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PhD by Practice:

CERAMICS AND THE HAPTIC - A CASE STUDY SITED IN WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of Bath Spa University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This practice-based research investigates ceramics and the haptic in relation to place, through a case study of Worcester Cathedral.

A two-year residency provided an analytical frame within which the practice was developed, illuminating aspects of the Cathedral. Using clay as an interface to explore the space around me, clay became an arena in which an activity could take place, resulting in a range of ceramic works.

The thesis was built on contemporary contextual ceramic discourse pertaining to the haptic, and the idea that this could be expanded through an inquiry into a specific space. On a personal level a sacred space provided a catalyst for themes to do with connection, contact and communication.

The research led to the formulation of a method of interpreting the space through a haptic engagement with ceramics, underpinned in part by Paul Rodaway's[1] model of the scope of haptic systems and Bachelard's[2] phenomenological approach to the experience of space.

The subjective aspect of the practice became a component of the research, and an on-going review was carried out via a reflection on comparative practices and audience participation. Serendipitously, the residency found an unexpected parallel via a mutual interpretation with a musician.

The research discovered new ways for ceramists to explore and describe the experience of being in a sacred space by utilising what might be called a haptic language. An unexpected result for the project was the development of a studio residency as a form of research, and the collapsing of the separation between making-as-doing and doing-as-thinking.

[1] Rodaway, Paul *Sensuous Geographies*: *Body sense and place.* London: Routledge, 1995.
[2] Bachelard, Gaston *The Poetics of Space*. Boston: Beacon Paperbacks, 1964.

Author's Declaration

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Signed …….. Date ……..

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Finally, the research owes a particular debt of gratitude to sculptor Matthew Galpin who generously offered his thoughts as well as suggestions for relevant texts.

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Introduction

Haptic: (h/p/t/k*adj*.) Of, or relating to, the sense of touch: tactile.

[Greek haptikos from haptesthai, *to grasp, touch*.]

Overview

This introduction outlines the initial premise of the research and the synergistic relationship between ceramics, the haptic and my practice. It summarises the rationale for undertaking the residency at Worcester Cathedral and describes a journey I made to prehistoric caves in France, which ultimately inspired this project and became a core experience that resonated throughout the research.

This core experience impelled me to conduct a case study having a distinct form of engagement, the kind I had in the caves, though at the time this was not fully understood. From the perspective of ceramics and the haptic, the residency in Worcester Cathedral allowed me to:

- become familiar with a space over time
- conduct a hands-on physical investigation with clay
- evaluate the subjective nature of my own role in the process
- develop a relationship to and reflection upon contemporary theory and context
- and recapture some of the cave experience by encountering and embracing the numinous

Furthermore, through integrated theory and practice-based research, centred around a two-year residency in Worcester Cathedral, the research revealed new possibilities for ceramics to:

> *make visible an aspect of the Cathedral that is difficult, even perhaps impossible to articulate verbally, and be applied to an exploration of a sacred space…* *(Residency notes, 2009)*

Experience of the haptic - of or relating to the sense of touch; tactile - is crucial to the way we understand ceramics. Soft and pliable, clay yields to touch, is readily mouldable, and takes an impression. Footprints in clay left by prehistoric man on cave floors can still be seen, and fingers imprinted on early Egyptian pottery endure. When dry or fired, clay transforms, becoming firm and rigid. As a material, people in the everyday world are accustomed to the feel of its texture, its surface appearance, its weight and volume and how it fits the hand, how it is held. Through a complex relationship between touch and our experience of being touched, ceramics evoke a sense of contact but also embody a history, or narrative, of that contact.

A fundamental premise of this research is that ceramics and the haptic are inextricably linked. This includes what I came to describe as the visual and the imaginative haptic. As this implies, the making and using of ceramics evokes memory and metaphor, and gives rise to a non-verbal experience – possibly even a language - which will be explored further below.

Following my MA in Ceramic Design (completed January 2008 at BSAD) I discovered that my work had entered new territory, wherein clay had revealed its capacity to explore, to remember, then to re-evoke those memories - qualities that derive from the material's capacity to take an impression.

In attempting to make overt what I felt was at the heart of handmade ceramics - the notion of contact with the maker where you are literally invited to put your hand in the artist's space - this concept initiated a period of exploration of my surroundings using clay as an interface.



Fig.1 Pippa Galpin, '*A conversation Mapped in clay', 2008*

Vignette: 'Two people sit at a table in conversation, chatting, involved. Leaning in, they gesticulate, discussing people, images and their lives, eager to make sure that these images match. Adding to the connections being formed in the space between them, they share a playing field. This conversation remains in mood or flavour, located by the marks left behind in clay.' (MA Exhibition text, 2008)

The technique that I developed exploited the capacity of clay to take an impression and to capture moments in time. During the MA programme, a variety of scenarios were set up to investigate this idea. For example, by covering a table with wet clay, the marks left after a conversation between two people record the event. While the detail of what was said is lost, the physical impacts of the gestures remain. Now fired, when sitting at the table, the story is conveyed by imaginatively projecting oneself into the maker's space and into the evidence of movements and repeated actions (Fig. 1).

The fourteen piece ceramic frieze in Fig. 2 evokes a domestic situation where a re-enactment of sweeping the floor left a trace of the action picked-up in clay.



Fig.2 Pippa Galpin, '*Sweeping the Floor',* ceramic frieze, 2008

> *'This piece is made by covering the floor with slip over a paper membrane and sweeping a small coin across it; the rhythmic movements of a broom pushing the coin and marking the surface gather up momentum till the coin is moved from one side of the frieze (the left) to the other. These marks remain in the slip. Working in this way, clay became an arena where an activity could take place, and the resulting artefacts became a mapping of an experience.'*
> *(Exhibition text, 2008)*

This method was further developed for the PhD as a way of exploring communication through touch, translated via the medium of clay. The corollary in the Cathedral to putting one's hand in the artist's space is to put one's self into the user's space.

The Cathedral, considered as an object in time, represents a series of what might be called boundary spaces, thresholds where a blurring of domains occurs, as between the subjective and the objective, which at times appear to collapse together, or overlap – for example, the maker and the made, the doer and the done to - raising questions within the research which I will attempt to answer over the course of this text.

The decision to case study Worcester Cathedral came mainly from the unexpectedly powerful haptic stimulus I experienced in the prehistoric caves in France which evoked deep feelings of otherness, bordering on the sacred, and

perhaps best described by Rudolf Otto's phrase, the sense of the numinous (see 1.3.1; for a fuller definition see 7.1.5).[3]

Some time prior to the residency, I visited prehistoric caves in Rouffignac and Gargas in the French Pyrenees. What struck me about Rouffignac was not only the power of the drawings of animals (which though interesting are unrelated to this research) but how they were situated within the cave space and, in turn, how this distinctive combination of power and spatial orientation so profoundly affected me. Eager for more, I subsequently visited Gargas, famous for containing a huge number of prehistoric handprints, which I felt I needed to see. In my notes at the time I made the following observation:

> *Although prehistoric man would have lived in the entrances of these caves, 'cave art' is most frequently situated in the most difficult to reach places. In Rouffignac, for example, the famous ceiling is deep in the cave:*
>
> > *'the original artist(s) would have had less than 1m of space to crawl around in, so would not have been able to see the large figures of animals, let alone the whole composition.'*[4]
>
> *In Gargas, in the French Pyrenees, the stencils of hands (which are quite common in Ice Age 'art') are probably c. 25,000 BC but may be quite a bit older - c. 27,000 BC has been suggested*[5]*.There are many hypotheses as to whether these are gestures, mark-making, or signals, but whatever the intention of the person in making the mark, what struck me was a connection to a human so long ago.*
> *There was something about the placing of the marks, or drawings, in the 'centre' of the earth, that paralleled the sense I had on visiting the crypt at Worcester Cathedral: the journey in and down, somewhat circuitous, the low ceiling, the enclosed atmosphere, the sense of being deep in the earth, deep in a great pile of rock, the weight of all that was above; the connection*

[3] Otto, Rudolf *The Idea of the Holy*. Translated by Harvey, John W. First published in 1923. New York: Oxford University Press, 2nd ed. 1958.
[4] Bahn, Paul. G. *Cave Art: A Guide to the Decorated Ice Age Caves of Europe.* Revised ed. France: Lincoln Ltd, 2012, p.72.
[5] *Ibid,* p.126.

between my work, a handprint and the place that may have had ritual and/or sacred connections… *(Residency notes, 2009)*

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

Fig.3 Prehistoric handprints, over 27,000 years old [6]
Gargas, Pyrenees, France

These encounters sent me on a journey culminating in this PhD research and the two year residency at Worcester Cathedral that became the subject and also the site of the research. *(Residency notes)*

Over the following two summers I visited other caves in France, including Pech-Merle in Caberets (see Chapter 3 and 4) Niaux in Tarascon (Chapter 7) and the Grotte de Font Gaume and Les Combarelles in Les Eyzies De Tayac, Dordogne (Chapter 8).

The journey to this research, begun as a subjective response in a prehistoric cave, encouraged me to enact or perhaps re-enact an experience with clay. From a ceramist's perspective I felt that working with clay, an explicitly haptic medium, would produce a physical trace of that experience, which, when fired and wall-mounted would – like the cave paintings – require the viewer to confront them face-on.

Based on the idea that working in a historic and sacred place would add a new dimension to my work, I applied for a residency in Worcester Cathedral, which has been a place of worship for thirteen centuries, since 680 AD when the first

[6] Springinsfeld *Image of* 'Prehistoric Cave Handprints'. Nestploria et les grottes prehistoric de Gargas. [Online] Available from: www.neste-nistos.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/paroiemains2.jpg [Accessed 29 June 2015].

Cathedral dedicated to St Peter was founded. It is a space that is highly charged, intellectually, emotionally, physically and spiritually, and intriguing from a haptic perspective. The application for the residency was jointly made with Maureen Gamble who currently focuses on creating objects with a narrative dimension. Coming originally from a print tradition, Gamble's practice is different to mine, but with a shared interest in responding to a sacred space we felt the affiliation would be mutually beneficial.

Methodology

1. The residency (Dec. 2008 – Jan. 2011)

The notion and significance of working in a sacred space was fundamental to this research. It was, however, vital to the development of the research that the residency was allowed freedom of content and it was therefore agreed that there would be no requirement for the work to have a religious component. From the perspective of the Dean and Chapter, the aim was to have an artist looking at the space from a different perspective, a secular viewpoint, and it was felt that this would benefit both the artist and the Cathedral, offering a new approach to the space.

At an early stage it was decided that the ceramic practice would focus on work made in a part of the crypt, which was provided as a studio. The residency allowed me unlimited access to the building and involvement in the day-to-day workings of Cathedral life. My commitment was to work on a regular weekly basis in the Cathedral and present the work formally to the public twice during the residency period.

During the first year of the research (Dec. 2008-2009) the time was spent getting to know the Cathedral from a haptic perspective and seeing what this might bring to the project (see Chapter 1). The work in the crypt became a response to the research into the Cathedral as a whole, viewing it historically, aesthetically, architecturally and in terms of the sacred. The residency was extended to a second year, allowing a natural break and time to draw conclusions, and to

revisit the research in an annual cycle. The methodology was designed to undertake research through an immersive experience with clay: to produce, to 'bring into being', thereby 'unveiling' (see 1.3.1) new insights and relationships over an extended period of time.[7]

An account of the residency is given throughout this text and I will be using extracts from my '*residency notes'* as evidence. As the basic premise for the research is based on what is perceived through a haptic appreciation, this source material offers an account written as close to the experience as possible and reflects the subjective nature of the research.

2. Ceramic technique

The methodology employed a process of thinking-through-making, and my approach was to position myself inside the Cathedral and to work with clay as a layer between that space and myself. The pieces made in clay are casts of a physical exploration of the space.

The ceramic technique involved spreading layers of slip (runny clay) over a surface. This meant leaving the clay to dry between each layer, sometimes for weeks, until the action could be repeated and a thickness built up. The repetition and the slowness of the process paralleled, in some ways, the devotional process as well as the rhythm of Cathedral life.

> Technique: all layers are applied by hand:
>
> 1. Large piece of tissue paper placed on selected area. Creases in the paper can be seen on the surface of the prints.
> 2. A layer of thin porcelain is rubbed over the surface. Most of the slip is removed, just leaving enough to show the detail of the floor, and the finger marks. This hardens, but not to bone dry.
> 3. A very liquid wash of black oxide stain is poured over the porcelain slip, and gently moved over the whole surface allowing it to fill the hollows. If

[7] Agamben, Giorgio *The Man Without Content*. Translated by Georgia Albert. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, pp.68-69.

watery enough this appears blue-green.

4. When nearly dry a thin coat of porcelain paper clay slip, with added nylon fibres, is smeared over the layers below. This sometimes has an amount of earthenware terracotta slip added to give colour and depth. This is then left to dry.

5. Further layers of porcelain paper clay mix are added to give strength to the print. These layers are visible at the edges of the panels (and if the print is rubbed back).

6. When leather hard, the print is turned over. If it has curled, the piece might be propped to keep its shape.

7. Sometimes the pieces are left for periods of time. Sometimes, stains and oxides are added and the pieces are burnished and occasionally rubbed back. They are then cut. Later in the research these layered up sheets were hand moulded over three-dimensional forms (see Chapter 8).

8. The larger slabs are propped and placed on ceramic fibre so they can be moved without cracking, and bisque fired to 1220-1280 to impart translucency to the top layers.

9. The pieces are attached to wood for wall mounting and any splits are mended (sometimes with the addition of rubble from the crypt floor ground into the cracks). The pieces are sometimes wax polished.

The extract below is an observation of the making process written at the time:

> *Working in Worcester Cathedral crypt, I explore my environment through the sense of touch.*
>
> *By layering up thin layers of porcelain I made a series of prints that record both the floor, and the action made over it. 'Felt into being', these are the results of my having read the floor, as though in Braille, gradually encountering or discovering the unexpectedly mundane and microscopic haptic realities, picked up via marks made over generations of use.*
>
> *Done partially with my eyes closed, this reminds me of throwing. When centring and forming a pot on the wheel, I also work with my eyes part closed. Communication through physical gesture sits comfortably with a ceramic process.*

The process is akin to brass rubbing and involves rubbing the floor with slip over a paper membrane to reveal the image below.

To reference my scale and relation to the space, I measure out the parameters of my reach. At this point, I can choose to accentuate the image, or the trace of a hand-sweep across the surface, or to conduct an exploration of the texture of the surface.

The second layer, a dark wash, pools into the crevices and stains the high points. The rate of drying, affected by the conditions in the crypt, causes the clay to buckle and curl. As each layer is applied, the image of the floor is lost to view (see 3.2.1).

Once dry enough to turn over, I saw the print for the first time and I work on re-presenting it in light of my time spent in the space.

There is a moment here, when the piece is picked up and I respond intuitively to the irrational and to chance, to make visible what I perceived through touch (see 3.3.3). *(Residency notes, 2009)*

The technique described above was adapted from a reverse printing technique developed by Steve Royston Brown.

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

Fig. 4 Steve Royston Brown, 'Hubris', 2003 [8]

Brown undertook a collaborative doctoral award, PhD, with the Royal College of Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, entitled 'The Physicality of Printmaking' 2006-09.

[8] Brown, Steve Royston 'Hubris', 2003. *Steve Royston Brown: the official website, 2016*. [Online] Available from: steveroystonbrown.com. [Accessed 9 April 2016]

My work is a development of this technique, registering both the surface from which it is taken and hand-marks from the making. The synergy of these two forms of contact underpins the research-through-making in this project (see chapter 4).

My initial intention was to pick up evidence of contact with the fabric of the building. As the residency developed, the extent and range of the haptic nuances evolved.



Fig. 5 Pippa Galpin, unfired ceramics
Height 130cm, width 54cm, depth 8cm. Aug. 2009

This first piece made in Worcester Cathedral picks up the high points and the indentations in the floor where a brass image would have been set into the stone. This is the piece in its unfired state and prior to being cut or mounted.
(Residency notes)

3. Strategies used to test and assess the methods employed

During the residency a range of research strategies were used. Access to the entirety of the Cathedral encouraged reflections on the building as a whole, both physically and in relation to the work being undertaken by other researchers: in

particular, the Cathedral archaeologist, the librarians and the second artist in residence. This enabled me to analyse my practice in relation to companion practices.

Towards the latter part of the residency I developed an analysis-antithesis-synthesis learning paradigm, so that points that converged or diverged - in practices that share common ground but were outside the ceramic tradition - could be used to test ideas and open up new areas of thought between ceramics and the haptic and, as it turned out, much to my surprise, music. To develop this last notion I entered into a mutual interpretation with a classical musician, Henrietta Wayne from the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, who joined me in the Cathedral to investigate a connection between the haptic and sound. The sound element of the project (see Chapter 7) was originally intended as a way to view themes that had developed by considering them from an alternative or companion practice. Interestingly, the recordings became part of the work.

The location of the studio in a public setting opened up the possibility for discussion about the research with the public, and presented a working studio as an exhibit. This public element to the residency successfully minimised the boundary between the making, the research and the product (see Chapter 6). At the end of the first year, structured audience participation projects were initiated to review and develop the research. In line with the idea of ceramics and the haptic as a means to research Worcester Cathedral, these involved participation with the material.

The residency culminated in public exhibitions at the end of each year which included the second artist in residence, a musician, and two invited artists, enabling a multi-disciplinary performance to take place, framing the work in a new context and relating it to sound. By exhibiting work as interventions in the Cathedral, symbolic and physical relationships emerged.

As the investigation evolved, the combination of proactive and reactive research endeavours led to results that were not anticipated.

Contextual and theoretical research paralleled the practice; this was essential to an integrated theory and practice approach. Attending exhibitions and conferences contributed significantly to the research. Pivotal to this were visits to residency programmes, in particular Gloucester Cathedral, symposiums and visits to, for example, the British Ceramic Biennials, Stoke on Trent, and conferences such as 'Ceramics in the Expanded Field' at the University of Westminster, 2014. Because contextual and theoretical information formed the backbone to the research, ideas generated from this are interwoven throughout the text. However, an overview of the research in relation to contemporary discourse that developed over the period and the contextual framework, and key texts that underpinned the research, are outlined in Chapter 1.

Expectations of the research

The original thesis contained a number of explicit and implicit expectations, which are outlined below:

1. Clay as a recording or transcription device

The prediction here was that the clay, when acted upon, and as an extension of the human body and of human consciousness, could become a valuable research tool. The idea draws on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological investigations of how art (and in his example, specifically painting) 'displays the act of viewing the world'.

> '… between the seeing and the seen, between touching and the touched, between one eye and the other, between hand and hand, a blending of some sort takes place - when the spark is lit between sensing and sensible…'[9]

Merleau-Ponty's description allows for interconnectedness between perceiving and perceived. Leila Wilson describes this as:

[9] Merleau-Ponty, Maurice 'Eye and Mind'. Translated by Carleton Dallery. *In*: James, Edie. *ed*. *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics.* Evanston Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1964, p.163.

> ‘a simultaneity in which one both perceives the world through observation and interaction, and experiences the world revealing itself through its very essence’.[10]

It is Merleau-Ponty’s ‘insistence on the body as the centre of perception and the medium of consciousness’ that I am proposing as integral to the language of contemporary ceramics, which we assimilate through the haptic system.[11]
For this practice led PhD research, the expectations of the methodology were that by recording an interaction between the body and a space, clay would simultaneously be affected by the space and imprint my understanding or grasping of it.

In other words, and still using Merleau-Ponty’s metaphor, in working the clay I am both ‘touching and touched’.[12]

2. Ceramics as a method of communication, language and connection
I entered this research with the notion that ceramics could operate as a haptic font, a term I am using to describe a physical print in clay that at some level is understood and interpreted as a human mark. This mark or trace is not just historically and narratively interesting, but can on the one hand elicit a visceral kind of haptic connection to the human, and, on the other, evoke that hard-to-define experience of the numinous – both experiences similar to what I felt as I stood before the prehistoric cave art.

As the research progressed, so too did my expectations. I found that by reflecting on the changes taking place in the work, the outcomes began to chart the changes in my experience of the space, recording that experience in the clay. Both the reflection and the recording generated what I began to regard, respectively, as a metaphorically and physically etched language of both the everyday and of what was hidden in or behind the everyday.

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[10] Wilson, Leila ‘Merleau-Ponty’. *Theories of Media*, University of Chicago, 2003. [Online] Available from:
http://csmt.uchicago.edu/annotations/merleaupontyeye.htm [Accessed 30 June 2015].
[11] *Ibid*.
[12] Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, p.163.

Edmund De Waal touches on this in his introduction to *Design Sourcebook: Ceramics:*

> 'Ceramics are unlike the other arts. We feel we know ceramics, we handle them everyday, we welcome them into our domestic lives and place them at the centre of our rituals. They are often an unremarked constant in the background of our days. But they are a Trojan Horse, planting a reminder of a profound transformative process in the midst of the continuity. This process, the changing of common clay into something strange and other, is at the heart of our myths of making. Adam, after all, was made from clay…'[13]

3. New perspectives in relation to ceramics, the haptic and the Cathedral

At the start of the research I thought that the physical nature of the research would mean that the results, the information I gathered, would be purely factual, yet as the residency developed I found that the research was affected by the issue of the crypt as a sacred space.

Prior to the research I was intrigued by my role in the making process and in particular the consequences of positioning myself within the process of the making, thereby necessarily adopting the dual positions of participant and observer, of toucher and touched.

Using clay to record a space was an unusual step and I was curious to see if I could develop methods to overcome the limitations of imprinted clay. At this point I had not fully comprehended the changes to my practice that would be entailed by what I later called my shift in perspective (3.1.1). I anticipated that, if successful, this research might contribute to and engage with current debate on the relation of ceramics to the haptic in general, but also specifically in regard to a sacred space, as will be explored in the next chapter.

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[13] De Waal, Edmund *Design Sourcebook: Ceramics.* London: New Holland Publishers (UK) Ltd, 1999, p.6.

Chapter 1

Contemporary ceramic discourse, comparative practices and key texts

Chapter 1 outlines concerns raised in current ceramic discourse for the position of the crafts in contemporary Western culture. It considers the potential for a critical language developing in the field that can then function outside it. From the specific standpoint of ceramics and the haptic, this chapter reviews the primary contextual sources that provided a background for the research, indicates how the key texts supplied its theoretical underpinning, and reflects on the tradition of residencies in sacred spaces.

1.1.1 Contemporary ceramic discourse

The positioning of the research in relation to critical debate in the field of ceramics and the crafts today aligns this research with questions pertaining to the relationship between the handmade in a digital age, ceramics as a purveyor of meaning, and the notion of ceramics in the expanded field.

In an article entitled 'Out of Touch' (1997) Pamela Johnson raises concern for the crafts in a digital age.[1] She describes a time when virtual representations are so easily accessed there is potential loss of a physicality of expression evoked through direct contact (5.1.2). Julia Kristeva echoes the sentiment:

> 'We are all more or less reduced to virtual images - through the images propagated by television, video games and so on. The reality of our world and even our own reality is slipping out of our grasp. I think the crisis we are living through is deeper than anything since the beginning of our era…'[2]

Since the new millennium, as if in response to this crisis, we have witnessed a rapid evolution in haptic research: 'fundamental understanding of touch perception, technologies for interface via haptics, and commercial applications, are all burgeoning'.[3] Such research sets art alongside areas such as marketing, linguistics, robotics and neuroscience, which explore the nature of haptic perception.

My response, and the entry point into the debate for me, has been to develop a practical hands-on exploration of the haptic that, rather than challenging the new virtual domain, was designed to augment the existing vein of ceramic discourse by applying a haptic language to a new context.

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[1] Johnson, Pamela 'Out of Touch'. *In*: Harrod, *ed*. *Obscure Objects of Desire: Reviewing the Crafts in the Twentieth Century*. London: Crafts Council Papers, University of East Anglia, 1997, p.293.
[2] Penwarden, Charles (undated) *cited in* Kristeva, Julia '*Of Word and Flesh' In:* Stair*, ed: The Body Politic. The Role of the Body in Contemporary Craft*. University of Northumbria at Newcastle, 1999. London: Crafts Council, 2000, p.160.
[3] 'World Haptics Conference' (papers, WHC2015-IEEE), 2015. [Online] Available from: www.ieee-ras.org/component/rseventspro/event/402-whc-2015-ieee-world-haptics-conference. [Accessed 26 July 2015].

In 'Ceramics and art criticism' (2006), Janet Koplos noted that since the turn of the 20th century, the lack of a critical language for clay has been acknowledged but not resolved (5.1.2).[4] In *New Directions in Ceramics, from Spectacle to Trace,* (2015) Jo Dahn suggests that perhaps the reason why critical discourse on ceramics remains an issue is because:

> 'with its pervasive flavour of 'how-to', ceramics writing has typically been interested in process and material: how something was made has taken precedence over how it makes meaning. Indeed, many texts continue to fetishize method and bypass the significance of ceramics in terms of ideas'.[5]

However, the work Dahn describes as exemplifying the 'new directions' taken by contemporary ceramists is now underpinned by critical theory and so more aligned with the world of fine art, in which ideas trump the 'how' and in which critical craft methods are undervalued.

Dahn suggests that:

> 'One way to characterize ceramics that fit readily under the heading of craft is to describe them as 'material-based', since what they are made of and how they have been made is central to their construction of meaning. If that is the case, surely critical frameworks and aesthetic analyses alike ought to incorporate understanding of materials and their histories and investigate their handling.' [6]

If this is recognised - a process that has begun - then a critical language of clay and descriptions about making can go hand-in-hand, rather than being mutually exclusive. There is a shift here between the concern raised by Koplos for a critical language for clay (i.e. as a way to talk about it) and the language that

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[4] Koplos, Janet 'Ceramics and art criticism'. *In*: Clark *ed*. *Ceramic Millennium*. Canada: The Press of N.S.C.A.D University, 2006, p.280.
[5] Dahn, Jo *New Directions in Ceramics, from Spectacle to Trace.* London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015, p5.
[6] *Ibid,* p.15.

Dahn describes as coming from the processes and the material itself (i.e. as a way to make meaning).

At the conference entitled *The Body Politic* (1999) Julian Stair heralded a 'new era of body politics where critical writing had begun to unlock the eloquent voice of objects'.[7] This eloquent voice is indicated in several of the papers given at the conference. As Rob Barnard notes, this way of thinking provides us with a rehabilitated concept of ceramic 'function' as a purveyor of meaning. Bernard gives an example of the haptic language of ceramics when he graphically described a pot 'sensed through flesh'.[8] In a paper aptly entitled 'Making Sense', Jane Hamlyn suggests that the purpose of making now transcends product and becomes recognised as a way to 'make sense of our lives'.[9]

Within this context, by bringing the haptic qualities of clay into debate, my research seeks to add to a critical language of clay. By this I mean that the clay itself constitutes a language in its own right, that can be used to unpack or to interrogate objects and spaces and the relation of the body to them.

In the introduction to *The Body Politic*, Stair says that 'many makers and critics believe that craft is a practical philosophy'.[10] Accepting this practicality as a given, my research adds to the debate by bypassing an attempt to unlock what Stair calls the elusiveness of 'tacit knowledge' i.e. the understanding you get through touch, by co-opting this very elusiveness itself to find a new form of knowing. This approach acknowledges Peter Dormer's concern that 'craft and theory are oil and water', that critical language would 'distort the integrity' of craft. This thesis proposes a way to avoid this conundrum by offering a physical model as a way to 'conceptualise the "haptic"'.[11]

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[7] Stair, Julian *ed*. *The Body Politic. The Role of the Body in Contemporary Craft*. University of Northumbria at Newcastle, 1999. London: Crafts Council, 2000, p.13.
[8] Barnard, Rob 'A New Use for Function'*. In:* Stair*, ed: The Body Politic,* p.74.
[9] Hamlyn, Jane 'Making Sense'*. In:* Stair*, ed: The Body Politic,* p.76.
[10] Stair, Julian, p.13.
[11] Dormer, Peter 'The Language and Practical Philosophy of Craft', *The Culture of Craft*, Manchester University Press, 1997, p.219. *In*: Stair Julian *ed*. *The Body Politic*, p.8.

Despite the fact that we are experiencing the closure of a great many ceramic BA courses, there seems to be an increase in post-graduate ceramic research.[12] Additionally, the use of clay across the arts in work born out of a concern for material presence, process and performance appears to be increasing.

Perhaps the awareness of a critical language of clay and a concern for tacit understanding is being addressed, and the function of ceramics can be used to throw light in areas beyond the traditional borders of ceramics, in what is now referred to as 'the expanded field'.[13]

Dahn suggests that as the contemporary crafts are quite evidently now valued both for their 'ability to address ideas [and as a means of] encounter with material(s)' the 'so called art/craft debate… has been naturalised in the collective cultural consciousness'[14]. Dahn describes this new territory as 'elastic', but 'subsumed' into neither art nor craft.[15] In this way ceramics benefits from the breadth of theoretical discourse provided by art theory, in relation to the language of materials and performance (4.2.6), and from critical discourse on the crafts.

In 'Super-Objects: Craft as an Aesthetic Position', Louise Mazanti suggests that the way forward for the crafts is to provide a metaphor for the role craft objects play[16]. In doing this she proposes that:

> 'we move from the "making" to the "being" of craft, from the "process" to the "doing", to the role it performs in contemporary culture'.[17]

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[12] Dahn, Jo, p.10.
[13] Conference & Exhibition *Ceramics and the Expanded Field,* University of Westminster, 2014. The conference examined how ceramic practice has broadened over the last decade.
[14] Dahn, Jo, p.17.
[15] Dahn, Jo 'Elastic/expanding, Contemporary Conceptual Ceramics'. *In*: Buszek *ed*. *Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art*. London & New York: Duke University Press, 2011, pp.153–71.
[16] Mazanti, Louise 'Super-objects: Craft as an aesthetic position'. *In*: Buszek *ed*. *Extra/ordinary Craft and contemporary art*.
[17] *Ibid,* p.61.

I take a similar position to Mazanti, but propose that work that is centred on making and process prefigures the material becoming an object, and is therefore similarly imbued with the cultural associations of the craft object (Chapter 5).

My research is based on the premise that there is no need for ceramics to lose touch with its metaphorical, historical and mythological associations, or for it to be self-referential. It can now build on the field's maturing critical voice as a practical philosophy.

Further to the above, Michael Jones McKean says:

> 'I'm curious about what clay has to tell us when it moves outside of the logic of its own conventions, its own set of rules. In my own work, it's more useful to imagine clay and the objects within a project simply as points in a constellation. Together they form a shape, an abstraction larger than themselves, yet separately they still maintain their own discreet measures of value and meaning.'[18]

Whereas McKean talks about constellation, I prefer the idea of triangulation. By this I mean the dynamic between myself, the clay and, in this case, the Cathedral, and the working out of how each aspect of this triangle responds to the other. For instance, how the clay is affected by the Cathedral, how I am affected by both the Cathedral and by the use of clay in that (sacred) space. In other words, within this practical philosophy, I am seeking a model with which to investigate this site.

The diversity of contemporary ceramic practice extends the notion of ceramics beyond the vessel. Coupled with Clare Twomey's description of contemporary clay-making as being 'investigative, non-conventional' this opens up the field to one which is both inclusive and transferable.[19] In this vein, contemporary site-

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[18] McKean, Michael J. 'Towards Incongruence' *cited in* Dahn, Jo *New Directions in Ceramics*, p.111.
[19] Twomey, Clare 'Contemporary Clay'. *In*: Hanaor *ed*. *Breaking the Mould; New Approaches to Ceramics.* London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007, p.37.

specific ceramics have produced a cross-fertilisation of ideas between the body, material and a sense of space, which frame the context for new dialogues.

These ideas make way for ceramics to move out of the conventional studio space and embrace the notion of 'post-studio ceramics'.[20] In my case - and other residency programmes, for instance the V&A - these might be called site-specific studios, that engender new forms of audience interaction which can involve the audience in the making and the exploration of ideas.

[20] Twomey, Clare *Research University Westminster London*, 2015. [Online] Available from: www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/our-people/.../twomey-clare [Accessed 9 December 2015].

1.2.1 Contextual background

In the beginning of this research a question prevailed: Is contemporary ceramic discourse at a crossroads? Such junctures quicken the pulse, evoking both excitement and nervousness, yet allow for new concepts and qualities innate to the material to be developed (see Chapter 5).

The recognition that touch was an under-aestheticised vehicle of expression opened up the territory of ceramic discourse and the haptic. That clay reveals something quintessentially significant about the nature of the haptic and that this bears a connection to the 'bodily' formed a background to this research.[21] The development that this research proposes is to use this way of thinking (both through practice and theory) in relation to the exploration of a sacred space.

With respect to their approach to the material, part of the background of this research is based on, and developed from, the work of Bonnie Kemske, Richard Deacon, David Cushway and Claire Curneen.

Kemske's PhD, completed at the Royal College of Art London in 2008, was entitled 'Evoking Intimacy: Touch and the Thoughtful Body in Sculptural Ceramics'. Her research explores how we engage with ceramics via the haptic from the making to our possession of it.

[21] The term 'bodily' is used to conflate the notion of the human body with the idea of embodiment and will be developed further in the text.

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

Fig. 6 Bonnie Kemske, '*Into the Embrace'*, A Ceramic Possibility, 2006 [22]

Made first with clay round a balloon, the forms are hugged into shape. These are then cast and can be held in a similar position to the way they were first made. They invite touch, evoking a connection between you and the now absent maker. (Residency notes, 2009)

In an article in *Interpreting Ceramics* entitled 'Breaking the Taboo', Kemske explains the motivation for her work:

> 'Every person experiences touch individually, bringing with them their own touch histories and physical and emotional states of being, yet touch is a universal experience. The way we touch, our physical responses and the emotions our touch engenders, help define us as both human and as individuals… Touch is the most direct and least analysed of our senses.'[23]

[22] Kemske, Bonnie 'Into the Embrace', 2006. *The Royal College of Art: the official website, 2015.* [Online] Available from: http://t1.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcT2o8sVjNkxbL2oUuUE6PGnPhgh8e-sSK-cl_Nut4Q46rAbnlKb7TN8tw [Accessed 28 June 2015].

