HOW CAN MY TEXTILE ART AND MY TEXTILE CRAFT PROCESSES CONTRIBUTE TO A DIALOGUE THROUGH AN INVESTIGATION OF MATERIALS USED IN A DISPOSABLE CULTURE?

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I explore the contribution that my textile art and textile craft processes can contribute to an ethical dialogue through an emerging materiality. This contribution is distinctive because, by focussing on certain materials commonly thought of as 'waste', I am drawing attention to how the growth and acceptability of a disposable culture alienates us from both the material world and also from knowledge of ourselves. Through my practice and this thesis, and the interface between them, I explore how a recognition of this use, or rather mis-use, of resources can assist in better understanding the isolation and alienation that society is experiencing as noted for example by Bauman (2003).

My current art practice and this research project seeks to uncover, reveal and deepen the connections with our material world; connections that are currently stretched and ruptured by the strictures of capitalism and the politics of neoliberalism.

My work is about resources, the depletion of which impacts on the natural world and the biosphere. It seeks to bring about a reassessment of how we use, view and value 'common', everyday objects and materials in post-industrial societies, seeking to bring about and enable a less destructive and combative system of production and reproduction than currently exists.

This work takes the form of an examination of materialism and materiality, *less about its economic impact*, but more as a search for a different materialism, a new materialism, a *deep materialism*, which will enable a reviewing and a reparation of the relationships between matter and materials and our (optional) need and desire for both.

The materials I use in my practice have already passed through people's hands. They have been used fleetingly, are felt but not seen; consigned to their post-use phase. They are not broken, but our relationship with them is.

I am re-working and re-presenting these materials so that they are seen as part of an integral and egalitarian 'whole', with no one material, human or otherwise,

being seen as dominant or more important than the other. With recent developments in quantum physics showing us that matter we previously thought of as 'inert' is in fact made up of vibrating strands of energy and in a post-anthropocentric age of diminishing resources and an uncertain future, some may say an ecological crisis, it is crucial that we reassess and revise our relationship with the material world.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

This thesis seeks to bring about a reassessment of the quotidian, the overlooked and the unnoticed whilst at the same time raising an awareness of the agency, presence and vitality of matter, countering perceptions of inertia and stasis. It will also reassess the ethical relationality of the human towards matter and the material world.

This reassessment will use the materials and hence the materiality of objects commonly thought of as ‘waste’ to examine our current attitudes towards matter and its implicit disposability; questioning how this impacts on our humanness (and perhaps ultimately our survival) in the twenty first century.

This thesis thus encourages a ‘holistic’ viewing of matter, where the term ‘waste’ does not designate the ‘end’ of an object, as this is not possible, as all matter is in a constant state of alteration and flux. This negative perception of ‘waste’ is altered from a negative position into a positive position of creative possibility.

Through building and using a framework for thinking which draws on an emerging ‘new materialism’, I make a contribution to understandings of ‘the material turn’. I encourage a transition to a ‘deep materialist’ way of thinking, questioning the ecological impact of seemingly simple objects and common practises.

Through examining and provoking through my practice the connections between this nascent ‘deep materialism’ and the micro-political I make a contribution to

understandings of the micro-political roles and responsibility of the individual subject and ways of being in the world. Through the development of a ‘low impact practice’ I reassess the ethics of the maker and practitioner in their relationship to their materials and processes.

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Part 1

Chapter 1

1. Introduction

1.1 Context of Investigation

This thesis is concerned with the depletion of resources and how the use and mis-use of the material world can be viewed, re-viewed and re-assessed, thus promoting a micropolitical self-awareness of the repercussions of human actions on ourselves, on the biosphere and on each other. As the age of the Anthropocene impacts on our planet, this thesis will suggest ways in which we can alter our currently destructive relationship with the material world and the resulting ecological devastation. This thesis promotes a world of becoming which is allowed to do and be so under its own natural systems; the impact and intervention of the human is lessened and challenged.

1.2 Overview of method

To this end I have developed my practice as a contemplative art and craft practice, the making and the sometimes repetitive actions of which is a method of focussing the mind and the body on these materials. A relationship with them subsequently develops and by reforging them as art/craft objects, the relationality of their essence, their *quidditas*, is revalued by the viewer, my audience, as well as by myself.

The recuperative process of gathering these materials; materials that have a designated status of disposability, and their subsequent altering and re-imagining is transformational for myself, as the maker. It is also instrumental in enabling the viewer, my audience, to be able to reconsider these re-instated materials with a heightened sense of awareness and curiosity.

I have centred my practice on a particular kind of material commonly viewed as ‘waste’. These are objects that are intended to be used only once; single use

'disposable' items. I have restricted this practice to three 'products'; paper coffee cups, crisp packet wrappers, and paper carrier bags. The material I use in my work can be seen as a blatant form of 'rubbish'; a socially acceptable form of 'waste', seemingly necessary to modern living and lifestyles.

1.3 Structure and chapter outline

This thesis is divided into two parts.

Part 1 consists of this first introductory chapter and three further chapters which describe the theoretical underpinnings on which the practice draws in order to discuss and explore the themes of the thesis as already stated.

Chapter 2 - Waste, explores the concept of 'waste' in its material and metaphorical definitions. It describes the paradoxes, the complications and differing contexts of attempting to define and pin down common assumptions of what waste actually is.

Chapter 3 - Materialism, Materiality, Deep Materialism, provides an overview of differing definitions and hence confusion around the use of the terms materialism and materiality. The questioning of the definition of these terms both in their theoretical and popular meanings, creates a framework around which aspects of a differing materialism, a new materialism, or a *deep materialism* can be described and prescribed.

Chapter 4 - Politics and Micropolitics, describes and searches for a different kind of politics, a politics that is more relevant to the everyday and to the individual. The implications and development of a micropolitical way of thinking is related to the importance of the seemingly inconsequential and overlooked. This is a concept which is re-iterated in the focus on understated and seemingly obscure materials used in the practice.

Part 2 consists of four further chapters and is an exploration of, and reflection on, my creative practice and its interplay with the theoretical ideas already explored in **Part 1**. The short introduction details the contents of this part of the thesis.

Chapter 5 - **Influences on Practice**, discusses the influences and effects on my work of exhibition attendance, conference participation, the Japanese concept of wabi-sabi, and comparisons between Japanese and Western methods of papermaking. I also discuss the work of other artists and art movements, particularly the Arts and Crafts movement, which have had an impact on my practice and on the realisation and the development of my thinking.

Chapter 6 - **Development of Practice**, charts the maturation and development of my practice including early experimentation with found materials, the significance of the materials used, and describes an exploration of the choices made in the selection of certain materials and rejection of others. I also describe the concurrent development of a low impact practice which is implicit in the ethics of this practice.

Chapter 7 - **My Practice**, describes my working processes, the 'deconstruction' of the objects and ways in which they are reformed and reinvented. This chapter includes images of my work and my working processes and also discusses how this body of work is enriched by theoretical ideas, especially understandings of what 'waste' is considered to be and contributions to the 'material turn' explored in **Part 1**.

Part 2 is completed by Chapter 8 - **Conclusion** of the thesis, in which I suggest ways in which this research project can add to and be a part of an 'ethical dialogue'; a dialogue that questions our assumptions and understandings of the status of the human in the world and our relationship with the material world. I argue that more attention should be paid to the material world as humanity is a part of it, it is not separate. A more caring, responsive and responsible custodial stance is outlined. I will also outline future plans and projects.

This is followed by a bibliography, exhibitions I have shown work in and conferences I have contributed to and attended.

Finally the **Appendix** is a photographic documentation of the exhibition of the practical element of the thesis as shown in the Long Gallery, at Corsham Court, Bath Spa University, November 2016.

Chapter 2

Waste

> Like beauty, it appears that the phenomenon of waste belongs to the eye of the beholder. Radical subjectivism of this sort raises an inevitable question: if one and the same thing can simultaneously be both waste and not waste, does waste, per se, exist at all (Kennedy, 2007: 5)?

> Trash presents us with an opportunity to comprehend the peril of our own existential and ontological failure. When we understand how contrary to our mortal essence is our technological treatment of worldly beings, convenient commodities will lose much of their lustre. [They will cease to comfort and sedate us in their old, advertised manner.] Their a priori disposal will begin to alarm us, for therein we have caught a glimpse of our own insensitive rejection of ourselves (Kennedy, 2007: 187).

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to unpick and unravel the diverse definitions and ensuing implications of the meanings of waste. The ontology of waste is a complex and elusive field and I seek to examine its ramifications in its convolved cultural contexts and meanings. The definition of 'convolve' is to roll, coil, or twist together and has the sense I am searching for in order to express abstract ideas in a material form both linguistic and tangible. This terminology is relevant as the meanings of waste are inextricably linked and intertwined with the other chapters in Part 1 of this thesis, Chapter 3 – Materialism, Materiality, Deep Materialism and Chapter 4 - Politics and Micropolitics.

This chapter encourages a shift in thinking which enables a repositioning of material waste so that it is no longer deemed and devalued as such, but is seen instead as a capable and interesting material, with potentiality and aspirations of its own. I will firstly look at the paradox and confusion that becomes apparent on attempting to determine a definition of what waste actually is and how it can impact on concepts of a new or vibrant materialism, such as that proposed by Jane

Bennett and others. I also consider the impact of 'the disposable', and how it relates to wider concepts around waste, as the objects I have chosen to work with for this study can all be described as such, made to be used for just a short while before being 'disposed' of. In the second half of the chapter I explore a range of ideas relating to waste, including waste as a temporal concept, the reduction of waste through concepts such as the circular economy and the issue of waste and wellbeing and how a definition of waste can affect our relationship with death and our own mortality. These various ideas are included to show the diversity of interest in, and literature on and around, concepts of waste and such an in-depth review provides a context for my choice of so-called waste as the raw material of my practice.

2.2 Definitions. Origins. Paradox. 'Fluid Consumerism'

Definitions of waste

> However hard one tries, the frontier separating the 'useful product' from 'waste' is a grey zone; a kingdom of undefinition, uncertainty – and danger (Bauman, 2004:28).

This quote from Zygmunt Bauman's *Wasted Lives* is indicative of the confusion and sense of unease and indeed of danger, felt by certain authors in discussing the contradictions and difficulties of defining waste and the problems and paradoxes it engenders. Bauman recognises that if the boundaries between what is considered waste and what is not are not 'upheld' this opens up dangerous possibilities of destabilisation and the unknown. It is an uncomfortable fact that everything, as soon as it is made, finished, or seemingly complete, is on its way to obsolescence; an uncomfortable fact that also applies to us, as humans.

Jane Bennett, whose ideas on new materialism I explore in more detail in Chapter 2, suggests viewing matter as 'vibrant', and objects as 'lively things'. She also invites us to consider the relationship between waste and danger asking,

> How would patterns of consumption change if we faced not litter, rubbish, trash, or "the recycling", but an accumulating pile of lively and potentially dangerous matter (2010: viii)?

The difficulty of defining waste is described by Greg Kennedy in his 2007 work *An Ontology of Trash* when he states:

> Despite its proximity and familiarity, we have no clear understanding of what trash truly is [. . .] we neglect to meditate on the wider relation at work between our treatment of things and the status of their existence in the world we inhabit (2007: ix).

Here Kennedy, in describing the lack of a relational concept of how we treat matter and how this affects us, feeds into a discourse of the (limited) ethics of waste, which is discussed in more detail below. That 'waste' can be different things to different people in different situations is reflected in my practice, in which waste becomes a valued resource despite it being an overlooked and undervalued, yet integral and seemingly unavoidable part of modern lifestyles. As Kennedy states 'Something extraordinary, despite its everydayness, is at work that demands interpretation and elucidation' (2007: xvi).

John Scanlan goes on to describe the wider cultural connotations of waste describing it as:

> residual phenomena that attend life at all times (as the background against which we make the world). We might see this habit of separating the valuable from the worthless within a whole tradition of Western ways of thinking about the world, and that rather than providing simply the evidence for some kind of contemporary environmental problem, 'garbage' (in the metaphorical sense of the detached remainder of the things we value) is everywhere. Indeed, our separation from it is what makes something like a culture possible (2005: 8).

In a post-industrial society which has undergone massive technological change so quickly it is worth investigating where initial ideas around 'waste' and 'post-usefulness' originate. It is interesting to note how meanings of 'waste' have changed. We currently also apply the term 'waste' to intangible concepts such as time and opportunities, as well as material goods. Exploring these various definitions of waste raises the need to look at the origin of the term 'waste' in more detail, and this is the subject of the next section.

Origins: Vastus

The etymology of the word 'waste' comes from 'vastus', which is, according to Viney, 'giving it the same Latin root as the word 'vast' and meaning a time and space that is void, immense or enormous' (2014:18). In its active form this becomes 'vasto', which implies the meaning of 'to make empty or vacant, to leave unattended or uninhabited, to desert' (ibid.). This implies a place of no obvious 'use' to mankind, unexplored and unexploited, or overexploited and deserted, so that it no longer has a 'value' to humankind and is considered a bleak wilderness with no inherent worth, therefore it is seen as 'use-less' and defined as 'waste'.

If this 'void' is uninhabited, it has no relevance to humans; they are not there to describe, explore or exploit it. It cannot be visualised or remembered. Similarly the concept of modern 'waste' is one which most people would not be able to, or desire to 'visualise' or relate to. We are not encouraged to follow the path of the black bags containing our own and others' unmentionable and now obscured discards. They have become 'waste', become something no longer useful or attractive. They are lost to view, out of sight and seemingly no longer exist, but have disappeared into the convenient 'void' of waste processing; a process that does not concern us. We are not encouraged to feel a part of it; we are not encouraged to 'care'. As Scanlan states 'all talk about waste [. . .] generally foregrounds a concern with ends, outcomes, or consequences, and the recognition of waste indicates a need for attention to what usually remains unknown' (2005:22).

Scanlan also contends that the word 'waste' in Old and Middle English 'referred to a land or an environment that was unsuitable to sustain human habitation' (2005:22). This again implies that humans and the early concept of waste are mutually exclusive, the one precluding the other. It is understandable that we find our relationship with waste complex and difficult to resolve. It is not seen as significant, it has become 'the other', separate from us, impossible to value as it no longer 'exists'. It is 'nothing', a paradoxical situation I explore in the next section.

Paradox of describing something as 'nothing'

> Waste occurs only with a subtraction of worth; an already worthless object cannot be wasted. Since values are our investment into things, their subtraction marks our divestment from or indifference to things (Kennedy, 2007: 5).
>
> Trash is supposed to be nothing, a non-existent; it is supposed to lack whatever legitimates the presence of an object in our world (Kennedy, 2007: x).

Thus 'waste' is supposed to be 'nothing'; in my practice I am seemingly 'making something from nothing'. This paradoxical problem is described by Kennedy above; there are inherent difficulties in describing 'nothing'. Thus the protean and ungraspable nature of waste begins to become apparent.

Also the meaning of Bauman's 'kingdom of undefinition' reveals itself; the difficulty of defining waste matter which is existing in a vacuum of unexplored and uncertain meanings. This raises the issue in contemporary culture of who decides what waste actually is. Maurizia Boscagli in her work *Stuff Theory: Everyday Objects, Radical Materialism,* pinpoints one characteristic of waste when she says 'Dropped from the networks that give it economic and affective significance, it points beyond official taxonomies of value' (2014: 228). Thus waste defies easy classification, sitting in the 'post-ownership' phase of a commodity, outside of 'official' economic structures and strictures. This 'sitting outside' could perhaps be due to a fear that if we interrupt the 'flow' of garbage then this will impact on the continuous production of consumables and commodities we have become so accustomed to. This aspect of fear is explored in the next section.

Fluid consumerism and liquid modernity.

Boscagli also refers to the fear implicit in the status of waste when she comments:

> Garbage's fluidity may be seen as a threat to be contained, or as a force synonymous with the fluid enticements of consumerism itself. Garbage is the most characteristic object-hoard of consumer culture, and its outlaw underside. Thus it occupies a dangerous, potentially disruptive, position (2014:228).

Boscagli is echoing Bauman, both in her reaction of seeing the undefined status of waste as a threat to consumerism and in her description of waste, and consumerism, as having a fluidity. Bauman is well-known for his study of contemporary society that he describes as 'liquid modernity' in the book of the same name. He states:

> There are reasons to consider 'fluidity' or 'liquidity' as fitting metaphors when we wish to grasp the nature of the present, in many ways *novel*, phase in the history of modernity (2002:2).

Bauman's concept of 'liquid modernity' is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 - Politics and Micropolitics.

I would argue that one of the unacknowledged 'dangers' here is that the wealthy industrialised western nations with more sophisticated infrastructures only appear to have the problem of the 'waste' of the material world 'sorted' - sorted into confusing and contradictory streams of separation, processing, recycling, incineration, landfill disposal. These methods of production and unresolved disposal pose huge problems for the areas of the world which are consuming, or aspire to consume (a problem in itself), the same goods as wealthier nations but do not have the systems in place to 'deal with' the residue of it. The ontology of waste and conceptions of waste which recognise its materiality need an urgent reconsideration to meet the ethical challenges raised by the ownership of and responsibility for waste in the twenty-first century. These issues are explored in the next section.

2.3 Ethics of ownership and responsibility

Without a more developed and thoughtful 'ethics of waste' - as it can be difficult to differentiate between wanted waste and unwanted waste - there is a case for a more developed study of the impact of waste and its systems, not just on how it affects the human, but also the repercussions on the material world and the wider biosphere. Gail Barker discusses how the treatment and 'elimination of' waste 'became a marker of civilised modernity' (Barker, 2006). This thesis suggests that the matter of waste needs to be reinstated and reseen as an integral part of a

wider system of material flow and flux. Until we acknowledge this and treat it differently we are content to despatch our waste to other places as currently a large proportion of our 'waste' is processed in other parts of the world, in countries that have not produced it, negatively affecting their environments (Minter 2015).

The question is raised as to whom these 'unwanted' materials now belong and whose responsibility do they become. This challenges us to consider whether they belong to whoever made them, to whoever purchased them, or to whoever used them last. Current attitudes assume that materials which sit outside of human economic value systems have no right to exist. However, does this indeterminacy of ownership give waste a power, able to 'occupy space in new, unexpected ways'? (Boscagli, 2014:231) This uncertainty and need for definition and re-definition represents a fertile place of opportunities for artists to explore. See Part 2 Chapter 5 – Influences on Practice.

We have already seen that, ideally, waste is supposed to be 'nothing' and Boscagli elaborates on this concept when she surmises that 'The junk object teaches us to think of negativity as a plastic and mobile category' (2014:231). Plasticity in this sense means to be in a formative or flexible state, an impressionable state, a condition of alteration and creative possibilities. It is this quality of mobility, of change, that I explore in my practice. Thus she describes an antithesis to this condition of nothingness, describing 'a *quidditas* of the object, an "essence" of the material that comes into being only through dis-use' (2014: 229). So perceptions of waste hover unnervingly, balancing and teetering between one state and another, between being useful and valued or discarded and valueless. However between and beyond these states there emerges a 'truthfulness' of the materials, seeing them for what they are and what they are capable of; this is also the quality that I explore in my art practice where I explore how ethical considerations of waste can be an expression of a form of care for others and ultimately for oneself.

Having discussed the difficulty of defining waste and the paradoxical situation of waste being both materially 'something', yet modern society wanting to dismiss it as 'nothing', and the ethical considerations that this raises, I now go on to look at

various aspects and ideas on waste proposed by different authors. This is to enhance understandings of waste as both a material and a temporal concept, and also to provide ways to engage with the materiality of waste.

2.4. Time. Disposability. Convenience.

Time.

Viney (2014) describes waste as a way to measure time; time passes through objects and materials, in a strange and unregulated correlation between the intangible – time, and the tangible – materials. However Viney makes little comment on what precedes 'use-time', the provenance of objects and materials seems of little interest; the discovery/enquiry/revealing of the provenance of the materials I use in my practice are, to me, an important part of their materiality.

The materiality of time, deep time

Today many of our commodities are made from minerals that would have begun to be formed hundreds of millions of years ago, challenging our concept of time, of deep time, and how we can possibly relate to materials that have been formed over millennia.

Normative practices of valuing ancient objects or materials suggest a reverence and respect for said materials. However, most plastics, still being made from oil, a truly 'ancient' liquid, nevertheless seem to bypass any claims of respect or deference. Indeed there is a certain irony in that plastics and polymers made from oil are now returning to the sea in vast quantities, breaking up into smaller and smaller pieces and returning to the sea bed, as this was where they would have originally been formed by animals and plants dying, sinking to the bottom of the sea and being covered by mud and the process of forming 'fossil fuels' beginning. Similarly the aluminium foil used to make the crisp packets is made initially from bauxite, a mineral which:

> is the geographical result of more than 500 million years starting with the eruptive alumina-silicate rocks or metamorphics containing feldspar and mica, which passed through clay. In tropical climates, the soluble elements and part of the silica were washed by rainwater acidified by the organic

> decomposition of humus, leaving only alumina and iron oxide. (alteo-alumina, 2016)

These materials are the result of natural primordial processes which have occurred over aeons of time, they are ancient at the same time as being a product of modern mass production, products designed to have a short use-time of sometimes only a few minutes. However aluminium is one of the few materials that can be genuinely recycled into the same form. Although when thin layers of it are fused to plastic to make crisp packets, they are impossible to separate.

Disposability

> Why would we bother to produce products likely to outlive all of us? The circular causal relation between disposables that expedite our potential doom and between the fear of our global demise that accelerates the expansion of disposables directs us to a deeper intimacy between trash and human extinction (Kennedy 2007: xix).

Thus the materials I work with in my practice are used for sometimes only minutes before human-induced obsolescence kicks in and time is wrenched prematurely into the 'waste time' phase that Viney describes. This can be seen as a violent and hubristic act, a violation of the qualities and dignity of these materials and one with potentially dire consequences as Kennedy describes above. In my practice these materials provide a sense of vitality, enquiry and 'openendedness'. These qualities offer a challenging and tantalising invitation to be utilised, more so, in my view, than other materials that have been produced specifically to be made into artefacts by makers and artists. Although used and discarded, and having a much foreshortened 'bounded sense of futurity' that Viney ascribes to other objects, these materials remain 'the same', their material properties have not changed. This raises the question of who decides that they are ready for obscurity and hence decides on the impact their production and disposal has had on the planet's resources. Has this been a futile process of extraction and production?

> Without a proper understanding of disposability, all our scientific bustling to develop new technologies to combat trash […] serves only to aggravate the perceived problems. […] to understand trash, and thus also the plight of a disposable world, we must become thoughtfully compassionate (Kennedy 2007:185).

This quote from Greg Kennedy stresses the need to fully understand the connotations of disposability and that, by constantly seeking technological solutions to 'fix' this surfeit of 'temporary' material we are constantly producing, we are not addressing the problem at source. How can we become 'thoughtfully compassionate'? How can exploitative practices be revealed and rectified? Kennedy talks of the need for the 'humanization of modern humanity' (ibid.), also stating that before we can change something we need to fully understand it.

Convenience

What is different about the materials that I use is that they are designed and destined to have only a single use, have a very short 'life span' and then are discarded immediately, thus setting them at odds with other forms of 'waste'; they are items used once for the convenience and 'carefreeness' that their use gives to humans. This unnerving state of affairs is re-iterated by Hannah Arendt. In her work *The Human Condition* she states that 'the reality and reliability of the human world rests primarily on the fact that we are surrounded by things more permanent than the activity by which they are produced' (1958:195-196). Thus this process of making things with inherent qualities of disposability is an antithesis to this statement, leaving us wondering on what can we depend? As Arendt states, this raises questions over what is the nature of reality, what is real and on what can we rely if this state of affairs exists? My practice seeks to be both challenging and beguiling in equal measure; to alter the machine-made with the touch and sensitivities of the hand-made, and to endow these new forms with meaning and compassion. The purpose of my practice is to pass on this sense of intrigue and also a sense of disquiet as to how we treat these materials. This will be discussed more fully in Part 2 Practice and Reflection.

2.5 Hygiene. Waste disposal workers

> The germ theory, which attributes disease and infection to invisible and ubiquitous organisms, created the conditions for a scientific privatization that paved the way for many of the twentieth century's strange technological novelties, in particular disposable items (Kennedy 2007:67).

The use of paper drinking cups was encouraged, despite initial opposition, in the early years of the twentieth century, primarily in America; they were made to replace the shared glass and metal cups at communal drinking fountains and water sources, as these were deemed to be unhygienic and capable of spreading disease.

Due to mechanised methods of mass production, these 'disposable' products are unlikely to have been touched by human hand, or to have come into contact with other contaminants. However, due to the (largely unacknowledged) plastic linings inherent in the contemporary version of the 'paper' cups and also the fused plastic and aluminium foil layers inherent in the crisp packets, have we exchanged one form of toxicity for another, perhaps worse, one?

This 'toxicity' also extends to beyond the human, affecting the wider biosphere with the inability of these materials to biodegrade. The enclosed food, in this case crisps, are also 'suspended' in a state of fixity inside the packets, Kennedy describes this process thus:

> The nature of food materials is, of course, natural, that is, essentially bound to the unpredictable sequence of becoming and passing away, of emerging and receding. Where technological food-processing fails to fully fix this Heraclitean flux, technological packaging succeeds. It arrests food artificially in its natural ontological passage and suspends it in a kind of eternal, immutable realm (Kennedy 2007:66).

Thus this packaging takes this 'food', away from a world of becoming and holds it in a strange world of 'unbecoming', caught and held in an artificial 'time freeze', where natural processes of time and hence decay are held in check - a state dependent on human activity to release it back into the normative world of change, alteration and entropy.

The fact that I pick up these used articles may seem unhygienic and unpleasant to some. They are washed and dried before they are re-used. My desire to engage and work with this material over-rides concerns as to who may have handled this material before it was discarded. I do not feel threatened, but feel more a sense of curiosity as to how and why these materials have come to be in this state of

abandonment purely for human convenience. After all, waste disposal workers are in contact with this kind of material on a daily basis.

Waste disposal workers

Our personal household waste is often secreted in black plastic bags; it is private, not for prying eyes, and the black plastic gives the hidden contents an air of mystery and points to a reading of shame and improper behaviour. Is black plastic seen as being more impermeable than clear plastic, concealing odours and other more intangible secrets; would clear plastic allow for voyeuristic tendencies to prevail? Who is now 'allowed' to touch this stuff?

Bauman refers to waste disposal workers as being 'the unsung heroes of modernity' (2004: 28). He says, referring to the relationship between waste and ill health:

> Day in, day out, they refresh and make salient again the borderline between normality and pathology, health and illness, the desirable and the repulsive, the accepted and rejected,[ ] the inside and the outside of the human universe (ibid.).

The artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles has spent many years working with waste disposal workers and the sanitation department of New York; her work is discussed further in Chapter 5 - Influences on Practice. With the increasing process of sanitisation that has taken place in industrialised societies over the last one hundred and fifty years, it is interesting to note that the root of the word 'sanitary' (1. of health or the rules and conditions of health; esp., promoting health by getting rid of dirt and things that bring disease 2. free from dirt, etc. that could bring disease; clean; hygienic) is the Latin word *sanitas*, meaning 'health'. This is also the root of the word 'sanity' (1.the condition of being sane; soundness of mind; mental health 2.soundness of judgement). Thus this shared meaning makes an immediate connection between cleanliness or hygiene, and our mental health. But perhaps we have gone too far in the other direction, 'Germs and later bacteria, were thought to be living creatures; hence, the modern conception of cleanliness goes beyond the mere absence of dirt. It entails sterility, which means the absence of life' (Kennedy 2007:67-68). It thus becomes difficult to accept that our bodies are composed of

different forms of bacterial life. This is discussed further in Chapter 3 - Materialism and Materiality.

In discussing this 'borderline' Bauman states, 'All boundaries beget ambivalence, but this one is exceptionally fertile' (2004: 28), and it is this fertility that I exploit in my practice.

Bauman also states that this boundary 'oozes anxiety' (ibid.); by using one of the material properties of decaying matter to describe the human sense of unease felt if this boundary is transgressed, he emphasises the unpleasant putrefaction of biological 'waste' left to its own devices, left unchecked; something that 'oozes' is not easily contained, nor can it be easily persuaded to return from whence it came. Thus this anxiety, by having the material qualities of waste, seems to inextricably link us to this state of entropy.

'Modern survival – the survival of the modern form of life – depends on the dexterity and proficiency of garbage removal' (2004:27). As this process is taken out of our hands, both physically and metaphorically, our waste becomes someone else's responsibility, we are encouraged to relinquish responsibility and forget about it.

2.6. Unnatural materials. Use and mis-use. Recycling.

Unnatural Materials

> Humanity has always had its garbage. Yet, in earlier times, things were usually worn out before they were thrown out (Kennedy, 2007:xv).

Commodities fabricated before the Industrial Revolution were largely 'organic' and made from degradable materials and produced by 'natural' processes (Packard 1960, Leonard 2011). However throughout the twentieth century chemical and industrial processes have conspired to produce materials that do not degrade naturally. 'Synthetic offenders' is the term Annie Leonard uses to describe industrial/chemical materials, unable to biodegrade, that have been concocted with no thought as to how they will end their 'life', where they will end up, or concern as to their ecological impact. In describing their ubiquity she says 'The

large scale development and use of synthetics has really exploded since the mid-twentieth century' (2010:96). In making sense of the economic rationale behind these products she says:

> Often it's cheaper for industries to use synthetics, but that's only because they rarely have to bear all the cost of making, using, cleaning up after, or disposing of these materials – in other words, the cost of paying for their ultimate ecological and health impacts (Leonard 2010: 80).

In her online article 'Modern Waste is an Economic Strategy', the American activist, artist and researcher Max Liboiron elucidates her title thus:

> Modern waste is fundamentally different from its predecessors. From the turn of the twentieth century and into the 1950's, first in the United States, then elsewhere, waste began to increase in tonnage, gain in toxicity, and become more heterogeneous (Mac Bride 2012:174). It also started to play a pivotal role as an industrial strategy for growth and profit (Liboiron, 2014).

(Heterogeneous 1. differing or opposite in structure, quality etc., dissimilar 2. composed of unrelated or unlike parts; varied). Both the crisp packets and the paper coffee cups that I work with in my practice could be described as heterogeneous materials: the packets are a layer of aluminium foil fused to a layer of plastic and the cups are similarly a fused layer of plastic and paper, they are both not suitable, in their present form, for 'recycling', if this was considered to be a suitable 'end' to their existence, nor will they bio-degrade.

One aspect of the complexity of contemporary recycling systems in the UK is described by BSU Sustainability Coordinator Sarah Cundy. Here she describes the waste stream that includes the 'paper' cups:

> This waste goes to a Mechanical Biological Treatment plant (MBT) where any metals are recovered (obviously none in a coffee cup) then the remaining waste is 'composted'. This is done inside to comply with Animal By-product regulation (so you lose the water and biodegradable fractions). Then the residual waste, known as refuse derived fuel (RDF), from this process is sent to an 'Energy Recovery Plant'.

For more information on this process please see Friends of the Earth briefing on MBT online.

Use and mis-use of materials (used in my practice)

In previous descriptions of my practice I have described the treatment of these materials and resources in terms of ‘use and mis-use’. What actually constitutes ‘use and mis-use’ is open to interpretation. That the original construction of the packets and the cups is a mis-use of materials is one way to consider these artefacts; they have been devised and constructed in such a way that they cannot benignly decompose. Any altering of their material constituents requires collection, collation and crude industrial processes involving high energy use. Thus I claim that this is a ’mis-use’ of materials.

