geography and demographics of the Isles of Skye and Raasay. Traversing the past, future and present *technê*, ATLAS offers many possibilities to collectively research with materials, tools, technologies, materialist theories and methods.



Left: *Landscapes*, David Lemm, 2015

TEMPORALITIES:

A nonlinear way of looking and seeing that acknowledges the particular relationships remote-rural living has to deep heritage. This nonlinearity is multiple and resistant to a literal interpretation of heritage which is often imbued with nostalgia and romanticism.

A Skull and a Screen

(2015), In the Shadow of the Hand

Women of the Hill

(2015), Hanna Tuulikki

NEO NEO // Extreme Past

(2016), In the Shadow of the Hand, Niall Macdonald, Sophie Morrish, Bobby Niven and Hanna Tuulikki

Place of Pillars

(2016), Ruth Barker



Left: An archaeological ranging pole photographed against a chambered cairn on the east coast of the Isle of North Uist.

Photo: Gayle Meikle

Temporalities

The Cuillin mountains are washed in golden autumn sunlight, it is dusk on Oidhche Shamhna, Halloween, the start of winter: Samhain in Gaelic (and wider Celtic) lore is the beginning of the darker half of the year. The audience forms a procession on foot up the hill near Torrìn, as they ascend, a remarkable shape appears above the horizon. An elevated figure in a huge white dress, whirling a spindle that makes a buzzing sound, standing out against the muted colours of the hillside. Almost a hundred people have gathered in a natural amphitheatre to witness a mysterious story unfold through song.

This is the staging of a site-specific performance led by artist Hanna Tuulikki, an epic endeavour — to retell the tale of the High Pasture Cave through a song-journey informed by archaeological evidence and folklore. Researchers have suggested that the cave once hosted rituals of great religious significance dedicated to a matriarchal culture. Towards the end of the Iron Age the cave was sealed and forgotten until cavers stumbled on it in the 1970s. Tuulikki used a range of visual and sound-based forms, working primarily with the voice she conjured a new imagining of the site now lost from memory. Immersive and ethereal, the performance attempted to unearth an essential relationship with the lore of the place. The work grew out of research building relationships and conversations with archaeologists and specialists in material culture.

Tuulikki is one of several artists ATLAS has commissioned to make work in response to the very distant past. The artists were asked to respond to the theme of archaeology and archaeological sites across the Hebridean islands of the Isle of Skye and the Uists. Each artist used personal biographical time as an entry point for their investigations, throwing up universal themes: from the memento mori of In the Shadow of the Hand's self-portraits cast in graphite; the collection of faunal remains gathered from Sophie Morrish's continued investigation into the habitat in which she lives; Niall Macdonald's casts of future artefacts; Bobby Niven's imagined relics of future forgotten society using flotsam and jetsam as his inspiration; to Hanna Tuulikki's archaeo-archaeological investigation into the temporal and mythological identity of a particular location. In turn, the programme celebrated the rich cultural heritage of these islands, making the invisible visible and bringing contemporary voices to forgotten stories.



Left: A graphite cast of a skull (artist's own), *A Skull and A Screen, In the Shadow of the Hand*, 2015.

Photo: Gayle Meikle

Above: Video still from *A Skull and A Screen, In the Shadow of the Hand*, 2015



This chapter presents documentation from these projects, alongside the written elements of artworks *Place of Pillars* by Ruth Barker (2016) and *Head Lines* by In the Shadow of the Hand (2015) and writer Katy Hastie's ekphrasis response to the artworks included in the exhibition *NEO NEO // Extreme Past* (2016). This medley of material aims to reflect the fluidity of a place in which feminist scholar Doreen Massey calls 'the event of a place' a constellate arrangement of temporalities, materiality, climate and culture. The text 'Time Mulch' is our own reflection of this horizontal experience of space and time; whilst 'Memory or Monument: Reimagining memorial, narrative and experience' anchors much of this work to ATLAS's investigation into the relationship between contemporary art and memorialisation.



Memory or Monument: Reimagining memorial, narrative & experience

Emma Nicolson

Cùimbne — Memory

Tboir an cùimbne — To call to mind

Cùimbneachan — Memorial, keepsake, memento, souvenir, commemoration

Càrn-cùimbne — Commemorative cairn

Clach-chùimbneachain — Memorial, monument

Là a' Chuimbneachaidh — Remembrance Day

Cùimbneachan-cogaidh — War memorial

Òraid-chùimbneachaidh — Memorial lecture

This text discusses an expanded relationship between monuments and memorial, and the relevance of situated, culturally appropriate, and public, creative practices to express and share past, present and future identities. I will focus on our work with Urras An Taobh Searthe (Staffin Community Trust), to develop a contemporary memorial for Skye's 'Land Wars'.

The Isle of Skye (along with the wider Hebrides and Gàidhealtachd) has a complex historical relationship to the British State. Centuries of domination and displacement of the indigenous people has had a lasting impact on the identity of these isles. Although no longer explicitly racialised within the context of the nation state and wider Commonwealth the story of this struggle still resonates with politics around cultural resistance and elimination, and related concerns about the depletion of knowledge and understanding of Indigenous memory and place-based experience.

Many people have heard of the Battle of the Braes and the Glendale Martyrs and how their actions helped to change Highland history. Tales of their bravery have inspired many books and plays — including the now classic 'The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black Black Oil' by John McGrath, written as the first play for the 7:84 theatre company — but those uprisings have their roots in an earlier revolt. It was in Staffin in 1877, ten years before the Battle of the Braes that a man named Norman Stewart from Valtos became the first crofter on Skye to refuse the imposed rent increase. Stewart played a pivotal role in the ensuing agitation: jailed on at least two occasions, he

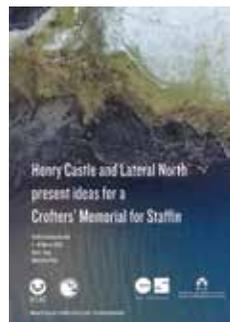
Left: Aerial view of Staffin
coastline

Photo: Tom Smith

earned the nickname Parnell after the infamous Irish politician who stood up against the English landlords. Stewart rallied hundreds of local crofters to join his cause. The north end of Skye is the heart of the former Kilmuir estate where these crofters organised protests, mounted rent strikes and demanded the return of their land that had been seized during the clearances. Across Skye, actions became so prevalent and extreme that by 1882 the fight was being reported in every national newspaper on almost a daily basis. After six years¹ the government ordered a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the plight of the crofters, the Napier Commission in 1883, and then in 1886 passed the Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act, which would eventually bring substantial relief and security for crofting communities across Scotland. Although these events happened over one hundred and fifty years ago, the legends of these fearless men and women continue to burn brightly in local memory and many Islanders are direct descendants. I am proud to be able to celebrate my own great-grandmother's role in the battle of the Braes.

In 2014 ATLAS began working with Urras An Taobh Searthe (Staffin Community Trust) to explore what a fitting contemporary memorial to the crofters might be. This project, funded by Creative Scotland and Highlands and Islands enterprise, saw ATLAS explore a range of examples from the ephemeral to the more permanent and led to a series of pilot commissions. The first of these was Ruth Barker's *Place of Pillars*, a beautiful lament conceived as a tribute to the crofters uprising which exists as an audio work and was performed both in Skye and as part of the Edinburgh Art Festival at the National Portrait Gallery of Scotland in 2016. Barker's text is a personal and evocative account informed by time visiting sites and meeting people in Trotternish. Her melodic prose threads a tale of ages, mapping a non-linear journey across time, traversing nature and history. Rich and free-flowing, she creates a slow, cyclical tale linking local imagination to its environment.

Our investigations were slow in pace and delivered through an engagement process that tapped into multiple threads of association, memories, symbols, patterns, narratives, materials and contexts. The project was positioned as an opportunity for artists to develop a pilot proposal for a contemporary memorial. The project's steering group had a number of potential sites for a work of art in mind, though the proposal was not necessarily to form a permanent sculpture. It could be temporary, a building, or another type of structure. Artists were expected to involve the community and visitors in their responses. Following an open call, Tom Smith from the design collective Lateral North, and the sculptor Henry Castle were chosen by the steering group to develop their proposals. The pair spent time together and independently working in the community researching living history, meeting Islanders and connecting to the area and its stories. They went on to exhibit their proposals and share their findings with the local community.



Above: Poster for Crofters' Memorial for Staffin, 2017; installation view of Lateral North's presentation for the Crofters' Memorial, 2017.

¹ After the Act was passed in 1886 discontent and arrests continued taking place in Glendale on Skye and across the Hebrides in Barra, Uist and Lewis. These further land raids led to the landmark legislation of the 1919 Land Settlement (Scotland) Act.



A quern stone.

Photo: Emma Nicolson



Ruth Barker performing *Place of Pillars*, Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, 2016,

Photo: Erika Stevenson

Our work helped to reimagine monuments as 'documenta', non-linear practices of memorial, and attend to the complexity of narrative and experience in the construction of community-oriented memory. It has come to be understood that memorials erected earlier in the twentieth century tended to impose an official narrative symbolism on their subjects. By contrast, more recent explorations by artists have provided opportunities for individual reflection and personal commemoration. As a result, the sense of collective experience that this new kind of monument invokes is much more tentative. Viewers are brought together in a range of ways (publicly-sited pieces, gallery objects, performances, photographs and books) rather than unified by official memories.

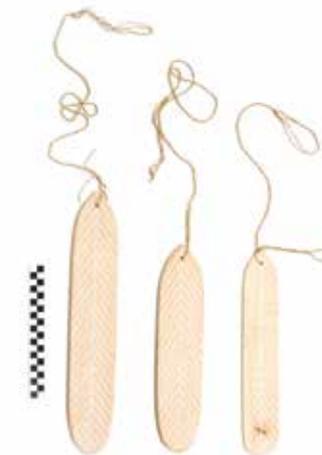
Embedded within this project was a desire for a rigorous period of research, learning and consultation. In particular the project included specifically tailored 'Go See' opportunities for members of the Staffin community to visit a range of artworks in the public realm; these included, James Turrell's Perthshire work *Skyspace*, Ruth Ewan & Astrid Johnston audio tour of Edinburgh's Observatory, *Memorialmania*, and Peter Zumthor's *Bruder Field Klaus Chapel (The Brother Klaus Field Chapel)* in Mechernich, Germany. This aimed to help to inform the group's approach, and to enable a dialogue about how art in the public realm can demonstrate best practice, sensitivity to and understanding of the characteristics of a place/context/brief. It was critical for ATLAS that the project not be viewed as extractive or exploitative and in this context artists were encouraged to consider the nuance of who speaks of, and for, place. The slow evolution helped the artist's capacity for building connections, and to find a contemporary voice for local history and culture, both for the people who are part of that heritage and to visitors.

A conversation between Hanna Tuulikki and Angela McClanahan-Simmons

Angela: From my point of view, I'm so interested in the research process here, because there is a sense in which — and we talked about this in our earlier conversation about the nature of artistic enquiry and other sorts of experimental enquiry in disciplines like archaeology and anthropology — and it's interesting to compare and sort of think about emerging ideas in the seams of those disciplines, where they come together, that question this sort of modern idea of what evidence is, how evidence should be treated. That there are these kind of alternative meanings; and one of the things about prehistorians that I find quite interesting, as

imaginative way, because, you know, you don't have historical documents to go on. So I'm really interested in this idea of how you approached the site: it's an embodied approach. You're kind of letting your interests guide how you experience the site, and place and so on; and so it comes up against those really interesting ideas.

Hanna: Yeah, I find it really, really exciting: this idea of a non-specialist, and never being able to know, and the mystery around that; but also, I'm drawn towards archaeologists who are interested in looking at folklore and traditional customs. [Ancient] place names are a really strong element of the High Pasture Cave. It's in the township of Kilbride — Cille Bhrighde meaning 'church of Brigid' — Brigid (or Brigit) was a saint in Christian times, but pre-Christian times, she was a goddess. In Christian times, she basically became foster mother of Christ, so she was a really important figure that transitioned this mother goddess figure into Christianity; and then the hill, Beinn Dùbhaich, is the 'hill of sorrow', which for me — when I found that out, it just spoke about this unknown woman, and also the sense of keening traditions.



an archaeologist, is that there is an acceptance among many of them — not all — that the idea of evidence needs to be imaginative, and you need to put it together in an

Angela: Okay, yeah. So to probe some of what you said, I'm thinking of three things here, the first of which is again going back to this idea of what evidence is, and how we understand it — between, you

Left: Hanna Tuulikki dressed as Cailleach, *Women of the Hill*, 2015.

Right: Spinners, *Women of the Hill*, 2015.

Overleaf: Artefacts belonging to Cailleach, *Women of the Hill*, 2015.

Photos: Laurence Winram



know, in a discipline like archaeology, which seems very ocular-centric: you go out and you do a survey, and you look, if there are tools or a scatter on the ground, or if you use your magnetometer to essentially do an x-ray of the ground to find out what's there, physically; it's all about looking, and this has so many parallels with art, you know, being ocular-centric for the last three hundred years or so. This approach that you take, it's more speculative. You talked about drawing out what isn't seen, both in a literal sense: so there's the stream under the ground, we know it's there, there's the path on maps, you know, basically, that this thing is actually there; but there's a sense, when you talk about the mnemonic landscape, or the memorial landscape — it's also a sense of drawing out the histories, as well. So there's an affective element of that which is, again, in evidence, some of the more... and I don't want to use the word, 'fringe,' but certainly, in anthropology, there is a sense of treating as evidence some of the things that you *feel*, rather than what you can hold, or what you can see. So there is,

I think, a strong element in your work of this.

Hanna: Yeah, I'm really interested in acoustic archaeology, or archo-acoustics. I'm not quite sure what the difference is, actually; but more and more archaeologists, now, are beginning to experiment with sound-making practices in sacred sites, and... not so much singing, and not so much with the female voice, actually, but with, like, beats and clicks and geeky tech stuff...

Angela: Do these ideas of technology clash as well? So we have the ideas about the prehistoric alongside the kind of, you know, digital technologies, and so on, which is quite interesting.

Hanna: Originally, I was thinking that, in the set, I would have, TV aerials, and like, thinking about Beinn na Cailleach as this transmitter from the Other World, but also thinking about material culture in relationship to the present day: what are the things that we value? We can look at material culture of the past to understand better people's beliefs. So what would we — in years from now — think about today?

Angela: Yeah, it's interesting how, in archaeology, I suppose, we think of technology as any material culture; so essentially what that means is, anything that people manipulate to use, right? So it's anything. It could be a rock hitting another rock. It doesn't have to be crafted well. Most of what you used in the performance has kind of got this idea of more organic materials that could disintegrate; you do have metal — a little bit of metal — but we tend to think of technology as being sort of modern, digital technology, but actually all of this [material] almost transmits a certain element, I suppose, of what we sort of recognise to be technological... some people might describe it as advancement, but 'evolution', maybe, is the better word, I suppose.

Hanna: Yeah, and I should really mention Caroline Dear, who's an artist based on Skye. Caroline's great, and she's so interesting! She is an artist who makes things with plants, but she trained as an architect, and she's trained in botany, so she has this really interesting relationship with material, in terms of structure, and then this sort of intuitive sense of material, and understanding of the botany; but she also has a deep personal connection with this site, and we'd been talking on and off for years, and so she collaborated on the project, and she made the headdresses — for each of the three characters; the belts; and the spindle, and the thread.

Angela: Ah, fantastic, yeah.

Hanna: But also, the pussy willow blanket, that's a shroud, that gets placed over the unknown... the felt body that it represents, the unknown woman's body, in the piece; she was looking at ancient techniques of this open-form blanket.

Angela: Yeah, well that kind of brings me, then, nicely, in relation to the research that you undertook for the film, which is, I suppose, the whole idea of the speculative approach. We've touched on this a bit, and one of the words that we struggled with, in our first conversation, was this idea of 'anachronism', which of course almost implies that it's a 'wrong' version of what we know to be linear events — so I hesitate to use that word, because it implies that there's something somehow wrong with using anachronism; but the way that you kind of mix up approaches, and what I find interesting, and that runs parallel with a lot of what's happening in archaeology, is that there is this kind of gradual enfolding of speculative approaches that are being, again, recognised more these days as legitimate ways to think about the past. [For example] there was an archaeologist in the 90s, a very feminist archaeologist, who found a knitting awl on

a Native American plain site in Minnesota, and said, 'Well, I can describe this object, I can draw it up in the site description, I can show where we found it, and the excavation. You know, I can take pictures of it, but that is not really going to get us closer to saying anything substantive about the past.' And so, in lieu of this, she says, 'So, I'm going to just tell a story about how I imagine this awl to be...' You know, where it ended up, how it got there, the story behind it; and so it reminds me of the way that you work, actually, and that it is, kind of, a really similar mode of enquiry, I think.

Hanna: But also, more than that, ultimately, all we have are stories.

Angela: Yeah, exactly.

Hanna: And that's what history is grounded on; and so much of the time, women's history is marginalised and suppressed.

Angela: Absolutely, yeah, so it strikes me that there is that really interesting — working in the seam of questions that are driven by, I suppose, recognising women's roles in humanity, work, history etc. So I find that quite exciting — and how speculation is actually a valuable tool to help us think about this; paired with what we recognise to be evidence. So it's this multi-stranded way of thinking about evidence, I guess.

Hanna: And also, this sense of relics that are embedded within stories themselves! So there's the passing down, generation to generation to generation to generation; yes, things change, but there are vestigial layers that are kind of encoded within these stories, that can be traced right back.

Angela: Yeah, so in as much that it's about the story itself that you're telling, here, it's about, I think, as well, one of the things we can get from it is ways of thinking about these things, and stories, and how we can find ways



Performance of *Women of the Hill*, 2015.

Photo: Simon Groom

to ask questions about them, about these places —

Hanna: Yeah, and how we value storytelling as well.

Angela: How we value them, absolutely. So then, that brings me to — and this is a blunt question, and I realise it's a blunt question — but do you see this as a feminist work?

Hanna: Oh, yeah! Of course I do!

Angela: It had to be asked explicitly.

Hanna: Yeah. Yes, this is a feminist work. It's reimagining... imagining or reimagining a patriarchal, or matrifocal culture, and how layers, traces of this are also encoded within customs, folkloric traditions, music practices through history, as well; and how those stories are marginalised. So it's highlighting, shining a spotlight on these.

Angela: Absolutely. Yeah, and it's showing how, I suppose, again, our very research questions that we ask about things are often shaped by our own interests.

Hanna: Yes! Absolutely, and also, you know, we were three women. I've been working with two other performers, Lucy Duncombe and Nerea Bello; we've been working together for many, many, many years, and each project that we do together is like a little journey, and we discover something new about ourselves, as women, as women performers; and for us, the second-to-last song, the lyrics are, 'Mother before me, Mother beyond me, Mother within me, Mother the memory', and each of us takes one of those lines — except for 'Mother the memory', we sing together — but there's a very personal element for each of those lyrics, the most obvious one being Nerea — 'Mother within me' — she's a mother of two children. So reconnecting, or connecting, with our own sense of motherhood, whether we choose or whether

we don't choose to become mothers. I'm choosing not to become a mother — that's not my path — but also this sense of our own distaff side, so distaff side being the matrilineal side, and trying to connect with that in our personal histories, as well. Which isn't explicit in the work, but in terms of performers sharing a process, that was really an important aspect, and it goes beyond this project.

Angela: Yeah, it's enfolded in the shaping of it, the forming of it. [...] But this sort of role, I suppose, of ritual — and this plays in this work, specifically, but also in your work in general — I guess, in anthropological terms, it's (ritual) going through a process, of becoming something else. For example you start off, whether this is a sort of procession, during Mayday or something like that, where you start off as one thing — you have a particular role in the community, but then you might, in a parade, come together as a community, and you become, then, a somatic body all together. So you're all sort of joined in this kind of time and space where you become something other than just yourself, right? So it's transformative, and I get a real sense in the film, in the narrative of the work, that this is something that's quite important to you, in terms of how you make work, this sort of ritual. How did you become interested in this, I suppose?

Hanna: I am interested in liminality, liminal spaces, thresholds; even thinking about my own practice, I don't sit, comfortably, in one category, so I work as an artist, with a visual arts background, as a composer, and as a performer, with a process-led, research-led, place-responsive practice; so I'm sitting between these different territories. Maybe there's a resonance, with an interest in liminal spaces, because I'm occupying this in-between state; but one of the subtitles of *Women of the Hill* is 'Song Cycle at the



Threshold', and there's this sense of the three-fold threshold: winter, this changing from autumn into winter, or from summer into autumn; and Brigid's body laid at the threshold, so this life into death, womb/tomb idea again; and then this idea in Celtic folk culture, *Samhain*, a Celtic New Year, being this liminal space where the veil between the worlds is very thin — so that's where [Halloween] guising comes from. You know, we've got dressing up and knocking on doors, and people would give offerings to ward off the evil spirits.

Angela: Yeah, because that sort of liminal space is considered dangerous, as well, often.

Hanna: Yeah, absolutely!