[23] Kemske, Bonnie 'Breaking the Taboo'. *Interpreting Ceramics,* Issue 8, 2006. [Online] Available from: www.interpretingceramics.com/issue008/articles/22.htm [Accessed 29 June 2015].

Since completing her PhD, Kemske has become involved with a multi-disciplinary international artist's collective 'Art in touch'. In their exhibition, *Just Under the Surface,* the group explored 'the aesthetic, emotional, bodily and metaphysical possibilities of an art that is keenly aware of the senses, especially touch'.[24]

Quoting the Czech surrealist artist, they recently reiterated *Jan Švankmajer*'s observation:

> 'The only pure, virginal sense that remains is touch. It's also the only one that hasn't been catered for by the arts. It hasn't been aestheticised. I see it as an unexplored plain; I believe there is a buried treasure there.'[25]

Kemske highlights the importance of touch by inviting people to physically interact with her work, which engages what may be called a universal haptic sensibility.

From a sculptural perspective this line of enquiry has connections with the sculptor Deacon's approach to clay. In the series of work that he refers to as '*Ceramic Studies'*, Deacon uses the property of clay to yield to the artist's touch, playing with the material's malleability to create forms. This work is fundamentally about the acts of making and creativity inspired by his physical relationship with the material.

> 'I am absolutely not interested in the technique. That's not why I made the work. I am interested in a very primeval thing. I think it's amazing that materials can be made to respond and the fact that they are responding, touches quite significantly the ways we relate to the world.'[26]

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[24] Švankmajer, Jan *cited in* 'Art in Touch' (exhibition catalogue) *Just Under the Surface*. The Crypt Gallery, St Pancras Church, Duke St, London, NW1 2BA 2011. [Online] Available from: www.remotegoat.com/uk/event/130172/just-under-the-surface/ [Accessed 29 June 2015].

[25] Kemske, Bonnie 'Art in Touch' (exhibition catalogue) *Just Under the Surface*. [Online] Available from: www.remotegoat.com/uk/event/130172/just-under-the-surface/ [Accessed 29 June 2015].

[26] Deacon, Richard *'Personal's'*, from artist's description on placard, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, Jan. 2007.

Deacon's approach allows an un-intellectualised, uncontrived relationship with the clay that is primal, playful, joyous, and which goes both ways i.e. to touch is to be touched and to be touched is to touch. The haptic is reciprocal.

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

Fig. 7 Richard Deacon, *'Ceramic Studies'*, 2005 [27]

These pieces give a sense not just of the feeling of clay but the pressure needed to squeeze it into shape, and the choice of how to fit your fingers into the holes to hold them. *(Residency notes)*

The responsiveness of the material to picking up the marks of human interaction, which characterises Deacon's work, is echoed in Cushway's use of clay as a way of recording.

In an article entitled 'Presence and Absence', Cushway describes the installation piece, *'Room'* (Fig. 8), which records his traces: the marks are those of footfall or spillage during his studio activity, the accidental and the everyday.[28]

[27] Deacon, Richard and Niels Dietrich *image of* Deacon's 'Ceramic Studies'. *In:* Deacon, Richard *About the Size of It.* Dusseldorf: Richter Verlag, 2005, cover page.

What we see in *'Room'* is a:

> 'record of six months of time, within [his] studio and the practice there within, and an archaeological record of [his] practice. [What fascinates him about this way of working is] the fact that we use tiny fragments of ceramic to define and trace cultures back through time.'[29]

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

Fig. 8 David Cushway, '*Room',* 1996 [30]

The difference between the approach described here by Cushway and the one taken for this research is, in part, that of intent. Cushway's work records a trace of events as they happen. My approach uses a deliberate action to investigate a space. However, influenced by Cushway's work, I sought a way to get closer to an actual haptic response to the site.

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[28] Cushway, David 'Presence and Absence'. *Interpreting Ceramics,* Issue 8, 2006. [Online] Available from: www.interpretingceramics.com/issue008/articles/05.htm [Accessed 29 June 2015].
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] Cushway, David *'Room'*, 1996. *Image in:* Cushway, David 'Presence and Absence', *Interpreting Ceramics*, Issue 8, 2006 [Online] Available from: http://t2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQeFkmaUZWSZ_4lVeph1-TrXLHQHEpSg_nbeVpKo-Sv8Yp_GokTXZpMzw [Accessed 28 June 2015].

Like in Cushway's piece *'Room'* the archaeology of the making is seen in the my work. The marks from the Cathedral floors and from the making were recorded in wet clay, creating a record similar to that of clay tablets. Indeed, the approach drew on a connection to cuneiform, one of the earliest systems of writing, developed by the Sumerians between 3500-3000 BC, for which wedge shaped symbols were pressed into wet clay.[31]

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

Fig. 9 A Mesopotamian clay writing tablet, with proverb, 1900-1700 BC.
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

This is the teacher's version; the pupil's copy is on the other side. What intrigues me about these objects is that they were made in the palm of the hand, and that the angle of the stick used to make the marks defines shapes. (Residency notes, 2009)

Though my work is very different to hers, working in a sacred space made me aware of the work of Claire Curneen. While much of Curneen's imagery tends to have that high drama that religious iconography in particular has, both her work and mine draw on an awareness evoked by the sacred context itself.

[31] Cuneiform - Ancient History Encyclopedia [Online] Available from: www.ancient.eu/cuneiform/ [Accessed 9 December 2015].

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

Fig. 10 Claire Curneen, '*Irene Tending St. Sebastian'* [32]
Porcelain, detail, 2006

By re-visiting a religious narrative, Curneen shines light on a contemporary view of what it means to be human. Empathy with these figures (see Fig. 10) works on different levels. Alongside the proportion and attitude of the forms and the narrative, they use a range of ceramic textures and surfaces from soft-shiny to glass-edged sharp that communicate via a haptic sensibility, adding pathos to the work. At close range the forms are built of porcelain pieces that still bear the finger-marks of the maker and so become a reminder of the mortality of the flesh that the story conveys.

[32] Davies, Mansel *image of* Claire Curneen's 'Irene Tending St. Sebastian', 2007. [Online] Available from: www.clairecurneen.com/archive_2001_2007/images//cc_200712.jpg. [Accessed 28 June 2015].

Shown in the Mission Gallery in an exhibition entitled, 'To This I Put My Name', 2014, the poignancy of Curneen's work resonated with the space:

> 'It is the evocative venue… that provided a physical focus for Curneen's project; orchestrated relationships exist between space, sculpture and viewer.'[33]

This way of thinking about the material inspired an underlying metaphor - clay as language - that I was able to apply more and more to the sacred context of the Cathedral.

1.2.2 Art in sacred spaces

Residency programmes in Cathedrals and Churches around the country have proliferated at various times[34]. Consecrated buildings hosting well-established programmes such as Durham Cathedral, 1983-2011, Gloucester Cathedral, 1997-2010, and numerous deconsecrated churches, have been turned into art galleries and now host Contemporary Art Installations.

Writing about his time as Artist in Residence at Gloucester Cathedral, 2009-2010, James Wright says:

> 'the opportunity to develop your practice, informed by diverse audiences and without the constraints, commitments and pressures of the gallery, allows for truly worthwhile and informative artistic development and research. Time to reflect on your practice and fully immerse yourself within it, is a rare commodity in the often fast paced contemporary art world.'[35]

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[33] Roche, Catherine and Claire Curneen *To This I Put My Name* [Transcription]. Ceramics Seminar. The Mission Gallery, Swansea, February 2014.
[34] Many residencies current at the start of this residency have now been mothballed due to funding cuts.
[35] Wright, James *University of Gloucestershire*, Gloucester Cathedral Residency, 2009-10. [Online] Available from: recruitment.glos.ac.uk/partnerships/.../Pages/JamesWright.aspx [Accessed 29 June 2015].

From a research perspective, residency programmes allow opportunities for responding to a particular historic building or space. The results of this can then be informed by the space itself as opposed to pre-formed notions being imposed upon it.

In 2008, around the start of this residency, Tracey Emin's work, entitled '*For You'*, was shown in Liverpool Cathedral. Situated above the west doors, the work, in pink neon, read:

> 'I felt you and I knew you loved me'.[36]

The intentional double meaning flagged up the extent to which context impacts the sense conveyed. Interestingly, despite the ambiguous and potentially challenging nature of the work, Emin's piece won the ACE Award for Art in a Religious Context (2009), which indicated a climate in which the Church was open to the questioning attitude of the Arts.

From this contextual background and through the invention of strategies in which ceramics and the haptic can be employed as a methodology, this research has been able to take an inclusive and transferable investigative approach to the study of a sacred space.

[36] Emin, Tracey 'For you' [artwork] at Liverpool Cathedral, 2008. *Cited in: Art and Christianity Enquiry*. [Online] Available from: http://acetrust.org/art-and-christianity-enquiry-ace [Accessed 30 June 2015].

1.3.1 Theoretical underpinnings

This thesis draws on a broad range of contemporary art and craft texts to underpin and develop an understanding of ceramics and the haptic (see bibliography). In addition to these, by way of informing a relationship between the ceramist, the work and the site, a number of texts not only influenced the research, but also became cornerstones. These texts were drawn from human geography, philosophy, religious philosophy, sociology, psychology, and architecture. A brief overview of how these texts underpin the research is given below.

Throughout the research, the idea that making could be a means to reveal new insight was informed and inspired by Giorgio Agamben's *The Man Without Content.*[37] Agamben defines the origin of the word 'pro-duction' as coming from ancient Greek, where it originally contained:

> 'a clear distinction between *poiesis* (*poiein*, to pro-duce in the sense of bringing into being) and *praxis* (*prattein,* 'to do' in the sense of acting)… central to the idea of praxis was the idea of the will that finds its immediate expression in the act, while, by contrast, central to *poiesis* was the experience of pro-duction into presence, the fact that something passed from nonbeing to being, from concealment into the full light of the work. The essential character of *poiesis* was not its aspect as a practical and voluntary process but its being a mode of truth understood as unveiling, ά-λήθεια.'[38]

The implementation of these ideas changed the focus of my usual making from that of product to process, validating the idea that I could embark on research without knowing where it would take me. This not only involved an investment in the process, but also what Agamben identified as a risk inherent to the nature of art making. Agamben's overall theoretical stance supported the subjective

[37] Agamben, Giorgio, pp.68-69.
[38] *Ibid,* p.68.

nature of my research and in fact positioned this risk factor as part of the process itself.

This idea of making as a mode of thought and the use of clay as a research tool is informed in part by Richard Sennett's *The Craftsman,* where Sennett explores the impact on contemporary society of what he sees as a shift due to our acceptance of technology.[39] As a sociologist, Sennett appraises the effect of our relationship with craftsmanship on society. We are, he believes, becoming so reliant on tools to do laborious tasks that we are apt to skip points of the task where thinking might have taken place and changes might have been implemented. The underlying tenet of this shift is that thinking takes place between the hand, the eye and the brain, and that 'Making is thinking'.[40]

Sennett takes this idea further in quoting Immanuel Kant:

> 'The hand is the window on to the mind'.[41]

Reflection on the specificity of making by hand is informed by various texts including *The Thinking Hand* by Juhani Pallasmaa, in which the Finnish architect/architectural thinker discusses the bridge between mental and manual skills.[42] Pallasmaa acknowledges that:

> 'All art forms - such as sculpture, painting, music, cinema and architecture - are specific modes of thinking… they represent ways of sensory and embodied thought characteristic to the particular artistic medium. These modes of thinking are images of hand and the body, and they exemplify essential existential knowledge.'[43]

Of particular resonance to this research is the emphasis Pallasmaa places on what he describes as the dual perspective which creative work calls for:

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[39] Sennett, Richard *The Craftsman.* London: Penguin Books, 2009.
[40] *Ibid,* p.1.
[41] *Ibid,* p.147.
[42] Pallasmaa, Juhani *The Thinking Hand: Existential and Embodied Wisdom in Architecture.* United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, 2009.
[43] *Ibid,* p.019.

> 'one needs to focus simultaneously on the world and on oneself, the external space and one's inner mental space. All artworks articulate the boundary between the self and the world, both in the experience of the artist and in that of the viewer/listener/occupant'.[44]

It is this boundary between the world as it is and how we perceive it that - via the haptic - the ceramics made during this research explores.

Throughout this research, Rodaway's *Sensuous Geographies* is used to define the scope of the haptic. In the chapter on touch, Rodaway develops the extent and nature of what he calls the 'Haptic Geography'. This he says:

> 'includes information about size, weight and form of objects and their movement relative to the body. [It] gives us the ability to discriminate key characteristics of the environment and our place as a separate entity in that environment or world, but it is not just a physical relationship, it is also an emotional bond between ourselves and our world… Touch is direct and intimate and perhaps the most truthful sense'.[45]

In analysing what is assimilated through the haptic system, Rodaway draws attention to the ways in which experience is constructed. This served to expand the research field, throwing into question the possibility of the haptic as having defined boundaries, either with the other senses, or with our metaphorical and linguistic associations. Throughout the account of the residency, this text is introduced as a way to consider and define different forms of haptic response (see Chapter 2).

Coming to terms with an understanding of the Cathedral space was in large part informed and supported by ideas from Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space.* This text calls attention to the significance of the physicality of a space to the imagination and specifically to our relationship to it. Throughout *The Poetics*

[44] *Ibid,* pp.019/020.
[45] Rodaway, Paul, p.44.

Bachelard opens up the notion of an 'oneiric', a term he uses to describe 'the house', a house of dreams and memories, that impacts on how we perceive all other houses. [46] Bachelard investigates psychological attitudes to spaces with connections made between a space and a nest, or a shell, where a person might 'with-draw into his corner'.[47]

Fundamental to this research was awareness of the relationship between a phenomenological understanding of a sacred space and the sense of touch. This understanding was pivotal in helping to establish the impact of the space on the research, and is used to analyse the experience later in this text (see Chapter 3).

As the research developed and new ideas were encountered, additional theory and contexts became influential. These ideas included haptic stimuli, which constitute a form of information that might be better viewed as a paradoxical knowledge; this is expanded by Lorna Collins's research (4.1.4).[48] The nature of the haptic is further developed in relation to ideas from psychologist Jonathan W. Schooler and his theory of 'verbal overshadowing', which suggests experiential knowledge is compromised by being verbalised (5.1.1).[49] [50]

Clarifying the way the practice operated as research, the notion of a 'transitional object' or 'space' as described by D. W. Winnicott in *Playing and Reality* proved useful.[51] Winnicott developed the theory of a transitional object in relation to his studies into early childhood. He describes how, when infants are born, they do

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[46] Bachelard, Gaston, p.15.
[47] *Ibid,* p.91.
[48] Collins, Lorna 'Towards an Understanding of the Paradox of Touch'. Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge School of Art, 2014. [Online] Available from: https://www.academia.edu/8024712/Towards_an_Understanding_of_the_Paradox_of_Touch. [Accessed 27 August 2015].
[49] Schooler, Johnathan *et al*. 'Thoughts Beyond Words: When Language Overshadows Insight', 1993. *In*: *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 122, no. 2, 1993, pp.166-183. [Online] Available from: *Schooler Johnathan – Open Mind*. http://open-mind.net/om-contributors/Jonathan_W_Schooler [Accessed 30 June 2015].
[50] Schooler, Johnathan and Tonya Y Engstler-Schooler 'Verbal overshadowing of visual memories: Some things are better left unsaid'. *In*: *Cognitive Psychology*, 22, 1990, pp.36-71. [Online] Available from: http://wixtedlab.ucsd.edu/publications/Psych%20272/Schooler_Engstler-Schooler_1990.pdf [Accessed 2 July 2015].
[51] Winnicott, Donald Woods *Playing and Reality.* First published 1971. London & New York: Routledge Classic, 2005.

not comprehend the idea of themselves as separate beings from their mother. In normal, healthy development, infants typically begin this separation by progressing from the breast to using their thumbs to playing with dolls or teddy bears. These transitional objects bolster the child's journey from total identification with the mother to a gradual understanding of themselves as individuals. The thumb and the doll/teddy are, in this sense, an 'intermediate area of experience'.[52]

This intermediate area is a boundary space where the objective and the subjective meet and which, over time, allows the two to be distinguished or disentangled in the mind of the growing child. Clearly, given the nature of transitional objects (thumbs, dolls, teddies) the haptic is a crucial component, facilitating the movement from a state in which the child is merged with the mother and has no boundaries or distinctions about self and reality, to one in which the child has a sense of separateness, of self, of being an "I".

By placing the clay between the Cathedral and myself, clay became a metaphor and a tool for Winnicott's 'intermediate area of experience' where I could explore the boundary between my own subjective experience - what I felt physically, psychologically, and what I sensed of the 'numinous' (see Rudolf Otto below) – and the objective space of the crypt in which I worked.

It is worth noting that, as Winnicott observes, it is the child, or in this case my subjective experience, and not the object that is transitional (see Chapter 7):

> 'The object represents the infant's transition from a state of being merged with the mother to a state of being in relation to the mother as something outside and separate.'[53]

What a sacred space is and how this contributed to the project is also considered in relation to Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy.*[54] This is reflected on via

[52] *Ibid,* p.2.
[53] *Ibid,* pp.19-20.
[54] Otto, Rudolf.

contemporary religious context as described by Bishop Peter Harris in *The Image of Christ in Modern Art.*[55]

In *The Idea of the Holy*, Otto presents the notion of the numinous as a way of understanding the ineffable and the irrational in religious experience – literally, what cannot be verbalised or explained conceptually - in a way that is liberating when working in the context of a sacred space (see Chapter 7). Equally, this idea could be applied to art-making in general, and I will present a case for the crossover of these two areas as this thesis develops.

One of the challenges and concerns throughout the project was how to work in this religious context without questioning the meaning of the sacred, yet still presenting a personal exploration of a Cathedral crypt: a profound primal connection between a human being and the numinous, as with my original experience in the prehistoric caves. Intriguingly, these two sites share many features (some of which were noted earlier), including how the distance of time makes it impossible to know the original intent, and how the sense of connection to primal human makers nevertheless remains powerfully present.

1.3.2 Conclusion

Using the characteristics of material and making, contemporary ceramics now throws light on areas where it would not traditionally have been shed.

The distinctive aspect of my research is that it focuses on the haptic nature of the material, defining and developing this aspect as a critical language of clay. The research proposes a way of thinking-through-clay and applying it to a new context. This position is underpinned by the contemporary ceramic contexts and supported by the texts outlined above.

The core of my thesis centres round the case study of Worcester Cathedral and looks at relationships between the component parts: between the ceramics, the

[55] Harries, Richard *The Image of Christ in Modern Art*. United Kingdom: Ashgate, 2013.

haptic, the Cathedral and me. The following chapter introduces the site itself by exploring and reflecting on Worcester Cathedral from a haptic perspective.

Chapter 2

Worcester Cathedral from a haptic perspective

Chapter 2 reflects on the experience of making by hand with clay and considers this as a mode of thinking that can give rise to a ceramic sensibility via the haptic. For me, this awareness derives from my past as a potter and from a desire to implement intrinsic qualities of handmade ceramics. The conceptual shift that this research makes is to apply this haptic perspective as a way to explore Worcester Cathedral using ceramics and the haptic as an evolving research methodology.

Section 1 further unpacks the range of ideas drawn on throughout the research, extending Paul Rodaway's exploration of a 'haptic geography', his term to define the full scope and range of haptic stimuli from 'simple contact' to 'imagined' (2.1.1) and 'dynamic' touch (2.1.5).[1]

Section 2 develops an understanding of the Cathedral from this expanded notion of the haptic, revealing influences within the Cathedral that range from a kinaesthetic relationship to the space, to a gestural form of communication. This suggested a connection to a symbolic pilgrimage, which came to be an underlying metaphor for the residency.

The findings from this approach are considered in section 3, in relation to examples from architecture, sculpture and texts on the haptic in the built environment. Based on tours of the Cathedral given to interested parties and members of the public during the residency, this chapter asserts that the haptic perspective utilised for these tours proved to be a distinctive and valuable way of thinking about the space.

[1] Rodaway, Paul, p.41.

2.1.1 Mapping the territory of the research

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

Fig. 11 Worcester Cathedral [2]

Initial research into Worcester Cathedral from a haptic perspective involved reading the space in the way that one might read ceramic objects. This brought to attention areas affected by: touch, contact, wear, trace, breaks, repetition, the everyday, as well as ritual, ceremony, continuity and the devotional.

This focus on reading the space raised questions about how being in, and moving around within, this large three-dimensional area impacted my subjective engagement with the space. More acutely, I was concerned with how my approach as a ceramist would affect my perception of the Cathedral as a whole.

The physical methods used in making the ceramics in the Cathedral and feeling the space from the inside out (see Chapter 3) caused a significant shift in my perspective and in my priorities. This shift was partly informed by Janet Koplos'

[2] Fletcher, Adrian *image of* 'Worcester Cathedral', 2015. [Online] Available from: http://www.paradoxplace.com/Photo%20Pages/UK/Britain_Centre/Worcester_Cathedral/Worcester_Images/800/From-SW-Oct05 D6664sAsAR800.jpg [Accessed 27 July 2015].

'The Body in Art and Crafts: The Abstracted Body', in which Koplos explains how ceramists work through: [3]

> 'the feeling of clay curving under their hands mixing with a memory of similar curves in the body. It is not [an attempt to recreate] an abstracted *figure*… but an abstracted *sensation.'*

Koplos likens this to what the sculptor and critic Robert Taplin describes as:

> 'a "sense of living in a body as opposed to looking at one"'.[4]

My case study of Worcester Cathedral began by researching the Cathedral from this haptic stance, underpinned by Rodaway's definition of the territory this encompassed.

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

Fig. 12 Paul Rodaway's illustration of the 'Dimensions of touch' [5]

In *Sensuous Geographies,* Rodaway has discussed the dimensions of touch, which include touch that is within reach as well as imagined touch between person and environment.[6] He identifies three levels of reciprocity in what he calls environmental experience:

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[3] Koplos, Janet 'The Body in Art and Crafts: The Abstracted Body'. *In*: *The Body Politic.* London: Crafts Council, 2000.
[4] *Ibid,* p.44.
[5] Rodaway, Paul, Figure 4.3, p.53.
[6] Rodaway, Paul.

> 1. '*Simple contact* - the juxtaposition of two surfaces against one another… Such contact is generally passive touching or rubbing against or simple co-presence… Simple contact is geographically a simple confirmation that the world still exists and that we are with "our feet on the ground".'
>
> 2. '*Exploratory activity* - an agent actively investigates the environment… The active agent is conscious of a stream of haptic sensations giving a rich supply of information about the environment explored… Exploration essentially distinguishes between different features, or objects or surfaces in the environment and "maps" spatial relationships'.
>
> *3. 'Communication* **-** the contact is actively intended, by one party or both… Communication establishes an active relationship to the world, transforming abstract spaces into meaningful places.'[7]

In relation to Worcester Cathedral, there is a correlation between the different types of haptic experience – between the active and the passive, and the direct and the indirect, the latter being described by Rodaway as 'imagined touch'. This imagined touch is 'rooted in memory and expectation' and accounts for the evocation of the tactile through touch metaphors, such as 'keeping in touch'.[8]

> 'Focusing on the dimensions of touch in individual experience also reminds us that this geography is always, ultimately, in reference to the human body' [and contributes to an understanding] 'of degrees of insideness and outsideness in the relationship to places'.[9]

These degrees refer to the particular blend of the physical (what is outside) and the psychological (what is inside) and are further explored in Chapter 3.

[7] *Ibid,* p.54.
[8] *Ibid,* p.48.
[9] *Ibid,* p.54.

2.2.1 Worcester Cathedral from a haptic perspective

In the context of the haptic, the Cathedral is 'bustling with sign systems' text and texture sitting side by side, as in the writing on worn stones. [10] [11] Consequently, prior to embarking on the research-through-clay, I gathered both first and second-hand observations of the building, and photographed evidence of human interaction vis-à-vis the building as well as the traces of human action within it.



Fig. 13 Central nave being cleaned, Dec. 2008
Worcester Cathedral

Grasped in this way, the Cathedral evidences both marks worn by incidental contact - the marble feet of several of the statues have been stroked shiny by passers-by; the steps into Prince Arthur's Chantry have been worn concave by the number of people climbing them over the years - and those made from intentional and violent actions, such as the defacement of the statues in the Chantry, which is the result of religious upheaval during the Reformation.

[10] Dahn, Jo *Conversation with Pippa Galpin*, 2009.
[11] An idea that alludes to the theoretical underpinnings of semiotics and the writings of Roland Barthes.



Fig. 14 The steps into Prince Arthur's Chantry
Worcester Cathedral



Fig. 15 Foot of statue
Worcester Cathedral



Fig. 16 Detail of carvings in Prince Arthur's Chantry
Worcester Cathedral

2.2.2 Worcester Cathedral; the ground under our feet

Throughout the early stages of the residency I concentrated on working on the Cathedral floors. Conceptually, the idea of the ground under our feet and what we experience from the ground up, appealed to me both metaphorically and physically. However, the total haptic experience is not explained solely by the metaphorical and the physical. It also requires what I am calling the visual haptic and the haptic imagination. The latter, which can be equated to Rodaway's imagined touch, can be seen as a kind of projection onto surfaces and objects, which augments the haptic experience by recalling a lifetime of experiences of touching and being touched (Kemske's 'touch histories', see 1.2.1), possibly from as far back as the womb. The visual haptic can be considered as a cross-sensory contribution similar to the way our sense of smell seems to be inextricably

linked with our sense of taste. Indeed, where sight is part of the experience, I feel it is probably impossible to disentangle this component from our experience of the haptic. Inevitably, these two forms of perceiving will often be blended.



Fig. 17 Detail of the nave floor, small scratching in the marble,
an example of the visual haptic viewed up close
Worcester Cathedral

Rodaway makes a similar observation. A sighted person experiencing a haptic encounter is generally unable to separate the experience from that of the effect of sight. A combination of what he calls 'imagined touch' and 'reach touch' (see Fig. 12) informs the experience. The haptic, augmented by sight, is crucial to our assessment of a location and our sense of place.



Fig. 18 Section of the nave
Worcester Cathedral

> *The idea of the ground under our feet reminds me of the abstract minimalist sculptor Carl Andre, and most famously his Bricks, entitled Equivalent 8 (1966).*[12] *My heightened awareness of the haptic had brought with it a connection to wateriness and a connection between the horizontality in Andre's floor pieces and his experiences of canoeing (to where things are very flat, as in water) that he brought back into his steel works.* *(Post-residency notes)*

For example (as seen in Fig. 18) the polished floors in the Cathedral are both smooth underfoot and reflect the light. This confuses the perception of depth of the surface, giving an illusion of the ground as a pool covered with water, and although the ground is solid marble, our position on it is unbalanced. This intensity is heightened because without touching the floors you cannot always tell if the contrasts in the surfaces you are walking on are the effect of their being wet or dry, light or dark, rough or smooth. This draws attention to a surface, in this case the floor, and to an act - that of walking - that might go unnoticed in other spaces.

[12] Furlong, William *Interview with Carl Andre.* May 1995. [Online] Available from: https://farticulate.wordpress.com/.../31-january-2011-post-carl-andre-selected -works- [Accessed 2nd March, 2016].

According to Rodaway, the incongruity of illusion and density, the blurring of sensory boundaries, compels awareness of what ordinarily remains outside consciousness:

> 'Haptic geographies are often overlooked, since the tactile experience is such a continuous and taken-for-granted part of the everyday encounter with the environment.'[13]



Fig. 19 Detail of the nave, still wet having just been cleaned
Worcester Cathedral

As in the nave, perception becomes unreliable in the crypt, where the lighting is low and reflects off the stones.

[13] Rodaway, Paul, p.42.



Fig. 20 The crypt floor, Worcester Cathedral

The photograph shows the dark cobbled together surface of the floor and the way it picks up the light

Much of the flooring in the crypt is lined with gravestones, carved with calligraphic and symbolic pictorial imagery and although the specific narrative content communicated by these stones is outside the domain of this residency, their presence is registered kinaesthetically through the soles of the feet and by the haptic eye and the haptic mind.

Shiny and slippery, these stones alter your gait, just as your gait alters them. This kind of reciprocity became characteristic of the residency as a whole.



Fig. 21 Detail of a gravestone in the central area of the crypt



Fig. 22 Detail of a gravestone in the central area of the crypt

Hesitation caused by the unevenness of the floors - from breaks, chips, water-damage, or by the mismatching of the pieces when the floors were reassembled - draws attention to events through history via the soles of the feet.



Fig. 23 Detail of the crypt flooring underfoot

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to divorce a haptic appreciation from what is percieved simultaneously via the other senses, or from pre-existing knowledge of the nature of the building, and as the residency progressed I became less concerned with limiting the scope of the research in this way.

Metaphorically, the notion of thinking from the ground up, and working with what we pick-up from the ground under our feet, impacted the findings of the research.



Fig. 24 Chipped and water damaged flooring in the crypt

2.2.3 Touch vs. passive contact with Worcester Cathedral

As mentioned above, touch can be both passive and active. When showing me around the Cathedral, a member of the congregation explained that when sitting in the nave, visitors would become aware of a cold draught of air coming in under the door from the cloisters where the door had been worn from repeated openings. This is just one small example of the wear and tear of time and an indication of how perception may change when time is spent in the site.

Rodaway expands on the idea of passive touch by describing it from the perspective of the blind:

> 'The blind frequently refer to a strong sense of the pressure of objects not directly touched but nevertheless felt as a kind of pressure in the air around the body. This is sometimes called "facial vision"… This is an intense experience of the presence of large objects before they are reached or one can touch them.'[14]

The contrasts in the scale of the spaces in the building, and the proximity with the outside is such that, as one moves through the Cathedral, one can feel a tangible difference in the quality of the air, especially between the closeness in the crypt, the stillness in the vast main body of the building, and the lighter flow-through of air in the cloisters. From the subtle to the overt, a physical connection is formed between the Cathedral and the visitor.

When introducing visitors to the Cathedral and discussing it in relation to ceramics and the haptic, I became aware that people found the topic accessible and easy to identify with. By introducing the idea of a haptic appreciation, a new way of encouraging people to consider their engagement and relationship with the space opened up very quickly.

What seems to make it accessible to members of the public and what continues to engage my passion with clay is its quintessentially prosaic, mundane nature, its malleability and its visceral echoes of childhood play, which allow people to generate an often abstract understanding of the haptic. Indeed, this perspective humanises the space, populating it with everyday gesture, movement and meaning.

This observation was later used in the audience participation project at the end of year one (Chapter 6).

[14] Ibid, p.49.

2.2.4 Gesture and the physicality of the space

Recalling Robert Taplin's observation - a 'sense of living in a body as opposed to looking at one' - brought with it the insight that the haptic effects of the Cathedral were derived more from this sense of being 'in' it, as opposed to looking 'at' it.[15] This perspective revealed a pre-existing kinaesthetic relationship with the space.

The dimension of touch, described by Rodaway as the dynamic, references this:

> '*Dynamic* - vibrations and locomotion, that is perception of movements "within" objects and of objects through space, relative to our own body/or other objects in reach.'[16]

In the day-to-day life of the Cathedral, a metaphorical language is played out in the architecture of the building and the functions for which it was designed. The architecture of the building is designed to evoke more than a physical response; it was engineered to act psychologically on the visitor. You look up to the heavens, drawn to do so principally by the Gothic lines of the arches. The Cathedral itself directs you to focal points in space and positions you within it. You look up at the altar and are looked down on from the pulpit.

There is also a relationship between the architecture and the symbolic actions of the congregation: during the services you are asked to stand, to sit, to kneel. Repetition of such actions is itself a form of ritual. In some Cathedrals, such as Chartres, a labyrinth is marked out on the floor; when traversed, this suggests a meditative dance or symbolic pilgrimage (Fig. 25). For me, the Cathedral itself was such a labyrinth, and my moving in and through and round its interior charted my own pilgrimage, literally and metaphorically.

[15] Koplos, Janet 'The Body in Art and Crafts', p.44.
[16] Rodaway, Paul, p.48.

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

Fig. 25 Labyrinth, early 13th Century, Chartres Cathedral [17]

The medieval reference to the labyrinth is picked up on by Mark Wallinger in his Finger Labyrinths, designed for the London Tubes: 'The tactile quality of the artwork's surface invites the viewer to trace the route with a finger, and to understand the labyrinth as a single meandering path into the centre and back out again – a route reminiscent of the Tube traveller's journey.'[18] In a secular world, the labyrinth is an analogy for the millions of journeys that are made across the Tube network every day. *(Post-residency notes)*

Between services, Worcester Cathedral hosts a steady stream of visitors. Guides and volunteers show them around, pointing out areas of interest and historical facts. I observed that when describing the magnitude of the Cathedral, people responded with their hands, using a gestural language to articulate an expression. Used in this way, the hand gestures appear to define a space between the thought and the word, a physical place where the abstract of an idea is described or even resides: this gestural language is used to compensate for the overwhelming nature

[17] Saward, Jeff 'Labyrinth'. [Online] Available from: www.labyrinthos.net/photo_library14.html [Accessed 30 June 2015].
[18] Wallinger, Mark 'Labyrinth' [Online] Available from: art.tfl.gov.uk/labyrinth/about/ [Accessed 2nd March, 2016].

of the space, a psychological translation of the monumental physicality. This echoes the connection between forming thoughts in the air and the forming of ceramics, and is elaborated on in Chapter 3.

2.2.5 Visual record of the Cathedral from different perspectives

During the early stages of the residency I researched the Cathedral in its entirety from a haptic perspective. Although the major concentration of the practical work eventually took place in the crypt, the impact of the relationship between the crypt and the rest of the building had an important influence on the ceramics.

