

research +
enterprise

UCA
university for the creative arts

Research students

Exhibition catalogue 2013



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Introduction

Time – Place – Space

The perception of place, spatiality and time is changing in our globalising world under the influence of incessant and ubiquitous digitisation. As our existence is very much conditioned by spatial and temporal coordinates, Atlas and Cronus wield different powers over our ways of socialising and communicating, living, and working, self/perception and self/governance. Therefore, the theme defined for the annual UCA Research Student conference and exhibition provides a pertinent framework for the display and critical debate of their creative inquiries in progress.

The exhibits are broadly situated within the territory of art, architecture and design, and span a considerable variety of media. These range from multi-media installations centred around carefully crafted objects made in ceramics, cloth, and mixed materials, and performative manipulations of celluloid to produce film without a camera, to imaginative spatial interventions, and photography based narratives. The works on display share a concern for material processes as the driving force for the poetic exploration of human relationships and identities within a dynamically changing set of existential conditions, social concerns and cultural

sensitivities. Through their practice, research students aim to scrutinize and challenge established modes of perception and engagement, for instance in terms of how we conduct greetings in and across cultural boundaries, how we imaginatively re-engage with historical architectural sites and specific spatialities, and how we can achieve mindfulness, i.e. a state of relaxed yet heightened awareness, through meditative or ritualistic practices. The reassessment of historical cultural precedents related for instance to Minimal Art, Arte Povera and Identity Art, as well as traditional crafts, installation and media practices, from contemporary perspectives motivate much of the creative explorations on show. In their totality these in/ter/ventions involve the bandwidth of the human sensorium and provoke a diverse array of embodied experience that affect how we re-intuit familiar sites, give consideration to situatedness and the genius loci, re-think 'tempus', rhythm and duration, and comprehend the connective energies of memory and spirituality.

Each of these inquiries proposes its own and entirely owned answer to the question what does re/research in the space of the Creative Arts mean, and how does it contribute to new knowledge and

understanding beyond the terms of the individual practice. These interrogations of approaches, methods and instruments of inquiry 'in and through practice' add significantly to both, the ongoing debates about the still contested notion of 'art as research' and, more generally, about the value of the arts in society. They engage with the persistent tensions between established paradigms of knowledge production within the academy that continue to be dominated by models from the natural and social science on the one hand, and the forms of validation of contemporary art and cultural practices on the other hand. Despite a history of almost three decades, the understanding of research in Art and Design is still emerging and remains contested. The gamut of terms that seek to give expression to creative practice as the site, method/ology, tools and process of re/search indicate the developmental nature and changing temperature of the debates. Practice-based or practice-led research, art as research, artistic research, practice as research or 'PhD in studio practice' allude as much to specific institutional and political frameworks as they are marked by different cultures, languages and educational geographies. Whilst each term is specifically situated and comes with a set of connotations, they have in common the

demarcation of a 'proposition that reciprocally frames the known unknowns as it deframes the experiencing of the unknown unknowns' as the Dutch artist and researcher Sher Doruff argued.¹

Conceived and organised by a highly committed group of research students, the annual conference and exhibition extend academic opportunities for insightful reflection, vibrant exchange and informed debate that are offered by the UCA Research Student Forum, the Advanced Research Methods workshops and the Annual Progress Review Panels. These events provide an arena for organisers and participants to test and develop their professional skills and creative and intellectual confidence, and thus contribute to the development of research students' leadership potential for the creative economy and wider society.

Prof. Kerstin Mey
Director of Research + Enterprise

¹ Sher Doruff, 'Artistic Res/Arch: The propositional experience of mattering', in: *Art as Research*, ed. R. Smite, K. Mey and R. Smits, Acoustic Mirror, Vol. 9, MPLab, Art Research Lab of Liepaja University and RIXC, The Centre for New Media Culture, Riga, Latvia, 2011, p. 15

Beverly Ayling-Smith

Research degree student

3rd year part time

The space between mourning and melancholia: the use of cloth in contemporary art practice to materialise the work of mourning

