Colouring in 'The Past'

A research project by
Stephanie Black and
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Introduction

What are productive illustrative strategies to unearth, activate and reposition our relationship to the past? Stephanie Black and Luise Vormittag reflect on a wealth of ideas and approaches.

This issue of *Colouring In* is the result of an extraordinarily rich and engaging symposium that took place on 9 December 2022 at the University of the Arts London, hosted and funded by the Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon Colleges of Arts Design School. The day was framed by two keynote presentations — by Assistant Professor of Illustration Jaleen Grove (RISD, USA) and visual anthropologist Alexandra D'Onofrio (University of Manchester). Additionally there was a plethora of panels, as well as asynchronous video panels and a poster exhibition by illustration students from both Camberwell College of Arts and Kingston School of Art.

We want to express our profound gratitude to all the people who gave presentations and proposed a nuanced set of ideas on illustration and the past. This PDF publication contains the written-up versions of the many engaging talks that were delivered on that day, and we hope you find their intertwining of

creative practice and thought as compelling as we do. We are also extremely thankful to our chairs — Mireille Fauchon, Rachel Gannon, Serena Katt, John Miers and Nanette Hoogslag who framed the presentations with their own ideas and perspectives. Additionally we want to extend our gratitude to all the people working behind the scenes to make this event possible: Valeria Rocca, Rory Wynn, Fae Sharples, as well as the Chelsea estates team and catering team were instrumental to the success of the event. The audience, brimming with questions and comments, contributed to a lively atmosphere. It was truly energising to be in the room with so many like-minded people, who are as interested as us in illustration and its potential to act as a critical intervention to global debates.

In this introduction we do not need to repeat the ideas that can be found in the numerous contributions in the following pages of this PDF, the respective authors make their points with a superabundance of eloquence and persuasiveness. What follows in this piece therefore are our reflections on some of the themes we noticed emerging through the accumulation of these numerous perspectives. We decided to cluster our discussions on illustration and the past around four ideas: Illustration as a conjuring act, the opportunities afforded by reappraising historical narratives from the vantage point of the present, illustrative methods for articulating non-linear temporal constellations, and lastly illustration's own histories of representation.

As usual, we are interested in what illustrations and illustrators do with these ideas, how they present and materialise them, but also how they overlap with or diverge from other methods in other fields.

The prize-winning historical novelist Hilary Mantel suggests that "to retrieve history we need rigour, integrity, unsparing devotion and an impulse to scepticism" (Mantel 2017). We are delighted to report that we found our contributing illustrators to possess all of these qualities — and more.

Illustration as a conjuring act
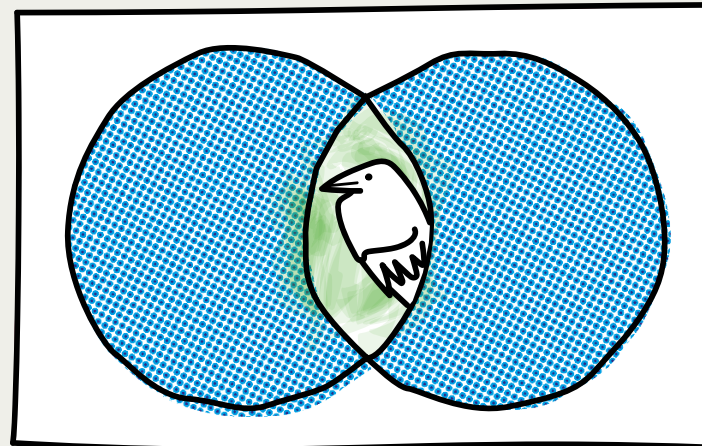
What are the possibilities for illustration practice to imaginatively (re)construct worlds and lives beyond

our immediate reach? In her humorous account on the tribulations of archival research, prominent British historian Carolyn Steedman offhandedly quips: "There is the great, brown, slow-moving strandless river of Everything, and then there is its tiny flotsam that has ended up in the record office you are at work in. Your craft is to conjure a social system from a nutmeg grater, and your competence in that was established long ago" (2001:18). A historian's competence for conjuring the past is one thing, but what kind of competence can illustrators bring to the task of reconstructing forgotten or otherwise absent histories? What techniques can we use for conjuring?

Jaleen Grove proposes that in essence "an illustration is a theory of what something is or could be" (p.17) and suggests that therefore "conjuring is the imaginative act at the heart of illustration". In her illustrative work-in-progress *Timepieces*, discussed in detail in her keynote address at the symposium (pp. 18–22), she uses the conjuring power of illustration to help us orient ourselves towards more hopeful futures. In her work the hand-rendered illustration stands in contrast to the indexical qualities of old photographs and graphic memorabilia, that remain tethered to troubling colonial histories.

While Grove's work is oriented towards conjuring better futures, how might we imaginatively conjure the past? Steedman's quote above eloquently

reminds us why historians need to do this in the first place: What we have in our various archives and record offices, connects us to only a tiny fraction of past lives and experiences. How might we fill in the gaps without riding roughshod over the complexities of past people's lives?

Rachel Emily Taylor, Catherine Anyango Grünewald and Sharon Kivland made that one of the key questions they addressed in their panel "Empathy and the Past". They collectively interrogate the possibilities of empathy across intervals of time, where the imaginative reconstruction of another person's experience becomes one of the key requirements for recovering historical lives (pp. 70–84). Cultural anthropologist Aleida Assmann reminds us that empathy is a relatively new term and focus of research. While modernity had introduced the figure of the "impartial spectator", our era seems to have rediscovered the empathic subject (Assmann & Detmers 2016:3). "Empathy appears as a key term in a number of previously unconnected disciplines including sociobiology, psychology, and history, where scholars have only recently started using empathy as a medium for understanding" (ibid).

Empathy certainly also plays a central role in Mireille Fauchon's illustrative practice. Her work in response to the archival records of Croydon suffragette Katie Gliddon (1883–1967) presents an empathetic and embodied affiliation with a historical subject (see

summary by Serena Katt pp. 49–52). Fauchon stages an imaginary conversation with Gliddon, where actions in the present work to conjure the experiences and motivations of the historic suffragette: the breaking of glass, the close attention given to female allyship, the reading aloud of Gliddon's words close to the place where they were first written. Fauchon's illustrative work captures and documents this process, while also allowing space for Fauchon's own contemporary experiences of life in Croydon to form part of a trans-historical assemblage.
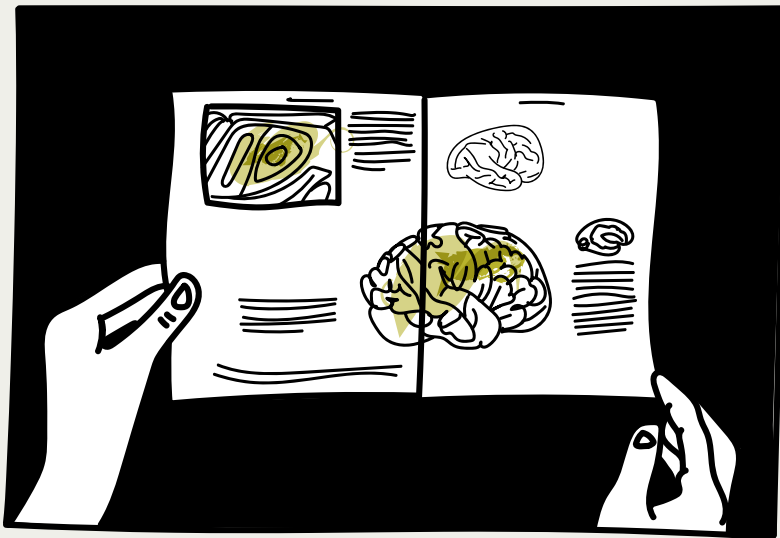
Empathy, however, also has its limits, may that be because we withhold empathy due to deliberate disregard or simply lack of interest (Assmann &

Detmers 2016:9)[1]. Another obstacle for the possibility of empathising in a meaningful way with historical figures arises when there is simply too little to go on in the archives. Countless groups and individuals have historically not been deemed worthy of recording, and as a consequence we lack documents that give adequate testament to their lives and experiences. In these scenarios prominent academic Saidiya Hartman proposes the conjuring power of "critical fabulation" — a method that "elaborates, augments, transposes, and breaks open archival documents" (2019:xiv) — strategies that are also used in so-called "postmemorial" practices (discussed below). Illustrator Caitlin McLoughlin (not present at symposium) builds on Hartman's methods in her artist's book *The Yellow Wallpaper* (McLoughlin 2022). Working with a piece of autobiographically inspired, feminist fiction written in 1892, McLoughlin assembled images that shed light on the social context and constraints under which the author presumably worked. McLoughlin describes how she "imagined the process as climbing inside the story and pushing outwards" (McLoughlin 2022:221). She argues that illustration "can borrow the principles of fiction to explore ideas and imagine realities, and [...] this can be applied [...] to uncover or reveal previously untold stories or challenge existing narratives" (ibid:218).

In contrast, Rachel Emily Taylor arrives at a different proposal (pp. 70–74): In her article she discusses her practice-led illustration research

[1] It is also worth noting that empathy does not automatically result in concern for the other. To illustrate this philosopher Martha Nussbaum proposes the example of the torturer, who is acutely aware of the suffering they are inflicting "without the slightest compassion" (Nussbaum 2001:329)

IMAGE
Artists' impression of Caitlin McLoughlin *The Yellow Wallpaper*, year unknown

in London's Foundling Museum, where she worked with contemporary children to conjure up imaginary historical foundlings. Looking back over the portraits the participating children produced under her guidance she reflects on the drawn pencil sketches, comparing them with the "finished" coloured in paintings. This prompts her to ask whether attempts at "colouring in" the past might sometimes be actually blotting out that what we are seeking to conjure. Perhaps, she suggests, illustrators should not colour in, but use our work to outline the empty spaces in the record, drawing attention to what is missing?[2]

Kimberly Ellen Hall's work on discarded objects takes Taylor's position a step further. Her work can be seen as an outright refusal to illustratively conjure the past. During her residency at a recycling centre in Philadelphia she drew groupings of thrown-away objects belonging to specific people. We know nothing about those individuals, and however tempting it might seem to speculate about their previous owners, Hall steadfastly maintains her focus on the objects themselves (p.87–88). Conjuring stories about these objects and their imagined owners remains an open invitation to the audience viewing the work. Gary Spicer's practice also concentrates on the present, while gesturing towards devastating histories. His drawings at his great-grandparents' grave site do not attempt to reconstruct historical lives, but circle in on Spicer's own, affective response to the place (pp. 89–90).

These projects suggest that we should sometimes refrain from attempting to resurrect past lives, accept their transience, and focus instead on what has been bequeathed to us.

Presentism embraced

How do our contemporary concerns and experiences colour (in?) our accounts of the past? What are the possibilities and pitfalls of hindsight? Hilary Mantel proposes that "the writer of history is always a walking anachronism, a displaced person, using today's techniques to try to know things about yesterday that yesterday didn't know itself. He [sic] must try to work authentically, hearing the words of the past, but communicating in a language the present understands" (Mantel 2017). But how do we integrate "the authentic words of the past" with our present-day concerns? Historian Lynn Hunt warns us of the pitfalls of presentism, our tendency to interpret the past in terms of today's values and interests: "Presentism, at its worst, encourages a kind of moral complacency and self-congratulation. Interpreting the past in terms of present concerns usually leads us to find ourselves morally superior" (Hunt 2022).

While being mindful of this tendency of temporal superiority, considered acts of reappraisal can be important ethical interventions into institutional omissions and blindspots. What can we see, say

and show today, that we were, for any multitude of reasons, unable to in the past? Illustrator Sharpay Chenyuè Yuán's project *Pearl's Daughters* on Chinese female factory workers during the 1980s (pp. 60–69) is indeed shaped by her present-day concerns: she highlights the women's individuality and their emotional experiences, both of which are decidedly contemporary values. Graphically this idea of individuality and not always fitting in is reflected in the sometimes awkward gestures the women have to perform on the assembly line that force them to protrude beyond the confines of the frame they are placed in on the page.

Acts of reappraisal can also be performed through the reinterpretation of existing cultural artefacts and collections. Artist Fred Wilson's (not present at the symposium) seminal 1992 project *Mining the Museum* for example rearranged items belonging to Baltimore's *Maryland Historical Society* to dramatically challenge complacent historical narratives. In one potent juxtaposition he placed the museum's prized silverware alongside slave shackles he unearthed in their archives. Catherine Anyango Grünewald also works to adapt existing creations in her reinterpretation of historical texts, augmenting and challenging them through her illustrations. For example her illustrations for Sister Helen Prejean's *Dead Man Walking* (originally written in 1993) about the experiences of death row prisoners, present a timely corrective to the author's earlier blindspots by foregrounding black

histories and experiences of the US- American carceral system (pp. 75–81). Hindsight is here conceived as something that should be practised with care and consideration — not to flatter our own sense of superiority, but to revisit painful historical narratives that continue to impact our present.

Anyango Grünewald's work demonstrates how illustration can help us to foreground a traumatic past that continues to stain everyday experiences today. Her graphic narratives of racially motivated violence and systemic oppression frequently show characters being forced out of the panel, thereby casting the panel's frame as the corrupt and exclusionary border of historical acceptability. Occasionally her images break down all together under the weight of trauma. Anyango Grünewald thereby reminds us that illustration can also be used to learn about unspeakable histories, where images can articulate what lies beyond the realms of language.

This point was underscored by Iqbal Singh, regional communities partnerships manager at the National Archives. He explains that when working with archival material "the arts can capture something that a 'straight' reading will not allow" (see summary by Serena Katt pp. 49–52). The projects he described in his talk, contemporary post-colonial reexaminations of archival records, are a far cry from the self-congratulatory haughtiness Hunt warns us about. Iqbal maintains that engaging with the past should

go beyond simple commemoration. As a result some of this nuanced and in-depth engagement can prompt painful emotional experiences in the present, so much so that Singh has been offering the support of a psychotherapist on some of his community projects.

Far from being a way of distancing ourselves from the supposed moral debasements of the past, these examples demonstrate how attempts to unpick and rearticulate our complex histories serve us to better understand our fractured and jagged present. We remember and look back for the sake of the living after all, to help us make sense of where we are today.

Temporal constellations

"[Walter Benjamin] called on us to stop 'telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary' and instead grasp 'the constellation' which the present forms with the past, in order to forge the revolutionary future." (Groom 2013)

Through earlier PDFs we have established that one of illustration's strengths is being able to synthesise disparate perspectives, which echoes Benjamin's concept of non-linear temporal constellations (Benjamin 1968). The practices introduced during the symposium exemplified ways of conceptualising time beyond the linear tripartite model of past-present-future. Time was conceptualised as fluid

(or "durational" to use Henri Bergson's term) and non-linear, with the past informing, overlapping and erupting into the present. For example, past and present were intertwined and fed into the construction of future identity for participants in Alex D'Onofrio's film *It was Tomorrow* (2018) (see pp. 37–48). In terms of the forms used to capture or elicit a temporal experience, the complexity of time was also reflected in the production methods used to convey subject matter concerned with the past, as seen in Gareth Brookes' artist's book (or concertina comic) *Times Tables* (see pp. 53–55). The book represents a durational sense of time, with none of the usual structural impediments to the flow of time between images. By combining water-soluble pencils with a good soaking and burnishing, Brookes' images from the past stain the present and future, similar to the Freudian concept of the "return of the repressed" as referenced in Sharon Kivland's contribution (pp. 81–84).

Esther McManus introduced the concept of asynchrony through the work of mediaeval scholar Carolyn Dinshaw, who is concerned with how we conceptualise time when studying the past and its texts. Asynchronous times are described as "different time frames or temporal systems colliding in a single moment of now" by Dinshaw (2012: 5), who explains that where the mediaeval texts she studies are concerned, there are many overlapping systems of time, e.g. "agrarian, genealogical, sacral or biblical, and historical". This is recognised and

responded to by McManus in her comic *Between Friends*, where she maps constellations of times. Her engagement with historical feminist publishing, such as Sheba Feminist Press intersects with her own present, bringing Sheba's past and her present together on the page. The strategy of visually foregrounding her engagement with the archival materials makes McManus' intervention in the writing of history visible, whilst also keeping the different perspectives she encountered distinct in order to maintain the complexity and polyvocality of an archival source.

Dinshaw introduces Bruno Latour and his critique of the "modernist settlement", in particular its emphasis on progress through linear time, and the veneer of objectivity introduced by the disinterested professional observing facts external to their engagement with them.

As Kevin P. Donovan (Lecturer in the Centre of African Studies at the University of Edinburgh) explains, Latour seeks to shift our understanding of knowledge from "matters of fact" to "matters of concern" to bring our attention to the many roles and factors at play in the production of knowledge, thereby introducing "ethical and political considerations to domains where they were previously excluded" (Donovan 2014: 881). This concern also runs through McManus's book, as she brings recognition to histories not usually recognised by the value systems and history-writing practices of their historical context.

By contrast, McManus makes the production of knowledge visible by showing her role in the process of synthesising archival materials into a history of sorts. As a distancing device this reminds us (as viewers) of the constructedness of the page, enabling a different kind of synthesis compared to historical fiction. It asks that the viewer maintain a critical distance from the subject matter, as comics scholar Kate Polak suggests: "The gutter is a kind of reminder that this is a representation and you are involved in creating this representation in your mind as you read it. The gutter creates a space of possibility, where people are reminded that they are a part of the artwork too" which can have the effect of asking us to consider our own role in relation to it (Berlatsky 2018).

Our symposium participants demonstrated their immersion within their subject matter, echoing Latour's "matters of concern". This overlaps with Dinshaw's interest in the role of the amateur, in particular the root of the word (Latin, then French: one who loves) lying in their coming "from positions of affect and attachment, from desires to build another kind of world" (2012: 6). Here we do not claim that our symposium participants are amateurs working outside of the professional realm, but that what is intriguing about some of the practices described is that, like the amateur, they are "operating outside of regimes of detachment governed by uniform, measured temporality" (2012: 5). For example the monetised time of the professional is disrupted and repurposed by Catherine Anyango Grünewald in her

Last Seen images, where time spent on repetitive layering of graphite leads to ruptures in the paper surface. The concept of value being accorded to time spent working is repurposed in a powerful gesture of emotional labour, which ultimately leads to the breakdown of the image, instead of the economical value afforded by "productive" labour.

Deliberately apportioning attention and therefore value to under-told stories is a recurring theme throughout the symposium presentations, echoing Theodore Adorno's comments on Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (Beiner 1984: 425–6) that we should turn our focus to the vanquished and to those events and actors that fall outside of the linear historical narrative of victory and defeat. But with personal investment in the subject matter comes an ethical dimension, in that the emotional work involved in engaging with difficult pasts may have repercussions for those engaging with it. This reminds us of Iqbal Singh's mention of the involvement of psychotherapists on a current project. Acknowledging the affective potential of engaging with the past in such a way evokes Dinshaw's amateur again, and gives projects like *Last Seen* their impetus in calling for change, reminding us of Benjamin's revolutionary drive.

Illustration, in the form of research-led, long-form personalised projects of the kind we have celebrated with *Colouring In*, seems to have negotiated a balance of these aspects of the amateur with the

professional demands of economic concerns and career progression. The illustration professionals seen here make their role in pursuing and producing knowledge visible, thereby avoiding the mystification of the "expert" modern professional (Dinshaw 2012:21, referencing Latour). Interestingly, traditional models of professional time in illustration don't quite accommodate this way of working. But these are all professional projects in different ways, whether its designer-maker self publishing, or illustrators acting as commissioned workshop facilitators, or swapping cultural capital for academic capital. Illustration is moving beyond limiting versions of what constitutes "professional" practice in this sense.

The challenge of representing the complex conceptions of time outlined above has been met in intriguing ways by the practitioners encountered in this issue. However, for most of our contributors, Benjamin's constellations are not visualised as a web, as the term might suggest. Rather, we saw collections, layers, and time-based media. For example in Yue Mao and Ksenia Kopalova's composite images the tessellation of memory and imagination through fragments of images enables them to visualise and make explicit the messiness and co-constructed nature of memory and history written on this basis. As with McManus's book, in this instance illustration shows us the slipperiness of tackling history and memory, as well as visually demarcating the different perspectives that contribute to our understanding of the past by combining

photographic and drawn imagery. This structural solution allows the makers to acknowledge the gaps in knowledge, and the contributions made by different voices to our understanding of the past.
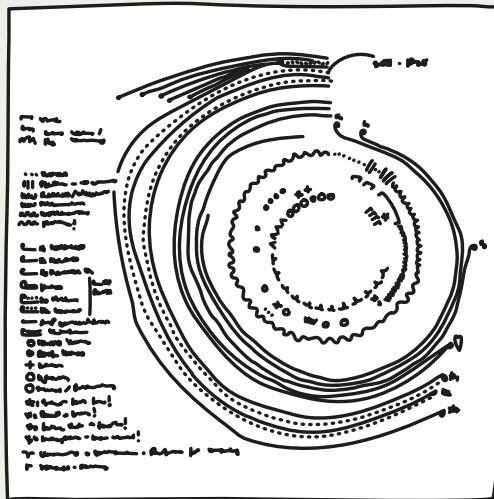
Current Visual Communication student at the University of Bergen Ena Johanna Rathgeb (not present at symposium) builds on parallels between the present and the past to inform her auto-ethnographic project based on her grandfather's diary and archival research. Visual representations of present-day refugees and the harmful narratives these create provide a contemporary need for her foray into the past. Her investigation of the visual means to convey notions of home, memory and migration show style to be responsive (driven by an

openness to the material) and take in pencil drawings for their vulnerability and hand-drawn infographics to map the complexity of the material. The role of drawing archival resources is described by comics scholar Hillary Chute in relation to intimacy, in a similarly family-led story. In Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* she describes how the redrawing of family documents allows Bechdel "the intimacy of touching her father through drawing him, while suggesting that the form of comics crucially retains the insolvable gaps of family history" (2010: 176).