As the physical and emotive stimuli of the space affect each person individually, I tried, where possible, to take people round the site during the residency. In extreme cases the building can provoke sensations of vertigo, claustrophobia, or even agoraphobia. The sense of weight and volume of the interior space shifts as you move through it, heightening one moment and diminishing the next.

Knowledge, or memory, of the sensations gathered from a tour of the Cathedral above, affects how you feel in the crypt below, where the ceilings are low and the spaces quite densely packed. Navigating between the fifty or so pillars that support the floor above, past alcoves and recesses, past relics, past the accumulated wear and tear, always moving down towards the crypt, the emotional and metaphorical experience helps re-create the history that once filled these spaces. The photographs on the following pages attempt to show this journey.



Fig. 26 Looking up at Worcester Cathedral from the entrance



Fig. 27 Looking down to the entrance from the roof



Fig. 28 Looking up from inside at the ceiling of the Chapter House

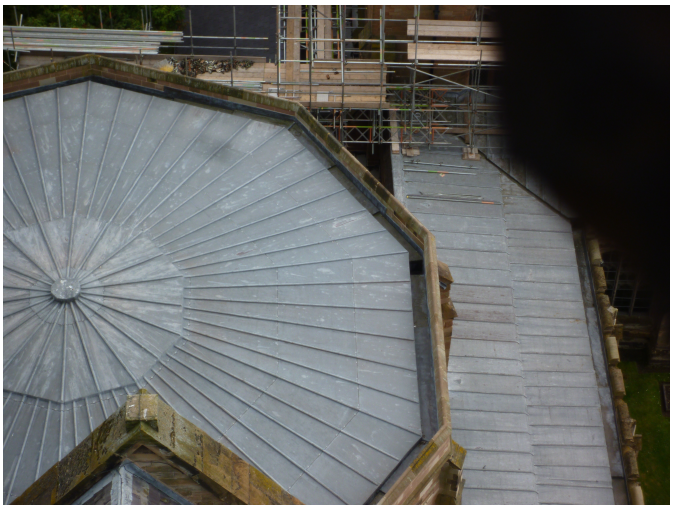

Fig. 29 Looking down from the topmost roof to the Chapter House roof

As the ceramics were made in contact with the floor of the Cathedral crypt, it was not until later, when reflecting on the residency, that I realised the effect that the

whole building would have on the outcomes of the study; an exploration of these ideas forms the basis of Chapter 3.

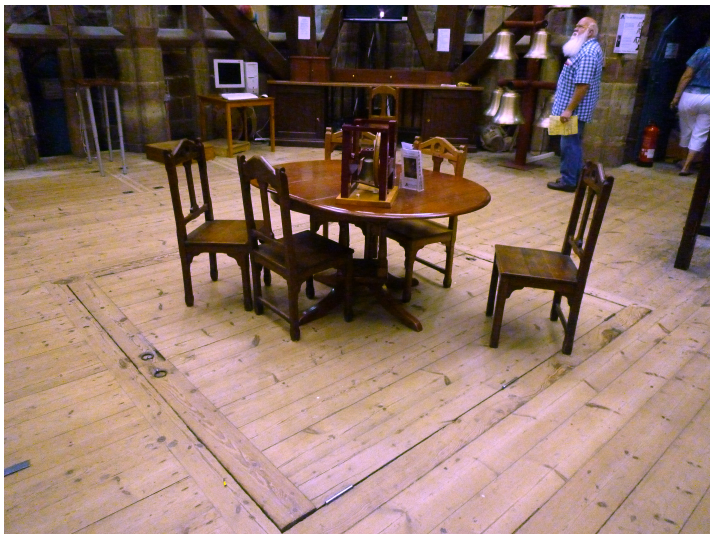

Fig. 30 This trapdoor in the floor opens in the ceiling of the Cathedral (Fig. 31)



Fig. 31 Looking up at the height of the ceiling in front of the altar steps
The trapdoor (Fig. 30) is above us here, while the crypt is directly below (Fig. 32)

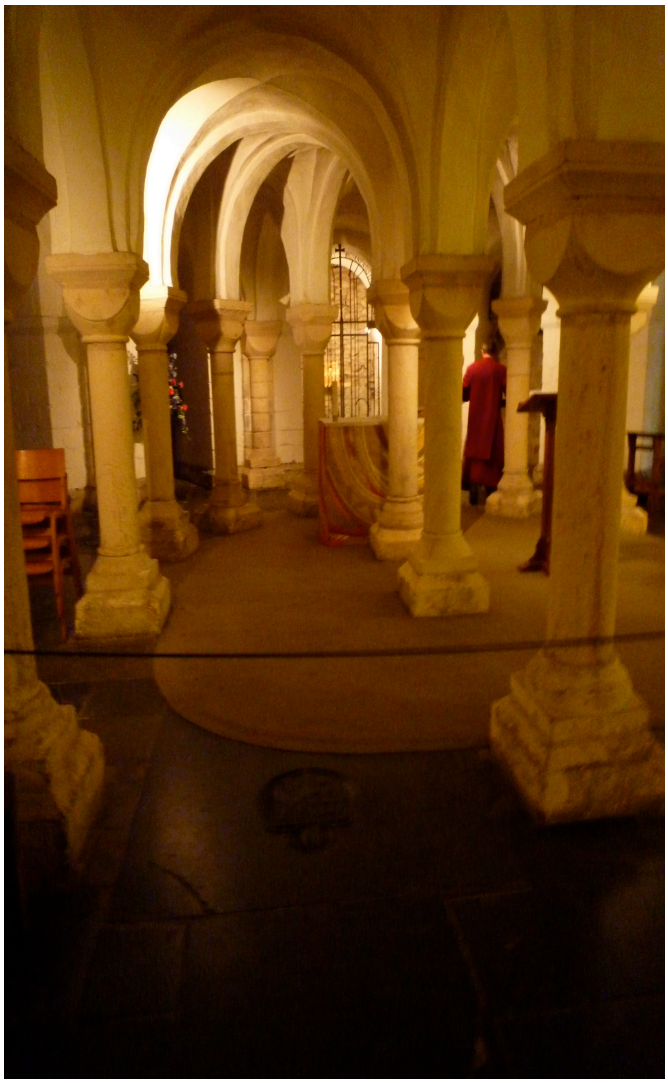

Fig. 32 The Chapel in the crypt

The contained nature of the crypt alters not only how the space feels, but I noticed that it also altered how people acted physically within it; in the crypt, for instance, people were less likely to use large hand gestures.

2.3.1 Worcester Cathedral from a haptic perspective; reviewed in relation to the experience of visiting the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao

A correlation between a ceramic, sculptural and architectural language that my haptic method implies, can be seen at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, where a compelling relationship between Frank Gehry's architectural design and a large sculptural installation by Richard Serra is displayed. These spaces help demonstrate how the static forms of Worcester Cathedral have a dynamic relationship to one another when encountered as part of a movement through space.

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

Fig. 33 Atrium, Guggenheim Museum
Bilbao, Spain [19]

[19] Atrium Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain *Guggenheim Museum: the official website*, 2016. [Online] Available from: http://europaenfotos.com/vizcaya/pho_bilbo_15.html [Accessed June 2016].

In *The Thinking Hand* Pallasmaa observes that 'thinking through the senses' transcends a utilitarian understanding of architectural space, bringing a focus to what he describes as 'lived metaphors through space, structure, matter, gravity and light'.[20] Pallasmaa's notion of a 'lived metaphor' suggests ways in which a space can communicate an embodied feeling of that space.

From the expanded notion of the haptic outlined earlier, research showed that I was no longer dealing purely with the area under my touch: the entirety of the Cathedral and its impact became a central theme throughout the remainder of the research.

Gehry's architectural design with its curved volumes and large glass curtain walls has itself a Cathedral-like quality, with indoor spaces that play with different volumes.

Housed within the gallery, the museum features an entire room full of large sculptural works by Richard Serra (Fig. 34):

> 'These are unexpectedly transformed as the visitor walks through and around them, creating an unforgettable, dizzying feeling of space in motion.'[21]

[20] Pallasmaa, Juhani, p.019
[21] Serra, Richard *Guggenheim Museum: the official website*, 2016. [Online] Available from: www.guggenheim-bilbao.es/en/works/the-matter-of-time/ [Accessed 30 June 2015].

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

Fig. 34 Richard Serra, '*The Matter of Time*', 1994 – 2005
Eight sculptures in weathered steel, dimensions variable
Guggenheim Bilbao Museum

Seen from this perspective, the position of the studio in relation to the Cathedral space and the ritual of moving round and through the building and making the work, inevitably resonated throughout the residency; like a three-dimensional labyrinth, the residency became a sort of symbolic pilgrimage.

2.3.2 The Cathedral in relation to the human form; reviewed in relation to *Madonna in the Church* and the *Madonna della Mela*

By way of contrast to my experience of being in the Cathedral, which like the Guggenheim and the Serra, I found to be dizzying, I was intrigued and confused

by the apparent contradiction of the depiction of van Eyck's Madonna (see Fig. 35) as a monumental Mary, unrealistically large compared to her surroundings. This image stayed with me, and it was not until later (after the residency) that I registered the tenderness of her holding the baby in her arms, touching his feet. The enlargement of the *Madonna and Child* vis-à-vis the Cathedral, seen in the background of the image below, reflects the primacy of the spiritual.

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

Fig. 35 Jan van Eyck, '*Madonna in the Church'*, c. 1438–40 [22]
Gemäldegalerie, National Museum, Berlin

A second Madonna, the *Madonna della Mela,* by Luca della Robbia (1455-60) served to highlight the importance of the haptic. In this piece, the ceramic fingers

[22] Anders, Jörg P *image of* Jan van Eyck's 'Madonna in the Church'. *Gemäldegalerie National Museum: the official website*, Berlin.
[Online] Available from: www.google.com/...madonna-in-the-church/OgFrmfnJd3r8zw?hl...
[Accessed 30 June 2015].

of the Madonna indent and mark the flesh of the Christ child. The give in the clay, presumably pressed when soft, has produced a fleshy bulge against the hand that holds its weight. Though this is an effect achievable by master craftsman in marble, this sense of the bodily, of the appearance of the soft, is also an intrinsic quality of clay, retained in the fired product.

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

Fig. 36 Luca della Robbia, '*Madonna della Mela'* 1455-60 (70-52cm) [23]
Florence, Museo Nazonale del Bargello

The della Robia shows the way clay responds to touch. Clay as flesh is very different to stone, which much of the Cathedral is made of. *(Residency notes)*

In researching the Cathedral and the impact of the space on the residency, I had found that from the perspective of a ceramic sensibility, the haptic had a humanising effect on the space. This understanding signalled an unusual

[23] Falsini, M and M Sarri *image of* Luca della Robbia's 'Madonna della Mela'. *In*: Stephan, Karin *ed*. *Della Robbia*. Italy: Scarla, 2009, p.30.

direction the residency was to take, in which the capacity of clay to take on the suggestion of flesh featured in the later works (see Chapter 6).

2.3.3 Results and implications; reviewed in relation to Richard Sennett and Marc Augé

In this chapter I have returned to my initial experience of the Cathedral and my primary question: What would happen if I were to bring a ceramic sensibility to a consideration of Worcester Cathedral?

From a global perspective, the ramifications of a change in how we engage with touch and notions of the haptic are explored in, for example, Richard Sennett in *Flesh and Stone; the Body and the City in Western Civilization*[24] and in Marc Augé's, *Non Places: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Super Modernity.*[25] In contrast to their approach, my more specific focus involved working from the ground up, from the microcosm to the macrocosm.

In *Flesh and Stone*, Sennett flags up a danger he sees for contemporary society that enables us to conduct our lives with little need for contact. To explore this idea he introduces the reader to two versions of this 18th century street scene, both by William Hogarth, exemplifying the civilising effect of touch. Originally designed by Hogarth in support of the Gin Act, the two engravings were supposed to go alongside each other and depict the evils of gin as opposed to that of beer. The one depicts a street scene, with gentle physical contact between the figures; in the other, touch has broken down and disharmony prevails.

[24] Sennett, Richard *Flesh and stone; the body and the city in western civilization*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1994.
[25] Augé, Marc *Non-Places: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Super Modernity.* Translated by John Howe. London & New York: Verso, 1995.

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

Fig. 37 William Hogarth, '*Beer Street and Gin Lane'*, 1751 [26]

A comparison between these two prints exemplifies what Sennett sees as happening when a society looses the closeness of touch. (Residency notes)

Sennett warns that the 'geography of the modern city, like modern technology' is arranged in such a way that 'human bodies' need not be made 'aware of one another'.[27] This concern for the humanising effect of touch (exemplified above through works by Van Eyck and Della Robbia) highlights what might be called the human haptic vs. the virtual haptic (a phrase that evokes the thoughts of Pamela Johnson 1.1.2).

Set in this context, ceramics and the haptic, and more generally the handmade crafts, are likely to be seen as synergistic in a digital age, as by their very nature they draw attention to a different mode of being.

In focusing on a sacred space that has revolved around ritual and routine over generations, a reference to its opposite, what Marc Augé terms *Non-Places*, is useful.[28] Augé discusses how in modern life places in which we spend much of our time (such as airports and motorways) become 'transit points', a world, he says, where we are…

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[26] *Image of* William Hogarth's 'Beer Street and Gin Lane'. Courtesy of the print collection, the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University. *In*: Sennett, Richard *Flesh and stone. The Body and the City in Western Civilization*. New York: W.W. Norton &Co, 1994, pp.19-20.
[27] *Ibid,* p.21.
[28] Augé, Marc.

'surrendered to solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral'.[29]

In defining space, Augé cites Michel de Certeau, describing it as a

> 'frequented place… an intersection of moving bodies, it is [he says] the pedestrian who transforms the street… into a space.'[30]

Seen this way, our haptic usage of, and interaction with location, is what transforms a place into a space. As the residency developed, it was this idea of contact that came to characterise the distinct sense of space I perceived in the Cathedral.

2.3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted a relationship between the visual and the haptic and a kinaesthetic response to that relationship, which began for me with my encounter in the prehistoric caves.

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

Fig 38 Cave drawings, Chauvet, France [31]
From film clip, 'Cave of Forgotten Dreams', Werner Herzog

I like this photograph because I find the relationship between the space, the drawings, and the observer interesting, as it contains the three elements of my research. *(Post-residency notes)*

[29] *Ibid* p.78.
[30] *Ibid* pp.79-80.
[31] Herzog, Werner 'Cave drawings' from video clip of 'Cave of Forgotten Dreams'. [Online] Available from: www.stuk.be/sites/default/files/styles/stuweb-event-main/public/images/event/main/cave_of_forgotten_dreams.jpg?itok=8FxvVwsz [Accessed 1st March 2016].

In March 2011, just after finishing this residency, a film by Werner Herzog was released in the UK, called 'Cave of Forgotten Dreams'. The film is about the newly found prehistoric cave system in Chauvet in the south of France and the beautiful 30.000 year old drawings there. Tantalisingly, due to the fragile nature of the drawings, the caves are closed to the public for most of the year, but are able to be seen exquisitely filmed in 3-D in this film.

It is never made clear whether this is a documentary or a feature film, as it does not have the structure of either, being neither climactic nor overtly informative. What it is, is reiterative. Very little happens. For the most part the characters just visit and revisit the caves. The film shows you what is there, then shows you again. The effect is cumulative; the repetition, the layering up of visual experience, allows what was initially unseen in the caves to be seen.

Herzog's conclusion is that maybe, given what he sees as the shamanistic nature of our direct ancestry, we should be called 'homo spiritualartis', rather than homo sapiens, an idea he left unexplored.

I began this research concentrating on touch and what the Cathedral felt like physically; what I found was that I needed to revise my initial conceptualisation of the haptic and embrace a more expansive definition that significantly clarified the exploration of the Cathedral from a ceramic perspective, and which is developed in the next chapter.

This perspective, used by Julian Stair in *The Body Politic* and quoted below, deepened my understanding of the haptic and opened new doors:

> 'The psychological interpretation of touch'.[32]

[32] Stair, Julian, p.9.

Chapter 3

The Cathedral from a ceramic perspective, considered via a parallel practice in archaeology

This chapter reviews the first year of the research and unpacks the influence of the residency process.

Section 1 introduces a key element of the practical research by starting to question what happens when the normal position of the ceramist is shifted in relation to the clay.

Section 2 looks at two examples of the making. The first explores what was learnt by analysing the making of a particular frieze; the second considers what was learnt about the Cathedral from the residency process. The outcomes discuss the physical findings and a new understanding of the site via the haptic and the numinous.

Section 3 looks at a comparative study between my methodology and that of the Cathedral archaeologist. The findings revealed that my practice diverged from that of the archaeologist by the very nature of practice-led research to incorporate the subjective component. Examined in relation to Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, the effect of the position of the studio in the crypt, inside and below ground, influenced the character of the work - in ways morphologically related to my prehistoric cave experiences.

Section 4 concludes the chapter by reviewing the practice in terms of contemporary context and suggests that the shift in perspective from a traditional way of working around clay, to the ceramist being on the inside turning out, generated valuable insights in relation to the Cathedral and to furthering the study.

3.1.1 Techniques: a shift in the maker's position in relation to clay

The ceramic technique used in this research and developed from a reverse-printing technique (see Intro, p. xix-xx) is one I have not seen applied to an external space in this way before. Technically, the developments made during the research involved ways of lifting large panels off the floor without damaging the panels or, importantly, the surfaces of a historic building.



Fig. 39 Pippa Galpin demonstrating the process of working with clay on the floor to a member of the public, Dec. 2009

The scenario developed for this study was to position myself inside a space in the Cathedral and work with the clay as a layer between that space and myself.

When making a simple pot, the form is made in the hands. The technique, used in the Cathedral, starts by covering the walls and the floor with a thin membrane of paper and, with my hands, working the clay against the surfaces that surround me.

This technique shifts the normal positioning of the maker in relation to the clay. With handmade ceramics, the shape between the hands defines the pot. It is as though the clay is the lining of these (cupped) hands, an extension of the body.

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

Fig. 40 John Hester, Pinch pot construction [1]

The curve of the fingers controls the shape of the pot, pressing from the inside out

Formed in the hands, a pinch pot records the size of the hands that made it and (as suggested earlier) may bear the marks made by the maker's fingers and even their fingerprints. Subliminally, when used or played with, intimate details about the maker are picked up, like echoes.

Similarly, the wheel-thrown vessel is formed in relation to the maker's physiology and posture, created as the inverse of the human form. The maker works round the clay to transform the lump into a vessel, and from this the clay takes on a relationship to the human form. Pots are often described in anthropomorphic terms, with the rim referred to as a lip, the centre as a belly and the base as a foot. Wheel-thrown ceramics echo the form that made them.

[1] Hester, John *image of* 'Pinch Pot Construction', 2003. [Online] Available from: www.jhpottery.com [Accessed 1 July 2015].

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

Fig. 41 Otto Hagel, The motion of hands making a pot [2]

Koplos describes thrown ceramics as having:

> 'the additional dimension of an inside contributing to its character, so that it involves a topological transformation of a bulge on the outside being a recess on the inside - a quality that open vessels particularly exploit. Vessels pull vision and imagination into themselves. They focus inward, centered on that interior void, rather that reaching outward to command the surrounding space.'[3]

The methodology I employ investigates what happens if the position of the maker is changed, with the human on the inside, turning out. The aim of this shift is to pull vision and imagination into the space within the Cathedral, in the way it might be pulled into a pot.

This analogy illustrates a function of the technique used. By reversing a basic ceramic practice, the technique brings with it the sensibility of working on a pot.

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[2] Wilderhain, Marguerite's *image of* Otto Hagel 'The motion of hands making a pot', c. 1945. *In*: Adamson, Glenn *ed*. *The Craft Reader.* Oxford & New York*:* Berg, 2010, cover page.
[3] Koplos, Janet 'Ceramics and art criticism', p.280.

The making is akin to the making of a pot, as the surfaces and contours of the pieces are created through the pressure of the fingertips and the actions of the maker. The end result embodies and remembers these actions.

3.1.2 The site-specific nature of the research

The making outlined above evokes a form of thinking which questions my spatial position in relation to the clay and the crypt. This line of enquiry overlaps with that of the textile artist Caroline Broadhead's piece, '*The Waiting Game'*, that describes a body-material interface.

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

Fig. 42 Caroline Broadhead in collaboration with dancer Angela Woodhouse '*The Waiting Game',* Upnor Castle, Kent, 1997 [4]

Broadhead uses the 'sensual and tactile' qualities of the fabric in a way that indicates a relationship between 'feeling and articulation'.[5] The extension of the body through cloth and the dancer's movements define the space, represented and accentuated through the material, and communicate via the visual and imagined haptic.

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[4] Broadhead, Caroline and Angela Woodhouse '*The Waiting Game',* 1997. *Rochester City Arts Festival: the official website*. [Online] Available from: http://t1.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcSPdfRMkneo1JKImIAWCtfRFbNHXUjPSyZl3ViRB4uJ4kiSQ7DHAHM5Ew [Accessed 28 June 2015].

[5] Mitchell, Victoria 'Folding and Unfolding the Textile Membrane: Between Bodies and Architectures'. *In*: Stair *ed*. *The Body Politic,* p. 182 & p.181.

3.2.1 Reflection & analysis of the studio practice; thinking through making

The idea of thinking from the inside out, with clay as an interface between me and the fabric of the building, is explored below by focusing on the making of two specific friezes and aims to show what happened when a ceramic perspective was applied in this context.

Example 1:

This example recounts thoughts and observations from residency notebooks of the making of the triptych figured below.

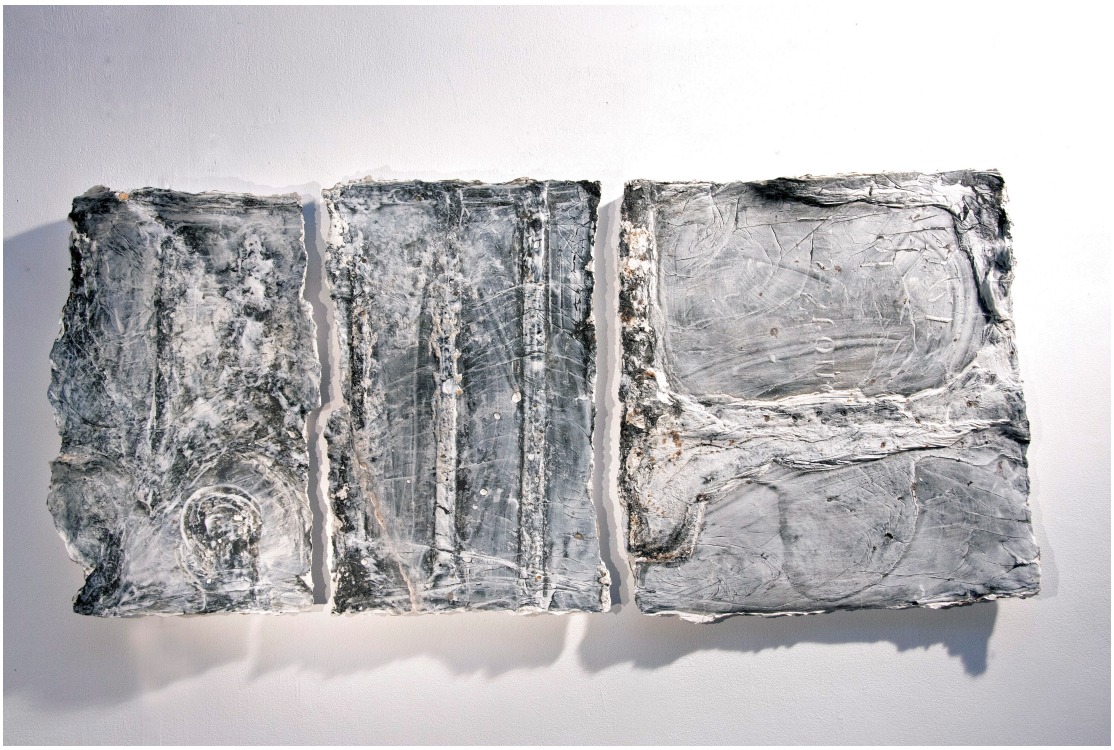

Fig. 43 Pippa Galpin, Blue Triptych from Worcester Cathedral
Height 56cm, width 142 cm, depth 4cm
Exhibited at Corsham Court, April 2012
(See End Plates)

In the first panel there is a figure or head near the bottom. The middle panel has pictorial elements of the architecture of a Cathedral in the form of tall spires. The third is a gravestone with the word 'Stone', reversed, in relief. Across this panel, from left to right, the surface has been eroded away and the layered strata of the rock formation revealed.

The choice to use this area of the crypt was because the three elements which formed the basic elements of this research, the human, the architectural and the layers of wear, were all found represented in one area of floor. (Residency notes)

The first layer of slip, when it is put down, records the imprint of the floor. It picks up every little crack, every scar or mark; once lifted, this will be a relief, in reverse, of the actual floor (Fig. 44 & 45).



Fig. 44 Close up of an actual section of the crypt floor used for the frieze illustrated above



Fig.45 Pippa Galpin, Detail of work in progress, when the print was turned over

There is a close likeness in colour, tone and texture between the actual floor and the ceramic at this stage. *(Residency notes)*

The conditions in the crypt affected the work: when the crypt is damp (it leaks when it rains and there were sometimes puddles on the floor) the pieces do not dry until the floor dries out.



Fig. 46 Detail of the triptych (Fig. 43), drying in the crypt, Dec. 2009

When I returned I found the atmospheric conditions of the crypt were reflected in the ceramics, which buckled or curled. *(Residency notes)*

Though the ceramics were treated with respect, there were times when the pieces were accidently walked on, or chairs were scuffed against them, so people entering the room also left their marks on the work.



Fig. 47 Detail of accidental marks recorded in clay
(see Fig. 68 for full frieze)

When the clay prints were turned over loose bits of stone from the Cathedral floor sometime became trapped in the clay.



Fig. 48 Detail, of stone from the Cathedral floors as part of the fired work
(see End Plates and Fig. 68 for full frieze)

The piece in Fig. 49 below was displayed unfired in the crypt next to where it was made, bringing attention to the relationship between the Cathedral and haptic stimuli.



Fig. 49 Pippa Galpin, Unfired triptych
Exhibited in the open studio exhibition in the crypt, Dec. 2009

Once it is fired (see triptych in Fig. 43 above) the top layer of the porcelain slip becomes translucent, allowing the lower layers to be seen at the same time. The colours become stronger and the material hard. At this stage there is a much clearer distinction between the imprint of the floor and the finger marks.

3.2.2 The process of layering up clay over time

As mentioned earlier, the site of Worcester Cathedral has been a place of worship for over a thousand years. Working in the crypt, it became apparent that layering over time of both physical and spiritual practice contributes to what makes this a sacred space.

At the start of the residency I had wanted to keep as closely as possible to what was picked up through 'simple contact', as Rodaway describes it, but found, that the notion of the haptic in relation to the Cathedral was far broader than I had anticipated, in that it altered my subjective response to the space.[6]

[6] Rodaway, Paul, p.45.

Example 2:

Much of my time in the studio was spent working on specific sections of the crypt floor. This close examination and experience of making prompted new thoughts about the connections being made between the clay and the space. My first impressions of the Cathedral - timeless stone, endurance, unvarying continuity over the centuries - gradually gave way to a surprising sense of flow. What at first I saw as immutable, I soon began to regard as a process of constant change.

The studio in the crypt is positioned under the north aisle of the Cathedral. As can be seen in Figures 50 & 51 below, there are two doors: the entrance in a glass wall at one end and a door at the far end of the studio, which does not open.



Fig. 50 Glass entrance to the studio in the crypt
From the inside looking out

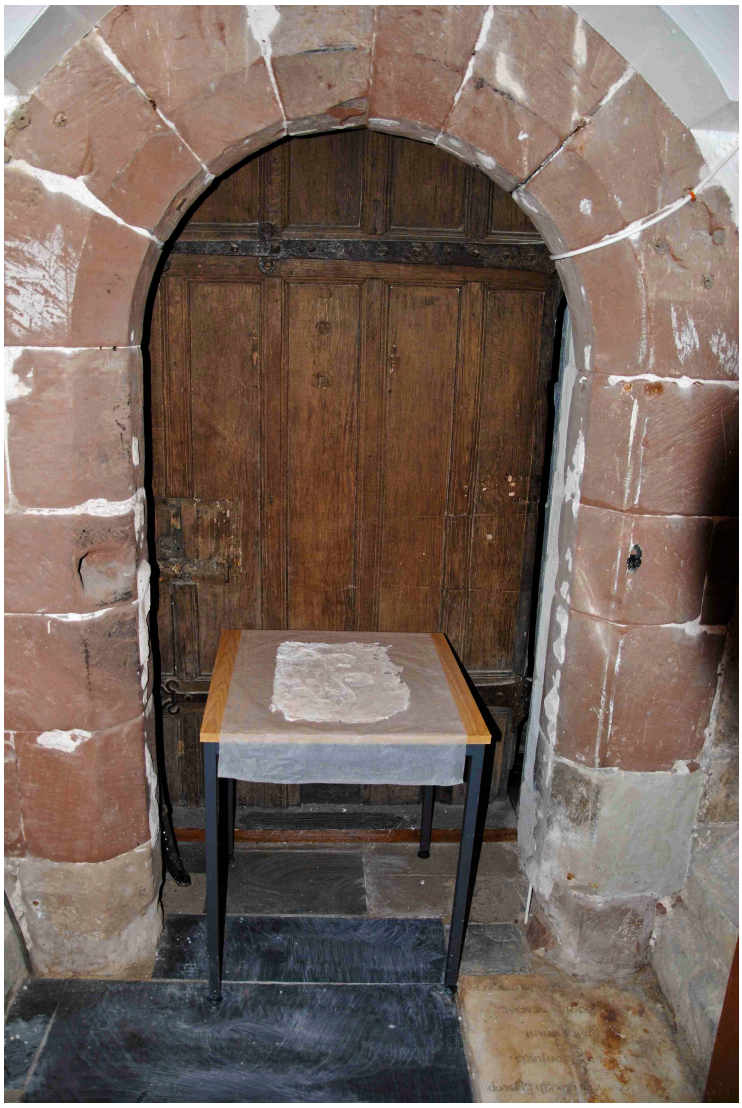

Fig. 51 Picture of the closed door at the far end of the crypt;
this door does not open

However, despite there being two doors in the crypt, I observed that a section I was working on clearly showed the mark of a door worn due to repetition of use, yet not by the door behind it:

> *The stone-slab I was working on was just in front of a large wooden door, at the back of the crypt. The door and the mark do not line up* (Fig. 51)

I later found out that:

> *The stones now on the crypt floor once paved the nave of the Cathedral. The old stones were salvaged and used to line the floor of the crypt, haphazardly fitted together* (see Fig. 52).

The mark on the floor of the crypt must have been made by another door elsewhere. A door that may no longer exist, except in these marks.



Fig. 52 Crypt floor, Worcester Cathedral

The black and white marble floor that is in the nave today replaced the old stones in the 19th century (Fig. 53 below).
Heavy, wooden and carved, the door is propped in place and cannot be opened. It could never have been opened. If it did, it would open the other way (see Fig. 51). *(Residency notes, 2009)*

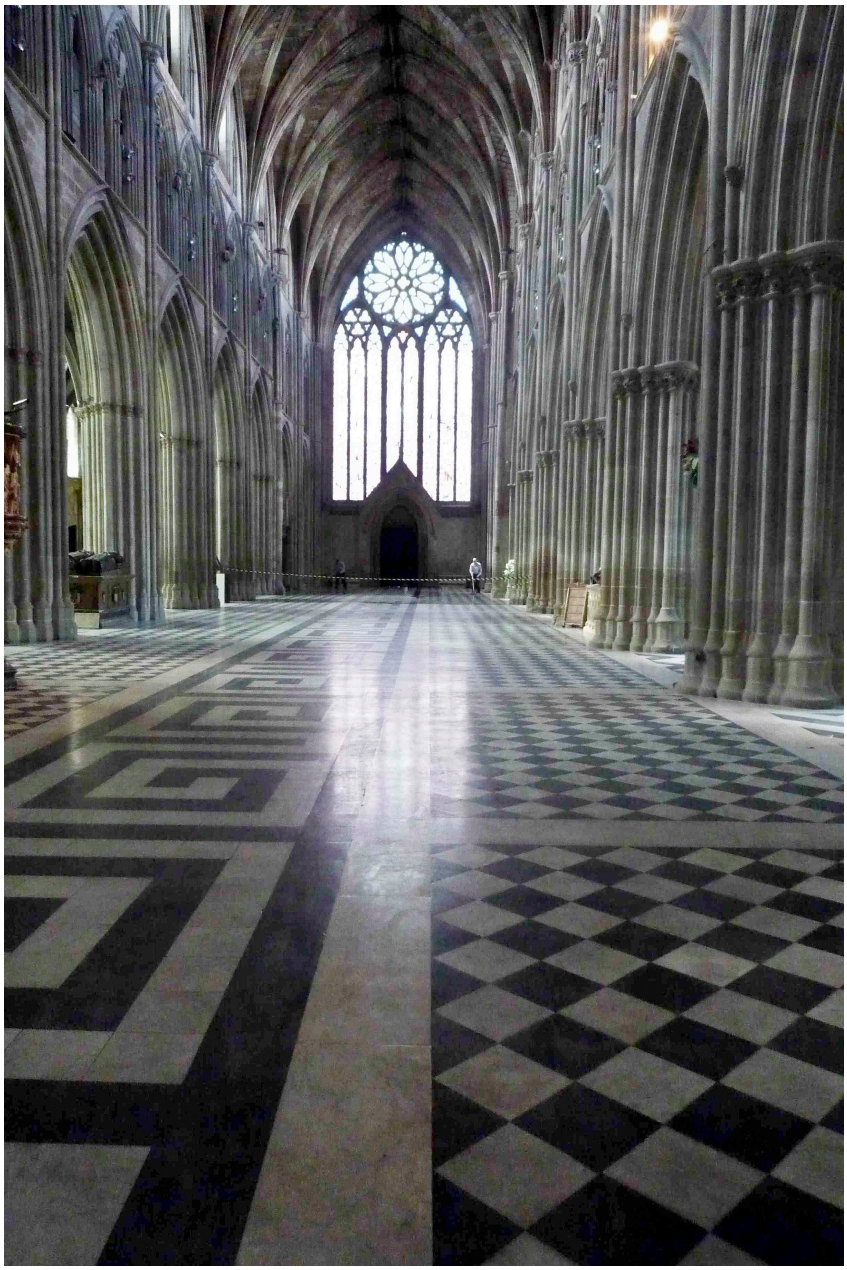

Fig. 53 Black and white marble tiles down the nave
Worcester Cathedral

I learned from the Cathedral archaeologist that parts of the Cathedral had been moved, as mentioned above. This tension between the seeming constancy of the Cathedral and the undeniable evidence of change showed that in this site even the ground under my feet was not necessarily a constant. Indeed, the space itself is in a continuous state of evolution. This evidence of human contact, which makes and moves, wears down and builds up - this endless reiterative endeavour - humanises the great stone Cathedral.