Recycling

So now, as this waste, these materials, persist, we have been forced in the Western industrial world to develop strategies of dealing with it. Recycling is one such strategy, usually resulting in more of a process of ‘downcycling’, as few materials can be reprocessed so that they retain their original properties, glass and some metals being the exceptions. Liboiron is not convinced of the efficacy of this process. ’Recyclables are just disposables by another name’, she claims, stating the statistic that of the 15% to 30% of the recyclables that are recovered from the waste streams in America, nearly half of these are buried or burned because they have been contaminated or changes in the market place make it uneconomic to use them further. She goes on ‘Beyond disposability, present day waste practices like recycling continue the extension of profit through trash’ (Liboiron, 2013). She also makes the point that industry champions recycling because it does not have to pay for it. The cost is borne by municipalities in the U.S., and local councils in the U.K., hence the taxpayer finances this process.

Recycling infrastructure creates a framework where disposables become naturalized commodities instead of allowing practical waste design, reduction or elimination (ibid).

2.7. Natural cycles. Circular economy

Natural Cycles.

The soil could be described as an economy with no waste, as could a forest full of deciduous trees that shed their leaves, providing food and nutrition for the next year's growth.

So this begs the question as to whether the natural cycles of growth, decay and replenishment have been ignored in our quest for more stuff. Michael Braungaart and William McDonough, a chemist and an architect, in their seminal publication from 2002; *Cradle to Cradle. Remaking the Way We Make Things*, answer this question and are in no doubt that we have to find a better way. They say:

'If humans are truly going to prosper, we will have to learn to imitate nature's highly effective cradle-to-cradle system of nutrient flow and metabolism, in which the very concept of waste does not exist' (2002).

For waste in nature becomes food, a form of nutrition, and they suggest that either products should be designed in this way so that they can be totally re-used as a biological nutrient, that is, you can compost it, or as a technical nutrient meaning that you can re-use or recycle it into what it was before using less resources than were used in the initial production.

Circular economy

According to the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) a circular economy:

> is an alternative to a traditional linear economy (make, use, dispose) in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible, extract the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recover and regenerate products and materials at the end of each service life (WRAP, 2016)

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation is another charity that is working to promote more sustainable methods of production and consumption. It 'works with business, government and academia to build a framework for an economy that is restorative and regenerative by design' (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2016)

2.8 Mortality. Technological alienation.

Mortality

> What we need to say clearly is that the language of garbage is a language of termini – of things cut off, things that we lose interest in, things that reach a point of no return. In the end of course, is ruin and death. Yet with all things garbage-related a transformation characterises the perverse nature of all we value because with the end comes the beginning (Scanlan 2005:49).

Far from being the end of something, the materials I am examining give me the opportunity to *begin* a project, they are the inspiration and catalyst for *new* work that belies their previous status as 'waste' and being seen as the *end* of a process. However the fact that waste matter has connotations and connections with 'endings' and with our own mortality cannot be denied. As Scanlan also states,

> It will also be seen that the creation of garbage results from a more or less imperceptible contest between life and death – because death constitutes the human return to matter, and is in a sense, the 'garbaging' of the body (Scanlan, 2005: 9).

This is something not often discussed; death is a taboo subject; just as we do not wish to be reminded of our waste, nor do we wish to be reminded of our own mortality. It is interesting to note that the 'natural material processes' of entropy and decay in death are largely denied in our society; we prefer a technological end to our corporeal existence, rather than the messy and 'uncontrolled' processes that may render our bodies to the earth.

Technological alienation

As mass produced objects have become the ubiquitous norm, has this mechanisation distanced us from the material world? Kennedy brings us back to the relationality of materials with ourselves when he states that any study of waste is 'ultimately self-exploration' (Kennedy 2007: x) and that if we look deeper we can see 'images of ourselves'(ibid.) emerging.

This alienation from natural processes and hence the natural world engendered by technology is discussed further by Kennedy, who also implies that we are distanced from ourselves and thus from what makes us human. He implies that although we

can feel connected to the world through technological means, satellite systems for instance, this indicates that we have not formed an essential bodily connection. 'This very effortlessness, however, infects our perceptual omnipresence with bodily insensitivity. It does not permit us to form, through manual repetition, the bodily habits requisite for the coextensive corporeal awareness' (2007:45). This lack of a sense of interconnectivity, (one that is exemplified yet remedied in some part by a new materialist outlook and further discussed in the following chapter) suggests that we do not have the metaphysical means to realise the consequences of our actions.

> When we discard a banana peel […] we throw away with it the tyres, asphalt, spark plugs, work-boots, fuels, pipelines, paper invoices, boxes, computer chips, television screens, newspaper flyers, and all the other countless objects required to produce, deliver, and market the commodity (2007:52).

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have identified some of the difficulties and paradoxes in explaining the meaning of 'waste'; I have suggested that 'waste' although it is preferable that it does not exist, will persist even though we become unaware of it. I am seeking to shift and readjust our relationship with materials so that the 'boundary' between what is waste and what is not is questioned and eventually broken down. Only by doing this can value systems be readjusted and materials, and ourselves, as we too are material, be viewed in a more compassionate and caring framework (framework: a structure to hold together or to support something stretched over or around it).

The exploration of waste in this chapter raises the possibility of other ways to relate to and understand the material world. Further philosophical and theoretical ideas explored in new materialist thinking by authors such as Jane Bennett, Diana Frost and Samantha Coole provide ways to conceptualise such relationships and understandings and are explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Materialism, Materiality, Deep Materialism

3.1 Introduction

> As human beings we inhabit an ineluctably material world. We live our everyday lives surrounded by, immersed in, matter. We are ourselves composed of matter. We experience its restlessness and intransigence even as we reconfigure and consume it. At every turn we encounter physical objects fashioned by human design and endure natural forces whose imperatives structure our daily routines for survival (Frost and Coole, 2010: 1).

The working title for this thesis was *From Materialism to Materiality: How can my textile art and textile craft processes contribute to an ethical dialogue through an emerging materiality?* The meanings of the words 'materialism' and 'materiality' are problematic in their definitions. Although sharing the same etymological root, they have conflicting and different meanings from a populist, prosaic viewpoint than from a theoretical, philosophical one. This chapter will attempt to unravel these diverse meanings by examining the definitions of these terms in the context of wider theoretical references and my art practice. I will endeavour to reconcile the 'materiality' of the material world within the theory of materialism. I will be asking how it is possible to interrogate and inform our relationship to the material world through questioning the accepted ontologies and dialectics of materialism, distanced as they seem from the physicality of 'the material', for as Frost and Coole also state:

> There is an apparent paradox in thinking about matter: as soon as we do, we seem to distance ourselves from it, and within the space that opens up, a host of immaterial things seem to emerge: language, consciousness, subjectivity, agency, mind, soul: also imagination, emotions, values, meaning, and so on (2010:1-2).

This chapter will also seek to elucidate yet simplify the complexities of this field. How can the way in which we treat the material world on which we depend and yet at times seem to value so little, be altered? The emergence of a 'new materialism' – a 'deep materialism' - will be examined and I question how it can contribute and feed into this discussion. I will look at how this process can inform, re-view and

readjust ‘old materialism’, altering it into a form of a more ecologically aware contemporary materialism – a form of ‘eco-materialism’ or ‘deep materialism’, suitable for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

3.2 Definitions: Materialism and materiality, common usage

These two words appear, through my practice and this project, to be interlinked and reciprocal, yet over-loaded with meanings and potential. I have used them to describe this project from the outset, when they portrayed the (as yet unformed) research process and practice that I was looking for, describing and promoting, at a fundamental and populist level, a belief that, by examining and reconnecting with the ‘materiality’ of things/stuff/objects we normally take for granted and discard, this could result in a shift ‘away from’ accumulative materialism. I was unaware at that time of the cultural and philosophical ramifications of the term ‘materialism’. I was, and still am, of the opinion that the dissemination of this practice and this thesis can alter how we look at the world; in a less destructive, more curious, yet more responsive and more compassionate manner.

For the purpose of this study I will initially examine the common/popular usages of the terms ‘materialism’ and ‘materiality’. However it will soon become apparent, due to the fact that in the literature the meanings of these two words become interchangeable, that these words have a fluidity of their own which I attempt to capture and pin down in order to describe a sense of a different materiality, a ‘new’ materiality and a ‘new’ materialism currently emerging. I intend to show that by doing this, by ‘going full circle’ if you like, of looking at common materialism in the light of a ‘new materialism’, there is scope for a re-invention, a transformation of this common materialism into a different form, where we accept, acknowledge, and thence are able to restrict the impact of the mis-use of the material world on the wider biosphere.

Materialism – common usage

As already discussed above, the term materialism has a dual meaning, as in everyday language materialism has the meaning of 'the tendency to be more concerned with material than with spiritual values.' Simms and Potts describe this 'popular' or 'common' materialism in its traditionally accepted form as being inextricably linked with consumerism;

> Like an abusive relationship with the real world, materialism has become synonymous with consumerism – wasteful, debt-fuelled and ultimately unsatisfying. Yet, inescapably, we are part of the material world. How, then, can we develop a healthy connection to it (2012: 1)?

Our connection to the material world could be described as being 'unhealthy', being in need of reparation, as although we desire material goods in a 'materialistic' fashion, we are not 'materialist' enough to care about the way we treat the material world. We do not see ourselves as a part of the problem of excessive consumption or being responsible for the outcomes of an unrelenting stream of discarded matter.

The material world is described by Simms and Potts, above, as something separate, something apart from us; but by stating that 'we *are* part of it', this implies that we are not part of it to start with, yet our bodily existence disproves this, if we accept that our bodies are 'material'. This is discussed in more detail below in the section Material Bodies.

The discrepancy in definitions mentioned above is evident in describing 'materialism' in its economic, popular sense meaning the desire for, goods, yet by describing our inclusion *in* the material world, it is unclear whether this material world means that we exist as material beings, or, we join in later with the material world which inevitably means the accumulation of goods. Jane Bennett, who describes herself as a 'word worker', asserts that we need a 'thickening of language' in order to properly describe these alternative states and ideas around a sense of a more lively materiality. However at the same time we also need to have a better understanding of what it is we are describing.

The anthropologist Daniel Miller warns against railing against the omnipresence of 'stuff', and the ecological ramifications of materialism in its economic sense, stating that *examining* our relationship to the material world will be more fruitful than simply decrying it. He states that the intention and central argument of his book *Stuff* is 'a paradox: that the best way to understand, convey and appreciate our humanity is through attention to our fundamental materiality' (2010:4). Through the condition he is describing, he would seem to be referring to our need to have things in a material way rather than to the materiality of our bodies. He continues:

> Stuff is ubiquitous, and problematic. But whatever our environmental fears or concerns over materialism, we will not be helped by either a theory of stuff, or an attitude to stuff, that simply tries to oppose ourselves to it; as though the more we think of things as alien, the more we keep ourselves sacrosanct and pure. The idea that stuff somehow drains away our humanity, as we dissolve into a sticky mess of plastic and other commodities, is really an attempt to retain a rather simplistic and false view of pure and prior unsullied humanity (2010: 5).

That we need to develop a less problematic relationship with stuff and objects is imperative but we cannot simply say that stuff is 'bad'. We need to find different frameworks through which we can overcome and rectify this economic domination of materialism, stuff, and hence waste.

Materiality – common usage,

Materiality can be commonly described as how certain material looks and feels; a straightforward sensory response to material. This is a reaction experienced by many artists and makers and in initially describing this project through the initial title, the materiality mentioned was intended to describe not just a response of the senses, but also the way a relationship develops between an artist/maker and their materials. I was interested in developing a sense, a knowledge, through my practice, that if I got to know these materials 'better', through the attraction of their tactility, their aesthetic and potential, I could then look beyond the object and its material construction. Implicit in this 'knowledge' is a curiosity as to how these materials came to be in their present form and the impact of their existence on the biosphere. From this appreciation could stem a sense of caring and a responsibility

towards these materials. This also implies that decisions made as to the benefits of acquiring certain goods over others would be implicit and explicit in their materiality and would lead to political decisions and a development of an ethical viewpoint. I explore and explain this concept more fully in the next chapter, Chapter 4 - Politics and Micropolitics and also in the Practice and Reflection section of the thesis, where I discuss the development of a low impact practice.

3.3 Materiality and creativity, proposed ethics of materiality

Materiality is a word and a concept that many makers and artists would appear to take for granted in their daily lives and approach to their work, so deeply 'embedded' would it seem to be within their natures and practices. However this sense of creative connection to materials lies largely unexamined in spite of this 'relationship to stuff' being an inherent aspect of an artist's being, of their work and of their creative thinking; a concept all the more difficult to describe because it is so innate.

In this challenge to invent new ways to understand materiality in the contemporary world, the visual arts have a special place given their concern with and understanding of, the manipulation of matter. This is where I situate my practice, where I look at the residues of human activity as a means to articulate and give form to alternative ways of viewing materiality and indeed, waste. As Boscagli describes:

> Trash highlights the status of materiality as fluid and unstable, an instability replicated in the "viscous" condition of postmodern life. The incorporation of everyday waste in art famously defined the adversarial stance of the modernist avant-garde (2014: 32).

As an artist/maker who 'deals with' stuff on a daily basis, and as someone who has always made 'things', a sense of materiality is an intrinsic part of my life. I am attracted to things and objects not only due to their material properties, although this is certainly an intrinsic part of it, but also with a view to what they might *become*, what they might *do*. This is a 'way in' to the world of materials, giving a sense of connection and fulfilment that I have taken for granted, but embarking on this research project has given me the opportunity to think more deeply about how

I personally feel a deep sense of connection with the world through making and by extension, to others. This has, through searching for an 'ethics of materiality', if you like, given me the impetus to also consider the 'affect' that the production and procurement of these materials has had on the wider world, on the biosphere, on the people and land that produced them.

3.4. Institute of Making. Heatherwick Studio

Mark Miodownik is the director of the Institute of Making at University College London. This is a 'multidisciplinary research club for those interested in the made world.' The work of the Institute, based in material science, holds a collection of diverse and intriguing 'materials', organising events and workshops to promote interest in making and materials. In a newspaper article Miodownik states that:

> Making is not just an economic activity, it is the equal of literature, performance or mathematics as a form of human expression. By eschewing material knowledge we cease to understand the world around us. We wring our hands about climate change or urban sprawl without any recognition that our ignorance of materiality might be the cause (Miodownik, 2016).

He states that 'Those who make things all have a different understanding of the practical, emotional and sensual aspect of their materials' (ibid.) He also believes that the value of making has been devalued due to the de-industrialisation of the developed world.

Miodownik sees a direct link between the sense of a materiality, or material understanding, being able to relate to the non-made, and also the constructed, world around us. In looking at the world he sees everything in the light of the materials things have been created from.

Heatherwick Studio

That thinking and problem solving can occur in relation to materials and the materiality of matter is borne out by the work of the designer Thomas Heatherwick. In the 2012 exhibition of Heatherwick Studio's 'Designing the Extraordinary' at the V&A Museum, London, 'Materiality' is a subheading on the accompanying promotional literature and is described thus:

> At the Heart of Heatherwick Studio's work exists a passionate engagement with materials research and fabrication techniques. The design process is fuelled by an innate sense of curiosity and a desire to understand how far certain materials can be pushed and interrogated. Some projects celebrate the pure excess and physical abundance of a certain material. Other schemes employ inventive engineering techniques to use materials in surprising and unconventional contexts. At times, the concept stage of a project will be driven by the physical properties of a material. The behaviour of these materials can often unlock problematic issues regarding the spatial arrangement of surface details and textures of a building (Heatherwick Studio, 2012).

The promotional literature goes on to describe how, as a student, Heatherwick was 'encouraged to experiment with a wide range of materials including wood, metal, plastics and textiles. He developed a way of thinking through making, formulating ideas by testing ideas in the workshop.' With not always a definite aim/conclusion in mind he experimented with a sense of a 'purposeful aimlessness' to discover the properties and possibilities of the materials he was working with. Tacit knowledge and an affinity with materials develops from the 'closeness' of this relationship, resulting in work of disarming originality.

3.5 Theory of materiality. Power of matter. Properties of matter

As has already been stated, the popular definitions of materialism and materiality appear quite straightforward. It has also been stated that we need to alter our relationship with the material world, and it has been shown that through a creative sense of materiality and making we alter the world, becoming closer to materials and hence ourselves.

The writers Diana Coole and Samantha Frost describe a more active and academic understanding of a sense of materiality through matter. 'For materiality is always something more than "mere" matter: an excess, force, vitality, relationality, or difference that renders matter active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable' (2010: 9). They are describing a more powerful and theoretical reading of materiality and materialism; as has already been stated these words become interchangeable in academic writing, describing mainly a relationship to matter,

but stemming from a knowledge of the histories and theories of material relationships.

Power of matter

Barrett and Bolt describe a rethinking of the potential agency of matter, citing Heidegger's description of a "re-distribution of power" (2013: 6) in the making of a silver chalice. Heidegger describes how the chalice has not just been made by the silversmith from silver, but this process has been one of co-collaboration; this is further described as a 'notion of care and indebtedness between co-responsible elements' (ibid.). Thus the matter that the object is made from is not seen as something inert, without the power to influence, to move and to act, but is complicit in the reciprocal process of creating the object. This reciprocal process is something that I identify in my own practice; the materials that I work with play just as much a role in what they will become as my own role as maker does. They are active in this process; my response is one of open-ended mutual exchange.

Properties of matter

The anthropologist and writer Tim Ingold in his article entitled *Materials against materiality,* from a 2007 article from the journal *Archaeological Dialogues,* offers a more pragmatic approach in expressing the current confusion in defining the term materiality in the field of material culture. He seeks 'to reverse the emphasis, [. . .] on the materiality of objects as against the properties of materials' (2007: 1).

Ingold believes that only if we understand the properties of materials can we understand how they came to be as they are. When we describe them with the blanket term of 'materiality', this only disguises their origins and properties. Ingold would seem to be adding to the dialogue surrounding the 'new materialism' propounded by Frost and Coole, Bennett and others, further discussed below, when he argues that 'the forms of things are not imposed from without upon an inert substrate of matter, but are continually generated and dissolved within the

fluxes of materials across the interface between substances and the medium that surrounds them' He further states:

> Like all other creatures, human beings do not exist on the 'other side' of materiality but swim in an ocean of materials. Once we acknowledge our immersion, what this ocean reveals to us is not the bland homogeneity of different shades of matter but a flux in which materials of the most diverse kinds – through processes of admixture and distillation, of coagulation and dispersal, and of evaporation and precipitation – undergo continual generation and transformation (2007: 7).

He wants to draw attention back to the materials themselves; 'The properties of materials, then, are not fixed attributes of matter but are processual and relational' (2007:1). He describes a 'continuity' of change and alteration, acknowledging human intervention in how materials are altered, when he states that 'Materials undergo continual generation and transformation, they do this on their own and also helped along by humans, taking over where non-humans have left off' (2007:7).

Ingold describes the current practice of focussing on materiality as 'a real obstacle to sensible enquiry into materials, their transformations and affordances' (2007: 3). He continues 'What academic perversion leads us to speak not of *materials and their properties* but of *the materiality of objects*?' (ibid.)

Ingold states that if we focus too much on the ill-defined concept of materiality, of objects, and not on the properties of materials, we will lose sight and knowledge of their magical properties and, in his words, 'on what makes them thingly' (2007: 9). He warns that then we run the risk of not being aware of how these objects came to be there in the first place – ' it is quite impossible to follow the multiple trails of growth and transformation that converge, for instance, in the stuccoed façade of a building or the page of a manuscript' (ibid.). He suggests taking a step back and in so doing revealing 'a tangled web of meandrine complexity' (ibid.), one which is concealed by the blanket term of materiality. It is this 'tangled web' that is so easily concealed in contemporary objects; we have no idea, for example, what residues were left behind in the processing of the aluminium of the crisp packets, what

energy was expended, or the amount of water inherent in the processing of the paper used for the coffee cups.

3.6. Beyond the object

The investigation of the provenance of the matter in my practice, looking beyond the discarded yet re-found matter and into the materials that have been used raises ethical questions of how and why this matter came to be in existence at all. By what processes and from what materials were they made and what was their impact on the biosphere? It is not acknowledged that we are at the present time 'distanced' from methods of production and from knowing the sources and quantities of materials used in the fabrication of most goods, as already described in the previous section. We are 'locked out' from this process. This closer looking at materials does not seem to be a priority; would a greater knowledge of the properties of materials, as described by Ingold, translate into a less destructive relationship with objects? Through their mass production, these objects/things have become commodified; they have a concealing identity that obscures their 'true nature'. Boscagli describes this in the context of 'historical materialism':

> For the historical materialist, the subject's experience of materiality in modernity is governed by reification – the subject's alienation from the sensual, real, brought about because matter, once commodified, had its true nature, the labour involved in producing it, hidden (2014: 4).

3.7 Jane Bennett. Vibrant matter, vital materialism

The work of Jane Bennett has been instrumental in proposing a different way of viewing matter, encompassing a different way of being in the world. In her work *Vibrant Matter* she describes a pivotal moment in her daily life; an encounter with materiality that takes place early one morning when she has the visual and visceral experience of catching site of abandoned 'waste' matter caught in a drain. What she saw was a dead rat, on old glove, oak pollen, a plastic bottle cap and a smooth stick of wood.

This unexpected tableau of spent stuff, viewed in early morning sunlight, an array of objects that she describes as 'debris', however seem to have the power, to her,

to be more than stuff. 'They shimmied back and forth between debris and thing [. . .] as existents in excess of their association with human meanings, habits, or projects. In the second moment, stuff exhibited its thing-power: it issued a call' (2010:4). Bennett rationalises this experience, stating that she had this reaction through her reading of Thoreau - 'who had encouraged me to practice "the discipline of looking always at what is to be seen"' (2010:5) and of Spinoza - 'that all things are "animate, albeit in different degrees"' (ibid.) She was seeing these objects, which included 'organic' and inorganic' matter, beyond their usual uses or status. She was viewing them analytically and yet 'letting go' of previous perceptions, as a child might see something, innocently, for the first time ' . . . and so I caught a glimpse of an energetic vitality inside each of these things, things that I generally conceived of as inert' (2010: 5). In her perception of that moment they had 'elevated' their status from object to thing, developing a 'thing-power' which she later describes as a potent force, a vitality, which gives things the power 'to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own' (2010: viii).

I frequently encounter this 'debris' of modern life, as in the discarded material that I utilise in my practice, this is material that speaks to *me*. I collect it and then embark on a process similar to the one described in the Heatherwick reference, of 'purposeful aimlessness'; also one of open-ended interrogation. I am not always sure what will happen, but by experimenting with these materials and seeing what they/we can produce together, this induces work that makes me more attuned to the potential of other 'debris' I may encounter. I have an innate attraction/response to these materials, not, as I see it, the rational one induced by academic training that Bennett describes. They do provoke in me, 'that strange combination of delight and disturbance' (2010: xi) that is mentioned by Bennett, and I aspire that this quality is also redolent in the presented artwork. This process is described more fully in Part 2 Practice and Reflection Chapter 7.

Another effect that the viewing of this matter had on Jane Bennett was her realisation that the viewing of this 'debris' gave her an insight into more common forms of materialism.

> It hit me in a visceral way how American materialism, which requires buying ever-increasing numbers of products purchased in ever-shorter cycles, is antimateriality. The sheer volume of commodities, and the hyperconsumptive necessity of junking them to make room for new ones, conceals the vitality of matter (2010:5).

Daniel Miller also surmises in his study of materiality that by not being aware of objects they are allowed to become ubiquitous and exist in an unquestioned yet undeserved space.

> The surprising conclusion is that objects are important, not because they are evident and physically constrain or enable, but often precisely because we do not 'see' them. The less we are aware of them the more powerfully they can determine our expectations by setting the scene and ensuring normative behaviour, without being open to challenge (Miller 2005: 5).

It is this challenge to 'normative behaviour' that I am taking up in my practice, of re-appropriating these objects, these paper cups, packets and bags; they are used because they are 'there', so that paradoxically in their deconstruction they can be viewed, they can be 'seen'. It is in this re-acknowledgement and investigation of these objects and materials, which are then re-presented to the world, that their impact can be recognised and their value re-assessed.

Vibrant matter, vital materialism

Bennett believes that we need to develop the 'knowledge' that we are already imbued with, in order to regain a sense of 'naivete' and human connection when considering matter. 'We are vital materiality and we are surrounded by it, though we do not always see it that way' (2010: 14). How can we restore a sense of humility and accommodate any sense of equality towards the material world, a material world which is normally utilised and exploited in an ever enlarging capitalist economic system? In examining the vitalism of her predecessors she says 'Mine is not a vitalism in the traditional sense; I equate affect with materiality, rather than posit a separate force that can enter and animate a physical body' (2010:10). She has coined the phrase 'vital materialism' to describe a recognition of the vitality and potential power of matter.

> Vital materialists will […] try to linger in those moments during which they find themselves fascinated by objects, taking them as clues to the material

> vitality that they share with them. This sense of a strange and incomplete commonality with the out-side may induce vital materialists to treat non-humans - animals, plants, earth, even artifacts and commodities - more carefully, more strategically, more ecologically (2010: 17-18).

Bennett bemoans the fact that 'linguistic means prove inadequate to the task' (2010:4), which is where the visual and tactile properties of art and craft can help to describe this liveliness of matter. One of the aspired outcomes of her work is a revealing of a 'complicated web of dissonant connections between bodies,' which can lead to 'wider interventions into that ecology' (ibid.).

3.8 New theoretical relationships

> With its acknowledgement of agential matter, neo-materialism questions the anthropocentric narrative that has underpinned our view of humans-in-the-world since the enlightenment, a view that posits humans as makers of the world and the world as a resource for human endeavours (Barrett and Bolt, 2013:5).

We have seen that the importance of discursive materialisms is not in doubt. We have also seen that the terms 'materialism' and 'materiality' become entwined and inseparable, overlapping in theoretical writing, belying their more modern common definitions. These conditions of late capitalism which endemically enforce an overexploitation of the actual world need to have the ideologies that allow this to happen altered. This situation has allowed the emergence of a 'new materialism' to take place. Frost and Coole state that 'to succeed, a reprisal of materialism must be truly radical' (2010:3).

Context of theoretical materialism

The history of theoretical materialisms is diverse, complex and contested. That they can be seen as relevant to this study of twenty-first century environmental problems is open to dispute. However it is worth noting their existence in order to better understand the framework in which newer forms of materialism can develop and be articulated and understood. Boscagli states, 'The older materialisms, whether dialectical, historical, mechanistic or culturalist, were developed in the era before the current truly massive proliferation of commodities' (2014: 19). She believes that contemporary mass production and the proliferation of goods and

commodities available has resulted in an 'inextricable proximity' between subject and object. She is calling for a revision of a different materialism appropriate for the demands of the twenty-first century, one which stretches 'from Spinoza to Bergson to Deleuze, more adaptable to a world of matter in flux' (2014:17). She also believes that

> […] Marx's nineteenth century historical materialism, with its totalizing sweep, was a theory of its era; now, when global resources are known to be finite, when their flow has created an immense level of global traffic, and when the commodification of every resource, from food to human feelings, into commodity objects is pursued at an unrelenting pace, the theory of reification, and its account of the unvarying commodity at the heart of it, is both more compelling than ever and in need of expansion (ibid.).

She also talks of emerging 'hybrid materialities' with new meanings, of 'fluid materiality,' and of 'the materialism of the encounter', stating,

'Most strands of the new materialist critique insist, from different disciplinary perspectives, on an ontology of material that centers on the positivity and productivity of the event' (ibid).

3.9 New materialism. Material bodies. Maternal matter

Recent writing, however, around the emerging field of new materialism, a form of materialism being re-invented for our time, describes a re-invention of materialism which 'begins with the atomism of Lucretius, and reaches into the work of Spinoza, Rousseau, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Althusser' (Boscagli 2014:19). Thus arriving at a present day 'material turn', where:

> Matter is no longer imagined […] as a massive, opaque plenitude but is recognised instead as indeterminate, constantly forming and reforming in unexpected ways. One could conclude, accordingly, that "matter becomes" rather than […] "matter is" (Coole and Frost, 2010:10).

Coole and Frost, in acknowledging this situation and in searching for alternative approaches to a 'new materialism', also question the wisdom of ignoring the importance of engaging with a material world that includes not just a reductive sense of materials that things are made from but encompasses a much wider remit. They describe how our existence depends 'on myriad micro-organisms and diverse

higher species, on our own hazily understood bodily and cellular reactions and on pitiless cosmic motions, on the material artefacts and natural stuff that populate our environment' (2010:1).

This reflects the 'ocean' described by Ingold that we are all a part of and are in constant contact with. They go on to question how 'In light of this massive materiality, how could we be anything other than materialist?' (ibid.) This phrase emphasises the discrepancy between the meanings of these two terms; meanings which need more elucidation. Barrett and Bolt describe why they think that there has been a timely, contemporary interest in a new materialism.

> The emergence of neo-materialism 'now' may be understood as the result of the butterfly effect – a confluence of currents across the disciplines that have validated a rethinking of the relationship between humans and non-humans. Whilst humanist thought placed the human subject firmly at the center of the social and physical world, discoveries in science, particularly around quantum physics and nanotechnology, and the emergence of new human-technological relationships have decentred the subject (2013: 3).

There is a need for different ways in which to describe a more fluid and flexible form of 'new materialism' in which the relationship between commodified matter and the human subject is altered and reviewed. This connection with a more ecological way of treating the world has already been mentioned and is an important impetus behind the 'new materialism' concepts advocated by Frost and Coole.

Boscagli describes this relationship thus: 'the new materialism insists on the fungability of matter and on the plasticity possible at the moment of subject-object orientation' (2014: 4). This 'change' that the encounter can engender is a flexible state, producing 'the commodity as environment, potentially capable of producing, rather than blocking, experience' (Boscagli 2014: 5).

Material bodies

It can be difficult to align our own corporeal selves within the framework of this new materialism and accept that our own bodies are 'material' too; including the microbial bacteria which inhabit our bodies. As Bennett states 'Without proficiency

in this countercultural kind of perceiving, the world appears as if it consists only of active human subjects who confront passive objects and their law-governed mechanisms' (2010: xiv). So can this proficiency in a different way of seeing the world be aided by a thoughtful and mindful art practice that is trying to break down the hierarchical systems of ways to view matter, matter that includes the human? Ingold has difficulty in deciding where the material world stops; with air, or the moon, with natural things or artificial things transformed into artefacts, with our own bodies, He asks 'If I and my body are one and the same, and if my body indeed partakes of the material world, then how can the body-that-I-am engage with that world?(2007: 4)'

He finds it easier to resolve this question when he asks:

> And where [. . .] would we place all the diverse forms of animal, plant, fungal and bacterial life? Like artefacts, these things might be attributed formal properties of design, yet they have not been made but have grown. If, moreover, they are part of the material world, then the same must be true of my own body (2007:4).

Frost and Coole have a more radical interpretation of how the currently accepted relationships between human bodies and other living and 'inert' matter is changing:

> Our main argument here has been that new ways of thinking about living matter are radically and rapidly reconfiguring our material world – both empirically and conceptually – not only transforming our most basic conceptions of life and the human but also intervening in the very building blocks of life and altering the environment in which the human species – among others – persists (2010:24).