Chute's point links the architecture of the work with Rachel Emily Taylor's concern for highlighting the gaps in our knowledge of the past, rather than filling them. As she states: "In its comics form we see the materialisation of epistemological problems. The book does not seek to preserve the past as it was, as its archival obsession might suggest, but rather to circulate ideas about the past with gaps fully intact" (Chute 2010:181).

These "gaps" are a productive part of illustrative projects concerned with "postmemory", where the second- or third-generation maker actively works with the ambiguity, uncertainty and emotional distance from a topic. The concept is outlined by academic Marianne Hirsch and reflects the wave of second and third generation projects such as Rathgeb's which examine complex stories of family history from periods such as the second world war. Hirsch explains that "'Postmemory' describes the

relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before — to experiences they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up" (Hirsch, no date). Projects are therefore rooted in visual artefacts such as family photos and documents, which necessarily raises questions about responsibility to these artefacts and their owners (as Grove explores with such honesty) and how to respond through visual exploratory methods.

Embracing the gaps and distance of postmemorial projects allows illustrators a more questioning approach. This is often reflected in outcomes that offer a nuanced appraisal of positions and accounts, which prompt us to question our position in the present. Further examples include Louise Bell's PhD research (a postmemorial exploration of her Grandfather's experiences of pre and post-war Plymouth), and Professor Hilde Kramer's Illuminating the Non-Representable research project. In her pioneering international and multidisciplinary project based in Norway, Kramer and colleagues explore such questions through a diverse range of research methods focusing on how illustration as object, artist's book, performance and sound can engage with the past. By doing so, Kramer seeks to move away from clichés associated with picturing the Holocaust and find other pictorial strategies and forms to present what may be considered non-representable.

Illustration's own past

Illustration's own past arose as a topic in Jaleen Grove's paper, who highlighted the role of historic illustration in shaping our views and, consequently, our present. The use of problematic historical (and contemporary, for that matter) imagery in the training of AI image-generating services is commented upon by writer and broadcaster Tracey Spicer (not present at the symposium), who asks us to question the biases inherent within a system based on existing content. For illustration, the problem of image-generation is also one of reduction; illustrative images based on past illustrations leaves little room for breaking out of existing tropes and styles. It is in danger of emptying the critical impulse that Dinshaw writes of out of scraped images, which is contrary to the practices surveyed here, where image-makers have taken pains to adopt a critical stance in relation to the past.

That images originally brimming with vigorous political critique can be dulled and flattened when they are recycled uncritically is a phenomenon with echoes of Fredric Jameson's interpretation of "pastiche" (Jameson 1985). He explained that pastiche is a counterpart to parody that serves commercial ends at the expense of political ones. But the curious aspect of pastiche (for us) is its link with comedy, leading us to consider why humour is not used as a critical strategy in the practices mentioned here. In its late 20th/early 21st century manifestation as the combination of a "humorous"

IMAGE
Artists' impresson of
Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, 2006

caption (relating to gin, perhaps) accompanying "retro" imagery (such as an advertising image of a 1950s housewife), it lacked a critical edge. But we can see its more common and incisive use in genres such as graphic memoir, raising the question of whether the issue with humour is that it may appear disrespectful of subject matter that practitioners do not own as their experience. Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* has been dissected in this regard by Judith Kegan Gardiner (Professor Emerita in English, Gender and Women's Studies), who explores the combination of tragedy and comedy in Bechdel's autobiographical work. Gardiner argues that it is Bechdel's combination of the gendered traditions of tragedy (male) and comedy (female) that allow Bechdel to reformulate literary genres. As Gardiner states, the result is that Bechdel transforms both modes by "making them more self-referential and more indeterminate at the same time that she shapes them to fit the lives of an expanding array of nonnormative people" (2011: 206). Therefore it seems that humour is a powerful tool when calibrated to the subject matter, but how this is judged requires sensitivity to one's own position in relation to that content.

The criticality of the practices surveyed in this introductory article demonstrate a productive response to the situation presented by AI image generation at this point. We are fully aware of the potential of our thoughts on this to appear woefully anachronistic in hindsight, given the

rapidly developing technology underpinning the phenomenon and the unknown opportunities that future iterations will bring. With these caveats in place, at this moment it seems appropriate to consider how we might reappraise what illustration can do that avoids becoming stuck in an endless loop of producing visual fodder with little development of tropes, attitudes, forms or disciplinary challenges.

The examples discussed here demonstrate a great emphasis on processes of enquiry and production, fostering a deep engagement with subject matter and its broader contexts and how this is discussed through visual means. With a greater emphasis on these modes of enquiry we can establish more rigorous, reflexive and questioning practices, resulting in complicated and in-depth projects that contribute to our understanding of our pasts and ask us to interpret and understand our present, and consider what we want to aim for in the future.

Conclusion

Throughout this survey of themes emerging from the symposium presentations and related practices the careful balancing act performed by illustrators is evident. They have demonstrated how fraught conjuring and conjecture are when negotiating a visual response to the past and its materials. This has been executed with a clear sense of responsibility to the subject matter, and to shaping the future. Such considerations also arose in relation to the use of empathy as a strategy, as seen in the suggestion of *not* colouring in the past. These mark a move to casting presentism as a more caring position, seeking to highlight and address imbalances rooted in the past, in light of present inequalities. This has been achieved by highlighting omissions and blind spots, for example.

Illustrative practices surveyed have also worked to reveal the production of knowledge, pulling back the curtain to reveal the wizard behind. In doing so, they tug at Latour's modernist settlement, instead being located within a healthy seam of critical practices outside the modern, with a capacity for self-reflexivity that is brought into the construction of images and objects.

We saw illustration's own past interrogated, representing a critical appraisal of how to look backwards and also to look forwards to what the future of professional practice might be.

We propose that looking forwards allows us to greet new additions to the image-making toolkit as an opportunity to recognise what illustration can do, the processes and forms that can't be replicated by AI. As in previous decades, we are confident that illustration can reflect and reposition itself in light of existential challenges. On the basis of what we have collected in this PDF, we propose that illustrators can deploy a range of methods of enquiry and meaningful production processes that will enable them to steer a course for the discipline into new and exciting territory.

SB, LV

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The Lacuna's Calling: A Graphic Reckoning with History
–Jaleen Grove

History-telling as an imaginative act:
Jaleen Grove, Assistant Professor in Illustration (Rhode Island School of Design, USA) interweaves personal history, academic scholarship and creative practice, to reflect on the illustrator as a medium for creative incantation in the face of historical gaps and omissions.

This working paper and the studio practice it discusses began in response to an invitation to give a keynote to an international audience on the theme of The Past (University of the Arts, 9.Dec 2022, via videocall). Since the talk, it has evolved into a more methodological inquiry. Like many in the original audience, I am an illustration educator, researcher, and maker working in post-secondary institutions. I work in the United States and Canada, where, over the past ten years, addressing systemic inequity has become an urgent priority. In my school, like many other Canadian and American schools, the majority of students are people of colour while the majority of faculty are white like me. We white faculty members have been called upon by students and fellow faculty

of colour to improve learning outcomes and mental health by addressing overt and covert racism, and to decolonize curricula and pedagogy by removing or reducing Eurocentric biases. This paper and project it discusses address approaches in doing so.

As specialists in communication and trained to serve a community, illustrators directly or indirectly rise to meet demand, and insofar as the need to confront racism is shared by other practitioners and educators, my engagement with it will, I hope, contribute to our professional dialogue in illustration research. Self-reflexively presenting and analysing my work provides an opportunity to explore not just my artistic experiments but the awkward fit of the relatively new field of illustration research into academia as well.

As I discovered through this project, it is still necessary to lay out introductory concepts in race theory to even self-identified liberals. Knowing this goes to an international public for whom these concepts may be unfamiliar or termed differently, I will proceed without assuming the reader has any background at all in it. To begin, I am working in Whiteness Studies in a North American, mostly Canadian, context. *Whiteness* is an arbitrary category in the discourse of scientific racism, similar to caste, that has been historically and presently used to assign rights and agency (a basic reading list). It is a collective identity that has shifted over the centuries since the early years of European colonialism (late 1400s) to include or exclude certain ethnicities where, at various times

in the United States and Canada, whiteness has excluded the Irish, the Jewish, Eastern Europeans, Italians, and Spanish, and Caucasians who did not speak English were also marginalised (Dyer 1997: 51–52). Whiteness is also cultural, originating in a Protestant Christian worldview with a social organization characterised by hierarchy and bureaucratic management (class, gender, abilities, and religion are common measures) (ibid); this crystallised in British colonialists' cultural identity of "Anglo-Saxonism" (Edmonds 2009). These bureaucratic systems, which were utiled in colonial governance and the concomitant emergence of capitalism, were purposely designed to uphold the positive regard for and special rights and advantages of those deemed white and otherwise favoured by gender, faith, and so on (hence, white *supremacy*). While overtly racist, classist, and other unfair policies are being dismantled, the bureaucracies and laws are slow to change and much inequity — now, often covert and unintentional, or conveniently ignored, or strategically defended with rhetoric that skirts around racial discrimination per se — continues. This kind of impersonal, built-in oppression is called *systemic*. The underlying cultural whiteness is so normalised and entrenched in everyday operations that it goes largely unnoticed and tolerated, making it very difficult to dislodge the resulting systemic exclusions even when their whiteness bias is acknowledged. This everyday unnoticed and un-questioned whiteness is what I am tackling through my personal illustration practice.

Theorists of social inequity and advocates maintain that the replication of power relations that keep white men dominant in positions of authority and privilege will not cease unless individual white persons examine their own particular situation and stakes, so that each individual becomes aware of how they have benefitted and are inevitably swept up in habits of thought and inaction. (As I am writing of my own whiteness with white readers in mind and I am only qualified to speak about my own roots, I will leave aside the complicated question of high-status non-white and mixed-background people). This self-awareness is the prerequisite of change. The personal introspection is mandatory because remaining impersonal, as traditional (white) scholarship does, is one of the ways the status quo remains intact. The impersonal is abstract, not felt, a cushion that insulates one from culpability. Not feeling the rub enables inaction, or performative, symbolic action only.

Therefore, in this project I examine my whiteness through illustration research in the context of my birthplace in the Salish Sea region of Canada's west coast, off the mainland of Canada. On maps the Sea is still labelled *Georgia Strait*. Anglo-Canadian ethnicity, and the indigenous cultures that I grew up surrounded by but not in, live side by side on *Vancouver* Island, named for the English explorer, in the province of *British* Columbia, where I was born in the colony called *Victoria*, after the British Empire monarch. My kindergarten school was named for city founder Sir James Douglas, who

secured the townsite (originally a fort) from the lək̓ʷəŋən people and arranged no treaties at all for use of most of the rest of the province. Today, the lək̓ʷəŋən and others are negotiating new or first treaties, but industrial exploitation continues apace despite land claims underway. Extremely few places remain environmentally intact. Other allegations that have come to light since my elementary years are that in the nineteenth century smallpox was allowed (many say purposely introduced) to run unchecked among indigenous neighbours, and that native children forced to attend residential schools were frequently abused and killed in them.

The effort to overcome centuries of such oppression of the First Nations (the misnomer "Indians" is discouraged in Canada) is commonly referred to as *reconciliation*, an effort that I intend my work to serve. The indigenous politician from Vancouver Island, Jody [Puglaas] Wilson-Raybould, in her book *True Reconciliation* (2022: 306–7), asks all people to be inbetweeners, persons acting as bridges between the dominant white mainstream and indigenous people. An inbetweener also bridges past and future, a role historians and artists can perform well. The inbetweener emphasises interdependence and connectedness between communities and over time. Stepping into the inbetween, as an artist I am attempting to see whiteness and indigeneity anew, make historical facts visible and noticeable, and thereby intervene in my particular cultural inheritance, which must

be done before or as the work of advancing native rights is tackled.

When we are entangled in a problematic past how do we empathetically conjure a different future? I use the word *conjure* with intention. When describing illustrating, this word comes to people's lips quite unconsciously. Conjuring is the imaginative act at the heart of illustrating. Let us remember that an illustration is a theory of what something *is* or could be. The word *theory*, etymologically from Greek, means showing seeing – theo + oros (*theo* is also at the root of *theatre*; oros spills over into *oracle*). What I want to illustrate is the idiosyncrasy of my culture, its way of seeing itself, and what else it could and should be envisioning. Changing the future is imperative but we risk failure because of apathy and lack of empathy. This is where illustration conjuring comes in: if we can't see where we're going, we'll never get there. If we can't agree on where to go, we'll never start. If we leave our problems unseen, we won't know how to begin. Illustration sets ideals, attracts and bonds collaborators, and documents applications, failures and solutions — illustrating is always at the start of any meaningful human action. And every illustration begins with a conjuring act, turning nothing into something, theorising. Thus, there is tension between seeing with our eyes and seeing in our mind's eye. Navigating the factual sight versus the imagined insight is not just the essence of illustrating but at the heart of reconciling inbetween social groups as well.

Timepieces

I have developed an introspective gaze in making a body of mixed media works on paper that I call *Timepieces*. There are 15 so far. These cyanotypes are derived from family records and photographs and taken during site visits I made in 2022. Using a tripartite composition that employs the metaphors of *lens* and *lacuna*, my factual, photographic sources are reformatted as round negatives and exposed on paper light-sensitized with a mix of potassium ferricyanide and ferric ammonium citrate. With a nod to Benedict Anderson's theory of print capitalism (1983, 1991), I chose cyanotype because it is a nineteenth century technology that was used in scientific documentation and in engineering and other technical fields as blueprints; these in turn advanced the production of knowledge and modernity that shaped the expansion of European settler dominance. The blue is also evocative of the cold, wet climate of coastal BC. In each round "lens" I apply halftone screens to distance what lingering aura the vintage photos may have, as well as to exploit how print culture objectifies subjects by placing them at a remove. These technical processes, familiar to us from newspapers and textbooks, denote and document factual events, people, and objects that have really existed.

Pairs of lenses overlap in the middle. In a conventional Venn diagram the overlap represents shared values. The resulting shape is called *vesica piscis* (fish bladder) in Latin, considered an element of sacred geometry symbolizing the vulva and (re)birth; in Christian iconography it is called a *mandorla* (almond), representing spiritual transition. Mindful of these traditions, but subverting them, the *Timepieces* occlude portions of the photos left and right. The space normally reserved for Venn's shared overlap instead subtract and yield a blank space, a *lacuna*, the ancient word for a gap in a manuscript where history happened: maybe some water damage, or insects, or maybe someone cut out a piece. Maybe an editor copying an older text decided something was no longer important, or maybe it was censored. For me, the lacuna is an intervention that forces to the sides what whiteness has typically centered and removes bits, making room inbetween for conjuring and revealing what hegemony obscures. What is inserted there is imagery that refers to some aspect of indigeneity that imaginatively originates outside the photographic record and enters to claim space inside the factual, cyanotyped discourse. These interventions are hand-painted in watercolour, ink, and gouache, which allows humanity, empathy, and presence to advance in strength in contrast to the cold, mechanical cyanotypes. Therefore, the lacuna is not a void but a space of *illumination*, in both the sense of being limned and in the sense of realization. While the tripartite *Timepieces* may be meditatively absorbed without the support of text so that the viewer may contemplate freely, because I also want to convey the specificity of people, places, events, objects, and oral histories, I have

hand lettered commentary about the imagery on removable overlays of Grafix Duralar as a form of autoethnographic journaling or voiceover (making the overlays is still in progress at the time of writing). The conversations set in motion by juxtaposition of the documentary records with the conjured visions, and between what viewers see for themselves and my own narratives, are calculated to provoke an unsettling of settler mindset. Eventually to be bound as a one-of-a-kind artist's book, the reader-viewer is invited to engage at a slow pace and grasp each *Timepiece* separately, and then in inter-related couples or groups, and finally as an entire body.

In one *Timepiece* (Figure 1), the lefthand lens shows myself at about three, beginning my eventual career in art. The righthand lens is a cartoon my parents saved by Len Norris, whose books our family owned. The pictured woman, gun and binoculars in hand, is reminiscent of my parents and me out hiking, hunting, fishing, and gathering mushrooms and berries. In the lacuna is my portrait from memory of my childhood friend, Kayla, one of only two indigenous people I knew before adulthood. The red is for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry, a federal investigation into the disappearance of thousands of people over just the last couple decades. Supporters of the missing women hang a red dress outside their homes. The orange shirt symbolises the children who died while in the custody of the residential schools. I do not know what became of Kayla, but
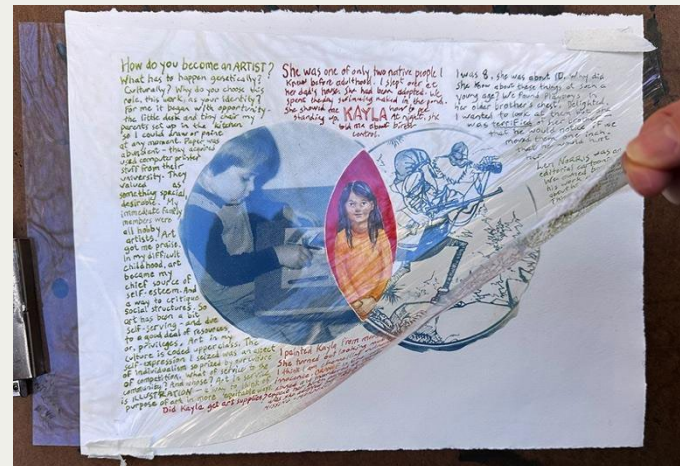
I do know from what I heard later that she was at risk for the former and was probably intergenerationally affected by the latter. Bringing these three disparate pictures together on paper invites consideration of how they are inter-related, what is shared by the three figures (land, gender) and what is not (empowerment, agency).

Another *Timepiece* pairs the façade of the Royal British Columbia Museum in my hometown (my childhood introduction to history) with a government tree plantation two hours' drive away, where my father once worked (Figure 2). Both present a regularity and *regulation* of forms, where the architecture of the building and of the forestry plot obey an inorganic grid of equally spaced elements. This is the visual language of ordering and classification of which whiteness is both producer and product. The manufacture of knowledge, including historical

knowledge, has facilitated global economic and political domination, as well as my family's livelihood: a great-grandfather was a forester; an uncle had a museum career; there are many scientists. Between those two photos is a watercolour depicting a shaggy mane patch, an edible mushroom my family liked to pick. These sprout up *irregularly* in local lawns that used to be meadows and forest floors, in persistent defiance of urbanization and the erasure of eco-systems, a symbol of resistance and fortitude. The past is always somewhere underground. Like a mushroom, as an artist-historian, conjuring disrupts the smooth turf of what the Nigerian-born writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has called "the single story", a dominant narrative that regulates, narrows, and confines identity.

The regulating, scientific-minded, progress-focused conditioning I come from affects my outlook (and the *Timepieces*' format), but so does the land itself and its history. To this day whatever is outside municipal and privately owned areas (94% of the province) is officially still called "Crown Land" and colloquially known as "the bush". Both terms situate this land as "outside" of the urban and the farmed, which erases industrial occupation via logging, mining, and fishing as well as indigenous habitation. The First Peoples Map of BC project charts language bases and gives an idea of pre-settler presence, as opposed to an empty land available for the taking.

One grandfather was a civil engineer and amateur painter who gave me my first hand-lettering lesson. I inherited his drafting tools and his oil paints. My *Timepiece* about him utilizes a snapshot of him as a grinning, confident young man while employed to survey parts of Northern Canada, paired with a survey pin head from a family vacation spot. The brass pin bears the words "Imprisonment for removal" along with "British Columbia Survey 1948" and a stylized crown. For reasons explained below, I do not reproduce this *Timepiece* here. In the 1950s, this grandfather held a provincial government position where he was empowered to decide where and how highways would be built through communities and unceded Crown land in British Columbia. Sometimes arranged through the United Nations, he went on to design infrastructure such as bridges, paving and water systems in the West Asia, Africa, and Southeast Asia. You might say he carried on the colonial project; at the same time his career could be viewed as one of benevolence, responsibility, and improving life for everyone under capitalism. How does one capture these contradictions? In the lacuna I have lettered the word *skookum*, which is one of the last Chinook Jargon words still in common parlance in British Columbia. Chinook Jargon is a mix of Indigenous, French, and English tongues once used from California to Alaska, evidence of a time when inbetween communication was achieved through a collaborative creative effort between peoples. Etymology is a form of oral history, and one of my

favorite research methods, for words preserve and pass on primordial meanings. Skookum means strong, sturdy, good quality. It is only in hunting through the archives that I discovered the other meanings of ghost, demon. To me it captures the two sides of "progress," a euphemism for capitalism's benefits at the cost of its inevitable environmental exploitation and social inequity.
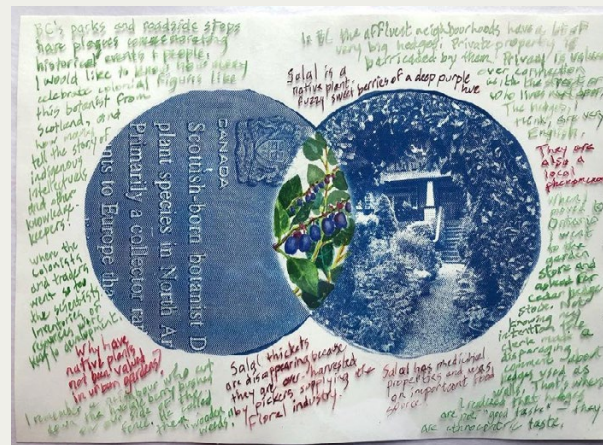
The Salish Sea region is a very lush, beautiful place with cathedral-like forests and dramatic shorelines. To the innocent eye it looks pristine, but both above and below the waterline environmental catastrophes are underway. As a direct result of unbridled capitalism, climate change has decimated the kelp forests and timber forests. Some of the *Timepieces* honour native plants, such as the salal with its edible purple berries between a park plaque

IMAGE
Figure 4

honouring a colonial-era botanist and a wall-like hedge that enforces social division over neighbourly connection. These hedges are typical here of private properties in affluent areas, an echo of grand European estates (Figure 3). The salal, like so many local plants, is not favoured in settler gardens and is disappearing in the bush due to overharvesting for the floral industry.