Angela: It's sort of thinking about things in a multi-layered way, your work, because it's individual bodies that go through these processes of transition; it's social bodies — so, sort of, thinking about the

wider community; but also spaces, places themselves have these elements; and also time. So it's like you start off as one thing, you become something else in the process — that liminal process — and you re-emerge into the world as something else.

Hanna: Absolutely, and actually thinking about it, a lot of my work — I mean, I make worlds with sound, but there is a doorway into the world and a doorway out of the world. It's not always clear-cut. My wish as an artist, for an audience experience, in live performance work, [is] to open out an experience for an audience, where people can leave with a different sense of being present in the world — so having a different relationship with a particular place, and with themselves in relationship to place, or time, or with the more-than-human world — one of my favourite phrases, 'more-than-human world', from eco-philosopher David Avram, to describe that which is more than human, not

that which is other than human; so not trying to define us by difference, but on a continuum.

Angela: Yeah, brilliant. [...] So this is an interesting idea, again, that I'm quite interested in, is how art can play that role itself; not just through the story that you might be telling, that represents ritual... So representation's one thing, and that's an element of what's going on here, but I like the idea that you are actually taking the audience through this transition as well.

Hanna: It's an embodied experience, and yes, of course, symbolic language plays a big part of that, because it's building this world that creates that experience.

Angela: Absolutely. [...] So I think, all the coming together, these elements, the idea that you enfold archaeological techniques into your enquiry; but it kind of helps to think about both art and archaeology as this almost sci-fi time travel, which I think is absolutely fantastic. There's also a sense, Hanna, I think, that this sort of relationship, again, this sort of thinking about neo-pagan traditions, and how they enfold and think about time differently; and this emerging idea, again, one of the things that seems to be, as we say, coming back in to fashion, in anthropology, certainly, is this idea of animism, so looking at cultures — not just in the past, but today — as having an animistic thinking about... I think you said 'more-than-human', but thinking about not just humans as more-than-human, but the whole world. I know that ATLAS is interested in this idea of the Anthropocene and post-humanism more generally. So there is an element, I think, going on of that, here,



helping us to rethink time through material culture, obviously, one of the most important things is to shine that spotlight, as you said, on women's roles, and paying attention, and bringing that to the fore in archaeological work and also art; and I suppose, maybe, rethinking ecology and landscapes as well. So I think all this work, in such a kind of interesting way, touches on all of those things; and I also do want to say, sort of hand it to you, that this seems like such a feat in terms of the detail that went into thinking about this.

Left: Hanna Tuulikki in conversation with Angela McClanahan-Simmons at *NEO NEO// Extreme Past*, 2016. Photo: Erika Stevenson

Above: Artefacts belonging to *Bride, Women of the Hill*, 2015. Photo: Laurence Winram

Place of Pillars

Ruth Barker

I read a book once. And in that book it said that Skye is called the isle of mists. And I thought, that makes sense somehow. Because mist is air and water together; you can feel it but not touch it. It is physical and it is not. In Skye, the stories are fractal. Each one opens onto another, and another, until a grain of spoken sand has become the telling of a mountain range and you are lost in the crevasses of familial relationships that you cannot quite grasp. This is a story of sorts. It is the story that grew from the tiny handholds of all the stories I have heard, and it never quite reaches the summit because I can't speak Gaelic.

So, I read a book once. And in that book I read that Skye is called the isle of mists. And from that book I learnt that once upon a time we lived in ages.

The age of Iron.

The age of Salt.

The age of Time.

And the age of Peat.

So, I read this book once. And in this book I heard that Skye is called the isle of mists. And in this book I saw a mouth moving. And the mouth had a tongue that was full of stories. The mouth told me how the world turned on its axis, then. And how as it did the continents came into being, slotting into their places like the terms of a crossword. Everything was a riddle, said the mouth, or a poem. Either one. The great landmasses were the stanzas. Once these were in place the language could be arranged and the sense could be found. This is how the islands came to be named and versed, it said. This is how the island of Skye found its definition against the blue of the crashing sea, and the white dome of the clouds, as words fit into their meanings. The mouth was convincing. I believed all of it.

So: I read a book once, which told me that Skye is the isle of mists.

I saw the coasts of Trotternish, stacked in basalt (they are upright poems).

I saw the hills of Trotternish, humped with granite and scree
(they are the elevation of riddles).

I saw the valleys of Trotternish, bedded in loam
(they are the hollows of novellas).

I saw the people of Trotternish: open faced, long minded, two hands each, and ears for listening
(they are the talk of fables).

I was a woman, spread



Here we are, telling a story of ages, and salt, and Trotternish
(we are footnotes on a page somewhere, or the lame digression of a joke).
I read a book. And it spoke to me, and told me that Skye is the isle of mists. Who will stay to listen
to the words? You, I hope. Open your ears. Open your ears to my mouth, now.

THE AGE OF IRON.

South to north

The old man

Older than the dream imagination.

They dissolved into one another, in ways I could not pronounce.

Mistaken for wilderness.

Take up your hands. Set up a marker.

The last crumbs scattered to the wind.

We drove up the peninsula, south to north, from Portree past the Old Man, up to Flodigarry. The sun was hot and the sky was iron hard and dry. We bought Monster Munch and I drank Red Bull and I had a map that I wrote on in biro, while your dog sat on the back seat showing his teeth and his tongue to the sunshine.

I folded and refolded the map, tracing ink across the flattened hills and lochans. I wrote in the names and the notes as you spoke, shaping the paper in creases that I hoped would be memorable. Tote: ruin of hut or house; *Dun Grianan*: sunny fort; Lealt: half stream; *Culnacnoc*: back of the hill. And again: green bog myrtle grows here; short willow; lush and fertile. Loch Mealt of the unlucky river. Sky Pie café. The Ecomuseum. The diatomite mine. The place where someone might build a bridge. Here and now. The place where there used to be a road. The place where there might be a new road. The place where the woman makes handmade dinosaurs. How much are they? I'd like a blue one. My daughter likes diplodocus. The place where there are footprints in the stone. The way is older than the dream imagination. Are you sure?

We drove past the Storr and there were thirty cars there at least, shining like sweetie papers blown to the kerb of iron hard rock. We watched tiny men and women walking slowly upward, winding their way through the vertical lines of the stone. They would reach the summit and return, sending tiny miniatures of the ridge to bounce back down the dusty track. We talked about infrastructure, and logistics. Toilets. Suitable footwear. Your dog didn't like going round corners. We drove, and the stories were as fractal as the scuffed stones. The narratives dissolved into one another, keeping their structure but changing in scale. Your father, his grandmother, her sisters, their nieces, brothers, neighbours, sons. Nicolson, Ross, MacLeod, MacKinnon, Iron. I could not pronounce the Gaelic. In the museum there were crofting tools and dinosaur bones. They were the same somehow. Silent, speaking, strong. In the evening the Storr was empty. No-one lives there. The cars had crept away, blown back over the bridge today or tomorrow. So light. They will be long gone before the iron hard winter.

The map I smooth across my knee is full of ink. The stories I have scrawled crowd out the written hills as they run in fertile rigs across the page. The paper land is plentiful with words and tongues and memories in inscription.

Beyond the road though, the hills outside my moving window blur to green and ochre. They are featureless for the want of talk and crofts and labour. Once upon a time the slopes were full of people. This working land could not always be mistaken for wilderness. Now leisure snakes across the horizon, in Gore Tex and insulated jackets. And the ground cries out to be trodden, and sings to the yellow jacketed workmen, who are doing something in the ditch.

Take up your hands, men and women. Set up a marker. Carve me a man as small as a coin. His face is indistinct. He has no eyes. He is Morgan Woodward in Cool Hand Luke. If you like you can give him sunglasses. Around the rim of the coin you write his name and title: *William Ivory, Sheriff of Inverness, come late to Skye with warrants of arrest and summonses for eviction.* Cast the man in iron. He is immovable. Cast the man in iron so that he is hard and unchanging and eyeless. Then give the coin to me. Coming out of the shop I drop my wallet and the coins spill into the ditch. Swallowed by the brackish water, the iron sinks like stone. My crisp packet blows into the hedge and then away, back towards the bridge. The last crumbs scattered to the wind.

South to north

The old man

Older than the dream imagination.

They dissolved into one another, in ways I could not pronounce.

Mistaken for wilderness.

Take up your hands. Set up a marker.

The last crumbs scattered to the wind.

That was the age of Iron.

The age of Salt.

I opened my mouth,

The sutures of a yellowish skull became stronger.

She pierced me with her needle beak.

I was every perforation,

A porous constitution of the universe.

Take up your hands. Set up a marker.

Together we will plunge into the sea.

In the age of salt I was a river. I opened my mouth in the high peat near the Storr and I gathered up shingle and the leaves of bracken, letting the heather spin in ash coloured whorls as I ran to the salt of the sea. I cut through the land then, scouring the flanks of the moor with a looping, confident line. From above, I looked like the sutures of a yellowish skull, marking the thin synarthrodial joints of the land.

This was my body then, skulling through the world. Dinosaurs waded me. Damselflies bred in me. Deer drank from me. Herons sliced through me. Water shrews danced across me. Wild cats stopped at the edge of me, peering down to see their reflection in my skin. Men opened their flies above me, joining themselves to me in glittering arcs. Women squatted above me. Children played in me. I became stronger.

I was the lochan and the stream and the freshwater and the salt. I was the waterfalls at Inver Tote, and the rivulets pulling across the Quiraing. I was the river and the torrent and the flood and the tributary and the spate and the puddle and the bog. I was every perforation of the land with water, and I kept my face turned up to reflect the sky. Three elements in one: Earth, Air, Water. I was a porous, mutable constitution of the universe. I was the mist.

When I was the bend of the Lealt river, a heron with salt on her legs pierced me through with her needle beak. I saw the flat of her belly and the curve of her grey undertail as she waited for someone to write her into a poem. When the words were finished the heron leapt up into the sky, bunching her wings and pressing the mist into her wake. I was the scatter of droplets that fell from her feet back into the body of myself below. As I fell, water descending through air, the land spread out for miles around me, filled with men and women who tilted their faces to their crofts, and never looked up. They were plentiful. Water joined to water and the river ran. To them I brought cold clear life for their cattle and their crops and their kettles. To them I brought boundaries and the order of the land. I was their skeleton, their anatomy of place. They gave me songs, and they gave me a woman big with the world with salt in her hair, to sing them.

Take up your hands, men and women. Set up a marker. Carve me a woman as tall as the mountains. Carve her a chair to sit in, and cut her a face like a slab of earth with no-one to till it. Give her broad fingers and feet planted firmly on the ground. Carve her name below her: Mairi Mhor nan Oran. Carve her in salt, so she is crystalline, sharp, and essential. Let her tower over the empty land, with her salt eyes open. Let her salt tongue rest in the cavern of her salten mouth. Then you must plant her in my river bed. She will season me with her dissolving language, and then together we will plunge into the sea.

*I opened my mouth,
The sutures of a yellowish skull became stronger.*

*She pierced me with her needle beak.
I was every perforation,
A porous constitution of the universe.*

*Take up your hands. Set up a marker.
Together we will plunge into the sea.*

That was the age of Salt.

The age of Time.

*The clock ticks loud
Too slim and frail to be grasped.
Some shatter. Others fall.*

*When you gave testimony
No-one asked for the words of women.*

*Take up your hands. Set up a marker.
Her hand rests on the plough.*

In the age of time I was a woman, spread out across the hills. My skirts were the colour of knapweed in shade, and my vetch and bluebell skirt was [...] and my eyes were pale forget-me-knots in the soft sandstone of my face. And I cannot remember the time. What time is it? Eleven o'clock.

My eyes are poor and I will not read now. The telly is a blank black wall. The clock ticks loud. I ask you the time. Eleven, you say. Eleven. And I nod, looking past you, looking straight ahead from my chair to the corner of the room.

I always knew the words to things, and now I am forgetting them. They slip from me like the handles of tea-cups, too slim and frail to be grasped. Some shatter. Others fall. There is time for you to sit with me. It is the only thing to do. You see me as [...].

You see me know and I am this place. I am the place it has always been. I am the grandmother of rock, the bearer of mountains who suckled the arable lands and the roads and the pinnacles. I remember what we once shared: starvation. When I was stripped and could not nourish you.

When you left and could not care for me.

When they came in the night for you.

When you were summoned to speak and those who listened to you wrote down the words.

When you gave testimony.

When you were eloquent.

When I could not speak.

When no-one asked for the words of women.

When I was barren and abused, and when it was too late, and the beasts were gone with the crofts.

This is what we have shared. When you have been here for a long time. When I have been here for longer. When you were my children. When my years number hundreds of thousands. When I am not going anywhere. When you are so brief. When your stories are fractal and momentary. When I have granite beneath my nails and basalt in my hair and loam between my toes. When I welcome the blow-ins and the agate and the holidaymakers and the Gaelic speakers and the microliths and the pearlwort and the ling. When I am the bed and breakfasts, and the A855, and the wigwams and the viewpoints and the footprints and the Free Church and the lost lamb lying by the burn with one high bank. Is she breathing? I cannot see. And if I could I would not tell you.

I am all of it. What time is it? Eleven oh five, you say. Just after eleven. Take up your hands, men and women. Set up a marker. Carve me a woman made only of time. Her mouth is ageless. Her hair is ageless. Her fingers and her toes are ageless. Her breasts and her belly and her back are ageless. She sits at the edge of the diatomite road and she stares out at the sea. At her side is a foot plough, hard with long use. The waves roll in and peel back. The clouds come down and lift up. The day closes and opens. She does not blink. She waits. She breathes. She [...]. Her breath is the motion of grasses and the birth of soil. Her gaze is the knowledge of [...]. Her testimony has not been recorded. She is silent. Her hand rests on the plough.

The clock ticks loud

Too slim and frail to be grasped.

Some shatter. Others fall.

When you gave testimony

No-one asked for the words of women.

Take up your hands. Set up a marker.

Her hand rests on the plough.

That was the age of Time.

Place
of
Pillars

THE AGE OF PEAT.

So, I read a book once. And in that book I read that Skye is called the isle of mists. And from that book I learnt that once upon a time we lived in ages.

The age of Iron.

The age of Salt.

The age of Time.

And the age of Peat.

So. I read this book once. And in this book I heard that Skye is called the isle of mists. And in this book I saw a mouth moving. And the mouth had a tongue that was full of stories. The mouth told me how the world turned on its axis, then. And how as it did the continents came into being, slotting into their places like the terms of a crossword. Everything was a riddle, said the mouth, or a poem. Either one. The great landmasses were the stanzas. Once these were in place the language could be arranged and the sense could be found. This is how the islands came to be named and versed, it said. This is how the island of Skye found its definition against the blue of the crashing sea, and the white dome of the clouds, as words fit into their meanings. The mouth was convincing. I believed all of it.

So: I read a book once, which told me that Skye is the isle of mists.

I saw the coasts of Trotternish, stacked in basalt (they are upright poems).

I saw the hills of Trotternish, humped with granite and scree (they are the elevation of riddles).

I saw the valleys of Trotternish, bedded in loam (they are the hollows of novellas).

I saw the people of Trotternish: open faced, long minded, two hands each, and ears for listening (they are the talk of fables).

Here we are, telling a story of ages, and salt, and Trotternish (we are footnotes on a page somewhere, or the lame digression of a joke).

I read a book. And it spoke to me, and told me that Skye is the isle of mists. Who will stay to listen to the words? You, I hope. Open your ears. Open your ears to my mouth, now. I'm talking still.

South to north

The old man

Older than the dream imagination.

They dissolved into one another, in ways I could not pronounce.

Mistaken for wilderness.

Take up your hands. Set up a marker.

The last crumbs scattered to the wind.

Time Mulch: Relational Time

Emma Nicolson & Gayle Meikle

Many materials are used as mulches, which are used to retain soil moisture, regulate soil temperature, suppress weed growth, as well as for aesthetic purposes. They are applied to the soil surface, around trees, paths, flower beds, to prevent soil erosion on slopes, and in production areas for flower and vegetable crops.

A variety of organic and inorganic materials are used as mulch:¹

ORGANIC RESIDUES — grass clippings, leaves, hay, straw, kitchen scraps, comfrey, seaweed, shredded bark, whole bark nuggets, sawdust, shells, woodchips, shredded newspaper, cardboard, wool, animal manure, etc. Many of these materials also act as a direct composting system, such as the mulched clippings of a mulching lawn mower, or other organics applied as sheet composting.

COMPOST — fully composted materials are used to avoid possible phytotoxicity problems. Materials that are free of seeds are ideally used, to prevent weeds being introduced by the mulch.

OLD CARPET (synthetic or natural) — makes a free, readily available mulch.

RUBBER MULCH — made from recycled tire rubber.

PLASTIC MULCH — crops grow through slits or holes in thin plastic sheeting. This method is predominant in large-scale vegetable growing, with millions of acres cultivated under plastic mulch worldwide each year (disposal of plastic mulch is cited as an environmental problem but there are also degradable plastic mulches).

ROCK AND GRAVEL — can also be used as a mulch; in cooler climates the heat retained by rocks may extend the growing season.

1. This is adapted from the Wikipedia entry for mulch.

Left: screenshot of a mind map collecting influences, thoughts and threads about the concept 'time mulch'

Traditional knowledge and beliefs recounting and transmission through story song language

Slave owners in North Uist and Skye:
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/maps/britain/#zoom=14&lng=-6.120071&lat=57.331618&lbs/person_id=2146640931

The cheviot the Stag and the Black Black Oil

<https://www.scotsman.com/whats-on/arts-and-entertainment/hebridean-slaves-offered-aps3-head-866404>
<http://www.bernerayhistorical.com/soitheach-na-daoina.html>

Our time is past can present and be future stars we see here not in the past...

Cò às a tha thu? - Who are your people? (Gessesse, 2019)

<https://gal-dem.com/what-its-like-being-a-person-of-colour-in-the-scottish-gaelic-community/>

Living in the age of the anthropocene everything is shaped and modified by humankind, crops, livestock, assume they are fundamental to the landscape but they're not they've all been modified. Everything is compromised in some way...

Caribbean time/ Creole Time v- Glissant's Poetics of Relations/ Relational Poetics. Annalee Davis

reminded me of what a lot of feminist and trans ecology writers are trying to counter. Stacy Alaimo's Bodily Nature is a good starting point for this so a good counter-argument which we can bring in about the very rigid

Patronymic naming patterns, locate you in place.

Stacy Alaimo - transcorporeality

Every thing is compromised in some way... Impossible to identify pure indigenous status and dangerous we need to consider this context....

The first son is named after the mother;
The second son is named after the father;
The third son is named after the mother;
The first daughter is named after the mother's mother;
The second daughter is named after the father's mother;
The third daughter is named after the mother.

Expressions of our tenancy of the island...

So John and Robert McDonald
William
Susan

material labor whereby old scraps are transformed - through practices of care and attention - into nutrient-rich new soil. In this provocation, we use "composting" as a material metaphor..." (Hamilton and

is, we require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles. We become-with each other or not at all. That kind of material semiotics is always situated, someplace and not noplac,

Heterogeneous

Mulch is an active site of decay, production and renewal, a site that hasn't yet metamorphosed into universalising soil; instead, partial forms remain visible creating a multitudinal terrain of life. This forms the beginnings of our thinking about time, and temporality, and the relationships of time that we witnessed on the islands, whereby a flattening of time occurs magnified by this historically *cleared*² yet profoundly dynamic landscape. 'Time mulch' is where we find the 'knot in the basalt', where place-names, proverbs, prayers and patronymics are folded together with ruins and rigs, stories and songs, geology and geography. It is in the people through the stewardship of their land.

An example of this is the visceral closeness to the islands' forbearers, as articulated and felt by the artist duo In the Shadow of the Hand as they stood on top of Cladh Hallan, an archaeological site on South Uist. This connection made manifest through the holding of a fingerprint marked fragment of unfired pottery from two thousand years ago. The local archaeologist, Dr Kate Macdonald, had just recounted the tale of the vegan teenager and the three-bodied mummy found on the site in the early 2000s. An astounding yet pedestrian account of Bronze Age terraced housing that Kate had been part of unearthing as a student.

Perspectives and historical depth are readily offered in museum collections and displays, and museum objects supply vivid evidence for how we lived, interacted, clothed and fed ourselves in years gone by. Our lives' material culture is usually taken for granted, and normally the role of museum objects and collections is a passive one. The conventional textbook approach purports to explain our history, environment, and language; and yet, often fails to describe the mulch's embodied and material experience adequately.

We invited In the Shadow of the Hand to create a contemporary drawing in response to the archaeology of the Uists. They began with the connection felt from the unfired clay; marked by the finger of someone who occupied that space millennia ago. *A Skull and A Screen* (2015) consisted of a graphite-cast skull, graphite-cast popcorn and a graphite screen. A looped video of the pair sitting on deckchairs (with their back to the viewer) eating popcorn, watching the grassy mounds of Cladh Hallan was projected onto the screen. The soundtrack to the video, 'Witness the Fitness' by Roots Manuva, pounded through the headphones.