Maternal matter

Matere Matter: mater: "origin, source, mother." (Simms and Potts, 2012: 2)

If we accept the etymology of the word matter as origin, source, mother, then we are already part of the material world as soon as we are born, if not before. This corporeal 'matter' is the one thing we all have in common. Jane Bennett states, 'My "own" body is material, and yet this vital materiality is not fully or exclusively

human', (2010:112) indicating that our bodies are also collections of multifarious bacteria and microbiomes, as well as minerals and elements.

Daniel Miller echoes the importance of acknowledging matter as the basis of life when he states 'My starting point is that we too are stuff, and our use and identification with material culture provides a capacity for enhancing, just as much as for submerging, our humanity' (2010:6).

3.10 Conclusion: The possibility of 'deep materialism'

Having looked at the diverse and complex definitions of materialism and materiality, it is difficult to initially see how the term 'new materialism' can be readily understood. I propose that the phrase 'deep materialism', a looking beyond surface engagement, better expresses the relationship new materialist thinking seeks to invoke and also include a recognition of the ethical aspects of human relationship to other materials and hence the wider world? 'Deep materialism' requires us to respond to the ethical demand that is placed on us by our use and mis-use of the material world. It encourages us to question the provenance of our materials, in the process limiting their destructiveness, and also queries what will become of them once their interaction with the human is interrupted. 'Deep materialism' also encourages a viewing of the human as matter, as Miller states, 'we too are stuff'. Hence the relationality between the 'outside' material world and ourselves immediately changes, the differences diminish, inherently invoking a more reciprocal and caring way to be in the world.

In the next chapter I explore how such an ethical response can be expressed through micropolitical action.

Chapter 4

Politics and Micropolitics

> It is not controversial to say that trash, gadgets, electricity, and fire are relevant to politics, or to say that though such things do not qualify as political stakeholders, they form the milieu of human action or serve as means or impediments to it (Bennett, 2010:39).
>
> Why is there not a more robust debate between contending philosophies of materiality or between contending accounts of how materiality matters to politics? (Bennett, 2010:xvi)
>
> The potentials produced at the micropolitical level feed up, climbing the slope that macropolitics descends. Mircropolitical and macropolitical go together. One is never without the other. They are processual reciprocals. They aliment each other. At their best, they are mutually corrective (Massumi, 2015: 82).

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2 I have described the different classifications and interpretations of waste that are relevant to this study. I have explored the contradictions inherent in certain concepts of 'waste', as well as the more challenging aspects of the ontology of 'the material' and how these can be 're-viewed' in a more 'materialist' way. Chapter 3, in describing the paradoxes, definitions and meanings of 'materialism' and 'materiality' I sought to clarify and enhance ways in which we can relate to a different kind of materialism. This new and deep materialism challenges accepted definitions of materiality and seeks to open up different ways in which to engage in different relationships with the material, in order to develop material strategies appropriate for the challenges of the twenty-first century and beyond.

In this the last of the three introductory chapters, I engage with the meanings of politics, the political, and specifically 'micropolitics', and how this can contribute to the different relationship with the material world which a developing new materialism calls for. This involves an examination of different ways of viewing the political. This is not so much the politics of government and political parties but more the politics of the everyday, of everyday actions and of the mundane; a concept described by Boscagli as 'subaltern politics' (2014:22). I will also look at the politics and ethics of freedom and the responsibilities of consumption. A definition

of the micro-political will be examined in the light of new materialist thinking. I will also examine, through my practice, the micropolitics of creativity, viewing creativity as an agent of change, and how it can promote subtle ways in which to bring about a realisation of how our actions can affect and influence the wider biosphere.

> When micropolitical flourishings proliferate to produce a singularity, in the sense of a macrosystemic tipping point, that's revolution. The ultimate vocation of micropolitics is this: enacting the unimaginable. […] Micropolitics is what makes the unimaginable practicable. It's the potential that makes possible (Massumi, 2015: 82).

4.2 What is politics and the political? Political theory

A first step in exploring the political is interrogating the meaning of the word. It is usually assumed that this refers to the 'macropolitics' of political parties and government of, and by, the state. This raises the question of how 'politics' differs from 'the political' and what place does political theory have in altering sensibilities and contributing to cultural change. Rancière proposes a different understanding of the political, one which differentiates between politics as a practice of power and the political as something different from this. Rancière comments how:

> Politics is commonly viewed as the practice of power or the embodiment of collective wills and interests and the enactment of collective ideas. Now, such enactments or embodiments imply that you are taken into account as subjects sharing in a common world, making statements and not simply noise, discussing things located in a common world and not your own fantasy. What really deserves the name of politics is the cluster of perceptions and practices that shape this common world (2015: 160).

It is in the sense of the political as 'a cluster of perceptions and practices which shape this common world' which is the focus of this chapter.

In view of the current ecological crisis, I would argue that it would be correct to assume that accepted forms of formal Western politics dominated by the process of 'collective wills', voting for a political party of your choice in a 'democratic' system, and the current dominant system of neo-liberal economics, has failed to halt this crisis. Chantal Mouffe, in an online interview, has described the current situation as being 'post-political', asserting that there is little difference in policies between the principle parties and that the main aim of politicians is to remain in

power, hence supporting the status quo of neo-liberal globalisation. She also states:

> Politics is, of course, to do with interests and moral concern, but there is also a dimension related to 'passion': the need for people to identify with a project. And what I call post-political is precisely the lack of this passion and identification (Mouffe, 2016).

Thus she sees a malaise at the heart of current systems, one which can result in low turn-outs of the population to vote, resulting in a sense of dis-enfranchisement and leaving a dangerous vacuum which other more divisive factions are keen to fill. This then raises the question of how politics and the political can be understood differently and in ways which can begin to play a part in meeting the challenges of the ecological crisis of the twenty-first century. This is the area explored in the next section through an examination of different approaches to political theory.

Political theory

Political theory has more of a discursive, philosophical meaning and intention than a politics understood as voting in a democracy might suggest. As Farrelly suggests:

> Political theorists are concerned with how we ought, collectively, to live together. The job of the political theorist is to bring some precision to fundamental (yet contested) political concepts- like freedom, equality, democracy and justice. Ideas are powerful things, they exert great influence on the real world and help determine the fate of the lives of billions of people. So the political theorist's job is an important job. A diverse range of social, economic and political arrangements can (and have been) defended by reference to abstract political values (Farrelly, 2006)

So if 'abstract political values' are important to 'arrangements' what form of politics can be seen as a way of making manifest and responding to an ethical 'code' by which we can restore our respect for the material world including the wider biosphere? William Connolly asks,'How can the dilemma of electoral politics be broken as we work both outside and inside its terms to alter its grid of political intelligibility?' (2013: 194) He responds to this question by commenting that whilst he does not know exactly,

> An orientation that focuses upon the potential interplay between productive actions at numerous sites does provide a strategic entry into the

> task of renegotiating that grid of intelligibility. This is especially so in a world in which more and more people sense both the fragility of things and feel the resistance within courts, corporations, electoral politics, and our souls to address it (ibid.).

Thus we, meaning not just ourselves but also the natural, fragile, systems on which we depend, need more than current political systems can offer us in order to flourish and in order to halt the degradation of what remains of finite resources. This then raises the question of what constitutes these 'productive actions' that Connolly describes and how can they be seen as, and become a way to, resist current capitalist exploitation and hegemony. I would argue that by working both outside and inside electoral politics' terms, as described by Connolly, we can influence the reparation needed to inculcate a less oppositional and potentially damaging form of politics. This form of 'subaltern politics' which can be also called micropolitics, can be a way to do this. A first step towards subaltern micropolitical thinking is an awareness that current electoral systems and capitalism give us a sense that we are free whilst in fact we are trapped within this system. It is to this issue I now turn.

4.3 Freedom, liberalism. Ethics of freedom

> And what sort of freedom is it that discourages imagination and tolerates the impotence of free people in matters which concern them all (Bauman, 1999: 1)?

As the above citation shows, Zygmunt Bauman, in his work *In Search of Politics* (1999), points out the conflicting position of a postmodern liberal society which has an acceptance and an impression of being 'free', yet at the same time feels strangely disenfranchised when it comes to having the power to alter events. Furthermore Bauman comments that 'we consider the case of human freedom, at least in 'our part' of the world, to be [. . .] resolved.' He goes on to point out that: 'We tend to believe equally firmly that there is little we can change [. . .] in the way the affairs [. . .] of the world are being run' and if we did try then 'it would be futile' (ibid).

Another feature of the wealthy industrialised nations of the world and the widely adopted politics of liberalism, is that we are largely encouraged to believe that we

can do, or have, whatever we want. This unrelenting consumerist outlook is described by Connolly (2013:80) as being an unfulfilling place 'in which the ideology of freedom is winnowed to a set of consumer choices between preset options.' Furthermore, the cultural constraints which once persuaded us to adhere to certain ethical codes have largely been eroded, as already described by Bauman in his concept of 'liquid modernity'. Bauman states that the conditions of modernity have made people into 'tourists', rather than 'pilgrims', living in a fluid and unfixed society. In such a society identity is uncertain and accepted traditions and beliefs are constantly being altered and superceded, resulting, according to Bauman in unprecedented anxiety and insecurity.

Against this backdrop of supposed freedom and fluidity Bauman poses the following challenging question:

> If freedom has been won, how does it come about that human ability to imagine a better world and to do something to make it better was not among the trophies of victory? (1991:1)

So as we move, according to Mouffe, into a 'postpolitical' phase of western democracies, where little difference is seen between the policies of main parties amid an acceptance that there is no alternative to neoliberal economics, Connolly defines another way to approach the issue of freedom. He argues for freedom understood as having the will and ability to alter ourselves, on a 'micro' level, freedom as the possibility 'to be and to become otherwise than we are' (Connolly, 2013: 79). Thus freedom is having the capability and the desire to change ourselves, implying that we also have the power to change others and hence the wider world, a political action in itself. He describes the inevitable tension between adopting both 'an ethos of responsibility encoded into multiple interacting practices and the creative element in freedom' (2013: 80), but suggests a way to negotiate this state of affairs by suggesting 'we keep the door open to creativity in the practices of art, citizen movements, entrepreneurial innovations.' Such an approach to freedom as 'keep[ing] the door open' raises the issue of ethics and it is to this I turn in the next section.

Ethics of freedom

Tony Fry suggests that we need to curtail our activities to act and consume within certain parameters, and that acting in this way procures its own sense of 'freedom'; a more authentic and worthwhile freedom. He suggests that 'all registered voters become accountable for the manner by which they utilize resources and with what impacts' (2011: 45). He also states:

> The shift implied in this prescribed conduct moves from unrestricted 'consumption' to a delimited expenditure of non-renewable resources, but with an unlimited expenditure of those that are renewable. In essence responsibility for one's actions is here transformed into making every enfranchised subject the environmental manager of their own self. Moreover, the greater the ability to design one's life within this condition of limitation, the greater the degree of one's freedom. The claim is not that such action solves the problem at large but that it engages one's self as a problem (2011: 45-46).

Thus seemingly small individual gestures, gestures of the everyday aspects of consumption and the realisation of the intent of these gestures, can have wider implications, thus generating a political position different to the norm. The 'ethical responsibility' of this way of micropolitical thinking can be interpreted expansively: Bauman also states that 'whatever happens in one place has a bearing on how people in all other places live, hope or expect to live' (2007: 6).

That this replication of individual actions can be a powerful force of hope and political intensity is suggested by Frost and Coole when they state:

> The enormous macroscopic impact of myriad mundane individual actions provokes critical, political, and legal reflection not only upon the nature of causation but also upon the nature of responsibilities that individuals and governments have for the health of the planet (2010:16).

Thus we can view these 'individual actions' as a form of 'micropolitics'; yet also as actions committed not only by humans but viewed in a wider inclusive 'public' as described by Bennett. She advises us, in relating to matter,

> to devise new procedures, technologies, and regimes of perception that enable us to consult nonhumans more closely, or to listen and respond more carefully to their outbreaks, objections, testimonies and propositions (2010:108).

How this new materialist thinking can further engage with a micropolitical viewpoint is further explored below.

4.4 New materialism. Micropolitics

Frost and Coole also explore connections between new materialist thinking and the ways in which our daily interceptions with, and impact on, the material world is altered and realised. My practice intercepts the flow of materials in a capitalist system, which I view as being a political act, this is discussed in more detail in **4.9** Unpicking Politics, below. Frost and Coole state:

> New materialist scholarship testifies to a critical and nondogmatic reengagement with political economy, where the nature of, and relationship between, the material details of everyday life and broader and geopolitical and socioeconomic structures is being explored afresh (2010: 7).

Perhaps a less oppositional way of thinking is called for – Frost and Coole describe how new materialist thinkers seek to disprove existing Cartesian, and other, binaries of thought, preferring 'a creative affirmation of a new ontology, a project that is in turn consistent with the productive, inventive capacities they ascribe to materiality itself' (2010: 8). The political can be seen as a way of making manifest and responding to a new materialism in a material manifestation of an ethical 'code' by which we can restore our respect for the material and the wider biosphere. As Boscagli states 'Beyond the gaze of the new materialist fascinated by matter, we need a politics of materiality' (Boscagli 2014:12).

Could different forms of materialism, whether 'new', or 'vital,' or 'deep' be a way to promote innovative and ethical 'culture-and psyche-formation' (Bennett, 2010:114) by de-centring the human from the maelstrom of organic and inorganic 'life' that has co-evolved and co-exists, with us, on the planet?

What 'form' can this politics of materiality take? How will it be persuasive enough to alter current ideologies of overproduction and overconsumption? Boscagli is aware that this will not be easy when she states:

> Working out the implications of the new materialism for the variegated sphere of the everyday is still a work in progress, in which this dynamic view of matter might take into account the heterogeneity of the street and of politics from below (Boscagli, 2014:22).

Micropolitics

The term 'micropolitics' is one that can used to describe the 'politics from below', as described by Boscagli. Bennett suggests this term as a way in which her work can be seen in the light of ethical and social connections.

> **. . . . . .** the bodily disciplines through which ethical sensibilities and social relations are formed and reformed are themselves political and constitute a whole (underexplored) field of "micropolitics" without which any principle of policy risks being just a bunch of words (2010: xii).

Definitions of 'sensibility' include 1. The capacity for physical sensation; ability to feel. 2. a) the capacity for being affected emotionally or intellectually b) sensitive responsiveness to intellectual, moral or aesthetic values.

Thus the term 'ethical sensibilities' can be seen to encompass 'the senses' which also relate to our feelings and emotions, our intellect, not just the normal senses of sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell. The term is extended to include how we feel and react to things, how our responsiveness is formed, how altered. In referring to Bennett's encounter with her 'debris', she was at the same time shocked by, yet drawn to, these objects, how they reacted with each other, and the effect they had on her. Her connection with the world on a micro, or material level is re-iterated by her statement that 'The ethical task at hand here is to cultivate the ability to discern nonhuman vitality, to become perceptually open to it' (2010:14). We are usually 'closed off' from this kind of debris, it is concealed, hidden and 'disposed' of by others; our normal sensibilities must not be upset or challenged. Bennett also states in an online interview:

> My political strategy is indirect because its target is not the macro-level politics of laws, policy, institutional change but the micro-politics of sensibility formation (Bennett, 2010).

Thus Bennett is seeking a 'principle of policy' with which to critique and enforce a more ethical field of politics, one which is more responsive not only to human

interactions, but also understands a different relationship with other phenomena. How can it 'compete with' and challenge the more accepted form of political rationale? Bennett quotes Guattari in asserting that, to challenge the established order, we need 'new micropolitical and microsocial practices, new solidarities, a new gentleness, together with new aesthetic and new analytic practices regarding the formation of the unconscious' (2010: 114).

In attempting to articulate and describe a closer relationship with the material world, one of enchantment, surprise, one of seeing things 'anew', this behaviour also implies a not taking things for granted, implying that we will become less consumptive, more respectful to and less detrimental to, the earth and its finite resources. Is this one way to put 'micropolitics' into practice? William Connolly suggests other ways.

> We must, for instance, become involved in experimental micropolitics on a variety of fronts, as we participate in role experimentation, social movements, artistic displays [. . .] and creative interventions on the new media to help recode the ethos that now occupies investment practices, consumption desires . . . (Connolly, 2013: 38)

He expounds the view that currently human affairs are played out in a world of interacting systems of self-organisation that do not value human flourishing or even survival. He also emphasises the importance of creativity as an agent of change.

> When we participate in a creative initiative and when we respond to a creative initiative from elsewhere that jostles received assumptions, we both change the world and become otherwise than ourselves to a large or small degree. That is the creative potential lodged between the open logic of identity and the evolution of circumstances with which it is entangled (Connolly, 2013: 79).

This concept is echoed in the work of Jacques Rancière, who states that by inserting something new into the world, you are creating a surplus, a 'more than existed before', to quote Rancière, and his discussion of 'dissensus' – whereby acts of dissensus question, disturb, and interrupt existing categorisations (Ranciere, 2015)

4.5 Political ecology of things, political ecology

Jane Bennett, by including in the title to her book the phrase 'a political ecology of things', is opening up discussions around the concepts of 'the political' and of 'ecology', elevating the term political ecology into a more transdisciplinary, philosophical and theoretically questioning frame of reference. Her work is also unusual in bequeathing political agency to 'things' and to 'matter'. Matter is linked to 'mother' through its latin root, and the Greek root of 'ecology' is *oikos*, meaning 'house' or 'household'. Thus matter and ecology have a similar provenance of not only a link through 'the maternal', the giver of life, but also through house or home - the 'environment' that nurtures and sustains us.

In his work from 2012 *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction,* Paul Robbins describes his field as 'an interdisciplinary area of research that connects politics and economy to problems of environmental control and ecological change.'

> The normative goal of the book is not over-ambitious. By explaining and constructively exploring the body of research sometimes called political ecology, I intend only to clarify the most persuasive themes in a highly disparate body of writing and show the politics of nature to be both universal and immediate. This, I think, may make a small contribution to helping us all break from an image of a world where the human and non-human are disconnected, a fiction that remains so stubborn a part of our modern reasoning that it is as difficult to unimagine as it is to picture a world without patriarchy or class (2012: 3).

So Robbins is also promoting a sense of interconnectedness in the world, stressing the strange ambivalence of nature being, at the same time, 'universal' and yet 'immediate'. This is a compelling way to describe this paradoxical concept, a concept which is difficult to comprehend, but one which is also part of a new materialist approach. He goes on to describe that he believes it is more a question of 'remembering' when society and nature were not divided, rather than this being a concept that needs inventing. His work is focussing not on a 'body of knowledge' but on a way to describe political ecology as *'something people do'* (Robbins, 2012: 4).

4.6 The Arts and Crafts Movement

This study will briefly describe here the historical and political implications of the Arts and Crafts Movement from the second half of the nineteenth century. This movement will be examined more closely in Chapter 5 – Influences on Practice. David Gauntlett, in his work *Making is Connecting,* describes the ethos of the movement thus,

> This loose grouping of idealist thinkers and craftspeople built on the ideas of Ruskin and Morris in different ways, but central to the movement was the idea that all creative work was of equal status, and was the means by which human beings could connect with nature, with their own sense of self, and with other people (Gauntlett, 2011: 47).

He also states, in describing the principles of the polymath William Morris, 'Morris understood 'genuine art' to be 'the expression of man's pleasure in his handiwork, and deplored the separation between the professional world of 'art' and the everyday things that people make' (Gauntlett, 2011: 42). In Morris' view, 'The artist should be humble, engaged with the everyday, and willing to make things themselves . . .' (Gauntlett, 2011: 43). It was through creative, meaningful work that man could find contentment and connection both with himself and his wider environment. Thus this movement can be seen to have correlations with ethical movements of the present day, as forms of new materialist scholarship are also seeking connectivity and interrelationship. Could this be the foundations on which to build these new relationships, as due to technological advances in some ways we know 'more', but in other ways, in not recognising the value of the biosphere, or the importance of matter, we know so much less? It was assumed by Morris that a connectivity to creative work and materials would procure a sense of care towards 'the outside'.

So can art, and indeed craft play a role, have a cultural input, and be taken seriously, in the 'renegotiating' that needs to take place? Can art/making/creativity be a means to 'soften the ground' for more authentic ways of being and be accepted, almost subliminally, as a form of influential cultural politics? Some artists

will deny that their work is political or be able or willing to differentiate between the hard politics of power and more discursive forms of cultural politics.

The Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei believes that 'Everything is politics. Everything is art,' (Ai Wei Wei, 2015) whereas the land artist Richard Long believes that politics is best left to politicians and views his work as being separate from the political (Lecture by the artist Bath spa University May 2015).

4.7 Beyond democracy? Beyond politics?

The writer Tony Fry, in respect of the current crisis, talks of 'identifying a political ideology beyond democracy', and of 'reconsidering the locus of the political outside the sphere of institutionalised politics' (2011: x). This raises the question as to whether politics - the way we live our lives and organise our world - is too important to be left to the politicians. How can this 'locus of the political' become a place of creativity, of duration, of resistance and endurance, an ethical place of realisation and recovery? The following text is a definition of a more enlightened view of the political by Rancière:

> Politics is first of all a way of framing, among sensory data, a specific sphere of experience. It is a partition of the sensible, of the visible and the sayable, which allows (or does not allow) some specific data to appear; which allows or does not allow some specific subjects to designate them and speak about them. It is a specific intertwining of ways of being, ways of doing and ways of speaking (Rancière, 2015: 160).

Thus this definition can be seen as a place of stimulus, of understanding, a joining, an interlocking, a knitting together of ideas and activities, that coming together creates a 'sphere of experience'. A sphere has no edges, sides, top or bottom. It is not an experience with a beginning and an end, but one that never ends as it is not linear, having a self-determining circularity. Hence this distribution, or partition of the sensible, is a way of relating to the world through the experiential, the senses are enlivened and implicated. Art can also alter sensibilities by invoking experiences of seeing things as they are not usually thought of. My practice alters the materials I work with, for instance altering one paper cup into something else

entirely, in order to jolt the senses, and the sensibilities of the viewer, into a different way of realising and considering these materials.

4.8 Resistance and the everyday - de Certeau, 'reclaiming autonomy'.

> Let us ask, […] what should we do with new materialities, once we have acknowledged the multiplicity of subject-object connections, and the unexpected connections of objects leading to unanticipated events? Now what? What is this materiality for? (Boscagli, 2014: 23)

This question by Boscagli is pertinent to this study, what indeed do we do with this knowledge, how can it manifest itself? Boscagli states, quoting Malabou, that the questions themselves 'take the material out of the serene, clean, and disinterested sphere of science and into the space of politics and the everyday' (ibid.). In further quoting Malabou she talks of a 'new responsibility' and an aspiration for a democratic acceptance of new materialities, which 'should take the fluidity of the event to the everyday level, where power itself becomes material' (ibid.) Thus power is relocated to the popular, the common, the normal, the humble, a place where resistance, in the form of alteration, hope and realisation, can take place. Thus my practice can be seen as a form of resistance to normative capitalist tendencies of value exchange mechanisms. This material has no recognised 'value', the time that I spend in reworking this material is not measured nor its monetary value calculated. I am exercising the 'potentia' of my practice in exploring the 'potential' of these materials (Negri, 2013).

The writing of Spinoza divides the meaning of the word 'power' into two; *potestas* and *potentia.* One describes the power that people have in themselves (*potentia*) and the other the power that can be exercised by others (*potestas*). It may be useful to recognise this sense of a personal '*potentia*' with which de Certeau is concerned in his work *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) where he shows how ordinary people can reclaim a sense of autonomy and power in a world where the over-riding forces of commerce and culture can seem overwhelming. For instance factory workers would use scraps left from making processes to create something for their own use.

4.9 Unpicking Politics - the micropolitics of my practice

Bennett interprets Rancière by saying that he 'chooses to define what counts as political by what *effec*t is generated' (2010:106). She goes on to say 'a political act not only disrupts, it disrupts in such a way as to change radically what people can "see"' (ibid.).

At the beginning of this study I had not considered that collecting crisp packets, paper cups, paper bags and reworking them was a political act. However through this writing and enquiry I have come to realise that, through the considerate making and the thinking involved – the intention implicit in the work, of altering and changing the world in different ways and on different levels, that the resulting ideas are 'enlarging the space of the possible' (Davis and Sumara, 2004), in an immaterial and a material way. This fosters my sense of emancipation, empowerment and inclusion: in being able to alter the world I feel more a part of it. In offering my work to the wider world I invite others to engage with this process. The ethics of my practice prescribe that I endeavour to add as little as possible to the materials I work with, and that nothing is left behind; there should be no waste from this waste. There is further discussion of the development of a low impact practice in Chapter 6 - Practice and Reflection. My use of materials goes beyond the concept of thrift, which is a human construct and a concept intrinsic in many textile craft processes, and is more of a positive appreciation as well as an interrogation of the materials used.

I see this art practice, my making, as fitting into this field of micropolitics; as a way to alter how materials are viewed, to 'alter' sensibilities with a view to encouraging a curiosity and questioning the ethics of the ways in which we can be so unaware of the provenance, and hence the impact, of things we may use, and consequently discard, every day. Sustainability can start at our fingertips, the things we touch and use every day. The intent of this practice, as already stated, is to re-present the objects I work with in order to alter what can be viewed as an 'alienation' from this kind of matter, seen as waste and therefore as an inherent and inevitable part of contemporary consumer culture. Through my practice I ask whether there is a way

to elucidate a different relationship, a more sensitive and questioning viewing of this material.

It is the possibility of altering this relationship 'at the moment of subject-object interaction' (Boscagli, 2014: 38) that is fundamental to this project which explores how we can be more sensitive to materials which pass through our hands, materials which are felt but not necessarily 'seen'. This project confronts us with the question of how can we be unaware that to use objects and materials for just a few minutes is deeply degrading not just for the materials involved but for us also, complicit in this maltreatment. It also questions how this 'sensibility' to matter, an awareness of its provenance and its potential, its 'deep materiality', can be awakened and enlivened.

The power of this material is ignited and explored by being reinserted as art/craft items into the culture that produced it - the consumerist culture that expected this material to be exploited and then conveniently forgotten. Boscagli calls into question this assumption, in the light of new materialism, stating

> This stuff, bursting out all over in a world of overproduction, challenges any fatalist tendency to the apolitical or the anaesthetic, in the new materialism. The ontology of matter can thus keep the pulse of power; with a more ambitious and political move, culture can read the heterogeneity of matter in order to intervene in the social scenario to which it belongs (2014: 27).

This places my practice firmly in the field of the political, albeit in a new materialist understanding of the political, where matter affects and has agency. Thus my artwork asserts that this lively matter of 'waste' has not yet reached its final destination, should not be seen as a terminus, but by undergoing this process of re-enlivening, of reinventing, this creatively changes and experientially alters not only the status of matter, but also the condition of the human.

4.10 Conclusion

Micropolitics, then, can be seen as the way we live our lives on a daily basis, where we recognise the potential of changes and actions we are capable of making in our daily lives. This could also be the food we do or don't eat; the items we do or don't

purchase; how often we do or don't wash our clothes, whether we repair our shoes or buy new ones. These activities 'count' as political acts, as the politics of a way of being, as everything we do affects the world in some way, however small. This insinuates a looking beyond these objects and materials, raising an awareness of how they came to be in existence and what their continuing existence implies.

I include the 'not doing' as well as the 'doing' as a positive action by a subject; a 'not doing' does not need to be seen as a negative act, but a 'thoughtful' not doing becomes an action of intent and can be a profound political act.

Bennett quotes Guattari in an assessment of what is needed in order to amend ourselves, as humans, in order to produce a 'greener self-culture-nature' (2010:114) that is more than a 'green consumerism'. This 'self-culture-nature' blurs the boundaries between the inside and outside. This includes a realisation that the self – 'the inside', is constituted from and can be altered and affected by 'the outside'. From such a position – we can see actions as the micropolitics 'of the outside' and a more sensitised alteration of our human sensibilities as the micropolitics 'of the inside.'

In Part Two I go on to explore how by reviewing the way we treat the material world we may create possibilities to value it more. Through my practice I create these possibilities; connecting materials with a sense of materiality whilst at the same time objecting to the 'common' materialism that exploits materials and the resulting superfluous materials inherent in this system.

PART 2

Practice and Reflection

Introduction

The second part of this thesis is composed of four chapters which includes a conclusion to the thesis.

Chapter Five - Influences on Practice, describes the influence on my practice of a seminal exhibition and a series of conferences, of the Japanese concept of wabi-sabi, of the traditional Eastern ways of paper-making as compared to Western ways of paper-making, the importance of the Arts and Crafts movement and of the artists whose work resonates with my practice.

Chapter Six - Context and Development of Practice, explores the context of my practice, discussing its origins and its ethics and the way in which it has evolved during the course of this project.

Chapter Seven - My Practice, is a description and visual record of my work and development of my research. It also describes the methods employed, both in the unmaking and the remaking and the thinking behind these methods when discussing the individual objects that I work with.

Chapter Eight – Conclusion of Thesis: Matter Matters, is the closing chapter and seeks to conflate the arguments and focus on future plans.

CHAPTER 5

Influences on Practice

> How can humans learn to enhance our receptivity for "propositions" not expressed in words? (Bennett, 2010: 104).
>
> Studying art is important, because art sometimes gives voice to what is unspeakable elsewhere, either temporarily – one day we will find the words – or intrinsically – words are impossible (Morton, 2010: 12).

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter I examine specific influences on my practice and research. These disparate influences described below have all contributed to 'where I am now' in my work and research. They include a seminal exhibition, *Taking Time: Craft and the Slow Revolution* and the *Making Futures* series of conferences, organised by Plymouth College of Art. I examine the Japanese concept of wabi-sabi and study the differences, both physical and metaphysical, between Eastern and Western concepts of the process of making paper.

I also examine modernist art movements, beginning with the Arts And Crafts movement, already mentioned in Chapter 4 – Politics and Micropolitics. Its ideas and ideals are examined and its continuing relevance for the present day and contemporary problems noted.

I also look at artists whose work resonates with my intentions and who have had an influence on my practice and who may also exercise a political practice around issues of waste and environmental degradation.

5.2. *Taking Time: Craft and the Slow Revolution*

A major influence initially was a touring exhibition, curated by Helen Carnac, called *Taking Time: Craft and the Slow Revolution*, which toured nationally from 2009 – 2011. This responded to an awareness of 'fast' lifestyles and a seemingly unsustainable consumer culture. It invoked a framework of debate around craft

and making and its relationship to societal issues. Questions from the exhibition catalogue include:

- How can contemporary craft making enable social interaction and embrace collaborative practice?
- How do we understand the impacts of time in making and understand time constructs that are used within the making process?
- How can we better understand a making process if we reverse this process or 'unmake', literally 'unpicking the stitches' to reveal ideas of process, materiality and what an object may look like when it is complete?
- How do makers communicate ideas of making and how are these spoken about?

Frequently my audience comments, on viewing my work, particularly the crisp packet work, that it must have taken me a long time; as if I was in some way 'wasting' my time. This describes a sense of not knowing what is involved in making, in that nourishing place that you create for yourself, absorbed in your work, absorbed in your own making when a sense of time falls by the wayside and, if noticed, seems to stretch away into the distance. Our sense of time seems to have become corrupted, as in a consumerist culture where everything can be bought at a price - we have less and less an idea of the processes, both material and temporal, that making things involves. The time taken to make or create has to be validated by an economic criteria; thus the temporal becomes an important consideration in how we access, assess and view the world around us. This concept is challenged by the slow movement and its ethics.