In the finished frieze in Fig. 54 below can be seen the mark made by a door and by my hand gestures over the floor. To the right are the marks of a heraldic shield, carved into the stone, which at one time might have been filled with a brass.



Fig. 54 Pippa Galpin, 7-piece ceramic frieze, height 54cm, width 146cm

Taken from the crypt of Worcester Cathedral
Exhibited in 'Open West', Pitville, Cheltenham, March 2011
(See End Plates)

In this scenario, the door, the floor, and the ceramic impression of it, have all been moved. Yet there is something of a paradox here: the solidity of the Cathedral emerges, at least in part, from change.

3.2.3 Personal observations in relation to context

What ceramics, and the substance of clay in particular, brought to this research was a physicality that seemed very earthbound, producing an intimacy and link to another human, and resonating with the idea of being able to place your hand in a maker's space (see Intro p. xi) as with the fingerprints on a handmade vessel. This, coupled with a ceramic perception in the context of the Cathedral (see

3.1.1) brought with it a connection to the past, in the trace of haptic marks deposited over generations.

There seemed to be something tangible about this experience that defied explanation, yet felt similar to the experience of seeing handprints in prehistoric caves, each producing a heightened haptic sense akin to that of Rudolf Otto's sense of the numinous, which proved valuable as a way to describe the sacred without rationalising the non-rational (see 1.2.1).

What this brought to the research was a method by which a material-based approach could form the start of an inner dialogue made visible. Speaking about her work at the Ceramic Biennial Conference, Stoke-on-Trent 2011, ceramist Caroline Slotte described her experimental process of making as being led by the material; only afterwards did stories unfold.

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

Fig. 55 Caroline Slotte, Detail, *'Unidentified View'*, 2009 [7]

The piece was made as part of the research fellowship project entitled '*Second Hand Stories*' at Bergen National Academy of the Arts in 2007-2011

[7] Slotte, Caroline '*Unidentified View*'. *Image in*: Part of the research fellowship project *Second Hand Stories* at Bergen National Academy of the Arts in 2007-2011. [Online] Available from: http://carolineslotte.com/wp-content/themes/carolineslotte/img/ajax-loader.gif [Accessed 28 July 2015].

Paralleling my experience of working in the crypt, Slotte describes her making as:

> 'not a left hand document of knowledge [but] an inner dialogue, made visible. There is room for irrationality, to explain the inexplicable. A personal narrative that gets closer to the core of the creativity.'[8]

The experience of a non-rational emotional response to a ceramic site-specific installation in a former chapel can be found in Clare Toomey's *'Heirloom'* (Fig. 56). Here, Jo Dahn states that the site itself offers an ineffable quality, which induces a heightening of viewer perception.[9]

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

Fig. 56 Clare Twomey, *'Heirloom',* 2004 [10]

The installation was made up of more than 2000 cast porcelain objects, which appear to be emerging into, or growing out of, the walls of a building. Twomey's

[8] Slotte, Caroline *Secondhand Stories*. From talk at British Ceramic Biennial, Stoke–on–Trent, 2013.
[9] Dahn, Jo *New Directions in Ceramics,* p.78.
[10] Kelly, J M *image of* Clare Twomey's 'Heirloom'. Mission Gallery, Swansea, September 2004. *In*: Dahn, Jo *New Directions in Ceramics*, p.78.

work draws on the collective narrative of the visitors, as all the objects relate in some way to local history via haptic memory.

Dahn develops this idea by drawing on an article by Oliver Burkman entitled 'Where heaven and earth collide',[11] suggesting that such excitement might be due to the recognition of what Burkman calls an 'emotional residue' and what I came to regard as the embodied memory of haptic objects.[12]

In answering my original question - what can I pick up through clay? - it became apparent that I had found a connection between the nature and meaning of what a Cathedral is and the physicality of its use. More specifically, the layering over time of both physical and spiritual practice contributes to what for me makes this site a Cathedral.

It is worth re-emphasising that the work would have carried a different meaning if it had been made in a non-religious context. Hence, its provenance and its history are integral to this meaning.

To explore this further, in the year following the residency I took on a studio at the Ceramic Research Centre at Corsham Court to test the transferability of the findings from the Cathedral research. Interestingly, this studio was below ground again, so the location was similar and the building was also historic.

I believe the resulting work demonstrated that, as a way of researching a space, ceramics-and-the-haptic was a methodology that was transferable to other contexts. However, the Corsham work took on such a different direction that I did not feel it was part of the Cathedral research. The way clay resisted movement when pushed became symbolic of the space. The work became a response to thresholds and barriers, rather than a way to bridge a gap. Ultimately, I found the work made at Corsham lacked the connection to the sacred, which had become an important part of this research.

---

[11] Burkeman, Oliver 'Where Heaven and Earth Collide', Guardian newspaper, 22 March 2014.
[12] *Ibid.*

3.3.1 Testing the ideas: first comparative study, the Cathedral archaeologist

Alongside the making in the crypt, the thinking that informed this research was influenced by lengthy discussions with the Cathedral archaeologist, Chris Guy, and visits to his offices high above the nave. At the time, Guy was engaged in excavating the Rectory Undercroft, including human remains from the Chapter House.[13]

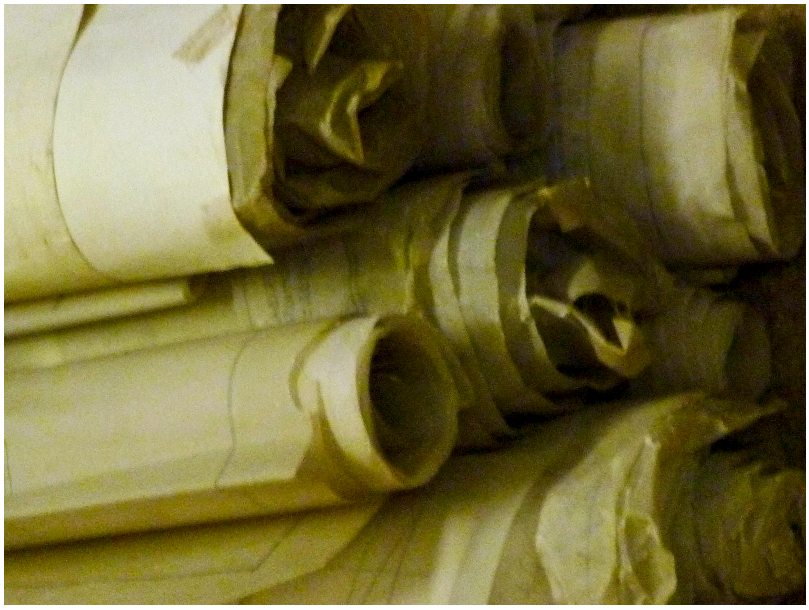

Fig. 57 Chris Guy, Drawings, Nov. 2009

Guy's approach to his profession, whilst rigorously objective and methodical, was also reminiscent of artistic procedures: long slow periods of reflection, meticulously patient drawings, flashes of (educated) intuition, an almost meditative pondering on the minutiae of the Cathedral and on its manifold implications as a building inhabited and used over time. Guy's approach, so eclectic and inclusive, challenged me.

[13] Guy, Chris *Archaeological work on: The Rectory Undercroft, The Human Remains from the Chapter House, Worcester Cathedral, The Old Palace, Worcester*. [Symposium Report] 2009/2010. [Online] Available from: http://worcestercathedral.co.uk/Symposium_Reports.php. [Accessed 28 July 2015].

I had entered the residency adamant that I did not want my beliefs to be a part of the investigation. Where possible, I would adopt the position of observing what was to be observed, and through this – perhaps because of this - making new discoveries that might contribute to a deeper understanding of the Cathedral and of the role of the haptic in gaining that understanding. Thus, I wanted to discover, to unearth, to find - not taint the project with 'me'.

Yet towards the end of that first year of the residency I found that my views, affected by the work in the crypt, were shifting. I came to understand that far from tainting the project with subjectivity, that in some ways my subjectivity *was* the project. Or as Rosie Braidotti has noted:

> 'the theoretical process is not abstract, universalised, objective and detached, but rather... it is situated in the contingency of one's experience...'[14]

In taking on this mode of thinking (1.2.1) I was as much the canvas and the outcome as was the crypt and the clay. I had wanted to avoid this kind of engagement with the space, yet this was the very thing that I now needed to explore and understand. To do so, I looked for ways to view the research from the perspective of parallel practices, including Guy's, following an analysis – antithesis – synthesis model.

In discussion with Guy I found that he drew each section of an area of study by hand. He then placed the drawings on a digital pad and traced them onto the computer. He explained that through a concentrated period of looking, observations presented themselves. For example, when meticulously drawing stones in a wall, Guy might notice that the angle of a curve in a stone seemed to be related to the curve in another stone, suggesting that at one time they might have joined.

[14] Braidotti, Rosi *Nomadic Subjects.* New York Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 1994, p.237.

The element of time taken with the drawing was a research method similar to mine, though whereas Guy utilises drawing to enhance noticing and to see connections, I pick up information through my fingertips. If drawing can be described as the process of 'seeing made visible' then the ceramic practice employed in the crypt was based on the experience of touch made visible.[15] It was through time and contact with the Cathedral that the research both he and I were involved in produced results.

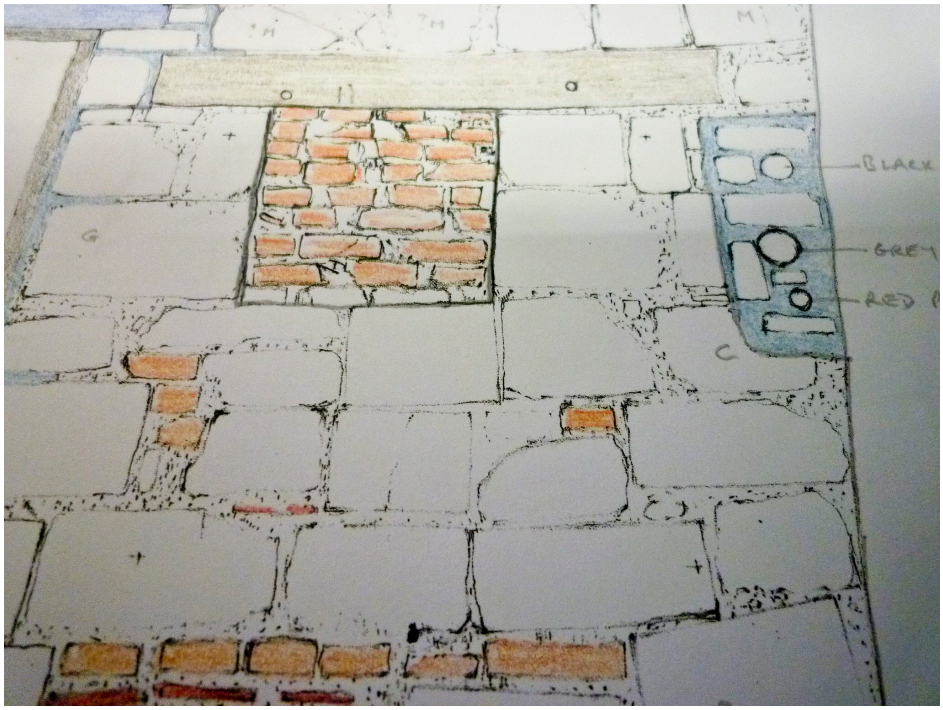

Fig. 58 Chris Guy, Drawings, Nov. 2009

3.3.2 Documentation of a tour of the archaeologist's offices

This visit to Guy's offices was intriguing in a number of ways: from the spatial relationships of the Cathedral, to Guy's historical knowledge, as well as to the connection I found in his working practices.

[15] Kovats, Tania *ed*. *The Drawing Book: A Survey of Drawing the Primary Means of Expression.* London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007.

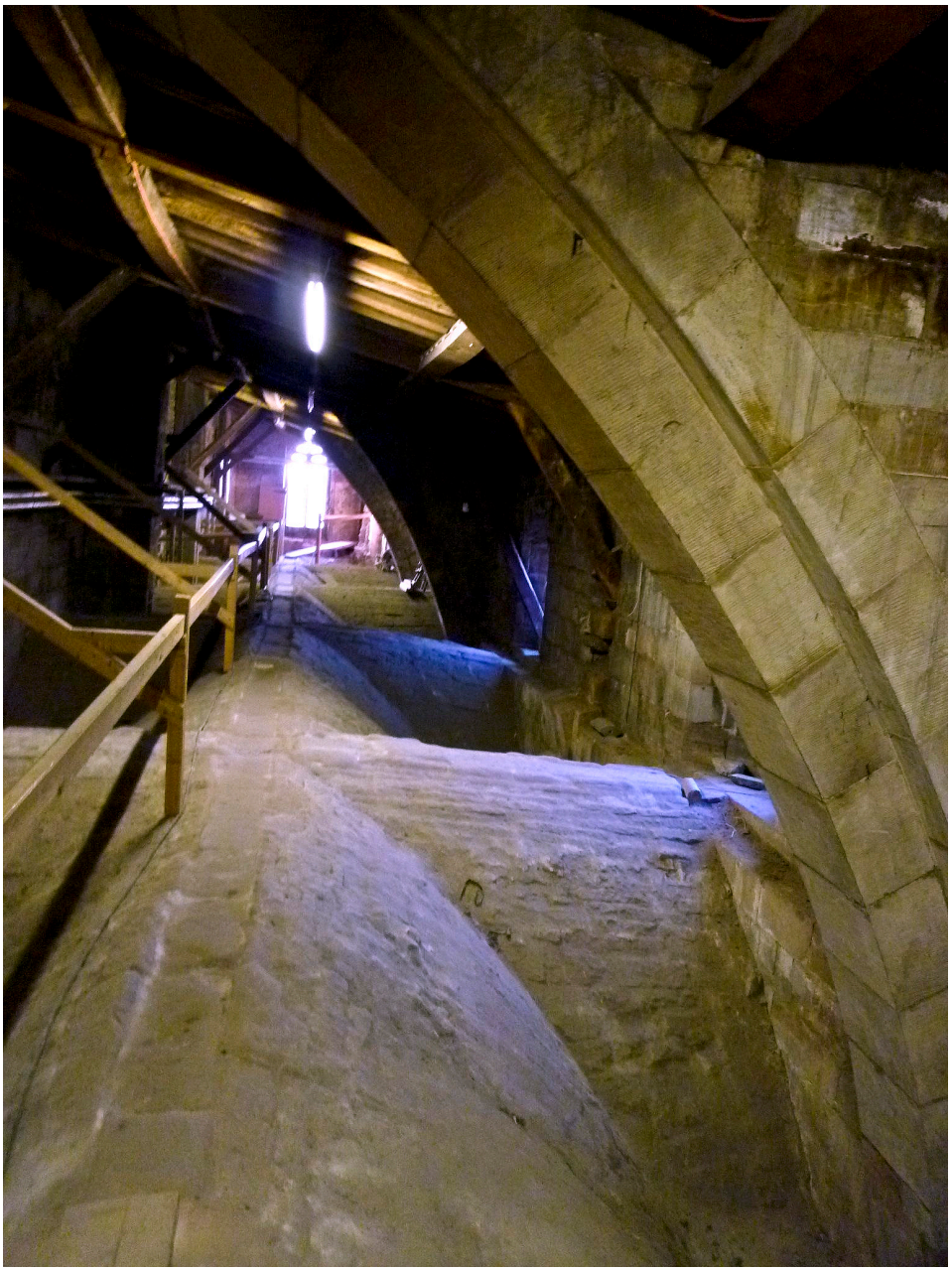

Fig. 59 View along the bays in the ceiling space immediately above the Cathedral's nave, close to Guy's office

Alert to the spaces and traces of its past, a tour to the upper reaches of Worcester Cathedral expands. As you move through constricted spaces to passages along ceiling tops the bays give enough information to encourage an awareness of the levels and volume of the space below. *(Residency notes, 2009)*

Guided by Chris Guy, one is made aware of the historical significance of specific marks in the stones; for instance, the crack in the brickwork that probably defines where the work of building the Cathedral had broken off in the time of the plague, and restarted using a different method of construction (see Fig. 60).



Fig. 60 Crack in the wall where building might have stopped during the plague

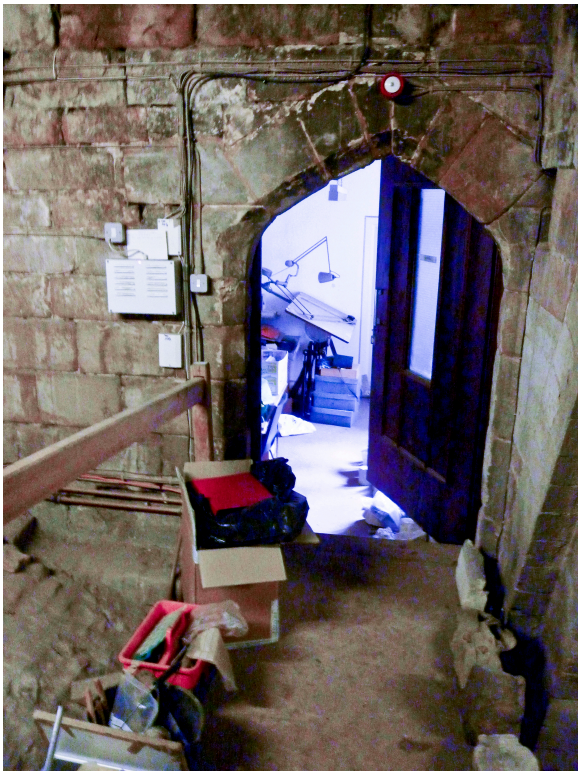

Fig. 61 Entrance to Guy's office over the north aisle
Worcester Cathedral

Guy's office, above the Cathedral's North Door, is reached through a locked door after climbing up a spiral staircase and walking along the ridge of the ceiling of the north aisle. The room was once 'probably' where the monks had their hair cut. The offices are full of plans, drawings and rubbings, of stones and bones, boxed and categorised, or waiting to be sorted.
In the far room I was introduced to another archaeologist who was cleaning bones, which were then ordered according to type. There was some discussion as to whether one was of an animal and if another were a child's. Guy explained where they had been found and that when they were finished, he had a place… where he could put them back underground.
This seemed to parallel my creative process, taking materials down into the crypt, exploring with them, turning them over, rubbing them back and then returning them. It struck me that although much of my work is flat, there is a three-dimensionality to the process over time. *(Residency notes, 2009)*



Fig. 62 Archaeologist examining bones, recently unearthed at the time of my visit

This analogy, the connection with archaeology, became a valuable way to test the research as it developed, and to reflect on it. I became aware of the connection between my initial entry to the space, from outside to inside, and my relationship to it during my residency.

In whatever way Chris Guy's methods parallel or differ from mine, he does not see himself in the processes that he wishes to understand. Yet the association with him and his work contributed to a clarification of my own approach, and even my goals.

I had also come to see the importance of the layering of time in my work, more conducive to revealing than identifying, of seeing something in a new light: to make visible what I had determined through touch.

> *Once dry enough to turn over I see the print for the first time and I work on re-presenting it in light of my time spent in the space.*
> *There is a moment here, when the piece is picked up and I respond intuitively to the irrational…* (Intro. P. xxii) *(Residency notes, 2009)*

Regardless of the methods used by scientists, my personal perspective has always been that most seek, at the end, a rational explanation. This, at least, became a counterpoint to my own research aims. What interested me was the ambiguity, the kind of knowing that resists - perhaps does not even need - analysis. What is picked up through clay at our fingertips - though touch - is at some level pre-verbal, even primitive. We grasp things, turn them over, move them from the literal, or from their expected context, and suddenly see new connections. Then we respond: intuitively, narratorially, irrationally.

A comment by one of the visitors to the Cathedral has stayed with me because it flagged up a problem I was having working out how to articulate the findings.

> *'Today, when I was smearing slip over the floor with my hands, I heard a tour-guide explaining to his group what he thought I was doing. Assuming that I was an archaeologist, he said:*
>
> *"She is feeling the floor, so that she can read it better".*
>
> *Which, in fact, was exactly what I was doing.* *(Residency notes, 2009)*

It was both curious and insightful that he explained my haptic activity with a wonderfully apt metaphor that not only evoked the idea of touch made visual but also suggested that there was a kind of haptic text to be read or deciphered.

3.3.3 The three dimensionality of the space, reviewed in relation to *The Poetics of Space*

The original premise for the research was built on *The Poetics of Space* by Gaston Bachelard. What had inspired me was a depiction of a phenomenological memory of a space, via a personal experience that parallels a ceramic sensitivity of knowledge through contact. Bachelard describes how the physical interaction with what he calls the 'first house' we are born in, both remains with us in our deepest memories and helps physically to form the actual musculature of our early development. Bachelard writes:

> 'Over and beyond our memories, the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us… [and if] after twenty years, in spite of all the anonymous stairways, we could recapture the reflexes of the "first stairway", we would not stumble on that rather high step. The house's entire being would open up, faithful to our own being. We would push the door that creaks with the same gesture, we would find our way in the dark to the distant attic. The feel of the tiniest latch that has remained in our hands.'[16]

Informed by *The Poetics of Space,* the residency was to take place over a two-year period, on a weekly basis. The intimate knowledge thus gained of the crypt - the main area of focus - deepened and grew until it became 'inscribed' in me.

Bachelard expounds what he calls:

> 'the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives'[17] …
> 'The house, quite obviously, is a privileged entity for a phenomenological

[16] Bachelard, Gaston, p.15.
[17] *Ibid,* p.8.

> study of the intimate values of inside space'[18] … 'And if the house [of our memories] has a cellar and a garret, nooks and corridors, our memories have refuges that are all the more clearly delineated.'[19]
>
> 'The house is imagined as a vertical being. It rises upwards… Up near the roof our thoughts are clear… [He describes this as] the rational zone of intellectualised projects.'[20]

In the context of the residency, the crypt is analogous to Bachelard's cellar. During the first year of the residency my ceramic practice and the work made in the crypt became progressively more abstract. In retrospect, the content moved from an interest in the actual to the subjective.

At the time, I noted:

> *I am now starting to question if I had worked in the 'upper reaches' of the Cathedral, whether the work would have been more cerebral.*
> *(Residency notes)*

This awareness aligns to how Bachelard describes the impact of a cellar:

> 'In the cellar… the dark entity of the house… we are in harmony with the irrationality of the depths… for the cellar, the impassioned inhabitant digs and re-digs, making its very depth active. The fact is not enough, the dream is at work. When it comes to excavated ground, the dreams have no limit.'[21]

In retrospect, development of the work during the residency took no dramatic changes. Instead there was a consistency to the process employed, even a rhythm, akin to Bachelard's digging and re-digging…

> *'… slowly finding out about the Cathedral… until the Cathedral was inscribed in me.'* *(End of Residency Exhibition notes)*

[18] *Ibid,* p.3.
[19] *Ibid,* p.8.
[20] *Ibid,* pp.17-18.
[21] *Ibid,* p.18.

3.4.1 Implications of the research in relation to context

By using clay to examine the site, the research entered a territory that sits between art and archeology. This connection, explored by archaeologist Colin Renfrew in *Figuring it out,* suggests an overlap where art operates as archaeology and archaeology as art.[22] For Renfrew, the parallels lie in the closeness required between researcher and subject:

> 'When you are there, actually digging, you are acutely aware of the brown of the sandstone… and the brown of the rich compressed layers of fragmentary bone… The aesthetics of the excavation process… [relate to] the pleasures of digging.'[23]

This idea is similar to the connection I found in Guy's attention to the minutiae observed in the Cathedral, which Guy sees as an aesthetic.

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

Fig. 63 Mark Boyle, '*Holland Park Avenue Study*' [24]
Earth on resin and fiberglass Height 239, width 239, depth 11, 1967.

[22] Renfrew, Colin *Figuring it out: What are we? Where do we come from? The Parallel Visions of Artist and Archaeologists.* London: Thames and Hudson, 2003.
[23] *Ibid,* pp.41-42.
[24] Boyle Family *image of* Mark Boyle's 'Holland Park avenue study', 1967. [Online] Available from: www.tate.org.uk/art/images/work/T/T01/T01145_9.jpg [Accessed 1 July 2015].

Renfrew likens this type of research to an experience gathered 'through the senses', a connection he identifies with the work of artists such as Mark Dion's reconstruction of an archaeological process in his *'Tate Thames dig' (2003)*[25] and with the pleasure of turning up treasures in work by the Boyle family. This, the Boyles call contemporary archaeology (see Fig. 63) because the work exposes, or brings to attention, what is there, rather than making an attempt to use the work to illustrate an idea.[26]

In *Figuring it out,* Renfrew believes the two fields can 'engage and… comment on what it is to be human'.[27] As a Cathedral archaeologist and as an artist conducting a research project on Worcester Cathedral, Guy's focus, and mine, overlap in that we both engage and comment on the nature of the Cathedral. What comparisons with this companion practice offered me was a way to reflect on my practice; what it brought to the Cathedral were new ways to view the Cathedral's past, by bringing my processes and exploration, which are similar to those of archaeology, to public attention.

The physical exploration of an interior space is similar to the work of Lucy Gunning, shown below in a still from a video clip of her climbing around her room.

> *Apart from a delight in the playful futility of the act, what interests me about Gunning's work is that it questions the significance of my presence in the crypt; that, and a connection to performance art, unexpectedly positioned me within the crypt space as a participant in a narrative (in other words, me being aware of myself being aware of myself).*
> *(Residency notes)*

[25] *Ibid,* p.48.
[26] *Ibid,* p.44.
[27] *Ibid,* p10.

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

Fig. 64 Lucy Gunning, '*Climbing Around My Room',* video still [28]

3.4.2 Working in the crypt; links to the prehistoric caves

Reflecting on the Cathedral from a ceramic perspective, this research – carried out in an underground sacred space – highlighted a 'thinking from the inside out'. This reminded me of an account by Norbert Casteret in which he describes a cave in Montespan.[29] In my residency notes I wrote:

> *The cavern he describes contains what may well be one of the oldest sculptures in the world, which is made of clay. He describes the figure of a bear, without a head, while a real bear skull lies on the floor nearby. Around the statue, the walls and the floors are smeared with clay. Cracks in the*

[28] Gunning, Lucy *Climbing Around My Room*. From video directed by Lucy Gunning, 1993. [Online] Available from: www/mattsgallery.org/news/aug2011/LG-Climbing-(1).jpeg [Accessed 1 July 2015].
[29] Casteret, Norbert *Ten Years Under the Earth.* Translated and edited by Mussey Barrows. New York: The Greystone Press, 1938.

rocky walls have been carefully chinked out and filled with fist-sized balls of clay. These clay-filled cracks are riddled with holes, poked with fingers or pointed sticks. (Residency notes)

Casteret's account of how he entered the cave, the evidence of human footprints and spear marks around the statue, are easy to form into a narrative, but what is pertinent to this research is that the prehistoric humans, using clay as an interface, pressed outwards, against the cave walls; in other words, from the inside out. This act forces a connection to the space with clay. Unlike the drawings, not all the marks left are representative of something humans saw; instead, they are representative of what people did, and where they did it.

During the residency I experimented with filling cracks in the Cathedral wall with clay. I had planned this as an installation, but the action felt invasive, so I collected the clay, which fell out of the cracks when it dried, and desisted.



Fig. 65 Pippa Galpin, Experimenting with clay pressed into the crypt walls, March 2010

Some time after, when repairing the work, I reversed the action and gathered broken pieces of stone from the crypt floor and used these to fill cracks in the ceramics. This felt in keeping with the spirit of the research, as it picked up what the Cathedral brought to the work, rather than to impose on the Cathedral.



Fig. 66 Pippa Galpin, Detail

Bits of Cathedral stone used to mend one of the friezes (see Fig. 69 for full frieze) (Residency notes)

Cathedrals, of course, are made of stone and it seems interesting to note that clay, geologically speaking, is made from the reduction of stone. In a sense then, in this project, clay was metaphorically filling the gaps, replacing what had been worn away.

3.4.3 Conclusion

What began as research into the Cathedral from a ceramic perspective shifted focus as I became aware of the role of myself in the crypt, and the subjective component of the making. In a development anticipated by Bachelard, the research opened up to notions of phenomenological space, which in turn affected my ceramic practice: by the position of the studio in the crypt, by the time spent turning over ideas, and by my response to the clay.

Having begun the residency adamant that I would not enter into ideas about the sacred, I nevertheless found that by concentrating on the physicality of the crypt, the layering of events, and the changes that had taken place in the Cathedral, my awareness of the crypt as a sacred space expanded and began to incorporate a sense of the numinous through the haptic (see Chapter 7).

A closer examination of the practice-as-research is developed in Chapter 4 by reflecting on the themes emerging from the haptic nature of the ceramic research. This picks up on an association with the archaeological approach discussed in this chapter and the method of feeling the floor in order to read it (see 3.3.2).

Chapter 4

Reflection and analysis of the practice and emerging themes

Chapter 4 reflects initially on the idea of reading the crypt floor with clay. This concept is expanded using a definition of drawing by Tania Kovats and then explored further through an analysis of the practice.

Section 1 extends the research in relation to a parallel process: the marginalia in some of the Cathedral's medieval library books. Further reflection led to the notion of clay as a personal mnemonic; with analysis of work by other ceramists, I will argue that the clay operated as a bridge between what I felt and a way to express it. As the ceramics evolved, a theme of reading as writing and writing as reading developed, highlighting the reciprocity involved in haptic research: to touch is to be touched. This concept is developed in relation to what Lorna Collins calls the 'paradox of touch'.[1]

Section 2 considers the physical processes used to make the friezes, and suggests that by being built-up and pared back, the processes reflect the creation of the Cathedral surfaces as they are today. In other words, the haptic history of action-over-time within the Cathedral space is embodied in and then re-evoked by the clay. This part of the process was responsive to the texture of the floors and preceded the print being lifted and made visual, which was then followed by a verbal interpretation.

The consolidation of these thoughts resulted in the idea of the ceramic friezes as haptic landscapes - landscapes created by the forces they were subjected to.

[1] Collins, Lorna.

4.1.1 Ceramic books; reading the Cathedral with clay

Concentrating on areas that are trodden on and seldom touched by hand, my ceramics investigate details of surfaces and chart an exploration of them; the clay simultaneously picks up marks from the Cathedral floor and traces representing my actions over the surface of the clay. The method is analogous to Tania Kovats's description of drawing.

In her essay, 'Traces of thoughts and intimacy', Kovats defines drawing as:

> 'a rule of representation… capable of a slow kind of expansion or alteration to accommodate the evolution of what is being communicated… Any drawing is a static object but contains the trace of action carried out in time.' [2]

For Kovats, as for Chris Guy, drawing encompasses an exploratory act, a way to draw out, or extract, meaning - a description I came to see as a process of feeling made visible in clay.

Kovats discusses the relationship between writing, drawing and mark-making, noting a role for drawing that is not an attempt to illustrate an idea but to reveal it.

> 'The Greek word *Graphe* doesn't distinguish between drawing and writing. The manuscript, the notebook, diary, or rough copy is a site where the writing process can be seen to spill over other spaces of the page - crossings out, arrows redirecting sentences, margins filling up with more thoughts of instructions for later. This blurring between writing and drawing is another reminder of the cursive mark-making activities we habitually engage in.'[3]

During my Cathedral research I found examples of this form of learning in the marginalia of the illuminated medieval manuscripts in the Cathedral library.

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[2] Kovats, Tania, p.11.
[3] *Ibid,* p.8.



Fig.67 Marginalia in the medieval manuscripts
Worcester Cathedral library

Marginalia are drawings and notes in the margins,
used to help the writer learn the text by rote.

Half written, half drawn, these are personal notations that sit between the reading and the orating of the text and evidence an individual's response to it. This first-hand primary resource is not audience-centric. Thus, it opens a window onto an unknown individual's inner process whereby the notes were an aid to understanding. The marginalia were to inform my thinking, as I could glimpse thought processes at work, occupying a space between a text and the communication of it to others.

The marginalia became an example of a personal mnemonic that tracks the history of a thought from the pre-verbal to the communication of it. This space between a fully comprehended idea and the point where it can be articulated felt like the moment in a creative process where ideas are formed, or come into being.

There are obvious illustrations of this union between image and letter in the illuminated manuscripts from the Cathedral library, but where Kovats' definition

of drawing becomes of particular interest to this research is when it starts to occupy an area where things are unclear and an act of translation is required.