In his essay *'Mourning and Melancholia'* Sigmund Freud described the process of mourning as coming to a spontaneous end like a wound which has healed. In contrast, melancholia is like an open wound which cannot be healed. Beverly's work explores the way traumas such as bereavement may heal but they are always present as scars embedded in the fabric of our lives.

www.beverlyaylingsmith.com



Healing series
Calico, thread, lead
Three pieces each
1.93 x 0.4 m

Kim Bagley

Research degree student
3rd year full time

Africa and the West: a contested dialogue in modern and contemporary ceramics

What Africa or 'African-ness' may mean in ceramics today is the question raised in Kim Bagley's research. African identities can be ascribed to objects by their makers or through exhibitions and museum accessions that categorise them along conceptual or geographic lines, in both Africa and the West. In studio work that forms part of the research, Bagley makes handmade multiples that incorporate elements of sameness and difference to comment on and question these issues of African identity construction through objects, referring to studio ceramics, in particular, and to postcolonial and post-apartheid realities, using metaphor and analogy in installation practice.

Current studio works are ceramic translations of extermination tents used in suburban Durban, South Africa, to rid homes of wood eating pests. These large, skin-like, hollow forms continue a theme of animal related metaphors, albeit in an oblique form. Previous work drew particularly on cattle and cattle related forms. An interest in clay-as-skin as a central metaphor continues to be both a formal and conceptual concern in work that addresses continental, cultural and personal identities.



*Extermination
Tents I (detail)*
Gas reduction fired
porcelain paperclay,
electric fired red
earthenware
paperclay, oxides
and screen printed
enamel transfers
Dimensions variable

Gail Baxter

Research degree student

4th year part time

Connecting the lacunae: contemporary lace practice and the notion of absence in museum archives

Gail's contemporary lace practice interlinks many individual threads to form a coherent whole around the absences that are the essence of the fabric.

The series contemplates the processes at work in the absorption of a group of privately collected objects into a formal museum collection. The objects and their provenances are assessed by the curator and archivist in order to plan a co-ordinated scheme for cataloguing, storing, retrieval and archival purposes. The individual object histories form sub-strands within the story that is being woven in the archive. The lace demonstrates the multiplicity of potential ways of configuring such diverse strands in relation to the formal constraints of the archival grid.

Many apparently random potential thread paths are manipulated and controlled according to a chosen set of working rules. Questions as to whether a pair of threads should be twisted to make them move in a certain direction or if they should travel through a different part of the pattern have much in common with decisions on where to place items taxonomically in a museum system.

Gail has exhibited widely in Europe and her work is held in both private and museum collections. Further examples can be found at: www.ghostreestudio.co.uk



Mediation (detail)
Mixed threads
200 x 20 cm (variable)

Richard Couzins

Research degree student

PhD completion phase

Inside out: the under-theorised object and material voice in Fine Art practice

Couzins' video practice investigates the material and object qualities of voices. Through this sound authenticity and self-presence meet in the voice, and ideas around this became a major issue for late twentieth century philosophy. More than this, as a result of reproduction, a voice also suggests a milieu in a way not possible prior to recording. The milieu has a materiality not obvious in its own moment but emerges with the comparisons afforded by reproduction and the distance of time.

Listening is not a neutral activity, but rather involves a strategy and regime. By listening to voices critically we must engage with a combination of ideas from psychoanalysis, phenomenology and cultural critiques, that do not invalidate each other, as the voice cannot be pinned onto any one theory. The voice cannot speak about itself, however, the aim of the research is to describe its' functions, and open up lines of enquiry for the voice as a form, object and material, to discover what gives rise to voice in Fine Art practice. We read and listen to voices as much as to what they say. Voices reveal information about the subject speaking that is direct, affective and outside of language.



The Jazz Singer
Video

Grigoris Digkas

Research degree student

1st year part time

A photographic representation of self-exile in contemporary Greece

Grigoris explores notions of journey and home, cosmopolitanism and cultural identity, desire and denial through stories of foreignness and self-exile in contemporary society.