Slow design isn't about slowing down our life system – it is about opening up a new system of life,
being able to view in a different perspective to what we have in our hands and our heads and what we do with it.
(Judith Van den Boom, 2016) Taking Time blogpost; original formatting

5.3. Making Futures series of conferences

At the beginning of this study I attended a conference at Plymouth College of Art which became a formative influence in how my practice and my thinking developed. The initial title for this study arose from a workshop at this conference which discussed the positive ethical ways in which 'craft' and making could contribute to a sustainable future. The conference, entitled *Making Futures: the crafts in the context of emerging global sustainability issues* has since become a biennial event. Initially its remit was:

> To improve understanding of the ways in which the contemporary crafts are practiced in relation to significant and new emerging agendas relating to global environmental and sustainability issues. The objectives include trying to understand whether these 'agendas' offer opportunities for the crafts to redefine and reconstitute themselves as less marginalised, more centrally productive forces in society, through new formulations and/or re-articulations of practices, identities, positions and markets, in ways that might engage more closely with contemporary social and cultural needs (Plymouth College of Art, 2009).

I have presented papers at the following three conferences, all of which can be viewed online. *Responses, redefinitions and repositionings,* presented in 2011, was the title of the first paper and discussed issues around the 'craft revolution' known as craftivism and how society could be altered through a focus on social groups coming together to stitch, sew, create and make, whilst publicising certain societal problems. In 2013, my paper was called *Deeper and Deeper* and discussed how a notion of 'deep craft' with a more ethical sensibility could make a difference to our lives. It also drew on the legacy of Arne Naess' Deep Ecology movement initiated in the 1970's and also looked to critique these concepts through the perspective of eco-feminism. The third paper, from 2015, was called *Yet more re:words, reverberations and resistances*, this charted the development of my practice, aligning it to theoretical writing and incorporating a nascent new materialist thinking.

The impetus behind the Making Futures 2015 conference was described thus:

> How might we move beyond the reductive instrumentalism of 'homo economicus' and mass consumption, to a political economy capable of valuing our needs for social well-being and resilient communities, that can also incorporate concerns for non-human environmental resources? (Plymouth College of art, 2015)

In the early stages of this study I was not aware of the 'political' perspectives that could be accessed through an art/craft practice but these have since revealed themselves.

5.4. Wabi-sabi

The Eastern concept of wabi-sabi, or the 'Japanese Art of Impermanence', has affected and influenced my practice, as has the work of various Japanese textile artists. Written definitions of wabi-sabi vary, it is seen as a philosophy of aesthetics difficult to define, even by Japanese people. As the author Andrew Juniper states; 'Wabi-sabi does not yield easily to a definitive, one-line interpretation' (2003: ix), he goes on to say that he hopes that his writing will 'offer some new perspectives on the spirituality of art in a world moving rapidly toward unrestrained materialism'(ibid.). In my research and practice these elements have become more important and have a relevance to a new materialist way of thinking as described below. It is not just a way of seeing beauty in the unexpected and the overlooked, in the worn and the worn out - the concept has a wider and deeper philosophical implication, as Juniper states:

> Wabi-sabi embodies the Zen nihilistic cosmic view and seeks beauty in the imperfections found as all things, in a constant state of flux, evolve from nothing and devolve back to nothing. Within this perpetual movement nature leaves arbitrary tracks for us to contemplate, and it is these random flaws and irregularities that offer a model for the modest and humble wabi-sabi expression of beauty (2003: 1-2).

Thus this concept has links with a new materialist outlook, viewing the world 'in a constant state of flux,' hence it is describing this state of 'non-fixity' already described in Chapter Three - Materialism and Materiality. It also resonates with my practice in that things and objects that are seemingly insignificant and worthless are viewed as having a value and an affect that can alter human perceptions and actions.

Wabi-sabi is a beauty of things imperfect,

impermanent, and incomplete.

It is a beauty of things modest and humble.

It is a beauty of things unconventional.

(Koren, 2008: 7)

The above text is the 'definition' of wabi-sabi given by Leonard Koren in his book *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets, and Philosophers.* He also states 'wabi-sabi is about the minor and the hidden, the tentative and the ephemeral: things so subtle and evanescent they are invisible to vulgar eyes' (2008: 50). He also states that 'The closer things get to non-existence, the more exquisite and evocative they become' (ibid.). This concept has made me reflect on attempting to use every part of the matter in the objects that I deconstruct, as every part, however small and close to 'non-existence', has a value and a plays a part in the virtuosity of the work. This theme of 'non-existence', of nothingness, is also evident in Zen teachings.

'All things are incomplete. All things, including the universe itself, are in a constant, never- ending state of becoming or dissolving' (Koren, 2008: 49). These thoughts are evocative of 'the world of becoming' alluded to in current Western theoretical thinking, particularly around a 'new materialist' outlook, countering ideas of a binary, over-logical understanding of the universe. The concept of wabi-sabi resonates with my practice reconsidering as it does the insignificant, the overlooked; the objects seemingly of little power or status. Koren also states,

> A powerful dynamic of the art-making process is representing the ordinary as extra-ordinary, and making what was heretofore invisible visible (2015:86).

In an exhibition of Modern Japanese Design at Manchester Museum, the beneficial effects on wellbeing of the concept of wabi-sabi are described in relation to human activities thus: 'Engaging with natural, unique objects which embody wabi-sabi is believed to help still unnecessary thoughts and worries, enabling life to be experienced in a calm and accepting way' (Manchester Museum, 2017). These ideas chime with the ethos of the slow movement as described above, and also intimates that the 'affect' of mass produced objects, such as the ones I work with,

are not good for human well-being. Wabi-sabi 'is the material expression of contemplative Japanese Zen Buddhist ideas and embodies the spiritual and not simply appearances. It is easier to experience wabi-sabi than to describe it' (ibid).

The definition of 'sabi' indicates that it is 'associated with accumulating wear and tear, patina, rust and fraying' (ibid.).

This concept influences my practice in the paper cup work but also in the paper carrier bag work, described below in Chapter 7.4. The paper is 'encouraged' to look used and worn; by redefining its existence as a single use item and using the momigami Japanese technique, a repetitive yet contemplative process of crunching, squeezing and releasing the paper, it develops a 'strength' in its softness and yet may break and tear in places. However this fragility indicates a new identity and belies a strength, both on a physical level, as the paper 'contracts' and becomes stronger and also of its metaphysical existence. It exemplifies at the same time the disparate qualities of strength and yet of fragility, both of the material and yet also of the fragility of impermanence, of constant change and altering, thus forming a unity of material and concept.

This concept implies a sensitivity to materials and to matter that I have attempted to incorporate into my art practice and one which the Western way of using and disposing of matter is diametrically opposed to. Contemporary Western attitudes towards the 'uses' of matter, particularly matter seen as 'disposable' do not include concerns over longevity or a valuing or knowledge of the ways in which that matter came to be in that particular form.

5.5. Eastern and Western methods of papermaking. Chika Oghi. Hanji.

> It is difficult to compare the art of Japanese papermaking with Western paper culture. From a tradition over 1400 years old, it produced a product which far exceeds our concept of paper as a commodity. The expression 'washi', which is used generically in the West to describe all handmade Japanese paper, actually covers an entire philosophy behind the production process and use of paper. It is virtually untranslatable (Leitner, 2005: 16).

Paper is a ubiquitous and often overlooked material. We use it in various forms in the Western developed world, not only to carry text and information but also as a

substrate for art work. It is also used in a more prosaic and disposable way to dry our hands, blow our noses and wipe up spills, exploiting its qualities of absorbency and a 'holding' of moisture. Laden with moisture paper becomes weak and will easily tear. On drying, its strength returns.

It is interesting to note that the way that paper is now made in the West is seen by the Japanese as a very wasteful and 'inauthentic' way to make paper. Traditional hand papermaking in Japan is still a spiritual and revered process; paper is seen as 'the mirror of the soul'. As Christina Leitner writes in her book *Paper Textiles:*

> In ancient Japan art and craft were closely connected to religion and meditation. Shintoism is the original religion of the Japanese. Its basic idea is that all substances, whether people, animals, plants or objects, are inhabited by gods (*kami*) (2005, 16).

The Japanese word *kami* means a sheet of paper but also has the shared meaning 'divinity'. *Kami* is also a word for the gods that:

> fill the world with life and are reborn through nature or through the actions of people. This belief that all things were living inevitably had a huge effect on how people related to their environment. To a large extent, they expressed themselves by respecting nature and there was the craftsman who not only created living objects, but 'built new housing for the gods'. He had to listen to the language of the material (ibid.).

Thus creative acts and making objects was seen as a form of re-birth, one form of life becoming another, and then that state also not being fixed but merely another stage in the 'perpetual movement' described above in the description of wabi-sabi. There is also an anti-binary bias similar to that expressed in forms of new materialism in this union of spiritual and creative principle. Leitner goes on to describe how in the West we see the world in terms of difference, whereas:

> The Japanese [. .] believe that all opposite pairs such as creativity and spirituality, tradition and progress, craft and technology, functionality and aesthetics, craft and art, West and East, Buddhism and Shintoism, being and not-being etc. are just two sides of a self-contained unity (2005:17).

In Japan, paper is seen not as a medium or 'carrier' for something else but is viewed as a means of expression with its own identity and status. In his essay *In Praise of Shadows,* the Japanese writer Junichoro Tanizaki, born in 1886, describes

perceived differences between the Western and Eastern sense of aesthetics. He describes how western paper is 'no more' than something to be used, whereas 'the texture of Chinese paper and Japanese paper gives us a certain feeling of warmth, of calm and repose' (2001: 5). He goes on to describe his perception of material differences in their reaction to light;

> Western paper turns away the light, while our paper seems to take it in, to envelope it gently, like the soft surface of a first snowfall. It gives off no sound when it is crumpled or folded, it is quiet and pliant to the touch as the leaf of a tree (ibid).

Thus paper almost takes on the qualities of cloth, being 'quiet and pliant to the touch'; in the pieces made using the momigami technique, I have (see Chapter 7.4) changed the qualities of the hard, crisp, yet brittle paper into something much softer; into a paper that can drape like a fabric and yet also feels like treated animal skin. This was an intuitive response to a mass-produced material hardened by its industrial manufacture. I have, In order to extend its life, developed a process that, by investigating and manipulating its materiality, invokes and provokes an emotional response from the viewer, such as the one described above by Tanizaki.

In Tanizaki's essay, light is seen as the crucial aspect of the aesthetic differences between the West and Japanese culture; the way that shadows and darkness inform and reveal Japanese interiors and indeed their artefacts is seen in contrast to the desired bright and 'polished' aspects of Western culture. The intangible materiality of darkness; its characteristics and properties are discussed in a positive way. Being aware of the connection to low levels of light in the concept of wabi-sabi, I deliberately kept one part of the gallery for the accompanying exhibition of my work in partial shadow; this seemed to 'reveal' and accentuate the work in a fitting and sensitive way. This can be viewed in the Appendix section of the thesis.

This awareness of the properties of shadow, of properties of darkness and lack of light also translates into an appreciation of artefacts that are worn and are darkened with age. These are artefacts that show the effects of time, and the number of times they have been used. Their temporality is reflected in their physical appearance in a form that would not be acceptable in the West, where the

appearance of ‘newness’ and ‘cleanliness’ is aspired to. These well-used artefacts may be blackened and tarnished with wear or grime, their undisguised ‘usefulness’ being seen as an intrinsic and valuable part of their existence. This again is in direct contrast to the assured metaphorical ‘shininess’ and ‘newness’ of a disposable paper cup, for example, of which the main concern is that the cleanliness of the product is not compromised. It is released from a plastic sleeve full of other identical cups, used for a few minutes and discarded, its short temporal ‘existence’ (as viewed by its human protagonist) can be curtailed and forgotten. It is not a problem for contemporary minds to disengage with material in this way, in a manner that has direct ramifications on the ecosystem of the earth.

Chika Ohgi

Despite Japan’s transformation into an industrial capitalist society, certain sensibilities and an appreciation of simple materials is still reflected in the work of contemporary Japanese artists. This is reflected in the work of Chika Ohgi, whose work *Walking around the lake* is described below.

Walking around the lake, an artwork by the Japanese textile artist Chika Ohgi is shown in Figure 1. It is displayed bathed in a pool of light and surrounded by semi-darkness and shadows, into which it seems to spill, extending our experience of the work. The unfilled space below the work, which is suspended in the air, accentuates the materiality of the floating paper pieces, and can be seen to emphasise the Zen belief that both ideas and objects are not ours to hold. The delicacy yet also the seeming weightlessness and the strength of the paper reinforces notions of transience and emptiness; the work has no edges or sides to contain it. The vaguely circular form of the whole piece and the notion of the physical act of walking around a lake gives the work a meditative quality and a temporal resonance of circularity, not a linear path of moving from one place to another, but a more responsive sense of rediscovery of a path already taken.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Fig 1 Chika Ohgi **(**1997) *Walking around the lake*

[gampi, kozo, cotton, cypress needles] ©Chika Ohgi Available at http://www.chikaohgi.com/works/lake.html (Accessed: 5th May 2017)

In the West, although paper is thought of as having an 'innocuous' presence, as being benign and unthreatening, its abundance belies its environmental impact. Paper *can* 'biodegrade', therefore it *will* 'go away'. It is recyclable, but this 'harmless' material is the result of an intensive industrial process. More than thirty common compounds are used to make paper, it needs dyes, chemicals and bleaches to give us the product we so admire (Sansom, 2012:16).

Traditionally, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, paper in the west was made from waste materials; rags of cotton and linen material were beaten into a pulp before being formed into paper sheets. Paper is still made from these plant-based fibres to produce watercolour paper and high grade paper for documents.

Modern industrial paper production has switched to using cellulose fibre from tree bark to make its products, this involves the 'farming' of trees; trees are felled in order to make paper and disposable paper products. Water and energy is used in large quantities in order to feed the necessary industrial process. As already stated in Chapter Two, all paper for the paper cups has to be made of high quality virgin pulp due to health and safety regulations. The way in which they are currently

constructed means that there is a 'join' through which contamination may occur. There are tentative moves afoot to 're-design' paper cups that do not have this join, as this makes them more suitable for the 'recycling' process, as the plastic, when processed at a paper mill, is in larger pieces so that it can be strained out. I argue that instead of inventing technological 'fixes' to solve this problem, we should not have products that are disposable but either have our own re-usable cup, which it is quite feasible to carry with us, or insist that establishments who serve hot beverages do so in cups that can be washed and re-used many times, made from ceramic, glass or other re-usable materials.

Hanji

Making paper using traditional Eastern methods was and is a truly sustainable process. The traditional production of Hanji paper in South Korea is described by Aimee Lee in her book *Hanji Unfurled*. Aimee Lee is an activist of Korean descent who found that the best way to change the contemporary world was to be an ambassador for hanji, as its making represents a method that is not harmful to humans or over-exploitative of nature. Hanji paper is made from the bast fibres of the dak plant, a perennial plant whose shoots re-grow every year and can be harvested to make the paper. As Lee states in her book,

> Unlike the sheets of wood-based, machine-made paper that Western nations started to make in the nineteenth century, hanji is not made from wood pulp, and harvesting dak does not kill the tree. In fact, making paper in consort with ecological cycles keeps dak healthy and alive, providing years of raw material (2012: 12).

All cultures with a tradition of papermaking have unique ways of creating and using paper that meets their specific needs and Korean hanji could be made, from the same fibres, in different thicknesses and weights and was used, through the skill of the papermakers, for many different articles. These included thick floor coverings, fine window screen coverings, sails, fans, kites, armour, clothing and more.

5.6. The Arts and Crafts Movement.

Labour. Legacy. Politics. Politics and Art. Attentiveness.

> The Arts and Crafts movement, in retrospect, can be seen to be the most successful construction of a theory and practice of ethical art . . . . The vernacular was the model, unalienated work was the means and art was the goal. The larger ideal pulled the three elements into proximity. It was a brilliant formulation: humankind would be liberated through communal creativity (Gauntlett, 2011:48).

I have already mentioned the Arts and Crafts Movement in Chapter 4.6, where I intimate the importance of Morris' thinking on the concept of meaningful and creative work, of labour, and how this can be a way to connect people to themselves, to others and to the outside world. This contributes to and describes an ethical creativity which, in Morris' view, '. . . was the means by which human beings could connect with nature, with their own sense of self, and with other people' (Gauntlett, 2011:47). During his lifetime he developed ideas around the micro-political importance of the noticing of everyday life to illustrate and exemplify the wider socialist political beliefs that he describes in his later writing and lectures.

Labour

> The Arts and Crafts movement was inspired by a crisis of conscience. Its motivations were social and moral, and its aesthetic values derived from the conviction that society produces the art and architecture that it deserves. [. . .] Britain [. . .] was the first to discover that factory conditions are far from ideal, and the realisation that technical progress does not necessarily coincide with the improvement of man's lot brought with it the long campaign for social, industrial, moral and aesthetic reform that is still unresolved today (Naylor, 1971:7).

The Arts and Crafts movement emerged in the nineteenth century as a reaction against early industrialisation and the excessive proliferation of mass-produced and seemingly over-decorated artefacts. Far from Morris accepting these objects as attributing status to the individual and being symbols of wealth, he describes them plainly as being 'waste' (Gauntlett,2011: 42). Morris was more concerned with the simplicity and authenticity of objects and materials, seeing more worth in a simply

executed article made by hand than one produced using machines and elaborate processes.

One aspect of the Arts and Crafts movement was 'the belief in the joy of group endeavour, the creative power engendered by a pooling of various artistic expertise' (MacCarthy: 2014:64). This can be seen as a precursor to the modern artists' studio movement where groups of artists share premises, providing financial as well as creative support. This ideal also has similarities to Andy Warhol and his Factory and is discussed in more detail below. The movement was concerned with the seeming dehumanisation of work in society; it was felt that an appreciation of, and collaborative participation in art and craft practices could change people's lives for the better and this resulted in many self-sustaining workshops and guilds being set up which were economically viable and had a positive lasting effect on communities.

The ideals of the movement - 'of productive and contented labour' (MacCarthy, 2014:59), of the value of the hand-made and of the democratisation of art as part of a movement for social justice, spread throughout Europe and north America, emerging in Japan, which had also undergone a period of rapid industrialisation, in the 1920's and 1930's. It is interesting to note the influence that Japanese artefacts and commodities had on Western society during the latter half of the nineteenth century and how the Arts and Crafts movement surfaced in Japan as the Mingei or Folk Crafts movement, initially focussing on ceramics. By 1927, over one hundred works of Morris and Ruskin had been translated and published in Japan (Nakanishi, 2008).

Morris had been influenced by Ruskin's work and particularly his ideas around joy in labour which sought to end false distinctions between work and leisure. Morris developed utopian ideas in his viewing of art and collaborative art making (he saw no distinction between 'art' and 'craft') as being central to his vision of how to lead a good life. As Naylor describes 'From such a generous and spontaneous collaboration a "decorative, noble, popular art" would emerge, simple, organic and

close to the earth, with a natural unity between form, function and decoration' (1980:108).

Legacy

The continuing legacy of this movement in the twentieth century in Great Britain is described online on the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum's website,

> Art schools and technical colleges particularly in London, Glasgow and Birmingham played an important role in developing the movement. In return the Arts and Crafts ideas influenced the teaching of art, craft and design in Britain through to the 1950's and later (Arts & Crafts Museum, 2016).

Women were encouraged to take a leading role in this inclusive movement and it also encouraged the involvement of amateurs and students, thus reflecting Morris' preoccupation with the democratisation of art. He saw 'art made by the people as a joy to the maker and the user' (MacCarthy, 2014:11). This was promoted as an alternative and an antidote to 'a nineteenth-century industrialised Britain of encroaching cynicism, class bitterness and waste' (ibid.), challenging as it did the undemanding and unrewarding mechanical processes of mass production in factories and the resulting unregulated pollution that Morris saw disfiguring London.

In 2014 the artist Jeremy Deller curated an exhibition called *Love is Enough* at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, juxtaposing the work and lives of William Morris and Andy Warhol whom Deller cites as being his two biggest artistic influences. As Deller describes,

> Both were natural collaborators who worked with the prominent artists of their time to develop working methods that did much to redefine the artist's relationship to the studio and factory. Morris achieved this through his mastering of craft techniques and his rejection of industrial processes and Warhol through the activities of the Factory, which often parodied the industrial culture of the mid-late twentieth century (Deller, 2014).

Thus Morris' ideas and influences are still relevant to the present day, and an archive of his work and writings, as well as work by contemporary artists inspired

by his work, can be viewed at the William Morris Museum in Walthamstow, London.

Politics

MacCarthy further describes William Morris' ethical stance when she quotes him thus: 'What business do we have with art at all unless all can share it?' (2014:10) She describes the movement's beliefs that 'Access to art was everybody's birthright, everyone was due a creative occupation and, as Morris came to realise, art was bound inextricably to politics' (ibid.).

Morris developed his socialist thinking throughout his lifetime, playing a leading role in various campaigning groups and helping to found the Socialist League in 1884. He read Marx, and the ideas around mass production and the alienation of labour reinforced his political thinking, causing him to develop a form of 'Socialism seen through the eyes of an artist' (Naylor, 1980:108), otherwise described as 'artistic socialism'. Thus Ruskin and Morris can be viewed as early environmentalists; their philosophy of leading a simple life and of taking only what is needed is re-iterated by later movements and ethical thinkers.

Politics and Art

As MacCarthy states when describing Morris' utopian and visionary novel *News from Nowhere* 'the most strikingly original aspects of the story have to do with art and the environment' (2014:16). In this work art is seen to encompass the whole world, whether it be kitchen implements or the way towns are planned, it is 'so omni-present there is no need to define it' (ibid.) This work emphasises the view that change is always possible and influenced the radical politics of late Victorian Britain. By 1898 *News from Nowhere* had been published across Europe and was also printed in Russia during the turmoil preceding the revolution.

This belief that art could change the world was implicit in Morris' insistence that attention to, and appreciation of, the materiality of simple articles and activities of the quotidian was essential in opposing exploitative capitalistic methods of production. His well-known view that it was advisable to 'Have nothing in your

house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful' (Morris, 1880), underscored an early condemnation of an economic materialism and unbounded consumerism. It is still relevant that an interest and appreciation of well-made goods, designed using benign natural materials and made with considered low carbon processes would alleviate the harm being done by industry driven by an ethic of profit-making, of over-production and a negative ecological awareness.

Attentiveness

Through his lifestyle and in his writings Morris developed and promoted new paradigms around 'art and its connectedness to social conditions and psychological and spiritual needs' (MacCarthy, 2014:11).

As has already been stated in Chapter 4.6 - Politics and Micropolitics, Gauntlett describes Morris' belief that artists should be 'engaged with the everyday' (2011:43). This attentiveness to the everyday and noticing the overlooked, has also been alluded to in section 4.8, where I refer to de Certeau and his work *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) and describe an engagement with, and an acknowledgement of, the potential of the everyday as an act of resistance.

Morris believed that creative curiosity and a sense of awareness of and connection with ones surroundings provoked contentment and was crucial to the well-being of the individual. His beliefs are borne out by this state of attentiveness resonating with the contemporary interest in mindfulness and well-being. The National Health Service (2014) states on-line that "Paying more attention to the present moment – to your own thoughts and feelings, *and to the world around you* – can improve your mental wellbeing" (my italics).

Mind, the mental health charity, also promotes a series of actions called the *Five Ways to Wellbeing*, the third one of these recommendations is to 'take notice', stressing the need to be aware of, be curious about, and enjoy what is taking place in the present moment. This awareness can lead to a calming of the mind and a less stressful disposition. An acceptance of the present moment pushes away fears

emanating from the past and redefines a calming sense of the present, a sense of a temporality undisturbed by regrets or worries over the future (Mind, 2013).

That this sense of awareness is amplified by the act of making and creating was also recognised by Morris who, as Gauntlett describes, 'judged the arts to be "healthy" when they were built upon an intimate weaving together of "craft" abilities and artistic ideas, the practical and the emotional, and the stimulation of both pleasure and intellect' (2011:43).

My practice juxtaposes the hand-made with the industrially produced object; these objects have been produced by an automated process and there is no relationship between the maker or the creator of the process and the finished object. These objects are overlooked, alienated both from their 'maker' and also from their user. In their post-use phase they are then rejected, designated as 'waste'. I feel their abandonment - something must be done to correct this state of affairs. Thus my relationship with them begins. I pick them up and begin to 'unpick' their industrialisation, revealing the materiality of their constituents. This is an act of necessary yet joyous labour, a rescuing and re-seeing of the overlooked, discarded object and is an implicit and understated act, an act of the hand and the intellect. By undoing the mechanical processes by which these artefacts are constructed I am respecting the matter from whence these artefacts came. I am questioning the system that produced it, thus resisting the conditions and the societal pressures that brought it about.

5.7 Later Art Movements. *Arte Povera.*

There have been several art movements in the modern era that have incorporated waste or used, found or discarded materials of the everyday in their works.

Whiteley quotes Boccioni from the Futurist Manifesto of 1912 in describing a desire to move away from 'elite' materials and their intrinsic establishment values.

> We must destroy the so-called nobility, wholly literary and traditional, of modern and bronze […] The sculptor may use twenty or more different materials if he likes […] glass, wood, cardboard, iron, cement, hair, leather, cloth, mirrors, electric light, etc. . . (2011: 36).

This movement continued through the Dada anti-aestheticism from the time of the First World War, to the collages of Cubism and the work of Kurt Schwitters, who while in Britain during the Second World War created work from bus tickets, scraps of paper and cardboard. It continued with the assemblages of Dubuffet, and the ready-mades of Duchamp, which tested the tolerance of society to new conceptions of art and freedom of expression.

Arte Povera

Arte Povera, or 'poor art', an art movement that evolved in Italy in the 1960's and 1970's, evolved as a reaction against the commercialisation of the art gallery system. The artists who were party to this movement became well-known for using materials not normally seen in galleries, such as soil, trees, rags - materials seen as having little economic value. They often used performance in their work and in using such materials sought to challenge and undermine the value systems of an art world that they saw as becoming increasingly elitist. This movement had repercussions in Japan, emerging in the 1960's as the 'Mona-ha' group, or School of Things, whose artists 'instead of making traditional representational artworks, explored materials and their properties in reaction to what they saw as ruthless development and industrialisation in Japan' (Tate, 2017). A founding member of the group was Lee Ufan, who rejected traditional representational art in favour of showing the properties of materials. In 1968 a piece of work was a 2.7 metre-high tower of soil displayed next to a similarly shaped hole in the ground.

The piece of work shown below is by Jannis Kounellis, a Greek artist who lived most of his life in Italy and was immersed in the *Arte Povera* movement. It shows the rawness of unprocessed wool, shorn from the sheep but not carded or spun. It is arrested in its normal journey of production into useful 'objects' for our use. The wool has been briefly and unevenly dipped in a blue dye which appears to exaggerate its materiality – its form otherwise looks uncontrived, having been wound and draped over a simple frame of wooden bars. The wool would not usually be seen in this way; its production would be a part of an unseen and unacknowledged industrial process. The blue and the white dyeing of the wool,

reminiscent of the sky and clouds, emphasises the part that these entities would have played in the production of this commodity. The sheep would have produced the wool outdoors, under the sky, warmed by the sun and exposed to the elements and this is reflected in the work. This piece also emphasises the aesthetic of a seemingly lowly material, bringing to the fore, in its simple presentation, not only its origins and its materiality but also its uniqueness and beauty.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Fig 2 Jannis Kounellis **(**1968) *Untitled* [wool and wood]

Photo: ©Tate, London [2017] Available at http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/kounellis-untitled-t07074 (Accessed: 12th March 2017)

5.8 Further Artists: Tony Cragg. Mierle Laderman Ukeles. El Anatsui. Aurora Robson. John Grade. Song Dong. Huang Xu.

The logic of the waste event and the cause of its centrality within many forms of sculpture, literature and architecture relate to how waste implies events through a temporality of dispersal, a complex intermingling of the present and the absent that instrumentalises a lingering and uncanny permutation of temporal redundancy. It is this intermingling of the present and the absent that challenges, enchants and frustrates, and explains

> hesitation before artworks that make and are made from waste (Viney 2014:43).

I will look more closely at the work of seven diverse artists whose practices range from sculpture to performance to installation or a mixture of various disciplines. They are relevant to this study as although not all of them work directly with 'waste' matter they share a profound sense of a materiality that is inter-connective, cutting across boundaries of differing ethnicities, cultures and time.

Tony Cragg

In discussing the early work, from the 1980's, of the sculptor Tony Cragg, who initially trained as a scientist, Scanlan draws attention to the largely unnoticed making processes that products and objects have to go through in order to be in the world. In his early exhibitions Cragg would arrive at a gallery with no materials or work but a performative process would see him gathering found objects and arranging them into assemblages he became well known for. He was aware that industrial methods of production, and hence material relationships, are largely concealed and hidden in modern societies, taking place in factories and other places of mass production. This concept is explored in Cragg's early work:

> His work is notable for its exploration of different materials, including found objects and raw matter of various kinds. Cragg's method of dispassionate ordering and composing seeks to make evident the vast array of objects and images that surround us, but with which he feels modern man has only a superficial relationship, based on function alone. In order to enhance our imaginative and emotional relationship with the world at large, Cragg proposed beginning with physical matter as the fundamental basis of experience (Berggruen, 2017).

Cragg seeks to build a 'poetic mythology' for the industrially produced objects of our time. If we know them better, their properties and their limitations, they would not be a threat to us. In 1992, Cragg said,

> I see material or an object as having a balloon of information around it. Materials like wood already have a very occupied balloon. The objects of our industrial society as yet have very little information attached to them, so even if something like plastic can be accepted as a valid material for use, it still remains very unoccupied. There is a lot of work to be done to actually

> make a mythology for this material, over and above its extremely practical and utilitarian value (Cragg, 1992).

Thus Cragg uncannily predicts the problems we are experiencing with plastic, being because we do not know it well enough. The work below, in its compression of materials, would appear to reference geology and archaeology. '*Stack* resembles a cross-section view of long-forgotten buried rubbish' (Delaney,2001) . This description reinforces his interest in how his work relates to the natural world and also describes the impact that man is having on nature. His training as a scientist informs his practice and his work has been described as a 'study of the relationship of the part to the whole' (ibid). This is an idea derived from the theory of particle physics, and Cragg sees the visual and plastic arts as 'an important supplement and expansion of the sciences' (ibid).

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Fig 3 Tony Cragg (1975) *Stack* 200 x 200 x 200cm [Wood, concrete, brick, metal, plastic, textile, cardboard, paper] ©Tony Cragg

Courtesy The Lisson Gallery and DACS Available at http://www.lissongallery.com/artists/tony-cragg/gallery/3218 (Accessed: 14th July 2016)

Mierle Laderman Ukeles

Mierle Ukeles is an American feminist conceptual artist whose career has spanned several decades. She has been an 'unsalaried' artist in residence at New York's Sanitation Department for over thirty five years. One aspect of her work describes the 'devalued labour of sanitation and refuse workers' (Whitely, 2011:29). She correlates this with domestic labour and with her role as a wife and mother. In 1969 she wrote a Manifesto for Maintenance Art, this 'proposed undoing boundaries that separate the maintenance of everyday life from the role of an artist in society'(Krug, 2006).

In her performative piece *I Make Maintenance Art One Hour Every Day (1976)* Ukeles invited three hundred bank maintenance staff to discuss their labour as either work or art. She was questioning, as did Ruskin and Morris, 'the social constructions of aesthetic and cultural values that define what work and art mean' (Krug, 2006). Her work initially focussed on the routines of the everyday, the cleaning and 'maintenance' she carried out on a daily basis which included the inevitable sorting and disposing of 'trash'.