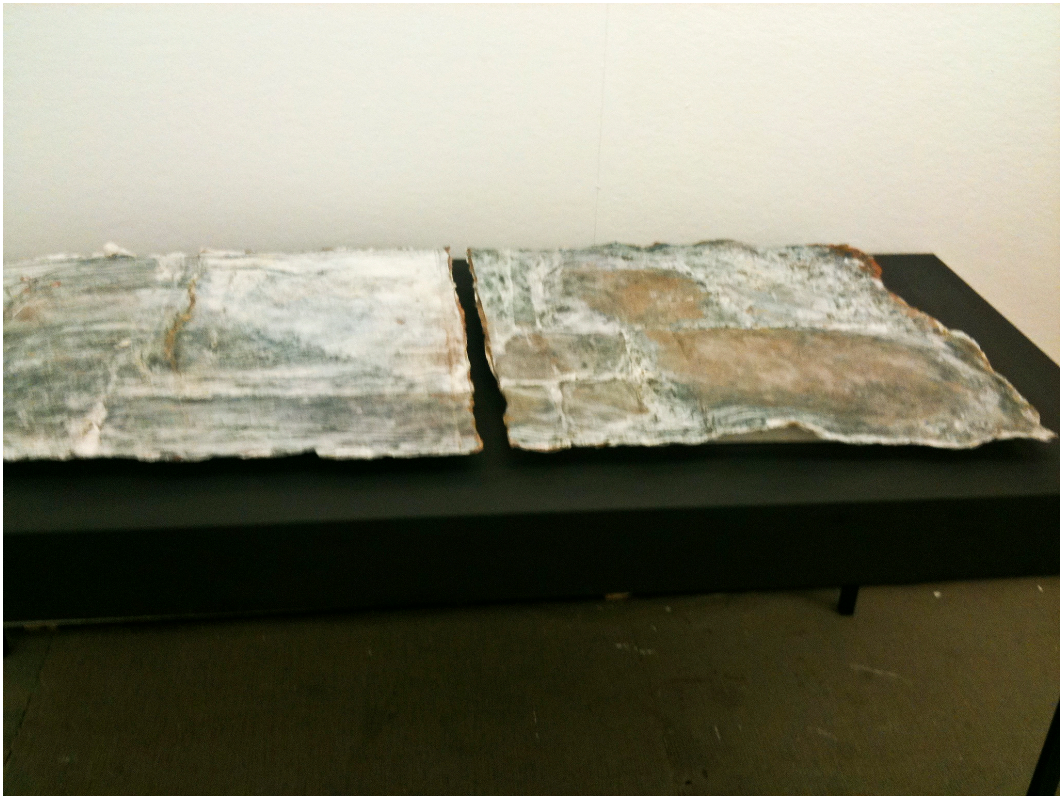

Fig. 68 Pippa Galpin, *'Reading of the Crypt Floor'*, height 55cm, width 140cm
Open Studio Exhibition, Worcester Cathedral, Dec. 2009
(See End Plates for wall-mounted piece)

This emergent theme - reading as writing and writing as reading - illustrated the capacity of clay to fill the gap between the tangible and the intangible, the literal and the abstract.

4.1.2 A sense of the haptic through material qualities

The capacity of the haptic system to communicate indirectly and unintentionally was brought to the fore by these medieval illuminations and marginalia. At the time I observed:

> *Worcester Cathedral hosts one of the world's most important collections of medieval books; these are extraordinary works and apart from the ideas they contain, their age and smell and the need to wear gloves when*

handling them provide a tantalising reminder of their fragile haptic nature. Unlike the print we are now used to, these illuminations are hand-crafted with a paint that, being thicker than the ink in the script, is slightly raised, offering a sense of what one might be able to feel under one's fingertips, if one was allowed to touch. *(Residency notes)*

Unlike Kemske's work, which invites touch, the ceramics made during the residency explore space via touch but are not designed to be touched. The paradigm for this research, therefore, includes the evocation of touch and awareness of fragility, as with the experience of viewing the medieval manuscripts.

An example of the ephemeral in ceramics can be seen in Nishimura Yohei's '*Fired issue of 'Time Out' magazine'*. Yohei's piece is laden with implications and poetic resonances, presenting a reminder of the porcelain used in the production of paper. It has a ghostly, friable quality, suggestive of loss.

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

Fig. 69 Nishimura Yohei, '*Fired issue of 'Time Out' magazine',* 1992
V&A, London, 2009

You can see the intricate texture of Yohei's work, the ripples of the pages, the lightness of the material, but simultaneously you're aware that if touched, the entire piece would disintergrate into a fine dust. *(Residency notes)*

Yohei's use of paper throws a conceptual light on my work, bringing with it a relationship to the materials that affects both structure and meaning. While continuing to use paper in the clay body, I came to employ the subtleties that firing brings with it, though not in all of my work.

For example, the paper membrane used to keep the clay from sticking to the floor adds a surface texture to the friezes. The paper pulls, creases, tears and although it is burnt away in firing, it leaves a paper-like quality in the ceramic print.



Fig. 70 Pippa Galpin, Detail of book frieze (see Fig. 68 for full frieze)

The piece was still a bit wet when I lifted it off the floor and you can still see the direction it pulled in, as the drag created creases in the surface of the paper, which show in the slip. *(Residency notes)*

In a second example (Fig. 71), the quantity of paper in the clay produces a parchment-like quality. Unfired, with frayed edges, the piece is very fragile.



Fig. 71 Pippa Galpin, '*Unfired fragment',* Dec. 2009

A remnant of a haptic reading via touch
(See End Plates for full piece, exhibited at Corsham Court, 2012)

As with the marginalia and Yohei's 'Time out' piece, this fragment produces a liminal sense of half-formed thoughts, of presence and absence, traits that the processes and the materials bring to my work.

4.1.3 Reflection on the principal technique

During the residency I tried a variety of approaches to explore the Cathedral including using the nature of the clay as an interface, in which one side shows the hand mark and the other the print off the floor. In this case the pieces would have needed to be seen from both sides.

Examples of such techniques, when used separately, are shown in Figs. 73-75 below. Firstly, imprinting the target surface, as in work by Heidi Harrington, which presents an impression. And secondly, imprinting the maker's mark, as in work by Ulla Viotti and Gabriel Orozco (figured below), which links the user to the human.

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

Fig. 72 Heidi Harrington, Installation, British Ceramics Biennial, Nov. 2009

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

Fig. 73 Ulla Viotti, *'Trace of Life',* 1987 [4]

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

Fig. 74 Gabriel Orozco, '*My Hands Are My Heart',* 1991 [5]

[4] Viotti, Ulla 'Trace of Life', 1987. *In*: Ceramic collection and archive, Aberystwyth. [Online] Available from: www.ceramics-aberystwyth.com/images/pots/c1116-120x120.png [Accessed 27 August 2015].
[5] Orozco, Gabriel 'My Hands Are My Heart', 1991. *In:* Bonami, Francesco *The Early Adventures,* Tate paper, issue 21, 2011. [Online] Available from: www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/early-adventures [Accessed 27 August 2015].

As with the cave-markings, Viotti's handprint evidences human presence and its orientation, that of turning outwards and projecting onto the world, whereas Gabriel Orozco's work turns inwards, indicating the intimacy of the act of clasping the hands together.

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

Fig. 75 Dotted Horse Panel, in the prehistoric cave of Pech Merle, France, approx. 25,000 years old [6]

> *I saw this during the residency and was struck by the connection between the shape of the rock wall, which forms the head of a horse, and the hand and red finger marks on and around the picture area. Like my work, the shapes appear to be reactive to the space.* *(Residency notes, 2009)*

As described in the Introduction (see Intro. xxiii), the reverse printing technique used in most of my work brings together these forms of impression that would usually register on the face and on the converse side of a ceramic print. This layering of mark-making and image, as in the prehistoric cave drawings, indicates that a person was there: evidence of contact, stamped over an image.

The section of one of my friezes below shows marks made in stone by the repeated opening and closing of a door and, over that, the sweeping gesture of my hand across the surface.

[6] Delon, René's *image of* Dotted Horse Panel', 2009. From the prehistoric cave of Pech Merle, Lot, France.



Fig. 76 Pippa Galpin, Detail of one section of a 7-piece frieze
(See in End Plates. For full frieze see Fig. 54)

In order for this to be achieved, it is important that the top layers be translucent, an effect achieved by the thinness of the porcelain layers and the firing temperatures (1260/1280c). The first layer is a very thin layer of porcelain slip, the second a thin stain wash, and the third a layer of terracotta slip. I found that by careful application and high firing I could get three layers to show through.

The effect allows a recording of layers-over-time to be seen simultaneously, as though there were no space or duration between. As is shown in Fig. 76 above, the raised mark that arcs across the top section of the panel from mid-left to high-right is the impression where a door has worn a groove through repeated

opening over generations, while the white lines that sweep over the surface are traces of slip produced as my hands moved across the clay.

The intention was to lessen, or even remove, the sense of separation, effectively collapsing the elements of time and space and bringing the layers into an intimate adjacency, thereby showing both the accumulation of marks in the Cathedral as well as the gestures of my contact.

4.1.4 Review and findings; the 'paradox of touch'

Utilising clay as a bridge between what I felt and how to express it heightened the effect of what Lorna Collins calls the 'paradox of touch'.[7] For Collins, the paradoxical logic of touch lies in the experience of touch being simultaneously merged and not merged: that while physical touch involves the separateness of distinct bodies (e.g. a hand and an object), emotional touch requires an internalised felt experience. In other words, the thing that is touched physically remains unmerged whilst what is touched emotionally becomes a merged experience that happens inside oneself. Drawing on Deleuze's *Logic of sensation,*[8] Collins argues that this haptic sense is a key agent, as when we say 'an art work touches me'.[9]

Collins' explanation of haptic perception clarifies what I found in undertaking this research: that in both senses, I touched and was touched.

My ceramics represent the imaginary space in which this occurs: touch and touched are merged, seeming to collapse the space between, embodying Collins' 'paradox'.

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[7] Collins, Lorna.
[8] Deleuze, Giles *Francis Bacon, The Logic of Sensation.* Translated by Daniel W. Smith. London & New York: Continuum, 2003. *Cited in* Collins, Lorna *Towards an Understanding of the Paradox of Touch,* p.4.
[9] Collins, Lorna, p.4.

4.2.1 Analysis and development of the link between the methodology and an understanding of the Cathedral

During the study, the forces to which the materials were subjected became increasingly a part of the language used. Through their material presence, the layering of image and trace built up over time.

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

Fig. 77 Cai Guo-Qiang, *'Gunpowder Drawings'*
Guggenheim, Bilbou, Spain, Aug. 2009

These drawings, which is how he describes them, are the result of the burn marks left on the paper (he places lines of gunpowder between two sheets of paper and sets off a charge). They are therefore the result of an action rather than an attempt to replicate an image. *(Residency notes)*

Destruction as a creative force emerged from the making process and developed from research into Cai Guo-Qiang's work, which bears a parallel to my practice vis-à-vis his approach to drawing. Cai Guo-Qiang's Gunpowder drawings (Fig. 77) are a residue of a force.

Results from this period of the residency were further clarified when viewed in relation to the work of PhD student, Sarah Gee, which she describes as

'experimenting with expression'.[10] [11] Shown at the British Ceramic Biennial, Stoke-on Trent, 2011, her work pushes the material beyond its functional and durable capacity. By encouraging glaze to eat into powdered clay, Gee exploits the contradictory forces of corrosion and fusion to bond the work together. In this way, Gee's work questions the nature of permanence.

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

Fig. 78 Sarah Gee, '*Experimenting with Expression*'
British Ceramic Biennial, Stoke on Trent, Oct 2011

The idea of opposing forces became an important way of thinking about the work made in the crypt. The technique used to create the ceramics produces both an impression and a residue; paradoxically, this appears to bring together the equal, but opposing, forces of trace and erasure, creating a convergence between two ceramic processes. This, in turn, highlighted a specific characteristic of Worcester Cathedral that is akin to the patina that is created by being both built up and worn away.

[10] Gee is currently studying for her PhD at University of Sunderland. Working title of thesis: 'Towards a definition of impermanence in contemporary ceramic art practice'.
[11] Gee, Sarah. Text from description on exhibition panel, British Ceramic Biennial, Stoke-on-Trent, 2011.



Fig. 79 Pippa Galpin, Red Triptych, Worcester Cathedral

Height 56cm, width 138cm, depth 4cm
Exhibited here at Corsham Court, April, 2012
(See End Plates)

Similar to the detail of the Cathedral floor in Fig. 80 below, the idea of patina as something you add to as you simultaneously take (something) away, harked back to an initial observation when considering the Cathedral from a haptic perspective: the polishing of the toe of the statue (Fig. 15) through repeated touching. This patina is highly evocative: it carries haptic memory - a mnemonic triggered both by sight and by the touch that gives as it takes.



Fig. 80 Worcester Cathedral floor showing the patina enhanced by the light and surface

4.2.2 Ceramic friezes as '*haptic landscapes*'

Informed by how colour and light heightened the visual haptic appreciation of the Cathedral, the ceramic friezes developed over the course of the residency. By enhancing the ceramic pieces after the print was lifted - for instance, by rubbing back the surfaces, burnishing the high points and adding oxides into the cracks - the complexity of the layering was enhanced and the cracks and capillary networks revealed. During the early part of the residency the works made remained focused on experiencing the space through touch, being an unaltered result of an action. As the residency progressed, however, the focus shifted to an interest in communicating what was perceived during the period in contact with the Cathedral and hence the enhancement mentioned above. (Lifting of self-imposed restrictions was to feature in the work made in the second year of the residency. See Chapter 8.)

The dynamics involved in the creation of real-world landscapes - of opposing forces, built up and eroded - caused the works to take on a similar topography, which I have called haptic landscapes. This was described in an extract written at the time and is depicted in examples below:

> *When evaluating the initial findings from my practical research, I found that seeking to make visible what I perceived through touch resulted in work with a landscape quality about it. Like landscapes, these pieces were formed by forces exerted upon them. In the same way as trees in some locations are gradually deformed by the long-term effects of wind and elements, or the sea wears away at the shore, these pieces record movements across a surface: a memory of an experience, a haptic landscape. (Residency notes)*



Fig. 81 Pippa Galpin, detail of frieze polished and rubbed back
(See End Plates and Fig. 79 for full frieze)

Through the clay a felt sense of the space was made visual. As the clay was layered up on the floor, requiring repeated movements, a similar layering up seemed to be taking place to my internal representation of the touch information. In neuroscience, this process is described as:

> 'Haptic imagery [and] is the ability to form a mental image of object properties examined by touch.'[12]

In my work, the clay transforms my haptic imagery into an external visual object. As the work developed, the ceramic friezes became a mnemonic for my internal representation of what I have perceived as the Cathedral's haptic landscapes.

[12] Hollins, Mark 'Haptic mental rotation: More consistent in blind subjects?'. In: 'Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness', 80 (9), 1986, p.35. [Online] Available from: www.researchgate.net/.../232462129_Haptic_mental_rotation_More_consistent_in_blind_subjecs [Accessed 1 July 2015]



Fig. 82 Pippa Galpin, detail of frieze
Close up of 7-piece frieze (see Fig. 54)

4.2.3 Conclusion

By employing critical but often overlooked aspects of the haptic system as a research methodology an understanding of the reciprocal impact of touch on the exploration of a space, and on the explorer of that space, evolved.

This aspect of the research engendered themes of reading as writing and writing as reading and evoked the visual metaphor of the ceramics as haptic landscapes. This came to represent what happens when Rodaway's haptic geography is made visual, demonstrating the opposing forces of trace and erasure, both in the work and via the haptic impressions inscribed in me.

By adopting the metaphor of reading-and-writing, the analysis of my practice in the first year of the residency unpacks how ceramics and the haptic operated as a mode of exploration. This way of thinking suggests that the physical expression evidenced in haptic marks is part of a universal ceramic language, an idea developed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Reflection on the haptic as a ceramic language in relation to contemporary ceramic context

This chapter revisits the nature of the research in relation to contemporary ceramic debate (see Chapter 1) and reflects on ceramics and the haptic as a mode of thinking and a language that can be applied in the expanded field.

Section 1 considers the notion that knowledge, as psychologist Jonathan W. Schooler has suggested, is compromised when verbally articulated.[1] While this section focuses on a craft-oriented version of Schooler's ideas, leading to an apparent paradox of the haptic, it also explores how metaphor appears to offer a solution to the paradox, and perhaps a different mode of understanding.[2]

The aim of this section is to explore ways in which haptic stimuli may be articulated. The frequency with which the word paradox is used in this text to unpack the nature of the haptic, highlights the complex and often contradictory nature of this stimulus, and hence some of the difficulties with pinning it down. However, attempts to achieve this are discussed further in relation to De Waal's essay, 'Speak For Yourself', and conclude that a 'silent', 'childlike'[3] and possibly 'pre-verbal' language is communicated via the medium of ceramics.[4]

Section 2 defines the area of knowledge ascertained through an 'indexical' impression or trace, as described by Margaret Iversen.[5] Through examining examples of contemporary ceramic practice, the research indicates that the

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[1] Schooler, Jonathan W *et al*. *Thoughts Beyond Words: When Language Overshadows Insight*.
[2] Not to be confused with what Lorna Collins calls the 'paradox of touch' - see 4.1.4.
[3] De Waal, Edmund 'Speak For Yourself'. *Interpreting Ceramics*, Issue 5, 2004. [Online] Available from: http://interpretingceramics.com/issue005/dogandwolf.htm [Accessed 2 July, 2015].
[4]Ridley, Matt *Nature via Nurture, Genes, experience and what makes us Human.* London: Fourth Estate, 2004, p.216.
[5] Iversen, Margaret 'Index, Diagram, Graphic Trace; Involuntary Drawing', Tate Papers, Issue 18. 2012. [Online] Available from: www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/index-diagram-graphic-trace. [Accessed 2 July, 2015].

haptic is a language that via bodily impressions links to another human being and is in some form re-experienced, or re-known.

This section also reviews the position of contemporary ceramics in relation to a theory for craft, as defined by Howard Risatti,[6] and re-emphasises the importance de Waal[7] places on repetition and on the build-up of knowledge described by Johnson as integral to craft sensibility.[8]

[6] Risatti, Howard *A Theory of Craft; Function and Aesthetic Experience.* Chapel Hill U.S.A: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
[7] De Waal, Edmund 'Speak For Yourself'.
[8] Johnson, Pamela 'Out of Touch'. *In:* Harrod *ed*. *Obscure Objects of Desire: Reviewing the crafts in the Twentieth Century*. Great Britain: Crafts Council, 1997, p.293.

5.1.1 A study of a space through clay; a distinction between knowledge and information

In 1997, Pamela Johnson, in her article aptly entitled, 'Out of Touch', warned of concerns for the language of the crafts in a digital age. She wrote:

> 'The sensuousness of the crafts would seem to have particular resonance at this time, as we witness the intensification of a digitised information technology. A computer terminal provides access to information, a craft object implies access to a certain kind of knowledge.'[9]

By contrasting the acquisition of knowledge to that of information, Johnson brings to prominence a mode of perception achievable through material based work.

It is this kind of knowledge expressed in the bodily understanding of Kemske's work and in the physicality of clenching by Deacon (Fig.7), that influenced this research at the outset.

In analysing the haptic as a means of exploring a space it became apparent that as well as being a form of understanding that is under threat in a digital age, it was also an area which proved difficult to articulate. Further research into a theory of compromised knowledge acquisition by the psychologist Jonathan W. Schooler suggested why this might be.[10]

Schooler describes how 'verbal overshadowing' - the shifting of information out of the visual and into the verbal - displaces the visual memory or knowledge across to a verbal equivalent, which is significantly less reliable and less rich:

[9] Johnson, Pamela, p.293.
[10] Schooler, Jonathan 'The verbal overshadowing effect: Why descriptions impair face recognition', Memory & Cognition, 25 (2), 1997, pp129-139. [Online] Available from: http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.418.5504&rep=rep1&type=pdf [Accessed 2 July 2015].

> 'There are certain… fluid, intuitive, nonverbal kinds of experience that are vulnerable to this process [of verbal overshadowing].'[11]

Schooler originally tested his hypothesis by showing test subjects a video of a crime (a staged bank robbery). The subjects were then asked to verbally describe the robber while a control group did not. Both groups were presented with line-ups and asked to identify the robber from similar looking faces. What Schooler found was that the subjects who had described the robber no longer had uncontaminated access to their original visual memory or experience.

> '… the verbalization subjects were biased to rely on their memory of how they had described the face. Their verbal memory overshadowed their visual memory.'[12]

Further studies showed that:

> '…regardless of the specific content of the verbally derived memory, generating a verbal description induces a shift from holistic/visual processing… to featural/verbal processing…'[13]

And:

> '… verbalization biases subjects towards verbalizable processes, and thereby disrupts the non-verbalizable…'[14]

It is important to note, however, that this overshadowing effect does not apply only to the shift from the visual to the verbal but, as Schooler notes above, producing a verbal description causes, irrespective of the original content, a shift from holistic (global) processing to featural (local) processing.

Complicating this issue further, research at Pohang University of Science and Technology and the University of British Columbia into the naming of haptic stimuli has shown that:

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[11] Schooler, Jonathan W *et al*. *Thoughts Beyond Words*, pp.166-183.
[12] Schooler, Jonathan 'The verbal overshadowing effect', pp.129-139.
[13] *Ibid*, p.135
[14] Schooler, Jonathan and Sean M Lane 'Skimming the surface: Verbal Overshadowing of Analogical Retrieval' [Research report], *Psychological Science*, 2004, p.718. [Online] Available from: http://lsu.edu/psychology/oac/documents/Lane_Schooler2004.pdf [Accessed 2 July 2015].

> 'Most people have less linguistic specificity for nuanced touch sensations than for visual or auditory experiences'.[15]

In trying to fill this linguistic gap, the researchers offered subjects the opportunity to name haptic experiences; the results showed that attempting to verbally label such experiences was in fact thwarted:

> '…verbal overshadowing may have impeded [the] learning…'[16]

While all this provides clues as to why touch in particular - and the haptic in general - is the least explored of the senses (see Kemske 1.1.2) it also helps explain why the haptic has been relatively neglected in artistic discourse: we literally explain it away when we try to explain it at all.

Instead, we might take Schooler's advice:

> 'It appears that some things are better left unsaid...'[17]

A statement that chimes uncannily well with Peter Dormer's assertion that:

> 'almost nothing that is important about a craft can be put into words',[18]

And yet, despite whatever neglected status it has, the haptic remains a significant part of every artistic experience, from sculpture to painting to writing. We simply do not have an adequate way of talking about it, since when we do talk about it we risk losing its essence. This might be called the paradox of the haptic.

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[15] Hwang, Inwook *et al*. *The Haptic Crayola Effect: Exploring the Role of Naming in Learning Haptic Stimuli*. Pohang University of Science and Technology, University of British Columbia, 2008, p.390. [Online] Available from: www.cs.ubc.ca/~brehmer/pubs/hwang_worldhaptics11.pdf [Accessed 22 June 2015].
[16] *Ibid*, p.390.
[17] Schooler, Jonathan W and Tonya Y Engstler-Schooler. 'Verbal overshadowing of visual memories'.
[18] Dormer, Peter, p.219.

5.1.2 Metaphor as a method to overcome difficulties in articulating the haptic

Thirteen years after the publication of Johnson's essay, 'Out of Touch', a book by the ceramist Edmund de Waal, *The Hare with Amber Eyes; a Hidden Inheritance* was published to high acclaim.[19] Pertinent to this study is that de Waal's descriptions are infused with an attention to detail clearly born out of a sensitivity to his craft. This he utilises to bring to life the history behind a collection of netsuke. De Waal illustrates the actual haptic process of experiencing objects at its most basic, as well as the type of knowledge that is inferred by the reflective reader. In other words, touch made visible.

In describing the netsuke de Waal writes:

> 'I pick one up… If it is wood, chestnut or elm, it is even lighter than the ivory. You see the patina more easily on these wooden ones: there is a faint shine on the spine of the brindled wolf and on the tumbling acrobats locked in their embrace… There is a slight split, an almost imperceptible fault line on the cicada. Who dropped it? Where and when?' 'You work your fingers round the smoothness and stoniness of the ivory.'[20]

Such language draws on what might be called a Proustian sensibility.[21] And though de Waal describes (which Schooler has shown can lead to a loss of information and richness) he does so in ways that deliberately try to recapture the sense of the experience by means of language and metaphor. De Waal's style is, in fact, strikingly novelistic: he uses the second person to engage the reader ("you see" and "you work your fingers"); arresting images and concrete language that draw the reader into filmic close-ups that then convey a more felt experience; metaphors such as 'fault line' and 'stoniness' that release compressed meaning suddenly and potently; and role-playing engagement by

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[19] De Waal, Edmund *The Hare with Amber Eyes; a hidden inheritance.* London: Chatto & Windus, 2010.
[20] *Ibid,* pp.11-12.
[21] A Proustian language, 1931 Times Lit. Suppl. 2 Apr. 274/2 The Proustian distinction between 'involuntary memory'… and 'voluntary memory' (Ref OED)

asking questions such as, Who dropped it? and Where and when? These seemingly simple language devices help reconstruct the haptic experience for the reader.[22]

What I am proposing here, given the paradox of the haptic by which knowledge may be impoverished or lost when verbalised - one might say shifted across from felt knowledge to mere information – is that the nature of the materials and processes evoke an internal non-verbal knowing or memory of knowing.

In this sense, Johnson's concerns that in a digital age we might become 'Out of Touch' with the language of the crafts seems to have been avoided by the use of an archetypal language of ceramics and the haptic.

5.1.3 Ceramics and the haptic: a language of silence

Recognition of the lack of a voice in the crafts, and the haptic in particular, is starting to be addressed. In a paper presented at The Ceramic Millennium in Amsterdam, Janet Koplos noted that since the turn of the 20th century, the lack of 'a critical language for clay' has been acknowledged though not yet resolved (see1.1.1).[23] And, as Kemske observes, the dearth of analysis concerning the sense of touch is now 'being challenged across many fields' (see 1.2.1).[24] However, the haptic experience still remains a problematic area about which to write, a point also brought to attention by research from recent scientific and marketing studies.[25]

Schooler's hypothesis suggests that the concern Kemske raised, that touch was one of 'the most direct and least analysed of our senses'[26] might arise from it involving a different mode of thinking; a mode that stems from an internal,

[22] De Waal, Edmund, pp.11-12.
[23] Koplos, Janet 'Ceramics and art criticism', p.280.
[24] Kemske, Bonnie 'Breaking the Taboo'.
[25] Hwang, Inwook *et al*, p.390.
[26] Kemske, Bonnie 'Breaking the Taboo'.

preverbal self i.e. a child-like aspect that understands the language of gesture and sensation before it understands verbal language.[27]

This idea resonates with the thinking of:

> 'several different scientists in recent years [who] are beginning to suspect that human language was originally transmitted by gesture, not speech'.[28]

Intriguingly, in a paper entitled, 'Speak For Yourself', de Waal questioned why ceramics was under-articulated:

> 'If theory is of value, why is not this more apparent to potters - and why are not more makers of ceramic art writing about their work?' [29]

De Waal suggests that it is too simple to attribute this lack of critical writing to a flaw in the maker and that:

> 'The makers' silence is fruitful, is necessary for the poet's creativity, a reminder of physicality, of repetition and of a gestural language'.[30]

De Waal sees a connection between the making and the silence as reasons why there has been a lack of writing about ceramic work. He asks that we:

> 'listen to the language of Leach when writing on the feeling of glazes to the touch:
>
> > "Unconsciously our fingers are invited to play over the contours, thereby experiencing pleasure through the most primitive and objective means. Children play with pebbles with a similar awakening of perception."[31] …

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[27] Iverson, Jana M. & Susan Goldin-Meadow, 'Gesture paves the way for language development'. [Research Report] *Psychological Science*, 16(5), 2005, pp.367–371. [Online] Available from: https://goldin-meadow-lab.uchicago.edu/.../goldin-meadow.../2005_Iverson_ GM.pdf [Accessed 22 Sept, 2015].
[28] Ridley, Matt, p.216.
[29] De Waal, Edmund 'Speak For Yourself'.
[30] Leach, Bernard 1940 *cited in* De Waal, Edmund 'Speak For Yourself'. *Interpreting Ceramics*, Issue 5, 2004. [Online] Available from: http://interpretingceramics.com/issue005/dogandwolf.htm [Accessed 2 July, 2015].
[31] De Waal, Edmund 'Speak For Yourself'.

> Authenticity precedes the fall into self-consciousness, the fall into language that comes in childhood'.[32]

What de Waal heralded and is still important is that ceramics demands a particular mode of attention, in the making and in the understanding. He argues that by writing about materiality and gesture these almost inexpressible experiences can in fact be expressed, or interpreted.

5.1.4 Ceramics and the haptic: a mode of understanding

One of my aims throughout this thesis has been to explore, and make overt, a ceramic sensibility - a gestural language which stems from my past as a potter and is utilised in my practice. This sensibility includes the older notion of silence still used to describe the way ceramics communicates.[33] [34]

There is a conundrum here, one that impinges on a larger Western debate regarding the suitability (or not) of pinning down craft sensibilities. On the one hand, it raises notions such as Peter Dormer's concern that a critical language might 'distort the integrity' of craft (see 1.1.1) by talking about something that, as Schooler hypothesises, cannot be adequately verbalised.[35] On the other hand, it flags up that historically most formal analysis of the vessel was, and still is, biased towards the visual. For example, although a large part of the function of a bowl may be its capacity to be handled and while there might be token mention of tactile qualities - for example, weight and texture - there is still a lack of discussion that involves what it actually feels like to touch the object; in other words, the subjective experience of physically touching something and the subjective experience of emotionally touching something.

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[32] *Ibid.*
[33] As suggested in the title of a book edited by Peter Held, *The Language of Silence, the Art of Toshiko Takaezu,* 2010.
[34] The notion of 'ceramics as a site' where silence can be explored is developed in an article by Jeffrey Jones, 'Keeping Quiet and Finding a Voice', Interpreting Ceramics, Issue 5. Available from: www.interpretingceramics.com/issue005/keepingquiet.htm
[35] Dormer, Peter, p.219.

The freshness of de Waal's argument is that it removes the need to pin down craft sensibilities by focusing on specific characteristics of making and on the physical properties of materials as a way to speak about what is actually in front of you. This development of thinking and writing about ceramics is starting to include an understanding and familiarity with the material and what it can do, offering a way to talk about sensual haptic qualities in the work, while allowing the clay to communicate via the sophistication of silence.[36]

From the perspective of research within a sacred setting, this impoverished vocabulary for haptic experience - whereby even its naming and labeling has received less verbalisation - might keep the experiences more in the non-rational, inexplicable, pre-verbal and 'synesthetic' realms, which allows for the capturing and holding of the original uncontaminated experience (much as Rudolf Otto insisted that the numinous could only really be talked about via analogy and metaphor).[37] This is further explored in Chapter 7.

[36] See also: Roberts, Geraint 'Filling the Silence: Towards an Understanding of Claudia Casanovas' Blocks'. [Online] Available from: www.interpretingceramics.com/issue005/fillingthesilence.htm. [Accessed 2 July 2015].
[37] Synaesthesia: A condition in which one type of stimulation evokes the sensation of another, as when the hearing of a sound produces the visualisation of a colour.

5.2.1 Redefining the haptic language used during the research

During the first year of the residency a theme of 'reading as writing and writing as reading' developed from the reciprocal nature of using clay to explore the crypt. Thus, what was learnt was simultaneously articulated. An index of actions was brought together with the imprint of the Cathedral floor. This came to represent an internalised haptic landscape of the experience of the sacred space. The following section reflects on the nature of this as a language of embodied metaphor and considers how it is enacted in clay.

5.2.2 A trace of an action; an indexical link

To highlight the fact that this language has a particular kind of immediacy it is useful at this stage to explore the nature of an 'index', as used in this study in relation to the human, and as opposed to the 'graphic trace', because it exemplifies an aspect of the knowledge vs. information dichotomy referred to earlier.

For example, in Clare Twomey's installation, '*Consciousness/Conscience'* there is an awareness of contact that is quietly potent. The work plays on our preconceived notion of the ground under our feet as solid and that a tiled floor can be walked on without thinking, which is subverted by making a floor of unfired compressed clay tiles, which powder when trodden on (see fig 83 below).

> 'By walking across the work [the public] effectively destroy the floor to gain access to other works. The floor tiles record their path within the space. Consciousness/Conscience is conceptually linked with ideas of human interaction, social convention and appropriateness.[38]'

[38] Twomey, Clare *Clare Twomey: the official website*, 2015. [Online] Available from: www.claretwomey.com/consciousness_conscience.html [Accessed April, 2015].

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

Fig. 83 Clare Twomey, '*Consciousness/Conscience'* [39]
Royal Crown Darby bone china, 1,400 by 400cm 2.5cm deep. Tate Liverpool; Crafts Council, London; and Icheon, Korea, 2001-2004. This work has recently been remade for 'Fragile?', an exhibition at The National Museum Cardiff, 18 April to 4 October 2015.

> *For me the power of this piece is the reminder of what we take for granted. (Residency notes)*

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This form of trace evidences a haptic experience of the world that is so basic, so ubiquitous, that in the real world it is often overlooked.

It is helpful to consider the specifics of the term index and how it operates broadly within an art context. In 'Index, Diagram, Graphic Trace, Involuntary Drawing', Margaret Iversen defines a notion of the index as developed by the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce.[40] Iversen refers to the index as:

> 'part of a highly complex theory of sign systems… [a] tripartite division of signs – the icon, the symbol, and the index – based on their differing

[39] Paradise, Andy *image of* Clare Twomey's 'Consciousness/Conscience', 2001-2004. [Online] Available from: www.claretwomey.com/media/images/user-images/20576/consciousnessconscience_1.jpg [Accessed April, 2015].
[40] Iversen, Margaret.

means of signification: broadly, the icon depends on similarity, the symbol on convention and the index on some physical or existential connection..'

Iversen explains that:

> 'While a pointing finger or a shadow are simultaneous with and normally adjacent to their objects, most indexical marks are traces of something that was present in the past… [such as] a footprint in the sand.'[41]

Peirce calls the directness of the communication seen in the example of a pointed finger, 'shocking', and though not as direct, he maintains that this retains some of the immediacy of this link to the human and the visceral.[42]

The haptic trace in and of itself is not exclusive to ceramics; it is a device or language shared by other media. However, though not necessarily an intentional part of the communication of a ceramic piece, traces of haptic marks can always be seen in handmade ceramics.