Grigoris structures narratives around the framework set by the 'voyage' both as a figurative component of travelogue and memoir and as an allegory of a metaphorical journey towards an elsewhere. His intimate documentaries combine different kinds of imagery and text in fragmentary and poetic narratives that project memories of the collective subconscious and perceptions of a displaced and alienated present reality into a suggestive nostalgia for a utopia.

Grigoris' work is usually conceived and carried out in book form due to the intimate nature of the medium and its potential for creative storytelling. This allows the viewer to engage with his contemplative thinking in a profound way. In his work, the boundaries between the real and the fiction are blurred. Reality through the eyes of the self-exiled is transformed into fiction, while photography's indexicality consolidates the fictional perspective of the exiled into document. Photography becomes a contemporary visual language to transform dream like and reflective stories into social documentary enquiry.

www.grigorisdigkas.com



From the series *Ithaca*
Photography
Dimensions variable

Michael Halpin

Research degree student

2nd year full time

The contemporary re-signification of Minimal Art

Mike is a sculptor and installation artist. Both his research and practice examine the re-interpretation of Minimal Art.

Whilst his works may look like minimalism of the 1960s and 1970s they are, in reality, very different. The geometric, linear, monochrome, perspective, repetitions and space are important features within the works. However, the viewer is asked to consider issues outside the work that can only be explained by the backstory, which often includes political debate, narrative, biography etc.

The underlying philosophies of Mike's works are based on writings and theories from Deleuze, Merleau-Ponty, Lefebvre and Bourriaud et al. which reflect on narrative, 'fold' and 'unfold', the immanent, spiritual, space, perception, phenomenology, embodiment, immersion and abstraction. In view of the dimensions of his space specific works the special relationships between art and architecture and the practical use of space have become additional considerations.

The viewers and their dialogues with the works are key components in the completion of Mike's works, which are created to question rather than to provide answers.

Pearl Square
Roundabout 2011
Acrylic, industrial
paint, charcoal on
canvas
8.2 x 0.5 x 0.0025 m



Christina Lovey

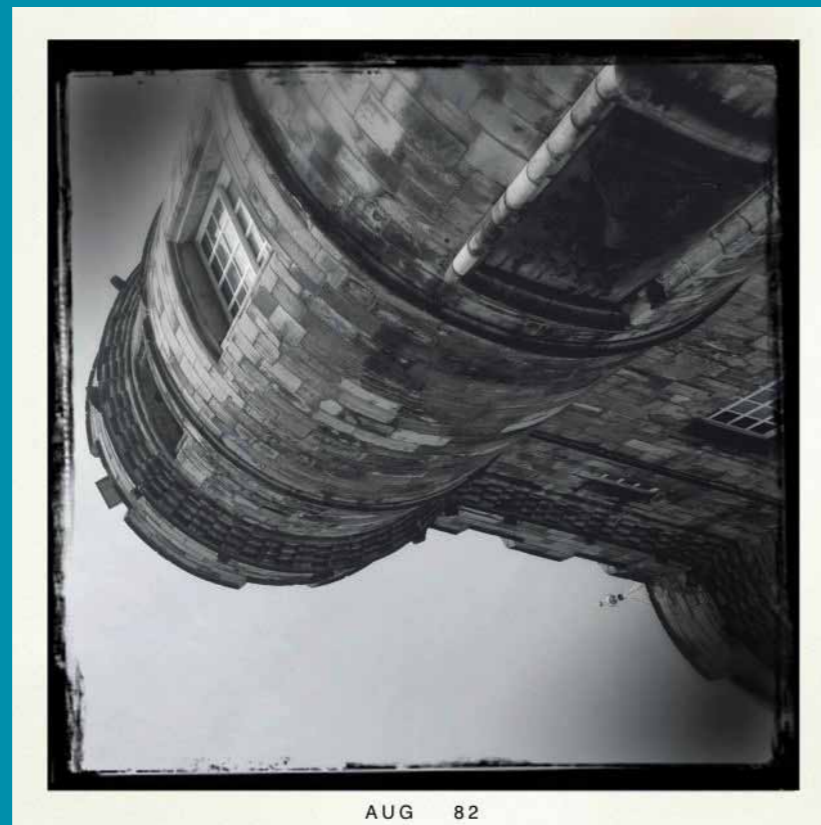
Research degree student

PhD completion phase

A pilgrimage into the liminal:
an experiential enquiry into the embodied
and psychological experience of grief and its
re-presentation in film

Christina's work explores, through experiential image making processes, the liminal experience. Working with digital photography and video, and drawing on the documentary tradition, Christina's practice is concerned with the re-presentation of lived experience through the use of Ranciere's aesthetic regime, which refuses to privilege particular aesthetic forms and draws on multiple and interstitial modes of production. Image making attempts to re-present lived experience and to unfold the process of making so that the construct is evident within the work itself.