This interest in trash came to dominate her practice with many long term projects evolving, one aspect of which was to seek to 'reveal and erase the boundaries between citizen and waste' (Whiteley, 2011: 153). In *Touch Sanitation (1979-1980)* she shook hands with 8,500 refuse workers employed in New York, aspiring to make the sanitation workers more visible and also alter perceptions of trash as being dirty, unhygienic and 'untouchable'. This also celebrated the work that these low paid workers were carrying out. She agrees with Bauman who, as already stated in Chapter 2, describes these workers as 'the unsung heroes of modernity' (2004: 28). She states;

> 'I'm not here to watch you, to study you, to analyse you, to judge you, I'm here to be with you: all the shifts, all the seasons, to walk out the whole city with you'. I face each worker, shake hands, and say, 'thank you for keeping NYC alive'. Performance Duration: 11 months, at least 1 to 2 8-hour/per day shifts. With 8,500 sanitation workers (Ukeles, 1977-1980).

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Fig 4 Mierle Laderman Ukeles (1977-1980) *Touch Sanitation Handshake Ritual*

©Mierle Laderman Ukeles Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

Available at https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/feminist_art_base/mierle-laderman-ukeles (Accessed: 4th May 2017)

Ukeles was also attempting to reconcile the relationship between the waste that had been discarded in New York and the citizens who had discarded it.

In her work Flow City (1983-1990) Ukeles created an installation that enabled waste to be viewed from all angles, through transparent walls, as it was being 'processed'. She wanted this material, now unseen and consigned to 'secret' municipal processes, to be reviewed and reconsidered.

> I want visitors to feel the extreme diversity in different materials . . . I want visitors to see the materials in a kind of hovering state of flux: thrown out, not yet back. I want the visitors to pass through a state of potentiality (Whiteley, 2011:153).

The 'hovering state of flux' that Ukeles describes can be seen to relate to a new materialist viewing of materials; she is emphasising this uncertain, fluctuating state that waste finds itself in and which has already been described in Chapter 2. The

'potentiality' of the material emphasises the belief that this matter still has potential and meaning, it is too soon to desert it and consign it to insignificance.

Patricia Phillips describes how Ukeles was, in re-negotiating the private and public relationships of her art practice, asserting the feminist thinking behind her work. In an article online she states:

> The artist's own family dynamics and personal observations underlie the authenticity of her inherently public work, which seems a more effective way to respond to cataclysmic, unanticipated shifts. In fact, this by-play of private-public, the mixing and merging of formerly oppositional designations, has stimulated a wider recognition of institutional systems while supporting a process of feminization in the public realm, animating the popular slogan 'The personal is the political' (Phillips, 1995).

El Anatsui

El Anatsui is a Ghanaian artist/sculptor; he is best known for his constructed 'metal tapestries', sometimes made on a monumental scale. He uses discarded materials which range from printing blocks and metal sheet roofing to metal seals and bottle tops from glass bottles. His work is constructed by weaving together and overlapping these components, sometimes using copper wire, to create complex, shimmering and 'luxurious' fabric-like draping forms that belie the materials' humble origins. The work has a strong visual impact and ceremonial presence and this ostensible opulence and metallic sheen, attractive to a Western sensibility, is in stark contrast to the conditions of low living standards experienced by many African people. This gives the work an added resonance, as his work is informed by the economic effects of colonialism on Africa, as well as referencing traditional African cloth and weaving. An installation called *TSIATSIA – Searching for Connection*, covered the entire front façade of the Royal Academy in 2013. He is using 'waste' material, found in his local environment, to explore a political cause.

El Anatsui says of his work ' . . . I have experimented with quite a few materials. I also work with material that has witnessed and encountered a lot of touch and human use . . . and these kinds of material and work have more charge than material/work that I had done with machines' (El Anatsui, 2010). These materials, having passed through human hands, retain traces of human lives and situations;

they have a power for him, perhaps a 'thing power' as described by Bennett. The people and situations that produced this material have receded, moved on and away, yet the material remains, leaving a memory of previous histories intrinsic in the metal, not obvious in a world of becoming, of change. El Anatsui believes that as the world is constantly changing, so his work can be altered and re-arranged to reflect these processes. In the repurposing of these materials the validity of using such durable materials for a single time is questioned.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Fig 5 El Anatsui (2014) *Timespace* [aluminium and copper wire] 325x495cm

©El Anatsui Courtesy October Gallery

Available at http://www.octobergallery.co.uk/artists/anatsui/index.shtml

(Accessed 7th May 2017)

Aurora Robson

The Canadian artist Aurora Robson, started working with plastic bottles after noticing bags of them left near her studio. Only later did she realise the potentially hazardous and intractable nature of their over-use and impact when discarded thoughtlessly, resulting in plastic pollution in river-ways and the sea. Jennifer

Allan's online review of Robson's work refers to the continuing scale of plastic production, 'European plastic production runs to 57 million tonnes per year. Around 3.7 million of that is polyethylene terephthalate (PET), used in food and drinks packaging' (Allan: 2014). Robson often colours this plastic with non-toxic water based inks. They are cut, sliced, heated, stretched and reformed to create complex forms that reference organic formations. She is also an activist, a writer, a teacher and founder of Project Vortex, a sculpture project which aims to interrupt the waste cycle and supports river cleaning schemes.

Installations are often on a large scale; these are often creatively lit, suspended in a large gallery space or atrium, creating shadows and darkness to accentuate the work. This sense of spirituality is reinforced by the darkness of the floor. Which is the earth, which the sky? These delicate yet striking semi-transparent assemblages often reference the human body or natural or aquatic life forms, questioning the divisive nature of 'life', of 'inertia'; and who or what decides which is which.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Fig 6 Aurora Robson (2011) *Everything All At Once, Forever* [plastic bottles, ink] ©Aurora Robson Photo: Marshall Coles

Available at http://www.aurorarobson.com/everything-all-at-once-forever.html (Accessed: 14 July 2016)

Barbara Schreiber, in a review from Sculpture magazine, reproduced online, asks of Robson's work, 'These irresistible works erase their origin. Is this transformation or denial?' (Schreiber,2015). She questions the ethics of making waste material into

something striking and beautiful. She questions the ethics of 'erasing' their identity. She also wonders how this can make us care more about the detrimental consequences of plastic use. Schreiber then describes how Robson does not dislike plastics themselves, just our needless over-use of them, describing the artist's work as 'glittering monuments to our love of convenience' whilst confronting us with the uncomfortable situation of what happens to this material next. Robson's message is clear; she believes that our use and mis-use of this material is harming the natural world, particularly the marine world. She is using these plastic bottles, currently seen as a lifestyle choice and a component of modern living, to re-imagine and make visible this highly industrialised material.

John Grade

John Grade is a Canadian artist whose work is produced with acute temporal awareness; an awareness of transience, of decay, and how the world reacts to and affects his work. He makes sculpture defined by its timescale, orchestrated to 'endure' for a certain amount of time, whilst decaying due to the effects of natural processes, this may be due to the weather or attacks from wildlife, large and small. His work can be buried for certain amounts of time, exhumed and retrieved to view the effects of the earth's moisture and microbes. He is interested in funerary practices and how we, as humans, present ourselves back to the earth. His work reflects aspects of impermanence already discussed, emphasising the continuing energetic processes of decay and decomposition implicit in all matter. This is not a negative process but a collaborative process engendered between the artist and the world of matter. This process can be studied, altered, learnt from. It is interesting to note that words describing the degradation of matter; decay, entropy, for instance, have a negative connotation; despite matter decomposing providing a source of food for other organisms and becoming a part of the food chain. Thus perceptions of 'waste' are hindered by the lack of a positive vocabulary and Grade's artwork contributes to the understanding of this concept.

Early in his career Grade felt that his work was too 'controlled'. In an on-line interview with Ron Judd he states that 'The element of losing control ultimately

gets me involved in the process of how it's going to break down […]. If I can sort of be there, and nudge it, and push it in a direction and get to see it happen […] that's more interesting to me' (Judd, 2011).

This process of 'breaking down' is indeed 'nudged' in Grade's work *Elephant Bed* (2009 – 2010), figures 7 and 8 below. The twenty sculptures were made using a 'paper' polymer, the structure of which was reinforced with a corn-based plastic which made the work entirely bio-degradable. Despite being six feet in diameter and twenty four feet tall, each sculpture only weighed eight pounds. Figure 7 shows a detail of the work; ten of the sculptures were suspended over a pool of diluted ink. The work could be lowered with a pulley into the ink, drawing up the dye but then dissolving into the liquid, becoming integrated and invisible in the dark pool. This is a process from which there would be no turning back, no undoing. This work was installed at Fabrica Gallery in Brighton and as a finale the other ten sculptures were 'walked' to the sea and offered to the ocean, dissolving into the waves in a ceremonial performance of the 'end' of their existence. After immersion into the ocean no trace of the sculpture would appear to remain, except in documentation and in the minds of the people who made it and the audience who viewed it. It has become experiential, with no obvious material manifestation to reinforce these memories. Its materiality has been denied, its use of energy and matter has become intangible. This is the stuff of myth, of creating new narratives to take forward into a world where the implacability and permanence of artwork and indeed of matter is the widely accepted normative way of viewing the world.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Fig 7 Grade J. (2009) *Elephant Bed* (detail) [binderless polymer, India ink]

©John Grade Courtesy Fabrica Gallery Available at

http://www.johngrade.com/#/projectwithdescription/ELEPHANT%20BED/true

(Accessed 3 April 2017)

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Fig 8 John Grade *Elephant Bed* (detail) [binderless polymer] ©John Grade

Courtesy Fabrica Gallery Available at

http://www.johngrade.com/#/projectwithdescription/ELEPHANT%20BED/true

(Accessed 3 April 2017)

Song Dong

> The activity of saving and re-using things is in keeping with the Chinese adage - *wu jin qi yon* - 'waste not' – a prerequisite for survival during periods of social and political turmoil (Barbican, 2012).

The Chinese artist Song Dong displayed his work 'Waste Not', consisting of ten thousand items of his mother's possessions, collected over five decades, in the Curve Gallery in 2012. It reveals the contents of his mother's house, which included pieces of soap, toothpaste tubes, bundled strips of fabric, plastic bowls and bottle caps. These had been kept by the artist's mother who had grown up during the poverty and the hardships of the Cultural Revolution in China during the 1960's and the 1970's. This is a lifetime's accumulation of goods, where nothing has been thrown away, every small thing kept, even if seemingly worn out and having no further use. This underlines the unacknowledged value of the tiniest scrap of material and how the fear of *not* having stuff can lead to a deeper connection with the materiality of everyday life. These objects, kept and then displayed in this way show the implacability of the matter of everyday life if we hold on to it. These objects have been collected over a period of social and political upheaval, and yet they have stayed the same. The death of his father occurred during this time; the materiality of these objects was a comfort and a reassurance for his mother, a way of keeping hold of experiences and relationships.

In an online interview with Bruna Volpi Song Dong describes how his mother became depressed after the death of his father and used these objects to reassure and comfort herself during this time of grief and uncertainty.

> My favourite object is the soap, which you can see near the beginning of the exhibition. My mother collected the soap during the time of the Cultural Revolution and some pieces are older than me (Volpi, 2012).

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Fig 9 Song Dong (2012) *Waste Not* (detail) ©Song Dong

Courtesy The Barbican Curve Gallery

Available at https://www.barbican.org.uk/generic/large-images.asp?id=12878&im=14663&af=artgallery (Accessed: 8th May 2017)

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Fig 10 Song Dong (2012) *Waste Not* (detail) ©Song Dong

Courtesy The Barbican Curve Gallery

Available at https://www.barbican.org.uk/generic/large-images.asp?id=12878&im=14663&af=artgallery (Accessed: 8th May 2017)

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Fig 11 Song Dong (2012) *Waste Not* (detail) ©Song Dong

Courtesy The Barbican Curve Gallery

Available at https://www.barbican.org.uk/generic/large-images.asp?id=12878&im=14663&af=artgallery (Accessed: 8th May 2017)

This work, in its undeniable celebration of concrete objects, differs from the ephemerality of Song Dong's previous work '…here at the Barbican you can see so many things. For me, I think something and nothing is the same because in the end there is nothing' (ibid.).

Huang Xu

> Huang Xu suggests, by his discreet aesthetic choice, that if our greatest leap forward is boundless consumption, then our collective shards – our present markers for the future – may be more ephemeral than we think (Jan Murphy Gallery, 2016).

Huang Xu is a Beijing-based photographer whose practice includes the forensic examination of plastic detritus. He uses processes of 3-d scanning and digital manipulation to produce ethereal images of contemporary sublimity. It is at first difficult to identify the white and weightless form, floating in darkness, defined by its shadows, of *Fragment No 10,* below, as being waste plastic. Huang Xu is also

exploring the aesthetics of waste materials, materials that would normally not be examined again or be deemed worthy of further inspection. By halting their journey into the void of the 'state' of waste and by examining and realising their claim to beauty and acceptance, he is making us reconsider these materials in an alternative way. Huang Xu must be well aware that plastic waste from Western consumer societies is shipped to China to be 'processed', impacting negatively on the local ecosystems. This is described in Adam Minter's book *Junkyard Planet: Travels in the Billion-Dollar Trash Trade.*

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

Fig 12 Huang Xu (2007) *Fragment No 10*. Rice paper, edition of 12 and Chromophotograph, 215x122cm edition of 6

©Huang Xu Courtesy of October Gallery Available at http://www.octobergallery.co.uk/art/huang_xu/xu_10.shtml (Accessed: 18th July 2016)

This work by Huang Xu has an ephemerality and mystery: it hovers, yet is still and static. Or is it? What do the dark shadows conceal or reveal about the status and

dignity of this (unidentified) matter? How is it changing having been 'frozen' in this photograph? What form of 'life' does it now engender? Bennett tries to unravel these questions through describing a world of becoming.

> What if you […] imagine the world in terms of an overabundance of forms or plenitude – as a place where, although individual humans and individual objects are surely mortal, the matter of which they are made is not. This world is pictured as both finite and infinite, both short of resources and abundantly full, both temporally bound and ever ongoing. The molecular assemblages formed by matter […] are temporary and frail, but the process of becoming goes on and on and on. It is not finite (2001).

CHAPTER 6

Context and Development of Practice

6.1 Introduction

> Rendering trash beautiful is a double-edged move: trash-as-art can work either as an anaesthetic, to produce more narcotic seamlessness, or it can foreground waste as the sign of the inadequacy of the distinctions that patrol the western system of objects (Boscagli 2014:233).

In this chapter I look at the ethics and impetus behind my art practice and the rationale of, and aspiration towards, a low impact practice. The ethics of care will also be looked at as a way to inform human and material relationality within an eco-social setting. I also describe the origins and development of my practice. I go on to describe what I do and why I do it, discussing the materials rejected and the materials chosen for this project. I further elucidate the meanings of the objects chosen, noticing their sometimes surprising similarities and shared properties. All artwork and images are by the author unless otherwise stated.

6.2 Ethics and Impetus. Ethics of care. Low impact practice

This study is not an investigation of the amounts and varieties of post-consumer waste that we currently have to deal with but is an investigation of the ethics of using certain materials only once and what this sense of 'disposability' does to our human-ness and how it controls and affects our culture. Scanlan makes an uncomfortable proposition when he states that we need to 'consider the possibility that the surprising core of all we value results from (and creates ever more) garbage (both the material and the metaphorical)' (2005: 9).

Thus I explore how my practice introduces, through the material turn, a questioning of the apparent fixity of the world, and how, in a world of becoming, this fixity can be overturned. Through the process of my (low impact) practice, I explore how this overturning opens up and enables ways to then care (more) both for the material world and also for ourselves as material beings.

Ethics of care

The 'ethics of care' is a distinct moral theory within the field of ethics. It can also be seen as a practice which, as Maureen Sander-Staudt describes online, 'builds on the motivation to care for those who are dependent and vulnerable, and it is inspired by both memories of being cared for and the idealisations of self'. Carol Gilligan states online that 'the ethics of care starts from the premise that as humans we are inherently relational, responsive beings and the human condition is one of connectedness or interdependence'. I would like to take this thinking further and place it into a new materialist framework where 'care' extends not only to ourselves and to others but also to the interdependent eco-systems we are all a part of.

Low impact practice

The ethical aspect of this work runs alongside, and is influenced by, the development of a 'low impact practice', meaning a practice that whilst using as little material and energy as possible, also prescribes that no residue, or unused matter, will be in existence at the 'end' of the making process; everything will be used. I write 'end' in inverted commas as this study has led to the questioning of the 'end' of processes and asks whether they can be seen as more of a continuum. I endeavour to use things and materials already in my possession and use 'found' materials as already described. However these are by no means ethically 'perfect' and more thoughts on this are discussed below in **6.8** Chosen Materials.

I propose that the humble matter I use in my art practice, commonly known as waste matter, can have agential power and presence. I propose that through a creative collaborative relationship between these materials, myself as artist/maker, and wider eco-social factors/influences (the ecological crisis) I seek to re-inforce the notion that we can re-envisage, re-examine and re-imagine the world through matter, thus making connections with, and developing a better understanding of, the material world, and ultimately ourselves. The assumed boundary between ourselves and the wider world is a construct which must be challenged as we too are material. This will open up further questioning and give a deeper understanding

of the concept of the term materiality, already discussed in Chapter 3 Materialism and Materiality.

6.3. Overview of practice. Context of previous work.

This section is an overview of my work in the light of my practice before beginning this study and also charts how the practice has evolved and developed.

My current practice has grown out of the body of work I produced during the MA:Design Textiles course at Bath School of Art and Design. My final collection was called prosaically 'Waste Not Want Not'. It comprised of a set of work of which the main concern was working with materials that had had a previous life and hence were perceived to have no further 'use'. I proposed that this was a 'mis-use' of these materials. Thus this way of working was in response to an ethical concern over diminishing resources and a perceived overexploitation of the natural world. The work consisted of various 'unpickings' and deconstruction of single-use, discarded objects. This was in order to demonstrate, as part of an art/craft practice, that it was not necessary to consign these materials to the status of 'waste'; I was questioning aspects of value in order to ascertain what this status actually was.

Fig 13 Knitted vessels made from unpicked nylon builders' bags

Maximum height 34 cms

By re-instating these objects, reimagined and remade, back into the world and giving them an elevated status as an 'art/craft object', their 'value' must surely be reassessed. For instance nylon woven single-use builders' bags were unpicked and the resulting 'yarn' was 're-used'; used, for example, to make knitted forms and vessels.

Context of previous work

Several of the artefacts I unpicked were already constructed of a kind of 'yarn', as in the builders' bags above, but other objects provided more of a challenge, as my initial instinctive response, employing my sensibilities as a textile artist, was to try to convert this material into some kind of yarn; a potential (full of 'potentia'/power) resource that I could then use further by allowing the material to reveal its qualities and its ability to become something other than it already was.

Other single use items that I had noticed - paper carrier bags, for instance, were cut into strips, and the resulting strips twisted to form new shapes and forms. Alternatively these paper strips were also machine stitched to form a flat ribbon which was then knitted by hand into three dimensional freestanding forms. One bag made one vessel - with no waste, resulting in a way of working that intuited the amount of 'yarn' remaining and this guided the outcome of the work; this constituted the beginning of the 'creative constraints' that have continued into my current practice, augmented by the development of a low impact practice already mentioned.

Figure 14 One paper carrier bag cut and twisted

6.4. Deepening material engagements. Development of practice. A peculiar practice.

This seemed a straightforward, 'hands-on' and 'low-tech' engagement with the materiality of the objects at the time but looking back I am aware of how important that engagement and that relationship was in preparing the ground for my further research. I liked being in control and not being too dependent on technology and sources of power; things which could easily be taken away.

On finishing the previous study it became clear that, although I had increased my knowledge and skills as a maker, I had not fully investigated the implications of these 'waste' materials and what they signify for society; they seemed to be deserving of more 'attention'. I had also noticed the increased use of smaller disposable artefacts/articles, used only once and then discarded, a practice which seemed an unnecessary use of resources, easily avoided, but one which was becoming increasingly widespread. It became clear that this needed wider investigation. By working with these materials; rescuing, reworking and re-presenting them into the world, what could I discover about the ontology of waste and disposability through my practice? Indeed how would this challenge, this search for a different kind of knowledge through my making, my creative practice, affect myself, and my view of the world? This quote, from the writing of Barrett and Bolt, suggests a different way to look at made objects, posited by Heidegger, one where the concept of 'care and indebtedness' can be introduced into the relationship between the object, the maker and the materials.

> The 're-distribution of power' posited by Heidegger's reconceptualization of createdness has much in common with neo-materialist positions on political agency: Heidegger's rethinking of createdness and his re-interpretation of causality shifts our understanding from the 'form-matter' thesis to a notion of care and indebtedness between co-responsible elements. In sum, art is a co-collaboration, not a form-matter synthesis and matter as much as the human has responsibility for the emergence of art. In other words matter has agency (2012: 6).

Development of Practice

My own practice as an artist has always been inherently materially led; I am attracted to the innate physical properties of materials, and my creativity, as an interplay between the physical and the intellectual, responds to materials I find interesting. This 'responsiveness' initiates a process of open-ended, consequential discovery; an interrogation that results in the development of a tactile, sensory, and henceforth, on a certain level, 'emotional' relationship. This process is not distracted by drawing or sketchbook pre-planning of what I am going to do, with a predicated outcome, but is, and has been from the beginning of the project, more of a reciprocal reaction and relationship between myself and these materials,

reacting to the 'agency' of matter as described in the Heidegger quote above. It is also a similar way of working to the 'aimless purposefulness' described in the initial experiments by Thomas Heatherwick in Chapter 3.

The kind of materials I am attracted to and the definition of their status in the world, and how the come into my possession, is an important part of the methodology of my practice. I often 'come across' these materials, they are not often searched out, they present themselves to me; they are found, discovered, or re-found, re-discovered.

These reciprocal relationships with the material objects, and the resulting material acquired from these objects that I use in my practice, evolve and deepen over time, as I ask more of both the materials and myself, extending my skills as a maker and at the same time assessing more closely the qualities of the materials I am using. I am using these techniques and ways of working in order to enable these objects to 'overcome' what they were, to 'open themselves up' to a different way of being, to reveal more of the capabilities of their matter, of their 'materiality', and the meanings and intentions of their (new) materiality. As Grosz describes, (and if I refer these remarks to my practice) 'these multiple becomings both make and unmake, they do (up) and they undo' (2011: 2). She continues,

> Each of these becomings is a mode of transformation of the actual and the present according to virtual forces, forces that emerge from within, meeting forces that surround and enmesh things, events and processes. These becomings are individuations, processes of the production of things, processes that transform states of matter, processes that enable and complicate life (ibid).

My practice can be viewed as an interrogation, an unravelling, an unpicking of said objects; they are literally taken apart, revealing to some extent 'the forces that emerge from within', in a metaphorical yet also in a physical way. My curiosity engaged, this process questions what they can and will do and become. This desire to 'complicate life' involves a 'shake up' of the status quo. In our commodified culture, of which these artefacts are clearly representative, how will they emerge from their previous being to form a different one, encouraged by my actions (of my making/unmaking) and intuitive sense of how we can work together, allowing them

to ‘become more and other than their histories through their engagement with dynamic environments’(ibid). This interrogative practice questions who has ‘the upper hand’, the material or the maker, for one cannot exist without the other. We are interconnected. At what point, if at all, does this process ‘finish’ and who decides how and when?

A peculiar practice

This practice is peculiar in that while working with these chosen materials I am trying to make a case for their non-existence. One of the problems of this practice is how can I make this work be seen as more than an aesthetic form of ‘recycling’; (a practice that already can be viewed as a way to ‘mop up the excess’ and therefore gives permission to and enables consumerism to continue unabated) so that the intention of the work is not seen to celebrate the existence of these materials? This is similar to the question raised in the question over Aurora Robson’s work in Chapter 5**.** I aim to infuse this work with a sense or a form of ‘re-enchantment’, so that questions *will* be asked as to the provenance of these materials *and* their future destination. This practice is interrogative in its quest to unravel and reveal more about how we live now and also the implications for the future.

6.5 What I do; creative deconstruction

I challenge myself, and these materials, by subjecting them to a form of creative de-construction, a taking apart, a looking beyond the object in an open-ended process with uncertain outcomes. This entailed a realisation of just how much material is intrinsic in these objects and it became a challenge to show and represent this excess of material by reforming and remaking this matter into other artefacts.

Thus, creative curiosity aroused, my making process explores the intrinsic physical materiality of the objects and raises questions as to how it was originally made, from what materials, the impact on the biosphere, even its impact on us, in using and consuming such materials. It seemed, and still seems, an anomaly that our

consumption of the material world is at record levels, yet we do not value or care about the material that surrounds us, as levels of current waste streams show; we are materialist, yet we are not materialist enough. We are not aware of what things are made from and hence we are not aware of the ecological impact of most materials.

I consider and exploit these material qualities in my practice, I am curious as to how these materials have come to be in a particular place, but strangely I am not curious or concerned about whoever left them there. That relationship is over; it cannot be rectified or resurrected. I am more concerned with the things themselves, they have the power now. Through a process of exploring, unpicking, taking apart, reworking and altering these objects, I then represent them in a different form to be re-examined and reassessed. I am exploring not only their materiality but also reworking their meaning. What ethical caveats do we need to impose on our material goods if we hope to halt the exhaustion of resources, desecration of environments and consequent reduction of species? These 'modern' materials are an entanglement of materials and processes, of chemical reactions and by-products.

What is seen in the final product is a very small part of the object's impact on the world, so by extending these materials I am referencing their ecological impact, something that is unseen and normally not thought of. By extension, having forged this 'curious' and unresolved relationship with these objects, I want to know what will happen to them after their 'use-time' has expired, in their 'post-materiality' phase. It is worth considering who sets these rules. In a world where logic, empiricism and the positivism of a scientific rationale are seemingly highly prized, it is illogical to be constantly mass producing things/materials for which we have no obvious need and which have no prescribed benign 'destination.'

6.6 *Res derelicta*, gleaning

These objects, existing as they do in a vague, marginal space of post-ownership, hence of non-ownership, become fascinating. They are *res derelicta*, used by everyone and anyone, but then, post-use, belonging to no-one. *Res derelicta* is a

legal term, meaning 'abandoned things'; it is a term used in Agnes Varda's documentary film *The Gleaners and I.* Varda consults a lawyer to cast a verdict on whether items left abandoned on the street can be appropriated by anyone, or is this a form of 'stealing'? The lawyer consults her legal tomes and declares that, as these items have been abandoned by their previous owner, they can be taken or claimed by someone else. They are 'free', in both an economic and a metaphorical sense, and there is no redress to the claimant. This point needed clarifying as it is a strange condition for these items to be in, in a late capitalist system where these objects, having played their part in a value exchange transaction, are now cast adrift in an undetermined state of purposelessness and liminality. This state of liminality will be discussed further below.

I frequently 'find' my chosen materials and retrieve them, in a form of twenty first century gleaning: they are scooped up, rescued, surreptitiously brought home. There they are, on pavements, stuffed into crevices in walls, left behind on café tables, available, accessible, yet somehow obtrusive and seemingly indicative of our failure. These objects feel 'wrong' to me; in a filmed interview about my work by Dylan Spicer as part of the 2014 Forest of Imagination event, I spontaneously described the crisp packet material as being 'alien', it does not degrade and has nowhere to go. Like an alien species, these materials come between and form a barrier between myself/ourselves and the 'natural' world. They do not 'fit' and this, for me, questions the validity of their existence (Harper, 2014).

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues - company branding and full logo visible]

Fig 15 Found (*in situ*) crisp packets

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues - company branding and full logo visible]

Fig 16 Found (*in situ*) paper cup

6.7 Choosing and rejecting materials. Plastic.

It took me some time to decide which materials to focus on for this study and also to decide how these would become the focal point of my practice. The three commodities chosen were relevant to the other themes of the project and they had enough in common to lend themselves to become a part of my practice despite being constructed from very different materials.

Plastic

I considered working with plastic. The thin polyurethane film used for plastic bags and food packaging is ubiquitous and it at first appeared an enticing material due to its transparency, its elasticity and its ability to stretch and alter when heated. It was also widely available and it was easy to collect a large amount in a short space of time. It was also straightforward to convert it into a form of useable yarn. It had several ethical factors which needed examining – its current over-use, its impact on the biosphere, uncertainties about its safety and also its indisposability. I enjoy the challenge of working with materials that can seem uncompromising, unappealing even, but there was something about this material, perhaps I feared it on some level. I was aware of the toxicity of some plastics and I sensed that if I was going to take this material somewhere different and truly be able to explore its materiality it would involve the use of heat and the possible release of unpleasant gases.

6.8 Chosen Objects

After some deliberation and experimentation, a process which evolved during the course of the study, I decided to work with the following three sets of objects for this project. These were:

- Paper drinks cups
- Crisp packets
- Paper carrier bags/paper bags

The paper cup has been drained, the crisp packet eaten from, the paper bags divested of their contents. They have been relieved of their duties, leaving only

residues, traces, remainders and reminders. These objects are all 'socially engaged' objects; they are a part of daily life, hence they are seen and yet unseen, proving a challenge to reinvent their status and meaning.

The three products I have used for this project all have to pass a stringent 'ethical test'; they are part of the detritus, the discards, the disposable 'other' of high capitalist culture; they are 'found'. I have not procured them through any monetary exchange and am (seemingly) not 'responsible' for their production. This does not make them the 'perfect' ethical material, however, being still part of an over-productive system, and as with second-hand clothes, which ethically can be viewed as a positive option, the practice of buying and using them is still propping up out-dated and exploitative methods of industrial manufacture.

The methods of deconstructing or altering these objects, of exploring their materiality is dependent on the objects and is described individually below. I have looked at the work of Elizabeth Grosz to help to elucidate the thought processes of my practice through the benefit of a new materialist approach. Although Grosz does not describe herself as a new materialist as such, her work has the intonations of a perhaps new, certainly different, materialism.

> Matter and life become, and become undone. They transform and are transformed. This is less a new kind of materialism than it is a new understanding of the forces, both material and immaterial, that direct us to the future (Grosz, 2011: 5).

Although Grosz is referring to more 'natural' processes, it has informed my practice to attempt to understand this form of 'becoming' - of which I had been aware but was unable to articulate before - and the 'forces' that lie behind them.

Thus these materials, although not ideal (in that they have not had a 'positive' effect in their production, are not being produced as part of a closed loop system or being carbon neutral or even carbon positive), this 'waste' matter that I coerce into being my base materials, *could* be viewed as having the least impact on the human and non-human world around us as they are already used and dispensed with. Their existence, although not morally acceptable to me, cannot be denied. I do not have the power, political or otherwise, to halt their production and hence

their being in the world. Their destiny, which is ultimately to rest in a landfill or undergo incineration fills me with a kind of regret as I sense the existential (was it worth it?) futility of their existence and ponder the human ingenuity and creativity that has been used in creating these materials, aside from the seemingly wasted energy and resource consumption.

6.9 What they have in common: Containership. Liminality. Commodification.

On closer examination it became clear that these objects had more in common than I had at first noted, apart from their demeaning status as 'waste'. They were all, as already mentioned, a part of daily life, a consequence of modern lifestyles, easily accessible yet easily overlooked.