Graphite is commonly used in the practice of In the Shadow of the Hand, however, for this contemporary drawing commission, they were keen to push their technical understanding of the material. A combination of experimental casting methods, rudimentary processes and cutting-edge technology produced a poetic meditation on temporal slippage, material strength and human fragility. The skull, a replica of one of their own, was

2. The Highland Clearances: the main period being between 1750s-1880s, when different phases of significant and ongoing removals of people from their land, both as forced evictions and as the strongly encouraged, voluntary (often facilitated) migration of inhabitants of the Highlands and western islands of Scotland. The removals cleared the land of people primarily to allow for landed-interest to enhance their economic prospects, including the mass introduction of deer and sheep. In Gaelic, the period is known as *Fuadachean Gàidheal* (eviction of the Gael).



Top: Close up of the archaeologist Martin Wildgoose's hands holding flint arrowheads.

Photo: Bobby Niven

Bottom: Artist Bobby Niven and Martin Wildgoose on a site visit to Rubh an Dunain, 2015.

Photo: Emma Nicolson



Above top to bottom: Laser cut cardboard sections of MRI scan of skull; cardboard mould of skull to be cast in graphite; artist duo In the Shadow of the Hand with archaeologist Kate Macdonald at Barpa Langass, North Uist.

Photo: Gayle Meikle

3. Belief is the final work in the *Flat Earth Trilogy* following on from Animate TV commission *Flat Earth* (2007) and *A Short Film about War* (2009) by Thomson and Craighead.

reconstructed from an MRI scan. This low-risk examination procedure produces multiple images of an area of the body. However, hard bone is not visible in an MRI scan. To achieve the desired outline of the head the cross-section images of the head were inverted before being laser cut onto thick cardboard. Each layer was then hand glued to make a mould. This process threw up digital artifacting (an introduction of a glitch that transforms the information of the file) resulting in a stratification of the skull. This unintended texture reveals a material quality that connects the human skull to the geological matter of graphite, a timeworn material that those who will be cremated will transform into. To see a living person's skull in this way creates a monstrous temporal mulch of past, present and future time.

The temporal mulch appears in the psyche of the place when encountered through individuals like Dugald Ross, tradition-bearer and curator of the Staffin dinosaur museum whose ancestry on the island goes back hundreds of years. In describing the North end of Skye, he meanders through a thread of association from deep geological time, Jurassic past, Neolithic, Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, to the rich diversity of the bogland and the cultural secrets it still holds (leather shoes, tools, the punitive actions of the Kilmuir estates factor, extraction of diatomite in the nineteenth century from Lealt, or the recently proposed salmon farm). The Scottish academic, writer, activist and Leòdhasach, Alastair McIntosh has often talked of the importance of tradition bearers in the storybuilding of a place. Folklorist and academic Hamish Henderson (1919-2002) described tradition as a metaphor of the 'carrying stream'. For Henderson, the carrying stream of tradition gathers new ideas while flowing through time and tradition bearers.

'Time mulch' defies the hierarchical and imperialist structure of history as a determinist, linear progression of time in hours, days, seasons of uninterrupted knowledge past present and future and linear classification. The metaphor of the stream meandering through space via its currents and counter-currents, splitting off, changing course and disappearing to return upstream allows us to consider multiple ways of experiencing the world that moves beyond a human-centred control of space and time.

In 2013, we commissioned *Belief*³ by Thomson and Craighead, a documentary artwork exploring the notion of belief through online sourced information. For this particular tale of belief, the filmmakers used the iconic heirloom of the chiefs of Clan Macleod of MacLeod in Dunvegan, the Fairy Flag (Am Bratach Sith). The film was screened in close proximity to Dunvegan Castle and its Fairy Tower and the Fairy Flag. The traditional tales about the Fairy Flag's origin have two themes, Fairies and Crusaders. The connection with the Crusades can be linked to definite information available to the origin of the Fairy Flag; the fabric thought once to have been dyed yellow, is silk from the Middle East (Syria or Rhodes). Experts have dated it between the 4th and 7th centuries A.D, in other words, four hundred years

before the First Crusade. There are many stories associated with the flag, most talk of its magical properties and mysterious origins; a gift from the fairies to an infant chieftain; a gift to a chief from a departing fairy-lover; a reward for defeating an evil spirit. The various powers attributed to Fairy Flag include: an ability to multiply a clan's military forces; the ability to save the lives of certain clan folk; the ability to cure plague on cattle; the ability to increase the chances of fertility; and the ability to bring herring into the loch at Dunvegan. The film was made from information found entirely on the internet. Presenting a series of fragmented broadcasts about belief, all sourced from the video sharing community YouTube. A compass floor projection interacts with the montage showing each clip's point of origin starting with the Isle of Skye then out of Scotland to incorporate a cacophony from around the world. With a little help from Google Earth viewers are placed at the centre point of the cinematic data visualisation.

In responding to the location of Dunvegan Castle the artwork presented the opportunity to explore the psychology of the place. The accompanying curated programme employed tactics of psychogeography (flaneurship and subconscious imagination) to provide an alternative to the typical tourists' coach trip. We devised a hybrid tour highlighting sites that connected to the folklore and history surrounding the Fairy Flag and combined this with contemporary movie locations synthesising them together through the windows of a moving coach. Journeying through Skye in an unconventional way tuned the audience towards an expanded understanding of *heritage*, including its mythologies.

A literal aspect of 'time mulch' that we wanted to capture in our programming was the

abundance of important archaeological sites on the Uists and Skye.⁴ These locations are little known outwith specialist knowledge from those who dug them and the local people who walk, live next to and work the land that these sites inhabit. Our 2015 programme *Muinntir mo Dhùthaich (People of my Place)* was aimed at exploring this rich terrain of temporalities and raising the awareness of these sites by partnering contemporary visual artists with expertise and enthusiasts.

The chosen sites were Rubha an Dùnain on the Isle of Skye and The Udal on the Uists. Both of these sites display evidence of continual occupation ranging from the Neolithic, through the Viking period to the nineteenth Century Clearances. Rubha an Dùnain, to an untrained visitor's eye, is difficult to distinguish between the different periods without expert interpretation. Walking with local archaeologist Martin Wildgoose, he describes it as an open time-capsule, waiting to be discovered. Around the site is an altered topography, adapted and controlled to suit successive waves of inhabitants from the Mesolithic hunter-gatherers (8000-4000BC), from the Vikings and until clearances of the nineteenth century, which brought about the end of human-centred activity on the headland. Through the expert lens, the site becomes a landscape where the homes, enclosure patterns and burial sites survive as visible material remnants and monuments.

The Udal human habitation is much more visible, a cavernous midden exposed through coastal erosion is the centrepiece to the site. Blackened bones, shells, pottery and tooled fragments mingle together at the bottom of the pit. The stratification is disrupted due to the disturbance caused by erosion, climatic conditions and farming activity. The site excavation was controversial, remaining active in local, living memory. We paired

Aerial view of the viking canal at Rubh' an Dùnain.

Photo: Martin Wildgoose



artists with archaeologists that had a deep understanding and knowledge of the locations. Their extraordinary, imaginative ability to ignite interest in the material culture and the extreme past is resonant of many artistic practices. By bringing the two vocabularies together to reimagine these sites we aimed to generate deeper engagement with the complexity of these sites and generate new artistic work.

Niall Macdonald's exhibition *untitled fragments, in acid green* responded to the many layers of artefacts found at The Udal. Macdonald referenced incomplete examples of metalwork, mis-shapen lumps of spent iron-ore and other remains relating to the history of manufacturing at the site, inspired a series of twelve plaster relief sculptures that make use of raw fragments from the artist's own production process. Shards of shattered plaster and curls of excess material have been collaged with cast reproductions of quotidian objects such as smartphones, light switches, bones and credit cards. Having spent a period of research camping at Rubha an Dùnain, artist Bobby Niven worked directly with materials and forms found in and around the site, avoiding 'real' artefacts, utilizing only things found on the surface, things without perceived archaeological value: synthetic man-made flotsam jetsam; seaweed, bogwood, bones and rocks; all reconstituted and collaged into faces and figures. *Proceedings Of The Society* presented a body of pseudo-archeological artefacts, suggesting utensils, narratives, ways of living of a future community existing on the site of Rubha an Dùnain.

Living on the isles you begin to unpick the relationships between superficial encounters of its 'isolated beauty' to a layered understanding of time, space and place. Our sense of 'time mulch' is brought through a fluid understanding: of geology, fairies, tradition bearers, archaeologists, clans, artists, tourists, moving image, technology, mummies, lochans, rusting sheds, dinosaur footprints, botany, a plane crash on the hill in Staffin; to finding things in the midden and peat bog, preserved; right through to the lack of affordable housing for islanders and the economic dependence on tourism. All of this has shaped our work as an arts organisation, adding to a bricolage of activity that mulches together and contributes to the polyphony of a place.

Cultural memory

4. See www.canmore.org.uk.



Installation view of *Biomass*
(NU20072014), Sophie
Morrish, Taigh Chearsabhagh
Museum and Arts Centre,
2015.

Photo: René Jansen

(dis)array of 10 wishbones

LIFE

*bones articulate
the same belief as seeds
Do you believe in x-ray?
Could so much calcium lie?
sourced from cells, stars, sand, salt and shit
moon clean and lime pale
crackling like dinner plates
scraped and moulded cartographies
with secret plans
to expand flesh,
now undone.*

*Taurine teeth thousands dark
fire pit soot
smoulder molar*

*sand sticks to scaleless
bones buttressed in
the fish with teeth.*

*Air flutes through vole nasal holes
an eagle feather left cliff air
and maybe sound still hides
in the walnut of a pilot whale ears
swaddled somewhere in a neck joint
so large it must have been
chopped one day
by something bigger*

*warm dung breathes
In the jutting loops
of a cow's skull
a speckled egg thrums red yolk.
A sea potato pulls cassette tape
from its bristles
chick's over-sized sockets
bulge with the defenceless hunger*

*sheep ribs curve, bend,
would they grow into spirals?
incisors roll free from mandatory mandibles.
Black sea bird feet, webbed and dry
scratch
a sternum stretches, arcs
lobster pincer, crab claw, urchin shell
pimple purple cold.*

*Wishbones yearn to be snapped
calcified corals flower
scapula stalk uphill grazing
a deer horn bubbles into growth
the dog's skull laps cool water from a burn
and never sees the raised crook
that cracks it
nectar rots on a bee's leg
pronged roots of a human tooth
burst the gum, tell the truth
intervertebral discs etched as coins
pay*

DOMAIN

Shore sea marine moor hill cliff path farm heath rocks outcrop sand machair soil mud bog peat
burn loch owl pellet mountain promontory salt sand bank estuary dune archipelago

KINGDOM

Hyperborea Balranald Carrinish kirkibost Baleloch Griminish Vallay Malacait Sollas Grenitote
Ahmor Port non Long loch Portain Lochmaddy Struan the little minch Haemodea Eilean Star
Innse Gall West Dwelling abode domicile Crossing Fords Corn island Fearsad Ywst

PHYLUM

Celt Norse proto-Viking white settler local Hebridean hyperborean St Columba Presbyterian
crofter agricultural

CLASS

Gaelic, Latin, English

ORDER

Neolithic Bronze age Spring Wednesday BC 7:23am ADE 3000 Fortnight 2003

FAMILY

Macleod MacDonald Ranald MacMhuirich Currie MacLeods, MacDonalds, Mackenzies,
MacNeils

GENUS

Bereft of general movement flexion, extension
Medial or lateral rotation
Dorsiflexion and plantarflexion
Pronation, Supination
Eversion and inversion
Lost all relation to our anterior

SPECIES

Microtus agrestis Ovis aries Bos taurus Salmo salar Accipiter nisus Homo sapiens sapiens cù
Globicephala melas Batoidea Nephropidae Echinocardium cordatum Echinoidea pinniped
Cervidae Corvidae Pica pica Aquila chrysaetos Canis lupus familiaris Numenius arquata
Laridae Sternidae Diomedidae, Anthozoa Patellogastropoda aves tunnag

ANATOMY

Wishbone furcular thorax sternum olecranon rachis mermaid's purse chela rostrum beaks
humeras wings carpal Chondrichthyes wisdom tooth Pubis thorax clavicle femur

Everybody, everywhere (can be annihilated)



*I am made a necessity of the system
partible by participle and particle my slippery nuclide
an out-dividual cast could elide atomic suicide
from the magnetic a carbon skullprint
resongance of calcium hexing from my hexis
a digital electric sketch your oblivious oblivion
storing your cataclysmic
storing love of lethe
[my eyes]
in the way hard disks I call out to all anatomy
feel the patina of my veins hold to me
I feel the hard disks your messy anaclisis
sifting draw me to death
the megalithic binaries let me edify
of my bones in my deifying
dying
annihilation and
excarnation, decompose
dismemberment, sweeten and bless
burial these substitutions
rebirth reform the replete
repeat in the repeat
resist replace*

Cross-section of skull
mould, In the Shadow of
the Hand, 2015



Cast bogwood on sculpted wooden hand, Proceedings Of The Society, Bobby Niven, 2015.

Photo: Johnny Barrington

Predictions of the Society

We small gods of lost future
abandoned by our unborn prophets
extend unto this hereafter
memory foam fates
divisive divinations of
our whenceforth
our whencewhere
why-knotted relics
transmit our infinities in
whittled legerdemain.
Bronzed cosmic canapes,
telling of clumsy eternities.

The god of lost thoughts
has a head that orbits
his shoulders
he dances his bones
and lands
with twisted poise
to find the bulb
popped from his belly.
He splays, tries to stand,
grasps whatever is beyond this form
a gymnast learning the air
blows right through him.

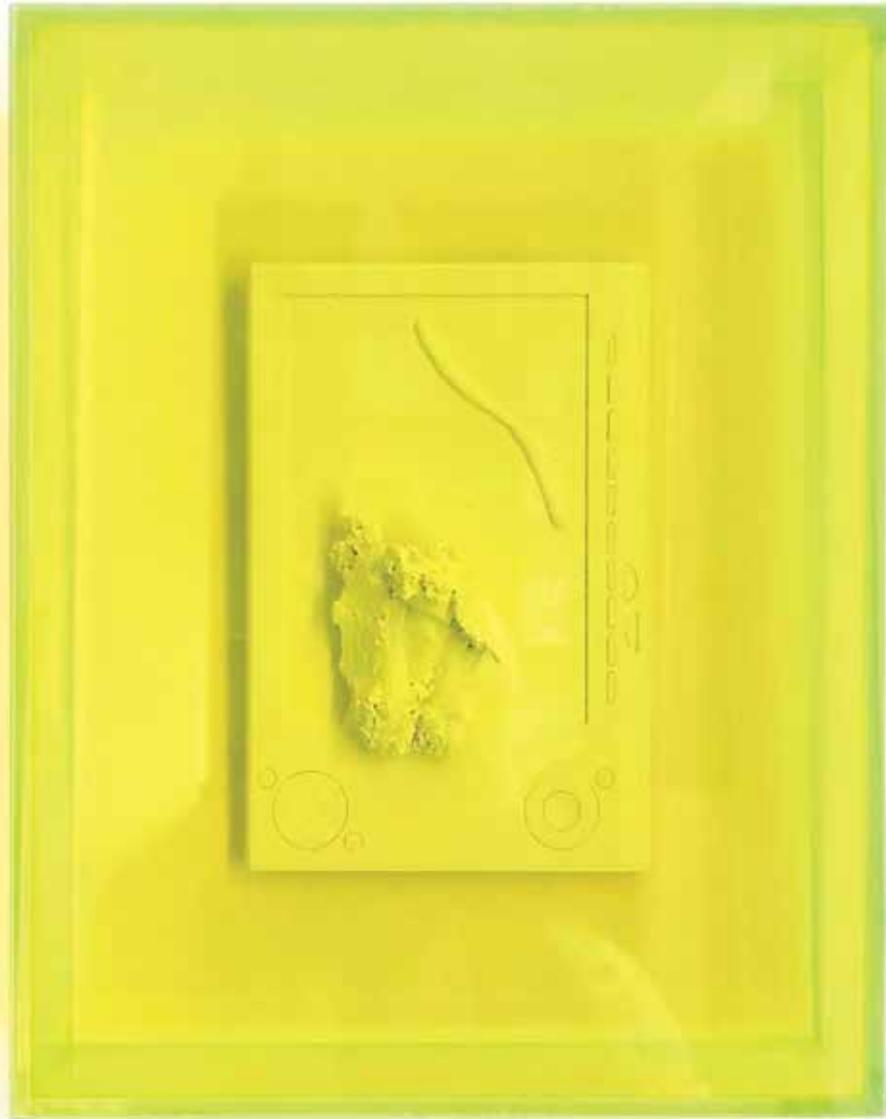
The god of unfinish
is a flowing matter.
The emergent causality of
half-turned Viking bogwood
probing for growth
sunken with purpose.
Now coated in the
protean metal melody and
light's glycerol sheen
a nebulous suspension,
dissolution and re-assembly
of a Penelope colony.

The goddess of happenstance
stands happy on our hands.
Her platform pronged and slotted
so perfectly in the palm,

so balanced on that board,
the fecund lean
of her slender waist,
floats.
To us she extends
her neon friendship.
Her transcendental accidental
pregnant pores and
wanton portmanteaux soul
feed on the magical psychosis of chance.
She directs the current flows,
that makes the mute portents sing
and all the world is creamy with her talismans.
Time stretches out in all directions
radiating resuscitations
to guide us.

The god of waste,
our circular necessity.
sprung faecal clump, he
rose a heavy ghost,
a surfeit void,
a gilded glut.
There will be need of
his drunken spiral swagger,
his topples and heaves,
leave himself everywhere
in sage manifestations
of secreted violation.
Compressed deposit of all past ages
reverential nefarious clump
oh disintegrate but do not forget the
scavaging pulsating spleen
that pulverised life
when it made thee thus.
Precious pressure map
of animated entropy
your future is out of date.

Lost in the ethereal abandonment of
these consecrations,
we pray out to a future, to a future more,
give us more. We can take it.



Plaster cast composite in
fluorescent perspex casing,
*untitled fragments in acid
green*, Niall Macdonald, 2015.

Photo: Gayle Meikle

irremittance of the parts

sad nothing
can be held
so silicon
still
and close
that it can
be assimilated

but you try
to glow

to meet the world
a shortwave longer
than the
florescent
neon waves
meet you

chockfull
with bleached
comatose
commodities

a box of time to be
sold in a mall
that insists on
being pyranine
plastic

being perfumeless
blameless
as torsos broken open
like gods
or spat-out

pig-iron
from the fray
scraped and read
in the obsolescent
light of
a kindle

screen
scrolling

where the thing
escapes into then
then the now
begins and you
give time
time

where we fit
man with
a midden Möbius
gastric band

the closer
we got
our breath shows
then passes

Katy Hastie July 2016

Headlines

Human cognition does not rest upon individual minds alone.
It is distributed across person, things and time.

Since the mid 1980s archaeology, the discipline of things, has been exploring the complex issue of mind and cognition from the material remains of the past. Materiality, crucial in processes of enculturation and cultural transmission, shapes our lives, mediates our relations with the world, directs our actions, triggers or inhibits feelings, educates us in the social environment and participates in cognitive processes, such as memory or feeling. Artefacts, due to their simultaneous material and ideal nature, are fundamental constituents of culture, which in turn is fundamental in shaping cognitive processes. We do not create and live culture in an ethereal, ideal void. Things make people.

The concerns of cognitive archaeologists have basically been centred on evolutionary matters, that is, the development of cognitive skills in human beings: when did abstract thought, the aesthetics or the use of material culture as external symbolic storage appear for the first time? In the configuration of motor skills and learning which psychomotor changes have to occur so that an apprentice becomes proficient at making wheel turned pots or a certain kind of flaked tool? Beyond the evolution of cognitive skills how has our material culture shaped identity, personhood and self?

Our lives and thoughts are inextricably entangled in a material world. As a matter of fact, almost everything in our cultural lives could be considered material culture, since there are very few – if any – activities that are not materially mediated in one way or the other – even singing or storytelling implies materiality: at the minimum a technique of the body.

Objects are important. Material objects, in particular art, have agency. They are not just passive containers of culture. It is not necessarily the mind that imposes its form on material culture, but very often just the opposite. Things shape thoughts. We think through things even when we do not think about them. In fact, it is precisely when we do not think about things that the thingness of the thing is working best.

Material culture is used to think in both an explicit and implicit way.

We cooperate actively in the making of the material world that surrounds us, but making things makes ourselves simultaneously. The most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two completely independent lines of development, converge.

Making things affects sensorimotor skills and more importantly, perceptions of oneself, society and the world, as the teaching of technical processes incorporates social information and attitudes that are not strictly orientated to technical ends. Most of the time, material culture works through the evocation of sets of practices that are not discursively perceived and that sometimes, cannot be put into words. A roof-tile is not meant to consciously represent anything, to convey any explicit meaning. But this does not mean that they are not meaningful.