Utilising a piece by Bulgarian artist Nedko Solakov, Iversen demonstrates the difference between the use of symbols and index, and the information communicated. In the work, *Fear,* Solakov (see Fig. 84) contrasts a computerised boarding pass stub and lumps of clay with hand marks impressed into them. By carrying the clay with him on a flight the artist recorded his involuntary movements by squeezing the clay whenever he became nervous.

[41] *Ibid.*
[42] *Ibid.*

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

Fig. 84 Nedko Solakov, '*Fear',* 2002–3

'Terracotta, Alitalia, Austrian Airlines, and Lufthansa boarding pass stubs, ball-point pen [and a pair of] sculptures'[43]

The premise here is that in Solakov's work the index indicates a link to another human being's emotions. In Iversen's text, attention is drawn to the idea of a human impression as a link and it is this link that I want to explore and develop throughout this chapter as a way of understanding the nature of my research practice. I will be referring to this as an indexical link.

A powerful example of representation of the human by touch is exemplified, in terms of performance art, in the traces of Ana Mendieta's '*Body Tracks'.*[44]

[43] Tzvetanov, Angel *image of* Nedko Solakov's 'Fear', 2002–3. *In*: Iversen, Margaret *Index, Diagram, Graphic Trace; Involuntary Drawing*. Tate Papers, Issue 18, 2012. [Online] Available from: www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/index-diagram-graphic-trace. [Accessed 2 July, 2015].

[44] Walker, Janet S 'The Body is Present Even if in Disguise: Tracing the Trace in the Artwork of Nancy Spero and Ana Mendieta'. Tate Paper, Issue 11, 2009. [Online] Available from: www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/7280 [Accessed 1 July, 2015].

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

Fig. 85 Ana Mendieta, *'Body Tracks' (Rastros Corporales)* [45]
Blood and tempera on paper, 1982

This form of tactile representation is described by the French philosopher, Georges Didi-Huberman, as closing:

> 'the gap between the mimetic reflection and its model, thereby avoiding the dominance of the eye and mind'.[46]

As Mark Wallinger's '*Id paintings*' demonstrate, a narrative through the trace of an action comes from recognition. The example Wallinger uses recalls the bilateral symmetry of the famous Rorschach test, whereby:

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[45] Mendieta, Anna 'Body Tracks'. *In*: Walker, Janet S *The Body is Present Even if in Disguise: Tracing the Trace in the Artwork of Nancy Spero and Ana Mendieta*. Tate Paper, Issue 11, 2009. [Online] Available from: www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/7280 [Accessed April, 2015].
[46] Didi-Huberman, George *L'Empreinte* at the Centre Pompidou, 1997 *cited in* Walker, Janet S *The Body is Present Even if in Disguise: Tracing the Trace in the Artwork of Nancy Spero and Ana Mendieta*. Tate Paper, Issue 11, 2009. [Online] Available from: www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/7280[Accessed 1 July, 2015].

'in recognizing figures and shapes in the material, the viewer reveals their own desires and predilections while trying to interpret those of the artist.'[47]

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

Fig. 86 Mark Wallinger, *'Id Painting 50'*
Acrylic on canvas, 360 x 180 cm, 2016

'Wallinger utilises Sigmund Freud's terms, id, ego and superego in an interrogation of the psyche, the self, and the subject… the paintings are the record of actions that appear to be intuitive and guided by instinct, thus echoing the primal, impulsive and libidinal characteristics of the id.'[48]

Like Wallinger, who used his arm span to determine the size of his '*Id* paintings', my ceramics bear the evidence of their making and a narrative of the artist's encounter with the surface.

[47] *Hauser & Wirth: the official website*, 2016. [Online] Available from: www.hauserwirth.com/exhibitions/2717/mark-wallinger-id/view/. [Accessed 23 April 2016].
[48] *Ibid.*

5.2.3 An indexical link; performance in raw-clay

By using ceramics as an arena in which an activity can take place the nature of the work made during the residency took up a position not as performance, but in relation to performance. With this, the use of raw clay brought into question the intrinsic value of the unfinished work.

Both nationally and internationally there is a current interest in the use of raw clay in performance. Extrapolated from a maker's sensibility, contemporary conceptual ceramists adopt the language of ceramics and the haptic to enact a performance.[49] [50] Of particular interest in relation to this project are the works of Alexandra Engelfriet, Summer Zickefoose and Elizabeth DiDonna who explore a connection between the bodily and embodied metaphor with clay.

In the '*Marl Hole'* project, Engelfriet's use of clay is pared back to the fundamentals of process and a physical connection between maker and material.

[49] Raw clay is currently broadly used throughout installation and performance art, for example in works by sculptor Kate McLeod, Royal British Society of Sculptors. [Online] Available from: www.rbs.org.uk/artists/kate-mcleod [Accessed 23 April 2016].
And performance artist Heather Cassils, Fierce Festival, 'Becoming an Image – this is tomorrow', October 2013. [Online] Available from: www.thisistomorrow.info/.../fierce-festival-heather-cassils-becoming-an-image. [Accessed 23 April 2016].

[50] For an illuminating account of ceramic and performance see, 'Elastic/Expanding: Contemporary, Conceptual Ceramics' by Jo Dahn, in *Extra/Ordinary, Craft and Contemporary Art,* Ed. M. E. Buszek.

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

Fig. 87 Alexandra Engelfriet during the *'Marl Hole'* project [51]
Organized by Neil Brownsword
British Ceramics Biennial, Stoke-on-Trent, 2009

The 'Marl Hole' performance was carried out in a clay-pit, so the clay has not been brought to the site or involved in any other process of making. In contrast to the usual volume worked on in a ceramic object this is a huge site and registers marks made not just by the repetitive hand or finger movements, but by actions of the entire body. (Post-residency notes)

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

Fig. 88 Alexandra Engelfriet [52]
Detail of the above, to show the scale of the project (see Fig. 87 above.)

[51] © Engelfriet, Alexandra 'Marl Hole'. *Alexandra Engelfriet's Projects: the official website*. Project organised by Neil Brownsword as part of the first British Ceramic Biennial in Stoke-on-Trent, 2009. [Online] Available from: www.alexandra-engelfriet.nl/projects.php. [Accessed 22 September 2015].
[52] *Ibid.*

Engelfriet uses the association implied by the relationship between the maker and the clay to highlight that she is working with 'the material from which everything arises and into which everything returns'.[53] While in *'Dust to Dust'* (see below) the Biblical reference in the title is clear, it arises out of the mundane and everyday, as embodied in ceramics.

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

Fig. 89 Alexandra Englefriet, '*Dust to Dust*' [54]
Video performance, (see URL below) 2011

> *The forms are achieved by repetitive wrapping of wet clay in damp cloth. Lifting and turning the clay, the weight of the clay feels like bodies. The clay pushes against the wet cloth in the way a body would bulge against a shroud. Treading down the clay, the clay squidges between her toes. There is a physical intensity and sombreness about the way Englefreit works that suggests a narrative.* *(Post-residency notes)*

Engelfriet's work shows the capacity of haptic traces in clay to shift quickly from being recognised as commonplace associations, to ideas about life and death and from the microcosm to the macrocosm, such as the leap from the playful

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[53] © Engelfriet, Alexandra 'Dust to Dust'. *Alexandra Engelfriet's Projects: the official website*, 2011. [Online] Available from: www.alexandra-engelfriet.nl/projects.php. [Accessed 22 September 2015].
[54] © Engelfriet, Alexandra 'Dust to Dust', 2011. Video performance: YouTube. [Online] Available from: www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=loMYdBt0N3k [Accessed 28 February, 2016].

squidginess of clay to its role in grand themes of creation myths, perhaps as metaphors are absorbed.

Similarly, ceramic processes that involve a repetition of an action over time – such as working on Cathedral floors with wet clay – may begin to develop a likeness to ritualistic activity, a factor that became increasingly important as my residency progressed.

Using the idea of connection-through-making and making-as-connection, a performance piece by Zickefoose and DiDonna, entitled '*Bridge'* (Fig. 90 - 91) used clay to join two people both literally and metaphorically. The work is described as focusing on the process involved in the making to demonstrate connections to one another, thus:

> 'referencing a shared act through reciprocal actions'.[55]

[55] Di Donna, Elizabeth and Summer Zickefoose 'Bridge'. *Actions+Materials: the official website,* 2011. [Online] Available from: http://actionsplusmaterial.tumblr.com. [Accessed July, 2015].

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

Fig. 90 Elizabeth DiDonna and Summer Zickefoose, '*Bridge*', 2011 [56]

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

Fig. 91 Elizabeth DiDonna and Summer Zickefoose, '*Bridge*' [57]

[56] Scollon, Erik and Carly Slade *image of* Elizabeth Di Donna and Summer Zickefoose's 'Bridge'. [Online] Available from: http://actionsplusmaterial.tumblr.com/ [Accessed July, 2015].
[57] *Ibid.*

In another Zickefoose project entitled, '*A Line from a Poem'*, clay is used again to function as an interface forming a physical link between two people, though over a greater distance.

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

Fig. 92 Summer Zickefoose, '*A line from a poem*,' USA, 2011 [58]

Ceramics, in the nature of a vessel, has always operated as a link, a connection, sometimes a barrier, to the outside world. A ceramic mug is an interface between the body and a fluid, its function to protect the body and prevent the contents

[58] © The Brick Factory [collective] *image of* Summer Zickefoose's 'A line from a poem', 2011. [Online] Available from: http://actionsplusmaterial.tumblr.com/ [Accessed July, 2015].

from spilling, and though one is potentially warmed by the contents one is also separated from them. In Zickefoose's piece, '*A line From a Poem'*, this interface is developed conceptually, as a metaphor between inside and out. The work highlights the idea of the simultaneous nature of contact and separation, that epitomises haptic experience (see Collin's notion of the 'paradox of touch' 4.1.4)

Similarly, in my work, clay is used both as an actual and a metaphorical interface, enabling a connection to the crypt as a way to gain objectivity about the experience, in order to write about it.

5.2.4 The ceramic pot as an indexical link and interface

Touch is not a language exclusive to ceramics, but as Kemske says;

> 'Ceramic ware has always been handled and made by hand'.[59]

As such it operates as an indexical link, an interface.

A visit to both The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology and the Crafts Potters Association showed the importance of subtle haptic nuances and the timelessness of this connection.

The Museum houses the Flinders Petrie collections. Petrie discovered a way to date archaeological sites through the 'careful noting and comparison of the smallest details' of pottery.[60] The museum presentations categorise periods of ancient history through the subtleties of change in ceramic form, mark, or decoration.

The nature of the fingerprints, the indexical traces, left on the pots provides an evocative sense of 'your hand in the makers' space' (see Intro.) and a connection to early Egyptian civilisation (see Fig. 93).

[59] Kemske, Bonnie 'Breaking the Taboo'.
[60] Flinders Petrie Museum, description on placard, Dec. 2013.

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

Fig. 93 Vessels, Dendra
The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology

Susan Nemeth describes this connection:

> 'My ceramics are about expressing individuality and exploring the handmade mark. I am looking for the vulnerability, the spirit and the essence of the human touch with all its imperfections… '[61]

[61] Nemeth, Susan *Contemporary Applied Arts: the official website*, 2012. [Online] Available from: www.caa.org.uk/exhibitions/archive/2012/gifted/susan-nemeth/. [Accessed 2 July, 2015].

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

Fig. 94 Susan Nemeth, Handmade vessels, 2012

Handmade ceramic vessels, touched into shape by repetitive gestures, which leave finger marks and a spiralling pattern that traces their growth, simultaneously suggestive of the relationship between body shapes and clusters of vessels. (Post-residency notes)

In Nemeth's work I saw a connection to my own, in that like most indexical links, ceramic traces are evidence, through the 'animating' qualities of clay, of the past in the present.[62]

[62] *Ibid*.

5.2.5 An indexical link through ceramic installation

Having established the idea of an indexical link to another human as a quality contained in handmade ceramics, a language of ceramics and the haptic brings with it this language when installed in a new context.

For example, a non-verbalisable haptic language is employed in ceramic installations which use remembered or imagined touch to communicate. In a similar vein to the work I exhibited in the Cathedral at the end of the first year of the residency, Kate Wilson uses the handmade to point to human loss and by implication human connection:

> 'A set of vessels commemorating British service personnel killed in Afghanistan, the *Last Full Measure of Devotion* attempts to physically quantify the actual tally of lost lives in a format that can be universally 'read' in the form of loving cups.'[63]



Fig. 95 Kate Wilson *The Last Full Measure of Devotion* [64]
Wells Cathedral, Lady Chapel, U.K. 2013

[63] Wilson, Kate *Email to Pippa Galpin*, Aug. 2015.
[64] Wilson, Kate 'The Last Full Measure of Devotion', 2013. *Photograph Emailed to Pippa Galpin*, Aug. 2015.

Placed on the steps of the altar the function of these cups is designed to be read metaphorically, presuming a knowledge of what it would feel like to hold and use them, but they are also ritualistic, at our feet to be knelt before, not used. The whole idea of a loving cup, where traditionally two people hold the cup at the same time, draws on the notion of the ceramic vessel as an extension of the body and invites the idea of a link to another human. These are cups that do not need to be put down - they are commemorative, holding a thought or a memory, something to be shared.

In a variety of ways the installation engages with notions of touch, through memories of contact in the past, in the viewing of the work. Wilson explains that:

> 'The space itself physically allowed engagement in a way none of the other venues could.'[65]

The intent was for each vessel to maintain individuality. To achieve this Wilson used the imperfections of hand-made production. Wilson says:

> 'At each stage of the making my hands were 'present', from throwing, pulling handles, applying a sprig to glazing and the application of decals.'

The effect of the:

> 'slight variation in the size of loving cups created a shimmer that would not have happened had they been cast objects, this shimmer gave a landscape to focus upon, encouraging the viewer to linger. The spiritual nature of the place provided a quiet space for contemplation when people are automatically quiet and respectful and therefore perhaps made some consider the subject matter more deeply than at another, non-spiritual venue.'[66]

In relation to my thesis, what is significant is the quiet way this haptic ceramic language communicates in a sacred context. Wilson's reference to the slight

[65] Wilson, Kate *Email to Pippa Galpin*, Aug. 2015.
[66] *Ibid.*

differences in the pieces causing a shimmering quality that is akin to a landscape is reminiscent of my notion of haptic landscapes.

5.2.6 Findings and observations in relation to contemporary ceramic discourse

In an article entitled 'Super-objects: Craft as an aesthetic position' (see 1.1.1) Louise Mazanti suggests that the way forward for the crafts is to represent themselves not only literally but also metaphorically.[67] Mazanti suggests that this is done by considering:

> 'the role [craft]… performs in contemporary culture'.[68]

Quoting de Waal, Mazanti refers to the crafts as 'site-sensitive' because they bring their own language and the metaphors they embody with them to a new context.[69]

This approach, typified by Linda Sormin, brings the haptic qualities of clay to collaborative projects.

> *In a YouTube video about her work, Sormin describes 'the act of forming… an experience of the world through the whole body'.[70] She brings this haptic quality to her installations by linking found objects with hand rolled clay. It is as though the clay is roaming around the objects, until they are connected through the exploration of touch.* *(Post-residency notes)*

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[67] Mazanti, Louise 'Super-objects: Craft as an aesthetic position'. *In:* Buszek, Maria Elena *ed*. *Extra/Ordinary Craft and Contemporary Art*.
[68] *Ibid,* p.61.
[69] *Ibid*.
[70] Sormin, Linda 'Salvage'. YouTube Video, Sheridan Voices. [Online] Available from: www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=HZeLRZjViH0. [Accessed 28 February 2016].

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

Fig. 96 Linda Sormin, '*Salvage*' [71]
Ceramics and mixed media installation, New Orleans, 2008

For Sormin, this involves extending her own practice, in this case (see Fig. 96) by collaborating with people who had weathered Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, and through storytelling and hands-on making, exploring and enacting stories of vulnerability and aggression, trauma and survival. Survivors such as these became involved in the *'Salvage'* installation for which they themselves provided…

> 'industrial ceramic insulators, a plastic blow-up Scooby dog, glazed architectural façade bricks, string, broken pottery, a section of roof. [They then] worked with raw clay and fired ceramics as [a] connective tissue.'[72]

Through this form of haptic linking, participation in Sormin's work enabled the survivors to elicit a narrative haptic language that allowed them to process trauma.

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[71] Sormin, Linda 'Salvage' *image in*: Sormin, Linda 'Boundary Work' *Interpreting Ceramics*, Issue 12, 2008. [Online] Available from: www.interpretingceramics.com/issue012/articles/07.htm [Accessed September, 2015].
[72] Sormin, Linda 'Boundary Work'. *Interpreting Ceramics*, Issue 12, 2008. [Online] Available from: www.interpretingceramics.com/issue012/articles/07.htm [Accessed September, 2015].

5.3.1 The haptic as integral to a contemporary ceramic language

The language of the haptic includes but is not limited to the language of function.[73] In *A Theory of Craft: Function and Aesthetic Experience,* Howard Risatti proposes a theory for craft distinct from that of Fine Art.[74] His theory is born out of a relationship between function and aesthetic experience. However, by focusing on the haptic and the act of doing and making associated with ceramics, a foundation for ceramics prior to that of function may be employed by some contemporary ceramists.

For Engelfriet, for example, the primary concern is not with the aesthetics of the sculpture. Her focus also includes the way she works, operating:

> 'intuitively, not controlling the work but going along with it, surrendering … to the material and the experience'.[75]

In a video of Engelfriet making a vessel, a strong haptic engagement can be seen via the visual close-ups (see Figs. 97 & 98). The result being that the making is as much the work as is the finished piece.

[73] This idea is developed in an article by Paula Owen entitled 'Fabrication and Encounter; When Content is a Verb' edited by M. E. Buszek's *Extra/Ordinary Craft and Contemporary Art*, p.83.
[74] Risatti, Howard.
[75] During, Nesrin 'From Raw to Fired'. *Ceramic Review*, 256 July/August 2012.

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

Fig. 97 '*Ceramics 1. Alexandra Engelfriet at work*' [76]
Video clip by Carrie de Swaan (see URL below URL)

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

Fig. 98 Alexandra Engelfriet [77]
Close up of making a vessel, from video clip

[76] De Swann, Carrie Image from YouTube video, 'Ceramics 1. Alexandra Engelfriet at Work'. [Online] Available from: www.youtube.com/watch?v=cxWMrEJBhXU [Accessed 12 Dec. 2015].
[77] *Ibid.*

Further recent examples include the idea of a haptic engagement when evoked by the word 'Encounter', which was raised at the Ceramic Biennial, 2015. Here, 'Encounter' includes 'different ways of looking at, interacting with, and understanding contemporary ceramics' in public art projects that link ceramics to a site.[78] In contrast to this, hands-on public art projects such as *'Clay Cargo'* invite the public to 'get some clay under [their] fingernails'.[79] This is a direct reference to hands-on making in large community projects such as the Ikon project, which formed the basis of the 'Thinking Hands' symposium, 2013-15.[80] A documentary project by Neil Brownsword, '*Re-apprenticed',* also explored this idea via pottery production in Stoke.

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

Fig. 99 Neil Brownsword, Film clip from *'Re-apprenticed', 2015*
A film project, exploring the loss of valuable skills in the ceramic industry

This still from the film in which china colours are being mixed was projected on the wall of the disused Stoke ceramic factory during the Ceramic Biennial. (Post-residency notes)

[78] *British Ceramic Biennial: the official website*, 2015. [Online] Available from: www.britishceramicsbiennial.com. [Accessed 23 April, 2016].
[79] *'Clay Cargo',* at the Original Spode Factory Site, Stoke–on–Trent, 2013-2015 and the British Ceramic Biennial HUB, 2015. *British Ceramic Biennial: the official website*, 2015[Online] Available from: www.britishceramicsbiennial.com. [Accessed 23 April, 2016].
[80] 'Thinking Hands Symposium' [Symposium Report PDF] Clayground Collective. [Online] Available from: www.claygroundcollective.org/.../Thinking-Hands-Symposium-Report-Final. [Accessed 28th October, 2015].

In the film, *'Divided Labour',* made in collaboration between Brownsword and Johnny Magee, the repetitive actions of making are explored through both sound and image to evoke:

> 'the pace, rhythms and poetics of making and materiality [illuminating] the human intelligence and ingenuity embodied within various stages of ceramic manufacture, which all too frequently remain overlooked.'[81]

Although made to raise awareness of the demise of traditional ceramic skills, Brownsword's video - by using a sensual ceramic aesthetic with which to show a visual haptic display of the mixing of ceramics colours - shows a contemporary ceramic language born out of its history of making.

In Risatti's investigation of craft, he argues that a reiteration of the real world is a part of how we appreciate functional craft objects. This he ascribes to the act of recognition as knowing, which he says brings with it a sense of re-knowing - an idea that seems to echo Johnson's notion of knowledge acquisition through the crafts, in the article 'Out of Touch'.[82] Where Risatti's argument is useful is in helping to define the area of ceramics and the haptic, in that he draws attention to a haptic trace, as evidencing not just a single act but as an accumulation of events contributing to this mode of thinking: the re-doing and re-membering, as well as associations to an archetypal memory.

In his exploration of the fundamental nature of craft, Risatti refers back to the roots of the word aesthetics which, taken from the Greek word "*aisthētikos",* referred not to art and beauty, but to:

> 'one who is perceptive of things through his sensations, feelings, and intuition'.[83]

[81] Brownsword, Neil, description on placard, British Ceramic Biennial, Stoke-on -Trent, 2015.
[82] Johnson, Pamela, p.293.
[83] Risatti, Howard, p.263.

In this sense, ceramics is at a crossroads, but with new directions on offer (1.1.2), while at the same time ceramics is being applied as part of a sensual haptic aesthetic.

I opened this chapter by considering Johnson's concern in 'Out of Touch', raised at a time when the emergence of digital technology was causing anxiety for some commentators. However, the concern that knowledge might have been lost to the crafts seems to have been unfounded, in that this knowledge is now being applied in new contexts and with new understanding.

By applying a ceramic sensibility (an extended metaphor of craft) to a sacred place my ceramics show traces of actions that are an 'extension of the mind'- an idea that I find in the haptic embodiment of an action in pots by Nemeth, and in raw clay performances by Englefriet and Brownsword's documentary ceramic projects.[84]

My ceramic pieces are not pots. They are, for the most part, wall-mounted, neither designed to be used nor touched. This way of working is extrapolated from a ceramic sensibility and includes the experience of making and of being in the Cathedral. The findings from the residency build on these ideas and on what Risatti describes as an aesthetic of the sensual, a sense of re-knowing; and on Rodaway's insistence that:

> 'Haptic geographies [i.e. touch] begin and end with the living body, literally and metaphorically.'[85]

From this perspective, what this thesis proposes is the creation of a role for ceramics which includes the notion of ceramics and the haptic as a language, in which clay operates as what might be called a 'haptic-font'.

[84] *Ibid*, p.108.
[85] Rodaway, Paul, p.47.

5.3.2 Conclusion

With reference to Schooler's findings, this chapter has explored the nature of the language of ceramics and the haptic, and brings attention to Kaprow's observation that:

> 'only a small fraction of the words we use are precise in meaning… [and] words alone are no true index of thought…' [86]

The language of the haptic is a communication based on knowledge as distinct from information and represents a childlike, pre-verbal mode of thinking. Through a trace of an action, an indexical link to another human is evoked, drawing on both voluntary and involuntary memory. It is a ceramic language that, as a way of thinking, has utility in other contexts. This language is further explored in Chapter 6 in the context of public involvement in participatory projects.

[86] Kaprow, Allan 'The Legacy of Jackson Pollock', 1958. *In:* Kelley *ed*. *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life.* Berkley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1993, p.82.

Chapter 6

Testing and developing findings through public engagement

This chapter reflects on the second year of the residency in which the application of haptic research was tested and evaluated. This included a series of projects that were designed to involve the public.

Having established the haptic as a ceramic language that is informed by an indexical link to another human being, my approach assumes a connection to an act and as such a relation to performance and participation. This is achieved by reflecting on the process of making in a site on view to the public, and the more formal inclusion of the public engagement at the end of year exhibition. This chapter also considers how the partnership with the second artist in residence, Maureen Gamble, impacted the perception of the work. Gamble's performances involve an element of participation, which brought a relational aesthetic perspective to the study.[1]

The chapter outlines the nature of the participatory projects undertaken. This was a process of learning that became perceived as a form of pilgrimage. Reviewed in relation to contemporary ceramics, the chapter concludes that by focusing on the haptic, an extended connection between the participants and the Cathedral was achieved via clay.

[1] Bourriaud, Nicolas *Relational Aesthetics.* Translated by Pleasance Simon and Fronza Woods with the participation of Mathieu Copeland. France: Les presses du reel, 2002.

6.1.1 Application of a language of the haptic: open studio, installation and participatory projects

This part of the account of the residency reflects on the application of the language of ceramics and the haptic through participatory projects, and explores the idea of an impression in clay as a haptic font. The participatory projects drew on the act and process involved in taking a cast, or print, as a way to initiate a first-hand sense of being in touch with the Cathedral. Although this was a new way of approaching the Cathedral, the projects showed that this was a mode of understanding and representation that was readily comprehended and accepted by Cathedral visitors.

During the residency, as the idea of reading the fabric of the building with clay developed, the printing methods used became suggestive of what I came to call a haptic font. This is an idea that encompasses an action or process of imprinting which is recorded in clay and includes the sense of a font both as a source and as a typeface. The concept allowed me to see and describe impressions left in clay as expressions akin to a language, a language that opens up communication and connection between subject and object, between person and place.

When making the work in the crypt, I did not know what the final product would look like nor was I attempting to reproduce a pre-conceived idea. My involvement was as close as I could get to what Nicholas Bourriaud describes as an 'operator of meaning, rather than a pure "creator"', seeing this as way of opening a dialogue with the space.[2] This approach focussed the research on the making, suggesting Bourriaud's notion of a relational aesthetics, which helped define the use of audience participation in this research.

By employing a part of what Bourriaud describes as 'Art as a state of encounter', the participatory projects drew on his notion of the viewer's position as moving:

[2] *Ibid* p.93.

> 'between the status of witness, associate, customer, guest, co-producer, and protagonist'. [3] [4]

Through this approach the research was able to capitalise on a peculiarly ceramic quality, an idea Alan Kaprow describes as a 'blurring [between] art and life'.

> 'Precisely because art can be confused with life, it forces attention upon the aim of its ambiguities, to "reveal" experience.'[5]

The result was a methodology that used the circumstances of the residency and drew on the situation to reveal a haptic experience of being in the Cathedral to participants, first-hand, in clay.

In this way a fortuitous ambiguity ensued: was this the end of year exhibition, an open ceramic studio, research, or a live-art performance? This ambiguity was further enhanced by working and exhibiting alongside Maureen Gamble, the other artist-in-residence.

Gamble's poetic archival objects (see Fig. 100) suggest both real and imagined narratives, which she described as representing the individual voice in the vast scale of the Cathedral space, which can gather and grow into a collective and powerful voice.

[3] Bourriaud, Nicolas, p.18.
[4] *Ibid*, p.58.
[5] Kaprow, Allan, p.82.



Fig. 100 Maureen Gamble, '*Word of Mouth'* Worcester Cathedral, Dec. 2009 [6]

Detail of performance by Gamble, as part of the Open Studio Exhibition, '*Word of Mouth'* participants were invited to place a private message or prayer in a paper bag, fill this with air, and add it to an installation in the crypt.



Fig. 101 Maureen Gamble, '*Word of Mouth*' [7]
Installation of interactive public art at Worcester Cathedral, Dec 2009

[6] Guy, Chris *image of* Maureen Gamble's 'Word of Mouth', 2009.
[7] Guy, Chris *image of* Maureen Gamble's installation 'Word of Mouth', 2009.

The exhibition highlighted the connection between my work and Gamble's, drawing on the attention that both art and research evoke, by being both performance and interactive hands-on research.

6.1.2 Outline of public engagement

My intention for the end of year exhibition was to devise methods to engage the public in a haptic exploration of Worcester Cathedral through clay and to share the experience of working with it. This was done through three distinct projects:

1. The first project involved covering the pillars with wet clay to feel the volumes of the space
2. The second by layering clay over the floor for people to take impressions from.
3. The third by asking participants if they would contribute to the research by making three-dimensional lines in clay to physically represent their route into the crypt.

The aim in all three projects was to encourage people to think with their hands. The objectives were:

- *to elicit an audience response*
- *not to patronise, or impose*
- *to keep the questions open-ended*

To enable this my intention was:

- *to apply my own methodology to the situations*
- *where possible to ask for genuine involvement in the study so as to offer/share the sense of discovery I had found through the experience. (Residency notes)*

The demographic of the audience was mixed, drawing from the local University, the Cathedral staff, worshippers and visitors. There was therefore a range of secular and religious participants, with a mix of those who were invited, or responded to publicity and those who came upon the events as part of their tour

of the Cathedral. Over the period of a month the exhibition attracted a steady flow of visitors.

1. An exploration of the space and volumes with public engagement in the making process.



Fig. 102 Clay covered pillar in the crypt, Dec 2009
As part of the Open Studio Exhibition, Worcester Cathedral

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

Fig. 103 Exhibition visitor next to a human-scale pillar
Worcester Cathedral crypt, Dec 2009

The pillars are coated with wet clay which is in turn covered with plastic to keep them wet enough for the public to interact with during the exhibition. The pillars in the crypt are on a smaller scale than those in the main body of the Cathedral, and when you get very close to them, almost a hug's reach, you become aware of an almost adult-to-child relationship in terms of scale, which I found comforting, and which l wanted others to experience. *(Residency notes)*

For this project the public were invited to touch clay that was layered up over sections of the crypt. This was done informally while explaining the purpose of the research. The aim was to change the normal exhibition of finished work to a situation where the process becomes the exhibit.

2. A print project in clay:

For this project, members of the public were offered hand-sized pieces of raw porcelain to use, to pick up a print off the floor. The forms they made registered their handhold on the one side and a print of the floor on the other.

The ceramics made during the residency were, to adopt a description used by John Berger in *Ways of Seeing*, a testament to the experience of being in the crypt where

the immediacy of the imprint of gestures in the ceramic friezes employs the 'effect of closing the distance of time' between the work and the 'act of looking at it'.[8]

The aim of this participatory element was in part designed to share a moment of discovery I had had when peeling the clay off the floor. The value of engaging the public in a haptic experience was two-fold, in that what had been initiated from an aesthetic appreciation of the space, led to discussions about the haptic within the Cathedral.



Fig. 104 Pippa Galpin, working with members of the public in a participation project at the Open Studio Exhibition to mark first year of the residency, Dec 2009 [9]

The image shows that I am both explaining verbally and gesturally, and that this action is being copied. *(Residency notes)*

The outcomes of these experiential pieces were examples of communication – which, as Berger describes it, 'permeates the actual material' - for example, in colour, texture and form, as shown in the photographs below.[10]

The nature of the project moved people out of their ordinary posture and had them crouching down and feeling the floor through the clay. Having initiated

[8] Berger, John *Ways of Seeing.* London: Penguin, 1973, p.31.
[9] Guy, Chris *image of* Pippa Galpin's public participation project, 2009.
[10] Berger, John, p.31.

discussion about touch, participants spoke about the atmosphere in the crypt in emotional terms, describing it as:

> "*Warm", "comforting",* and as a "*highly spiritual place". Alluding to the number of gravestones on the floor, many were surprised to find that it did not feel "spooky"*. *(Residency notes, 2009)*

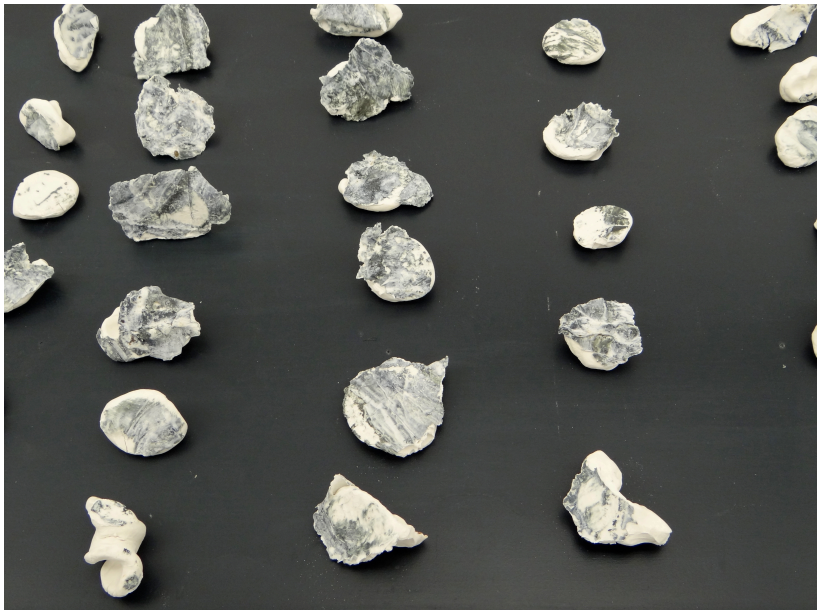

Fig. 105 Collection of three-dimensional ceramic prints
made by members of the public visiting the Open Studio Exhibition, the crypt, Dec. 2009
(See End Plates)

> *In some of the pieces the handholds are more definite, others scrunched and in some the participant has focused on the way the delicate print comes off the floor in folds supported by the structure of the clay. Each one records a time, a person, and a space.* *(Residency notes)*

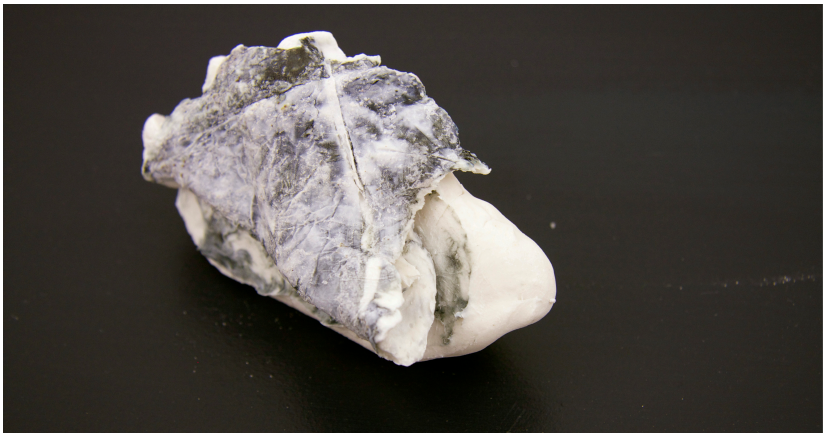

Fig. 106 Close-up of one of the pieces figured above, (see Fig.105)
which was subsequently fired and shown at Corsham Court, 2012
(See End Plates)

Some time after the studio residency, I was giving a talk about the research and found that without the clay as an interface the public's reaction to touching the floor changed. One visitor said:

> *"I can't divorce myself from the knowledge that these are gravestones. I wouldn't be comfortable touching them."* *(Residency notes, 2011)*

The results of the project parallel Kemske's research, whereby:

> 'Viewers become touchers, moving away from sight alone and its required distance, to the intimacy of bodily contact'.[11]

In this way a ceramics sensibility, that in Kemske's work evoked an intimacy between a human and an object, was extended to an appreciation of the Cathedral space.