Containership

These 'products', having been used just once for their original purpose; one of 'containership', of holding something else, are now cast adrift, let go, released, realising a freedom that belies their provenance as a mass produced artefact replicated in their millions. They have all been receptacles, vessels, holders of something else. They have an 'inside' which once contained other things. They have been emptied out, they can be seen to be 'set free', yet they will be endlessly replaced by other ones exactly the same. Paul Voice describes the thoughts of Hannah Arendt when he states 'If no artefact is made to be permanent but rather made to be obsolete, to be used and consumed, then the very structure of the world, as Arendt understands it, is threatened' (Voice, 2014: 41).

Once the reason for their existence has been removed, the products that they contained, in the case of food (the crisps) and drink (coffee or tea) have become assimilated into the human, becoming a part of our bones and our bodies, a part of our 'insides'. These objects become free, 'independent' and open to new interpretations. They were not and are not wanted for 'themselves' implicitly but are a marginal accessory to a contemporary lifestyle. The drink is more important than the cup, the crisps are more important than the packet, the contents of the paper carrier bags are more important than the bags themselves. Thus they slip

through our hands, sometimes on a daily basis, unquestioned, unnoticed and seemingly unstoppable.

In Martin Heidegger's essay 'The Thing' he discusses and describes what he sees as the intrinsic properties that make a jug a jug. He deliberates that the vessel's 'thingness' does not lie at all in the material of which it consists, but in the void that it holds. 'And yet, is the jug really empty?' he queries when the jug is full of wine, the air is displaced and asks is this reality the jug? He declares that what is in the jug, whether water or wine, it will have come from the earth. In the jugness of the jug, sky and earth dwell. I would like to take this thinking further and propose that in the materials of the jug, which is clay, sky and earth also dwell. The clay would be formed from natural process many thousands of years old, would have used energy from the sun and the lives of miniscule creatures, minerals and plants to form its materiality. Similarly with these objects that I use in my practice, whether they are made from bauxite from rocks, plastic from oil, paper from trees, these were all 'living' entities once (has this now stopped?), they are all products of the earth's ecosystem. They have all originally been made by, in ways we cannot now see but *can* become aware of, natural processes and formations.

As Heidegger states that the jug is defined by the void it contrives; the emptiness of these products places them into a different category; one ready for exploration and reinterpretation. They no longer possess their previous predestined position and it is this that makes these articles interesting for me; this void is a creative place of proposition and deliberation. These articles are much more interesting to me empty than they are with their contents intact. They have slipped out of their intended characterisation and are open to suggestion as to what they might become. Once empty, this void *seemingly* negates these objects – once empty they are no longer viable, become unwanted, are viewed as an 'excess'. But this void opens up possibilities, 'life folds over itself to embrace its contact with materiality'(Grosz, 2012), one life finishes and another begins, a process or continuum is in evidence.

Liminality

These ‘empty vessels’ appear to occupy a space ‘once-removed’, no longer needed, they occupy an undefined place of liminality open to suggestion.

The term liminal is defined as having two meanings; the first describes the ‘transitional or initial stage of a process’. This correlates with a description of my practice as being an investigative and alterative process; a place of transition and change. It can also be used to describe the materials of the practice as these are undergoing change, not just through natural processes, but also through the creative process of my practice, using my hands and the making process to alter their condition.

The second meaning of the word liminal describes ‘occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold.’ I have already discussed the implications of the inside and the outside of these articles, and this term, discussed in light of Heidegger’s reading of the void ‘making’ the vessel, would seem to stress the importance of this boundary. But in my work I am breaking down these ‘vessels’ and hence these boundaries, their sides and undersides are removed and relocated, offering a threshold to a new way of being, a way through from one condition to another. Their outsides are ‘dissolved’; the void, that negative yet creative place has been enlarged and now becomes a part of the world.

As the word ‘liminal’ is ‘relating to a transitional or initial stage of a process’, thus this condition of transition, of change, is used to re-instate these materials, with their compliance, into a different hierarchy, having a different status; a material with a new meaning and a new intention. It is difficult to describe the new ‘relationships’, where material states are changing and altering, not fixed, which are suggested by this process but Elizabeth Grosz offers some insights into conditions of materials and describes her current work, which:

> explores the condition under which material and living things overcome themselves and become other than what they were. It elaborates the *difference* that constitutes things, including subjects, and that structures the relations between things. Things undergo becomings, which transform them in ways which are unpredictable and irreversible. These becomings

> are the testament to the differences that constitute whatever identity things – including subjects, living beings – might have. Becomings complexify, transform, overcome in ways that are measurable but also imperceptible (Grosz, 2011: 1).

It is this 'imperceptability' of becomings that is fascinating. By deconstructing these containers, the inside and the outside no longer exists, it breaks down, it becomes one, therefore this duality and this barrier, is broken down. Engaging with these materials and reflecting on these processes becomes a way to access a different kind of materialism, one where materials are acknowledged as having 'a life of their own'. As a maker I know this, and this resonates with Jane Bennett's description of 'thing-power' and a 'vital materiality'. Just as Bennett was shocked to discover how a set of discarded and disassociated objects caught in a storm drain could alter her perceptions of 'inert' and 'lively' matter, the 'liveliness' of these, and all, materials that I work with is something I accept as part of their existence. Bennett states,

> In my encounter with the gutter on Cold Spring Lane, I glimpsed a culture of things irreducible to the culture of objects. I achieved, for a moment, what Thoreau had made his life's goal: to be able, as Thomas Dumm puts it, "to be surprised by what we see" (Bennett, 2010: 5).

Commodification.

Another factor that these articles all have in common is that they are the product of a process of commodification; they all carry a previous 'identity', weighted down with their economic and commercial status. Thus to deconstruct these objects and to remake them, exchanging their aesthetics of commercialism for the aesthetics of art, these products of a system of late capitalism that desperately needs to change, are given the chance to reconnect with the world through alternative meanings and connections.

The work I make is not 'for sale', I prefer to see it placed 'outside' of the potentially destructive system that has already produced these items. As these materials have this commercial basis and have been used to 'sell' certain commodities, whether coffee, snacks, or other goods, they form a cogent base or platform from which to critique the use of materials within a capitalist system.

CHAPTER 7

My Practice

> Art engenders becomings, not imaginative becomings . . . but material becomings . . . in which life folds over itself to embrace its contact with materiality, in which each exchanges some elements or particles with the other to become more and other (Grosz, in Barrett and Bolt, 2013:18).

7.1. Introduction

As already stated these selected materials that I work with are a part of our daily lives, they are emblematic of the status already described as marginalised, but it is through these lowly and humble materials that we can re-view, rewrite and reconsider the status of these materials and in this process also reconsider our relationship with and towards them. For if we are distanced from materials, and from matter, it is all too easy for a sense of the superiority of the human to fill this 'void'; a hubristic hierarchy ensues that needs challenging and altering. Through an examination and evaluation of my practice, largely described chronologically, this chapter seeks to draw together strands from the previous chapters to produce a persuasive argument for a more thoughtful, engaged and responsible position towards a different materialism, whether a 'new' materialism, or a 'deep' materialism, which questions the provenance, affect and effect of matter.

7.2. Paper coffee or tea cups

As the number of coffee shops has proliferated over the last five years, I started to notice the abandoned paper coffee cups, seeing them on roadsides, in ditches, country lanes; anomalous places where they seemed strange and out of place.

These cups were developed in the early years of the twentieth century when due to the health concerns implicit in sharing cups, waxed paper cups were supplied to be used individually and once only. The numbers of the disposable cups now used are vast and hence difficult to envisage. Unlike some other artists who may work with waste materials, I have initially decided to focus on the individual item, preferring to tease out and focus on the materiality from each object, although I

have also used them as conglomerations, as described below. Despite the common belief by the public that these 'paper' cups are made from paper and can therefore be 'recycled', due to the plastic linings inherent in their make-up they can at present only go to land-fill or incineration. Attempts are being made to produce a disposable cup that can be recycled, or composted - a process that needs the right conditions in order for materials to bio-degrade. However it would seem more sensible to have cups that can be re-used many times, whether by carrying one's own cup or using the establishment's crockery that can then be washed and re-used.

> In 2006, a study was conducted measuring six and a half million trees harvested to make sixteen million paper cups, resulting in four billion gallons of water used and two hundred and fifty three million pounds of waste (Blanchard, 2015).

The quote above is an interesting way to describe the statistics of these cups, noting not just the end product but also the number of trees harvested and the amount of water and the waste implicit in the process.

It makes, however, no reference to the plastics involved or what happens to the cups afterwards; an incomplete life cycle analysis. By reworking these materials I am creatively augmenting the 'life cycle analysis' of these materials, taking them out of the realm of statistics and mass production and giving them back an identity, one of 'the handmade'; they are given the care and attention that that state and status implies.

Unmaking the coffee cups by cutting

My first experiments with the paper cups consisted of simply cutting, with small sharp scissors, as fine a strip of the cup as I could cut without it breaking, cutting from the top down. This was an intuitive response to the cup, to its hardness, its stiffness and an attempt to alter and 'break down' the shape of it by using the low-tech method of hand cutting.

It became a challenge, as with peeling an orange, to cut the whole cup without breaking the strip. This became easier the more often I did it, and was also a

pleasant aural experience as the sound of the scissors cutting was ‘echoed’ by the shape of the cup. This could result in some fourteen metres of ‘yarn’.

Fig 17 Cut paper cup balls of ‘yarn’

Due to its fragile nature, it would be difficult to work with this material further, so I wrapped the base of each cup with its own cut yarn, forming a fanciful ‘paper cup ball of yarn’, theoretically ready to be used for something else. These ‘balls of yarn’ fit nicely into the palm of the hand, they can be thus held, ‘weighed’, examined, evaluated. I made twenty five of these ‘balls’ for an exhibition, their method of display being piled on top of each other, close and touching, holding each other up. A pair of knitting needles was displayed with them, alerting the viewer to the fact that these objects could potentially be made into something else. Different brands and colours of cups were used, but the same low-tech principle of making, by hand, produced a mixture of lively ‘released’ material, coiling and complying whilst at the same time wanting to be released from this state also.

This work, entitled *Twenty Five,* was displayed as part of a triptych of my work in the exhibition *Papier Global 2* in Deggendorf, Germany in 2011.

Fig 18 Paper cup balls of yarn displayed individually yet in a group

I displayed these cups differently above as I was exploring their relationships with each other. I was altering the relationship between them, giving them some distance between them, so that they were not self-supporting but independent entities. This seemed to emphasise their individuality and strength; they seemed stronger apart.

Two others sets of 'twenty five' paper cups were also displayed, another set was also cut but cut in different directions, releasing the material in a different way, as below figures 19 and 20.

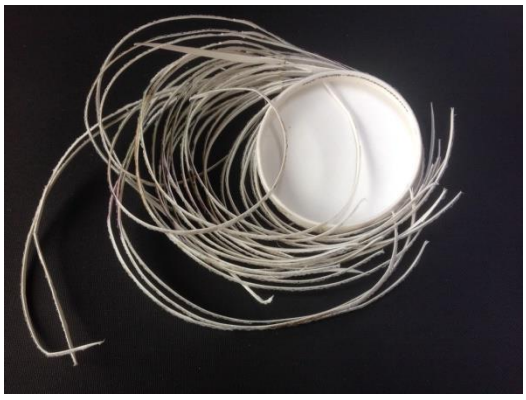

Fig 19 Cut paper cup

Fig 20 Cut paper cup

The cups below (figure 21), were also cut in a different way; I discovered that by cutting the cups at different angles and then stopping and cutting at a different angle, the 'memory' of the material still tried to form a curving shape and hence made interesting forms which seemed to want to 'entangle' with other cups.

Figure 21 Twenty five cut paper cups Title: *Twenty Five*

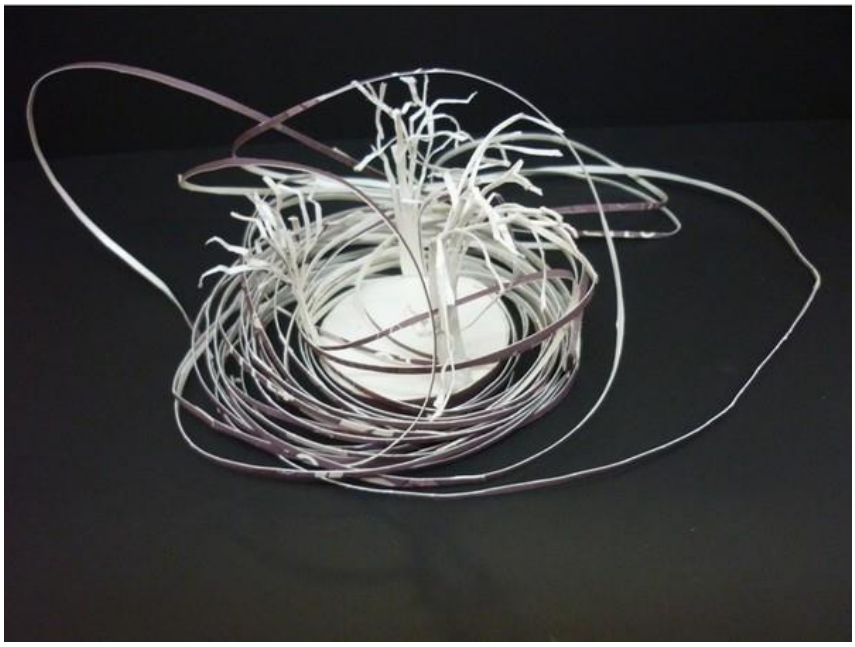

Figure 22 Cut paper cup Title: *Storm in a coffee cup*

The above image (figure 22), is of a piece of work entitled *Storm in a coffee cup* and is made from one cut cup. It alludes to the more frequent and fierce storms the world is experiencing due to the effects of man-made global warming and changing weather patterns and its effect on the natural world. The 'tree' in the centre is also an allusion to the provenance of the materials that the cup is made from; an aspect of these objects that often gets forgotten and overlooked.

Fig 23 Entangled cut cups

Figure 23, above, shows cups cut in straight lines; they still retain the 'memory' of their form and curl and twist, easily becoming entangled in each other, forming a mass of lively material.

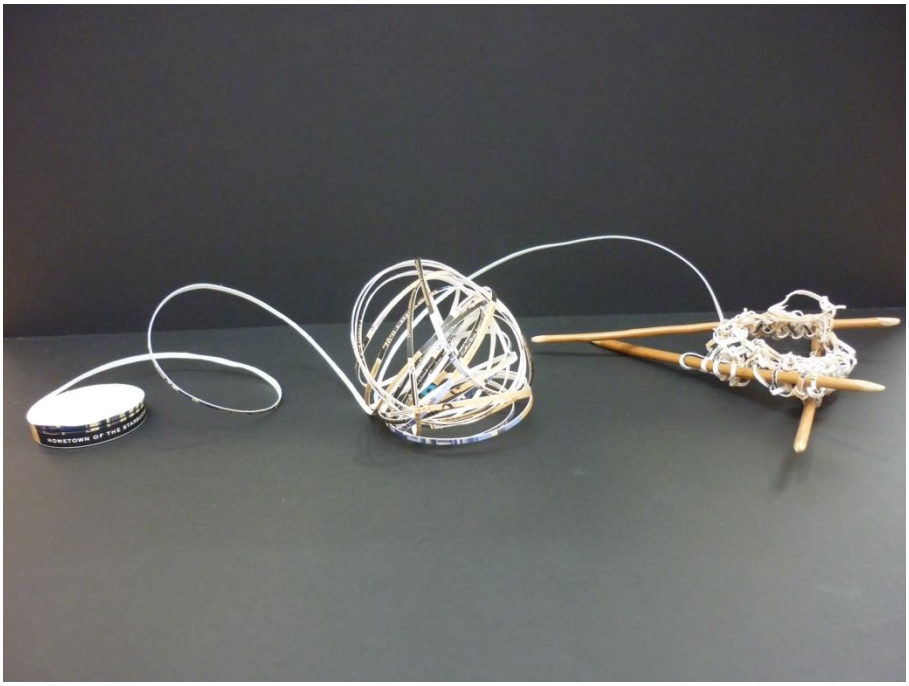

Fig 24 Cut and knitted duplicitous ‘paper’ plastic cup

The image above (figure 24), is of a cup that looked like it was made of paper, but was actually made of plastic; by cutting a strip from it, as the released material was strong and pliable, I was able to use a part of it to knit with, and I then left the ‘yarn’ attached to the rest of the ‘ball’ and to the base of the cup.

Plastic paper cups

It was while cutting the cups in this way that I discovered that the cups were lined with a layer of plastic, which I later discovered was polyethylene. This revealed itself as it came away from the paper slightly as I was cutting. I was surprised to discover this, as I had envisaged them to be made of compressed paper, they are called ‘paper cups’ after all. This altered their ‘purity’ in my eyes, if a mass-produced product can be seen to be ‘pure’. This idea of paper being seen as pure and innocuous has already been discussed in Chapter 5. Questions arose in my mind as to how safe it is to put very hot liquids into this plastic-lined cup. I have an intuitive distrust of plastics as I have already discussed. Also I wondered what did this plastic lining imply for their disposal? They are not able to biodegrade and have to go through landfill waste streams or incineration. This fact of the paper cups being lined with plastic was ‘revealed’ on-line in the Daily Mail (Lean, 2016) and, on

March 16th 2016, was featured on the front page of the *Daily Mail* (Poulter and Kelly, 2016). It was at last realised that these cups cannot be 'recycled'. This is stated as if this 'recycling' would make everything acceptable and is the desired endpoint of all materials. I have questioned this concept in Chapter 2. It is interesting to note that it is left to the general public to 'police' this disregard for materials and mass produced commodities. However, it now seems as if 'business as usual' has been resumed and things appear to have returned to 'normal'.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues. Headline reads 'Hypocrisy of coffee giants - High St chains claim to be 'green' while handing out 2.5bn cups a year that are NOT recycled']

Fig 25 Poulter and Kelly, 2016 *Daily Mail* front page.

Unmaking by peeling

I decided to concentrate on single cups at the beginning of this study; it seemed a more engaging and manageable way to show the amount of fibre that was inherent in each cup. After discovering that these cups had a plastic liner I experimented with trying to separate these two heterogeneous materials, to peel away the paper outer part from the plastic liner. This was not difficult to do, and by wetting the cup in a bowl of water for a few minutes I found I could 'persuade' the paper to leave the plastic. This was a 'slow' process, waiting for the wetness to penetrate, the

paper to be softened enough; its adherence to the plastic gradually softened and then I was able to gently peel the paper away.

Fig 26 Paper 'peelings'

Fig 27 Peeled cups and plastic liner

Fig 28 Peeled cups and plastic liner

I kept the shape of the cup intact and liked the way that these humble materials appeared, when dry, as if they were made from a delicate porcelain china clay.

Fig 29 Group of peeled paper cups

Title: *Twenty Five*

This sense of delicacy and fragility was something I endeavoured to develop, as it seemed to echo the fragility of the natural systems we rely on and when objects appear fragile they invoke a response, a sense of needing to be taken care of. This sense of fragility and impermanence as a process of change, was influenced by considering the concept of wabi-sabi, discussed more fully in Chapter Five above.

This process, this unmaking and unpeeling, this 'going backwards', this 'rewinding' of the construction of the cup, opens up a space in which to rest and ponder. What now? The original 'making' of the cup would have been accomplished physically in seconds, however the length of time taken for the components of the cup, for example the tree used in its production, to grow and mature, is not usually considered. Nor the source of the water used in this industrial process, from river, stream, rain, clouds.

By comparison to the industrial process, untouched by human hand, the unpicking is very slow, the sensibilities of the hand-made, or the hand 'un-made' come to bear on these materials. By revealing of 'the inside' of these cups, their materiality estranged from their previous identity and purpose, I am trying to influence and

strengthen our reaction and feelings towards them, a reaction articulated by Jane Bennett, as already mentioned, when she catches sight of the unlikely articles that 'shimmied back and forth between debris and thing' (2010: 4). Have these objects that I have altered crossed that line between 'stuff to ignore' and 'stuff that commanded attention in its own right?' (ibid.) As 'waste' materials seem to frequently be stepped over or not noticed, not registering on our human scale of awareness, Bennett elucidates further on this changing of her state of awareness,

> 'This window onto an eccentric out-side was made possible by the fortuity of that particular assemblage, but also by a certain anticipatory readiness on my in-side, by a perceptual style open to the appearance of thing-power' (2010: 5).

Fig 30 Peeled paper cups

Title: *Twenty Five*

She infers that her knowledge of philosophy gives her insights into how to view these objects, but I would argue that viewing objects in this way is more of a

visceral reaction, one that by-passes the logical part of the mind, affecting our 'sensibilities' more directly and resulting in a response of the emotions.

These are the same paper cups as the ones used in *Twenty Five* above (figure 30), but are arranged differently, they are in a line with space between them. They appear to make a more powerful statement, a sum of their parts; they need to be walked along in order to be viewed. By being placed on the floor the viewer needs to bend or kneel in order to have a closer look. These objects are not recognised as any form of vessel that can be drunk from. They have taken on and developed a potency and a power of their own, belying their mass-produced industrial past.

Remaking the paper cups

In wondering how to further develop this work, and having already experimented in my textile work with making paper and using it in mixed media collages, I wondered whether it would be possible to reuse the paper peelings in some way using basic paper making techniques. I therefore broke up the wet paper peelings into small pieces, soaking them further in warm water and then liquidised the mixture with a soup blender, producing a basic paper pulp. This process could be carried out in my kitchen using simple domestic bowls and equipment.

Fig 31 Bowl of torn paper peelings **Fig 32** Bowl of liquidised paper pulp

The paper on the left has been torn by hand, and then after leaving to soak, it can be liquidised with a soup blender into the pulp shown on the right.

The texture and appearance of the pulp is enticing, looking at it is like viewing something vaster, deeper, than simply cellulose fibres suspended in water. I have to test this pulp by dipping my hands into the liquid to ensure that it is of the correct viscosity for my needs, that the fibres are of the correct texture and that the ratio of water to fibre is suitable for the process I am about to embark on. Bauman, as mentioned in Chapter Two, uses many words to describe the properties of liquidness to elucidate his concept of a 'Liquid Society'. These words resonate when I look at this pulp. He describes properties of liquidity in very 'material(ist)' words; they 'flow', 'spill, 'run out', splash', 'pour over', 'leak', 'flood', 'spray', 'drip', 'seep', 'ooze' (2000: 2).

I decided to experiment with ways of remaking paper from the recovered pulp from the cups; normally, a rectangular deckle and mould, consisting of two wooden frames made of wood, one covered in mesh, is dipped into a large vat of paper pulp in order to cover the mesh with a fine, even layer. This is lifted clear of the vat of paper pulp, suspended for a few moments to drain off most of the water and is then inverted to deposit the layer of 'paper' onto a thick layer of cloth or similar, the paper sticks to the cloth and can then be hung up to dry, on the cloth.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues - company branding and full logo visible]

Fig 33 Two handmade tools, found metal 'feather'

As I was not sure how much pulp I was going to have to experiment with, I decided to make my paper on a 'micro-level', and constructed my own small tools that could improvise as a mould and deckle. These were made from wire and I covered the form of the wire with a fine metal mesh that I already had. The shape of the larger tool was dictated by the size of a bank debit or credit card, as I had read that the dimensions of these cards correspond to a 'perfect proportion' or 'golden mean'. I also liked the irony of using the dimensions of a credit card as this study, although not an analysis of contemporary aspects of consumerism, does allude to propensities of overconsumption.

The idea was to 'build up' a piece of hand-made paper using multiple rectangles, by slightly overlapping the edges so that they would mesh together as the fibres dried and create one whole piece of paper. This did work, the different colours of the rectangles being formed from the outer layer of the cup being kept separate from the inner layer or main body of the cup. These cups often have two layers of paper, the outer one providing extra insulation from the heat of the coffee or tea. Working in this way meant I could alter the shape of the paper according to how much pulp was left, echoing techniques mentioned earlier of intuiting how much material is left and this fact dictating the finished form. I have since discovered, as described in Leitner's *Paper Textiles* book, that 'In all areas of Japanese art, individual modules and units play an important role as building blocks for the complete structure' (Leitner, 2005: 17). Thus there is an added link between my practice and an Eastern sensibility, already mentioned above in the description of wabi-sabi.

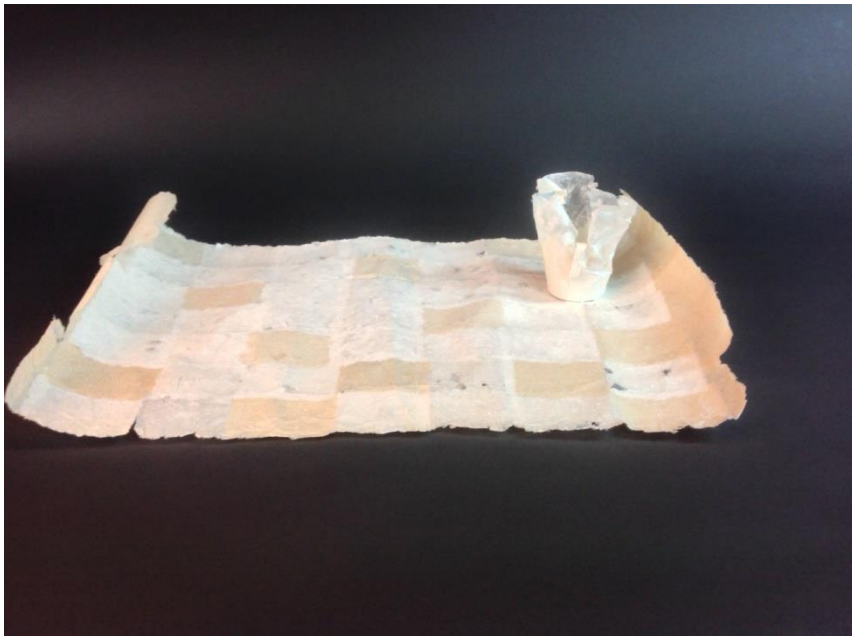

Fig 34 One paper cup = one sheet of paper 35cmx60cm

I was pleased with the resulting ‘paper’, satisfying in its ‘re-formation’ from the cup and yielding a piece of paper measuring 28cm x 45 cm. At first I displayed the paper with the stripped plastic liner, hoping to show the origins of the work. But then began to wonder if it was more effective to also show another identical cup, so I began to work with pairs of cups, thinking that one cup reformed on its own, with no reference to what it had been might be misunderstood, or not understood or ‘interpreted’ in the way I had hoped. The resulting sheet of paper seemed complete on its own, with no added decorative element or text. It had a rawness and a simplicity in its materiality that I liked and seemed uncomplicated, yet delicate; the hand-made from the machine-made was a concept I found pleasing. I was also surprised at the size of the sheet of paper, using all the pulp rendered a sheet measuring 35cm by 60 cm, from a cup 10 cm high with a diameter of 8.5 cm was produced.

Fig 35 'Tube' of paper from one cup lit internally

Height 39 cms.

As my skills improved I later went on to make a larger sheet of paper, again from one cup, in the form of a tube, constructed by overlapping the two short edges together. This was displayed upright, standing on its edges, the softness of the paper only just supporting the structure. Ironically, as can be viewed below (figure 36), this cup was purchased from the Planet Organic retail chain. I had purchased it myself, and later realised that the word 'organic' does not necessarily mean 'ethical'. There is nothing 'organic' about this cup, possibly the drink inside it may have been. I mixed the two colours of the pulp, grey from the outside sleeve and white from the inside cup to produced different gradations of colour.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues - company branding and full logo visible]

Fig 36 'Planet Organic' paper cup being deconstructed

Paper Ribbon

Initial experiments with the pulp, using the smaller tool on the left above, resulted in an overlapping continuous 'ribbon', this was made with a similar method of overlapping smaller components, hence building up a much longer piece. This, when dried, was rolled into a coil and hence the springiness of the coiling become 'embedded' into the materiality of the ribbon. It 'remembered' its shape. Paper does this: it complies and retains a shape or form.

Fig 37, 38 Paper ribbon from one 'paper' cup

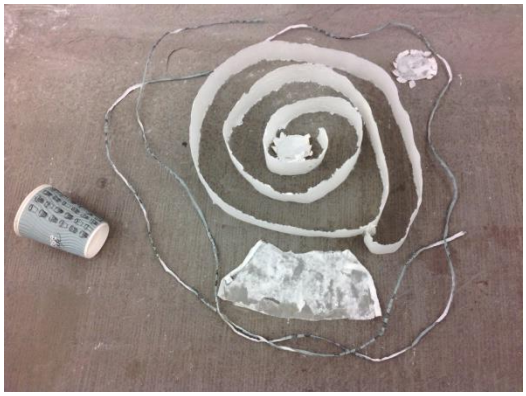

Fig 39 Paper ribbon from one cup

Fig 40 Paper ribbon from one cup

Each image above, shows two identical cups, one deconstructed, the other left whole.

Paper Lace Ribbon

As already stated it was interesting to note how much material was intrinsic to these objects; they were revealing a surprising amount of 'wasted' matter. The initial paper ribbon seemed uninteresting and rather flat and this made me wonder if I could make a kind of lace ribbon. This would mean making a different tool, creating holes in the mesh which would hold no pulp. These had to be of a certain size as I discovered that the viscosity of the water would cover them over if they were too small. As a textile artist I am well aware of lace - a constructed textile that can be made by many different methods; knitting, crocheting, tatting, as well as the more traditional lace-making techniques employing fine threads, bobbins and cushions.

Fig 41 Two paper cups, one deconstructed, the other left whole

As lace usually has an openwork structure, I wondered whether it would be possible to make a kind of ‘faux lace’ with the paper pulp. The main aim was that if the structure had ‘holes’, then these would be a void, would be empty, and so the precious paper pulp would go further, encasing and enclosing the holes with layers of paper pulp.

This worked well and produced a more interesting ‘lace ribbon’. The ‘strings’ shown in the images below are of the outer layer of paper, I have torn it and twisted it, making a kind of paper yarn in order to provide a contrast with the flatness of the made ribbon. The plastic liner is also shown.

Fig 42 Lace paper ribbon and plastic liner

Lace on a bigger scale

On discovering that this technique could work I then wondered whether this could be done on a larger scale and went on to further develop the technique and the process. This re-formed paper has the ability to be 'dissolved' again in water and remade into something else; its present state is temporary, fleeting. Although depending on water for its existence, it is also its enemy. One of the properties of paper is its strength when it is dry and yet its fragility when it is wet. This opens up possibilities to the maker to explore and experiment with these properties.

Paper lace doily

I then wondered if it would be possible to make a kind of paper 'doily', circular in shape. This was a challenge as I would employ the same creative constraints as in the previous cup work, using only the pulp from one cup. What shape would it be? Would I run out of pulp? How to begin – from the inside out? I began the process and, in wanting to relate back to the natural world tried to make a wire tool that represented a tree. I did make a small drawing for this to help me visualise the

process and the finished shape, although it was very different at the end of process.