Yet making artefacts is only part of the constitution of the self in relation to materiality. Subjects are made through the use of things as well, especially in those cultures where

What I have:

A white saucer, an open laptop, a bottle of Buxton still mineral water without its lid, a white lighter, a small section of iron embossed with the letters P.A.R.T, an orange note book, a black biro cutting across two of its pages, an unplugged external hard drive, a small circular cactus in a grey pot, a mug containing tea, a pile of three books with their titles facing the window, a pencil drawing on white A4 cartridge paper.

What I don't have:

The thing I am writing about.

What I have:

You.

What I don't have:

An Iphone.

What I have:

The key to immortality.

What I don't have:

A will.

What I have:

A white saucer. I lift it up to see its underside, careful not to spill ash on my computer. It reads Cherie. I Google Cherie hoping it might tell me something useful. I have the song in my head. I sing a line, roll another cigarette and think about an ex lover.

What I don't have:

The thing. I write: can I possess some thing if it has no material form? I say it three times: It will exist it will exist it will exist. I underline the final will, pick up the Buxton water bottle and take a few gulps.

The thing I am talking about is my own skull.

What I have:

A propensity to drink alone.

What I don't have:

Property.

What I have:

The skull pulls out another cigarette, brings it up to its teeth, smiles, strikes a match and sucks hard. The lit tip glows. It exhales through the dark space where its nose would have been. Smoke spills, clouding the air between them.

She puts down her pen and rubs her temples. Fuck. She looks up and out of her bedroom window. It can't smoke. It doesn't have hands.

I flick forwards a couple of pages. Attempt to connect art to everyday life, to our structures of feeling, to our fantasies that mediate everyday life.

What I don't have:
Ornaments.

What I have:
A facebook profile. Social media is an object. Not an ethereal void. I'm adding this to my list of objects, including ornaments that I hate.

What I don't have:
A facebook profile. She was writing about E, an ex-person facebook profile, buoyant above blue thumbs. I find this incredibly sad. Like you've lost something and not lost something. Surely this is the worst feeling of loss. That you're given no space to mourn the passing of something—in particular the passing of time. I would like the opportunity to mourn the passing of time. Given a chance.

What I have:
Three pairs of adidas originals. Eight pairs of jeans. Skinny. Mostly black. £160 worth of make-up worn in varying degrees of thickness.

What I don't have:
A pension.

What I have:
Five boxes of receipts. Twelve tax returns.

What I don't have:
A five year plan.

What I have:
An orange notebook. It is open and the biro is lying diagonally across it. The page to the left is dated Monday 17th August. About half way down this page I have written, The skull said:

What I don't have:
A TV licence.

What I have:
A two bedroom flat that I share with two other women, both in their thirties.

What I don't have:
My wisdom teeth.

What I have:
A Master's degree in Fine Art.

What I don't have:
A regular income.

Handicrafts have vanished and technological knowledge is socially very restricted—for example, in industrial and post-industrial societies. In the modern world, we construct our subjectivities through consumption. Furthermore, the way we abandon and destroy material culture is also part and parcel of our identity. Although destruction might be particularly characteristic of the modern world, it has always played a role in culture.

Things are made in the past and conceived for the future.

Cognitive processes are not just distributed through people and things; they are also distributed through time. Past actions and events can condition the future actions and events. Yet time is embedded in things and things have their own temporality, which does not have to coincide with human time. It has recently been argued that different types of structural forgetting are specific to different social formations, and late modernity is characterised by massive oblivion based on superhuman speed, megacities, consumerism, and perishable urban architecture. In the same vein, it can be said that late modern subjects cannot be understood without their intimate relationship with the continual and massive destruction of their environment. It is the whole life cycle of things and people (from birth to death) that is ineluctably intertwined and this implies looking simultaneously at how people use (and discard) things, and how things use (and discard) people. However, the relationship between consumption and destruction is more ambivalent than one may think. We have to bear in mind that the destruction of objects may be liberating. Likewise, consumption can become alienating and create dependencies where there was none.

Material culture is fundamental in constituting the self as relational or independent — the whole spectrum between one possibility and the other.

Materiality is deeply involved in the construction of both relational and individual selves. Societies where relational forms of identity prevail tend to produce homogenous objects and styles that underscore the shared identity and relations between members of the society, whereas individualistic societies normally produce a proliferation of distinct artefacts and categories of artefacts in order to satisfy a myriad of tastes that are enmeshed in complex social strategies.

In certain prehistoric societies the person is not individual, but 'dividual', multiply constituted through relations with other persons. In some contexts such as marriage, ceremonial exchanges and death, persons can be decomposed: they give away parts of their selves in the guise of pigs and other valuables. But bodies themselves are decomposable, too: people can detach from parts of their own bodies as well as attach themselves to parts or (substances) of other peoples' bodies. In the construction of the self among non-modern societies, we have taken into account elements of individuality and likewise, in societies with highly individualised persons, elements of relationality (or dividuality). Both relational and individual identities have at least one thing in common however: they are both fantasies, creations of the human mind whose aim is to neutralise the anxiety that would cause the true understanding of the powerlessness that defines our relation to the world. And what could be better to give an appearance of solidity to a fantasy than material culture.

Relational identities are also expressed in the way the dead are treated. It seems logical that if persons are considered partible and decomposable, their bodies are too.

Burials from Uist during the Mesolithic and up to the Neolithic period often kept only disarticulated bones, because the human remains were buried after a period of exposure to the elements or because bones were dug up and reburied again. The skull, in particular, tends to receive a different treatment. An interpretation of skull removal and other mortuary practices (such as lack of grave goods) can be interpreted as strategies to limit the accumulation of power and authority. As people are perceived as inseparable from the collective in relational cultures, tombs also are often collective. The skeletons of different people appear mingled together and sometimes it is difficult to refit individual bodies.

The treatment of the deceased was a very straightforward way of transmitting ideas of the self and community in a broad sense. There seems to be a tendency among those societies where corpses and bones are manipulated not to hide away the event of death, as opposed to societies with only one death ritual. In fact, many of the death rituals of excarnation, dismemberment, burial and reburial of bones were attended by the entire group and sometimes parts of the dead were ritually consumed, which is the most powerful way of showing a sense of community.

The strong development of the individuality in the West since the 15th century comes hand in hand with an extraordinary increase in the number and variety of artefacts through which new, diverse and often conflictual selves were channelled and constituted: gardens, houses and headstones, portraits, toothpicks, as well as reading and writing materials. Some of these items are used in a communicative manner, to consciously display personal and social taste and status, in other cases intrinsically related to the self in an unconscious manner. Both categories of artefacts are related in that they have to do with ideas of care (physical or psychical) and are therefore crucial in fostering and cultivating the individual self. In this sense they are technologies of the self, which is vital for the definition of culture.

Technologies of bodily care that evince a strong awareness of the individual self developed since mid 2nd millennium BC in bronze age Europe, when razors and mirrors, dress pins and individualised weaponry became widespread among the elites. Those items were indispensable to constitute individual selves in the midst of rather homogenous communities. The difference with modernity is that technologies of the self and individualised material culture become extremely generalised, eventually cutting across social classes, race and gender. In our globalised, late capitalist world, almost everybody wants to be unique. In fact, artefacts in modernity can be a powerful way of holding the self together in disruptive scenarios, such as civil conflicts, wars and dictatorships. Artefacts may help to link one with his or her self prior to the traumatic experience or to create a new self, which incorporate (and domesticates) the traumatic experience.

Material culture is society made durable.

To understand the emotional life of a person is to understand the types of feelings (anger, envy, fear, depersonalisation, shame, joy, love, homesickness, and so on) felt by that person, the distribution and frequency of those feelings across time and context, the kind of situations that elicit them, the wishes and fantasies that occur with them and the action tendencies set off by them.

What I have:

A collection of letters from TV Licensing. The language of the letters is becoming increasingly aggressive. As a result so have I. I'm ready for them, I try to convince myself. Actually I am. I've become one of those angry Natsi's that pours through footage of TV License door-stepper and the legalities of what you can't watch. I've kept all the letters though they haven't ever turned up at my door. I've kept the letters. I'm quite curious about how the same words are arranged in different ways and how they're supposed to make me feel. Empty threats, I think, but dangerous. I've kept the letters. I might make an artwork about them.

What I don't have:

A cock.

What I have:

The right to speak freely. I'm told.

What I don't have:

A collection of tics in a jar.

What I have:

A plaster cast from both sets of teeth and a wax cast of the space inside my mouth.

What I don't have:

When I think about my dead grandmother I don't experience a lack.

What I have:

A fragment of iron embossed with the P.A.R.T that I put in my pocket the day of the iron pour. It's from a plaque that we planned to re-cycle, re-melt and recast. We broke the plaque up the day before with pointed hammers but this piece wasn't used. The P.A.R.T was the beginning of a longer word. I pick it up, turn it over in my hand and then smell it.

What I don't have:

Any recollection of the last few minutes.

What I have:

Nine months of cognitive behavioural therapy. She teaches me to say things even when I'm not, to feel comfortable with the silence. At home in front of the mirror I have to

practice saying things to myself that I don't believe. At the bottom of the mirror there's half a bronze plaque that says 'AMORE'.

What I don't have:

A pinhole camera, a house of cards, a rock, a cymbal, a ball made of elastic bands, two right gloves or an object from the Hunterian.

What I have:

A slow heart. Apparently it's nothing to worry about.

What I have:

£15000 of student debt and 19 years of free education.

What I don't have:

Toilet paper. Luckily I have a flat mate who buys this but only after an extended period of drip-drying.

What I have:

GSOH and a GREAT personality.

What I don't have:

A membership at Glasgow Life.

What I have:

Undirected desire.

What I don't have:

A tattoo of a piece of popcorn on my right hip.

What I have:

A Scottish accent and a fairly deep voice.

What I don't have:

Two skulls.

What I have:

A vulnerable memory.

What can be the contribution of archaeology to understand the emotional life of individual societies? We have to take into account that emotions are not always easily verbalised, especially overwhelming emotions. Actually feelings themselves cannot be observed, only indexes of it (gestures, facial movements, heartbeats) and indexes are the raw material with which archaeologists work. Besides, emotions are often triggered, orientated or conditioned by the material world. The important point to bear in mind is that the emotions archaeologists are better able to retrieve are those related to hyper-abstract and over generalised feelings – the kind of feelings one has when entering a gothic cathedral, a megalithic tomb or prison cell. In which places was greater the investment made in material devices orientated towards affection? Which spaces are emotionally charged? Those related to collective identity, political power, religion, punishment, individual achievement, life, death, liminal states?

With the rise of cognitive archaeology in the 1980s emerged the interest for material culture as a form of memory container. Recently, archaeologists have been more interested in how places and things are suffused with memory and the effect that this has on people, rather than in the way particular objects or monuments are explicitly codified so as to store specific memories. It is now widely accepted that memory is not something exclusively individual, but socially shared.

Material memory is not necessarily based on constructive processes. Destruction can be a positive way of maintaining memories, provided that it takes place in a dramatic, ritualised setting and is regularly repeated. However, destruction can also be an effective way of erasing memory; the idea of cutting short forever not just a particular remembrance, but also the possibilities of repetition, because it is repetition that makes the past always present.

The destruction of one thing, however to regenerate into something else is a cycle of production and destruction that maintains memory in these contexts. The problem is when destruction itself becomes an end, that is, when the central point is to obliterate a cultural world and start a new one ex nihilo.

Late modernity is characterised by a particular regime of forgetting that is enforced in everyday life through the built environment. The scale of human settlement, the production of speed and the destruction of the built environment generate a particular "cultural amnesia". Whereas medieval and early modern cities used to have conspicuous landmarks that created an affect of spatial cohesion and places of gathering that fostered social cohesion, new cities are formless, segregated spaces and, for that reason, unmemorable and unsocial. Besides, the continuous refashioning of the built environment prevents any possible social recollection of shared places. We might say that super-modern cities fail to transmit memory, but we may as well argue that they succeed in creating forgetfulness. The production of oblivion is intrinsic of the political economy of late capitalism. Cultural amnesia is not produced by accident, but by the necessity of the system – so that we forget where things come from. The question that emerges from the study of material memory practices in late modernity is: How does living in a post-mnemonic culture affect human cognition?



Left: *Landscapes*, David Lemm, 2015

RESILIENCE:

An agility synonymous with island and mountain culture, mountainous terrains are both difficult and vital places to live and work. Those who live with the mountains have an ability for endurance and to reconstruct, rebuild, revitalise and reimagine their surroundings and things.

Ceumannan // Footsteps

(2015-2017), Anne Martin and Jason Singh

Ragadawn

(2018), Caroline Bergville

Climavore: On Tidal Zones

(2017-), Cooking Sections



Resilience

Reconsidering, reimagining, speculation and risk are all techniques that help us make sense of the vitality of a place; deployed as tools of resilience these techniques contribute to the cultivation of imaginaries that displace well-trodden assumptions of island living. In this section, we place the artworks *Ceumannan // Footsteps*, *Ragadawn* and *CLIMAVORE: On Tidal Zones* alongside writing about artworks and artists that we began to make arrangements to work with, but, for whatever reason, these projects remain in the space of speculation. Our decision to include these projects is to articulate an implicit way of working in contemporary art practice through which the speculative act of imagining future artworks and situations is elemental to making artworks public. By giving space to these projects we acknowledge the labour involved and their collective contribution to the shape of our activity, and how the tacit use of speculation in contemporary art practice can be understood.

Conversations with artists form much of this speculative work and have been a vital part of the ongoing praxis of the organisation. Often, the inescapable mountainous terrain of Skye is the starting point of these conversations, artist Ilana Halperin's diaristic account penned on the ATLAS residency at Sweeney's Bothy on Eigg uses this terrain to reveal the global interconnectedness of this volcanic material. Halperin contemplates these 'extinct' geological sites and the mineral diaspora in relation to their active volcanic cousins across the earth and oceans. Whereas 'Remote as Samoa' by Moira Jeffrey combines the writing of Virginia Woolf's 'To the Lighthouse' with the work of John Akromfrah (who has a longstanding relationship with Skye and has been included in our Screen-It programme) to deftly refute the isolated splendour often associated with island living. These contributions invite us to consider the blurring of borders between language, culture, geography, ecology and diaspora.

Another piece of writing that exposes the rich tapestry of connection between global cultures is Anuska Rajendran's 'Underneath the Open Sky: Shilpa Gupta's Art of Encounter and Engagement'. She writes in response to the proposed installation of Shilpa Gupta's animated light installation *I live under your sky too* (2013). The work was to be presented in three languages English, Gaelic and Urdu touching on culturally constructed borders between people, freedom of movement and identity politics. *Ceumannan // Footsteps*, the work of contemporary sound artist Jason Singh with Skye-based Gaelic musician Anne Martin and Indian classical musicians, Sharat Chandra Srivastava and Gyan Singh, use Gaelic and

Left: performance of *Ragadawn* at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Caroline Bergvall, 2018.

Photo: Sophie Gerrard



Installation view of the oyster table, *Climavore: On Tidal Zones*, Cooking Sections, 2017.

Photo: Ruth Clark



More locally, *CLIMAVORE: On Tidal Zones* by Cooking Sections engaged with the significance of the intertidal zone bringing together the history of this space on the island with contemporary concerns and issues around food production and consumption drawing particular attention to the serious impact of salmon farming. A companion piece to the project 'Salmon' by Roger Hutchison tells the story of salmon in relation to the Hebrides. Cooking Sections work made it possible to highlight the ecological threats to the water surrounding Skye, question our responsibility to the more-than-human, and, through calling for activism and collective action to consider possible alternate economies that do not compromise the environmental qualities of the region. This artwork, initially inspired by local campaigns and concerns for the tidal zone around Skye, formed a three (or five) year project which has now evolved and continues beyond ATLAS.

ATLAS's work sits at the intersection of these global imaginaries. In doing so, it values the contribution fragile rural communities have in speaking to contemporary issues like climate change and the effects of hyper-globalisation, whilst remaining deeply connected to the place, the artworks and audiences alike.



Left top: *Ceumann // Footsteps* performance, The Ferry Inn, Uig, Isle of Skye.

Photo Emma Nicolson;

Bottom: Ann Martin and Gyan Singh in the recording studio, Kerala India, 2015

Photo: Emma Nicolson



Remote as Samoa. Deserted. Prehistoric

Moira Jeffrey

It is morning. I haven't slept too well. When we borrowed the camper van from our friends my husband was too diplomatic, or more likely too fearful, to mention that the ancient chassis was rusting. The wheels still turn, but the body of the vehicle is fractured and frail. I place my rucksack over the massive hole on the floor and put on an extra layer.

It is my daughter's birthday when we wake beneath the shadow of the Black Cuillin. The cold air has crept in all night. The glass is frosted and opaque. Our warm wet breath has turned to ice. My daughter gets up and tears open her birthday presents. She has a swingball set, and a Disney princess dress.

Inside the van we are chattering. Outside she is dressed in the gold and pale blue costume of Princess Merida, Disney's ancient Scottish warrior princess that none of us had ever heard of before. The campsite is deserted but for the steady trickle of men dressed for climbing. They are barely visible beneath their armour: boots and crampons, gaiters, balaclavas and ice axes. We sniff and laugh at the visual contrast with the tiny pale child dressed in a thin layer of flammable nylon. The truth is that we are probably complicit with the men conquering the mountain. All of us on an expedition, searching for something unattainable, something other and authentic.

Place, believed the French scholar Michel de Certeau, is fixed. Everything in its proper and inalterable location. Space is a more complicated and unwieldy idea. Space is subjective, we can experience it differently and simultaneously. Space lacks stability and depends on experience. Space can be transformed through actions and activities. How do we move between place and space? 'Stories', he writes, 'thus carry out a labour that transforms places into spaces or spaces into places.'

In 1927 Virginia Woolf completed one of the greatest novels of the twentieth century about a place that she had never even visited. 'To the Lighthouse' describes the life of the Ramsay family and their guests in the large house they lease for summer holidays on the Isle of Skye. Written in three distinct parts, it tells of a single busy day in the life of an intellectual Edwardian household; of a return visit after World War I to undertake a

Left: Film still from *Vertigo*
Sea, John Akomfrah

muted boat trip marked by loss and, in a short essay of extraordinary depth and compression, of the passage of time between the two.

An astute reviewer from the 'Glasgow Herald' was outraged at the landscape that Woolf described. She had apparently carelessly transposed the Cornwall of her own childhood holidays to remote Scotland. 'To the Lighthouse' describes cricket matches and a country garden with geraniums in a stone urn and the exotic flash of red hot poker in the flower beds.

But set against the central sequence of the novel when nature reclaims the house during the war years (its books grow damp, its garden becomes overgrown, its china cracks and furs) we might understand the presence of these plants as the colonising garden of England.¹ The red hot poker from South Africa, the pampas grass from Argentina. The entire world, not just the wild landscape of the Hebrides, is open to England's coercive domestication. Its global flora: just a vast inventory for the English mania for gardening.



'To the Lighthouse' tells us many things. Its relentlessly shifting perspective reveals the interior world of the characters, shifting unexpectedly in focus and voice and narrative centre. It is a book about the oppression of men, the resistance of art, and persistence of women. It is about the crumbling of Victorian patriarchy and the

costs that patriarchy imposes on both its sons and daughters. It is about a new generation's mute resistance. It is about ghosts and endings. It is about the creeping dissolution of old ideas. The mouldering books on the family shelves are a library of the era: the novels of Sir Walter Scott, 'Croom on the mind and Bates on the Savage Customs of Polynesia.'

Why set it in the Hebrides? 'To the Lighthouse' is not a novel *about* the Hebrides. It is a novel that tells us about being in Imperial Britain, even as it is extinguishing a generation of men like so many lamps blown out, that there is no place outside of England.

And yet that makes it about the Hebrides too. To imagine that contemporary Skye in its glories and in its supermarket ordinariness, its worries about the price of fuel, electricity tariffs, the benefits system, hospital provision, somehow exists outside of the global market, the politics and policies of Edinburgh or Westminster or Brussels is to imagine it without the very systems that delineate its boundaries, its lived life, its limitations and its possibilities.

1. This specifically English Imperialist influence on nature can be thought of with Rupert Brooke's war poem 'The Soldier', in mind: 'If I should die, think only this of me: / That there's some corner of a foreign field / That is forever England.' British acts of colonisation are enacted with this frame of 'Englishness,' as Brooke wrote, 'In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.' (Brooke, 1915). England's influence thus becomes synonymous with a sensibility of exceptionalism and refinement, and is an aesthetic taken up as a mark of overarching Britishness.

Left: View of Neist Point Light House

Photo: Emma Nicolson

How do we find adequate stories around place? In Skye that might mean a language around its geography that doesn't just reify the landscape, nature or the rural without understanding the social conditions that have created and contain it. It might understand the difference as de Certeau also usefully asserted, between strategy (the *modus operandi* of government and corporations) and tactics (the small acts of individuals). Strategy assumes control, tactics are corrective and adaptive.

In the contemporary art world an adequate story around place might be to find a dynamic beyond some false dichotomy between 'the urban' and 'the rural' or 'the local' and 'the international' (although you can usually spot the latter, as the curator Jan Werwoert has memorably joked, because it always turns up empty-handed needing to be fed and accommodated).