3. Evaluation of the ideas through public engagement: a haptic memory of space

Applying my research methods, in this third project I used clay as a tool to chart how the experience of the haptic caused the visitors to re-perceive the Cathedral. The nature of this project picked up on the notion of haptic imaging (4.2.2) and used this form of imagery to reflect on how haptic stimuli affected participants' sense of being in the Cathedral.

I had come to consider my process of haptic imaging (see 4.2.3) as a kind of haptic landscape (4.2.2) where memory is being stored, a process akin to archaeology (as referenced in Chapter 3). This approach brings to the fore things that might have been lost, for example, with the promotion of the visual over the haptic and the sensual.

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[11] Kemske, Bonnie 'Evoking Intimacy: Touch and the Thoughtful Body in Sculptural Ceramics'. PhD, Royal College of Art, 2008. [Online] Available from: http://www.bonniekemske.com/Abstract-apr7.pdf [Accessed 12 January 2016].

In order to test the transferability of the haptic imaging concept, I devised a project in which visitors were given a piece of soft clay. I then asked them to remember the way they had come from the entrance of the Cathedral to the crypt and to represent this by twisting the clay to form the path they had taken. I also asked them to mark points on the clay where they had stopped. In this way they shifted a haptic experience into a three-dimensional visual form.

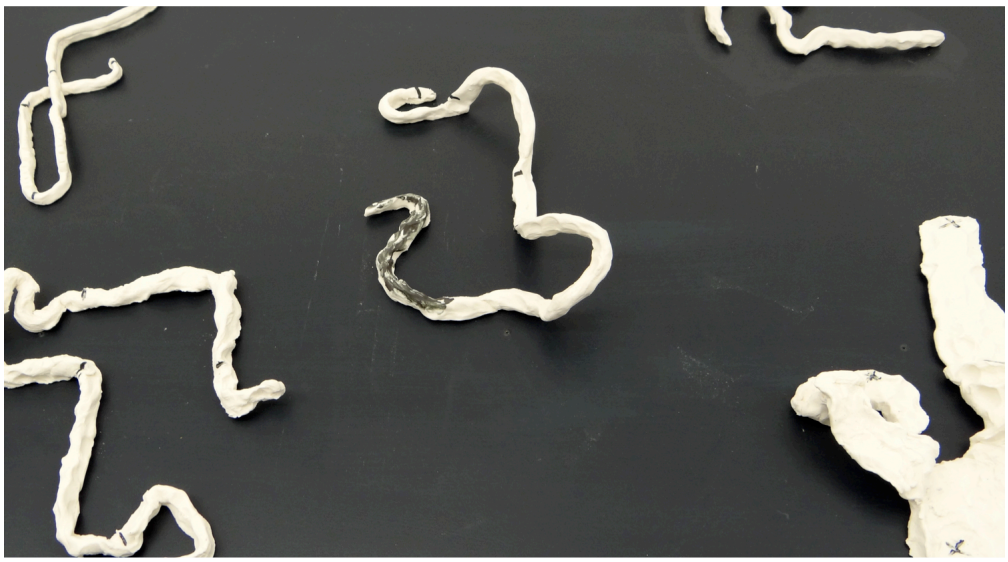

Fig. 107 Examples of the haptic line drawings
made by members of the visiting public

The participants were then asked to verbally recount their journey and say where they had stopped, which I took down as dictation. The examples below are a sample of the responses given, and as close as possible to the original responses:

Participant 1

> *"I like the long walk, the spaces in time in terms of the show.*
> *'Through the square, up steps, stopped at the door because someone was coming through.*
> *Through into the space and I stopped to look at the choir and the stained glass, then I turned round to look at the vaulting in the main body of the Cathedral. I went back to the route, passed the organ down the stairs and stopped to ask my way to the crypt.*
> *It's not difficult, just a bit fuzzy, I can't remember if the bit by the organ was raised or flat."*

The three dimensional lines showed that where there were less physical stimuli there was a tendency to contract the form: for example, the large open areas of the nave were foreshortened, while the steps or obstacles were emphasised.

> *"I was thinking about the vaulting and the space and height inside the Cathedral and why the chairs were set so that they were looking away from the altar, rather than where I was going."*
> *(Participants responses- Residency notes, 18th Dec 2009)*

The description displays a sense of being overwhelmed by the quantity of visual and spatial information.

Participant 2

> *"Door.*
> *Up a level, elevated up the ramp.*
> *Faced with the organ pipes and wall of pattern*
> *The expanse and icons, gilded*
> *Sudden change of intimacy/soft - from the chasm above/contrast'*
> *(Participants responses- Residency notes, 18th Dec 2009)*

In this description the participant equates the change of space to 'intimacy', linking a term usually applied to human contact, to the building. The participatory projects showed that the intimacy of the studio space in the crypt (as described by *Participant 2*) contributed to the blurring of the boundary between the crypt and a studio-exhibition space.

Participant 3

> *"This was my 2nd visit to the exhibition in the crypt but this time I was on my own and made more detours.*
> ** Through the main door, then the side door. Started to go through the chairs and saw a votive candlestick and plain cross (* spot marked in the clay).*
> **To the steps of the altar and across to the side aisle (*Spot marked on the clay) because you can see the windows behind the altar and the sign "crypt*

*exit only", which is funny and the Worcester Pilgrim plaque, the unknown person treading their path, and the connection with your [*meaning my*] work.*
Then down the aisle and down the little stairs.
**Stopped at the Pilgrims Boots, and to the open door across the Church bit (*spot marked on the clay) *Stopped when I saw people and thought about it:*

The pilgrims shoes and […] is under his burial spot. His journey beneath him, supporting his body from below?"
(Participants responses - Residency notes, 18th Dec 2009)

That Participant 3's account was undertaken in a sacred setting is embedded in the response. There is something about the idea of the path trodden being a 'support from beneath' that participant three saw as analogous to my practice; that ideas to do with repetition and wear permeate the devotional nature of the pilgrimage and that, metaphorically, the exploration of the crypt floor is symbolic of what we learn from the ground up (see 2.2.2).

Overall, the projects served to highlight the contribution of the haptic via raw clay to the memory and understanding of the space. In all involvement with the research, participants described a heightened awareness of a physical and emotional connection to the space.

6.2.1 Public engagement reviewed in relation to contemporary ceramic context

In the article, 'Ceramics and Art Criticism', Koplos suggests that one of the definitions of craft is that it has the propensity to occupy a dual position.

> 'Clay has always occupied the space between art and life… [at] the dining table, the kitchen and [in] the garden, among others… [a space] the art world only discovered a few decades ago.'[12]

While this duality is usually associated with domestic and functional wares, it is pertinent to this study when the categories and the materials they employ bring with them meanings or expectations associated with the ceramic tradition. Koplos's reference harks back to work such as that by Kaprow and the 'happenings' of the 50's and 60's and what Kaprow calls the 'blurring of art and life'.[13] Currently, the repositioning of ceramics includes 'encounters' (such as those featured at the British Ceramic Biennial, 2015 see 5.2.6), studio-residency programs (such as the ongoing studio residency programmes at the V&A, which included ceramists Keith Harrison and Phoebe Cummings) and post-studio ceramics (such as Cushway's performances at the British Ceramic Biennial, 2013, and Twomey's construction of a studio which was in itself an element of an installation at the Ceramics and the Expanded Field, exhibition and conference, see Fig. 108 below).

[12] Koplos, Janet 'Ceramics and art criticism', p.288.
[13] Kaprow, Allan, p.82.

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

Fig. 108 Clare Twomey *'Piece by Piece',* 2014 [14]
Ceramics and the Expanded Field exhibition and conference
University of Westminster

Here Twomey is adding to the slip-molded figures that fill the vast hall in front of her. As though on a stage, the studio set-up speaks of the act of making, as though it were a peopling of the space. (Post-residency notes)

'Piece by Piece' engages making as performance, a practice Twomey describes as:

> 'concerned with the affective relations that bind people and things, and how objects can enable a dialogue with the viewer. Clay is my constant medium as it embodies notions of permanence and inheritance, and has a profound connection with the everyday'.[15]

[14] Deleu, Sylvain *image of* Clare Twomey's 'Piece by Piece', 2014. [Online] Available from: https://cfileonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/1-expandedfield.jpeg [Accessed 12 January 2016].
[15] Twomey, Clare *University of Westminster: the official website*, 2016. [Online] Available from: www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/our-people/.../twomey-clare [Accessed 12 January 2016].

6.2.2 Conclusion

In *Ceramics,* Philip Rawson reminds the reader of the crucial part tactility and the sense of touch plays in many ceramic traditions, an element that is part of both the making and the appreciation of ceramics.[16] By contrast he says:

> 'We Westerners are not allowed to handle things in our museums; we have been brought up in a culture dominated overwhelmingly by graphic images addressed solely to the eye… We live in a world divorced from an entire *world* of sensation. And by this I mean not only merely generalized texture-sensation but a fully formulated structure of touch and grasp concepts.'[17]

Rawson suggests that Western social 'conventions' dictate very limited direct touch with, for example, food, or other people's bodies, 'except when we are lovers' and that…

> 'to use one's hands to explore the things around one is at best immature, and at worst illegal. However, among most other peoples, especially "primitives" [sic], the hand is a live instrument of experience'[18].

What this research project and other hands-on participatory ceramic projects do is to break cultural social conventions, by embracing the immature and the primitive, and approaching touch via an accepted association between the ceramic tradition and the tactile.

By bringing a ceramic studio-residency into a Cathedral setting, the research was freed from the conventions of day-to-day Cathedral life and permitted to undertake an exploration that might in other circumstance not have been condoned and might have been considered primitive, or pagan. The application of a contemporary ceramics language, that now includes site-specific performance and public engagement with making, enabled a new form of

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[16] Rawson, Philip *Ceramics.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984, p.19.
[17] *Ibid,* pp.20-21.
[18] *Ibid.*

residency to take place, concerned with the public's relationship to touch in a sacred context.

The interest engendered through touching the space with clay reinvigorated my practice, which became freer and more confident in the following year. Having found other people's responses a useful research tool, the making of ceramics was accompanied by a research project, in which I worked alongside a musician. The development of this is outlined in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7

The culmination of the Cathedral residency; the haptic in relation to sound

Chapter 7 examines extremes of the haptic spectrum, from the ephemeral to the enduring, by considering connections between the haptic and the feeling of sound. The chapter goes on to explore the latter part of the residency and reflects on the idea of layering through a parallel with the repetitive aspect of a musician's practice, and of resonance.

Section 1 explores methods developed to test and further the research without the need for verbal comparisons, by inviting the musician, Henrietta Wayne, to respond to the work. This was done through mutual interpretation, both by the musician and myself. To do this we devised an approach whereby Wayne adopted my methodology and responded to the space. The result became a sound-piece, which accompanies the ceramic friezes.

After the residency, Wayne's response was to commission a piece that she played and recorded in the crypt. This new work took the ideas one stage further, from the original ceramic practice (see recordings). Interpreting my practice in this way highlighted a connection with the musician uncovered parallels between the two practices, which for me became a way of recognising a connection between the haptic and the numinous. This idea is furthered in relation to Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* in which Otto considers the numinous vis-à-vis music.[1]

Section 2 reflects on the end of residency collaborative exhibition and live-art performance, which brought together the themes of the residency. The chapter concludes by reflecting on translation between the senses, by drawing on Michel Serres's *The Five Senses; a philosophy of mingled senses.*[2]

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[1] Otto, Rudolf.
[2] Serres, Michael *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies (I).* Translated by Sankey, Margaret and Peter Cowley. London & New York: Continuum, 2008.

7.1.1 The haptic and a connection with sound

Working in the silence of the crypt had made me acutely aware of sound, especially the quality of echo and resonance in the cavernous spaces of the Cathedral within which my practice took place. At times the sound of the organ, which was immediately above the crypt, resonated in the studio and at other times the silence was dominating.

To return again to the experience of visiting prehistoric caves, when visiting Niaux, in Tarascon, near Foix, and having walked a long way into the cave system we entered a vast chamber. A space that was, I think, even larger than the main body of Worcester Cathedral. In this hall it was suggested that someone might like to sing, which they did. The acoustics were astounding. We were then told that very early musical whistles had been found there. I had visited the cave to see the paintings, which are positioned off the side of the great hall, at the back of a small chamber, but what I was struck by was a connection to the quality of sound that I had experienced in the Cathedral.

Having explored the haptic on the monumental scale of the Cathedral, I became aware that the very small vibrations that create sound are also picked up via the haptic system, in that hearing – at its most basic - works by sound waves moving through the ear canal and striking the eardrum.

7.1.2 Testing and developing the research through a mutual interpretation with a musician

To develop these ideas, during the final year of the residency I asked musician Henrietta Wayne to respond to my practice. (This project began during the residency in 2010 and continued until 2013.) Wayne is a baroque violinist who plays the violin and the viola d'amore for The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. The rationale for this investigation arose from the idea that comparing the relationship between ceramics-and-the-haptic to the haptic in music, would test and develop the research.

The research quickly revealed aspects of commonality between the two areas whereby the need for verbal language is diminished and where I could be comfortable with ideas I found inexpressible. Working with the musician, I found a parallel - in the sense of the doing and knowing and the experiencing - to my own sensuous ceramic craft-based language.

Like ceramics, there is a connection between music and the haptic. However, in contrast to ceramics, which has the quality of permanence, music is ephemeral. Despite their differences, the idea of touch begetting touch emerged from both practices.

Whilst watching Wayne rehearse one of the arias from Handel's *Orlando*, played on the viola d'amore, I became aware that I could not only hear but feel the sound. I could actually see the vibrations produced by the bow as it moved over the strings. What was significant for me was a connection between this resonance and the way clay picks up characteristics of what it comes into contact with.

The instrument Wayne was playing contributed to the quality of this haptic experience, as the viola d'amore possesses 'sympathetic' strings: a second set that reverberate in response to the first set above, without being touched by the bow. This idea was expanded further upon hearing musician and conductor Daniel Barenboim's Reith lectures, 'In the beginning was sound'.

> '… the physical vibrations which result in sound sensations are a variation on touching, they change our own bodies directly and deeply, more so than the patterns of light that lead to vision, because the patterns of light that lead to vision allow us to see objects sometimes very far away… But the sound penetrates our body.'[3] *(Residency notes, 2010)*

[3] Barenboim, Daniel *In the Beginning was Sound*. 2nd Reith Lecture. Radio 4 Transcript, 6 May 2006. [Online] Available from: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00729d9 [Accessed 23 Aprip 2016].

As I have done with ceramics, Barenboim describes music as being capable of affecting us both directly and indirectly.

In ceramic terms, haptic stimuli – for example, the sensation of rough or smooth – are sensed on the surface of the skin, or if the object is warm or cold, the sensation permeates the surface, however it is usually through metaphor that touch is described in emotional terms. By contrast, music is often referred to in emotional terms, as it can move us to tears without our knowing why and Barenboim's associating it with the physical is the less common observation. In fact, both modes share physical and emotional qualities; in ceramics, this is usually perceived as primarily physical, and in music, emotional - aspects that are embodied literally and metaphorically in the word resonance.

7.1.3 Working alongside a musician

In considering Wayne's creative process, we immediately noticed a connection between the way we work: for Wayne this involved playing the same piece over and over; for me, this meant going over and over the same section of Cathedral floor or, when working as a potter, throwing the same shape of a pot again and again. In both cases our aim is to find a line, a shape or form, that runs through the material that is undefined until discovered, whereupon a change comes with the process of repetition.

Through observations about our practices a question arose: what if the music practice followed my ceramic layering technique, retaining the previous layers?

With my ceramics, made in the Cathedral, the original source is a surface, and the pieces an impression of it, while my interaction results in building up slip over a period of time. The results come to resemble what I call haptic landscapes. To apply this method to a musical piece, Wayne recorded her practice of the original piece on a daily basis and overlaid the recordings to create a multi-layered piece that formed a record of her practice over time. This recording was then played in the crypt, bringing to the sound-tracks the resonance and acoustics of the space. Wayne then played to the recording, adding yet another layer.

The recordings formed the basis of a piece, created during the end of residency exhibition, and subsequently played alongside my work at an Exhibition at Corsham Court, in 2012.



Fig. 109 Pippa Galpin
Exhibition at Corsham Court, 2012

The *'Haptic landscape'* at the far end of the gallery was accompanied by the recording made with Wayne.

The tracks were recorded on Wayne's Edirol R-09HR in Worcester Cathedral and at home (24Bit 44.1kHz input level 59-63% approx.):

- *Handel* *Aria from Orlando Gia l'ebromoi ciglio*
- *Telemann* *Sonata 1 from Canon Sonatas*
- *J. S. Bach* *Allemande from 2nd partita in D Minor for Solo Violin*
- *Tracks 16–19* *Orlando recorded at Home 14/01/11*
- *Track 20* *3rd part of Telemann in Cathedral 15/01/11*

- *Track 21* *Orlando recorded in Cathedral*
- *Track 22* *Bach in Cathedral with Typing as part of an Artist intervention in Final Residency Exhibition (see 7.2)*
- *Tracks 23-27* *Bach recorded at home against Track 22 16/01/11*

(Recording notes, 2011)

The result of this process was that the original music was softened, or muddied, by this iterative human process. With the clay, too, interaction served to soften the edges of the marks and round off and reverse the script on the stones. I had also noted areas of the Cathedral that had been repeatedly touched and thereby softened (see the photograph of the stone steps into Prince Arthur's Chantry Fig. 14).

With the music, the layering showed the variation in daily practice and while one can still hear phrases of the original score - or view the original shape of the clay - each iteration, or layering, results in the pieces dissolving into chaos. Yet through the muddying of this process a new line, or landscape, is formed. In both practices, and in the Cathedral, new forms were created by repeated actions over time.

To test the validity of this approach with an outside observer, my supervisory team arranged for the composer, Professor James Saunders BSU, to be part of the panel on my progression assessment viva, March 2012.[4] Topics at the review included the collaborative aspects of the exhibition and the involvement with the musician, which was considered successful. Though Saunders considered the term 'collaboration' valid, I have chosen to use the phrase 'mutual investigation' because it highlights this aspect of the research as a way of exploring and testing the ideas.

[4] A contemporary compositional response to space can be heard in the work of Professor James Saunders, B.S.U., and his connection to Sol LeWitt, in relation to art and writing as a form of instruction and verbal notation.

The new work that came from this project was not of my making but inspired by it. This is outlined below.

7.1.4 '*Ringing Expanse',* commissioned by Wayne in response to the ceramics

In response to my practice, Wayne commissioned her son, Jocelyn Campbell (who is currently doing a PhD in composition at Kings College, London), to write a piece that was performed and recorded in the crypt, 2013.
(Recording attached.)

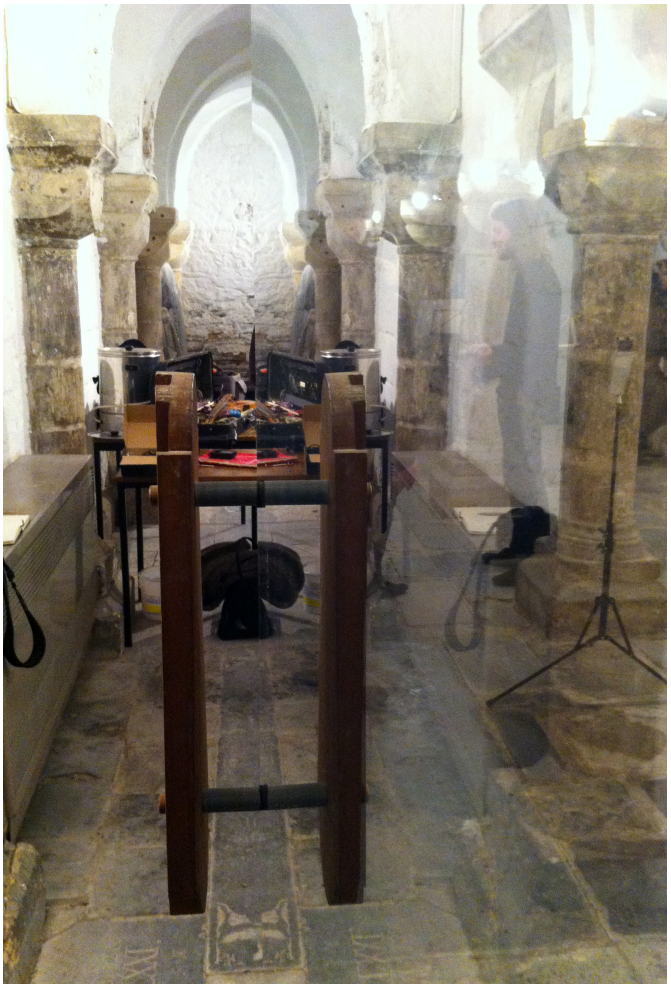


Fig. 110 Jocelyn Campbell, Conducting Wayne in the crypt
Worcester Cathedral

Reflection in the glass doors during the recording of work, 2013 [5]

[5] Blood, Emma *image of* Jocelyn Campbell conducting compositional piece 'Ringing Expanse'.

Writing about the inspiration for his piece, *'Ringing Expanse',* Campbell wrote:

> *'"Ringing Expanse" was written as a reaction to and as an accompaniment to Pippa Galpin's PhD ceramics work displayed in the crypt in Worcester Cathedral. The project came about as the second of two collaborations between myself, Galpin, and Henrietta Wayne. Wayne had asked me to compose a piece for solo viola d'amore and electronics; after assisting with the electronic component and amplified the sound for the previous collaboration, we began discussing the setting of the crypt as a location for the first performance of this new work. I then began to consider the parallels between Galpin's PhD. work and between both mine and Wayne's musical practices.*
>
> *'When composing the piece, my primary concerns were with the aspects of 'natural' and 'artificial' sound, the layering of each of these sound forms, and the physical presence of the performer's touch or lack-thereof with the electronics, by contrast. These seemed to me the most immediately relevant concerns, having seen and discussed Galpin's ceramic work with her. Furthermore, these were a set of concerns which would lead to interestingly ambiguous areas vis-à-vis the interplay between the viola d'amore and the electronic track.*
>
> *'Although the surface of the electronic track appears predominantly made from digital synthesizers there is an underlying presence of digitally manipulated recordings of the viola d'amore. It was my intention for there to be moments of ambiguity in the music where the audience would be aware of the sound of the viola d'amore emerging from both sound sources. I feel that this embeds the music with several layers of the performer's 'touch'; the performer is accompanied by a reconstructed and distorted presence of their own self - rather like the way in which surface forms from the crypt were cast and recast, creating new configurations from the layering process in Galpin's work'.*
>
> *(The above is Campbell's feedback on the joint projects.)*

Campbell's response serves to highlight the transferability of the initiating ideas.

7.1.5 Results and interpretation: the numinous through the haptic and through music, reviewed in relation to Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy*

That a musical process might align with the outcomes of my process was entirely unexpected, and how this related to the context of my work in the Cathedral I was not initially sure. I had been moved by the tone of the viola d'amore, especially when played in the crypt, and by the idea of its sympathetic strings (7.1.2) that resonated even though they were not touched. I later learned that the viola d'amore is not a common instrument but when used, it most often conveys moments of heightened passion and transformation:

> *I found that something that had moved me, and which originally had stimulated this parallel study, is used in JS Bach's '*St John's Passion'*.*
> *The viola d'amore plays during the 'Erwäge', the longest aria, which is placed centrally in the Passion. The aria evokes Jesus's wounds and presents their transformation into a rainbow, as a symbol of God's forgiveness. The aria is a meditation on the wounds and through that meditation the experience is transformed into beauty.*
> *Similarly, in Handle's '*Orlando'*, a pair of d'amores are played and again, marking the lowest point before resolution, transforming a most gruesome moment into a flower, before moving on to the next aria. This is the only time these two instruments are played in the entire piece.*
> *In both pieces, the particular haunting sound qualities and resonance of the viola d'amores is used at a pivotal moment of transformation.*
> *(Post-residency notes, 2011)*

The use of the physical resonance of the viola d'amore as a way to communicate the inexpressible seemed strikingly akin to the sense of the numinous, in this case haptically engendered, an idea I had been grappling with throughout the Cathedral residency.

In *The Idea of the Holy*, Otto has attempted to provide a 'distinct category for the sacred' with the 'numinous as a state of mind'. By becoming aware of the

numinous through music I came to a deeper understanding of the numinous through the haptic. Otto himself explains that:

> 'the object of religious awe or reverence, the *tremendum* and *augustum*, cannot be fully determined conceptually: it is non-rational, as is the beauty of a musical composition, which no less eludes complete conceptual analysis.'[6]

In Otto's terms, the concept describes a 'purely felt experience' that falls into the category of 'impulse, instinct and the obscure forces of the subconscious in contrast to the insight of reflection and intelligent plan'.[7]

[6] Otto, Rudolf, p.58.
[7] *Ibid,* p59.

7.2.1 End of residency exhibition

As the residency progressed, a question of where the research began and the work ended arose. To answer this, the residency was brought to a conclusion through a live-art performance and collaborative exhibition that merged these boundaries. Having become increasingly interested in making as a form of critique, co-residency artist Maureen Gamble arranged for three artists - two performance artists, Emily Warner and Rebecca Gamble, and violinist, Henrietta Wayne, to respond to our combined work.

By placing the ceramic friezes on the nave floor, my materials, which had been taken down to the crypt, were brought to the surface (ground level) again. This mirrored archaeologist Chris Guy's process of digging, re-digging, and turning things over and, in a Bachelardian sense, shifted the pieces from the hidden crypt (or 'cellar') up to the clarity of the nave.

Suggestive of cuneiform clay tablets inscribed with haptic marks, the installation was entitled '*Ten Tablets on Stone*', as the work embraced a Biblical reference (Fig 9, 1.2.1).



Fig. 111 Pippa Galpin, '*Ten Tablets on Stone*'
End of residency exhibition, Jan 2011

Gamble's installations, also placed in the Cathedral's south aisle, brought together objects that evoked real and imagined stories gathered over time.



Fig. 112 Maureen Gamble, Installation, Worcester Cathedral, Jan 2011[8]

During the private view, the spoken and the unspoken word were linked by sound, music and performance.

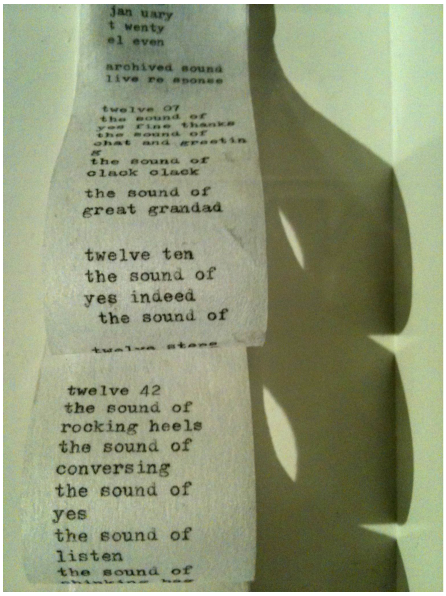


Fig. 113 Emily Warner and Rebecca Gamble, Performance Artists, with Henrietta Wayne, Musician, End of Residency Exhibition
Worcester Cathedral, Jan. 2011 [9]

[8] Guy, Chris *image of* Maureen Gamble's End of Residency Exhibition installation, Untitled, 2011.
[9] Guy, Chris *image of* End of Residency Exhibition Performance, 2011.

> Rebecca Gamble wrote: '[The] live action response was a continuation of Maureen Gamble's 2009 piece, in which visitors were invited to plant a mustard seed in her studio in the Worcester Cathedral crypt… Through the live intervention [of typing] Rebecca printed individual take-away kits, each dated and numbered [with a] selection of words…'

As Wayne played, the spliced together sound track of her previous recordings were played in the background and Emily Warner's old typewriter could be heard as she typed a record of the sounds she heard during the exhibition, such as the audience talking, breaks in the conversation, the music playing…



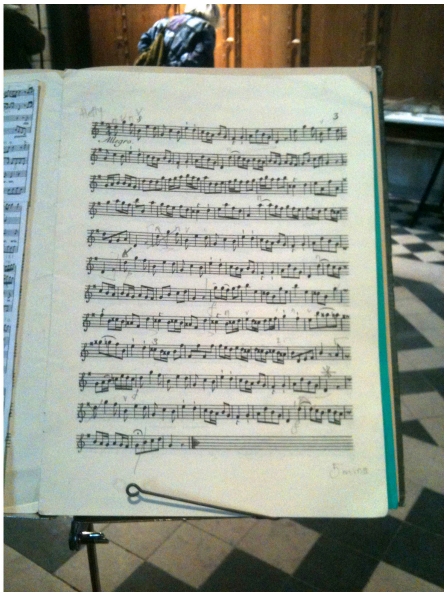


Fig. 114 Emily Warner, Detail of print out from performance
[10] Fig. 115 Handwritten musical score, Bach [11]

Placed next to my work, Wayne's musical scores, originally handwritten, added to the idea of haptic expression.

[10] Guy, Chris *image of* Emily Warner's printout from performance, 2011.
[11] Guy, Chris *image of* handwritten musical score, Bach.

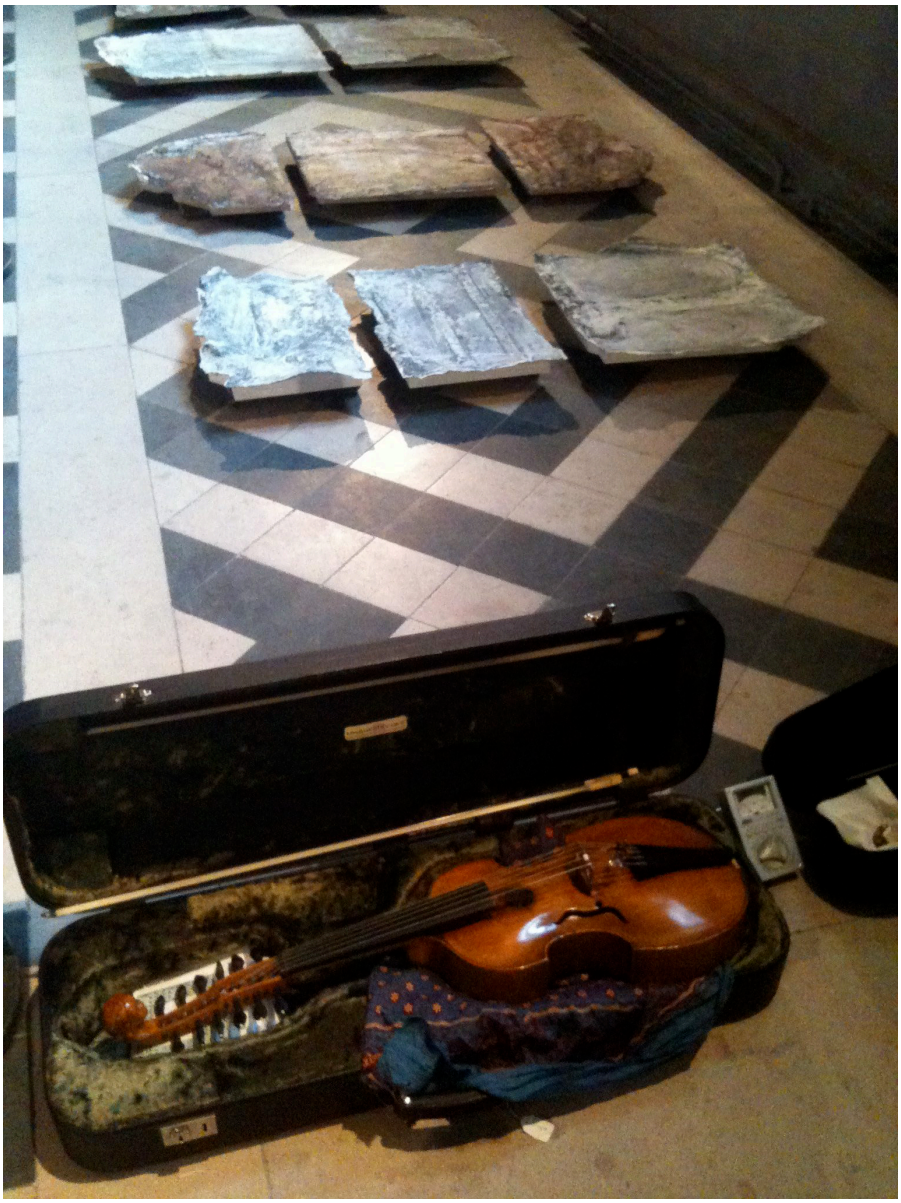


Fig. 116 Pippa Galpin, '*Ten Tablets on Stone*', with the violin and the viola in the south aisle, Worcester Cathedral, 2011

During the exhibition, the connection between ceramics and the haptic, and the viola d'amore with its sympathetic strings, was explained to the audience. And as a way of bridging the gap between exhibition and experience, a recording of the music plus the sound of the typewriter and audience talking, is now one of the layers in the sound piece that accompanies my work.