Raven is a sacred trickster character associated with transformation, who in various oral histories released the sun, moon and stars; who let people into the world by opening a clam; and gave them salmon (Figure 4, above). In many stories, Raven was white but through his meddling became black (Belarde-Lewis 2019; Korotayev, Andrey, et al, 2006). An aunt (who prefers to remain unnamed) tells me, "In Nanaimo, Snuneymuxw territory where your cousin grew up, the raven is also considered

a teacher, and a raven image was requested and given as a carving for the front door handle of the Nanaimo Montessori school by a First Nations family whose kids also attended there." The figures in the pair of cyanotypes are family members, one wearing a t-shirt for the British Columbia Wildlife Federation, which promotes conservation from the point of view of white hunters and fishermen but has begun collaborating with First Nations. The other is hoisting a prize salmon, probably the species we call Spring or Chinook (Americans call them King; note the colonial tie). When I was a child, every sportsman was allowed to catch up to four salmon per day. Restrictions have tightened over the years but Chinook are now so endangered that the youngest members of communities who used to depend on them as a staple have never tasted them. One Raven myth warns humans to always respect the gift of salmon lest the gift evaporate.

Entangled Empathy

Nurturing the shared space that could lead to a rapprochement between cultures and stewardship of the natural, spiritual, cultural, and human resources (that is, wealth) that all depend upon requires reconceiving selfhood and identity as one of inter-dependence. This does not come naturally where individualism and autonomy are prized. Philosopher Lori Gruen has developed an approach she names *entangled empathy*, "caring concern [for others]

coupled with critical questioning" (2022: 146), a method for emotionally while practically addressing painful legacy that stresses connectedness and relational co-construction (this work expands on her prior philosophy of relations between humans and non-humans, and her work with incarcerated people). With a concept of the individual being *in relations* rather than autonomous, she invites white people to examine the greater customs, patterns, indebtedness, and obligations in which they are embroiled, to "bring into focus the dominating and distorting conditions under which [their] perception of others developed" (2015: 30–31; 2022: 146). Embracing the uncomfortable, we "work through complicated processes to try to understand others as well as [oneself] in situations of differential social, political, and race-based power" (2022: 144, 146).

This fits aforementioned views that in order for one to effectively enact antiracism and decolonisation, one must first acknowledge internalized white supremacy. Protest against even tangential implication in systemic inequity is not unusual, however. Such resistance is indebted to the "dominating and distorting conditions" of traditional history-telling and illustrating. An example of customary popular history-telling is *The American Story: the drama and adventure of our country since 1728 as told by The Saturday Evening Post*. Although it treats the United States, tropes that appear in the book characterise popular Canadian history-telling too. The magazine (which circulated widely in Canada) was one of the top employers of

illustrators in the twentieth century and there are lots of fun Leyendeckers and Rockwells inside. These illustrators remain exemplars for many of my students, so it is important to be aware of the context in which their illustrations originated and how they are semiotically inclined in this book.

Published in 1975 at the tail end of the civil rights movement, the book contains only five images of Black people: anthropologist Margaret Mead speaking to some Pacific Islanders; two athletes; the lynching scene in the film *Birth of a Nation* (victim actually played by a white actor); and Martin Luther King, who appears as a television news item where the book mildly notes that he "died tragically" with no further explanation. Even the music section omits images of Black people, the text only crediting "tribal rhythms of African slaves" as the origin of American music. This is the catastrophic "single story" that Adichie warns of, that limits and biases understanding of what Black people's history and potential are.

Indigenous people are given three images, two of them stereotyped: a menacing posse by Western illustrator WHD Koerner; and a solitary figure in a bleak landscape by painter Henry F. Farny before 1916, tapping the longstanding "disappearing Indian" myth. The third is a photograph of a woman alongside a writeup describing the physical strength and independence of a Navajo elder with "a determination born of a lifetime of having to do things for herself" (it isn't clear whether the pictured

person is her). While this third portrayal is not obviously dehumanising, the stress on unentangled rugged individualism is a stock narrative in American national mythology that perpetuates "bootstrap" ideology, which purports that reward comes to autonomous self-starters. This conveniently ignores that systemic oppression hobbles those who come from disadvantaged classes, a blind spot that justifies abandonment and punishment of them because their circumstances can then be blamed on a lack of personal responsibility or rigour. The stoic elder is also an image that flatters the long-standing phenomenon of white people claiming an indigenous grandmother (never grandfather) as a bid for authenticity as a "true" American or Canadian (a genealogy that has long enjoyed the "Pocahontas Exception" to racial purity laws).

The foregoing provokes me to analyse the family tree of the ideal American boy at the end of the book, by Norman Rockwell (originally a *Post* cover in 1959). The parents adhere to the preferred eugenic standard of whiteness: fair-skinned, handsome, optimistic. The stock from which the boy descends — his parents are apparently distant cousins — include a native grand-mother and, at the base, a dark-skinned pirate with his Spanish princess wife. The pirate's chest bears the initials of the so-called Father of American Illustration, Howard Pyle, an homage to Pyle's romanticised prototypical pirate. Doubtless Rockwell meant to diversify and debunk racial purity when in defense of the pirate he said,

using unfortunate language, "Everybody had a horse thief or two in his family" (ibid). But simply adding non-whites leaves the job of undoing racism half done. By the looks of the ideal boy with his pink skin and red hair, the non-white heritage has been bred out. Hiding is an attempt to keep something unthinkable. Why could the native, Latin and possibly creole heritage that Rockwell placed in the past not be made present and preferred? Unwittingly, Rockwell's portrayal accords with nineteenth-century melting-pot social Darwinism which erroneously proposed that British genes would beat out everyone else's, so that in time, America would be a haven of whiteness. This was the purpose of the nationalist personification known as the Gibson Girl, which illustrator Charles Dana Gibson himself explained had the "best" genetic makeup of being explicitly English (in Marshall, *New York Times*, 1910). With the whiteness worldview being one of competition for achievement according to rather narrow parameters of material affluence and social position, Rockwell is conjuring a racist desired outcome. He is disseminating an imaginary ideal as if it were normal and true, promulgating the "single story" of white survival being dependent upon appropriating and then erasing non-white participation. Yes, the illustrator's powers can be put to questionable uses — but not inevitably. We can conjure alternatives if we take Gruen's entangled approach.

Just what do I do with these whiteness stories? Burn or ban them? No — dated media is evidence of systemic racism, and if we destroy things, it is harder to prove racism exists and to understand how it works. Furthermore, when we destroy such evidence, we also lessen shame, which is an important emotion for white people to work through and utilise for transformation.

These stories contain lacunae, not just by omission but by *graphic occupation*, such as the picturing of noble/savage/disappearing/grandmother "Indians". Besides eliding a nuanced and well-rounded representation, substituting the *appearances* of inclusion dulls the casual reader's criticality and desire for anything more or different. Graphic occupation is colonisation of the page, canvas, or frame. The visible and the occupied lacunae call to us, like an itch that won't stop, a hurt wanting medicine. Each lacuna is a spiritual rift of alienation between communities that haunts like a ghost that moans and disturbs our peace. It calls. I want to answer, to fill that silence of inaction. Choosing what to state or show is fraught, however. My culture is scopophilic to the extreme, and keeping up appearances via graphic occupation, such as the lone blanket-wearing figure in *The American Story*, is part of the problem. Therefore, the format of the *Timepieces* does not pair a "white" image and a "native" image as if the contributions are 50-50, with a resulting happy hybrid in the middle. That would be more graphic occupation, mis-representing the concept of inbetweenness as if there were a

polarised, essentialised, and balanced nativeness and non-nativeness to begin with, and promoting an absorption that "disappears" the distinctiveness of the indigenous, whitewashing the past.

The apparatus of observation and display itself needs examination. Since the so-called Enlightenment — the name evoking a beaming floodlight raking every nook and cranny so everything and everyone can be seen — Eurocentric culture has conflated sight with knowledge and assumed that knowledge equals wisdom. The English language's plethora of visual metaphors is well-known: insight, point of view, vantagepoint, lookout, outlook, prospect, exposition, and so on.

Lens is a synonym for worldview. In a photograph of myself at about age 4, I sit on my mother's lap and peer into a microscope (Figure 5, below).
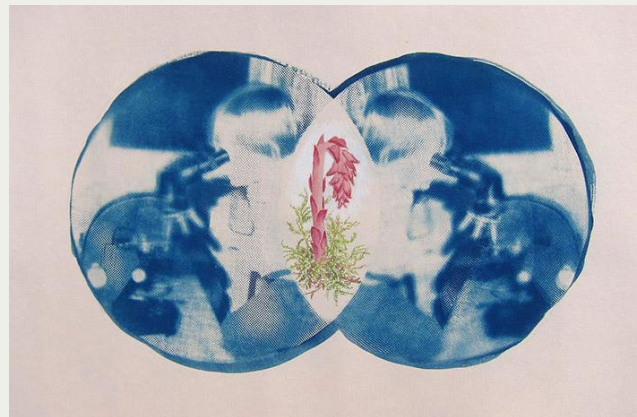
The specimen in the middle is colloquially known as Indian Pipe, a non-photosynthesising plant that grows in the forest. Trained to specialise in observation from birth, lenses have been a key aspect of my life. I was given my first camera for my sixteenth birthday and had a job in a darkroom printing historical negatives at 18. My family of scientists and outdoor enthusiasts regularly packed binoculars along on forays into the bush. Scopes were mounted on rifles that we took hunting. What went unseen? Between a tourism graphic and a photo of myself at 9 with a .22 rifle following a shooting lesson, the centre pictures a road block, a form of resistance that indigenous land defenders frequently employ on disputed Crown Land that British Columbians are accustomed to use for pleasure and industry (Figure 6, below).


Rather than disavow this heritage, setting my sights in new ways and turning the lens around to focus on myself opens what Gruen calls "spaces for less encumbered vision" (2022: 145). A traditional scholar would condemn the *Timepieces* and this essay as far too subjective to count as proper research, but auto-ethnographic self-study can be a place of meditation and self-reflection, important for anyone doing history work and cultural work. Putting ourselves into the picture and into the story is how we can build accountability and make reparations Ethnocentricity survives by denial of its own existence, since silence and invisibility is how power (white power) stays intact, so focusing on these images with the threatening survey pin warning, the gun in my arms, or the unnatural forestry plot and so on is to make the taken-for-granted strange, noticeable. Othering myself, I register how the normative lenses through which I have come to view the world are tinted ethnocentrically, and the more I look, the more I see how peculiar and specific my west coast makeup is; how arbitrary. Not inevitable. Changeable.

> Although so many intercultural and interspecies encounters have been oppressive, Lori Gruen reminds us entangled relationships can also be enlivening, expansive, and enabling, and all these entanglements provide spaces for practicing empathy in a less familiar form that makes visible the ubiquity of the ways that whiteness seeks to obscure others and then creates holes or fissures to look through
> (in "Empathy Beyond Whiteness," 2022: 145).

Wilson-Raybould notes that there is a habit of thinking of white and indigenous cultures as opposites, when
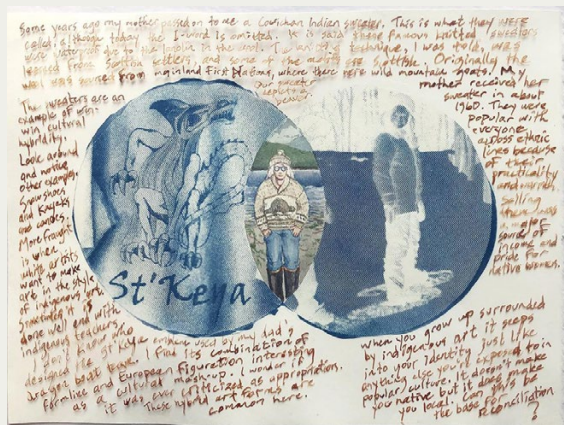
in fact history reveals many shared aspects; under-credited contributions of technology, values, and art have permanently affected Canadian mainstream culture (2022: 222–223). Evidence of cultural hybridity specific to Anglo-Coast Salish experience documented in family albums include wool sweaters made by indigenous women and worn by my relatives in the 1950s and 60s; I inherited one that I depict in a self-portrait in Figure 7 (above). The knitters used techniques originally learned from Scottish settlers with wool from dogs or traded from indigenous groups on the mainland, where there are wild mountain goats (Hawkins 1978). They became an important source of income for the knitters because these now-iconic sweaters became valued by west coast people across ethnic lines. Before the advent of modern fibres, in the cold, soggy climate they were the only clothing that was both warm and water-resistant (thanks to the lanolin in them). I flank the sweater with a dragon boat team's t-shirt featuring St'Keya

(Sea Wolf) drawn by an unknown illustrator in a style equally indebted to European and native traditions; and a photo of myself on snowshoes, an indigenous invention. Reminiscent of how Chinook Jargon facilitated communication, instances like these reveal interrelatedness, evidence of everyday inbetween experience that might be fertile common ground from which to conjure mutual growth.

Nowadays, there are many indigenous artists whose works address indigenous-settler issues and cultural hybridity, but white artists have generally steered clear. Perhaps they shy away from acknowledging their own complicity or that of their ancestors since the psychological toll can be brutal. Perhaps because it is easy to mis-step and cause offense: certainly white artists whom I have interviewed who learned native crafts and artforms (self-taught or from native teachers) have faced criticism for it, rightly so if they infringed on sacred or hereditarily-owned iconography, or tried to sell their works in direct competition with native artists (Grove 2006). The downside is that as awareness of cultural appropriation has grown over time, so has trepidation in partaking of any indigenous culture, even when offered by First Nations members themselves, as in the sale of sweaters, baskets, ornamental masks, or prints. I myself was hesitant for many years to wear an engraved silver pendant depicting Raven that my German-Canadian mother-in-law had given me, worried that I would be seen as culturally appropriating or pretentious. That fear seems questionable to me now — and a missed

opportunity. Wearing something produced for sale is not the same as "playing Indian". When non-indigenous people decline what is offered because a mindset that "It's not meant for me" or "That's not my identity" is setting in, it amounts to a silent treatment that is disrespectful, and it elides the fledgling integration we already experience. While consumption is no substitute for humanitarian and political action, action is more likely to be taken if indigeneity is visible and celebrated. Making the sense of what is shared may counteract the sense of irreconcilable differences.

Methodological issues

There are two methodological dilemmas that I have encountered in making the *Timepieces* and in writing about making them. First, who is speaking? History-writing, history-visualizing, and history-consuming have never been neutral acts, although the rhetoric of textbooks, TV shows and museum displays has commonly presented it that way (*The American Story* is an example). Conventional history-writing is similar to hunting and gathering and to the early explorers' and scientists' activities: with an air of detachment we travel, trawl through archives, collect data, take field notes, gather samples, and write it up for a privileged audience of fellow professionals to consume (that's you, dear reader; you are complicit in this quasi-colonial practice as a market for my academic labour). My professional acclaim as an

art historian rests upon conformity to that standard: meticulously documented evidence, command of "the King's English,"a style that sounds objective, faith in the scientific method and in logic, citation of sanctified prior scholarship, and double-blind peer reviewed publishing as a gold standard of "truth" and legitimacy. Mastering these things permits my research and ideas to be admitted to the ranks of accepted knowledge, to have a voice in the older fields of academia and therefore, influence.

I won't deny that relevant information is thereby brought forward. These scholarly standards of excellence, however, also gatekeep power and authority and are restricted to those who can afford graduate work and can master the preferred rhetoric. Pioneers of critical thought working in gender, race, disability, and other fields have criticised this as maintaining systemic oppression insofar as the information-gathering, perspectives, and modes of sharing by those lacking access are unheard and rendered illegitimate (Gebrayel 2023). When I enact professional standards and adhere to academic definitions of quality, I necessarily invoke centuries of Eurocentric world-views and reinscribe hierarchies, even when my content is biting.

The second dilemma contains an answer to the first, while introducing other problems. In contrast to my scholarly side, my professional role as a would-be decoloniser of pedagogy and as an illustration researcher rests upon subjectivity, emotional literacy,

subversive countercultural purpose, freedom of expression, personal connection and empathy, and belief in the longstanding roles of artists as critics, visionaries, shamans, shit-disturbers, interpreters, and goal setters who identify wrongs and start the healing process. Art has the potential to address racism, sexism, hegemony and their outcomes without reinforcing them because art is not held to unalterable tradition and there are precedents of reflexivity and institutional critique in artmaking. The products may not, however, conform to the commonly accepted measures of "quality", even though *some* contemporary and fine art standards are now recognised. In illustration, the visual languages of commercial appeal and graphic satire do not always meet approval due to prejudices and systemic barriers I have documented elsewhere (Grove 2006, 2014, 2016). It is worth highlighting too that the long tradition of self-expression, cult of the singular "genius", and artistic license pre-dispose us to be self-interested, possibly to the detriment of participants and informants, something we as a discipline need to mind as we carve our space in academia.

The illustration researcher is caught between these two paradigms at odds, the academic and the creative. As the newly formed International Association of Illustration Academics is proposing, illustrators must define their own standards of excellence and research methods. I submit that defining these measures and methods is important not just because doing so

honours our creativity but because the creative modes are an important way we might put antiracism, decolonisation, social inclusion and equity into practice and to communicate the critiques they entail. Artistic media has the power to clarify text, and outside of the verbal, to add layers of somatic and affective experience that are integral to engaging with emotionally difficult work. Creative and colloquial writing, and memoir, all ground material in lived experience and resist the disciplinary standards that silence, flatten individuality, delegitimise non-Western modes of being, and erode accountability. This is why my project takes autobiographical, auto-ethnographic, and poetic approaches. It is also why, wherever possible, I am linking to non-paywalled information written in plain speech. But there remains the tension between freedom and responsibility.

Ethics

This work is difficult, emotionally wrenching, and takes an enormous amount of self-criticality. On one hand, it requires examining and suspending Eurocentric values that my professional identity as an art historian practicing quality scholarship in the manner described above has rested upon. On the other hand, doing it in a self-referential way as encouraged in art and activism has tested the parameters by which research ethics and academic "quality" are set. It has also strained a personal family relationship.

The stories we illustrate provide the emotional impetus to practice entangled empathy and accountability. Illustrators, however, are not sociologists, and may be ill-equipped to work with communities. Too much provocation can backfire: although I accessed family records held by one family member (whom I shall call X) while they watched, informed them I was working on family history and colonialism, and obeyed their wishes that I keep names anonymous, upon seeing my *Timepieces* and reading a revision of the initial keynote, X reacted in a manner consistent with what Robin DiAngelo calls white fragility — an emotional backlash to a perceived threat to whiteness and its privileges. Critiquing whiteness had an unintended effect in which X's receptivity to the project was ruined and their opinion of me personally was injured.

I now realise that as full-time faculty immersed in disciplinary thought, I have become less attuned to what non-initiates are prepared to hear. Graphic novels commonly exhume family baggage as a method of social critique (best known examples include Spiegelamn's *Maus,* Bechdel's *Fun Home,* and Krug's *Belonging*), while Foucauldian dismantling of the archive and of what constitutes knowledge and identity is everyday stuff for me. Those outside the Humanities and Fine Arts, however, are not versed in any of this, and their expectations still adhere to the traditional model of "objective" history citing "established" facts.

The need for adequate background is why I have now prefaced the present paper with introductory definitions and resources on whiteness studies.

Lacking that, X did not recognise my anecdotal methods and the colloquial and autobiographical style of my talk because these depart from the normalised standards of history-telling that I described above. The free-range explorations of hermeneutic inquiry and inward-looking subjectivity are established methods of decolonising norms, but to X they were groundless cherry-picking, spurious interpretation, and illegitimate navel-gazing. Rejecting the premise that our family is inherently privileged by race and class, X forbade my use of some photographic portraits on the grounds that I had not sufficiently informed them of the creative and critical manner in which they would be employed, which is why many *Timepieces*, including the one of my grandfather with the survey pin, do not appear here. X also demanded excision of testimony I heard from another person describing a relative's alleged racist behaviour some 65 years ago. My attempts to hold a conversation resulted in X extending censorship to the remaining images derived from albums at their house, with the exception of pictures of myself so long as they appear in a context that flatters family dignity.