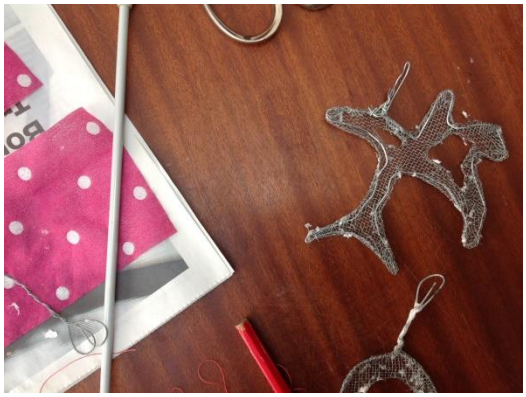

Fig 43 Wire ‘tree’ tool

Fig 44 Partially made lace ‘doily’

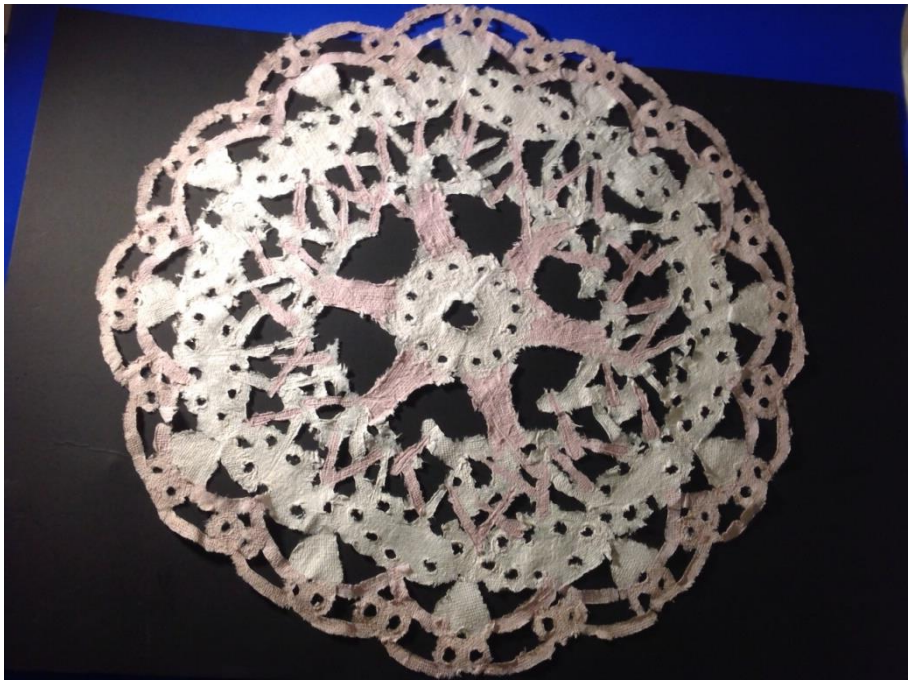

Fig 45 Paper lace ‘doily’ from one paper cup

Diameter 45 cm.

This was, I felt, reasonably successful technically, although I felt it did not have the ‘impact’ that I was looking for. It felt too constrained, as if I was imposing my will too much on these materials. I had broken them in, but they were not happy,

seeming very flat and ‘unalive’. I did not repeat the process, preferring to work in a less formal, more responsive, and more abstract way.

Abstract lace

The next foray into lace was inspired by the formation of a wasps’ nest, made of a kind of natural ‘paper’ so fragile it disintegrates on touching. It has been made from wood from the mastications of wasps; it has a defined structure of layers of different colours from the various wood material that has been collected. Co-incidentally on the cover of William Connolly’s work *The Fragility of Things* there is a finely cut paper artwork. This seems to make manifest his discussion of how the systems we rely on are more fragile than they seem. As Connolly states:

> A first task is to challenge neoliberal ideology through critique . . . . . Doing so to render the fragility of things more visible and palpable. Doing so, too, to set the stage for a series of intercoded shifts in citizen role performances, social movements, and state action (Connolly 2010: 37).

Fig 46 Portion of wasp nest

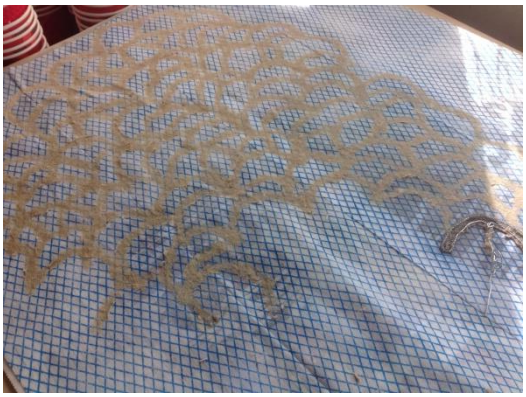

Fig 47 Abstract lace being made

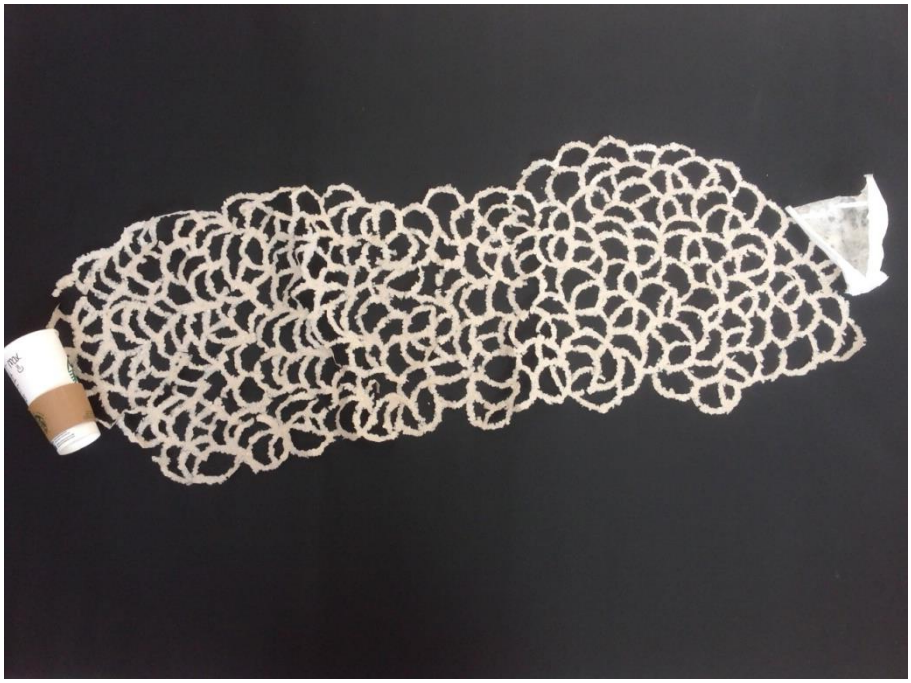

Fig 48 Abstract lace

Two paper cups, one deconstructed

I made two consecutive pieces of work, the first one, above, heavier and thicker, overlaying the layers of pulp to make a piece that although fragile would be able to support its own weight when displayed on a vertical plane. With the second piece I challenged myself and the materials, making the thickness of the paper as fine as possible in order to replicate the seeming fragility of the wasps' nest. The second piece was not strong enough to support its own weight but this breaking up became a part of its construction, I did not see it as a fault and I have displayed it in different ways, accommodating this fragility. It has enabled me to be more imaginative in how I display the work.

Figure 49 Fragile paper lace

Figure 50 Fragile paper lace detail

Reformed cups

I also experimented, using similar techniques as above, in making more ‘cups’ from the paper in just one cup. I was fascinated by the pleasing ‘arc’ shape that is the shape of the opened-out cup.

Figure 51 Ghost cups

One reformed Starbucks cup.

Starbucks cups have the most amount of paper and in the reformed cups above, it is shown that I can make eight ‘ghost’ cups from just one. I embossed the Starbucks logo onto paper on the front of the plastic liner, and the reformed bases of the cups resemble communion wafers.

I also made ‘holey’, lace-like replicas of the opened-out arc shape of the cups. I found I could make ten from one medium sized cup. This was a useful exercise although not, I felt, as successful as the previous work. The scale was not quite right and I think it was only myself who noticed the irony of making not only soluble cups, but also holey ones, as seen below, in figure 52.

Figure 52 'Lace' shapes from one cup, plastic liner included

Books

I have already described how I was content to leave the 'sheet' of paper that I had made unmarked, the materiality of the piece speaking for itself. I then questioned what paper actually does and how it is used in our culture and wondered whether it would be possible to make a small book or a 'micro-book' from a paper cup. I used the same 'credit card' tool but overlapped the edges of the small sheets to form the pages for the book. I constructed the brown cover from the outer layer of paper that was used in the cup, overlaying it to make a 'hardback' cover.

Fig 53 Layers of made pages

Fig 54 Outer cover being made

The book with the brown cover below (figure 55) is the first book that I made. I was surprised by how many pages the pulp produced, and as my skills with the pulp increased I was able to produce thinner paper, the book became thicker, more knowledge could be contained! See title description below. The unmarked pages were important in emphasising the materiality of the whole object, rather than being distracted by decorative or superfluous marking. This also tied in with the concept of no extra material, dye, or paint being added to the basic matter from the cup. This was enough, and I hoped that I had moved these objects to a different place with independent status, so that they became 'existents in excess of their association with human meaning' (Bennett, 2010: 4).

Fig 55 Paper cup book

Fig 56 Remade book with cup

I made more books, using cups with different colour sleeves to vary the colour of the covers of the book, the 'pages' remained white by separating out the pulp. I exhibited these with the title *Books of Lost Knowledge* as I was thinking about how knowledge in our society is encapsulated, how stored and how disseminated. Books are a traditional way to do this, particularly in an educational setting. I was also thinking about the different kinds of knowledge we will need in the future in order to counter the challenges we will face, and how we seem to have lost the knowledge of how to live sustainably. A set of three of these *Books of Lost Knowledge* were selected for an international exhibition of paper art *Eau-Fibre-Papier* which toured from 2015-2016. I have already discussed in Chapter 4 how Robbins thinks we have knowledge that needs to be remembered, rather than made afresh/anew.

Fig 57 Book of lost knowledge (red)

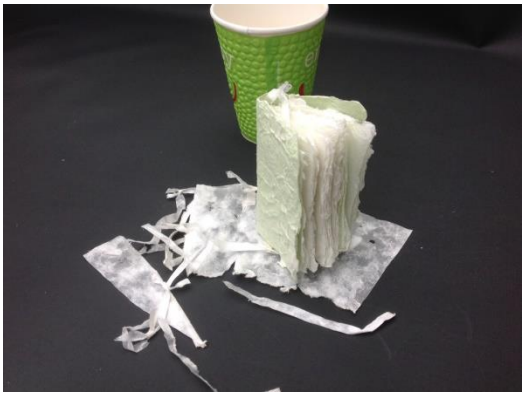

Fig 58 Book of lost knowledge (green)

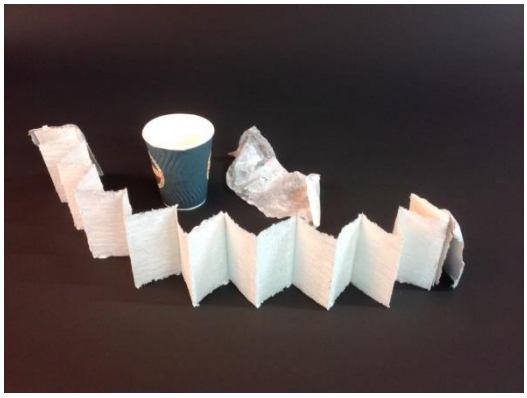

Fig 59 Concertina book

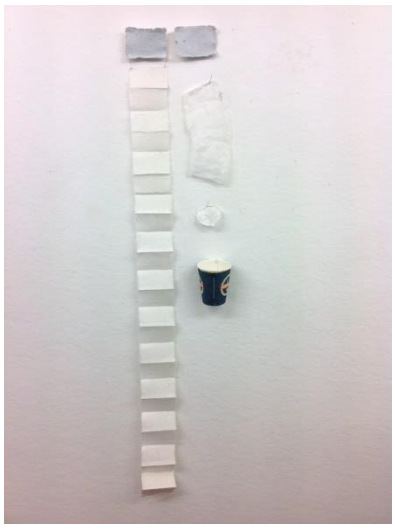

Fig 60 Concertina book on wall

I also made a 'concertina' book, see above, joining the pages together, and then folding them to create a compact form. This also had the 'covers' made from the outer sleeve of the cup. By displaying this book vertically, as seen in the image on the right, the sculptural form of the paper is accentuated and the relationship between the different parts of the deconstructed cup is altered and accentuated.

Miniature concertina book

On being offered the opportunity to display work in a wall-mounted glass case with limited space, I decided to make a 'miniature' concertina 'micro-book.' This is seen displayed on the middle shelf of the case below (figure 61), along with an identical

cup as the one the book is made from. This was shown as part of an exhibition at the Royal United Hospital in Bath, called *Fragile* which also featured photographic images of vulnerable species and habitats.

Fig 61 Work in glass case at Royal United Hospital, Bath. April 2016

Title: *Butterflies and Books, Books and Butterflies*

Butterflies

In making these paper forms, I was unsure as to how these would be viewed and concerned that my audience would not make the connection with the natural world. I was concerned that the thought, for the viewer, behind this 're-use' would be lost in the process. I decided to make some 'natural forms' in order to create a clearer link with the natural world. This resulted in two sets of butterflies. Experiments with making more wire tools produced two I could use to make 'wings', one for each wing, and also a small lozenge shape that represented the body of the butterfly. Hence each butterfly consisted of five dippings from the pulp, again overlapping edges to join the different parts together.

Fig 62 Butterflies made from one Starbucks cup

Title: *99 Butterflies*

A smaller cup produced forty-two, and a medium sized cup from Starbucks had enough fibre to produce ninety-nine. In Eastern cultures the butterfly symbolises metamorphosis and transformation; an appropriate symbol for this process. The 'butterfly effect' is also a phenomenon of weather patterns, where it is thought possible that the disturbance caused by the flutter of a butterfly's wings can cause a hurricane on the other side of the world. This resonated with ideas around interconnectivity which is implicit in new materialist thinking. It also resonates with the thinking discussed in Chapter 4, that small actions can be powerful and have much wider ramifications. As Frost & Coole describe,

> The enormous macroscopic impact of myriad mundane individual actions provokes critical, political, and legal reflection not only upon the nature of causation but also upon the nature of the responsibilities that individuals and governments have for the health of the planet (2010: 16).

Bauman also echoes this thought when he says 'whatever happens in one place has a bearing on how people in all other places live, hope, or expect to live' (Bauman 2007: 6).


Figs 63, 64 Image on left is two paper cups, one deconstructed and remade into forty-two butterflies. Similarly on the right, but ninety-nine butterflies were produced

It seems appropriate here to repeat this this quote from Barbara Bolt and Estelle Barrett's work *Carnal Knowledge*, which uses the butterfly as a metaphor for the expansion of new materialist thinking that has recently evolved. I came across this text after having already made the butterfly work, but it seems a fitting metaphor as a way to describe the subtle yet powerful ways in which ideas can be communicated.

> The emergence of the neo-materialism "now" may be understood as the result of the butterfly effect – a confluence of currents across the disciplines that have validated a rethinking of the relationship between humans and non-humans. While humanist thought placed the human subject firmly at the centre of the social and physical world, discoveries in science, particularly around quantum physics and nanotechnology, and the emergence of new human-technological relationships have decentred the subject. These, in concert with social, political, and philosophical theories that question the privilege given to humans in the human/non-human binary, underpin discourses of new materialism. At the core of the material turn, is a concern with agential matter (2013: 3).

Fig 65 *99 butterflies*

The Birds

Feeling that I needed to get on with some work, but not quite sure what to do next, I had stripped a cup with no particular purpose in mind and had co-incidentally also been watching the birds feeding outside the kitchen window. I drained and then squeezed the pulp in my hand, with a view to perhaps drying it to use at a later date. On looking down I realised that the form in my hand looked remarkably like a lifeless bird. The inside of my palm and fingers had formed the outside form of the bird. This coincidence needed further investigation and so I continued to strip cups, making more birds, allowing them to air dry over several days. Previous experiments with using the 'bulk' of the pulp had not been successful I felt; I had preferred to focus on making the paper as fine and delicate as possible. However the form of the bird seemed to suit the roughness of the pulp, which I was not making so finely, so that it was coarser and more textured. I was still wanting to relate the work to the natural world, and I was aware of Rachael Carson's work *Silent Spring*, which described the dangers of using DDT and its impact on the natural world, particularly on the birds and wildlife in America in the 1950's.

Fig 66 Paper pulp being moulded into bird form in my hand

As stated I made more birds using the squeezed pulp and I used the resulting plastic liners to construct a fabric to use as a 'shroud' with which I covered the birds and in exhibiting the first piece the shroud had to be lifted by the viewer in order to reveal the birds, placed in lines, their small bodies inert and still. This piece continues to evolve and change; I have exhibited it in different ways and for the viva exhibition it became different again.

Fig 67 Paper cup birds

Fig 68 Paper cup birds with 'shroud'

Working with these three different sets of materials allowed me, when coming to a natural hiatus with one set of materials, wondering where I could go next, to be able to switch my attention to another material, while subliminally still considering

the one that I had used previously. This was a creative process of layers of different experiential thinking but all informed by the same ethic of revealing the hidden 'nature' of these materials, as far as I, myself, the maker, was able to do.

Fig 69 Shroud made from plastic cup liners displayed at Walcot Chapel, Bath

June 2015

Fig 70 Paper cup birds displayed on cloth as above (below shroud)

Sweet Pea (waste as nutrition)

I had become aware of paper being used as a growing medium for seeds and wondered if I could grow a seed in the paper pulp from a cup. I proceeded to strip a cup and make a small 'pot' from the plastic liner. I then liquidised the pulp to use as a growing medium. I was also looking at the nutritional cycles of nature and thinking about the fact that 'the soil is an economy without waste', as described by the artist Debra Solomon in describing the soil rhizosphere as part of a Soil Culture residency (Solomon, 2015).

Fig 71 Sweet pea (detail)

Fig 72 Sweet pea growing

The pea germinated and grew surprisingly well as the paper has chemical residues and bleaches in it. This work was influenced by looking at the work of McDonough and Braungart and their Cradle to Cradle approach, as nature also has no waste. I was attempting to 'make good' this mass produced material. After the pea had stopped growing, I allowed the paper and the roots to dry out and the roots desiccated in the paper had formed a hard, solid substance not unlike wood itself.

I was going to describe the sweet pea as 'dead', but decided this is not the correct description, as it is still matter, is still in a process of becoming something else.

Fig 73 No longer growing sweet pea

Fig 74 No longer growing sweet pea with hardened root/paper matter on left

Tent City

This piece came out of looking at the pre-fix ‘eco’ and its etymological root, one definition describes it as coming from the Greek word for ‘home’. I had originally

thought to make a small ‘village’ or cluster of house type structures, but on making them, using the same simple wire shapes that I used at the beginning, the small structures looked more like tents and were reminiscent of a refugee camp. This work stresses, I feel, the difference in living standards experienced by displaced peoples, and is reminiscent of the concepts described in Bauman’s work *Wasted Lives.*

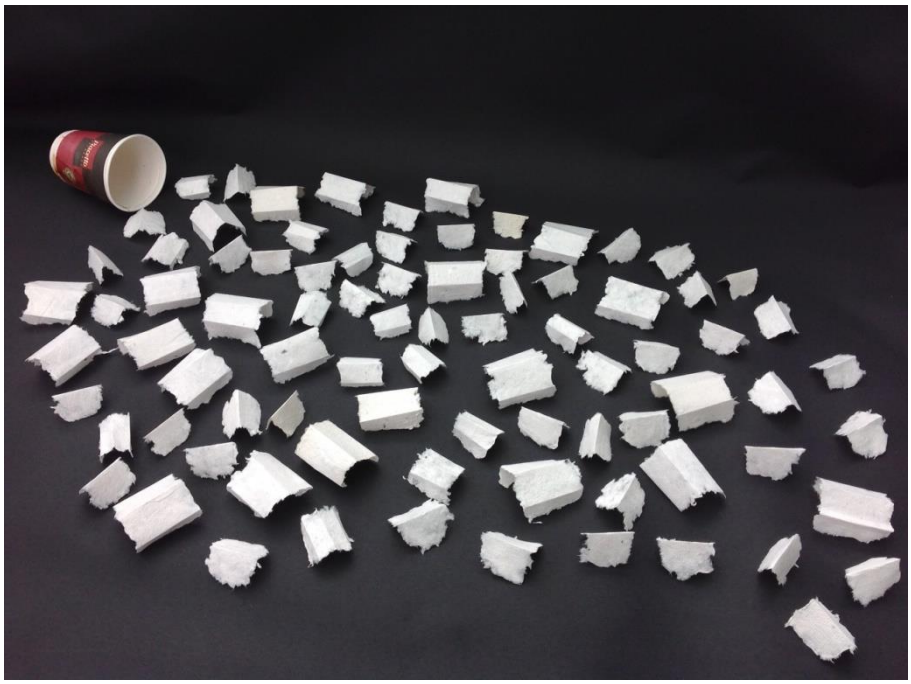

Fig 75 Two paper cups, one deconstructed

Title; *Tent City or Wasted Lives or Refuge(e)*

7.3. Crisp Packets

I had already experimented with the crisp packet material during the last part of my MA and knew that this material had further potential; I had not finished with it.

Crisp packets are made from a plastic backed aluminium foil, this means that, even if recycling was appropriate, they do not ‘fit into’ any current ‘waste’ stream. It is impossible to separate these two materials on an industrial, and indeed any, scale.

Fig 76 Found crisp packets

Fig 77 Packets ready for washing

Thus they are a heterogeneous material made of two different materials fixed together to create a waterproof and airproof membrane, fulfilling their function as a food wrapper of convenience and keeping the enclosed contents crisp and 'fresh', with the benefit of extra nitrogen. As with the paper cups, in their original design and planning no thought has been given to what will happen to these materials after they have been used. The demands of commercialism and profit outweigh considerations as to how their production will affect the wider biosphere. I had already begun to work with this ubiquitous material during my MA studies and felt strongly that I had not finished investigating it. It has a 'carnivalesque' allure; the material is shiny and colourful, belying its unnerving status as a material that will not go away. That it is viewed as a 'marginal' material is re-enforced by the fact that I come across these packets on pavements and roadsides with predictable regularity. They have been cast aside as a by-product of our commodified and fast moving culture. That these abandoned objects still have validity is stated by Boscagli when she asserts,

> For this, new materialism takes on board the cultural turn's well developed strategies for discerning the marginalised subject and object beyond the conventional disciplinary fields of vision, subjects, and objects which, though marginal, are no less material (Boscagli, 2014: 22).

Unmaking the crisp packets.

These packets are deconstructed by a simple process of opening out the packet to reveal the shiny foil inside. They are washed and when dry they are then cut, with scissors, into strips approximately one centimetre wide. In order to make this material into a 'useable' ribbon or yarn suitable for further use it was necessary to machine stitch through the middle of the strips, joining them in the process, then fold the strips in half and machine them again.

Fig 78 Washed crisp packet, partially cut

The foil on its own is likely to tear and split. The machine stitching strengthens the ribbon, and at the same time, by puncturing it with many holes, makes it more pliable, turning it into a softer material. I found I could make between five and six metres of ribbon from one medium packet. The size of these packets has increased over the time I have been working on this project, making the original 'medium' packets look small. The foil has also been made thicker, especially in the more 'gourmet' brands now available.

Fig 79 Crisp packet ribbon

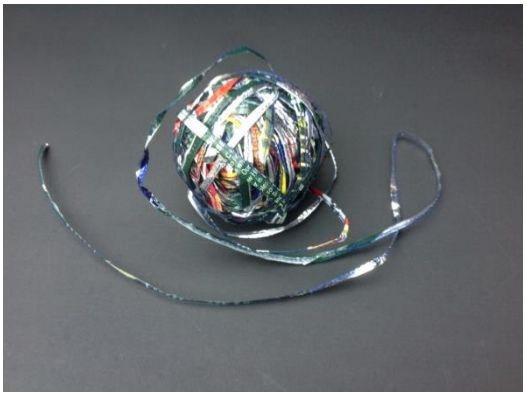

Fig 80 The ribbon wound into a ball

On displaying this work people often asked, on realising where the yarn had come from, whether I had washed the packets. Often on viewing this material its provenance is not recognised. Also when viewing the work it was assumed that I had used some kind of machine to cut the packets, and people were surprised that I had used only scissors. They helpfully suggested ways in which I could speed up this process of deconstruction by using mechanical cutting machines. This concern over how much time this had taken me raises interesting questions over how much time art or craft should take to make, or be seen to take to make, and it is assumed that in a capitalist culture, where time is money, as short a time as possible should be taken in the making. In not knowing how things are made, we also forget the time involved in making things, and how this can be a positive pleasurable *experience* rather than something controlled by capitalism.

The first work I made was ‘skeins’ of yarn from the packets; each skein was one packet, this was referencing the Twilleys skeins of woollen yarn commonly used for needlepoint and cross stitch patterns on canvas. Again this was showing a potentiality, a readiness to become something else, these skeins could be viewed as an ongoing process of making.

Fig 81 One crisp packet deconstructed – 5.6 metres of ribbon

Fig 2 'Skeins' of yarn

Fig 83 Crocheted forms

Single crocheted flowers/baskets

With this material being firm, shiny and metallic it felt less likely to be able to alter its composition therefore I felt it was more appropriate, and perhaps more challenging, to keep the ribbon the same, but to alter what I did with it. I changed the form, altering it to suit whatever project or exhibition I was involved in. Thus the conceptual element of the work was allowed to evolve and develop. I initially began crocheting small flowers and artefacts, each one made from one packet.

Fig 84 Crocheted flower, made from one packet, replaced where I had found the discarded bag

Initial experiments included finding a crisp packet, picking it up, taking it home to be re-worked and then placing it back, transformed, where I had found it. See above. This was problematic, both in its documentation and in the 'message' that I was giving back to the consumer, who, of course, was no longer there. How was this meaningful? I did not want to have this process viewed as one of remonstration and censure. This 'flower' is still in the hedge near where I live three years on.

Knitting chair – interactive work

I also experimented with knitting with the yarn, to which it responded well, creating a lively, glittery, colourful, textured surface and by creating a 'knitting chair' partly upholstered with some of the knitted fabric I was creating a 'domestic' setting, sometimes within a gallery but also using it in other indoor and outdoor settings.

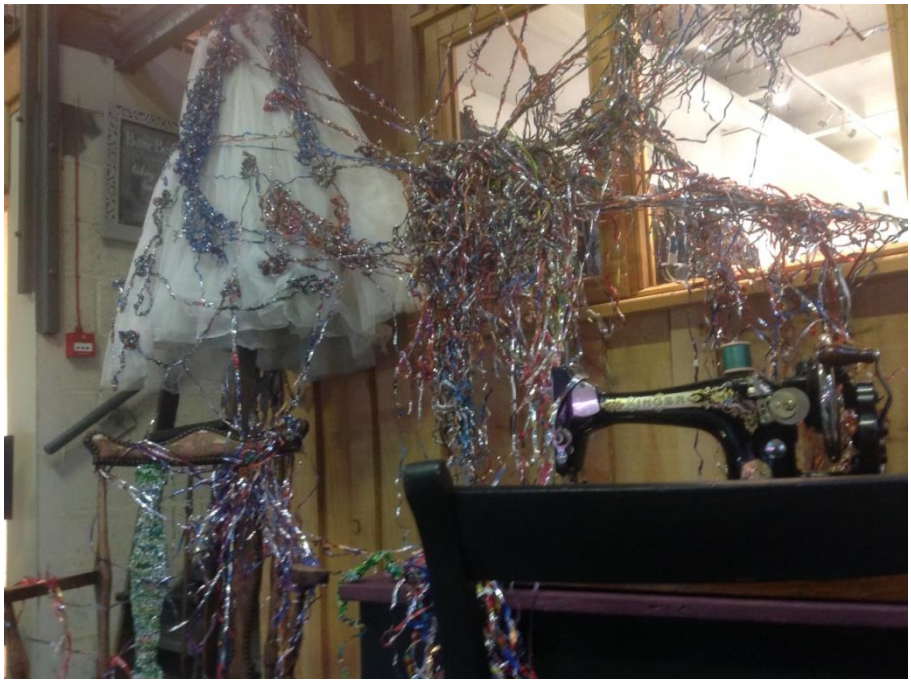

Fig 85 Installation at 125 Gallery, Bath, including knitting chair and domestic sewing machine

I moved on to making the work 'interactive', inviting people to knit, or make, with me, or indeed to unpick if these skills were not in existence, but to connect with and alter the material in some way. In an exhibition called Shift at Black Swan Arts in Frome, see figures 85 and 86 below, I created the beginnings of an installation and then let it evolve and develop over several weeks, I was in residence for several days and by the end of the show it had doubled in size, and many conversations had taken place. Interestingly my audience did not always recognise what the material was made from and, when told, were surprised that 'waste' could look this way. This is a peculiar and paradoxical practice as I am, at the same time as celebrating these materials and enjoying working with them, expressing a wish that they should not be here, we do not need them and I am asserting that their environmental cost outweighs their apparent benefits.

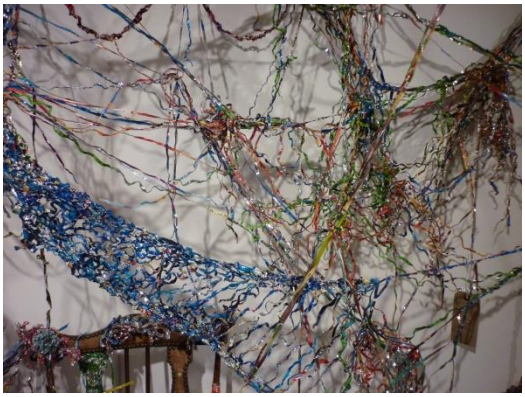

Fig 86 *Shift* Crisp packet installation

Fig 87 Detail of *Shift*

The Mayor's chains

This material was also used to make a set of chains for Frome's mayor, standing as an Independent and alternative in his outlook, he commissioned sets of 'chains' from different sources, including vegetables and lego. The framed photographs of the different chains became an exhibition that was shown at the Old Silk Mills, Frome in 2014.

Fig 88, 89 Peter MacFadyen wearing his mayoral crisp packet chains


Fig 90, 91 Installation at Forest of the Imagination event in 2014

This material was also re-fashioned into a garment for the opening of the first Forest of Imagination event held at Bath School of Art and Design in 2014. I was artist in residence, having a 'making shed' and used the crisp packet material as a workshop resource to make work. It was also used as a resource for discussions around what we see as 'waste', and the provenance of these materials, where they have come from, what they have left behind. The production of aluminium from bauxite creates red lakes of waste, it is also particularly energy intensive in its production.

The mass of crisp packet knitting was used to create a special dress to celebrate the opening night of the event.


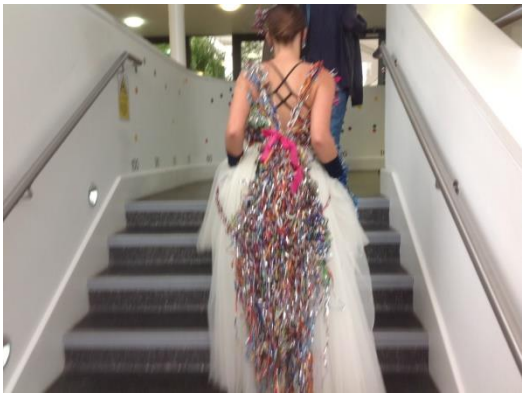

Fig 92, 93 Sophie Wotton wearing crisp packet dress at Forest of Imagination opening event

The resulting 'mass' of knitted and unpicked yarn has become a tangled representation of thoughts and ideas; 'entangled' and engaged, adding to the world, being seen and appreciated.