Fig. 117 Wayne showing the viola d'amore [12]
End of residency Exhibition, Worcester Cathedral

The ideas for the exhibition were developed from the residency exhibition in the previous year (see Chapter 6), which linked research to a live-art performance. The End of Residency exhibition developed the idea of the residency as a way to bridge the gap between an exhibition of work made in the space and the experience of being in the Cathedral, through public involvement. The outcome showed that I did not actually have to be making with clay for the research to be both inclusive and for the practice to be ongoing.

By engaging with the space in this way, the sacred nature of the Cathedral building and the link to the numinous through the haptic was brought to the fore when Dean Cannon Stanton referred to the Cathedral, in a resonating metaphor, as:

> 'these living stones…'

[12] Guy, Chris *image of* Henrietta Wayne showing the viola d'amore, 2011.

7.2.2 Conclusion

For me, the results of the research undertaken with Wayne were twofold. The mutual interpretation helped to make sense of the experience of being in the Cathedral and offered a new way of presenting the finished ceramics, one that kept the investigative quality of the research by adding an a layer of discussion and performance.

In the Introduction to this text (p.xvi) I proposed considering clay as a way of recording the interaction between my body and the Cathedral. The approach was explained in relation to a quote by Merleau-Ponty which described how 'between the touching and the touched' a 'spark is lit…' or, in other words, a creative force occurs between an act and the understanding of it.[13]

As the research developed, I saw the language of the senses as a different mode of thinking. It is not that a change had occurred in my own thinking, but rather that the process had made me more confident in the original premise and less inclined to try to understand, by putting into words, what is contained in the language of clay. By working with the musician, I found that the creative force seemed transferable between one sense and another.

Indeed, in *The Five Senses: a Philosophy of Mingled Bodies,* Michael Serres suggests that one way of interpreting sensual experience may be by elucidating the subtleties of the connections between the senses. Describing the flow of ideas between music and touch, Serres uses his philosophy of 'mingled' senses to describe a feeling, proposing a language of mingled senses as a way of examining things from an un-intellectualised un-rationalised sensual position.

> '… the gentle breeze engages the foliage on the trees in a quasi-musical dialogue, *sotto voce…*'[14] 'thunder, noise, and the vibration of sound waves (whether audible or felt through our skin) subtly become meaning.'[15]

[13] Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, p.163.
[14] Serres, Michael, p.106.
[15] *Ibid,* p.115.

Overall, the comparison to music enabled me to address the sensual as a way to explore my subjective response to the numinous through the haptic in ceramics. This final body of work is discussed in Chapter 8.

Chapter 8

Ceramics and the haptic: evoking the body

Chapter 8 introduces the last pieces of ceramics made during the residency; these pieces evidence a change to my practice as a result of the research. These works were not finished till after the residency, and so not exhibited in the Cathedral. The pieces brought to the fore what was learnt during the residency, by realising the importance of the human body in haptic research and addressing the challenges I had found in working in a sacred space.

This chapter outlines the changes to the practice and analyses the work in relation to Winnicott's theory of 'transitional objects', an approach that enabled the ceramics to be viewed as an interface which accesses and communicates ideas about the numinous, and about embodied knowledge, without having to rationalise the non-rational (see 1.2.1).[1] From this perspective it considers what the language of ceramics and the haptic can communicate in a sacred space.

[1] Winnicott, Donald Woods, p.8.

8.1.1 Final ceramics produced in relation to the residency

For the purposes of this thesis, we can best understand the concept of embodied knowledge via cognitive linguists Lakoff and Johnson's definition:

> 'Reason is not disembodied… but arises from the nature of our brains, bodies, and bodily experience. This is not just the innocuous and obvious claim that we need a body to reason; rather, it is the striking claim that the very structure of reason itself comes from the details of our embodiment… In summary, reason is… shaped crucially by the peculiarities of our human bodies… and by the specifics of our everyday functioning in the world.'[2]

Given the nature of ceramics and the haptic established earlier in this research, the final works emulated, with unexpected frequency, visual aspects of the human form. Even when dry, or fired, clay retains the marks where it yielded to touch in its wet state, and is reminiscent of the softness of flesh, picking up haptic traces that, as Rodaway notes, 'literally and metaphorically' create a link to a 'living body' (see 5.3.1).[3]

Excited by this connection to the human form, I changed my approach in the latter part of the residency and relaxed some of the restrictions I had placed on the making (I had previously only picked up things that were produced by wear and tear i.e. haptic marks). I now took advantage of this inherent potential of raw clay to evoke the human form and its associations, and allowed myself to work on the visual expressions of touch that I encountered in the crypt. These included images in the stones underfoot of people who appear to be holding hands and of the feet of the sarcophagi, which rest on various animals.

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[2] Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenges to Western Thought.* New York: Perseus Books Group, 1999, p.4.
[3] Rodaway, Paul, p.47.



Fig. 118 Pippa Galpin, Ceramic panel, height 56cm, width 56cm.
Exhibited at Corsham Court, 2012

The piece above depicts two people facing each other taken from a gravestone on the crypt floor. (See End Plates)

8.1.2 Casts from one of the sarcophagi; felt memory and holding a space for the unsettled

Round the edges of the crypt, propped against the wall, are elaborately carved lids of stone figures. Originally lying on their backs, these figures rest their feet on an animal (a dog, possibly a lion). I became interested in the notion of touching areas that depict the effects of touch, and by slip coating sheets of clay and working them over these sections of the figures, the clay took casts of the shapes under my hands. In my residency notes, I wrote:

> *The slip-coated clay has the stretch marks from the action of pressing and forming it over a fragment of a sarcophagus. Though the detail is partially lost, due to the thickness of the clay, what the action felt like remains. (Residency notes, 2010)*



Fig. 119 Detail, sarcophagus lid, crypt
Worcester Cathedral

(See End Plates, for ceramic piece taken from this sarcophagus lid)

To return to a concept described earlier (3.1.1) the action was like that of throwing a pot when the clay stays where the hands have been. The technique is different to the one used to make the ceramic friezes. Whereas with the friezes I had explored the surface textures with my fingertips, through thin layers of slip, with these pieces (see Fig.120-123) I used the palms of my hands, working with both hands simultaneously to find the curves beneath the clay.



Fig. 120 Pippa Galpin, Detail of sculptural piece that picks up a three-dimensional shape beneath it

The inside of the forms takes a cast of the shape of the hard stone-sarcophagus; the lines are crisp, picking up accurate detail of the shape in negative. However, I chose to use the outer surfaces of the casts, because these reflected the softening effect through the repetition of touch, and the memory of felt action.



Fig. 121 Pippa Galpin, Three-dimensional ceramic impression
Exhibited at Corsham Court, 2012
(See in End Plates)

Three-dimensional imprint from a sarcophagus lid, with details of the stretch-marks in the surface of the clay.

When reflecting on a specific piece (see Fig 122) I found the humanising aspect of touch and the material quality of raw clay led again to a sense of the body – which brought me back to a point made earlier, that the haptic has, on several levels, a humanising effect, as with the flesh-like association I had observed in Luca della Robbia's *Madonna della Mela* (see 2.3.2). In my residency notes at the time, I wrote:

> *These [sarcophagi] would have originally covered a tomb where there had once been flesh and bones. In reference to touch, I worked over the feet, placing a sheet of layered-up clay over the carvings. Through the clay, I*

explored the contours beneath my hands, stretching and pulling it to fit the form until it formed a skin over the stone-likeness of a human.
And in my work, I had found that contact brought a sense of the bodily: a re-embodiment. *(Residency notes, Dec. 2010)*



Fig. 122 Pippa Galpin, Unfired ceramic sculptural cast taken from a sarcophagus, these figures rest their feet on an animal (a dog, possibly a lion).
Exhibited at Corsham Court, 2012 (See in End Plates)

I generally choose to fire my work eventually, as I miss the illusion of merging trace and impression that the translucency of high-fired porcelain brings to the work. However, this unfired ceramic piece (Fig. 122) was to significantly challenge my thinking, in that what it communicated was unexpected: a non-rational re-membering, or narrative retelling, of the space, picked up through clay.

Being unsettled by this piece in its unfinished state, I nevertheless left it unfired. The feeling itself was wordless, perhaps not entirely rational, but in holding a space for the unsettled I would eventually come to see it as akin to the numinous, something inexpressible and fragile, a possible parallel with Schooler's work and D. W. Winnicott's 'transitional space' (outlined below): left unsettled, it remained in the realm of the intuitive, whereas firing would have required a rational shift, comparable to forcing the visual into the verbal, and thereby losing some of the

experience's richness. It was not until the PhD Progression Exhibition the following year at Corsham Court (Feb. 2012) that I finally decided to exhibit it unfired and to make a stand on which to present it, as I had done with the other works.

8.1.3 Evaluation of the role my subjectivity played in the research: 'transitional object' and 'transitional space'

In grappling with the issues that arose from working within a sacred space – the unsettledness, the frustration with inexpressibility, the personal confrontation with the numinous and the non-rational - I found that D. W. Winnicott's theory of a 'transitional object' and 'transitional space' (1.2.1) helped in bridging my concerns, partly by highlighting the symbolic function of the clay as an interface between the Cathedral and myself.[4]

Winnicott establishes that 'playing and cultural experience' may be a transitional experience because it 'links the past, the present and the future'.[5] One of the significant aspects of this research is the way it positions ceramics in just such a fashion: as an interface or translating boundary between the past and the present, between the toucher and the touched, what Winnicott describes as:

> 'an intermediate area of experiencing, to which inner reality and external life both contribute.'[6]

What is important is not only the idea of a link to the past, but also to that of change that takes place over time. The idea illustrated here has twofold significance in regards to the findings from this research. Firstly, to that of the ceramics as a link to the past and changes that occurred over time in the Cathedral and, secondly, to the subjective changes in my understanding. The transition, or change, in terms of this research occurred within me and to my - the artist's - relationship with the Cathedral (an idea discussed in Chapter 3).

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[4] Winnicott, Donald Woods.
[5] *Ibid,* p.147.
[6] *Ibid,* p.3.

The transitional space Winnicott describes is not portrayed as a way to separate an internal and an external reality, but as a way to represent the relation between the two. Winnicott addresses this head on:

> 'it would be possible to understand the transitional object while not fully understanding the nature of the symbolism'.[7]

Consequently, Winnicott talks of a paradox. His analogy is that of a piece of string, where two objects are both 'joined and separated by the string'. The paradox being that both the separating-out and the filling-in of the 'potential space' are needed.[8] The analogy is similar to the idea of ceramics as an interface in this research; it became not a way to separate out the ideas, but as a record of the process. Curiously, Winnicott's phrase 'where two objects are both joined and separated' made me think of Collins' paradox of touch (see 4.1.4) of the merging and the unmerged, as though the two ideas paralleled each other.

As a theory to help negotiate the research process, Winnicott's concept proved useful because it states that the transition is a process, and of value in those terms. Indeed, I felt comfortable working within a structure that accounted for but did not try to resolve this paradox.

This thinking helped me navigate what was a genuine difficulty when confronted by the magnitude of working in a sacred space. In this sense, the ceramics in the Cathedral could be said to stand in as a substitute, or symbol, for something I could not fully grasp, a transitional object that allowed me to progress towards that understanding, in part by allowing me to sit comfortably with paradox.[9]

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[7] *Ibid,* p.8.
[8] *Ibid,* p.145.
[9] *Ibid,* p.145.

8.1.4 Conclusion; a personal response to a sacred space

I started the account of the residency by saying that I wanted to make overt the haptic characteristics of handmade ceramics. By reimagining the pot, this research has shown that this connection does not reside in a hands-on connection with clay alone, but through an indexical link to a haptic trace, whereby ceramics brings the human into a space. By applying a haptic appreciation to a sacred space - as with Twomey's *'Heirloom'* (Fig. 56), Wilson's installation in Wells Cathedral (Fig. 95) and in work by Julian Stair (Fig. 123) - encounters with ceramics can induce a sense of the numinous.

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

Fig. 123 Julian Stair, '*Quietus',* Thrown Vessels, human sized
Winchester Cathedral, U.K. 2013 [10]

[10] Baldwin, Jan *image of* Julian Stair's 'Quietus', 2013. [Online] Available from: www.pallmallartadvisors.com/images/stk/pm-theme/content-right/dam/Pall-Mall/Stair-quietus-150x150.jpg/jcr:content/Stair-quietus-150x150.jpg.2016-02-24-16-23-30.jpg [Accessed 29 March 2016].

From an ecclesiastical perspective, the Rt. Revd. Richard Harries suggests that:

> 'sacred art [is that which] has become transparent to the numinous.'

Giving Rothko's paintings as an example, Harries says that:

> 'the subject may have no reference to any religious symbolism… [and yet still be capable of] opening up to the numinous.'[11]

My understanding of the numinous is that it cannot be made clear, or 'transparent', and Harries likewise describes art as a way of 'moving towards' an understanding, rather than of achieving it. He suggests that the numinous can be accessed through the abstract and the sensual, superseding any pictorial representation of it, though he admits he finds this 'mysterious' and does not 'know how to account for it.'[12]

At a fundamental level my research is a form of thinking through touch. The ceramics place an extra layer into the process, moving the experience from being a haptic encounter (with, in my case, the Cathedral) to a haptic experience with clay, and from there to a form in which that encounter may be seen or evoked.

In terms of this research, ceramic pieces can – by being a link or interface (or Winnicott's string) – operate as 'transitional objects', which can be comprehended even when the ideas they embody and symbolise resist a complete understanding, especially since they may become less authentic when articulated or rationalised.

The research found that an embodied language can allow one to bypass the need to interpret information i.e. to move from the haptic experience, the touch, to the feeling, without having to unpack or rationalise the feeling. In this sense, a haptic approach is appropriate to the research of a sacred space precisely because it allows us to explore what Rudolf Otto aptly calls 'the feeling of the numinous'.

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[11] Harries, Richard, p.3.
[12] *Ibid.*

Chapter 9

Evaluation and final conclusion

Chapter 9 evaluates and concludes this research by practice: 'Ceramics and the haptic; a case study of Worcester Cathedral'.

Section one brings the research full circle by considering the residency in hindsight. The aim of the work is to utilise the attributes of clay to highlight the haptic experience: this often involves taking what would ordinarily go unnoticed - in some cases, the ground under our feet – and spatially reorienting it to eye level, or giving it a focus that enhances viewer awareness. The research itself took me on a journey, akin to my visits to the prehistoric caves - a pilgrimage of sorts - after which my work changed, as did my view of its capacity to function in a sacred space.

Section 2 evaluates the haptic investigation of the Cathedral. The research gave rise to a new approach to the space and contributed to an understanding of the role ceramics can play in a sacred context.

Section 3 returns to a central metaphor of this thesis by revisiting the prehistoric caves in France. The visit re-emphasised the importance of doing and re-doing, mirroring the reiterative layering that the haptic calls for. This central metaphor in turn shone a light on the importance of ceramics and the haptic.

The chapter concludes the thesis by outlining the main outcomes of the research in relation to:

- changes to the practice over time
- ceramics and the haptic as a methodological approach to an investigation of a sacred space

9.1.1 Post-residency evaluation and research

The reflection and analysis involved in preparing this thesis served to unpack much of the conceptual thinking behind my approach to ceramics and the haptic. In the process of writing, connections were made that provided an opportunity to expand on what had been found and discuss ideas that would not necessarily have been apparent in the making alone.

The research established ceramics-and-the-haptic as a research methodology that was applicable to an investigation of Worcester Cathedral and which found parallels between the sacred and the haptic, in that neither can be fully expressed. In a sense, ceramics and the haptic can be said to fill the gaps that cannot be articulated.

The post-residency research used in the writing up of this document paralleled my research methodology i.e. translating a haptic experience to a visual format and then to the verbal. To do this, the document was constructed visually prior to the writing, then new layers were added as insights emerged.

The post-residency research informing this thesis included exhibiting the work in a white cube space at 'Open West' in Cheltenham, 2011; in the gallery, below ground, at Corsham Court, 2012; and as part of a touring exhibition (visiting Aberystwyth University, Salisbury Arts Centre and Bath Spa University) entitled Doctoring Practice, organised by Dahn, 2012. The research was also the subject of talks at symposiums at Bath Spa and Worcester University, 2013. Showing the work outside the Cathedral context generated insights and helped me to evaluate the ceramics. For example, it was from audience responses that I came to see the synergy between trace and erasure, employed in my ceramic process, that created the Cathedral surfaces (4.2.1) and to see my ceramics as conveying an exploration of the space through the notion of a *'haptic landscape'* (4.2.2).

Following the residency, further research was undertaken at the post-graduate research centre of B.S.U. at Corsham Court. The Corsham ceramics took a

different track, and are therefore not included in this text (3.2.3). However, the location invited debate, which helped to define the parameters of the Worcester Cathedral research, as the investigation of a sacred space became increasingly pertinent. (The value of this connection is developed further below, 9.2.1.)

Moving beyond the PhD and the experience of the residency, I am now in conversation with a Church in Hammersmith, London, about exhibiting the work from Worcester, along with some form of audience involvement.

With hindsight, if I could go back now and do the residency again, I would conduct more on-going participatory projects. Similarly, it is only in retrospect that I have come to see the making as a performance; had I been aware of this at the outset I might have been able to request more active intervention with the fabric of the building, to draw the public's attention to the act of doing and to the physicality of contact with the clay as a way of thinking about the space.

Since the residency, my relationship to making has changed and the element of figuration developed in the latter part of the residency (Chapter 8) has become part of my work. I found that asking an audience to respond to my practice as research enabled an involvement that drew on both performance and the ceramic tradition, but did not fit into expectations of either. I now find that including the making as part of where the work meets the world to be quite liberating, allowing an immediacy of response I have not had before.



Fig. 124 Pippa Galpin, exploring the notion of Making-as-performance, 2015[1]

[1] Blood, Emma *image of* Pippa Galpin at F.O.D.O Westminster Arts Centre, London, 2015.

9.2.1 The value of ceramics to an appreciation of Worcester Cathedral

This research set out to explore Worcester Cathedral from the perspective of ceramics and the haptic. As the residency progressed, the research established that the ceramics had the capacity to expand my understanding of the Cathedral.

Results from the comparison with the companion practices of the archeologist (Chapter 3) and the mutual interpretation with the musician (Chapter 7) led me to conclude that the process of moving ideas between one mode of thinking and another opens up new connections. By applying this modal shift to an evaluation of this research, the value of the contribution of this research became clearer (outlined further below).

The research concludes that the haptic is a perspective that, via ceramics, offers a tangential way to access and present a different mode of knowledge in a sacred context.

9.2.2 The research approach assessed in relation to Andrew Graham-Dixon and Paul Ricoeur

The methodological approach for this research adopted a maker's sensibility, a sensual language, born out of ceramic sculpture and domestic pottery, as a way by which to consider the experience of being in the Cathedral. As a result, a new approach to the space was found. The position of artist in residence gave license to address the space as an outsider, to work within it respectfully, yet without the need to adhere to conventional behaviour or to give special regard to the enormity of historical influences that created the space, and also without the need to take a position vis-à-vis any religious debate (see 6.1.4). With reference to Andrew Graham-Dixon's *A History of British Art*[2] and Paul Ricoeur's essay, 'Reflections on a new ethos for Europe', I propose that it was a kind of innocence

[2] Graham-Dixon, Andrew *A History of British Art.* London: BBC Books, 1996.

that contributed to the importance of the research.[3]

In *A History of British Art,* Graham-Dixon outlines the extremes in religious belief since the Middle-Ages and the upheavals that forged the Cathedrals we have today.[4] He charts a movement from the non-rational to the rational, from the image to the word, in a time when all vestiges of pagan ceremony were literally and metaphorically 'whitewashed over', replaced with a questioning rationalistic faith.[5]

Nevertheless, Graham-Dixon concludes by presenting an eleventh century image (Fig. 125) 'painted in ox blood', which has literally 'rotted through the whitewash of the Reformation'. The picture embodies the idea that the forgotten 'finds a way of coming back to haunt the imagination'.[6]

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

Fig. 125 Artist unknown, 'Time'
Merthyr Issui Church, Patricio, Powis [7]

[3] Ricoeur, Paul 'Reflections on a New Ethos for Europe'. *In*: Kearney *ed*: *Paul Ricoeur: The Hermeneutics of Action*. London: SAGE Publications, 1996.
[4] Graham-Dixon, Andrew, p.17.
[5] *Ibid,* p.32.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] Artist unknown, 'Time' Merthyr Issui Church, Patricio, Powis. *The Brecon's Tourist Information: the official website*, 2015. [Online] Available from: https://farm9.staticflickr.com/8505/8559386146_6b4fd2846d_c.jpg [Accessed 29 March 2015].

The overall process Graham–Dixon describes is analogous to the findings of the residency. The work made in the crypt studio (the crypt dates back to 1084) is imbued with the medieval characteristics of the space, which found a way of 'coming back': by the end of the residency the work embraced the non-rational, the ritualistic as well as images of the human form.

In this way Graham-Dixon's observations parallel the findings of this research, re-emphasising the effect the Cathedral had on the work and highlighting the capacity of ceramics and the haptic to operate as an effective research methodology in the investigation of a (sacred) space.

What the work brought to this site was a new way of viewing the Cathedral, allowing a visceral aesthetic with overt connections to ritual.

To expand on this, I draw an analogy to the idea of a 'philosophy of translation' proposed by Ricoeur.[8] Ricoeur suggests that interpretation is a process that can help to see the past in a new light. His focus is on the changes that occur in perception during this process. He suggests that what gets lost in translation are the personal implications of history, which as they do not affect an outsider lose the rigidness with which they are held. Ricoeur proposes that a philosophy of translation can be seen as a way:

> 'to set free that part of life… which is found captive in rigid… traditions'.[9]

In this sense, approaching the Cathedral from the perspective of ceramics liberated me from a fixed view of the Cathedral, with all its religious associations, and did so via touch.

By linking the ceramic tradition with a haptic perspective a record of what has happened in the past can be changed, not in actuality, but as Ricoeur describes it, 'in terms of the meaning it has today'.[10]

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[8] Ricoeur, Paul, p.8.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] *Ibid,* p.10.

The value of approaching the Cathedral from the perspective of the arts was recognised by the Dean of Worcester, the Very Reverend Peter Atkinson, who said:

> 'We at the Cathedral have been very glad to offer a space in which Maureen and Pippa have been able to work. This exhibition offers all of us an opportunity to see the Cathedral through their eyes.'[11]

To conclude, if clay is a vehicle for the communication of an experience, then it operates as an indexical link to the maker through time and as such is an embodied metaphor i.e. a metaphor of the embodied experience.

A useful definition of metaphor is provided by cognitive linguists, Lakoff and Johnson:

> 'The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.'[12]

Seen in these terms the haptic language of clay can, and is, applicable to new contexts, enabling a new approach: a mode of thinking and understanding that can operate as a literal and metaphorical link between a sacred space and a 'living-body'.[13]

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[11] Fry, Claire Untitled. *Worcester News*. 11th Jan 2011. [Online] Available from: www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/8796558.Academics___artwork_is_inspired_by_the_cathedral [Accessed 7 Dec. 2015].
[12] Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson *Metaphors We Live By,* p.5.
[13] Rodaway, Paul, p.47.

9.3.1 Human contact through haptic trace; a connection with the caves in the South of France

Briefly stated, the changes to my ceramic practice (outlined in Chapter 8) lead me to conclude that if the haptic evokes the human body then ceramics evokes an indexical link to a living human act. Through the repetition of such an act comes a sense of re-knowing or re-connection (5.3.1). In the context of a sacred space, this for me brought with it a sense of the numinous, in a very earthed sense.

9.3.2 Returning to the central metaphor: the prehistoric caves

As described in the Introduction, although prehistoric man would have lived in the entrance area of caves, the drawings are most frequently found in the most difficult to access parts. The placing of the marks, or drawings, in the 'centre' of the earth parallels Bachelard's thoughts on cellars and my experience of working in the crypt: the journey in and down, the enclosing atmosphere, a connection between handprint and place.

In caves such as the Grotte de Font Gaume (Fig. 126) the figures of animals are often drawn one over the other, leaving an impression that for me evoked a sense of being in a herd or in a circling stampede. In his Reith lectures, 'Playing to the Gallery', in 2013, Grayson Perry pointed out that these drawings were sometimes made more than five thousand years apart.

Standing in the Grotte de Font Gaume (post-residency, August 2013) what these drawings affirmed for me was the importance of re-doing, returning to the same place to draw, scratch, or leave a handprint, one atop the other, a layering that took place over thousands of years.

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

Fig. 126 Prehistoric cave drawings, c. 15,000-10,000 BC
Grotte de Font Gaume, Les Eyzies De Tayac, France [14]

In the Cathedral, both in my ceramics and in the project with the musician, the process of layering - a build-up of human contact - changed what existed before, creating new forms, an idea I associated with a haptic landscape. Here in the caves, this overlapping seems to have been done deliberately.

A key insight occurred whilst visiting a cave at Les Combarelles: in other caves, the drawings are clearly defined and representative of the animals they depict while in this case they were not.

[14] Delon, René *image of* 'Cave Drawings'. Official site information, Font Gaume, Les Eyzies De Tayac, Dordogne, France, 2011.

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

Fig. 127 pre historic cave engravings, from 14,000 to 12,000 BC
Les Combarelles, Les Eyzies De Tayac, France [15]

In my notes at the time I wrote:

> *Having seen some outstandingly beautiful drawings in the morning, we visited a cave with some small indistinct scratchings in the rock. By torchlight, the guide pointed out the lines of an animal, possibly a goat. She then traced the lines of another animal, which partially obscured the first, of what might have been a fish and then a third and so on. At the end of the demonstration she said what these engravings showed was that:*
>
> *'The act of doing was more important than the result'.*
> *(Post-residency notes, August 2013)*

No one can know why people so long ago and over such long time spans considered this an important thing to do. We can surmise that these drawings/scratchings may have been part of a ritual, but to focus on this skirts over the importance of the phenomenological experience that is still evident.

[15] Delon, René *image of* 'Cave Engravings'. Official site information, Les Combarelles, Les Eyzies De Tayac, Dordogne, France, 2011.

What we are left with is concrete evidence of an act, the place in which it occurred, and how it makes us feel.

Like the cave wall scratchings, what is communicated by my ceramics is evidence of layers of doing and re-doing.

In my ceramics, what can be seen and experienced in the resulting pieces is not just a sense of space evoked by an imprint taken from the Cathedral but by a person moving their hands over that space, a person in dialogue with that space. The accumulation of layers of translucent slip on the Cathedral floor picks up traces of wear and tear that contribute to the character of the space, but also positions a human within it.

What the analogy of the caves emphasises is an indexical link between the human and a connection to a space that can be recorded in clay. With the ceramics removed from the Cathedral, we know - as with the caves - that at the very least they were made, made by human hands, and hands not unlike our own. The caves serve as a reminder that just possibly 'the action may be more important than the result' and that this capacity to remind us resides in clay.

9.4.1 Summary of research findings

To conclude, the research resulted in changes to my practice and a shift in my approach to making. It has established ceramics and the haptic as a methodological approach, and in particular demonstrates its applicability to the investigation of a sacred space. This section summarises the research findings and offers this thesis as an original contribution to the field.

9.4.2 Changes to the practice over time

The nature of the ceramic technique and its relation to the space in which it was made, produced a physical shift in positioning between ceramist and the clay i.e. working from the inside out (Chapters 2 and 3). This developed a connection between an inner landscape and a haptic expression, as seen in the '*haptic landscapes'* friezes (Chapter 4). A language developed that includes not just a single act, or trace, but a complex intermingling of metaphor and evoked memory (Chapter 5).

The research encouraged an expansion of the parameters of my practice: a progression that saw a change from taking prints off Cathedral surfaces, to embracing abstracted personal responses which were worked on once the print was lifted, and which allowed for breaks and movement (e.g. warping) in the ceramic panels due to conditions in the crypt. Public engagement projects and the crypt-as-studio brought an element of performance not previously seen in the practice (Chapter 6). The collaborations involving mutual response to other artists became a way to show, critique and develop the work (Chapter 7). Focusing on the haptic resulted in a new body of work with the introduction of figuration (Chapter 8).

9.4.3 Ceramics and the haptic as a methodological approach to an investigation of a sacred space

The practice grew out of a development of ceramic techniques, using the

translucency of high-fired porcelain to superimpose impression and trace (see description Intro. xxvi). Chapter 2 explores the Cathedral from the perspective of the haptic, and suggests that this approach is a potentially valuable research area. The research found parallels to archeology, in that it reveals what is there, what people did and where they did it, rather than answering the question *why*. This awareness gained in importance as the research progressed, and was eventually brought to my attention by revisiting the prehistoric caves once the residency had finished. By contrast, the comparative research cast a light on my subjective experience and the role this was to play in the process. This shift in my thinking saw the embracing of the subjective nature of the research and eventually of the numinous (Chapter 3, 8 and 9).

Employing the reciprocal nature of the haptic, whereby a recording, and a responding to the recording action, occur simultaneously, the idea of 'reading as writing and writing as reading' merged. This enabled the ideas to progress from the haptic to the visual and then to the verbal (Chapter 4).

During contextual research a ceramic language emerged that brought with it an everydayness of contact and universal metaphor. One result of this was the growth and conceptualisation of a haptic language of clay (Chapter 5). Categorised in this way, ceramics-and-the-haptic can be seen as a system of communication, allowing for potential future insights.

Methods were devised whereby self-reflection could take place via paralleling and contrasting processes and practices in relation to haptic research. An understanding of the relationship between ceramics and the haptic, and the Cathedral, was expanded vis-à-vis music. By involving other modes of creative expression, the approach helped to overcome the conundrum that the research had found, of how to express the inexpressible (Chapter 6 and 7).

As a mode of thinking, the approach proved itself to be transferable to a new context, initiating new musical works, and providing a way to structure and develop this writing (Chapter 7 and 9).

9.4.4 Conclusion, ceramics and the haptic; a case study of Worcester Cathedral

The principal achievement of this research was to create new possibilities for ceramics and the haptic to explore and respond to a sacred space.

To paraphrase Lakoff and Johnson's definition of metaphor (see 9.1.2), using ceramics as an interface allows us to understand one experience in terms of another. In part, haptic impressions and mark-making do this by embodying information and translating it into an accessible physical form with a visual and an evocative component. Touch made visible and palpable in clay.

Employing ceramics and the haptic language as a tool for thinking about the Cathedral led to humanising the space, which is appropriate for the consideration of a sacred space.

The research resulted in a rehabilitation of the haptic using ceramics as a way to explore the space between the feeling and the rational articulation of it, and a bringing into awareness of things that already exist in the Cathedral but generally go unreported and unnoticed.

One of the unexpected findings of this research was a new form of residency. This used clay to draw attention to the haptic by observing the making process and by getting the public to touch the highly charged haptic surfaces of the crypt as well as using clay to draw on their haptic memory of the Cathedral spaces they had just moved through.

In global terms, the research is a plea for acknowledging the role of the haptic as a way to enrich our everyday experience by highlighting exceptional cases, such as Worcester Cathedral. My hope here is that others may add to the approach by exploring not just the remarkable but also the mundane. In other words, to take what is writ large in the extraordinary then apply it to the seemingly smaller canvas of the ordinary.

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[Individual end plate images available at http://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/9454/]

End Plates

1. *'Haptic Landscape',* Blue Triptych, height 56cm, width 142 cm, depth 4cm. See Fig. 43 for the piece exhibited at Corsham Court, April 2012, p.60.
2. *'Haptic Landscape',* Blue Triptych, Detail.
3. *'Reading of the Crypt Floor'*, height 55cm, width 140cm. See Fig. 68 for piece exhibited at the Open Studio Exhibition, Worcester Cathedral, Dec. 2009, p. 91.
4. *'Reading of the Crypt Floor'*, Detail of stone from the Cathedral floors as part of the fired work. See Fig. 48, p.63.
5. '*Unfired fragment'.* Exhibited at Corsham Court, 2012. See Fig. 71 for detail, p. 94.
6. *'Haptic Landscape',* 7-piece ceramic frieze, height 54cm, width 146cm. See Fig. 54 for piece exhibited in 'Open West', Pitville, Cheltenham, March 2011, p. 69 (and Fig.109 p. 163 for piece exhibited at Corsham Court, 2012.)
7. *'Haptic Landscape',* 7-piece ceramic frieze, Detail. See Fig. 76, p97.
8. *'Haptic Landscape',* Red Triptych, height 56cm, width 138cm, depth 4cm. Exhibited at Corsham Court, April 2012. See Fig. 79, p 101.
9. *'Haptic Landscape',* Red Triptych, Detail. See Fig. 81, p 103.
10. Collection of three-dimensional ceramic prints made by members of the public visiting the Open Studio Exhibition, Dec. 2009. See Fig.105, p.150.
11. Close-up of one of the three-dimensional ceramic prints made by members of the public. Exhibited at Corsham Court, 2012. See Fig.105, p. 150.
12. Ceramic panel, depicting two people facing each other, height 56cm, width 56cm. Exhibited at Corsham Court, 2012. See Fig. 118, p. 179.
13. Ceramic panel, depicting two people facing each other, Detail, p, 179.
14. Ceramic piece taken from the sarcophagus lid in Fig. 119, p.180.
15. Three-dimensional ceramic impression. Exhibited at Corsham Court, 2012. See Fig. 121, p181.
16. Ceramic sculptural cast taken from a sarcophagus; these figures rest their feet on an animal (a dog, possibly a lion).
17. Unfired ceramic sculptural cast taken from a sarcophagus; these figures rest their feet on an animal (a dog, possibly a lion). See Fig. 122 for piece exhibited at Corsham Court, 2012, p.182.