Can we find a way to understand the particularity of a place, acknowledge its history, without asserting a kind of belonging, or exclusion of belonging, in which the word soil always has a silent twin, a distant echo of the word blood? To attend not just to the ghosts of a place but to its contemporary labourers. In 'To the Lighthouse' it is the stoical labour of the local cleaner Mrs McNab, not the Victorian charity of Mrs Ramsay, that makes the house truly habitable.

Can we find a way to work or to make work, (to tell stories, make art) not as though we are in the early day of a better nation but as though we are right here at the grim fag end of capital in a world that is increasingly described by a populist nostalgia that imagines it was once cohesive and discrete.

Woolf's great book was about such a grim end: the collapse of Victorian certainty, and masculine centrality. She probably set it on Skye, because its narrative of destruction and dominion was so familiar to a literary audience steeped in the stories of the Jacobite Rebellion and the novels of Sir Walter Scott. Mr Ramsay, dominating yet pathetic, preposterously selfish and pathetically needy is like 'a king in exile'. Woolf was herself nurtured through childhood on Scott. She defined her art against his romance, yet she is shaped by his narratives. In 'To the Lighthouse' the past presents itself through unruly ghosts and in a gimlet-eyed examination of a fantasy of belonging that required constant bolstering and construction through paternal authority and maternal orchestration.

Woolf's discourse on empire is entirely from within, about its corrosive impact on its own. In the work of the contemporary experimental film-maker John Akomfrah, empire's reach is murderous towards its defined 'others'. On Skye, both these artists counterpoint deep time with anthropocentric time, both shuttle between place and space. Woolf's Skye was elegiac, Akomfrah's is the backdrop to a cry of rage.

Akomfrah's video installation *Vertigo Sea* (2015) fuses the terrible stories of recent migrant Africans adrift in the Mediterranean, with the historic massacre of West African slaves at sea, and the murder of political prisoners during Argentina's Dirty War by dropping them from aircraft into the ocean below. It draws on literary texts such as Herman Melville's epic examination of race and colonialism 'Moby Dick' (1851), Heathcote Williams' poem 'Whale Nation' (1988), and Virginia Woolf's experimental coastal novel 'The Waves' (1931).

The coastal landscape of Skye, alongside that of northern Norway and the Faroe Islands, provides Akomfrah with a contemporary sublime, not for its own sake but for an abrupt and episodic staging of confrontation and alienation. Akomfrah populates his landscapes with objects adrift. Clocks and furniture are piled on the shore, and men and women in elaborate historic costume look seaward. Costume drama, Akomfrah reminds us, is a form of cladding, an exterior designed to lay claim to an interior life. Costume is a ruse or feint to disguise the fact that historical drama is not the past speaking for itself but always the present talking about the past. Costume thus helps the present evade responsibility for its own history.

In 1938, eleven years after completing 'To the Lighthouse' Woolf finally travelled to Skye. The Hebridean island was, it turned out, no balmy, busy St Ives. 'Remote as Samoa', Woolf wrote on her postcards to her friends in England. 'Deserted; prehistoric.'

Sensitive locals, now and then, might easily get offended. But Woolf was a precise writer. I think it was an in-joke and a mea culpa. For Samoa was not remote but intimate in literary circles, thanks to the life and work of Robert Louis Stevenson, who settled in Samoa in 1890 and died there in 1894. E.M. Forster, who set himself against Stevenson, listed the works of Stevenson amongst those that 'smelled' of the Victorian era, musty and meretricious.

Modern scholars have established that the Bates book on the south sea 'savages' that Woolf refers to in 'To the Lighthouse' was never written. It is a tiny fiction but an essential element in an elaborate construct. In Woolf's novel she emphasises that it is a necessary strategic position of imperialism (and might this also be said of recent nationalisms?) to set one island against another.

As day turns to night, the Ramsay household light candles at the table. 'The night was now shut off by panes of glass, which, far from giving any accurate view of the outside world, rippled it so strangely that here, inside the room, seemed to be order and dry land; there, outside, a reflection in which things waved and vanished, watery. Some change at once went through them all, as if this had really happened, and they were all conscious

of making a party together in a hollow, on an island; had their common cause against that fluidity out there.' The room in which dinner takes place, the Hebridean island, the island mother nation. All exist in definition only because each is set against the fluidity, of an outside, an over there. There is *this* 'domesticated' island. And then there are the islands of the Polynesian 'savages'.

Confronted with Skye as place rather than space, Woolf is filled with not quite remorse, perhaps, but recognition. Am I like Stevenson after all? she wonders aloud. Perhaps I have written my own 'Treasure Island'.

2. After initial controversy caused by the 'sexualised' appearance of the Princess Merida doll in 2013, Disney removed it from their website disney.com.

Installation view of *The Call of Mist* at Dunvegan Castle, John Akomfrah, 2016.

Photo: ATLAS Arts

We drive back to Glasgow. The camper van is eventually sold. Still corroded, but ridiculously valuable nonetheless for its nostalgic value. In later merchandise Disney changed the image of Princess Merida. She grew larger breasts, wore tighter dresses. For a while people on the internet seemed outraged.² But these days nobody cares and my own daughter scarcely remembers her. She has been replaced in the affections of little girls by another adventuress. The equally feisty Princess Moana lives on a fictitious Polynesian island. The problem with expeditions is that they never satisfy and will always require new territories to conquer.





Underneath the Open Sky: Shilpa Gupta's art of encounter and engagement

Anushka Rajendran

Left: *I Live Under Your Sky Too*, Shilpa Gupta, 2004 -ongoing - ATLAS began to develop a project with Shilpa that would bring cultural connections between Skye and India to the fore.

I tried very hard to cut the sky in half, one for my lover and one for me, but the sky kept moving and clouds from his territory came into mine. I tried pushing it away, with both my hands, harder and harder but the sky kept moving and clouds from my territory went into his. I brought a sofa and placed it in the middle but the clouds kept floating over it. I built a wall in the middle, but the sky started to flow through it. I dug a trench, and then it rained and the sky made clouds over the trench. I tried very hard to cut.

Shilpa Gupta, *There is no border here*, 2005-06

1. First proposed by Althusser, the trans-individual space of human relations becomes the foundational idea for Nicolas Bourriaud's seminal text, *Relational Aesthetics* (Les Presses du réel, 1998). A similar concept is identified as 'trans-subjective' space in Griselda Pollock's work.

2. Grant Kester has identified the contingency of randomly constituted communities that develop and dissolve around an artwork in public spaces. For more: Grant H. Kester, "Aesthetic Evangelists: Conversion and Empowerment in Contemporary Community Art." *Afterimage* 22, 1995.

A few years after the Kargil War of 1999 between India and Pakistan, a curious exchange occurred among artists from the two countries. They sent each other artworks across the border to be displayed on the other side. Despite tense relations after being violently cut into two imagined, political communities during the partition of India and Pakistan, immaterial ties among families and shared histories — unbound to passports — linger. *Aar Paar* (2002), which Shilpa Gupta had initiated, was made up of artworks that were mostly digitally transferred and printed across a heavily guarded border. Laden with subversive intent, surpassing surveillance and check posts, these artworks lent object-hood to a desire for solidarity among physically dispersed communities; and the material journey of the artworks traced a channel of trans-individual social relations.¹

Prior to *Aar Paar*, Shilpa Gupta had been preoccupied with condensing immaterial relations between different communities — social, political and contingent² — in her practice. *Sentiment Express* (2001) was a portal where one could dictate personal letters, which were sent over the Internet to be handwritten in Mumbai. Other mediations by the artist between the personal and the collective emerged at the locus of takeaway cards that directed her audience to share their happiness with the artist over a personal telephone call, or later as survey sheets that collected sensorial responses to her installations. Various editions of the series *Don't See Don't Hear Don't Speak* (2009), through a playful inversion of the Gandhian

dictum, performed the collective logic that supports unequal relations of capital among various sections of the society. The work comprised the simple act of forming human chains by placing the participants' hands over each others' eyes, mouths and ears, in conjoint, mutually enabled oblivion.

Other works such as the more recent series *Untitled* (2014-15) foreground social realities that are invisible to this systemic err of complacency and complicity; in this case through displays of bandaged, smuggled goods and other traces of Gupta's research on the India-Bangladesh border region. Continuing her suspicion of manmade cartographic boundaries and citizenship, the works in this series embody the conflicted identity of communities from the border area, whose everyday activities question the legitimacy of heavy surveillance and legally enforced constraints that impede not just mobility but also livelihoods. The ethics of state sanctioned violence in this region can further be called into question by the shared culture and language of communities on either side. Economies in this archipelago of villages, which comprises the largest fenced border in the world,³ are maintained by para-legal trade. The artist immersed herself in the transitory, liminal identity of this community to produce art-objects that lent testimony to their lives.

A large portion of Shilpa Gupta's practice can be situated in the wake of the failure of anti-colonial nation-states,⁴ and their non-inclusive policies. The ruptures in the social fabric could no longer be ignored in India with the 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid — a mosque in the contested territory mythically assumed to be Ayodhya, upon which both Hindus and Muslims lay historical claim — by right-wing Hindu forces and the resulting communal violence which the state was unable to contain. In light of these rifts in the social sphere, it became important for artists to reconfigure their social responsibility both as secular cosmopolitan figures, and, as part of the legacy that had been passed down from the Bengal Modern — a movement most remembered for nationalist art making that mobilized sentiment against the colonial rule. While counter-culture movements that constituted the struggle for Independence until 1947 informed these nationalisms in art at the time, the idiom lost its dialectical force in the years that followed — especially since the partition of the region into India and Pakistan based on religious differences was simultaneous with freedom from colonization.

Shilpa Gupta is one of the earliest artists to move away from harmonious, assimilatory imaginations of diversity in the Indian context to render visible the fractures that have been plaguing the nation construct since its inception. For Gupta, this involved staging new modes of engagement and encounter with the work of art: actively interacting with contingent publics in urban spaces and addressing communities that do not fall under the

3. For more on the India-Bangladesh border, read: Kai Freise, "Borderlands: India's Great Wall", *n+1* (online only), 24 March, 2015.

4. From Partha Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?" in *Mapping the Nation*. London: Verso, 1996.



Shilpa Gupta, *Untitled* (*Wives of the Disappeared*)

radar of capital, media and state agents such as law. This has resulted in projects such as *Untitled (Wives of the Disappeared)* (2006) that immersed viewer-participants in a mock Republic Day parade, reminding them of the forgotten wives of the men who have gone missing in the Kashmir conflict; and *Blame* (2002-04), where the artist entered local trains in Mumbai (and other spaces) to distribute vials of simulated blood that allowed various publics to assume collective responsibility for sectarian strife between Hindu and Muslim communities in various pockets around the country. In another instance, as part of *Untitled* (2001-02) Gupta took frames of stretched canvases to various religious sites to have them blessed by the various deities and gods that the sites honor. These blessed canvases were later displayed with the source of the blessing for each canvas stamped on them along with a video documenting the artist's various pilgrimages to realize the work; an earnest attempt to weave together various communities of different religious identities that treat these objects as sacred, and probably would place these canvases in their personal shrines at home. *Blame, Don't See Don't Hear Don't Speak*, and other projects, though stemming from the artist's immediate context, resonate with our current global condition of threat, suspicion and disenfranchisement, and several editions have unfolded in other parts of the world.

The artist's chance travels across Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir — which resulted in *Wives of the Disappeared; Untitled* (2005-06) and *National Highway No. 1* (2006), interactive touchscreens exploring militarization and unrealized peace in Kashmir; *1:14.9* (2011-12), a hand-wound ball of thread tracing the ratio of the India-Pakistan border; and *1278 unmarked, 28 hours by foot via National Highway No 1, East of the Line of Control* (2013), consisting of unmarked gravestones along the border — led to similar investigations along the West Bank barrier between Palestine and Israel. The universal recurrence of these 'third spaces' are also signified through Gupta's conceptual repurposing of confiscated objects and motion flap-boards from airports; heating panels that sensorially push the viewer to its margins; and ambiguous and incorrect borders of various countries drawn from memory as part of her interactive map series. These engaged encounters jolt her viewers into a heightened awareness of the absurdity of various kinds of segregation and divisive politics that we have come to take for granted.

The trans-subjective space that emerges in her work, where diverse subject positions are able to acknowledge the unknowability of each other's experience and trauma finds antecedent in a series of works from the late 1990s. These relatively early experiments attempted to locate the abject 'other' within the self and by doing so, cathartically articulate our own regressions⁵ — those sentiments that we project on to what we perceive to be alien to our communal identities in order to save ourselves from culpability. This splitting of the unconscious as a collective and in the individual is reversed in Gupta's conceptual plays from this period, therapeutically locating the blame and pain in our own psyches and bodies. Fragments of the artist's own body — in works such as *Untitled* (1996), with the audio 'You are eating a part of yourself', *Order Now!* (1997), which were postcards with a photograph of a birthmark on the artist's back; *Altered Altar* (1998), which encased body hair in acrylic cases; and *Finger d'Artiste* (1998) — take on intimate meanings of fetish, suffering, the totem and the taboo. The body is both a personal and universal experience at the same time, allowing us to recognize our human fallibility, and that which we collectively repress and shun from our being in its unidealized presentation.

5. Julia Kristeva, "Approaching Abjection", *Powers of Horror; An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

The chapter of her practice that focuses more on critical embodiment of the 'other', spelling out the quiet violence that informs our everyday social exchanges, is a natural extension of these concerns. This shift from locating the collective within the personal to private articulations in social spaces is acutely captured by a 2001 series consisting of cloth stained with menstrual blood that the artist collected from various women and woven into different forms. The ultimate social taboo and deeply intimate traces of abjection is revealed to be one and the same in the art object, bearing witness to our collective unconscious. For, while identifying with one another, we are also addressing a part of ourselves.

In her later works such as *There is No Explosive in This* (2007), abstract inter-subjective relations became more pronounced as Gupta asked the viewers of her work in the gallery space to take suitcases stamped boldly with the words 'there is no explosive in this' out to the streets before bringing it back to the gallery and recounting their experiences with it — each of them temporarily embodying the subjectivities affected by bias and suspicion. In another instance, *Threat* (2009), a wall of brick sized soaps in the gallery space with the word threat embossed on them invited those who took home one of the bricks to wash away the threat that they perceive in themselves and others.

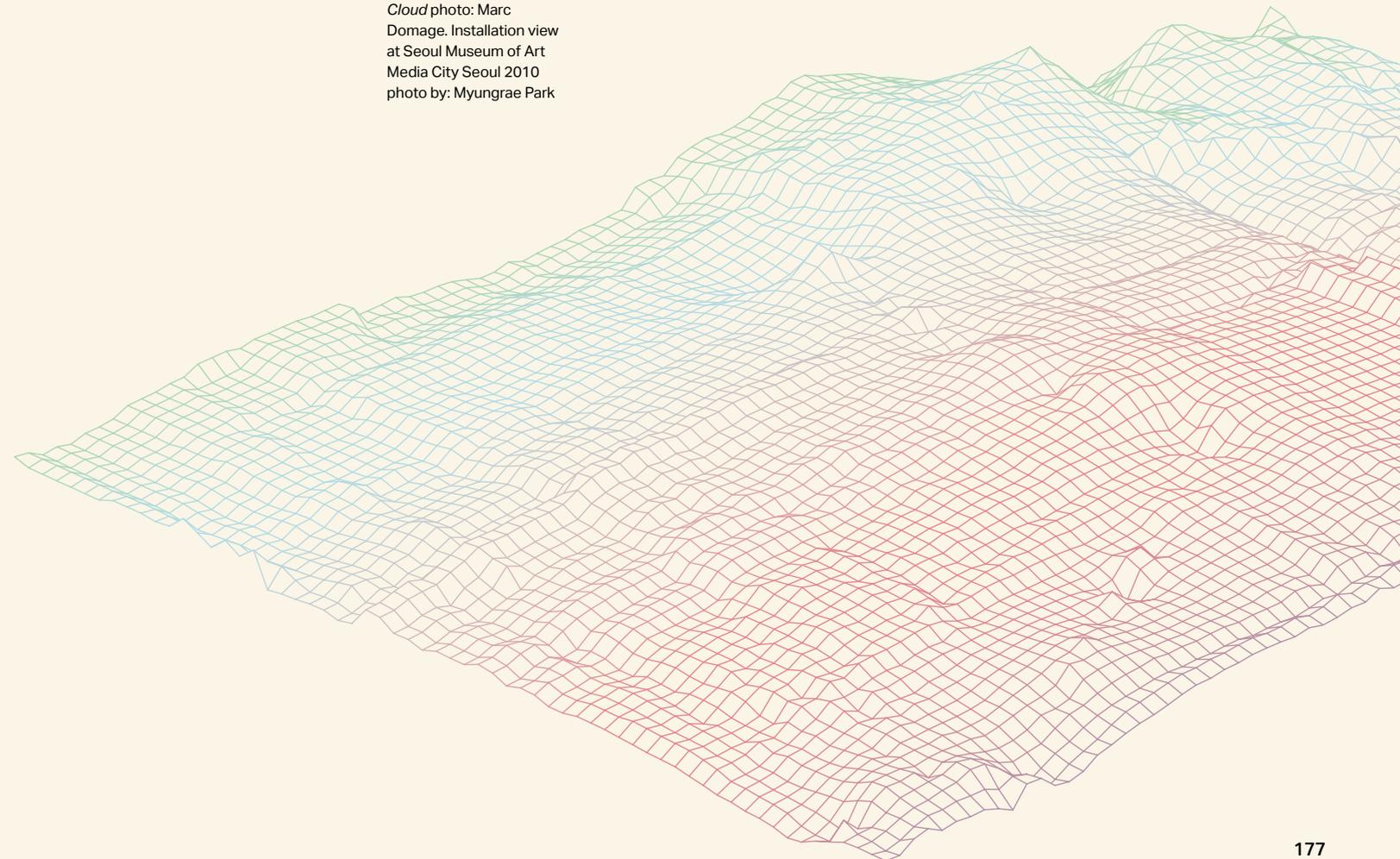
The circuitry of all these works intervenes and lends materiality to invisible threads that hold together fractured, isolated conversations within social and political infrastructures. For Gupta, this elusive relational fabric receives allegorical manifestation in the sky. At Kiosk, Ghent recently, spare motor parts scattered across the blue sky at Gupta's exhibition *Drawing in the*



Shilpa Gupta: *Singing Cloud* photo: Marc Domage. Installation view at Seoul Museum of Art Media City Seoul 2010 photo by: Myungrae Park

Dark (2017), where clouds are free to roam over man-made barriers on the earth below, reminded us of her frequent return to the sky metaphor for poetic relief. In *Singing Cloud* (2008-09), microphones bunched together in the shape of a cloud vie each other to sing testimonies of the human condition resulting in a singular hum emanating from the same cloud. In 2005, as part of the *There is no border here* series, the artist mounted the title outdoors, across the Havana sky and taped the words that opens this essay in the shape of a flag indoors. More recently in Bandra, Mumbai, text that the artist laid out against the city sky reads, 'I live under your sky too'.

In Gupta's extensive body of work, the sky becomes a utopic location, where structures and barriers we believe we cannot be without collapse in unison. When we look up at the sky, we see a comforting blanket enveloping the earth, reminding us that we can live together, and that we are mutually responsible for one another's suffering and relief. Shilpa Gupta gives us hope for redemption in the realization that we are flawed constructions, part of a flawed system, occupying an open sky.





Volcanoes Meeting Volcanoes

Ilana Halperin

Can being in one place help you understand another? On Staffa, you stand on a volcanic island. A series of lava flows surrounded by water. We are in volcanic places. In Glasgow, I live near a forest of fossilized trees. When I leave, I am surrounded by volcanoes. Everywhere — gutted craters, casts of explosions, rivers of lava, columns of cooling magma, fissures filled to the brim like long spiny fossils embalmed in mud — only their backbones sticking out above the water line. Volcanic Acts. But really, now it only seems like rock. You have to be told Arthur's Seat is a volcano, the Royal Mile a slick lava flow between the castle and another crater. Otherwise it is a hill, another hill, a street.

I go to Iceland. I go to Hawaii. I go to Japan. Living volcanoes.

Skye, Eigg, Mull, Staffa — extinct at least in our sense of time.

The Story of Two Halves

Minerals formed in New York City now reside in Glasgow.

We are not the only ones to cross the Atlantic.

In the Hunterian are two pieces of Epidote, green with shards of quartz and shadow. One is designated as 'from Rhode Island, New York'; one from Long Island. Of course there is no Rhode Island in New York, just a miscommunication left along the way. The epidotes entered the collection seventy years apart and belonged to two different owners. Each Epidote from the east coast crossed the ocean and stopped in someone's personal geological collection. In the 1970s Julian Jocelyn noticed these two epidotes were in fact one, one mineral split open and put into two different pairs of hands. And then, seventy years later, two pieces became one rejoined into a single rock with a small scar flitting across its surface. I think about Long Island. Growing up, this was the island of Seders which lasted for hours, and of Jewish cemeteries that you hoped not to visit. The diaspora. To go from Ukraine, Lithuania, Galicia across the Atlantic to the Lower East Side, to live in Brooklyn and then end up as part of the earth in a place as flat as Long Island never seemed quite right.