The series of images shown here were produced in response to one of the visual themes of Christina's research project: Place. Taken with an i-phone application: Hipstamatic and printed using archival paper, they explore the ambiguity of the image and the instability of dissemblance. As research material, the images attempt to re-present the liminal experience and to challenge the viewers perception.



Place, 3.
Mary Queen of Scots
Tower, Edinburgh
Digital photographic
image

Michael Wayne Plant

Research degree student

1st year part time

Exploring the visualisation of social conditions under neo-liberal economic policies: a photographic study in London's East End, with reference to developments within British documentary photography since the 1980's

Michael Wayne Plant's practice explores the social landscape of contemporary Britain, using a documentary approach to photography.

He will be focusing his research on the current government's economic agenda. His work is exploring the government's neo-liberal response to the current crisis of capitalism. With all aspects of society being impacted by neo-liberal theories, his work is a timely exploration of the impact on British society of neo-liberal policies, which has become the dominant political economic ideology of global society's power elite.

In using a documentary approach to visualise economic realities, Michael's work explores various debates within art, documentary and economics. In developing an aesthetic strategy for the representation of current economic issues, Michael is exploring documentary methods of photography, by combining the traditional conception of documentary image making (the concerned photographer) with that of a more aesthetic personal viewpoint. His images ultimately have both political and aesthetic resonance with contemporary social events.



*Living with a
Neo-liberal response*
Pigment ink on
archival paper
420 x 594 x 30 mm

Liana Psarologaki

Research degree student

2nd year full time

Beyond the physical threshold: enfolding the ontology and operation of immersive space

Liana Psarologaki is an installation artist, architect and researcher. Her project investigates the poetics of immersive space as artistic intervention within architectural sites. The research concentrates on the lived spatial experience as *veoma* (*βίωμα*), predominantly as a noetic-sensory process, with the subject being a mind spacing. The project introduces three axioms for this process: (i) the diaphragmatic site, (ii) the spatial threshold and (iii) co-aesthesia in experience. The practice enfolds around the three axioms introduced, as a series of studio and in-situ experiments, seeking to map the parameters for immersive atmospheres created by the energy related qualities of space such as light and sound.

www.lianapsarologaki.com



Ἥδωρ (hedor)
Experimental
light and sound
installation (detail)



Insider information
Textile, embroidery
80 x 100 cm

Carol Quarini

Research degree student
4th year part time

The domestic veil: exploring the net curtain through the uncanny and the gothic

The net curtain lies in the liminal space between the homely and the unhomely, and Carol uses it in this role as a metaphor for the uncanny and the gothic in the home, to re-read the domestic. The gothic, the uncanny and the domestic, are all concerned with boundaries and their unstable, permeable nature. The uncanny describes the blurring of the boundary between the homely and unhomely. The gothic considers transgression and decay, and things that can be sensed but not seen. The domestic references the duality of the home as sanctuary and prison that developed in nineteenth century Britain.

Insider information considers the use of stitching as coded communication and an alternative site of discourse for those unable to access mainstream media. In its use of cross stitch and hair it references Victorian domestic needlework. The neatly embroidered QR code suggests patient, ordered stitching yet conceals a hidden message. The stitching in human hair contains the DNA of the seamstress as well as conveying her written message. The veil of the net curtain hints at concealment. Together they produce a narrative about the domestic, which is available only to those with the keys to unlock the codes.

www.carolquarini.com

June Raby

Research degree student

2nd year full time

The ceramic vessel as holder of memory

Expressions of memory permeate the ceramic vessel to communicate as metaphor and symbol. The ceramic vessel, through its ancient and globally pervasive origins speaks as metaphor for many; devolving memory through its many iterations though history; built up and layered in our common consciousness. The vessel becomes an agent, an external hard drive of reference to connect us with what was, what is and what could be.