That final caveat suggests that if the *Timepieces* were not personalising systemic racism and physically and conceptually decentering family history, then my artistic inquiry would have found favour. The

indexical quality of photographs exacerbated the situation because the supposed accuracy of photos leads one to say, "That is him," not "That is a picture of him," conflating person and image. This impactful indexicality is one reason why I used the photos instead of drawing. Should I have made drawings using the photographs as reference or maybe simply invented pictures, or used public domain ones of strangers? There would have been less consternation, but all-important elements would have been watered down: the vital aspect of personalisation and *feeling* what actual implication and responsibility is, to motivate Gruen's entangled empathy; the semiotics of specific evidence that photographic technology brings; and the productive contrast between the dehumanisation of the halftone cyanotypes and the humanity of the illuminations, all of which I activated to illustrate my message.

Problematically, the freedom of expression valued in creativity and activism clash with conservative interpretations of copyright and research ethics guidelines. At the heart of X's defense of their censorship is their opinion that my sourcing from photographs without acquiring explicit permission for delivering an artistic message that X finds distasteful is a breach of ethics and copyright, hinging on the fact that the original photographs are not in my possession. This is a plausible argument. My own position is that I have a freedom-of-expression right and a birthright to explore my own heritage as I see fit by using my own snapshots of the original

family photos and changing them through artistic manipulation. In American and Canadian copyright law this is a grey area, where creative works in general and quotations for the purpose of critical review or satire are protected. Indigenous artists themselves frequently appropriate popular culture figures, brands, and paintings; one example is Sonny Assu's intervention using a painting by Emily Carr. Artistic license based on many precedents from Dada to Roy Lichtenstein to Richard Prince is established; at the same time, instances continue to be challenged in courts and public opinion.

In Illustration Research, as a discipline we need to articulate our own stance that balances artistic freedom and participant protection, because our needs are different from those of other researchers. Institutional research ethics guidelines are not written for artists; my own art school does not even post any. When as a grad student in art history I asked if we ought to be submitting dissertation research interview questions to the Institutional Review Board, people scoffed. In universities the policies are framed primarily to protect the personal information of strangers in scientific experiments, not to police interpretation in the humanities or fine arts.

While there's a general understanding that harm should be avoided and risk minimised, Boards do weigh potential harm against greater good. In my case, left to my own devices I judged that my intention to explore white supremacy was the

greater good and I imagined the risk would be only minor, stimulating in relatives nothing more than productive discomfort, the sort of emotional reaction that leads to curiosity and learning. Mistakenly, I assumed that X would support me simply because they were family and liberal. I also fell back on my artistic prerogative to explore unfettered; I have an admitted a bias there, because who doesn't want to be free in art?

I do not pretend to have been right any more than I claim my portrayal of whiteness is the only one possible. Rather, I contend that conflicting narratives can and should co-exist, which is how the "single story" is remedied. Was I correct to follow my course? Negotiating who controls the narrative opens up the difficult terrain of reconciling differing ethical perspectives. Is it more ethical to exercise my right to speak from my own perspective, do my personal psychological work, and address general social issues by way of personal case studies, than to protect family honour and X's individual wishes? Those who prize artistic and academic freedom or individual freedom of speech would say yes, on principle. Those thinking of the greater good and how documentation of whiteness would validate subaltern testimonies of suffering under white supremacy that have been dismissed would also answer "Yes!" Disclosing complicity with racism and benefit from whiteness is a form of contrition and atonement, where not doing this work would be dishonourable. To evoke impersonal distance or stay silent would be to cast my roots and myself into continued complicity. Alternatively, critics may argue that raising shame, embarrassment and fury violates the dignity, wellbeing, and rights of family members who did not consent to being involved in my work, however tangentially.

X's anger proves how entrenched white-centric values are and my loss of their esteem is a tangible price paid for unsettling the settler worldview. Excoriation and disownment, which are species of losing white privilege, are exactly what keeps white people from doing this work. Since I have certain regrets about what has turned out to be a defection from certain family values, I cannot claim my route is righteous, but nor am I going to cave simply because the outcome with X was fractious. X may yet come around, the project was supported by at least one other family member, and I still believe in the helpfulness of the endeavour for other artists, not to mention the original aim of embarking upon a self-decolonising journey. If we say artists should never upset anyone, then a dangerous limit on thought and personal agency is introduced. Holding back is a species of white silence.

Adopting the ethical principle of the Golden Mean, I have resolved to continue my work but to omit from this paper some material that X forbade use of. It's not the only or "best" solution; it's just the one I feel least uncomfortable with and that does not contradict the tenets of entangled empathy or Wilson-Raybould's

IMAGE
Figure 8

contention that true reconciliation is not achieved by means that cause more pain and distrust (2022: 313).

Conclusion

Traditional academic history-writing and picturing pretends there is no personal connection — history should be objective, and therefore true and unbiased, my forefathers thought. No. The oral histories, the oracular, the somatic intergenerational trauma, are all ways to acknowledge, imagine, and claim lost evidence. Insisting on objectivity and fact relegated histories of non-elites to discounted categories such as folklore, myth, fiction, superstition or hallucinations of a shaman, thus stripping away dignity and agency. Impersonal history also dulls the important elements of pain, empathy, and atonement. Impersonal histories result in reified ones like *The American Story*. Disavowing complicity in racism is the easy way out of possibly awkward and painful processes, but silence sacrifices one of the most effective ways of building inbetweenness. It is in story-telling and image-making that we tap the emotional reservoirs and commitments that sustain relationships.

My family member's iconoclasm has hindered my attempt to make seen the ways and means of my ancestors' flourishing. These unexpected lacunae are ultimately productive, however, because the prohibition turned this project from being an extended artist's statement to becoming a treatise on research

methods. X may have hoped to shut me down but in fact their vehemence has strengthened my resolve and conviction that this is meaningful work. Illustrators are used to constraints; suppressing creativity typically spurs greater creativity.

Nothing stops me from privately continuing my work. Illustration is conventionally assumed to be made for mass audiences, but the *Timepieces* model illustrating for oneself. Autoethnography is a journey of self-discovery, and the very slowness of the process forces introspection and the externalisation of private thoughts and feelings. The tripartite form combining previously unrelated images suggestively contextualises memory, genealogy, and place in obtuse ways, inviting non-habitual interpretation. This taps the purpose of the ancient mandorla/ *vesica piscis* shape as a spiritual aperture that opens meditative insight, a third eye. Conjuring empathically into the illuminated central lacunae

counters the limited, dispassionate, fact-based thinking that can enable apathy and harm. Conjuring transports us via the mythic. Before it referred to a hole in a manuscript, lacuna meant a pit that fills with water, sharing the same root as *lake* and *lagoon*. Consider a whirlpool (Figure 8, previous page). As the lacuna drains, instead of disappearance, destruction, death or emptiness, think of it as a point of origin seen from the back side, like a black hole: the vortex is going somewhere and it is producing something at an unseen destination. Diving into the lacuna's whirlpool is where imagination is far more important than evidence, where history and drawing are forms of mourning, where conjuring is a form of recuperation and clairvoyance that restores and challenges an averted gaze.

In sharing process and problems, and by activating theories of race and whiteness indebted to many before me, I aim to pierce the rhetoric of authority, expertise and wisdom that scholarly conventions employ and to upset conventional artworld status measures of perfection, originality, and genius. In academia, a paper or lesson ends with a definitive conclusion summing up why the speaker's argument is correct. But proclaiming success or failure or what is "true" would replicate the Eurocentric claim to knowledge that this project is questioning. Now it is time for others to share their owns struggles and successes.

I will conclude by calling your attention to three British Columbia indigenous artists who have projected new visions of their own, in inbetween ways (see below).

JG

Michael Nicoll Yahgulnaas

- Art in America: Fluid Frames: The Hybrid Art of Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas
- Bone Box: Item number 2696/1 a-l from the MOA: University of British Columbia

Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun

- Unceded Territories VR: Trailer
- Yes Magazine: Indigenous Artists Use Technology to Tell Stories About Their Ancestral Lands

Cole Pauls

- Vancouver Comic Arts Festival: Announcing our SALMON RUN Newspaper anthology
- The Globe and Mail: Permanent regalia: Tahltan artist Cole Pauls on how Indigenous culture can get under your skin

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Drawing and Animating Futures Past: Exploring existential possibilities of migratory experience
–Alexandra D'Onofrio

How can animation be employed as a collective storytelling practice with a group of migrants in search of better life opportunities? Alexandra D'Onofrio, Lecturer in Social Anthropology (University of Manchester) reflects on the possibilities for anthropologists and visual researchers to investigate realms of being that go beyond the visual, the factual, the verbal and the material.

You only live twice, oh so it seems,
One Life for Yourself and One for Your Dreams
Nancy Sinatra (1967)

Or, as a well-known anthropologist wrote some years later:

One of the most significant facts about us may finally be that we all begin with the natural equipment to live a thousand kinds of life but end in the end having lived only one.
Clifford Geertz (1973)

Supposing we do end up living only one life in 'reality', what happens with the lives we could be living instead, with all the other possibilities of life left aside or to one's dreams as Nancy Sinatra sings in the soundtrack to the 1967 James Bond movie? And how do they come to interact with our experiences of the present and with the ways in which we recount the past? These are some of the questions that lay at the heart of my anthropological research with a group of Egyptian men on their experiences of illegalised crossing of the Mediterranean Sea.

Far from being forgotten or simply discarded, 'other lives' have inspired the work of writers, singers and poets, psychologists, philosophers and lately also anthropologists. Other existential possibilities have a grip on our imagination, they *live* alongside us, having some sort of ghostly nature, they decide when to appear in the horizon as aspired versions of

the future yet to come (Crapanzano 2004; Jackson 2008; Schielke and Grau 2020), or as hauntings of unlived pasts (Fischer 2014).

As if animated by a life of their own, our unled lives seem to become manifest with a particular vividness in critical moments: when we are having second thoughts about a choice that we have made, when we are about to take a life-changing decision, or when we are in existential crisis feeling stuck, not knowing what direction to take. Possible lives from the past and the future emerge with greater force in those times, taking over our perception of the present reality.

If this is true for most human beings in the globalised world, where interconnectedness and mobility of ideas, objects and people have provoked the imagination to grow in scale, then it is most certainly true for people crossing borders, and practising mobility in quite radical ways out of necessity. Arjun Appadurai (1991) has argued that globalisation has resulted in '[m]ore persons in more parts of the world consider[ing] a wider set of "possible" lives than they ever did before' implying that many people nowadays often imagine themselves in other places, living other types of lives, and as a result dreaming of becoming different versions of themselves.

When I started researching migrants' experiences of crossing as an anthropologist, I wanted to work with my participants in order to explore precisely these

realms of their existences. People's imagination of the future, I realised while recording stories in places that function as border areas such as Calais, Ventimiglia, Milan, Sicily and Tangiers, represented the main driving force to attempt, retry and complete the crossing. Becoming preoccupied with the future is clearly not an imaginative activity that crossers engage with only when reaching the border. Migrants-to-be usually prepare, decide, act for the future (whether it is aspired or dreaded) even well before making the crossing, in their places of origin, by deciding what school to go to, how to collect as much money as possible, whether to get married or not, what religious rituals to perform, or even by deciding how to get dressed when attempting to ask for a European visa in their country of origin[1].

Before the research I am going to talk to you about, in the summer of 2008 I was in Calais to record the stories of people attempting to make the crossing to the UK to seek asylum. While recording a conversation a man named Yegsaw who had been travelling from Ethiopia for over 6 years told me: "You know...when I cross over to England, I will be able to tell you my true story, you will be able to meet the *real* me. Not *here*, in this place. What you see is not who we really are" (emphasis added in recollection by me).

Without realising it, Yegsaw was critically responding to the questions I set off with before reaching Calais, in regards to how storytelling happens in border areas and in what ways people remember stories at the

[1] For further reading about how the prospect of migration affects the ways people understand themselves and live their lives on a daily basis in so called 'sending countries' in Africa and in the Middle East, see *Global Horizon: Expectations of Migration in Africa and the Middle East* by Knut Grau and Samuli Schielke (2012), Leuven University Press

border. As usual in our work as anthropologists, it is from the people we meet in the real world that we learn crucial things about the relevance of our own questions and methods. In that revelatory moment I began questioning what I was doing both epistemologically and methodologically.
As anthropologists we are trained to participate in people's lives, observe what happens, conduct interviews, have long conversations. Yet by relying solely on verbal exchanges and on observations of what was in front of me and of what I perceived as reality, Yegsaw had warned me that I was bound to record only half of the story. He was also pointing towards another a temporality and a sphere of existence that I had not taken into consideration until then, focusing most of my conversations and reflection with people on their present conditions and their experiences of the past.

By redirecting my attention to the stories I could have encountered beyond the border, Yegsaw's remark made me understand that I needed to find other ways to gain access to that realm of the imagination and the future, in order to better understand how these people who were risking their lives on a daily basis were experiencing that particular time and place. Furthermore, I knew I had to challenge the heavy reliance of anthropology on observing reality, on the present and on using text and words both to carry out research as much as to communicate its outcomes. In our over-theorized age, Vincent Crapanzano (2004) illustrates how our epistemic outlook has almost

always been directed toward the word, events, content and substance, and as Jacques Derrida reminds us, toward presence (1967). How could I then incorporate a new ethnographic practice into my research in order to make it more responsive to what was true to the people, like Yegsaw, who were crossing borders illegally?
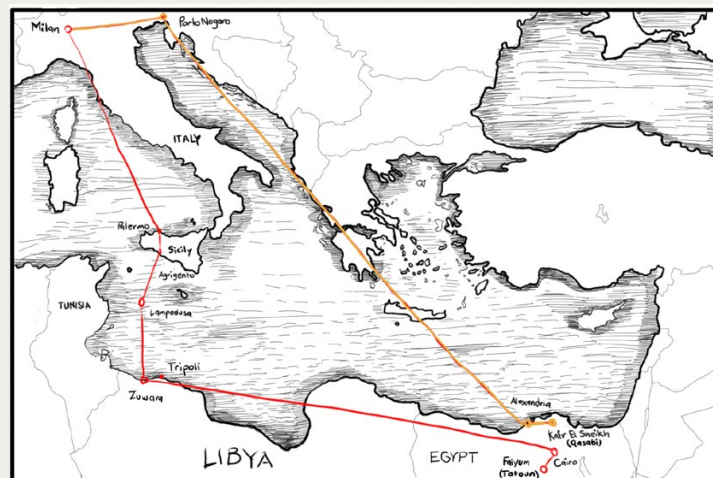
In 2012 I started off a new research project with a group of Egyptian men who had crossed the Mediterranean Sea illegally, when they were still adolescents. I had first met Ali, Mahmoud and Mohamed in 2010 during a community theatre project I was facilitating in Milan that engaged a mixed group of people, most of whom were people with a migrant and refugee background whilst others were Italian active citizens. The theatre workshops created a

safe and playful context to build new relationships, practise the language, listen attentively to stories which expressed the social and personal hurdles that people without documents were experiencing.

The map (Fig 1) shows the routes that Ali, Mahmoud and Mohamed took to reach Milan. The red colour indicates the journey that Mahmoud and Mohamed took. They both came from Tatoun, a rural town south of Cairo, which is very well known for being one of the primary sending areas for Egyptian migrants coming to Italy. At the time of my research the majority of the 36,000 Egyptians living in Milan, came from this area. The most common route taken by people leaving Tatoun to reach Italy in the last two decades has been the journey through Libya in order to board on a boat and cross the sea to reach the southern shores of Italy. Mahmoud disembarked on the Italian island of Lampedusa, while Mohamed's boat managed to reach Sicily and was escorted by the coast guard to the harbour of Agrigento, in the south of Sicily. From here, whoever is released or manages to leave the reception centres for minors, as Mohamed did, attempts then to find a way to dodge the authorities and get on a train to Milan, which is the end of their long journey.

Ali in contrast, comes from Al Qasabi, a small village in the Delta region around 180km north of Cairo, whose young people have mostly migrated to the Gulf countries and a smaller number to Europe. Ali seems to be the only man from his village to have chosen

Italy as his destination. He took an entirely different route and all together planned his emigration from Egypt in quite a unique way. He decided to study philosophy at the university of Alexandria, and with a degree in hand managed to get employed on a merchant ship. He waited for the first time the ship was scheduled to sail to Italy to take his definite decision not to make the return back home. Once the ship docked at the harbour of Porto Nogaro in the north-east of Italy he fled the ship during his first night shift on board and entered what he has named *his new life* as an illegalised[2] migrant.

When we started our research Ali, Mahmoud and Mohamed were undergoing the arduous but much hoped for process of legalisation. After almost 8 years of feeling stuck, not being able to get a proper job, or move without the fear of being caught, detained and deported or plan anything in regards to their future, they finally managed to go through a successful legalisation process. This represented another critical event in their lives, which changed the way they related to the future quite drastically, as it was once again re-inhabited with all sorts of possibilities. I saw this moment as an opportunity to explore how my friends were re-envisaging the future, the plans they were beginning to make and use creative ethnographic methods to investigate their thoughts and feelings. When I began asking them what they wished to do now that they were starting to think about the future in more concrete terms, I was surprised when they told me that they

[2] In this article I use the adjective 'illegalised' rather than 'illegal' which is the most common term used to characterise these types of journeys as much as to characterise the people we have labelled as migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. I do so on purpose, because our choice of terms is important and I wish to emphasise the political, legal and social process through which people crossing borders end up becoming illegal. Such processes have been analysed in depth by scholars such as Nicholas De Genova (2002), Ruben Andersson (2014) and Shahram Khosravi (2010)

wished to take me and the camera back to the past, to the first places of arrival to revisit those places with "new eyes", namely with the eyes of someone who now had different conditions and could make different decisions. So, while I was interested in working on the future, and I was naïve at the time in thinking of the future as something lying ahead, in a linear progressive temporal framework, my research participants were telling me that there was a sense of futurity to be sought by revisiting the past. I started thinking about the intertwining of the present, the past and the future and how the interweaving of those temporalities made up the autobiographical stories of illegalised crossings.

The crossing therefore became our major focus and framed by Ali, Mahmoud and Mohamed as a major critical event in their lives. The crossing itself became an interesting epistemological concept to work with in order to think about the past, the present experiences and the future possibilities. The way they were framing the crossing was quite significant for them because it split their existences into the life that preceded the event and the life that unravelled after. The crossing was also experienced as an ongoing process that went far beyond the mere physical movement from one place to another. As far as I understood the crossing itself was often described by them in subjective terms, as the physical and existential process of moving forward in life (Hage 2005)[3].

Although they were aware that the crossing would turn them into 'illegal bodies' once they would have reached the other shore, it actually stood for them as an act of defiance, an act of renewal, a moment in which the future was turning into something palpable, a future that was happening there and then before their eyes. Mahmoud and Mohamed in particular, who made the crossing by boat risking their lives, talk about the crossing as a moment in which they were finally holding their lives in their hands. We need to understand this feeling as a result of the sense of existential and social immobility they had left behind in their rural town in Egypt, which is an aspect my research has looked into but I do not have the time to explain in depth in this context. What is crucial to highlight in this discussion here is that when we engaged in working on their representations of the crossings Ali, Mahmoud and Mohamed did not wish to create representations of suffering, though this is an undeniable part of the experiences of crossing under such conditions. The way they wanted to frame it was as an act of resistance and renewal, an adventure.

In order to explore the intertwining of temporalities in their storytelling, and the relationships between memory, imagination and experience, I engaged them in a variety of different creative practices during fieldwork. We started off with drama improvisations, an expressive form my research participants were already familiar with, with the aim of exploring non-verbal expression. We then moved to co-devising

[3] Anthropologist Ghassan Hage describes the relationship between *physical* and *existential* mobility: It is when people experience a crisis in 'their sense of existential mobility' that they decide to move physically, and by any means necessary and available. Without taking into account this inverse relationship between physical and existential mobility, Hage argues we would be unable to understand the movement we call migration (Hage 2005)

storytelling events in people's houses, and this is when Ali, Mahmoud and Mohamed experienced themselves as storytellers and experimented with narrative and with engaging a diverse audience. This was an important stage of our collaboration as it made them aware of what it meant and of the decisions they had to make in order to create their own representations for an audience who did not necessarily share their same cultural background or experiences. The next phase had the aim of training them to think of parts of their autobiographical stories in audio-visual terms. I facilitated a participatory photography workshop with them, which fed into the subsequent practice of collaborative filmmaking where I followed their wish to revisit their first places of arrival, and filmed them as they took me round the significant places around the harbours, the reception centres, the train stations, the cities. I followed my participants while they improvised their actions and their narrations in front of the camera, inspired by the filmmaking technique used by Jean Rouch, a groundbreaking visual anthropologist who between the 50s and the 70s produced ethno-fictions with his research participants in Africa and in Paris by asking them to re-enact parts of their lives.

During these journeys I asked them to take photographs of the most significant places as they passed through them. Through photos and verbal associations, they captured memories and imagined futures associated with their past experiences. The gaps between the stories and the empty places through which the actors moved were consciously reproduced in the final film in order to invite the audience to recreate these experiences in their imagination. The final creative process entailed the imaginative exploration of those 'gaps' through participatory animation. The participants chose a moment they wished to re-elaborate on, with the animation technique of 'paint on glass'. The chosen photograph would serve as a background, a starting point and as a constant reference for the story-telling.