Growing up, we would never have said a mineral from Long Island is the same as being from New York. We would say — those minerals are from the suburbs. The idea of a mineral forming below the streets of New York City seems somehow unlikely — that anything of the natural world, of caves and volcanoes, could ever occur there. But it does — the Subway Garnet — found below West 35th street between Broadway and Seventh Avenue, in the garment district where my mother worked. A sparkling arterial system that connects one island to another, under and across oceans. The sidewalks in New York are not paved with gold, but with mica. And in Knoydart, garnets and mica shimmer between rocks on the beach. I always imagine volcanoes as the connectors — pipe lines tapping into the core of the earth. Every crater, a mouth that leads to the molten sea. But maybe minerals do the same, fill every gap. New growth in older rock. The potential for life after.

The Mineral Diaspora.

Field Notes

Laig Bay, Isle of Eigg

At the Singing Sands, a long volcanic dyke cuts through stone which looks like hip bones and ribs from an ancient living thing. I am quite excited to be able to discern — here they are like volcanic roadways. Lava or some melted river of material — a channel cut through and down — different from the rock on either side. Like a pre-planned road system with routes all running in the same direction at very regular intervals. Melted sandstone highways that are vertical and horizontal at the same time. I try to imagine the moment when all the dykes were molten, like lines of liquid fire.

Nearby, I found white quartz with a small black explosion of another material in one section, like exploded shards on infinite pause, surrounded by frozen liquid. Things made visible which are normally beyond what we can see — interlocking structures of air and matter.

And — the remains of one phenomena in relation to its active counterpart

The Isle of Eigg/Big Island in Hawaii

(now still/liquid earth - still growing)

The Isle of Staffa/The island of Stromboli

(An island erupts, only in silhouette, out of the water/An island erupts every night)

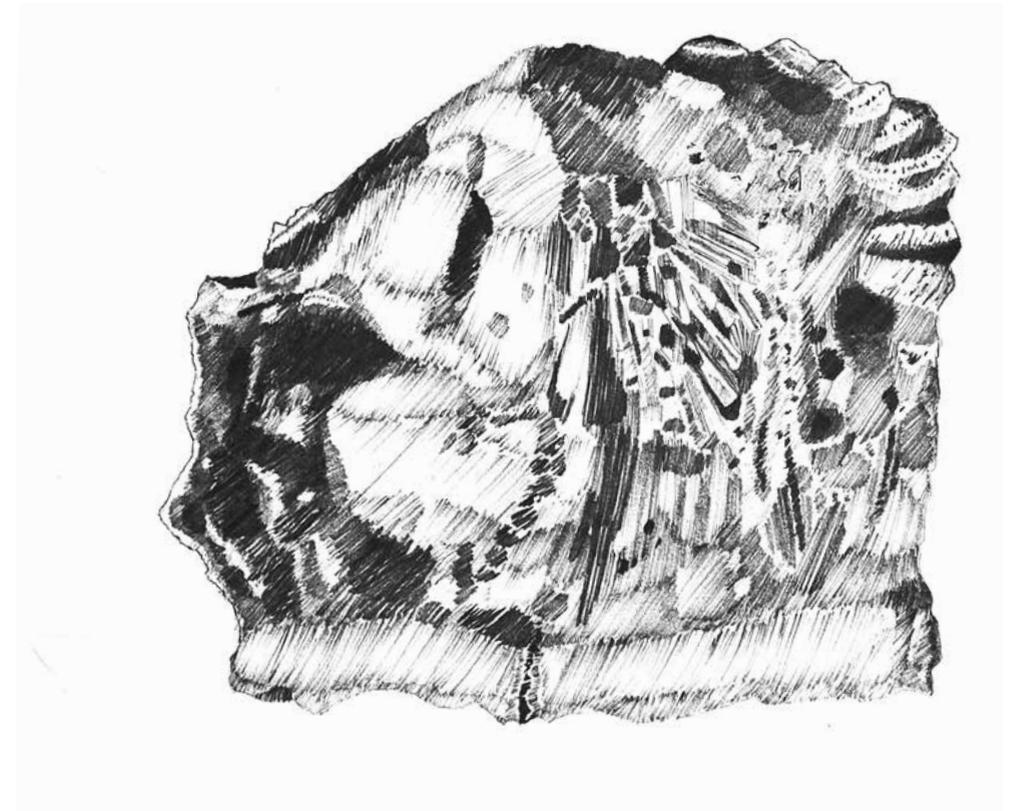
Finding Belemnites

Looking as closely as possible at piles of rocks, you tune your eyes, look for anomalies.

A slightly different glow means an animal from the Jurassic, nudged between rocks, can be held in your hand. Continue scanning... almost purple, others deep dove grey. Smooth like pipes, when everything else has angles. The main thing to notice is regularity amongst so much difference.

I met a woman today in her eighties down at the pier. She used to live in a bay way across on the other side of the island, and there she lived with her husband, and there she continued to live and raise her five children after her husband died thirty-nine years ago. Now she lives across the island, far from the bay and the rough waves and wide sea. When I said I was from New York she asked if I missed home, to which I said yes and she said, yes — so do I — I miss the bay. The scale of a place, the scale of an island, the scale of the ocean, the scale of the earth are totally relative.

Untitled drawing made on the ATLAS residency at the Isle of Eigg Bothy, Ilana Halperin, 2014



West Coast/East Coast

My great grandfather, who in the Jewish tradition of passing along initials — IHH — I am named after is known to have landed on Ellis Island, the Island of Tears, at least twice, maybe three times. His wife Eva followed him across the ocean in 1924. He crossed the ocean on the Aquitania, built on the Clyde, not two miles from my house on North View. The Aquitania was known as the 'Ship Beautiful'.

I have crossed The Atlantic so many times now I can't even count. Never on water, only in the air. Over fifteen years in Scotland, crossing at least twice a year — could it be a hundred times across the ocean?

Granite from the Tormore Granite Quarry in Fionnphort in the Ross of Mull is somewhere in Manhattan. I have heard rumors that it was used in Grand Central Station, in the piers, at the docks. There are pictures of the Welcoming Hall for the Titanic faced in pink granite along the Hudson — but I can't confirm where it was from. The pink stone in Grand Central may come from Connecticut, though I like to imagine crystalline rocks from Mull shimmering beneath the constellations in The Great Hall, metamorphic matched by celestial. Sidney Horenstein from the American Museum of Natural History in New York has been able to confirm the location of Aberdeen Granite in New York City — but then the trail went cold. Somewhere in New York are rocks from Mull, but I don't know where yet. The Hall for the Titanic is long gone, only remnants of the pier and a plaque. Sidney explained that the rocks in Central Park are not smooth from years of kids sliding down them, like the polished fingertips and toes of certain statues, but from the slow movement of glaciers heaving themselves along, leaving a fine grained surface eighteen thousand years ago.

Off the West Coast

I went to Staffa for the second time in my life. Exactly one year before I had been on Mull for the second time in my life as well, but that is part of an almost unspeakable moment reserved for thinking about marble and how it is composed of former life, or what was once life. And how one day I will be limestone, or marble if an eruption should re-awake, recrystallize and melt. Rock, earth, part of layers. Which generate the organic, the living, life. And these islands, dense rock, solid rock, were once liquid and airborne and ash. And only air and just the right amount of time and the weather at a precise moment led to Staffa. In marble, every streak of color shot through reveals who ever and whatever was alive to make it. In marble from Iona, long gone coral is white, plant life — new green at the start of spring.

Manhattan Island

In New York in the middle of a winter storm I look for granite from across the ocean. We stand at the Hudson. Pancake ice forms on the river. The last place I saw this was Greenland, where pancake ice forms every year around the time of my birthday, in the Arctic shift away from Autumn. We are around the corner from my old studio where you could slip onto the roof and watch the sun set over the river, the Island of Tears on the horizon. A platinum sky melts into water. I wonder if I should bring a piece of Manhattan Schist back to Mull. Bodies and rocks crossing back across the ocean.



The Islands

Driving through a valley of volcanoes on Skye, en-route to deliver a joint lecture entitled *Hand Held Lava*, I think — this piece means something entirely different here. In every other instance, we spoke about eruptions, lava, encountering ash from the solid ground of cities that are not formed on fault lines or at the base of moving mountains, but on stable solid ground. On Skye, everything is equally still now, but the carcasses of volcanoes fill your peripheral vision in every direction you look. You stand and talk about volcanoes on volcanoes, near volcanoes, between towering volcanoes — and it feels different even though here the land is theoretically just as extinct as any other place we have given this talk. But to talk about raw mountains and across deep time and formation where you can see the vestiges of that same action, you understand each experience and place differently. Each place more, from the experience of the other. Extinct mirroring alive. Active facing quiet remains.

Untitled drawing made on the ATLAS residency at the Isle of Eigg Bothy, Ilana Halperin, 2014





CLIMAVORE: On Tidal Zones

Cooking Sections

House sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) can be found in most places where there are houses. As this self-evident taxonomy explains, they are one of the most common birds in the world and their opportunistic eating habits attract them to places near human presence (and waste). Female and young birds have brown, grey and black feathers; while males have sometimes less-dull coloured bits in their neck. In Skye we heard of a sparrow that had 'turned salmon'.

The genealogy of aqua-cultures in the isle of Skye is long and varied, but it is certainly a result of human adaptation to climate alterations and power structures. If the original inhabitants of the island preferred to settle away from the coast uphill, they were later slowly forced down onto the shores, as they became more and more dispossessed crofter subjects within a system ruled by foreign landed aristocracy. Little by little, dwellers were pushed to an 'unproductive' littoral zone that made them reinvent subsistence at the margins. Within that progressive approximation to the shores, the method to obtain protein from such a harsh landscape required building walls to fish nutrients out of the surrounding rough waters. Such devices consisted of assemblages of wood and stone course materials, carefully laid, and woven in curved formations. With the receding low tide they would retain a variety of fish (herring, sprats, cod, shrimps, turbot, trout or salmon). Known as fish traps, *cairidh* in Gaelic, or *yairs* or *weirs* in old English, these machines carefully harvested the tidal zone. The sophisticated knowledge on the movement of fish throughout the year across different zones of the foreshore was reflected in the shape in which such tidal walls would be conceived and built to target an optimal catch from different species. They had an open entrance at high tide, but fish could find no exit when the tide went down.

Today, Scottish waters around the Isle of Skye face different challenges: it is no longer the access to marine protein, but the excess of it. The sparrow had 'turned salmon', not because of mating purposes, but because he had allegedly eaten a feed pellet from an offshore salmon farm. Like flamingos alter the pinkness of their feathers by the amount of little shrimps they

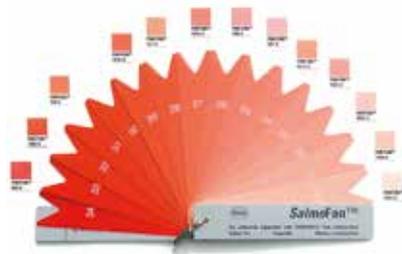
Left: *Climavore: On Tidal Zones, Cooking Sections, 2017 - ongoing.*

Photo: Ruth Clark

digest, industrial farmed salmon has to be fed astaxanthin artificially, to pigment its flesh and meet market expectations: the redder the salmon tones, the wilder it appears, and the higher value it acquires.

Intensive aquaculture in Skye relies on the marketing myth of 'Scottish Salmon' as an authentic product to the area. However, farmed salmon has neither its natural salmon pink tone, nor is it original to the area. 90% of Atlantic salmon, *Salmo salar*, populating the planet's ocean and seas, is a domesticated species dating back to the 1970s. Developed for commercial purposes and heavily dependent on antibiotics, pork-based and fish-based coloring feed pellets, it should be rather named *Salmo domesticus*. Grown in open-net cylinders containing about one million fish per farm, these specimens are severely affecting both the body of the fish and the seabed. Hundreds of kilos of salmon manure are deposited at the bottom every minute, killing the entire ecosystem underneath. At the same time, selective breeding processes create fish which grow faster yet mature slower. The extremely high density of nets and the proximity of specimens between each other reveals itself apparent in the fish's ragged fins and the countless outbreaks of parasites and diseases, like lethal sea lice. Recently, hundreds

of thousands of salmon fish had to be sacrificed in Skye farms, as not even strong antibiotics could keep the plague under control.

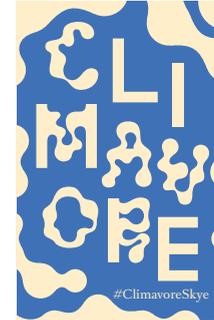


As a side-effect, sea lice is affecting other species in the area, mainly the wild salmon population. To such an extent, that in 2016 the UK government

engineered a fishing moratorium on wild salmon, blaming fishermen for the depletion of stocks. The way it was carefully planned consisted first in the government obliging local fishermen to reduce their fishing activity to protect the wild salmon stock; and later, once fishermen could barely make a living off their catches, the government passed a total ban based on the fact that it was not their main source of income; hence, their activity did no longer count as a traditional profession and should not be subsidised or tolerated.

The fantasy of 'Scottish Salmon' is an imaginary branding that needs to be critically rethought today. Not only from an environmental and ecological perspective, but also questioning what Scottish means in that construction. Especially, when five out of six of the salmon conglomerates operating in Skye depend on Norwegian-owned capital; they consist of corporations that were legally obliged to monitor farming 'Norwegian Salmon' in Norway under much higher restrictions, because of the violent detrimental effects

Salmon fan, *Climavore*:
On Tidal Zones, Cooking
Sections



on the Norwegian coastal waters, making them move to more relaxed Scottish waters.

In this context other understandings of aqua-cultures in the Isle of Skye and its tidal zones can provide the base to rethink the ecological imaginary of the island. Human-induced climatic alterations of the waters, ranging from increasing acidification of the oceans, appearance of new parasites and disappearance of species, could be approached through a different form of eating and sourcing of nutrients. As a response, the notion of *CLIMAVORE* reads and eats landscapes following such food landscape alterations — to eat, to *devour*, according to respectful and responsive understanding of the current climate. Different from intensive salmon farming that produces an excess of nitrogen, other creatures do opposite processes, like purifying the water by breathing. One mussel is able to filter up to twenty-five litres of water a day, and one single oyster up to fifty. So do other bivalves like clams, scallops, razor clams and seaweeds. The latter also provide an incredible source of easy-access protein without the need for irrigation or fertilisers. None of them is rare to the Scottish waters. There are archaeological remains of prehistoric sheep in the islands with marks in their teeth that indicate a kelp-based diet; and even in modern times, a booming industry in Skye emerged for kelp-based dynamite during the Napoleonic wars in the 1820s. From the perspective of human consumption, crofters have traditionally used the tidal zone not only for fish traps, but also to forage dulse (raw or boiled); make laverbread; or carrageen seaweed soup.



Contrary to corporate and governmental interests, coastal 'development' is an appropriation that more likely means building resorts and expensive housing than the enhancement of the socio-economic welfare of traditional coastal water-dependent communities. Hence, *CLIMAVORE* in Skye aims to rethink the environmental futures of coastal habitation and the coastal commons through a local diet that can effectively transform desires. To keep the 'unpropertied' rights of

people dependent on the nature of the waterfront. It takes the tidal zone of the island as an ambiguous site that appears, disappears, reappears, and constantly changes in size. That coastal space has no clear definition and opens up for a cleaner murky usership. The historical site for dispossessed dwellers can become today the entrance into a new ecology, economy and imaginary. And maybe the salmon sparrow will only exist as an island myth.

Alon from Cooking
Sections preparing
oysters for *Climavore*:
On Tidal Zones, opening
weekender, 2017.

Photo: Colin Hattersley



Salmon

Roger Hutchinson

Highlanders have always caught and eaten salmon. The bones of *salmo salar* are found in middens deposited five thousand and six thousand years ago by those Stone Age hunter-gatherers who made their way north and west in the warming wake of the last Ice Age.

For millennia it was a common foodstuff. Nutritious, easy to cook or even to eat raw, and above all plentiful, there were enough salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean to sustain whole families, whole townships, whole regions. Salmon runs in furious spate boiled around the coastline from Barra Head to Neist Point. The Highlander's ancestral claim to a salmon from the river and a deer from the hill would not easily be relinquished. It is as deeply rooted as black peat in the moor.

Salmon moved in both salt and fresh water. It was a frequenter of the tidal zone — of what would become known as the foreshore. That most travelled of ocean fish could be caught, by spear, hand, net or baited line, without the catcher ever going to sea. You did not need to go to salmon. Salmon came to you.

At low tide around the coast of Skye there can still be seen in the tidal zone the remains of stone fish traps. They are large circular walls built below the high-water mark. Fish such as salmon would swim unwittingly into them on the incoming tide, and be trapped within them when the sea retreated. Then, floundered, thrashing in the sand and mud and weed, they would be harvested by men, women and children. They are perhaps the last physical evidence of that millennial communal claim to the more valuable fruits of the tidal zone.

Fish traps became redundant because for a recent, brief period of time — a minute or two on the twenty-four hour clock of human life in northern Scotland — both salmon and most of the foreshore have been privatised. They are no longer held in common. There are many residual symbols, human and architectural, of that process. One of them is a small, dilapidated, category-B listed stone building which two hundred years ago was sunk into the damp and chilly cliff-face of Quay Brae in Portree in the Island of Skye.

Left: Mending Nets,
Bayfield, Portree, Isle
of Skye

Courtesy Highland Archive
Service (Skye & Lochalsh)

The ice-house in Portree was built in 1832 with the proceeds of another exploitation of the tidal zone.

In the second half of the eighteenth century the biggest clan chief in Skye, Macdonald of Sleat, refined his function, his role and his conception of himself. He abjured his medieval predecessors' position as powerful warlords and became an even more powerful landowner. Considerable assets which he had once held literally in trust were absorbed by lawyers and title deeds into his private possessions. His clansmen and clanswomen became his tenants and his employees. Macdonald was no longer first among equals. He was simply first. He was no longer the biggest clan chief in Skye. He was the island's biggest proprietor. He committed himself, in a newly entrepreneurial nation, to exploiting his assets.

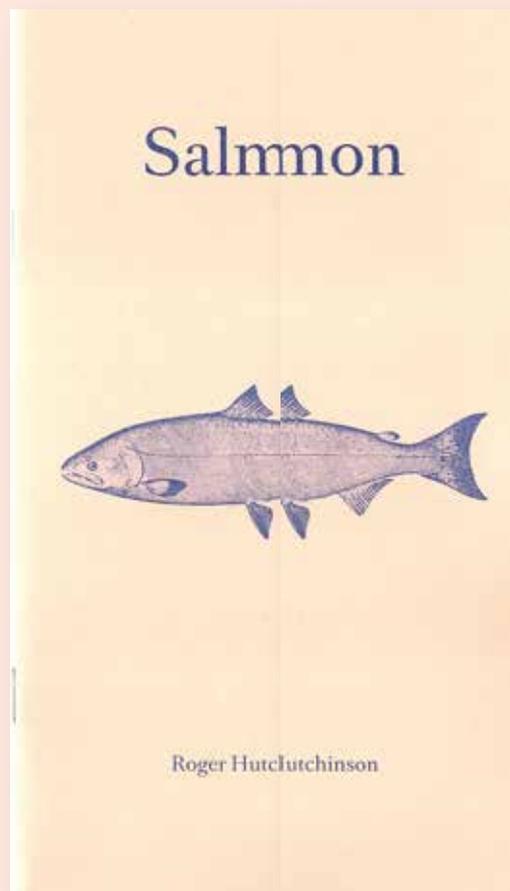
Historical accident favoured the first decades of Highland chieftains' transformation from actual buccaneers into metaphorical capitalist buccaneers. They were enriched by the wars between Great Britain and France which raged between the 1790s and the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. War required a lot of gunpowder. Gunpowder was processed from cordite, and cordite itself could easily be extracted from kelp, the large seaweed which littered Highland and Hebridean foreshores, and which in earlier decades had been processed into modest quantities of glass and soap.

It was money for old wrack. Landowners such as Macdonald encouraged their tenants to raise large families, which they put to work gathering seaweed and then drying it, burning it in shoreline kilns and carrying the ashes to ships for export to the south. Macdonald paid his tenants £2 for each ton of kelp ash. He sold it, without ever once seeing or touching the stuff, for £20 a ton.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century Macdonald of Sleat was coining £20,000 — around £2,000,000 in 2017 — a year from kelp, and the population of his estate was booming.

He celebrated in 1815 by building a residential castle at Armadale in Sleat. It was a bad year to cash in. Waterloo, where a great many Skye men fought in 1815, ended both the Napoleonic Wars and Macdonald's run of luck. A combination of severely reduced demand and cheap and easy foreign imports slashed the selling price of kelp ash from Highland foreshores from £20 to £3 a ton. Macdonald might have learned that capitalism was not an easy game to play. He did not absorb the lesson easily.

By the 1830s his income from kelp had all but vapourised, and the population of his island estates was at its highest level in recorded history.