June Raby's research into 'the ceramic vessel as holder of memory' encounters this quotidian function, the ritualisation of the vessels' purpose; inevitably layering cultural meanings in society and becoming a vehicle of symbolic authority.

The considerable importance of the vessel is explored in June's work, its unique place in human consciousness is ingrained in the container; in the often unconscious symbolic purpose to which it is put by individuals and groups when they make, view or gift a ceramic vessel.

Metaphors are unconsciously embedded in connectivity to the vessel; as expression of human relationships with people and things; building fundamental units of language, as agents in community gatherings. The investigation explores how this haptic and cognitive connectivity to the ceramic vessel unlocks not only social interaction, but also memory and imagination.



VOTIVE
Ceramics with
digital projection
Dimensions variable

Susanna Round

Research degree student
1st year full time

A practice based investigation into the
post-completion social life of buildings from
the 1960's and 70's

Round's work explores the on-going life of buildings. Using conceptual frameworks and perspectives of: personal and collective memory, notions of decay, architectural modernism, and the afterlife of alternative political outlooks, she explores the potential ways and impacts of seeing 1960's/70's buildings in the present.

Through her practice she draws attention to users' contributions to their own environment and investigates how these can play a part in conceptualising the post-completion life of a building.

The work utilises a range of making and participatory practices, including; constructions, in situ painting, artist's books and engaging with buildings users' for research and creative responses to places.



Red Gate
Photograph

Marie Therese Shortt

Research degree student

2nd year full time

Patterning culture: developing a system for the visual notation of greetings

Marie Therese's installation is an interactive space inviting two people at a time to enter and greet each other. Greetings are ritualised forms of acknowledgement but our experience of each greeting is different: the feelings and emotions triggered by an interaction with another person are unique for that moment in time, and the place and space in which it happens. The installation reflects variations in subjective experience, as the mood, sound and overall look and atmosphere of the space change depending on the proximity of the two people greeting.



Experimental Greeting space
by B. Sert and M.T. Shortt – 2012
Interactive installation with audio and visual projections
2.5 x 3 x 3 m (minimum)

Vicky Smith

Research degree student
3rd year full time

Touching negative: making film like me

Vicky Smith is an artist whose practice incorporates experimental animation, photography and performance. Her enquiry into the materiality of film in relation to the articulation of female embodied subjectivity leads her to perform the live film event.

The veracity of the film strip as material object allows Vicky to enact phenomenological reversals using the film apparatus to animate the artist and single frame practice to increase physical contact with film. Physical matter is printed onto film so that losses of hair, breath, spit and stains become agents of motion which re-animate the body.

Questions of artificial animation and film in its most tactile aspect are clarified through Smith's research into Benjamin's *'aura'* (1936), Laura Marks *'haptic visuality'* (2000) and Esther Leslie's *'theories of mimesis'* (2010).

Vicky's art is located between the 'wayward' work of women using animation creatively to interrogate subjectivity and an experimental materialist approach in which autonomous integrated reflexive practice and self skilling are the conditions through which the female voice is made possible.



100 feet
16 mm film and dirt
and performance
Dimensions variable

Research + Enterprise

About and contacts

Research

Our research stretches across the Creative Arts, enriching people's lives and shaping the creative economy.

We believe research is fundamental to the pursuit of academic excellence within a specialist university of the arts and that a growing international research culture and research degrees programme are central to our subject's development – to generate, communicate, and transfer knowledge.

Enterprise

The Enterprise Team at the University acts as a first port of call for our work with business and the local community. It promotes the extensive resources of the University to support the research and development of new products and services.

Galleries and Exhibitions

The Cultural Offer of the University is vital for stimulating the creative exchange amongst students and staff at UCA. It plays an important part for connecting with a diversity of communities externally in a critical dialogue about the role of creativity and the arts in society.

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