The reasons why animation revealed itself to be a crucial process in our research were manifold. Firstly, it was really helpful to explore participants' imagination, making implicit information become explicit by facilitating the communication of certain thoughts and feelings visually that would otherwise be very limited in verbal exchange alone. Participatory animation helped the research and creative work to foreground protagonists' voices, experiences, dilemmas and contradictions. The creative process of animating provided the space and context for Ali, Mahmoud and Mohamed to formulate their own questions and reflections on their life and stories so that the interactions and the production were not just led by my own interests. In fact, the reflexive and creative process of animating allowed my participants to renegotiate the conventional relationship between 'researcher' and 'researched'. Furthermore, the practice of animating allowed us to observe memory 'at work', acknowledging it as an imaginative and relational

[4] The work of Francesca Cogni

[5] All considerations by Francesca Cogni come from a drafted co-written text in 2017, yet to be published

process emerging through the relationships that people establish with the surrounding environment, with the materials they are using, with the people they are speaking to and with the stories they are trying to tell. Finally, but also crucially, in regards to the more political contribution of this type of work, animation enabled us to co-create counter-narratives that challenged official objectifying narratives and images of migrants and their stories.

The animation process was carried out in collaboration with Francesca Cogni, who is a professional filmmaker, animator, illustrator and artist. Choosing professional collaborators as part of anthropological research is not a straightforward task, but Cogni and I had collaborated previously, and she also knew the three men from workshops and activities we had done together in the past. Most importantly though Cogni and I shared common interests and working ethics when engaging with people or groups in participatory projects. She has been developing her work in exploring the relationships between reality, imagination and memory by using animation in her documentary films for many years[4]. She has worked on many different topics but we found common ground in working with people with migrant and refugee background to co-produce counter narratives through participatory methods.

The method that Cogni proposed for the project with Ali, Mahmoud and Mohamed was to animate without using a storyboard. We decided to use this creative strategy so that the process could remain open to creative improvisation and to narrative possibilities. According to Cogni's vision "the act of drawing created the condition for the next drawing and for the progression of remembering and building a narration. Memories and imagination emerged during the act of animating, in an active process where the memory of an event was rediscovered, renegotiated and redefined. This progressed continuously in present time through every single line that was drawn to compose the story"[5]. Citing John Berger's *On Drawing* (2005), Cogni explains how the author talked about the drawn image containing the experience of looking and of discovering, providing a particular sense of time, whereby a line drawn is important not for what it records so much as what it leads one on to see. What cannot be verbalised, finds a shape thanks to the freedom of association while animating in a mental state similar to Rouch's 'cine trance' (Yakir 1978: 10).

Therefore, Cogni proposes that "animation without a storyboard seems to contain the experience of remembering, the exploration of deep layers of memories set free by the act of producing a sequence of drawings that are made and cancelled and recreated again, in a suspended time and state of mind. The hand that composes progressively the drawings and their animation acts like a seismograph tracing the flow of one's thoughts, imaginations and memories. It is important to notice that this type of creative process also relates to the body in

very specific ways since animation and drawing in general are physical processes."

While the photograph captured by my participants was frozen by framing the specific moment and place in time, the drawings acted in the opposite direction, re-enabling a process of discovery of other existential and experiential potentialities of that same event by re-engaging the body in the act of animating. Similarly to what other scholars in anthropology have argued (Ingold 2011, Taussig 2011), the process of drawing initiates a movement 'toward and into the subject, a merging that is transformative of both drawer and that which is drawn' (Grimshaw & Ravetz 2015; 260).

In explaining the process of moving from the filmmaking to the animation, Cogni noticed that "the bodies of the participants, that had been initially activated by returning to the places of arrival and by re-living through the physical and emotional experience, were put through an immersive creative, mental and physical, space and time defined by the practice of animation. For several days, Mohamed, Ali and Mahmoud worked in a dark room illuminated by a soft light, where they performed a long repetition of similar movements and actions with their arms and fingers, in a cyclical flow of draw, wipe off, draw, wipe off, draw. This long and slow process revealed itself to be crucial in creating the conditions for us to reflect on memories and imagination at work."

Mohamed's Crossing

By immersing himself physically and imaginatively in that particular moment of the past, the animation enabled specific memories of Mohamed's to emerge such as how people were sat behind him, the fact that it started to rain at a certain point, and the feeling of a nightmarish enclosure when the sea and the sky became totally black in the middle of the night. It was only by engaging with the texture of the paint and its fluidity on the glass that he remembered the quality of the water, the drops of rain wetting them on the boat together with the waves crushing. The animation process allowed him to re-experience that moment and remember details he thought he had forgotten.

Mahmoud's Crossing

Though this animation also represents the crossing it is carried out in a very different way. In this case, Mahmoud instead of using animation to create a more or less realistic testimony of his experience decided for a much less anticipated narrative. By resisting the expectations of providing a testimony of his own experience, he decided to draw the faces of his parents. This represents an important counter narrative to the over mediatized depictions of border crossings: the usual objectifying numbers and categories are overturned with Mahmoud's emphasis on significant relationships. This animation also makes an interesting point about the memory of an experience not being singular or individual. Even when it is only one person recounting it, it is a memory that is shared with others even if in quite different ways.

IMAGE
Mahmoud's escape,
from animated clip

Mahmoud's escape

This animation also provides a quite unique example of its potential to provoke and evoke experiences, memories and imaginations. The first part explores Mahmoud's memory of staying at a reception for minors in Sicily. Initially he decides to show his friends and himself playing cards in the room. They were not allowed to leave, or decide what to do for themselves. Everything was provided for them, but he did not come to Italy to "stay comfortable". During those days he remembers speaking with his friends about escaping but they never really try it. The first time he experiences this fantasy is through this animation, which represents the possibility of re-writing the past and making a desire come true.

The intertwining of different layers – reality and dreams, past and futures – seems to be one of the most important qualities of this open animation process, creating the context for a narration that moves from a single place/event/memory to a multitude of possibilities. The mental (and graphic) process of representing a variety of different possibilities and views instead of just framing a more singular, factual reality can be understood as activating change in the participants' lives because it re-engages their imagination to envisage other personal and collective futures.

Working in collaboration with people who have experienced migration, animation allowed the research to escape from what has been coined as 'reality syndrome' by performance scholars who have written about theatre and creative work carried out during crisis, wars, traumatic or less traumatic life changing experiences (Gallagher 2007, Thompson 2003, Jeffers 2012). This 'reality syndrome' is particularly common in many productions and projects in the creative arts that deal with issues of migration. Approaching experiences and stories through an imperative of factual narrative and testimony not only often paralyses imaginative processes that are crucial in the processes through which people redefine who they are, their stories and their sense of belonging but also, and more importantly, may re-traumatize the people involved.

Like the surrealist ethnofictions of Jean Rouch, hand-drawn animations allowed us to document the manifestations of the surreal in the forms of the real, in order to produce what he poetically described as 'postcard at the service of the imaginary' (Fieschi and Téchiné 1967:19 in Henley 2010: XIV). Animation can facilitate the freedom to remember and to forget, to tell anecdotes, but also to find refuge in an expression through metaphors, to choose a new tale about one's past and future and finally, about one's self.

ADO

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Working with Archives: Approaches, Ethics and Impact –Serena Katt

Illustrator and Academic Serena Katt summarises the panel she convened on archival practices. The panellists discussed what it means to search for and interpret archival materials, what the value is of using visual arts to re-interpret archival materials – be that artistic, historical, anthropological or other – and what impact these processes can have on communities.

Contributors were Esther McManus (cartoonist and educator, Central Saint Martins [UAL]), Iqbal Singh (Regional Community partnerships manager with the National Archives), Dr. Mireille Fauchon (illustrator and educator, LCC [UAL]) and Liv Taylor (visual strategist and cultural researcher, University of Brighton & Atelier Index)

This panel brought together four speakers who share a wealth of experience of working within and interpreting different archival spaces, each concerned with critically engaging with the process. Their interests intersect in excavating stories that have been obscured, in considering how different forms of interpretation or re-telling of archival materials can enable alternative forms of understanding, and in considering the impact of technology on our understanding of archival processes.

Esther McManus' practice combines self publishing with experimental forms of comic making, working often with archival materials. McManus is interested in the contradictions & complexities that unedited archival materials offer, and uses comics and the physical form of the book to consider 'archival' modes of storytelling, as well as examining how comics can offer flexible ways of representing time.
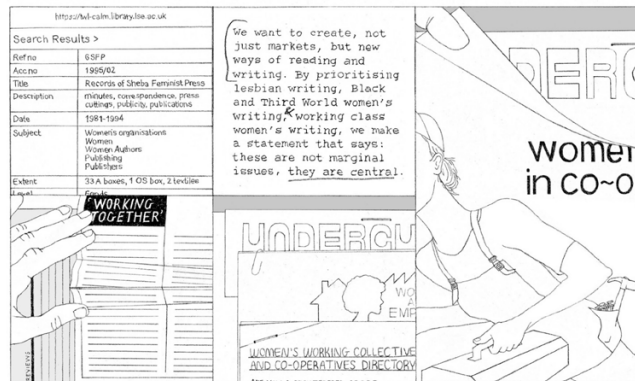
In her talk, she described how the medium of the comic can replicate the process of 'reading' archives, and offered a fascinating insight into how she sees archival stories as "communicating the multiple temporal standpoints of archives"[1]. McManus is interested in the form of the comic as a form that intrinsically represents time, and sees it as perfect for interpreting and working within archives, where different textures and the materiality of the past are the central focus.

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McManus believes that archival storytelling should offer multiple perspectives, maintain contradictions, and reach into the future, thereby "enabling solidarities between past and future". She also described how the process of drawing by hand allows for a response that is "emotional rather than factual"[2].

Iqbal Singh, regional community partnerships manager at the National Archives, has delivered numerous projects which connect his own archival research with creative practitioners, and he has worked with creatives and workshop participants from a variety of disciplines to respond to stories within the archives, as well as working with smaller communities to make archives more accessible spaces.

Singh introduced three projects – one using drama as its vehicle, a second using illustration and finally an Indian indenture anthology project that used creative writing. He sees these projects as going beyond commemoration, "looking history squarely in the eye" as Professor Santanu Das suggests[3]. Singh is interested in how different communities can engage in the process of reading the archive, and interpreting it, in order to gain an understanding of stories that matter to them and the communities they are part of.

Singh believes that archival records offer us unique insights. The projects he has worked on are not interested in sanitising history, and don't shy away from exploring more challenging themes like racial

discrimination, identity, and conflict. In one of the projects introduced, he considered how these processes brought him and the participants face to face with the underlying tensions and conflicts contained in the records. In another project, focused on Indian Indentured heritage, Singh described the different responses and emotions that arose for participants during the projects, which included psychological pain, as well as big questions about ancestors, history, and loss. Within all the projects described, a core process was for participants to find personal interests within the archives, and using this to drive their creative, and empathy-driven, process.

Dr Mireille Fauchon's practice explores the use of illustration as a tool to explore socio-cultural narratives both past and present. Mireille is particularly interested in anecdotal storytelling and the informal preservation of history within sites of experience, in particular, narratives that are deemed insignificant or inaccessible. Her PhD, awarded in 2020, presented an illustrative enquiry of the prison writings of the Croydon Suffragette Katie Gliddon, held by the The Women's Library, L.S.E., and their relation to current affairs.

Not all work with archives is intrinsically interesting or engaging, and the artist has to adapt to find different working methods to allow them a way in. In working with the writings of Katie Glidden, Fauchon was not immediately gripped by the story, and describes what she experienced as the dullness
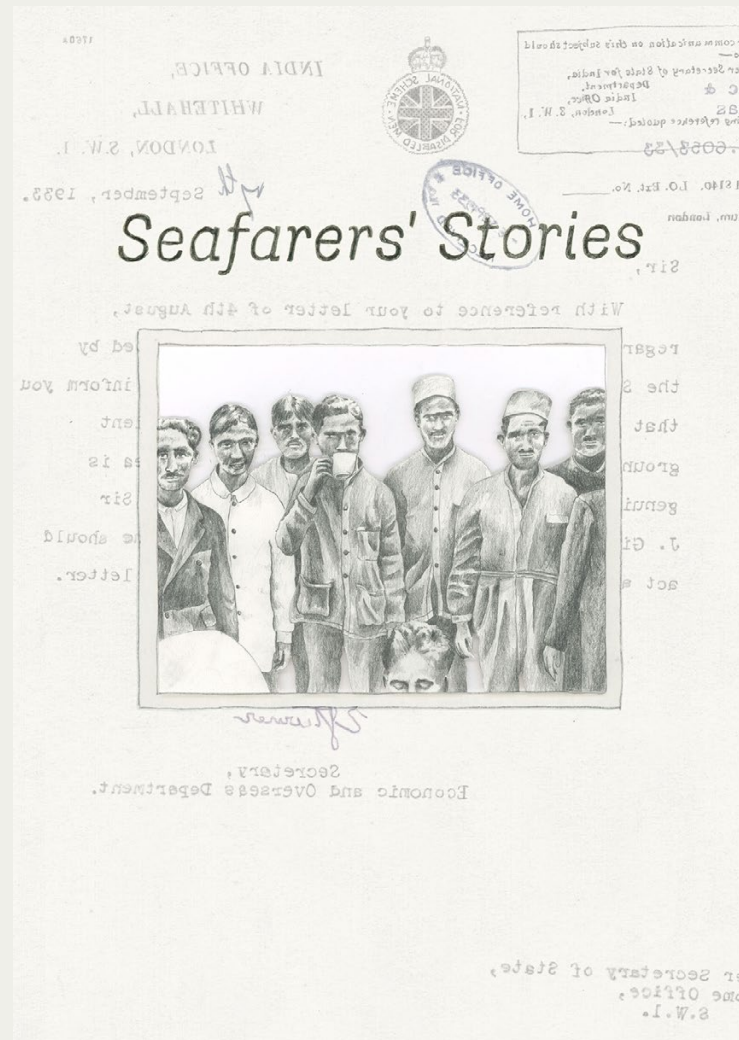
of the story being told. She developed systematic processes of analysis to help interpret and engage with the writing.

Fauchon, like McManus, considers the materiality of working with archives, and her practice asks "How can visual storytelling be used to make everyday histories physically present?". The act of being physically present in the archive in order to search for stories brings the benefit of serendipity for Fauchon, enabling her to stumble across the unexpected. She describes her process of interpretation as being thinking through making. The illustrator/artist can, Fauchon argues, become a conduit for the materials they are working with, perhaps it is the near-unconscious process of making that allows for this.

Liv Taylor has wide-ranging experience of working with different forms of archives, particularly in online spaces and in relation to image research. Based on her experiences as an educator and as an image researcher, she started Atelier Index as a platform for investigating forms of looking, and computer looking.

Taylor is fascinated by how we can think about image research in the digital age. She introduced us to some of her thinking about research processes, categorising the three main areas as:

1. Re-Search Gestures
2. Lyrical Looking
   & Spectral Thinking
3. Loops, Bubbles
   Frames & Filters

Drawing on her varied experiences as a researcher, Taylor contemplates the ways in which images are organised digitally through various forms, in particular the use of tags and hashtags, which she compares to the catalogue notes written for physical archival records. Taylor likens these to Instagram hashtags and Spotify suggested playlists, and asks us to consider how information is organised and presented to us so that we can become more aware of how we interact with it.

Taylor describes archival visits as being similar to quests. Research (whether connected to archives or not) can be similarly gamified in Taylors mind, and we can think of it as the slow uncovering of a map, rather like early 90's computer games. Like Fauchon, Taylor is interested in an iterative process, which she describes as learning by searching – much like thinking by making.

SK

Comics and the Past
–Gareth Brookes, Ian Horton and Maggie Gray

How might comics engage with the past? Graphic novelist Gareth Brookes describes how he dissolves linear time in his latest book Times Tables, while academics Ian Horton and Maggie Gray discuss the potential for comics scholarship – and illustration scholarship – to draw from art historical methods and perspectives.

Soaking as a method of representing memory across/between/through/against the illustrated page
–Gareth Brookes

I'd like to use the following piece of writing to describe the process of making a book as part of my practice-based research. Through this practice I hope to raise questions about what happens when we give up control of our materials and allow their action to play a significant role in how a work looks, how it reads, and its meaning. In this case the key materials involved are water and paper, and the action is soaking.

The result is *Times Tables*,[1] a 14-meter-long graphic narrative drawn onto two A4 concertina sketchbooks using highly pigmented water-soluble pencils. Using these pencils I made drawings on the surface of facing pages. A layer of water was applied using a brush, the sketchbook was then closed and the reverse side burnished with a wooden spoon, allowing the two parts of the image to print onto the surface of one another across the facing pages.

Times Tables describes the relationship between two identical twins as seen through the eyes of their grandchild. The narrative takes place in the past tense and is told in a simple childlike voice which is related to the reader as a succession of murky, mixed and fluid memories, an impression which the image making process is intended to reinforce.

IMAGE
Gareth Brookes, photograph of book *Times Tables* (2022)

[1] A digital version of *Time Tables* currently exists as a webcomic, and is free to access on my website, at https://www.gbrookes.com/timestables

Making this work involved a struggle with, and against, materials, an eventful process full of instances of disappointment and occasional pleasant surprise. The water had to be applied quickly, and the image burnished immediately. The water carried the pigment in all directions, and the pigments were unpredictable, some overpowering others, or mixing unevenly. The water affected previous pages, leaving traces or stains on them and in places compromised the structural integrity of the book itself, where the paper disintegrated along the wet fold of the concertina. Very often a quite delicate drawing I made was almost completely effaced by the water, at other times, a simple image would be made more complex by the water and the action of printing. Chance shapes, and random combinations of pigments would produce unintentional images as the action of the water by turns effaced and reinforced various aspects.

This process of folding the book back onto itself establishes a relationship of touch. Allowing these images of childhood and suburban domesticity to imprint upon and merge with each other, can be read as a kind of intimacy as well as a distortion. The murky, fluid images suggest metaphors to do with the experience of memory, and its recurrence. The left to right reading of time across the space of the page is disrupted by the imprint left by the future on the past and the past on the future. The closing of the page in the act of reading, reuniting the surfaces of the book in a relationship of touch, represents a re-enactment of the production of the image, an indication of another past event of which the image is also the index.

But there is another way of reading the concertina book. Stretched out to its full extent, all its surfaces

visible, the book becomes something different; all of its pages become simultaneously relatable in a pictorial relationship. The reader now becomes viewer, surveying a narrative time relationship which is also a pictorial present.

The structural units of book based visual narratives are firmly established by convention and reinforced by scholarship. This has both encoded and entrenched structures through which we perceive the succession of panels and pages in a past – present – future relationship based on the foundational metaphor that space is time. We barely notice such conventions as we read, but foregrounding materiality and the actions of the materials involved in the creation of the work makes this relationship apparent. One of the great pleasures of my practice is watching the indifferent material spreading, seeping and imprinting through and across the boundaries established to encode this space/time metaphor, producing new relationships of echo, prefiguration, overlay and recurrence. These traces are reconfigured in the act of reading as new temporal relationships and new indexically grounded metaphors which often have more resonance with the lived experience of memory than anything my human agency, in full possession of its tools and materials could achieve.

GB

Seeing ~~Comics~~/Illustration through Art History: Alternative Approaches to the Form
–Ian Horton, Maggie Gray

During the 1960s and 1970s foundational texts for what would become Comics Studies emerged from within the discipline of Art History as traditional approaches in this well-established field were challenged. Although subsequently the study of comics remained marginal to Art History, more recently there has been renewed interest in comics among art historians, while concurrently art-historical methodologies have informed comics scholarship (whether implicitly or explicitly), particularly those placing greater emphasis on the form's graphic, material and aesthetic dimensions. It is here argued that Illustration Studies (as a nascent discipline) could also profit by being informed by these methodologies and concerns by acknowledging the, often marginal but still significant, inclusion of examples drawn from illustration within art-historical discourse/s in the past, so bringing such approaches into the present and potentially impacting on the future of the discipline as it emerges.

Our recent research examining the relationship between Comics Studies and Art History resulted in two publications, a monograph *Art History for Comics: Past, Present and Potential Futures* and an edited collection *Seeing Comics through Art History: Alternative Approaches to the Form* (a necessary addition as we could not do all the work
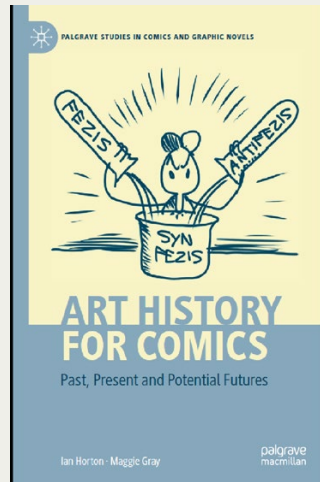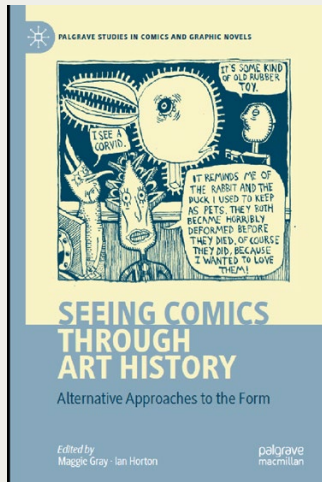
ourselves and our voices are clearly partial in examining such debates).

The monograph was structured around two main sections, the first section titled The History of Art History and Comics Studies, addressed the work of art historians, such as Gerard Blanchard, Pierre Couperie, Ernst Gombrich and David Kunzle, produced between the 1950s and 1990s, that used methodologies drawn from Art History to examine comics, cartooning and caricature. Following an introduction that asked, 'Why does Comics Studies need Art History (and vice versa)?' (We might here ask the question 'Why does Illustration need Art History (and vice versa)?') this section contained four chapters that examined this 'hidden'

history of comics scholarship by considering methodological issues such as canons, styles and schools; iconography and cultural history; and the social history of art.