Salmon by Roger Hutchinson, pamphlet produced to accompany, *Climavore: On Tidal Zones*, Cooking Sections, 2017

Thanks to the unsuspected riches of the tidal zone, Skye alone contained twenty-three thousand people in 1841. That was not only more than double the population of a hundred years earlier; it was also a number which the island would never again approach.

Having no further use for a substantial tenantry was not an insurmountable problem to Macdonald of Sleat. He evicted and deported them and ordered the lucky residue to limit, or preferably eliminate, their breeding. Having a hugely reduced income caused more of a headache. Macdonald looked again to his assets in the tidal zone. They included, it was realised, a great many salmon. Salmon was a popular and relatively expensive fish. By the early nineteenth century commercial salmon netting was spreading profitably around the whole of the Scottish coast. So in 1832 Macdonald of Sleat built an ice house in the cliffside at Quay Brae in Portree in which to store his annual haul of wild Atlantic salmon.

The business which revolved around the ice house in Portree lasted for a further hundred and fifty years.

Before the end of the nineteenth century Macdonald's salmon rights, along with the use of his ice house, was leased to a commercial netter named Joseph Johnstone, whose Montrose company Joseph Johnstone and Sons operated around the coast of Scotland until well into the twentieth century. Before the Second World War Johnstones passed on the Skye salmon rights to a Gairloch and Perth salmon fisher named Robert Powrie. The Powrie family held them until 1944, when James Banks established the West Highland Salmon Fisheries Co Ltd, which ran the business until 1962. In that year it was taken over by Kenneth Matheson of Bayfield in Portree, who oversaw Skye commercial salmon netting for the last three decades of its life.

James Banks' son David claimed to be the last person to use the ice house. He remembered opening a trapdoor at the back and pouring two hundred tons of smashed ice into the building. Fish boxes filled with ice were then delivered from the ice house to netters up and down the east coast of Skye.

It was a summer business which ran from late April or early May until the end of August. As several fishing stations were involved — at Staffin, in Portree Bay, at Braes and off the neighbouring island of Raasay — seasonal work was provided for about twenty-eight men each year.

Bayfield, the tidal littoral fishing neighbourhood at the foot of Quay Brae, was the traditional heartland of the fishery. David Banks built a post-war bungalow at Bayfield from which to oversee his family's summer activities.

The twenty-eight netting jobs went to local Skye and Raasay men. Wooden bothies were built for them on the small, uninhabited offshore Staffin Island and at lonely Brochel in northern Raasay. As well as their wages, those employees were promised by David Banks a bottle of whisky for every hundred fish caught in a day.

The whisky was occasionally claimed. The catch ran at an average of three thousand fish a year in the late 1940s, but almost ten thousand salmon were netted in the summer of 1957. In that fabled year the Bayfield fishing station alone landed 1,631 fish.

By the 1980s, the Macdonalds of Sleat had sold their estates and the wild salmon fishery which they established a hundred and fifty years earlier was dead.



It was made redundant by another privatised industry of the foreshore. Salmon farming reached Skye in the 1970s, and by the 1980s Scottish farmed salmon was flooding European markets. The sheer quantities of salmon bred in cages anchored yards from the shoreline made salmon, for decades that most exclusive of fish, one of the cheapest and most plentiful on supermarket shelves. By the twenty-first century almost twenty thousand tons, perhaps twenty million individual fish, were being farmed annually in Scottish waters. In that context, even ten thousand wild salmon a year melted into profitless insignificance.

Just as those old stone fish traps can still be seen at low tide — often within hailing distance of a cluster of fish farm cages — in Loch Sligachan and elsewhere, the tall net drying poles still stand outside Kenny Matheson's house at Bayfield. A short walk away, the ice house on Quay Brae recalls the same brief exploitation of the tidal zone.

ATLAS Chronology

2010

SCALE | Sculpture Trail

2011

Bàta Brèagha // Bonnie Boat | Walker & Bromwich

Pop up - Making Progress Makers

Knitting Exchange - Deirdre Nelson

Mid-Summer Readings

2012

Mapping Portree and Skye | J. Maizlish Mole

Peace Camp | Artichoke

Talking Art Series #1

2013

Belief | Thomson & Craighead

Fernweh

còmhlán bheanntan | a company of mountains | Alec Finlay

PANORAMA

The Nation // Live-Faith | Catherine Weir, Daniel Warren

ATLAS Editions | J. Maizlish Mole

Spincycle-Skye | Deirdre Nelson, Jason Singh, David Littler

Colm Cille's Spiral

Skye & Lochalsh Talent Development Initiative Phase 1

2014

Lúb/Loop | Deirdre Nelson

Temporary Spaces, Edible Places | Keg De Souza

Are you LOCATIONALIZED | Tatham & O'Sullivan, GENERATION 25 Years of Contemporary Art in Scotland

Contemporary Memorial | Staffin Trust Research & Development

Skye & Lochalsh Talent Development Initiative Phase 1 cont

ATLAS Editions | J. Maizlish Mole

Creative Time Summit 2014

Broad Reach

Out of Place | Corin Sworn, Dalziel + Scullion, Graham Fagen, Timespan

Telling Gathering | Ceara Conway

ARTIST ROOMS | Vija Celmins

Let's Talk About Space

Print Studio Micro — Residency | Joanna Foster

Navigating Your Imagination |

Alex Goodman, The Clipperton Project

Kinesis | Norman McLaren, McLaren 2014

Focal Point | Jo Darling

Are you LOCATIONALIZED | Tatham & O'Sullivan, GENERATION 25 Years of Contemporary Art in Scotland

Travelling Gallery: GENERATION | w/ workshop and artist talk from Craig Coultard

Beatha air an Fhearainn | Life on the Land

| Sharon Quigley w/ Mary Margaret Beaton, Jamie MacCuish, Ruairidh MacDonald, Jane MacDonald, Donald MacLeod, Alasdair Mackay, Donald MacKinnon, Jamie Thorington, Joanne Thorington & Piotr Wronka

Print Workshop Micro-Residency | Margaret MacLellan

A Life in Print | Alasdair Gray, The Alasdair Gray Season

2015

BBC Ten Pieces | David Lemm

GATHER | CONNECT | INSPIRE 2015

SCREEN-IT #1

Where I Am | Duncan Campbell & Luke Fowler, LUX Scotland

Contemporary Memorial | Staffin Trust Research & Development

Skye & Lochalsh Talent Development Initiative Phase 2

Patterns of Flora | Mapping Seven Raasay Habitats | Frances Priest

ATLAS Editions | Frances Priest

Women of the Hill | Hanna Tuulikki

Go & See - Venice Biennale 2015 | Staff Visit

Broad Reach

Biomass (nu20072014) | Sophie Morrish

Proposition for a Reading Group | Laura Donkers

Print Workshop Micro - Residency | Ross Hamilton Frew

North Uist Sea Poems | Pauline Prior-Pitt and Catherine Eunson

Print Workshop Micro-Residency | Michelle Lewtoska

A Skull and a Screen | In the Shadow of the Hand

Where I Am | Duncan Campbell, Luke Fowler, Lucy Skaer & Rosalind Nashashibi, LUX Scotland

Focal Point | Meg Rodger

RSA Summer Residency | Stuart McAdam

Focal Point | Mairi Thomson

So Much Depends Upon... | Susannah Bolton, Martin Campbell, Hans K Clausen, Margaret E Cowie, Laura Donkers, Laura Johnston, Marnie Keltie, Fiona MacIsaac, Deborah Anne MacVicar, Margaret Joan MacIsaac, Margaret MacLellan, Anne Corrance Monk, Sophie Morrish, Amanda J Rae, Mairi Thomson

The Udal Digital Commission | Fiona MacIsaac
untitled fragments in acid green | Niall Macdonald

Proceedings of the Society | Bobby Niven

2016

SCREEN-IT #2

Skye & Lochalsh Talent Development Initiative Phase 2

ATLAS Editions | Rene Jansen, David Lemm, Sharon Quigley

Travelling the Archive | Nicky Bird

Contemporary Memorial | Staffin Trust
Research & Development

Document Scotland

Atelier, Skye

Ceumannan // Footsteps | Anne Martin & Jason Singh

NEO NEO // Extreme Past | In the Shadow of the Hand

Sophie Morrish, Neil Macdonald, Bobby Niven, Hanna Tuulikki

Singing for the Sea (A Work for the North Atlantic) | Bethan Huws

GATHER | CONNECT | INSPIRE 2016

Place of Pillars | Ruth Barker

Aldeburgh Music | Friday Afternoons

Land Line // Five Walks in Skye | Caroline Dear

CLIMAVORE: On Tidal Zones | Cooking Sections Research & Development

The Call of Mist | John Akomfrah

2017

SCREEN-IT #3

Contemporary Memorial | Staffin Trust | Lateral North & Henry Castle

Early Warning Signs | Ellie Harrison

ATLAS Editions | Caroline Dear & Will Maclean

Còig Sgiathan | Five Wings

WASPS Artists Studios Residency | Martin Campbell

SCREEN-IT @ PHS

SCREEN-IT // Aithriseach

CLIMAVORE: On Tidal Zones | Cooking Sections

Eilean Fuinn | Richard Skelton

Go & See - Venice Biennale 2017 | Staff Visit

2018

SCREEN-IT // Home by Douglas Mackinnon (125 years of Skye Camanachd)

Contemporary Memorial | Staffin Trust

SCREEN-IT // Aithriseach

Eglantine | Margaret Salmon

Ragadawn | Caroline Bergvall

Women of Skye

ATLAS Editions | Martin Campbell & Ewan Thomson

Shore | Invisible Dust

CLIMAVORE: On Tidal Zones | Cooking Sections

List of Artists

Commissioned Artists

Ruth Barker
Caroline Bergvall
Nicky Bird
Martin Campbell
Henry Castle
Cooking Sections
Keg De Souza
Caroline Dear
Alec Finlay
Nick Hand
In the Shadow of the Hand
Rene Jansen
Lateral North
David Lemm
David Littler
Niall MacDonald
Will Maclean
J. Maizlish Mole
Anne Martin
Kirsty McKeown
Sophie Morrish
Deirdre Nelson
Bobby Niven
Frances Priest
Sharon Quigley
Margaret Salmon
Jason Singh
Richard Skelton
Tatham & O'Sullivan
Ewan Thomson
Hanna Tuulikki
Transit Arts
Walker & Bromwich
Catherine Weir

Programmed Artists

Shirley Abraham & Amit Madheshiya
James Adams
Chantal Akerman
John Akomfrah
Emma Balkind
Daniel Bär
George Barber
Meg Bateman
Ritesh Batra
Nerea Bello
Victoria Claire Bernie
David Bickly
Zöe Birrell
Susan Brind
Julie Brook
Gavin Bryers
Maoilios Caimbeul
Duncan Campbell
Jen Cantwell
Vija Celmins
Payee Chen
Ken Cockburn
Ceara Conway
Rhona Coogan
Thomas Joshua Cooper
Craig Coulthard
Steve Dilworth
Chris Dooks
Lucy Duncombe
Celine Duval
Victor Erice
Graham Fagan
Decker Forrest
Luke Fowler
Alex Frost

Sophie Gerrard
Rody Gorman
Sam Grant
Su Grierson
Alice Guy-Blaché
Robin Haig
Ilana Halperin
Ellie Harrison
Joe Harrison
Morag Henriksen
Bethan Huws
Leighton Jones
Gilly Langton
Suzy Lee
Let's Talk About Space
Stuart McAdam
Padraig MacAoidh
Diana Mackie
Hector MacInnes
Douglas Mackinnon
Norman MacLaren
Rachel Maclean
Cailean Maclean
Calum Maclean
Kenneth Macleod
Dana MacPherson
Fiona McAndrew
Fiona McLissac
Kate McMorrine
Colin McPherson
Michail Mersinis
Oliver Mezger
Nick Middleton
Neil Mulholland
Rupert Murray
Patricia Niemann

Akosua Adoma
Owusu
Hardeep Pandhal
Edwin Pickstone
Elizabeth Price
Jessica Ramm
Ben Rivers
Derek Robertson
Martha Rosler
Johnny Rodger
Joan Ross
Gill Russell
Fiona Shaw
John Smith
Sharat Chandra
Srivastava
Ishbel Strachan
Verity Susman
Jeremy Sutton-Hibbet
Margaret Tait
Thomson & Craighead
Angustus Veinoglou
Daniel Warren
Laura West
Lucy Woodley

Their work has been exhibited at Tate Britain; the 58th *Venice Biennale*; the U.S. Pavilion at the 2014 *Venice Architecture Biennale*; and *Manifesta 12* among others. They have been residents at Delfina Foundation, London. They lead a studio unit at the Royal College of Art, London.

www.cooking-sections.com

Norman Gillies

Professor Norman N. Gillies is the former chair of Trustees for ATLAS Arts. He is a native of the Isle of Skye and a fluent Gaelic speaker. He has had a lengthy career in management. In 1983, Gillies joined Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the national centre for Gaelic language and culture, where he spent twenty-five years heading up an ever expanding institution. He has board level experience of development agencies and arts organisations. Gillies is an Emeritus Professor of the University of the Highlands and Islands. He holds an Honorary Chair in Contemporary Highland Studies with the University of Aberdeen (who also awarded him an Honorary Doctor of Laws in 2000). He was Chief of the Gaelic Society of Inverness in 2000. Gillies was awarded an OBE in 2003 for services to education and Gaelic. In 2008, he received the Saltire Award in 2008; in 2009, he was made an Honorary Member of the Saltire Society. In 2011, Gillies was awarded an honorary degree (Doctor of the University) by the Open University for work in areas of special educational concern to the University and for exceptional contribution to education and culture. He chaired the Board of West Highland College from its foundation until the end of 2011 and until recently was on the Board of Governors of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Ilana Halperin

Ilana Halperin, born in New York, is an artist based between Glasgow and the Isle of Bute.

Her work explores the relationship between geology and daily life, combining fieldwork in diverse locations with an active studio-based practice. Her work has featured in solo exhibitions worldwide including Berliner Medizinhistorisches Museum der Charité, and Artists Space, New York.

Halperin was Inaugural Artist Fellow at National Museums Scotland. *The Library of Earth Anatomy*, is a permanent commission at The Exploratorium, San Francisco. *Minerals of New York* toured to Leeds Arts University and The Hunterian, Glasgow, in 2019. Her exhibition *There Is A Volcano Behind My House* at Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute was postponed in 2020 due to Covid-19. 'Ilana Halperin: Felt Events' is forthcoming from Strange Attractor/MIT Press (2021). Ilana shares her birthday with the Eldfell volcano in Iceland.

Katy Hastie

As a writer, Katy Hastie's work blends experimental forms of essay, story and lyric poetry to explore the act of seeing and knowing. In particular, she is fascinated by the inter and intra-active ways artistic, state and erotic surveillance overlap: how an artist fixes their subject, a lover their beloved, or the state their citizens.

She shapes her work into found cut-ups, concrete poetry and prose-poem essays, which can be found in 'Zarf', 'Gutter', 'From Glasgow to Saturn' and the 'Free Poetry: Scotland Anthology'. Hastie completed an experimental novel as part of her PhD at the University of Glasgow and currently helps edit 'Gutter' magazine.

Roger Hutchinson

Roger Hutchinson is a respected journalist and author who has lived and worked in the northwest Highlands since 1977. His

numerous books include 'Polly, The True Story Behind Whisky Galore' (1990), 'Calum's Road' (2011), 'The Silent Weaver' (2011), and 'Martyrs Glendale and the Revolution in Skye' (2015).

Lucas Ihlein

Lucas Ihlein is an artist and researcher in creative arts at the University of Wollongong. Ihlein uses socially-engaged art to explore cultural innovations in agricultures. Major exhibitions include *Plastic-Free Biennale* with Kim Williams in NIRIN (Biennale of Sydney 2020), *The Yeomans Project* (2011-14) with Ian Milliss at Art Gallery of NSW, and *Environmental Audit* (2010) at Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney.

Ihlein is a founding member of the group Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation (KSCA). Recent projects include *Sugar vs the Reef?* with Kim Williams, and *Baking Earth: Soil and the Carbon Economy* at Monash University Museum of Art.

www.lucasihlein.net

In the Shadow of the Hand

In the Shadow of the Hand is an ongoing collaborative project that brings into conversation the artistic practices of Sarah Forrest and Virginia Hutchison. Since the collaboration began in 2012, In the Shadow of the Hand has incorporated writing, object making, performance and film in order to explore the relationship between an art object and the language that surrounds it. For their contribution to the book, In the Shadow of the Hand use extracts from the paper 'Archeology and the Study of Material Culture: Synergies With Cultural Psychology' by Alfredo González-Ruibal, originally published in 'The Oxford Handbook of Culture and Psychology' (Oxford University Press, 2012). González-Ruibal is a Spanish archaeologist

who specialises in archaeology of the contemporary past including that pertaining to colonialism, dictatorships and capitalism.

Moira Jeffrey

Moira Jeffrey is a writer based in Glasgow and recently appointed Director of the Scottish Contemporary Art Network. Her published works include short fiction, criticism and commissioned essays on artists including Alice Neel, Monika Sosnowska and Esther Shalev-Gerz. She has contributed to new monographs on contemporary artists Carol Rhodes and Jacqueline Donachie, and the documentary photographer Alan Dimmick. Jeffrey has more than 20 years of experience in the visual arts in Scotland including roles in arts journalism and broadcasting, public funding, development work and research.

Angela McClanahan-Simmons

Angela McClanahan-Simmons teaches visual culture in the School of Art at Edinburgh College of Art. Her primary research interests include examining how people engage with and construct meaning from the material world, and how the things and places we make and use are experienced, interpreted, ordered and displayed to construct narratives of historic and contemporary cultures in museums, galleries, landscape, bodily, contemporary art and cinematic contexts. She is also interested in ideas about the material culture of the recent and deep past, and its relationships to politics, presents and futures, and ethical practices in contemporary art, museums and anthropology.

Gayle Meikle

Gayle Meikle is a Scottish curator, researcher and lecturer based out of Newcastle Upon Tyne, England. She specialises in bringing artists, artworks and audiences together to

create site-responsive and critically engaged projects. She takes an intersectional and relational approach to curatorial practice rooted in material feminisms (a strand of feminist theory that thinks with the natural, human and material worlds), critical spatial practice and socially engaged art. Gayle has over ten years of experience working in the cultural sector and worked with ATLAS Arts from 2013–2016 and Deveron Projects in 2011. In early 2021 she was awarded a practice-based PhD from the BxNU Institute, Northumbria University.

Gavin Morrison

Gavin Morrison is a writer and curator. He is currently working on a book 'The Malcontents,' which follows the fate of cannons sent by James Boswell to the Corsican Republic to aid the fight against the French invasion of 1768. The book uses the search for this lost arsenal as a structure from which to consider the instabilities and convergences of histories.

Neil Mulholland

Professor Neil Mulholland is Chair of Contemporary Art Practice and Theory at The University of Edinburgh. He develops speculative and theory-fiction approaches to writing, paralogy and artistic research. He collaborates with Norman Hogg (Ottawa, ON) as the Confraternity of Neoflagellants. Together they have published 'pan-pan' (Punctum, 2021).

With Dan Brown, curator of research at Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop, Professor Mulholland co-directs Shift/Work, a paralogy that reconfigures workshop-based artistic learning to generate open educational resources. This line of inquiry is explored in Professor Mulholland's book 'Re-imagining the Art School: Paralogy and Artistic Learning' (Palgrave, 2019). He is also founding

member of Atelier: Making Research Material Across the Arts & Social Sciences.

www.neilmulholland.co.uk

Emma Nicolson

Emma Nicolson is Head of Creative Programmes at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh (RBGE) and leads on the development of a new arts strategy, the creation of innovative exhibitions and event opportunities that engage with art, nature, science and the environment in the unique context of RGBE. In 2020 she launched Climate House and formed a collaboration with the Serpentine Galleries through the creation of the General Ecology Network. Prior to this she was the founding director of the award-winning ATLAS Arts (2010–2018) based on the Isle of Skye. During her tenure with ATLAS she undertook a two year guest curator role with Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum and Arts Centre in North Uist (2013–15). Emma has been actively involved in the visual arts for over twenty years and has worked with leading cultural institutions in Scotland, England, Ireland and Australia, including Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney Australia (2007–2010), National Galleries of Scotland (2001–07), and Fife Council.

James Oliver

James Oliver (Seumas Chatriona Dhomhnuill Aonghais Bhig), is a transdisciplinary academic and writer based in Melbourne, Australia. A native Hebridean and Daileach (from Gleann Dail, Skye), Oliver began his career as a researcher on Gaelic language education, place, and identity. He is currently an associate professor of design at RMIT University, working across international Indigenous practice research collaborations and more broadly on creative practice research, culture, and community.

www.jamesoliverculture.com

Frances Priest

Frances Priest is an Edinburgh-based artist with a specialism in ceramics. Her work explores cultural histories of ornament and decoration, combining a studio-based practice with sited projects and design commissions.