Green Week Event

This material was also used to form a dress and used as part of Bath Spa University's Green Week events in 2014.

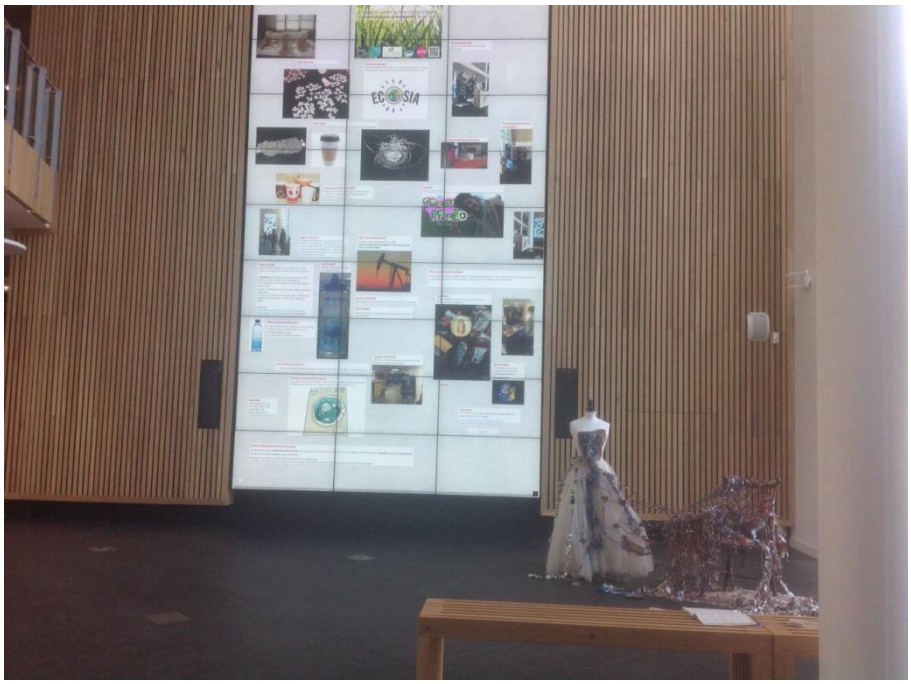

Fig 94 Knitting chair plus dress form plus images of my work on media wall for Bath Spa University Green Week 2014

Nature in Art

I also used this mass of material for an exhibition situated outside in the garden at Nature in Art in Gloucestershire in 2015. It was draped around trees and bushes and wound through a glade of trees and shrubs, where I also distributed used crisp packets to show where the material had come from. Before I had put a label on the work there were complaints that this part of the garden needed tidying up as there was litter around. I also used the material to adorn vintage dresses worn by two dancers as part of a spontaneous performative piece.

Fig 95, 96 Installation of work at Nature in Art

Fig 97 Crisp packet ribbon knit/unpick forming back of Georgie's dress for Nature in Art exhibition

Fig 98 Crisp packet ribbon forming front of dress

Title: *Grace's Foot*

This image of the material being worn by Grace is enticing to me as it shows the earth, the human and this incongruous material that I have already described as being ‘alien’, yet it is alluring in its colour and metallic sheen. It has come from the earth but has no way to return to it.

Walcot Chapel 2015.

The crisp packet ‘mass’ was also used in an exhibition at Walcot chapel in Bath in 2015, where I formed it into a circle; I was thinking about circularity and the circular economy. Several people commented that it looked ‘alive’ so this was an interesting reaction, bequeathing a sense of liveliness to this ‘inert’ material.

Fig 99 The knitted and unpicked yarn formed into a circular shape

I also attempted to connect it to the outside of the building by attaching it to an air vent and stretching it out on to the grass, in an attempt to make a ‘bridge’ between the building and the earth and the grass area outside.

Fig 100 Crisp packet material attached to chapel

Enchanted Gardens

The material had another re-incarnation being used as part of an Enchanted Gardens project at Blaise Castle Estate in Bristol in May 2016. It was used to adorn the central pillar of a rose garden in an event that was planned to take place partially during twilight.


Fig 101, 102 Rose Garden installation as part of Enchanted Gardens event, Blaise Castle, Bristol. May 2016

7.4. Paper carrier bags

Similarly I felt that I had not finished my work with the paper carrier bags. These bags, often carrying a brand or other advertising material, often displayed their 'environmental' credentials, making no mention of the articles that the bag was constructed to contain, which would surely have a much larger environmental impact. The bags will often have environmental 'messages' written on them such as 'please reuse' or 'dispose of me thoughtfully', see below figures 102 – 105.

These paper carrier bags, and other smaller paper bags, are other 'marginal' items that have caught my attention. Again they are normally used only once before being discarded. With the paper carrier bags their identity as a commodity is re-enforced by the branding and advertising usually implicit in their design.

The modern industrial production of paper is not a benign process, as already discussed above in Chapter 5**.** However the amount of paper in each bag is again surprising, especially as articles placed in the bags can be quite small. They by no means 'fill' the void that the bag is protecting and occupy it just for a short time, endowing the bag with a fix of consumer liveliness before being emptied and becoming 'lifeless' once more. However these bags can be taken out of their consumerist identikit condition, opened out and transformed through the Japanese technique of momigami.

[Images redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues - company branding and full logo visible]

Fig 103, 104, 105, 106 'Eco' messages on paper carrier bags

How I unmake - momigami

I have already described processes of experimenting with these bags earlier in my practice, deconstructing them and making them into different forms through creating yarns, both flat and plied. I was looking for an alternative to this and was intrigued, on opening out the bags, by the sheer amount of paper revealed. After some unsuccessful experiments involving squashing and ironing the bags in order to alter their texture and identity, I was searching for a way to erase their 'commodification', I tried to stitch them together in order to make a larger piece. This was unsuccessful, it was too unwieldy and difficult to work with.

Fig 107 Paper carrier bag

Fig 108 Several carrier bags

I decided to go back to the idea of keeping each unit/article separate and work on them individually. I was aware of the Japanese technique of momigami. This is a technique whereby paper, in the Japanese tradition it would be a fine tissue paper, is rolled and kneaded as if it were a ball of dough. The paper is then shaken out and the process repeated. Counterintuitively, this process has the effect of making the paper stronger and softer, producing an almost fabric-like material. It also shrinks slightly in the process. If treated with konnyaku paste, made with persimmon juice, the paper will become stronger, even waterproof and windproof, this would have been used traditionally in Japan where there is a tradition of paper clothing. I decided against using any oils or additives and I decided to try this technique with the paper carrier bags just using my hands and was pleased with the results. Please see video of the process on my website. Figure 106 shows one paper carrier bag after being treated with the momigami technique, whereas figure 107 shows several bags treated, and then displayed inside each other.

Fig 109 Group of bags

Fig 110 Groups of bags

The bags began to form draping sheets of suede-like material, transforming them from a utilitarian and functional, if ‘short-lived’, commodity into an intriguing material the origins of which it would be difficult to guess. This is an engaging and therapeutic ‘hands-on’ process, it can take three or four ‘kneadings’ to really start to notice a difference in the feel of the paper. It begins to look fragile yet by connecting in this way directly with the material, your awareness is raised of the paper gradually becoming softer, yet stronger. When paper carrier bags are new, they are flat, stiff, shiny, unsullied and uncreased. They are ‘industrialised’, the result of a process untouched by human hand.

Fig 111 Paper and carrier bags

On making a purchase the paper carrier bags are usually shaken out, showing the inside, ready for the purchase to 'fill' the bag; the sound of this opening out and the materiality of the bag becomes a part of this transaction

Fig 112 Detail paper bags

Fig 113 Detail paper bags

Similarly as with the paper cups, I feel that 'the inside' of the cup, the reason for its existence, is erased, as by opening out the bag, and revealing the nature of the

inside, the ‘void’ is dissolved and new possibilities are opened up, new things are allowed to happen, such events 'that enable and complicate life’, as described by Grosz, above.

Studio Event Walcot Chapel 2015

At a recent working studio event in Walcot Chapel in Bath - a former mortuary chapel where the conditions always seem to be cool, I suspended some momigami paper pieces in the middle of the space. I had recently heard a talk about gardeners being aware of the amount of moisture in the air, moisture that is not visible but this made me aware of the materiality of things we cannot see, and of having a sense of the materiality of the air. I had been unaware of this and it made me realise that all materials, our houses, our clothes, as well as our bodies are transpiring; receiving and giving out moisture. Paper especially will absorb moisture and I remembered installing my butterfly piece on a very hot day and wondering why the wings were coming apart from the bodies and realising that the dry conditions were desiccating the paper and so this made the fibres less likely to ‘stick’ together; a certain amount of moisture was needed to ‘hold’ the fibres together.

Fig 114 Momigami paper bags displayed in Walcot Chapel.

Fig 115 Paper bags suspended in the air

I had hung several paper bag pieces in the middle of the space and they reacted to the air currents by moving and turning; this seemed to re-inforce their connection to the air and the turbulence of their immediate surroundings. I had been reading about ‘new materialism’ and was trying to describe, in a material form, an awareness of the ‘unseen’ processes and transformations that objects may continually undergo and ‘experience’, particularly paper, which is constantly absorbing moisture but then the air ‘claims it back’. Words of reflection seemed to be appropriate.

Hanging pieces in the air in the chapel caught in the invisible upcurrents of air flowing all around

The paper making a 'barrier' in the air, or more of a way of slicing the space with a part tangible layer, what form what energies what sound waves bumping into bouncing off soft layers of pounded material inert alive inert alive inert alive inevitable

They turn hanging by a thread invisible (immaterial) tensile twist of fine thread unravelling? Or buffeted by unseen softness of billows of lightness

Desiccating drying taking in giving out

Distanced from a solid surface, wall, floor, ceiling a dance of relational movement set free from material weight

Half way between solid and liquid the softness pliability of handled crushed and smoothed connected matter mattering in the air of the space of the air of the space

Hung up to dry to desiccate moistness taking in giving out depleting replacing depleting unaware so silent no cry commune through touch

Nothing no thing added or taken away but altered beyond recognising different now

Human perception implies bodily connections non-human animalistic hides leathers skins useful permeable impermeable skin deep skin depth letting through letting in letting out letting the light in

Please see my website for video of performance piece. Reading: Susi Bancroft.

Conclusion

This chapter has described a materially led practice, a practice that puts matter at the forefront of its making. This is a peculiar practice, already described as using things, detritus, that 'should not be here', querying their materiality, their *quidditas* and at the same time exploring their undisclosed provenance. These materials are mysterious, keeping their origins secret; we can never fully know where they have come from. They are untraceable, both in their beginnings and their endings. This chapter has made links with the previous chapters, in particular the micropolitical resistance that can be inititated through a knowledge of the material.

Provoked by a deep ecological concern, this practice concerns the sensory nature and exploration of something that is outside of myself, yet I feel a deep connection towards these materials. The 'selection' of these materials comes from an innate sense of injustice and a desire to reinstate them back into the material realm that we should care more about; to be included and not to be rejected and deserted.

I have developed a sensitivity and a sensibility towards these materials and by extension to other materials, wondering where they have been made and by what methods and processes of production, thereby enlarging the scope and definition of a 'deep materialism'. Through the exploration of the potentiality of these materials, through making, this relationship becomes and initiates a feeling of being part of something larger than myself, a creative connectivity that through making heightens an awareness of being in the world, of being a part of the world.

Chapter 8

Conclusion of thesis: Matter matters

In this thesis I have advocated a reassessment of how we use and view common, everyday materials and actions. By taking so-called 'waste' as a starting point for both the theoretical work and choice of materials for my practice, and through the interplay and influence between the two, I have explored an alternative framework for approaching and evaluating the world of matter. This process, by enabling and inviting a reassessment of current prejudices and attitudes, proposes the ethical necessity of a cultural shift to an embracing of, and a deeper questioning and understanding of, the material world of which we are a part, yet with which we risk losing a sense of connection. The current ecological uncertainty is an opportunity for a positive and pivotal shift in our relationship with the material world by encouraging an adoption of a 'deep materialism', which includes a questioning of the ethics and motives in extracting, producing, and 'wasting' matter.

In this final conclusive chapter I review the key ideas explored in, and emerging from, each chapter in Part 1 of the thesis on the subjects of Waste, Materialism, Materiality, Deep Materialism and Politics and Micropolitics. I then highlight in a review how my practice has developed and how it provokes connections between conceptions of a 'deep materialism' and micropolitical responses and actions. In Part 2 I discuss what have been the main influences on my practice and how my practice has developed over the course of the project.

Finally I identify areas for further exploration and also for further disseminating the ideas and practices developed though this thesis.

8.1 Review of chapters

In Part 1 I drew on theoretical understandings of waste and new materialism to conceive a framework for action which can be understood as micropolical action. In Chapter 2, I described how 'what waste is' is a difficult and profound concept to pin down; it has the ability to alter its metaphorical and physical meanings to suit a contemporary need and at the same time expound society's consumerist cravings.

Through exploring the physicality and agency of denigrated 'waste' matter through my practice the concept of what actually constitutes waste is challenged and redefined.

Chapter 3 focussed on the differing definitions of the terms 'materialism', 'materiality' and 'deep materialism', revealing an unresolved and confusing use of language to describe matter and the properties of matter, and its relationship to the human. This relationship is crucial to how we see ourselves as global citizens, whether this is a position of care and responsibility, as a 'pilgrim' as Bauman would say, or one of over-use and degradation, as a 'tourist', to quote Bauman again, where as we are only visitors we care little for the consequences of our actions. I emphasise that as we too are matter, if we reject and forfeit the world of matter, remembering its root of 'mater', or mother, then we imperil not only ourselves but future generations.

In Chapter 4 I discussed how micropolitical action engages with the choices each individual has the power to make; choices which are informed and enriched by knowledge of the provenance and production of materials often taken for granted. We can resist and refuse this current use, or rather mis-use, of materials. Different ways to understand and engage with 'waste', and with matter, draw on a different and new form of materialism, including a 'deep materialism' to encourage an engagement with the material world on different levels. Alternative epistemological framings emerge which emphasise the dynamic nature of matter and how it exists and co-exists, framings endorsed by Bennett and others in a vitalist world of becoming.

In Part 2, Chapter 5 - Influences on Practice, events and experiences which have affected the practice were examined, placing the practice into the new and different materialist framing developed in Part 1. The value of noticing the overlooked and the temporal implications of impermanence are noticed through an attention to the everyday that was mooted by Morris and comes by way of Eastern thought and sensibilities to a modern sense of 'mindfulness', or the benefit of being 'in the present' and noticing the materiality of life around you, which is a

rich and fertile way to situate the human in the twenty first century, where digital connection can intimate dis-connection from the material world.

Through an examination of how other artists react with and revere materials, using them as carriers of meaning and ways with which to identify with, and alter the world, it is shown how this relationship can be identified and developed. Matter is fascinating yet fragile, deserving more of our attention then it currently possesses or receives.

In Chapter 6 – Context and Development of Practice, I identified a commonality in my choice of objects which I used as the starting point for my work. I make a contribution to the appreciation of matter in a number of ways. Through my work and the development of a low impact practice, I highlight how, whilst consumer society values the objects contained in the 'void' of the crisp packet, of the paper cups and of the paper bags, I find more value in the vessels themselves - they have their own material identity and place in the world.

I invite others to engage with these ideas – not in the sense of making their own reworked objects, although they are welcome to do so. This work stands in the world as a configuration of ideas and a conduit for sense of a 'deep materiality', raising questions about the relationality of matter; including where something has come from, what processes it has been subjected to, and what it next becomes.

The reconfiguration of my work makes a contribution both to understandings of 'the material turn' and to the emergence of new micro-political roles and responsibilities of the individual subject and ways of being in the world. This sense of a 'deep materialism' logically extends to other aspects of modern lives. For example, clothing raises issues of where and how it was made and with what ecological impact. Food also raises the same ethical questioning.

In Chapter 7 - My Practice, I described the methods developed to coax this mass-produced, industrially made material back into the world of 'mattering', to show that matter does matter; it affects us in ways we have chosen to forget. I argued that objects can be viewed as a reflection of their materials, that they are in a

constant state of change, or process: we and they have much in common despite changing and altering at different rates. The development of a low impact practice and the resulting creative constraints has enriched and counterintuitively expanded my practice as an artist. The problem-solving skills and thinking necessary to produce work that has an authenticity and validity worthy of the materials I have used, whether it is from trees, or minerals extracted from the earth, has expanded yet grounded my practice.

8.2 Areas identified for further research

Completing this project has provided me with a body of work which I intend to exhibit as such; it works best as a complete entity rather than subtracting pieces from it in order to show individual pieces. This work provides an alternative narrative with which human impact on the planet can be viewed and ameliorated. I intend to develop new work which will have the same ethics and criteria by which I made the present work. My research has also taken the form of presenting papers and giving talks so this is an aspect of my work which will continue to develop, as well as these ideas augmenting and influencing other projects I may work on.

In this thesis I have worked 'around the edges' of identifying and challenging consumerism, capitalism and neoliberalism. An area which I could engage with in my future practice is the possibility of a shift towards a postconsumer society, exploring what this can mean and ways in which it can be described and articulated.

I am also interested in the feminist aspect of the material turn and how this form of materialism differs from the object oriented ontology suggested by Morton and others. Women's engagement in the material and the domestic has a long but often concealed history.

The relationship between science and matter deserves closer consideration, being mentioned only briefly in this thesis. This relationship can shed light on the sense of flux and flow that all matter experiences. The scientist and biologist Alan Rayner, who is a personal acquaintance, has written a book called *The Origin of Life*

Patterns. He states 'Basically science has taken a wrong turn through its acceptance of 'objectivism' (the notion that a material object can exist independently from the space it includes and is included in) – which is based on a 'one-way-only' view of nature that sets the observer apart from the observed instead of recognising the natural inclusion of the observer within all that surrounds the observer. As per Einstein's contention that 'the environment is everything that isn't me' (Rayner, 2017).

8.3 Final thoughts: matter matters

Through my art practice and in writing this thesis I have sought to communicate how matter matters, highlighting how simple everyday objects can be transformed through a creative process and a paradigm of ethical thinking. Such a highlighting is an end in itself. The work I have made is not for the current art and craft 'market' in a commercial sense but is produced with the aim of encouraging a realignment with the material world we are all a part of. This body of work has been a process of raising awareness, both for myself as the maker of the objects and the interrogator of the theory, and for my audience, who view and are altered by this experience. This has been an heuristic process, enabling a regauging of a presence within a material world. It is time for a renegotiation with 'our' material world in which we are all included. Re-engagement with matter, not a rejection of it but an embracing of it, re-evaluates current socially acceptable paradigms and proposes a better way to connect with ourselves, with others, with the material, through the material.

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Appendix I

Exhibitions and Conferences

2011

- September: 'Transnational Clothing' conference, Bath School of Art and Design: paper presented.
- September: 'Making Futures II', Plymouth College of Art: paper presented Dartington Hall, Devon.
- September: 'Connecting Craft and Communities,' University of Exeter School of Social Geography, attendee at research seminar, Dartington Hall, Devon.
- November: 'The Internet of Things Ideas Lab', Crafts Council research seminar event, attendee, Watershed Bristol
- November: TRIP Conference, Loughborough University, attendee

2012

- January: 'Outside: activating cloth to enhance the way we live ', conference attendee, University of Huddersfield
- February: co-organiser 'Material Actions' seminar, Bath School of Art and Design, paper presented plus exhibition
- April: Work shown in Doctoring Practice Exhibition, short presentation given in Doctoring Practice Symposium, Bath, also at Aberystwyth, Salisbury
- April: Mapping the Future: Where Are You Now? Group Show Brewhouse, Taunton, Somerset
- April: Papier Global 2 Group Exhibition, Deggendorf, Germany
- June: Curiously Enough, Group Show, Ruskin Mill, Nailsworth, Glos
- June: Mending My Ways, Group Show, Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton, Somerset
- June: Attended Therapeutic Knitting Study Day, BRLSI, Bath
- June: Attended Mend*rs Research Symposium, Docker, Lake District
- June: PhD Progression Examination, passed
- Sept: Attended Space Place Practice Symposium, UWE, Bristol
- Sept: Attended Assemble: Innovation and Enterprise Conference, Crafts Council, RIBA, London
- Oct: Designs for a Future: Sustainable Design Group Show, Salisbury Arts Centre Wiltshire

2013

- March: SHIFT: What is the Work of Art? Group Show Black Swan Arts Frome Somerset
- March: participant, Makers Fayre, M Shed, Bristol
- April: Attended Time-Place-Space PhD Research Symposium, UCA, Farnham
- September: Making Futures Conference Plymouth College of Art Deeper and Deeper paper presented
- November: Subversive Stitch revisited Conference V &A

2014

- Textile Society Conference: Politics and Communication? Welcome Trust London
- Talk and work shown at Bath Spa University Sustainability Event, Newton Park Campus.
- Attendance and work shown, Commons Building for Green Week.
- Talk for Research Afternoon Bath School of Art and Design
- Talk to MFA students, Bath School of Art and Design
- April: Crysalis, Expert Craft Textile Project, Plymouth College of Art
- May: Bees Knees exhibition, Walcot Chapel, Bath
- June: Bees Knees exhibition, 44AD, Bath
- June:Work shown in PaperArt Fest, Sofia, Bulgaria
- June: Artist in residence, Forest of Imagination, Bath School of Art and Design
- July: Literati exhibition, Trinity Hall, Bristol
- August: Vessels exhibition, Making Space, Hampshire
- November: Christmas show, 125 Gallery, Bath
- November: textile research forum meeting(Farnham)

2015

- April: Bath spa University Green Week, work shown in Commons Building
- April: Textile research forum attendee, London Artworkers Guild
- April/May: International Biennial for Paper and Fibre Art Exhibition, Cirencester Books of Lost Knowledge. Touring to France, Switzerland and Taiwan
- April: I:SEE talk University of Bath Malcolm McIntosh *Thinking the Twenty First Century*
- April: Fashion and Textile Courses Phd Research Event, University of Birmingham, attendee
- May: Artist/workshop leader, Forest of Imagination
- May: Mayors Chains Exhibition, Frome
- June: Presentation of work Corsham Court, paper presented at Early Research Symposium, Corsham court.
- June: The Bees Knees Exhibition, Walcot Chapel, Bath

2016

- May: The Bees Knees, Open Studio, Walcot Chapel, Bath
- May: Enchanted Gardens community event, Blaise Castle Bristol. Installation in Rose Garden
- May: House of Imagination, Re-imagining Materials workshop: Rose Garlands
- June: Forest of Imagination, Rose Tree/Rose Garland workshop
- June: Encountering Materiality, University of Geneva Switzerland. Work shown plus paper presented: From Materialism to Materiality

Appendix II

Documentation of the exhibition of work as viewed at viva voce examination November 2016 at Corsham Court Bath Spa University

List of figures

Appendix II Images

Fig1 Paper cups cut into a fine strip and then wound around the base of the cup creating ‘faux’ balls of yarn

Fig 2 Paper cups cut into fine strips; the direction of cutting is altered to influence the curl and twist of the ‘paper’

Fig 3 *Twenty five*

Twenty five stripped paper cups, revealing the plastic liners and displayed with ‘peelings’

Fig 4 Partially knitted cup with ‘yarn’ from ‘paper’ cup that was made from plastic, using hand-made needles from whittled willow.

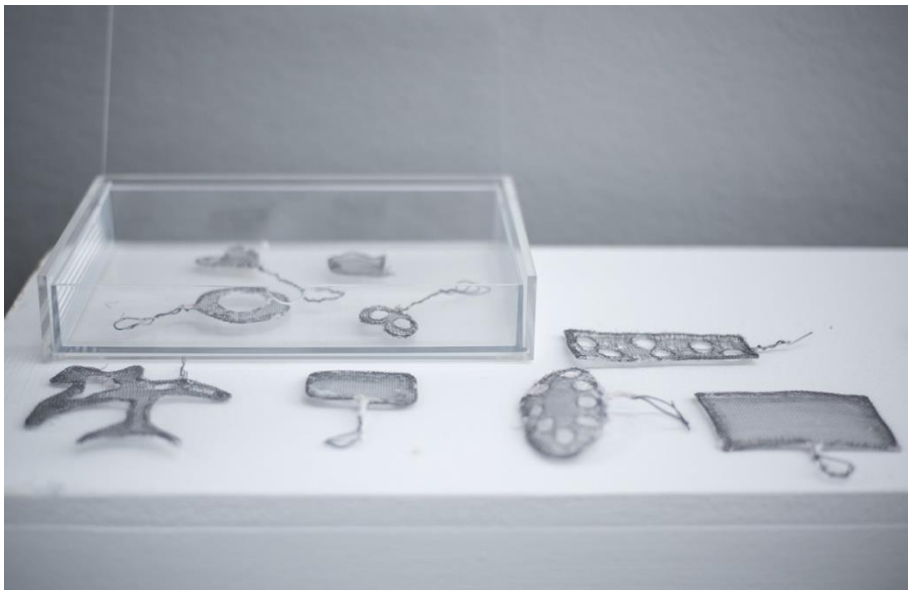

Fig 5 Paper-making tools made from wire and wire mesh

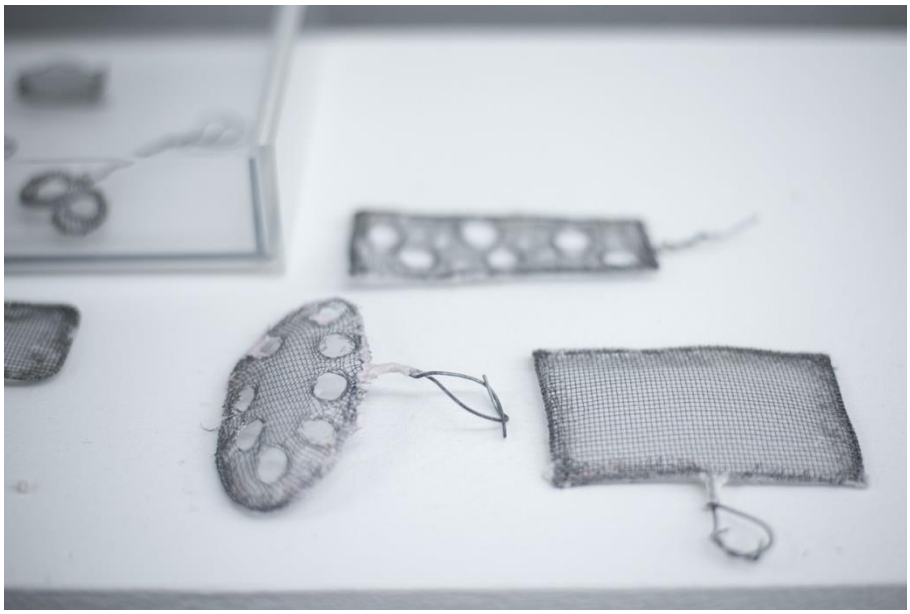

Fig 6 Detail of above

Fig 7 Two found paper cups. One has been stripped, deconstructed and remade; showing flat ribbon, twisted paper yarn and plastic liner

Fig 8 Two found paper cups, one reconstructed as above

Fig 9 *Book of (lost) knowledge*

Two identical found paper cups; one has been reconstructed into the form of a 'book'

Fig 10 *Book of (lost) knowledge*

Detail of figure 9 above

Fig 11 Two paper cups, one has been deconstructed and partially remade into the form of a book; loose pages and remainders of paper fibre are shown

Fig 12 Two paper cups, one has been reconstructed into a mini concertina 'book', plastic liner and all rescued fibre is shown

Fig 13 Paper lace doily (left) Abstract paper lace (right)

Each piece of lace is made from one single cup, on the left a formal arrangement, on the right a more informal, abstract form has been constructed

Fig 14 Paper lace doily as above in figure 13

Fig 15 Paper lace (breaking**)** The paper has been made thinly; creating a structure too fragile to support its own weight

Fig 16 One sheet of paper

A sheet of paper made from the paper stripped from the plastic liner shown

Fig 17 *99 Butterflies*

Two Starbucks coffee cups, one reconstructed into ninety nine butterflies

Figure 18 *99 Butterflies* detail of figure 17

Figure 19 Ghost cups

One cup has been deconstructed and remade into eight similar shaped ‘cups’, stitched into shape, with the circular remade bases shown and the plastic liner behind on the left, also stitched into a cup shape

Fig 20 Paper cylinder

Two identical paper cups, one has been made into a sheet of paper and has been joined to form a cylinder

Fig 21 Sweet pea

One cup has been remade into growing medium and container; it sustained a pea plant, seen behind, for several months

Fig 22 *Wasted Lives [Refuge(e)]*

Two paper coffee cups, one has been remade to form ‘shelters’

Fig 23 *A bird in the hand . . . . (Silent Spring)*

Each cup’s paper has been made into a bird; the sides and bases of the plastic liners have been hand stitched together

Fig 24 *A bird in the hand . . . . (Silent Spring)* detail

Fig 25 Paper carrier bags and paper bags made using momigami technique

Fig 26 As above

Fig 27 Detail of figure 26

Fig 28 Knitting Chair – with knitted crisp packet yarn ‘upholstery’

Fig 29 Crisp packet skeins

Each skein is made from one crisp packet

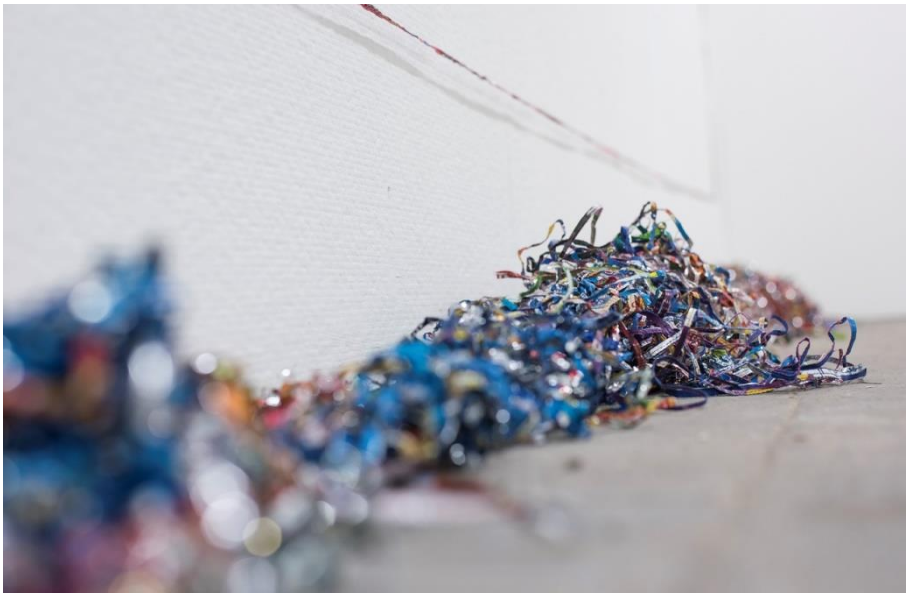

Fig 30 Crisp packet yarn detail

Fig 31 Image from slides of documentation of practice showing crisp packet yarn work, performance and installation

Fig 32 Image from slides of documentation of practice; paper stripped from cup soaking in water

Fig 33 *A bird in the hand . . .*

Detail of documentation of practice slide show showing, top left, process of making of part of *A bird in the hand . . .* Top right; detail of *Sweet pea*

Below; details of constructed 'fabric' of *A bird in the hand . . .*

Figure 34 Overview of Gallery 1

Figure 35 Overview of Gallery 1 (opposite end)

Figure 36 Overview of Gallery 2