In their books and essays Blanchard (1969), Couperie (1968, 1972) and Gombrich (1940, 1950, 1960, 1963), in addition to referencing canons, styles and schools, employed iconography and cultural history as methodological approaches to examine early comics strips (or proto-comics) and contextualised them using examples taken from the discipline of illustration. For example, when Gombrich analysed the iconography of female personifications in 'The Cartoonists Armoury' in *Meditations on a Hobby Horse* (1963) he considered the ways in which such images travelled across media and time analysing an 18th century cartoon depicting Britannia and an illustration from the cover of *Life* magazine from 1900 representing the Suffragette movement, then contrasted both with representations taken from the classical tradition. Kunzle similarly used iconography and cultural history as methodological approaches in his two volume *History of the Comic Strip* (1973, 1990), but here these approaches were inflected to focus on the social circumstances of production and consumption, thereby demonstrating the struggle within Art History to develop new approaches, in this case what came to be termed the social history of art. Although still focused on the emergence of the comic strip Kunzle's more recent books use these methodologies to analyse

the work of figures such as Doré and Cham who are usually considered as illustrators, focusing on the graphic narratives they produced (2015, 2019).

The methodologies noted above have been contested and transformed over last thirty to forty years so the second section of *Art History for Comics: Past, Present and Potential Futures*, titled Future Directions in Comics Art History, addressed these shifts. These updated methodologies were then applied to examples mainly drawn from British comics while including examples of illustration such as collages, cutaways and magazine covers. The edited collection *Seeing Comics through Art History: Alternative Approaches to the Form* sought to provoke further exploration of comics from diverse art-historical and methodological perspectives. Although again the focus was on comics, in this case particularly addressing the relationship to fine art practices and histories, many of the contributors also included examples drawn from the field of illustration such as the well-known perceptual trickery of the duck-rabbit image, medieval illustrated manuscripts and 19th century newspaper illustration.

Clearly both books include many examples of works which might easily be included under the umbrella of illustration, but equally importantly for this argument is what happens if we insert Illustration for Comics Studies in this kind of formulation, or rather Illustration Studies. If we currently have any umbrella term for this field's current interests and concerns it seems

to be Illustration Research but perhaps Illustration Studies has a better ring to it and maybe illustration could follow Comics Studies in becoming a fully-fledged academic discipline. Much work has been done to legitimise the field with recent publications such as Susan Doyle, Jaleen Grove, and Whitney Sherman's monumental *History of Illustration* (2019) and Rachel Gannon and Mireille Fauchon's practice focused *Illustration Research Methods*, but although histories and methods are acknowledged in their titles there is little reference made to the methodological concerns of Art History. The same is true of the *Journal of Illustration* founded in 2014, which is perhaps understandable given that it wishes to encompass a very broad range of concerns in legitimising the discipline, and although the Aims and Scope of the journal note that it wishes to 'To investigate the potential for metaphor, iconology and poetics in illustration' (2023) contributions to the journal are yet to fulfil this particular ambition. Interestingly the keywords associated with the journal, presumably created by the publisher (or perhaps an algorithm!), are 'Art Practice, Comics, Fine Art, Visual Arts' (2023) with no mention of illustration or indeed Art History.

From this project we learnt that as part of an inter-disciplinary Comics Studies, Art History can also demonstrate the possibilities opened up by a move away from a concern with rigidly defining and policing the borders of the form. Bringing Art History and ~~Comics Studies~~ Illustration Studies back into closer dialogue could similarly generate avenues for further

research at the edges and intersections of illustration and other forms of visual art such as postcards, picture stories, stamps, comics, zines, book arts, muralism, tapestry, stained glass, tattoos and body art, toys and video games, all fields that intersect with illustration as a discipline. We would be excited to see what might emerge from future forays down these, and many other, potential avenues.

IH, MG

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Visual histories of labour: Imagining, archiving and interpreting illustrations of Chinese workers from the 1880s and 1980s
–Anushka Tay and Sharpay Chenyuè Yuán

Anoushka Tay and *Sharpay Chenyuè Yuán present an image-led essay, drawing out the overlaps between their projects on Chinese labouring bodies.*

Introduction

Through a moment of synchronicity, the symposium connected two projects exploring the depiction of active, labouring Chinese bodies 100 years apart. Sharpay Chenyuè Yuán's (SCY) graphic novel *Pearl's Daughters,* which draws upon collective narratives of women working in factories in the 1980s of Pearl's River Delta, contrasted with Anushka Tay's (AT) encounter with late-19th century illustrations of Chinese labourers during her artist residency at Kew Gardens Archive. These projects took complementary

approaches to archives and collective community histories by exploring ways in which ideas of the past can be recorded and subsequently interpreted.

Through their projects, both artists considered how Chinese labouring bodies are represented using perspectives drawn from their own heritage. Sharpay, who was born in Canton and lives in London, practised illustration to temper disquieting feelings of disconnection. Whereas Anushka, a fifth-generation Hokkien in the UK via South-East Asia, examined materials gathered by foreigners in China and found illustration to be a way of making a lasting connection to a lost place.

This image-led essay centres the illustrations of Chinese labouring bodies at the heart of the two projects.

Untitled, Scene of Assembly Line

SCY: Residing in London during the pandemic has turned my home into somewhere I lost the possibility to reach. While seeing the massive photographic archives of Chinese female migrant labour in the factory around the Pearl River Delta in Southern China during the 1980s, these iconic yet never-accessible scenes happened to make up for my feeling of inaccessibility and displacement. In *Pearl's Daughters*, I experimented with illustration-making as a tool to explore archival strategies and excavate stories from the past, as well as a process of re-archiving to endow these lack-of-voice memories a new life to be read and interpreted by others.

Untitled, Scene of Assembly Line (Illustration from Pearl's Daughters)

Transporting wood

AT: In Autumn 2022, I went to the Archive of the
Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew as the inaugural
artist-in-residence, to research a collection called
the Miscellaneous Reports: China. These are 11
volumes from a larger collection of 772 volumes,
containing mixed papers relating to global botany
and trade, dating from the 1850s–1920s. I was
delighted to uncover two sets of printed illustrations
of Chinese people, working in the countryside, on
riverboats and in small artisanal workshops. 'Ichang
Products' features annotated line drawings showing
a variety of people, tools and transportation methods;
whilst 'Straw Matting from China and Japan' is a
commercial marketing booklet with coloured
engravings showing the stages of production in
a craft workshop. Their labour transformed local
plants into a variety of products and tools, and the
illustrations, by uncredited artists, brought this
world alive.
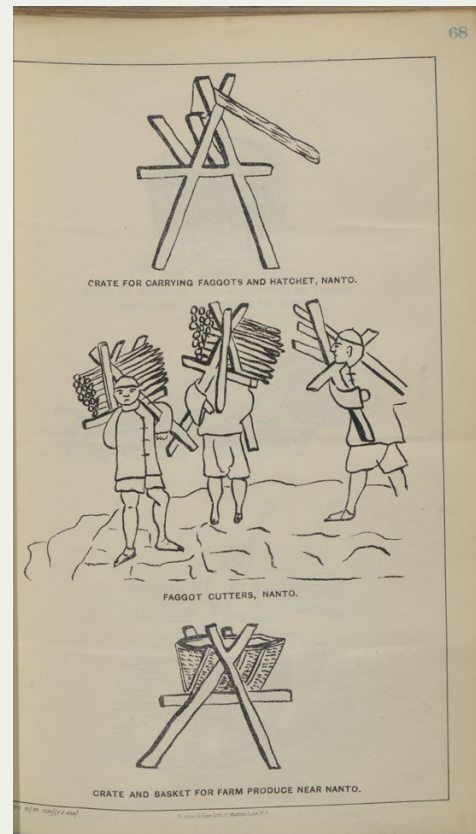
Untitled, Scene of Induction Training

SCY: The camera tells us the truth: that none of the labourers have the same gesture or expression, even though they were repeating the same task again and again in the factory workshop. The labours were engaged as the subject being photographed, yet their connection between the scenes preserved by the camera and us, the audience from today and future, is gradually loosened, which is irreversible over time. When reproducing the photos, I focused on the emotion of the workers, visually describing their postures through painstaking details which, in turn, build a larger evocative image of what it would be like to live and work in the industry. It is not about who they are, but to capture the impression of the era.

Packing finished mats

AT: These are examples of 'economic botany': specific examples of useful, rather than ornamental, plants. The two illustrative series are entirely different in style. In the commercial booklet depicting the manufacture of straw matting, the Chinese workers and the goods they are producing are visually entwined. Unified through the fanciful use of colour through the workers' clothing and the dyed reeds, the shapes of the rounded bodies rhyme with the rolls of matting that they handle. Objects in the scene float on a white background, and the people are all the same size and shape. The illustrations show a process of people and plants both becoming commodities.

PLATE No. 6—PACKING.

Untitled, Scenes of Dorm Life

SCY: Another potential method to get closer to the lives of the female labourers through archival materials lies in the testimonies within the text, however fragmented, preserved within quotes from journals, journalist's diaries, notebooks, blogs, and interviews. It was an alternative way to build up connections with the community while primary sources were inaccessible during the lockdowns. I cut out these stories from the wider texts, then put them together to create a collective image where separate individual narratives combined into one story.

Basket carried on the back

AT: By contrast, I was struck by the humour of the line drawings of 'Ichang Products'. There is something which feels very genuine, in the sketches of panting porters struggling beneath heavy loads; or a woman with bound feet and earrings carrying a toddler, waiting for her companion to get up after a break. Composition, facial expressions and posture revealed the anonymous illustrator's commentary on a social world in miniature. Details like the woman's hooped earrings, the woven patterns of the basket and the man's sandal straps suggest to me that they were drawn at least partially from life — if not from memory. These line drawings are bound within the archival volume with no additional contextual information, yet their liveliness and character invites imagination, and demands recognition, like a hand reaching out towards you through the mist.

"PEI TZU," OR BASKET CARRIED ON THE BACK, ICHANG DISTRICT, WITH STOOL TO REST PORTER AND BURDEN.

IMAGE
Basket carried on the back. Image from 'Ichang Products', unnamed artist, from the Miscellaneous Reports: China Economic Products I, MCR/4/2/2 f70. Image reproduced with the kind permission of the Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Untitled, Comic Page of Assembly Line

SCY: Combining both reproduced archives and the written personal stories and recreating the sequence of these narratives contributes a possibility of constructing the interrelationship between archives, illustrations and the text. Illustration becomes the medium that allows us to input our own imagination and interpretation, amplifying the contrast between the intensive, disciplined and boring atmosphere at the assembly line by recreating the colour, recomposing the perspective, and selecting the volume. The re-edited story becomes the new description, the metadata of these images, creating and evolving meaning to reconstruct and contextualize the narrative of the illustrations reproducing the scenes preserved in archives.

Weaving mats

AT: Encountering the two illustrative series was an important moment during my artist-residency. Nestled between pages and pages of written texts, they hooked me. The world of 19th century China came alive — bustling, surrounded by active, labouring bodies. I gazed at these images, and my living body reached back towards those drawn bodies with a sense of familiarity. This was a working China, where people sweated and panted, squabbled about childcare and wove beautiful carpets to spread across floors. As my artist-residency continued, I responded in my sketchbook by painting and drawing with coloured inks, and later went beyond the page and created a song-cycle using poetry, recorded sounds, vocal improvisation and keyboard music. Throughout, I clung to that moment of engagement with a long-gone historical China, where people worked with useful plants to form them into all manner of things. It is the discipline of illustration that opened this opportunity, to move beyond and above words.

IMAGE
Weaving mats. Image from 'Straw Matting from China and Japan, Treloar & Sons'', unnamed artist, from the Miscellaneous Reports: China Economic Products I, MCR/4/2/2, f236. Image reproduced with the kind permission of the Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Concluding thoughts

An archive can contain many different materials which represent the past, from written documents to physical objects, journals and sketchbooks to taped conversations. Sharpay and Anushka's projects highlight the significance of illustration as a means of recording the past, and as a way for people to engage with history. The projects represent an incitement for anyone so inclined to continue drawing; to capture present happenings pictorially, and to use images over words to evoke the past.

AT, SCY

Empathy and the Past: Outlining, Erasing, and Colouring In –Rachel Emily Taylor, Catherine Anyango Grünewald and Sharon Kivland

Two illustrators – Rachel Emily Taylor and Catherine Anyango Grünewald – reflect on how their work builds on empathy in order to interrogate past lives and experiences. Writer Sharon Kivland acts as a respondent to these two contributions.

Part 1: Rachel Emily Taylor

When I was first invited to speak at *Colouring In: The Past*, I was drawn to the title, and the idea of 'colouring in the past' and what that could mean, particularly when applied to illustration. It reminded me of a workshop that I had led with children as part of my PhD research.

On the top right is an image a child made during one of these workshops, simply using outlines. Underneath is an image from the same workshop but by a different child, and it has been coloured in.
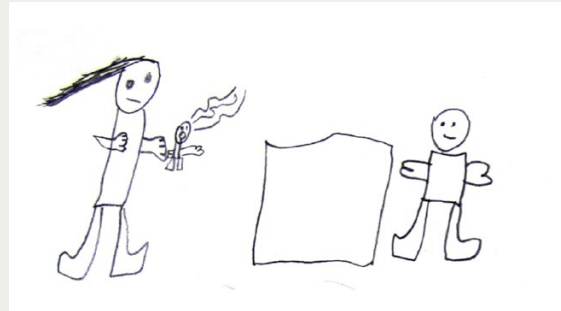
These workshops were part of a residency at the Foundling Museum [undertaken as part of my PhD, titled *Heritage as Process: Constructing the Historical Child's Voice Through Art Practice*, 2014–18]. This museum tells the story of 'the foundlings', which were abandoned children who were left in the care of the Foundling Hospital.

I was working with young children from the local area [Kings Cross] as part of my method, in the hope to reconstruct the historical foundling child's voice

through practice. Now, at the time when I began this work, these 'voices' were absent in the museum. I was hoping to engage the contemporary children from the local area with the narrative of the foundling hospital – but, from what I had observed prior to this, the children were fairly indifferent – I hoped to generate some form of empathy with the foundlings, in the hope that the sessions would provide material to work with in the reconstruction of this missing 'voice'.

I began the workshop session by introducing the children to the history of the Foundling Hospital. Each child imagined what it was like to be a foundling and I instigated this act, using exercises from theatre practice. As I present, you might notice I am not including any photographs of the children I worked with, and this is due to the ethical restrictions put in place by my University.


The children were invited to make an illustration of their own imagined foundling 'character'. Structure was put in place to guide the children towards empathy. Bioethicist Jackie Leach Scully says that

empathy is not possible without 'knowledge of the other' (Scully 2017) as this is needed to *imagine* another person's situation. As the facilitator, I am responsible for this in the workshops. In hindsight, my own opinion influenced how I passed on this knowledge. Although this was something that I attempted to avoid, there is a tendency to judge their historical situation with contemporary values; in history, this is termed 'presentism'.

I gave each child a 10" x 8" canvas and asked them to draw their character's portrait. I also showed them examples of paintings of foundlings in the museum, and these images were intended to assist the children in drawing the uniforms. I suggested that the children started their image by drawing the outline of the face – a simple oval shape – before adding their features. I gave a mirror to the children who struggled so that their features could help to guide them with their proportions. Their reflections could be used to measure and understand what features needed to be included. The mirror also enabled them to crop their images 'in frame'. In hindsight, by handing each child a canvas that had borders and a mirror – I directed them towards tools that cropped their image. The illustrations became faces that were bounded inside frames and without bodies.

Some children panicked when there was freedom in the task of drawing a portrait and illustrating their character, so I sat beside them and demonstrated how to measure their features with their finger and

IMAGES
from Rachel Emily
Taylor's project
Finding Foundlings
at the Foundling
Museum London,
2016

a pencil. As I continued, I found myself talking about facial symmetry, which the children enjoyed, and they drew a line of symmetry to guide their drawings. During the session, I decided to use guidelines to help focus their attention so that they could complete each stage of their portrait step-by-step and the children became absorbed in the exercise. A child asked me to draw on their canvas when they were 'stuck', but I refused to do so.
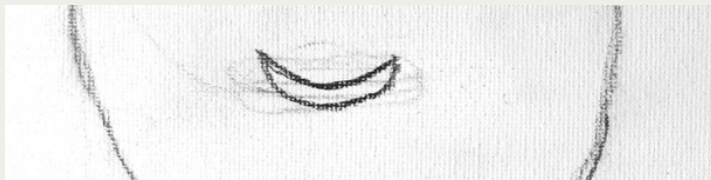
The children had an hour to compose their illustrations and rework their character's expression. In one drawing a child focussed on the mouth and out of frustration at the external image not appearing similar to the imagined, they replaced the straight mouth with a crescent moon smile. Although this shape is not how the mouth anatomically appears, it is a standardised shape that the child associated with the mouth. In this instance, the child was aiming to draw a 'neutral' expression but after becoming frustrated with the image, they chose to draw a recognised expression of happiness. On speaking to the child, happiness was not the emotion they intended to communicate. The child reverted to familiar symbols when faced with the inability to draw what they imagined. If, however, their foundling

'character' was in fact happy, this might seem an unexpected emotion based on the common reaction from visitors at the Foundling Museum, but it is still a valid interpretation made by the child.

In the children's illustrations of the foundlings, the eyes are large in proportion and appear to be doubled; the eyes have two irises and, in some cases, two pupils. This 'double portrait' could have been caused by looking in the mirror and the gaze moving while drawing. However, it gave the impression of being looked at by two people, perhaps the historical foundling child and the contemporary child, or perhaps an image of the child and their alter ego.
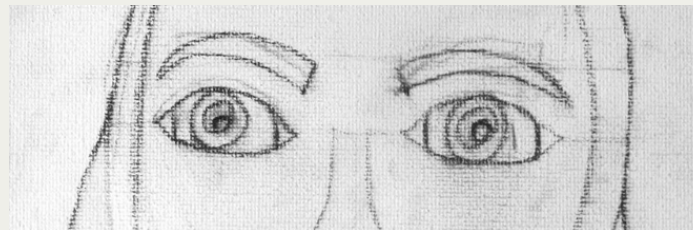
The 'doubling' is also a product of my instructions: I asked the children to draw a portrait of the historical child, but there were mirrors on the table. I had constructed an environment that could influence the children in relating the image to their reflection. Based on this awareness, in following workshops, I made the decision to remove the mirrors. Even so, a blending of self and other still occurred – and this could be described as an example of Lacan's

mirror stage. Lacan returned to the mirror stage throughout his work and developed its complexity. Initially viewed as a stage in the child's development (when one begins to recognise oneself in the mirror but later developed it as a fundamental aspect of subjectivity. The subject – very much like the children in the workshops – is 'permanently caught and captivated by his own image' (Evans 1996: 115).

On viewing the finished illustrations at the end of the workshop, I remember the children laying them out on the floor in a row. They began comparing their work and playing a guessing game, with cries of 'whose drawing is mine? Guess!' Ostensibly the children did not seem to empathise with the foundlings, but there appeared to be a connection in their illustrations. The foundling children stared out of the images with wide-eyes and closed mouths, as if 'voice-less'. In these images, each child has captured the face of a foundling from their imagination. These lost and forgotten children reappear, as if they had been photographed. Each painting is a portrait of two people: the child-artist and the foundling child they seek to recreate.

The paint had covered the pencil marks – the doubling of the eyes, the guidelines, and the mistakes – and through the application of colour, the two people in the image were merged into one. The drawings and outlines appeared to reveal the process, but the act of painting (or we could say 'colouring in') flattened the images and hid the guidelines. They became uniform.

What was lost or gained by the act of 'colouring in'?

The idea of 'colouring' is tied to conversations on race, and this has been suggested by the colour of the paint. 'Colouring in' also can be likened to empathy.

Do we 'colour in' parts of the past with our imagination?

Does 'colouring in' overwrite experiences and become an act of erasure?
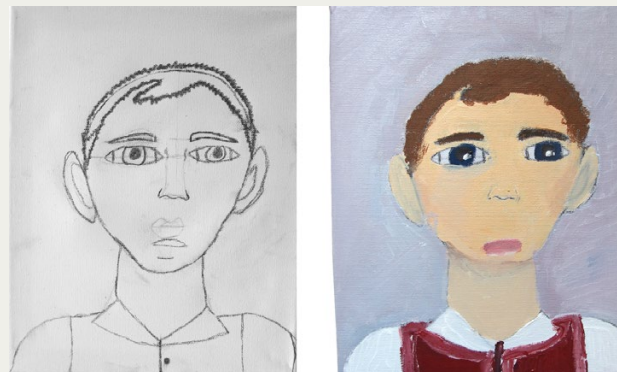
In these children's illustrations, through the act of 'colouring in', have they replaced the historical foundling child with themselves?

The history of empathy as a term is complicated. It was introduced into the English language in the twentieth century, translated from the German *Einfühlung*. This in turn is a translation from the Ancient Greek word for 'passion', *empátheia*, and it derives from *en* 'in' and *pathos* 'feeling', *feeling into*, or *feeling onto* [gesture to suggest the flat surface of the paper]. The term was later expanded to include the aesthetic experience and our modern understanding of empathy, which is now defined as the ability to understand someone else's perspective, of another person or a fictional character.

Scully voices her concern that there are obstacles to imagine another's life and inhabit their embodied experience, she says, 'I'm highly sceptical if this is possible, and I think we are kidding ourselves if we think we can do it' (Scully 2017). We are erasing the other by imagining ourselves in their position, and

in so doing, we are at risk of appropriating their experience. Jesse Prinz expanded on this, stating that 'empathy is a double-edged sword, by erasing the other and making the other's pain your own' (Prinz 2017). The use of 'erase' can also be considered as a 'replacement'. You may stand in their shoes but you do not stand in their skin.