Priest's work is represented in public collections including The National Museum of Scotland, The Fitzwilliam Museum and The Victoria & Albert Museum. Her work has been selected for survey exhibitions and biennales, including *European Ceramic Context*, *The British Ceramics Biennale* and *Homo Faber — Best of Europe*. In 2020 she became a QEST Scholar.

Ernesto Pujol

Ernesto Pujol was born in Havana, Cuba to a family of Spanish & Scottish descent. He is a site-specific performance artist and social choreographer, designing public, performative, group experiences as psychic portraits of people & places under threat. Pujol combines historical research, cathartic performativity, and environmentalism in his wandering process, which he calls "The Listening School".

Pujol is the author of: 'Sited Body, Public Visions: silence, walking & stillness as performance practice' (2012), and 'Walking Art Practice: Reflections on Socially Engaged Paths' (2018), as well as numerous cultural essays. Pujol is currently based in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Anushka Rajendran

Anushka Rajendran is a curator and art writer based in New Delhi. She is the curator for Prameya Art Foundation (PRAF), a not-for-profit arts organisation based in New Delhi committed to approaches that enable

audience-thinking for contemporary art. She is also the festival curator of *Colomboscope, 2021*, Sri Lanka; and curator of video art for *Asian Art Biennial 2021*, Taiwan. She was assistant curator for *Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2018*.

Rajendran's ongoing research traces how the notion of 'public' has acquired alternative significance to contemporary Indian art since 2004. She has been awarded fellowships that supported residencies with Aomori Contemporary Art Center, Aomori, Japan; the International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP), New York (by Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation); and Theertha International Artists' Collective, Colombo. In 2015 she received the Art Scribes Award for emerging/mid-career art writers of Indian origin.

Jane Rendell

Jane Rendell (BSc, DipArch, MSc, PhD) is Professor of Critical Spatial Practice at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, where she co-initiated the MA Situated Practice and supervises MA and PhD projects.

Her research, writing and pedagogic practice crosses architecture, art, feminism, history and psychoanalysis, and she has introduced concepts of 'critical spatial practice' and 'site-writing' through her authored books: 'The Architecture of Psychoanalysis' (2017), 'Silver' (2016), 'Site-Writing' (2010), 'Art and Architecture' (2006), and 'The Pursuit of Pleasure' (2002). With Dr David Roberts, she leads the Bartlett's Ethics Commission; and with Dr Yael Padan, 'The Ethics of Research Practice', for KNOW (Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality).

janerendell.co.uk

Ainslie Roddick

Ainslie Roddick took up the post of Director at

ATLAS Arts in December 2019. She worked as Curator at the Centre for Contemporary Arts in Glasgow from 2014-2019, and coordinated CCA's 'Open Source' Programme for five years. She has a keen interest in independent publishing and alternative library collections — co-founding Publication Studio Glasgow as an open access book-binding studio in 2017, and the Glasgow Seed Library in 2019. She teaches at the Glasgow School of Art's Curatorial Practice MLitt and co-founded artist project space the duchy in 2009.

Dr. Kirstie Skinner

Dr. Kirstie Skinner established Outset Scotland (2013 -2019) to encourage greater philanthropic investment in contemporary art in Scotland. Outset is a global network supporting art sector initiatives, contemporary art commissions and gifts to public collections.

Dr. Skinner is Director of Research and Strategy for the Outset Partners Grants Programme. As a researcher and consultant Kirstie has been involved with Scotland's public collections for over two decades, most recently leading Curatorial Leadership in Collections, a national initiative for Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN).

Prior to this, Dr. Skinner devised education and curatorial professional development programmes for various art institutions alongside her role as a university lecturer. Her published articles focus on sculpture and film, as does her thesis, 'Spectres of Minimalism'.

Keg de Souza

Keg de Souza lives and works in Redfern, Sydney on unceded Gadigal land and uses mediums such as temporary architecture, food, mapping and dialogical projects to explore the poetics and politics of space. This investigation of social and spatial

environments is influenced by formal training in architecture and experiences of radical spaces through squatting and organising. de Souza creates site and situation specific projects with people emphasising knowledge exchange and building relationships and relationality. In her work temporary architectures are often used as framing devices to host pedagogical platforms for centring voices that are often marginalised.

de Souza has made projects for: South London Gallery; Artspace, Sydney; Biennale of Sydney; Setouchi Triennale; Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver; Delfina Foundation, London; ATLAS Arts, Isle of Skye; Auckland Triennial and Jakarta Biennale. www.kegdesouza.com

Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart

Dr Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart is a senior lecturer at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and course leader for the MSc in Cultar Dùthchasach agus Eachdraidh na Gàidhealtachd (Material Culture and Gàidhealtachd History). Dr Stiùbhart's work draws upon the history, literature, material culture, ethnology, oral tradition, and popular customs of the Scottish Gàidhealtachd.

Among his research topics are the Hebridean traveller and author Martin Martin (c. 1665–1718); the late eighteenth-century 'local experts' who cooperated in an unsuccessful attempt to compose the first full-scale Gaelic dictionary; as well as wider questions about the historical rôle of popular oral literature, customs, and beliefs in fostering social resilience and community rapport in the challenging Highland environment.

Joanne Tatham & Tom O'Sullivan

Joanne Tatham & Tom O'Sullivan began working together whilst completing the MFA programme at Glasgow School of Art,

exhibiting their first collaborative work at Glasgow's Transmission Gallery in 1995. Their recent commissions include *A Proposal To Ask Where Does A Threshold Begin and End for Mima, Middlesbrough*; and *A Glasgow Spectacular for the 2018 Glasgow European Championships*.

Hanna Tuulikki

Hanna Tuulikki is an artist, composer and performer based in Scotland, who specialises in working with the voice and gesture, to re-imagine resonant stories of contemporary relevance. In research-led, multi-disciplinary projects, she investigates the ways in which the body communicates beyond and before words. With a particular interest in the practice of 'mimesis', her work explores the place of folk narratives, memory, ritual and technology within specific environments.

Tuulikki's innovative practice spans site-specific performance, immersive audio-visual installation and interactive new media, blending together textural tapestries of extended vocal composition, gestural choreography, iconic costume and original visual score drawings. She has worked with organisations across the arts in the UK, Europe, USA, India and Australia, including Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Glasgow International, BALTIC Newcastle, The Space, Tectonics Festival and Cape Farewell, amongst others.

Walker and Bromwich

Glasgow-based collaborative duo Zoe Walker and Neil Bromwich are known for their large-scale iconic sculptural works, participatory events and exhibitions that invite audiences to imagine better worlds. At the core of their practice is the exploration of the role art can play as an active agent in society, evolving environments and situations within which people can begin to re-examine the world around them.

Walker and Bromwich have presented work at Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; Tate Britain, London; The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh; and many others. They have also produced expansive public commissions such as *Celestial Radio* (2002-13) and *The Art Lending Library* (2012-19). A monograph on their work is published by John Hansard Gallery and is available through Cornerhouse Publishing.

www.walkerandbromwich.org.uk

Image captions for centre pages:

Top to bottom, Left to right (photos by ATLAS Arts unless otherwise stated): Emma at *Ragadawn* by Caroline Bergvall, 2018; Shona mopping the floor at WASPs artist residency; Audience listening to *Celestial Radio, Bàta Brèagha // Bonnie Boat*, 2011. Photo: Mark Pindard; *Are you LOCATIONALIZED* soft launch in Glasgow, 2014; Ann Martin, Jason Singh and Gyan Singh in the recording studio, Delhi, India, 2015; The installation of the Udal Digital Commission, artwork by Fiona MacIassac, Taigh Chearsabhagh, 2015; Prof. Tim Ingold, *Land Line Five Walks in Skye*, 2016; Ann Martin and Gyan Singh in the recording studio, Delhi, India, 2015; Board and staff members at the Venice Biennale, 2017; *Women of the Hill* after event at Talla Bhreacais, 2014; Participate knitting for the *Great Wellie Sock Challenge, Spincycle*, 2013; Launch event at Dunvegan Castle for *Belief*, 2013; George Kozikowski and Martin Wildgoose, 2013; the BBC Symphony Orchestra performing on the Isle of Raasay ferry, 2015; Close up of mycelium illustration, *Land Line Five Walks in Skye*, 2016; Ilana Halperin and Andrew Patrizio *Where Volcanoes Meet* performance at Minginish Community Hall, 2013; Installation of the *Are you LOCATIONALIZED* in North Uist, 2014; An archaeological site on the east side of North Uist; A contemporary memorial visit with members from Staffin Memorial Trust, 2014; artists Ruth Barker and Niall Macdonald with Dr Katie Macdonald and Catherine Macleod at an archaeological site in Berneray, 2014; Hector MacInnes sings at the closing event for *Singing to the Sea*, 2016; Dillie on the rocks in Skye; Audience members watching a screening of *Women of the Hill*, part of *NEO NEO // Extreme Past*, 2016; Gayle Meikle, Amanda Catto, Sarah MacIntyre and George Burns enjoying the menu at *Climavore: On Tidal Zones*, 2017; shot list for BBC's *Ten Pieces*, 2015; artist Caroline Dear with participants of *Land Line Five Walks in Skye*, 2016.

Bòcan [masc]

1. apparition, ghost, spectre, spirit, sprite
2. (hob)goblin

stiùirvb

/ d u r /v. n. -eadh

1. lead, guide!
2. conduct, direct, steer!
3. manage, supervise!

Àite [masc]

1. locality, location, place
2. lieu, position
3. instance
4. room, space

Cala [masc]

/kaL /gen. -laidh, pl. -lathan

1. harbour, port
2. resting place (poetic)

Deisear [masc]

1. place with a southerly aspect

Tuathair [fem]

1. place with a northerly aspect, land facing north

Tùs-àite [masc]

1. place of origin

Dùthchas [masc]

/du x s/gen. -ais, pl. -an

1. place of birth
2. heredity right or claim
3. birth-tie
4. kindred affection, natural affinity
5. natural, wild, state; wilderness, madness

Dùthchasach [adj]

/du x s x/comp. -aiche

1. endemic
2. traditional

Seanchaidh

1. tradition-bearer
2. storyteller
3. antiquarian

An ~ dúchais

1. one's native place

Help, aides, tools, pointers, gratitudes, nods...

A stocktake of gratitude and form of accounting for everyone and everything that helped make all this happen and other stuff, written as remembered.

We would like to acknowledge the archipelago of the Hebrides and the Island of Skye as sources of inspiration, refuge, grounding, intrigue, delight, frustration and inheritance. A boundless thanks to the artists who have been the very essence of the work we do. You inspired and enthralled audiences encouraging them to view the world and their environment with renewed perspective. We thank you.

Writing can be a solitary activity but the work presented here has like all of ATLAS's work been a collective process. Our thinking has formed through the generous minds who supported the work in different ways with their encouragement and critique. We are incredibly grateful to James Oliver, who read the entire manuscript closely and whose edits and comments improved the content presented here. This work has evolved over time and has been impacted by career changes, and many personal circumstances followed by a pandemic.

Praxis

1. practice, as distinguished from theory
2. accepted practice or custom

Biophilia: Hypothesis suggests that humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life. Edward O. Wilson defines it as the 'urge to affiliate with other forms of life'.

Topophilia: Love of place, Tuan defines as 'the affective bond between people and place or setting'.

Hospitality, hosting, building social connection through food and warm gatherings was a key part of our approach whether it was fortifying folk with hearty soup or dining on oysters in forty-mile-an-hour winds. This took the form of welcoming people in our homes, hosting special meals to introduce visiting artists to potential collaborators to working with local producers, bakers, pubs, restaurants and guest houses. Often our guests and visiting artists stayed with us but we are grateful to all those who kindly played host too. In particular we would like to thank; Margaret Ferguson, Whitewave, the Tongadale, Raasay House, George Kozikowski, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Viewfield House, Jeanmarie Gescher of Corry Lodge, Calum Munro of Scorrybreac, Calum Montgomery of Edinbane Lodge, Dunvegan Castle, the Skye Bakery, the Skye Gathering Hall and the Braes, Skeabost, Breakish, and Minginish village halls, and the many B&B and holiday cottages.

Equally in order to maintain a presence off island we relied heavily on the generosity of friends and family who accommodated and fed us when traveling to meetings in the central belt; Martin Reynolds, John McColgan, Steven Haddow, Senan Kelleher, Kate Cameron, Drew and Kate Meikle.

Peers and colleagues whose counsel was supportive and helpful — special thanks to Roanne Dodds whose critical friendship and

whose drive to lift other women up we will forever be indebted to; Suzy Glass, Kirstie Skinner, Clare Doherty, Caroline Winn, Neil Firth, Iona Macdonald, Kath MacLeod, Caroline Dear, Jane and Menno Verburg, Sophie Morrish and René Jansen.

For their extraordinary insight and generous sharing of knowledge; archaeologist Martin Wildgoose, historian Hugh Cheape, poet Maoilios Caimbeul, and the unofficial mayor of Portree Ross Cowie, Calum Matheson, Kate Macdonald, Elsie Mitchell, Meg Bateman, Lachie Gillies, Shona Macdonald.

There is a heightened sense of the essential role that volunteers play in island and rural communities, from the Mountain Rescue, Coast Guard, Royal LifeBoat Institution to the talking newspaper for the Blind. In making art happen we worked with all of these groups and more and their selfless service helped to shape and improve community life.

As a team we would regularly shrink and grow calling upon expertise and talents as and when we needed them to help support projects. Key contributors were Claudia Monteiro, our star media relations expert whose tenacity we relied upon to ensure our work was featured in national print; thanks to our valued design gurus Andy McGregor who created ATLAS's first identity; and An Endless Supply, Emlyn Firth, Fleet Collective, Hebridean Design and Maeve Redmond who helped visualise our projects.

For their skills as technicians, bus drivers, sailors and stewards Ross Hamilton Frew, Neil Christie, John Nicolson, Tim Wear, Rory Middleton, Chris Tyler, Dave Patfield and Rob Forest.

Will Maclean and Murdo Macdonald without whose encouragement Emma might never

have taken up the role in Skye.

Nourishment from the island; scallops, oysters, mussels, prawns, Stag biscuits, mushrooms, cucumbers, geese, venison potatoes, eggs, apples, wood sorrel, fungi, heather, beer, whisky, berries and hazelnuts.

Sunny days

Prosecco

Sea Eagles

Salmon

Otters

Peat

Salt

Anchovy Butter: In a large bowl mash together unsalted french butter, anchovies, garlic, salt, pepper and lemon. Use with scallops, slow roast lamb or toast.

Tools: Ladder, wellington boots, car, buckets, hammer, projectors, paint, brushes, measuring tape, ladle spoon and spatula.

Crofter Craft: A way of fixing things with baler twine or anything else to hand, what you can't do with tape, string and a hammer!

An Post

Thanks to all our more than human friends; Dilli, Patch, Edi, Ralph, Rob, Ruby, Brandy and the cats Mixu, Connor, the wild miniature shetland ponies of loch Skipport, the white ponies of Eriskay and the otters.

Family and kin Bits and Bobs

Some of our favourite stores; Jans of Portree, Skinners decorating centre, Kallin Shellfish Ltd, Inverness Chandlers, MacLennans Supermarket.

ATLAS would not have been able to function over the years without the dedication, commitment and hard work of so many. Key contributors to the success of many of the projects discussed were Producer Shona Cameron, Administrator Suzy Lee and Project Coordinator Rosie Somerville. We thank them for their hard work, dedication and invaluable contributions.

For their diligence, professionalism, ongoing patience and general understanding Ainslie Roddick and the ATLAS team past and present must sincerely be thanked.

We are indebted to the passion and commitment of the ATLAS board whose unwavering support gave strength to our mission. Throughout we were fortunate to work with a Board who took their governance duties seriously with good humour, individually and together they were important sounding boards, guides and champions for ATLAS. To Norman Gillies, John White, Rebecca Waterstone, Sorcha Dallas Gray, Steven Haddow, Sophie Morrish, Anna Jobson, Sue Pirnie and Donald Hyslop we thank you, it was an honour to work with you.

We are indebted to the passion and commitment of many individuals and organisations.

Locally — organisations; Clan Donald Centre, Fèisan nan Gaidheal, Aros, Seall, Portree Community Trust, Staffin Community Trust, RNLI, Cuillin FM, Skye Sailing Club, Portree High School, SkyeDance, Raasay House Hotel & Outdoor Activities/Raasay Trust, Raasay Primary School, Raasay youth club, Isle of Skye Pipe Band, Plockton High School Traditional boat building project, The Skye Agricultural Show Committee, Kilmuir Primary School, Portree Primary School, Broadford Primary School, Skye Weavers, Local Ward

Manager, The Isle of Skye Baking Company, Dunvegan Castle, Whitewave Outdoor Centre, Countryside Rangers Service, Royal Bank of Scotland, West Highland College, Taigh na Drochaid Resource Centre for disability and the elderly, Skye & Lochalsh Visually Impaired, Skye & Lochalsh Mental Health Association, Crossroads, Women's Aid, Family First, Adult Literacy/High Life Highland, Skye & Lochalsh Disability Group, Headway Highland, Community Stroke Services, Young Careers, Skye Old Peoples Welfare/ Community Transport, Viewfield Garden Collective, Am Fasgadh Day Centre, Skye Games Committee, SCVO Portree Community Council, WASPS. Dunvegan Castle's Hugh Macleod and team, Robert Livingston and the Hi-Arts team.

Our collaborative partners across the Minch Taigh Chearsabhaigh Museum and Arts Centre; Norman Macleod, Andy Mackinnon, Alasdair and Margaret MacLellan, Morag Macdonald, Charles Fraser, Pamela McAskill, Anne Corrance Monk, Stuart Menzies, Jean Archer, Pauline Prior Pitt, Keith and Sheenagh McIntyre, Marnie Keltie, Uisdean Robertson. The community, schools and especially Access Archaeology, Uist Arts Association and Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath, the Langass Lodge, the Lochmaddy Hotel, Ian Stephen Morrison and Am Pàipear.

Amanda Catto, Sarah MacIntrye, Stephen Palmer, Leonie Bell, Ian Munro.

Nick & Kate Middleton for their enthusiasm and commitment to ATLAS projects, often participating or filming in all conditions day and night.

Beyond this there are many individuals not mentioned here to whom we owe our gratitude.

Thanks to all at Hi-Art Arts in Inverness who incubated ATLAS, in particular Robert

Livingston, Avril Souter, Karen Ray, Laura Stevens, Sian Jameson and Pamela Connacher.

Regional — Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Highlife Highland Trust, Highland Council, Roads Dept, Hi-Arts Craft Development Programme, Ross Women's Services the RNIB and Sight Action (based in Inverness), SENSE, RETHINK, FLIP, The Autism Initiative, Art Link, Action on Hearing Loss and the RNID, Crossroads and Health and Happiness and CHANGE, Portree Archive Centre National; City Arts Centre, Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland, Artist Rooms, Hospitalfield, Creative Scotland, Deveron Projects, Huntly, New Media Scotland, Glasgow School of Art, Edinburgh School of Art, University of Edinburgh, LUX Scotland, Skills Development Scotland, Tate, Engage Scotland, SCAN, BBC Scotland BBC Alba, BBC Symphony Orchestra, V&A Dundee, This is Tomorrow, Situations, International, Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney, Performance Space Sydney, Outset Scotland, British Council Scotland, Artichoke, Fiona Shaw, ENPAP (European Network of Public Art Producers).

For their proofing and editing skills James Oliver and Kate Holford.

Ross Hamilton Frew as confidant and work-horse over the years and latterly who took on the brunt of domestic responsibilities.

To Sula and Brisa, who provided light relief during long writing sessions.

Skye Gathering Hall Basement
Bank Street, Portree
Isle of Skye IV51 9BZA

A Commonplace Book of ATLAS
Edited by Emma Nicolson and Gayle Meikle

This book is dedicated to Dilli.

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ONE LAST OBSERVATION:

- Networks help to feel part of a bigger community of arts professionals
- Seek to reconcile local needs and values and context of contemporary art
- Material and social circumstances are different
- Challenge preconceptions and expectations
- Deep listening and dialogue complement each other
- Encourage policy makers to not assume policy plays out the same everywhere — rural proofing
- Important to have a spectrum of provision, know the potential of small actions
- Rural setting is a complex ethical system to which there is no 'right' practice
- Recognition for more access per head to contemporary art in cities
- More visible cultural institutions in cities — smaller less visible in rural
- The less visible you are the more effective you are
- Absorb, understand, adapt, place — identity is formed through an ongoing process

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Traditionally a Commonplace Book takes shape as a curated collection of written extracts, reflective notes, explorative ideas and biographical inserts. An idiosyncratic organised depository of information devised for future reference.

Typically, the book is organised through a personal narrative, combining copied passages of existing writing, alongside diaristic entries and litanies. Mirroring this we present the Commonplace Book of ATLAS part biographical note, part documentation, chronicling the activity of ATLAS Arts from 2010-2018. It has been created as a marker of a moment in time, compiled over a number of years. There are contributions from those deeply connected to our projects and others included because they share affinities with our ways of working. The book creates an archive of insights into realised and unrealised work. Shared here is a diverse range of material from academic writing, snippets of conversations interleaved and enriched with project documentation.

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