Now, we must not forget that these children have been asked to *imagine* a historical foundling child. There is naturally a blurring of self and other. But even so, I would argue that this work could be used as an example when discussing empathy and 'colouring in'.

The children's paintings were worked into an installation, *Kept Within the Bounds* (2016), which was exhibited at the Foundling Museum. Although the children's portraits were 'coloured in', they were metaphorically placed on 'bounds' that contained negative space, in the same format as the floorplan as the Foundling Hospital, to draw attention to what was lacking in the museum.

Perhaps, as illustrators, we should not always use our practice to colour in the gaps in history. But instead, can we draw attention to these empty spaces and missing voices in historical record by *outlining* their existence?

RET

Part 2: Catherine Anyango Grünewald

In my work I have always been drawn to working with difficult subjects. I'm particularly interested in how we can make choices with our visual language to best communicate both the factual and emotional dimensions of historical or contemporary events.

Why is this important? Some subjects are so big that it is common to not be able to respond to them because of the sheer scale of information, which can make us feel detached from the subject.

According to the brain researcher Pontus Wasling, emotional commitment to a subject is required for memories to be preserved for a longer period of time. This is because the brain is better at storing emotional memories than what he calls declarative memories, which are facts and figures. So our responses to difficult subjects can be more empathetic if they are presented to us in a way that affects us emotionally.

Hindsight

Like Rachel Emily Taylor, I was intrigued by the title of this symposium and I decided to frame my response by considering what it means to 'colour in' the past. I have worked extensively with graphic novels, two of which are adaptations of existing texts. I am often asked about the task of adaptation and my approach to it is that the new version of the book needs to be something beyond an illustrated version of the text, that I need to add a perspective of some sort.

IMAGE TOP
Catherine Anyango
Grünewald, cover of
English version of
Heart of Darkness,
2010

IMAGE BOTTOM
Catherine Anyango
Grünewald, pages
from *Heart of
Darkness*, 2010

In 2010 I illustrated a graphic novel adaptation of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. When Joseph Conrad wrote *Heart of Darkness* in 1899 it was a reaction to the brutal colonisation of the Congo by King Leopold of Belgium. The main character Marlow travels up the Congo River to 'rescue' a man named Kurtz. In illustrating *Heart of Darkness* I took on the task of adaptation, the question of how to portray a dense, rich and uncomfortable world in pictures. But it was also a chance to create a version of *Heart of Darkness* in parallel to the original text, something which might acknowledge that we were reading it with a critical, postcolonial perspective, a way to create images that referenced the fact that photographs of people at the time did not describe them accurately or fully. I chose to work with this graphic novel because of the opportunity to place a new 'remembering' on the material – particularly because the history of the Belgian occupation has been largely whitewashed in that country. So I tried to make as many visual references as possible to the actual history the book describes, which is missing from the narrative of the original story.

I am currently adapting Sister Helen Prejean's book *Dead Man Walking* which was originally published in 1993 and is the story of Sister Helen's relationship and correspondence with two convicted death row prisoners, and the families of the victims. The two executed prisoners are white, but in the US the majority of death row victims are black and poor.

In this adaptation I place greater focus on the black experience than in the original book, placing emphasis on the stories of black death row prisoners Willie Francis, Warren McCleskey, George Stinney and Virginia Smith.

In *Heart of Darkness* I took a similar approach and scaled up the presence of the Congolese characters wherever I could, giving them more space and value in the book, and emphasising the many instances of casual violence. In both books I use the opportunity of a new version to 'colour in' by asking us to consider whose stories are missing from the original versions. In Sister Helen's case, she approached me precisely because she wanted a new generation to have access to her book. We also decided to place greater emphasis

on the experience of the victims (of the convicted murderers) families, something which Sister Helen felt she did not do enough of at the time.
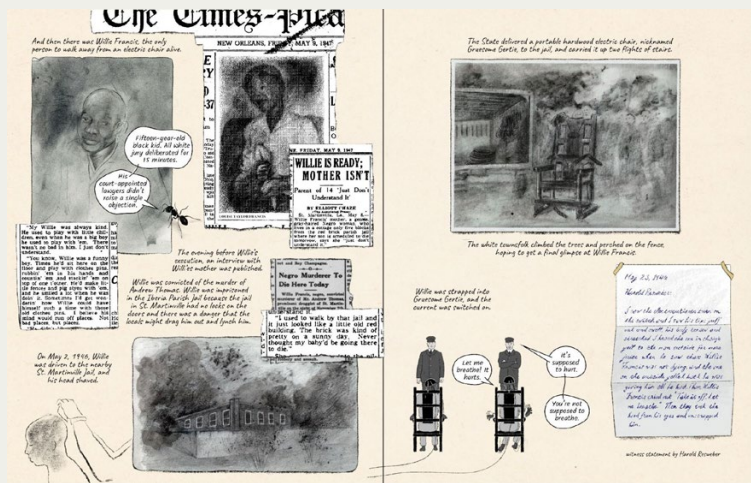
I feel this approach has a resonance with the title of the symposium. I am adding to a work that was produced in the past, with the benefit of hindsight. Both original books are complete in their own right, however both deal with extremely difficult material. I like to think of the artist's job as at heart being about organising information. By this I mean that we can take difficult or intangible concepts or stories and transform them into experiences that invite an audience to understand something in a subjective or emotional way. This can result in understanding something with empathy rather than pity or sympathy.

Match Cut

Heart of Darkness is often boiled down to Kurtz's cry of 'the horror, the horror', and could well describe the European vision of Africa, a darkness, a savage place. But Marlow realises there is a more subtle horror, and that he is a part of it. At one point, looking at the shrunken heads lined up outside Kurtz's house Marlow is literally confronted with both the Other and the ultimate abject in the form of a severed head, in which he sees himself. I used a cinematic device called 'match cut' to bring them together. He talks about not being as shocked by the head as by the systems of colonialism and imperialism, that has allowed this act of savagery to happen. I drew the head and Marlow as equal to emphasise the kinship

he feels with it and to emphasise that in this moment, he and the head are not so unlike – he has also reached the end of something, he is also doomed and damned. They have been brought to this point by the same forces and he recognises himself in this thing. I also want to address Marlow's complicity in this system by physically mirroring him with the head.

I'm a big fan of the match cut as a way to emphasise ideological similarities between things that seem unrelated. Kurtz is an ivory trader and is revered for the sheer amounts of ivory he is able to collect and for his 'rapport' with the tribes surrounding his camp. I tried to emphasise and criticise the relationship between Kurtz's ivory and the reality of how it has been amassed by creating a visual symmetry, or a match cut, between the ivory, the tribe, and gun cartridges. Creating visual relationships between these things exposes the relationship, in reality, between violence and compliance or subordination.

I use the same technique in *Dead Man Walking* – placing a tree across a double page spread where the young narrator recalls her childhood in Jim Crow era Louisiana. On the left-hand page, a man swings from the tree from a noose, and on the right-hand spread Sister Helen Prejean as a child swings from a same tree on a child's swing, her mother explaining segregation with the words 'Honey, they like to be with their own kind and we with ours.' Sister Helen writes: 'I felt awful. My parents never acted mean to black people, but nor did they question the Jim

Crow segregation that permeated every aspect of life. I never understood how the constant threat – and reality – of violence kept everyone in "their place"'. I think that this sentence of Sister Helen's overlaps with the situation in the Congo, where mutilation and torture was used as a tactic of control, and I'm really invested in reminding audiences that the threat of violence is something that can be invisible but powerful. By having them swing from the same tree I'm attempting to reinforce the idea that violence, innocence and wilful ignorance were happening in the same landscape, that there is a relationship between them, and that wilful ignorance can be the cause of violence.


Transgressing the Lines

One of the most useful things you have in the graphic novel is the panel and what it means emotionally or

sensually. A reader has expectations of panels that can be effectively disrupted if you play with how you use them. In *Dead Man Walking* I have used the panels to visually reinforce the idea of segregation, which is only mentioned in passing in the book. I place the black characters outside the panel borders during scenes in the Jim Crow era to visually reinforce the idea of segregation at that time. For example the black workers at Sister Helen's childhood home are drawn outside the panel of the home, as are black people at the back of the bus and in church where they are forced to sit separately. They are excluded from the panel which indicates a norm, a correctness. In the lynching image, the woman is kicked off the bus and out of the panel, into the lynching tree. In the context of 'colouring in' this has a resonance with the common use of the phrase to colour in, where as a child you have a picture and attempt to 'stay within the lines'. To transgress the line can be related to Julia Kristeva's description of the state of abjection as the crossing of a border:

'It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection, but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite.'
Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982)
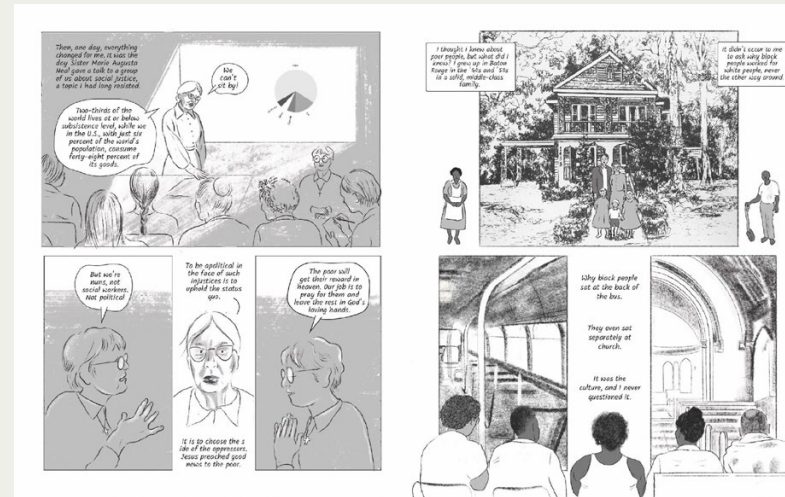
Disintegration and Erasure

Another example of not 'staying within the lines' can be seen in my drawing series *Last Seen*. The subject matter of this series is the emotional disruption of public space by traumatic events. Drawing can create a subjective and objective reconstruction of these events, portraying reality, but also other dimensions of the seen and unseen: the way that violent events can disrupt our spaces in an invisible way.

Typically, we get information about historical and contemporary crises through words, through language. I'm interested in the dimensions that can't be adequately described by words. My ex-student Benedetta Crippa wrote this amazing line: 'Threatened by systems of oppression, what

we carry inside can become unspeakable.' When things are unspeakable, we cannot learn about them through language. The illustrator then has a role to play in the communication of the emotional content of an event. Katherine McKittrick writes in her essay *Black Mathematics* that 'the archives are filled with bodies that can only come into being vis-a-vis racial sexual violence; the documents and ledgers and logs that narrate the brutalities of this history give birth to new world blackness as they evacuate life from blackness. Breathless, archival numerical evidence puts pressure on our present system of knowledge by affirming the knowable (black objecthood) and disguising the untold (black human being)'. So as with *Heart of Darkness* and *Dead Man Walking*, I am attempting to use drawing as a way to speak about the untold, instead of the known.

In these drawings, I often use an excess of mark making to destroy the paper surface. *Live, Moments Ago (The Death of Mike Brown)* is a reconstruction of the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in August 2014. Michael Brown's body lay uncovered for four hours on a hot pavement after he was fatally shot by police. These four hours are missing from our understanding of the event that photographs of the scene give us. My film is an attempt to make some meaning of that time. I have drawn fifty or so frames using a short mobile phone clip from a witness as reference, working them over and over again to produce a film that documents the disintegration of

the drawing. By drawing and redrawing it, time is reinvested into the image, as an homage. The redrawing causes the paper to tear and rupture, alluding to the subsequent disruption of public space and historical lynching fires. In this way I am taking a low value, low resolution image of the event and 'colouring it in' by adding a subjective, emotional dimension, a sense of the way that violent acts affect the surrounding social and physical landscape. It is also an example of 'colouring outside the lines', in this case the line, the image, is totally obliterated.

I will finish with the image I started with, which is also an animated film in which the city of Aleppo is slowly erased. In both films the process echoes the physical and mental trauma and unrest in the

environment. This emotional disruption of public space is something I have tried to tackle with the way the images are drawn, using the disintegration of the image as a way to create an emotional, rather than factual reconstruction of the historical events. It is a challenge to the idea of how pictures are made, using drawing to observe the breakdown, rather than the building up of an image. The unweaving or undrawing of the images over time is a way to try to describe the feeling of cognitive dissonance that comes with this sort of crime. Police brutality shows us that those who are tasked to uphold the law are not incorruptible, that the law is only a thin skin over a number of structures that barely connect and are often wrong, or compromised.

We believe in images like we believe in the law, that they are things that hold together, but these images disintegrate in the same way as those structures do, which we had believed to be solid. History is the same, it is something recorded by the winners, not the losers. In her presentation Rachel Emily Taylor said: 'Rather than colouring in the past, as illustrators, should we be outlining the past and not using our practice to fill in the gaps in history? But instead, draw attention to these empty spaces and 'gaps' in historical record.' I propose we can also add erasing or deconstructing to the idea of outlining and colouring in: to approach the past with an idea that it is not solid, but can be revisited and understood in many different ways.

CAG

Part 3: Sharon Kivland

Dandelions in a Meadow

Look, here's a picture, another picture to follow those seen in Rachel and Catherine's work. Yes, I am asking you to picture this, to make the picture yourself. I don't know where or how you make the picture, other than as a figure of speech, in your mind's eye, that sort of thing, but follow the picture as I describe it. It's not my picture (nor is it Rachel's or Catherine's, but I think they know about it, as I imagine many reading this also do, so picturing the scene I describe should come quite easily to you, if you cast your mind back to your first encounter with it, or perhaps you have simply heard someone talk about it before). Actually, strictly speaking, it's not a picture at all. In fact, I am describing it from memory, remembering a man's childhood experience as he described it. The scene is set in a square, rather sloping meadow; it is green, very lush, and there are many yellow flowers, which he thought to be dandelions. Outside a farmhouse, at the top of the lovely meadow, two women wearing headscarves, no, one is wearing a scarf, the farmer's wife, the other is a nursemaid and wears no scarf– stand in deep conversation. Three children are playing in the meadow. There's a boy and a girl, and another boy, the narrator of the scene, and he is two or three years-old and the girl, his cousin, she's the same age, exactly, and the other boy, another cousin, a year older. They are picking bunches of the yellow flowers. The girl has far the nicest bunch, and the

boys fall upon her – it's as though they had tacitly agreed this – and snatch away her flowers. She runs back up the meadow, crying, towards the two women. The farmer's wife gives the snivelling girl a big slice of black bread to comfort her, and when the two boys see this, they throw down the flowers and clamour for bread themselves. The woman cuts the loaf with a long knife, and he remembers that the bread tasted absolutely delicious. And then the scene breaks off. This must be noted: the scene breaks off: the scene always breaks off (as Rachel Emily Taylor and Catherine Anyango Grünewald have noted).

In recounting this remembered scene, he wondered what there was about it that was so compelling, what justified his expenditure of memory – for it is an economy of sorts to remember: if it were the act of unkindness, the tasty bread, made more so by the romping in the meadow, the attractive flowers (though he did not find dandelions at all attractive). In fact, there was something not quite right about the scene, something was off: the yellow too prominent, the taste of the bread exaggerated. Really, it was like a hallucination or like some pictures he had seen in an exhibition, parodistic, where parts of the picture weren't painted at all but applied as a sort of relief emphasising the most improper areas, such as a lady's bustle, the arse that covers an arse, one might say in a vulgar fashion.

Is it coming back to you now, if you'd forgotten the source of this account? One of Freud's patients told it to him in 1899. Freud went to great lengths in his own account of the scene and how it was recounted in order to extract the origin, the cause of the memory, for which there can be no guarantee, Freud said, though he conceded the scene might be genuine. This is what I remember of it; I cannot guarantee my accuracy – and while you may think I should have checked my facts, that is not the point of this exercise, the exercise of memory, the scene of a scene, doubled, laid over one you could quite easily verify.

The memory of the scene returned first when its narrator was seventeen, revisiting the countryside for a holiday; a downturn in the family fortunes had resulted in a move to the city, and there, in the countryside, on holiday, he fell in love with a young girl who was wearing a beautiful yellow dress at their first meeting. They parted, she went back to school, he went home, and that was the end of that. But he wondered what might have happened in different circumstances (if, for example, his father had not lost the family fortune), those created by his imagination. Yet, when later he had met her again recently, he was indifferent to her. However, the memory of her yellow dress continued to affect him, whenever he saw the colour elsewhere. He didn't like the common dandelion any longer either (Freud remarked), and couldn't there be a suspicion of a connection, yellow dress, girl, yellow flowers, but no, it wasn't the same yellow, it was the yellow of another flower, an Alpine one, a deeper yellow, one he later saw. When he was twenty, he met his

girl cousin again, but there were no fantasies of marriage in this encounter (he had his books, after all, he was wedded to them), though his father and uncle had a plan for their union. Freud placed the origin of the childhood scene here; the date-mark of its construction was the feature of the deep yellow Alpine flower, and goodness, it was all set in the Alps, for climbing holidays were the only pleasure the studious young man allowed himself. He threw away the flowers for a piece of bread, the neat metaphor for his bread-and-butter existence: love and beauty sacrificed for subsistence. There were, he realised, two sets of fantasies about how his life might have been more comfortable; indeed, Freud said, telling him he had turned them both into a single childhood memory, assuring him that these things are often constructed unconsciously, almost like works of fiction. Freud told him that the essentially indifferent content of the scene suited the representation of the two fantasies. In the memory thought, impressions of one period were represented, links of symbolic or similar nature connecting the content – Freud called this a screen memory. It was no simple game of *cache-cache*; it was not at all anodyne, for it showed the most significant turning points of the man's life, two powerful forces, hunger and love (think about it, Freud advised, when the man demurred at the latter, what is it to take a girl's flowers, but to deflower her?). The whole thing then was an escape into a childhood memory, but remember, Freud wrote that it is *questionable whether we have any conscious*

memories from *childhood: perhaps we have only memories* of *childhood. These show us the first years of our lives not as they were, but as they appeared to us at later periods, when the memories were aroused. At these times […] the memories of childhood did not emerge […] but were formed, and a number of motives that were far removed from the aim of historical fidelity had a hand in influencing both the formation and the selection of the memories.*

One last note on my story of the man recounting his scene of memory in Freud's account of a delightful and remarkable dialogue, a man of thirty-eight with academic training, who told his story clearly, yet it was full of colour: who is this man? I (and you) may have read other of his memories told in similar style, revealing details about his past, turning to his childhood memories or telling his readers about his dreams, almost always breaking off at a point beyond which he would go no further in his interpretation. Does something prick at your memory? One man can hide another.

I took the theme of the symposium more broadly than intended in my response. I am a poor respondent, too oblique or even forgetful of my role. However, I end with a few echoes, a few questions. Both presentations considered what it is to revisit the past, to make new versions while adding to existing knowledge, to place other emphases, to view from other perspectives. To look back, yes, and to think in the present about with care, with attention, with detail.

As the sign at level crossings in France warns, *un train peut en cacher un autre* (one train can hide another), a nice figure for there always being more than meets the eye. This was seen in the presentations of Rachel and Catherine, the more than meets the eye, the repressed returning, taking a different form, as memory studies and the concept of trauma also show, when memory happens in the present and remembering keeps on occurring, until it is worked through, when it may begin again in a new relation. Is this like the drawing of child who is asked to consider not only its own face but also that of another, not only a selection of features and their arrangements, but the becoming with… so a silence of the past might be given voice or image (could we call that presence, a present absence? And without erasing or replacing either child… an ethics of representation. Is this like the adaptation of an existing text, something that produces more that simply an illustrated version of the same old thing and opens into other dimensions?

The modification or construction of the past re-describes it, performs it; it is not simply bearing it, after Richard Terdiman – or after Édouard Glissant, 'remembering is not the opposite of forgetting', and 'memory has to be a selection; only some features of an event are preserved, and others are dropped and forgotten, either straightaway or little by little'. Remembering – an action – produces memory, but it is not always full, complete, it may be even without affect. What is the memory then, a narrative with

which to act, re-enact, to repeat, to work through – or to commemorate? Is the unconscious a memory, recognised by each subject as their history?

SK

Drawing and Remembering
–Ksenia Kopalova, Yue Mao
and Kimberly Ellen Hall

The first of our online conversations, this contribution brings together a summary of projects by our authors on the shared theme of drawing and remembering.

Memory is a black hole
–Yue Mao and Ksenia Kopalova

The project *Memory is a black hole* is an experimental dialogue between two researchers, who use text and image to stimulate the process of memory-making.

It is based on a procedure of reiterative text and image production: Yue recalls an everyday life route or location in a familiar city, describes it in text and takes photos of it. Then she cuts out an area of her photo with a 'black hole' — which resembles occasional glitches appearing in Google panoramas — and sends the text and the resulting images to Ksenia. The 'black holes' indicate the least relatable spots in her memory. Ksenia, who does not see the original photo, imagines what may hide behind these black shapes, and fills in the 'black holes' with drawings, in which she matches her own memories

of somewhat similar locations with the physical reality of the space that she sees in Yue's photo. Thus the resulting images never represent any real location, but form a common space of remembrance for the two researchers. These drawings become the ground for the second version of text by Yue, reinterpreting her everyday life route with an added layer of 'fiction'.

This procedure is an attempt to experiment with how a reiteration of writing and drawing can catalyse memory-making, and to test our preconceptions about texts and images, facts and fiction. We assume that memory-making can go beyond an automatic process of individual recalling, it can be a set of choices shared by a number of people, even though it is rarely recognised as such. We suggest that memory is constructed collaboratively and discursively, and that — using Freud's metaphor — the 'mystic writing pad' of our memory, actually overlays, merges and distorts traces of presence of multiple actors. The 'building materials' for this collaborative construction of overlapping memories — the texts and images — often oscillate between 'facts' and 'fiction'. Deteriorating and transforming in the process of recalling and articulation, layering on top of each other and merging with someone else's memories and interpretations, the resulting traces of the past are never 'truthful' representations of the past.

The experiment can seem 'constructed', artificial, but isn't our memory-making a constructed process

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as well? How can we really talk about the 'reliability' of our memories? Our project aims to highlight the process of 'curation of the past': in an exaggerated manner it brings attention to the 'artificial' nature of remembering, and, in a wider sense, history-making.

Our project also aims to reflect upon how the access to this collaborative history-making is restricted by authority, and who gets to be involved into this process of memory-making. Both contributors stay in their respective areas of professional practice (with Yue writing and Ksenia drawing), thus illustrating how memory is 'validated' by expertise. Simultaneously, the project questions our preconceptions of what information is regarded as 'valid' in history-making: with fiction writing and traditional drawing being practices associated with 'fantasy', 'imagination' or even 'deception', our project tests the simplistic binaries, such as 'true/false', 'individual/collective' or 'fiction/documentary'.

The project seems to have intersections with *Drawing Trash*, the project by Kimberley Ellen Hall, who curates/creates stories of individual people through showing objects that they have thrown away, in an intricate arrangement of a wallpaper pattern. These stories are more of a reflection on what our belongings tell about ourselves, rather than a representation of the historical owners of these objects. Nevertheless, there is certainly a tension created by oscillating between the physical materiality of the found artefacts and the artistic choice in displaying some of them.
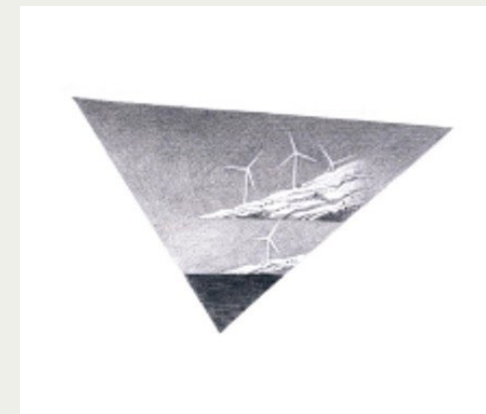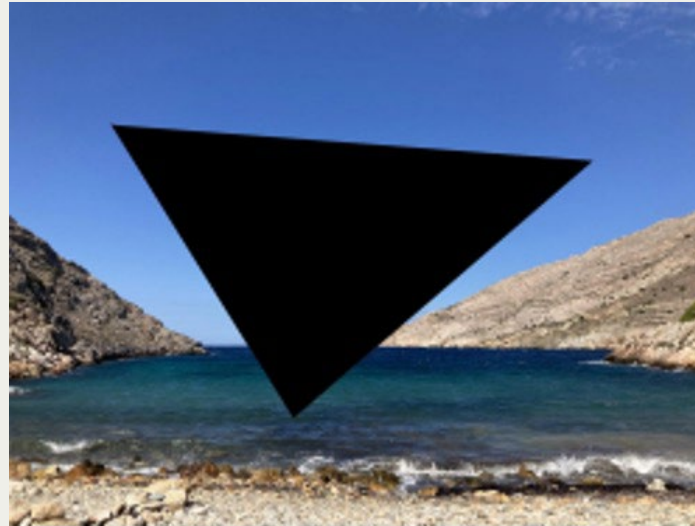
Both projects reflect the power of montage in creating history, and its inherently artistic nature. In her 2002 essay 'The articulation of protest', Hito Steyerl suggested applying the theory of montage in cinema to the domain of politics. Similarly, the above mentioned projects may suggest a way to look at history through the lens of artistic practices that are not commonly associated with history-making.

YM, KK

Drawing Trash
–Kimberly Ellen Hall

Pre-pandemic, I had a residency at RAIR (Recycling Artist in Residence) in Philadelphia, PA where I drew objects from the trash and created a collection of hand screen-printed wallpapers based on the objects I found. By drawing the objects in the recycling stream, I was able to reconsider the value of objects in everyday life.

The wallpaper collection was inspired by the lives I found sifting through the things people throw away. The items found were often recognizably from one person, and represented strange and sometimes deeply personal artifacts of a life. The objects selected were not meant to communicate who that particular person was, but rather to give a glimpse into who each of us might be based on the things we leave behind. By drawing the discarded bits of everyday life, the intention was to bring them back into the home (as wallpaper) and to reconsider what should be kept or lost and how the objects we select for our houses makes them home.

The thinking that came out of the RAIR residency took me to new places about how we decide what kinds of objects are in our homes and how long we keep them for. I spent time as a Makers-Creators Fellow at Winterthur Museum in Delaware and wondered: What is the real difference between what we send to the landfill & what we preserve

in a museum? Why do we keep the things we keep? Even a chipped dish can hold sentimental value to its owner. It can also carry meanings both acknowledged and preserved or hidden and unknown. In the wallpaper that came from this residency, these questions were explored through the practice of drawing and the curation of motifs of archival objects.

In this video-paper, I reflected on the outcomes of the project, both accomplished and missed, as well as proposed new directions that the work will be taking going forward. Outcomes include connecting what is happening in recycling and landfills with the way we have preserved household items in museum settings, and exploring the case that some old family objects in basements have the power to change history as we know it.

For the conference, I was in conversation with Yue Mao & Ksenia Kopalova whose research investigated memory through a collaborative drawing practice. We found parallels and crossovers in our work around the idea of curation and how the building up of layers, whether of memories or objects, can create the process of storytelling. They illuminated this connection by highlighting how memory-making is an active process and it resonated with my own ideas and experience of the active process of drawing. This conversation brought us to broader topics around how making meaning and stories directly creates history and makes us question what is truth. We also dug into ideas around authorship and ways to acknowledge and

break positions of power and authority in storytelling, whether through curation, collaboration, or methods of (de)construction.

I have used drawing as a tool to explore objects and ideas, both the discarded from the trash and the preserved in museums. The drawings liberate objects from both places and has helped me share the work of the collection and the loss of the dumping ground. It's created conversations around what meaning can be derived from everyday objects. I am interested in the future of objects in our world, whether real or imagined, especially in regards to the items we discard and how new objects might be made.

KEH

History and Identity
–Gary Spicer and Lydia Donohue

In this online conversation, Lydia Donohue and Gary Spicer presented papers and discussed themes of history and identity. Included here are summaries of their papers and the shared concerns arising from the discussion.

The Happening of Drawing: An exploration of Holocaust sites using phenomenological applications of drawing and writing practices
–Gary Spicer

Background

My PhD practice-based research investigated how by being a witness across time and space, bi-modal phenomenological approaches of writing and drawing can form a coherent embodied arts practice that engages with the *present* by confronting turbulent *pasts*. I wanted to show how through such an approach, entangled historical and personal genealogical narratives against the backdrop of a contested Jewish identity — could find form and be meaningfully reified and expressed.

The practice addressed the distinction between writing as a cognitive exercise and drawing as an embodied arts practice. Firstly, as an application of phenomenological approaches to the use of drawing to experience place, focusing on what it feels like to directly experience Holocaust sites. And secondly, in attempting to establish how visual arts practice such as drawing and writing, existing as interconnected rather than discrete constructs, when considered phenomenologically can elicit methods of embodiment which can deepen our understanding of such events.

In the first chapter of *The Arcades Project (1982)* Walter Benjamin reconfigures history by detaching it from a familiar linear and scientific conception and reframes it by inserting it into a non linear, spatial and poetic concept of what he called the 'constellation' or the 'dialectical' image where 'the chronological distinctions between past, present and future are transformed' and overlap. This transformative notion of de-temporalizing memory reconfigures history into a sort of montage and allows for a layering of personal and collective histories to take place. This is how my practice is able to encompass nineteenth century Krakow (nee Austrian) history — through my paternal Jewish ancestry — the emergent European Holocaust narrative and the early twentieth century history of Jewish migration into North Manchester. My own narrative of a conflicted 'Jewish' past and the recurrent motif of the 'broken body' complete the

'constellation' that determined the trajectory of the research.

On Drawing

When I am drawing in places such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, I am aware that I am drawing in a place not designed for drawing. I am conscious of the effect of the environment on the drawing. A phenomenological approach to drawing (or writing) necessitates being attuned to the physical and sensual phenomena experienced in the space. One is sensitive and aware of the temporal dimension to the drawing process also. Drawing takes time. There is a space of drawing, so how the body is experienced in this space is essential to the understanding of both the object being encountered and the process itself. I am aware of how other images — previously seen — or past memories have superimposed themselves over what I see and experience at the sites I visit. Nothing is ever neutral. The drawing is a confusion of what we already know and what we don't'. In this way there is always uncertainty and doubt. Here I am describing the process;

The drawers gaze, transformation, reverie… moment-by-moment, object-to-object, through, over and above. Open gazed, not dwelling. Casting…listening for what is being spoken in the silence.

Drawing disciplines my looking, sharpens and makes more apparent my unknowing. The seeing only confirming the things I don't know and can never know.

A seeing that sees through and into what is being drawn. More than just the eyes and vision — 'knowing' a seeing that sees the nature of things, where the drawer meets the subject…insight?

The penetrating gaze.

The Quilt: Illustrations of a life in fabric
–Lydia Donohue

My ethnographic work within the quilting bees of South Manchester has illuminated the soft-craft as more than hobbywork but rather a continual reworking/rewriting of body and cloth. The quilter imbues the fabric she works on with her intimate self; her memories, dreams, and secrets both puncture and permeate the porous surface of the quilt. I centralise the material artefact of the quilt as an object both inscribed with meaning and texturally readable as a historical and biographical resource that documents the passing of time.

Entanglements: In Conversation with Gary Spicer and Lydia Donohue

Threading our respective practices are the thematic notions of the body, the tacit past and ephemeral present, intimate historical narratives and material entanglements with the landscape. As embodied researchers, the body acts as a central point for our sensual scholarship and produces a distinct form of knowledge *from* the body. Flowing out of the reflexive approach dominant within our work, we are reminded of familiar and forgotten selves, an on-site reminiscence evoking memories, sensations, and practical skills that flow out and ripple into the field and our research.

Our work and following conversation is washed in the colour blue, our discourse meets at a cyan space and comes out dripping in the dye collected from snail shells, squids and dug up from the earth. The Jewish tallit (prayer shawl), a cloth of white and blue with close proximity to the body retains the mystery of the long-lost Biblical blue thread, originally coloured by the Chilazon, a sea creature long since disappeared whose blood, when exposed to the Mediterranean sun turned blue. Quilts present a material topography that, pierced with a needle, makes legible the trace of its maker, a map of Prussian blue its multifarious patchwork top reflects the historical effervescence of the colour, blue fabric permeating quilting history.

Quilts wrapped and shaped as swaddling, liminal and transitional objects make up part of the patch-work antiquity of celestial cloth, permeating into religious materiality, death and the afterlife, portals and border-crossings.

In the cat's cradle of lines connecting us, arts-practice brings us both into greater proximity to the universe, anchoring self and world, existing in the carnal space in which knowledge is forged. Utilising bodily learning and creative methodologies, we work towards a phenomenological exploration of being-in-the-world, mark-making and remembering.

GS, LD

Home Time
–Lihong Liu and Guglielmo Rossi

This article brings together summaries of online video presentations from Lihong Liu and Guglielmo Rossi, both concerned with the topic of 'home'. Shared observations on the overlaps between the two papers conclude the piece.

Sensing the Continuity of the 'Home' through Familiar: Images in the Darkness of a New Residence
–Lihong Liu (CCW, UAL)

The experience of *déjà vu* and/or the *unheimlich* is closely related to something once very familiar to us. Here, Lihong discussed the idea of the *unheimlich* which can be perceived as a peculiar combination of feeling familiar and yet unfamiliar in order to shed light on the process of exploring the continuity of home according to my own experience. Lihong argues that the continuity of a sense of 'home' is created by looking for a sense of familiarity through familiar everyday objects or furniture and by placing them in a similar position or having a similar room layout of the past in the strange living environment. Taking her series of drawings — *The Darkness series* (2020–2021),

IMAGE TOP
Lihong Liu-The Darkness series IV, 2020. 51x38.5cm. Pencil and correct fluid on paper

IMAGE BOTTOM
Lihong Liu-The Darkness series VI, 2021. 18x25cm. Pencil and correct fluid on paper

which were created during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) worldwide lockdown and focused on her experience of moving into a new living space, as examples to further clarify the ideas related to the *unheimlich*. The drawings demonstrate how Lihong's own experience of 'home' shifted from unfamiliar to familiar and from empty spaces to those crammed with familiar items that evoked a sense of dwelling. They record both the mental and the physical experience of the whole process of living in a new residence through the depiction of the relative positions of various objects in the room, especially at night. The darkness drowned out all the familiarity that had begun to build up gradually during the day. Such a mixed sense of familiarity and strangeness provides a sense of uncertainty which aroused a sense of the homely and yet unhomely. By continually questioning such relationships between objects and how they connect to a sense of home, it provides a lens to view and research the *unheimlich*.

The Housing Movement: Illustrations from the Archive
–Guglielmo Rossi (University of Greenwich)

To look through printed documents in archival collections at MayDay Rooms in London — the repository of radical histories documenting the struggles of post-1968 social movements — can be a messy and disorientating experience.

Within boxes are preserved dissenting ephemera part of a print culture which is fleeting and hard to classify. This type of publishing was largely produced by short lived social movements' groups, whose pamphlets, journals, leaflets, and posters are characterised by low-cost production processes, and which often omit author names, places, and dates of publication.[1] Looking at a selection of illustrations of buildings from a range archival collections and time periods, this research traces a variety of purposes and meanings for the images. The visuals selected describe buildings as sites of political struggle, including illustrations of squatters' campaigns opposing eviction; visual instructions describing effective community organising; drawings promoting the work of a women's group setting up a food co-operative. Other images demand decent social housing conditions; denounce the impact of low-quality housing on mental health; promote a newly established community centre offering advice to residents and advertise a housing co-operative project as part of the struggle towards finding alternative ways of living.

[1] The primary sources I discuss in this research were produced using low-cost print production processes such as mimeographs, small-scale offset lithographic printing presses, and photocopy machines

The Housing Movement provides a useful term to include the experiences of people trying to create housing conditions that are 'less subject to the whims of the high rent and high profits',[2] as part of a centuries long dispute between landowner and users. However, these experiences (including the initiatives listed above) read as fragmented and isolated episodes in history: the long-standing shortage of affordable housing characteristic of a city like London, for instance, is characterised by episodes that are localised and temporary, and looking" at images' visual and material qualities, this research aims to make connections between disputes that the visitor to the archive would otherwise encounter as fragments in separate boxes.[3] Furthermore, tracing a continuum across the movement's visual culture production and circulation, evidences the complex life of these images.

The circumstances introduced earlier, and the technologies used to produce this visual matter, certainly shaped how illustrations look in print, and their common interpretations: for instance, images' unrefined quality and quick turnaround, are commonly associated with communicating a sense of urgency. Across media and print history, the function of political images is convincingly argued as the intent of building momentum, agitating, organising, and forming solidarity across readerships. Nevertheless, the continuum that characterises this visual culture can also be

extremely literal, repeating the same illustration multiple times across different document genres.[4]

For example, once cut-out from one publication, the image shown here was adapted in size to fit the scope of a new text, and then reprinted. The immediate process of appropriating and repurposing the same drawing, illustrates how the image's reproduction and use extended — free from copyright restrictions — across time periods and geographies. Published in the 4 contexts shown by different organisations, the drawing might have also appeared in other forms: newsletters, flyers, posters, journals, etc. Showing an arm punching through an open window, the drawing was supposedly created by the Italian revolutionary organisation Lotta Continua (Continuous Struggle), it was published in the March–April issue of the journal *Radical America* (1973), and in the preface of the pamphlet *Take over the city*, published in London (1974). The introduction paragraph to *Take over the city* explains that:

> The class struggle in Italy has spread from the factories to every area of people's lives […] with widespread rent strikes, mass occupations of empty flats, and against rising food prices, expensive transports, inadequate schools and nurseries, and lousy medical facilities.

Since the autumn of 1969, intense protest broke out across suburban neighbourhoods of the industrial areas of the north of Italy, where southern

immigrants moved to find work, oftentimes in the automotive industry. In the service of political action and in solidarity with insurgent working-class communities within the networks of left-libertarian politics, this image circulated between Italy, North America, and the UK at least. Furthermore, illustrations of this kind contributed to shaping a sense of identity for the movement, evidencing how integral print culture was to the way in which organisations and collectives constituted and reproduced themselves. Describing the role of design and print production within the political tradition of the radical left, the introduction to *Agit-Prop Notes* speaks of political organisations from the period forming themselves 'in and through' different media forms and publishing.[5] Also referring to radical publishing, media theorist Jess Baines suggests that this print production shouldn't be understood as static, but constituted of objects in movement, providing material form, and a sense of authority and legitimisation to organisations that where otherwise temporary, spontaneous, and that formed around specific issues and circumstances.[6]

Acting and moving in this context across different media forms, illustrations seems to carry a particularly important role, and because of its square format similar to a comic panel, the image shown here lends itself well to being cut-out and repurposed as a political tool, from small badges to large size banners.[7] Illustrating the contemporary use of the image, the examples at the bottom present the advert
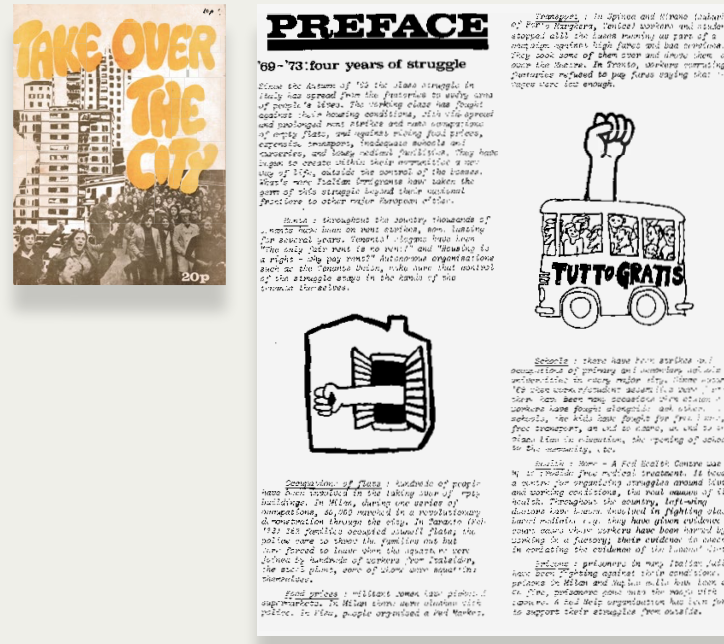
[5] These ideas are central to the introduction of *Agit Prop Notes*, the second volume of the MayDay Rooms' pamphlet. To be published in 2023

[6] Jess Baines, 'Radical Print Revolution?', in *Strike! Magazine*, November–December 2014 (pp. 20–21)

[7] Describing the role of comic strips in *Under the Radar: Underground zines and self-publications*, Jan Frederik Bandel, Annette Gilbert, Tania Brill suggest that the graphic form of the comic is particularly suited to be repurposed as a political tool. (p.177)
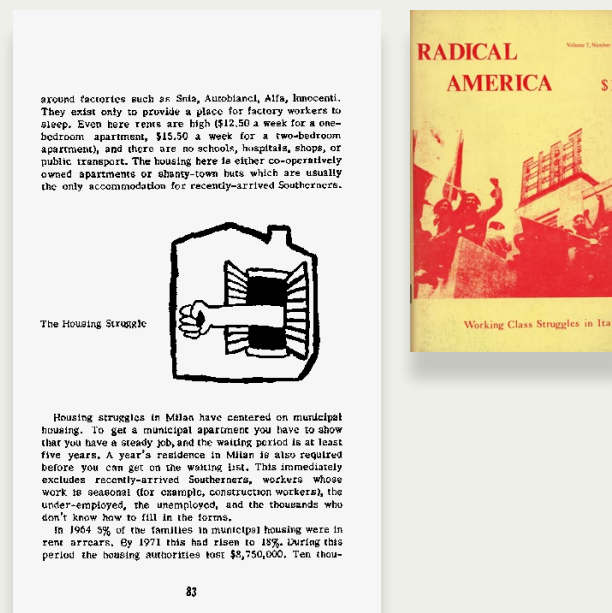
for a job at MayDay Rooms, and a library project initiated by the London Renters Union. Both instances develop this visual culture's continuum, indicating new interpretations and meanings for the illustration, and reinforcing the relevance of past experiences of resistance to contemporary struggles.

Shared observations

'Home' is something people will always be longed for. It is a matter of close concern for individuals, groups, and even society. Through the transformation of artistic language, it interprets people's emotional, physical and psychological feelings towards it in a graphic way, in order trying to find the answer to how to make a perfect home/residence. Or their images can be transformed into some kind of clear visual identity to express people's needs for a house/home or their struggle for a place to dwell. Besides, through the repeated use of certain images, we can see that their power as an image transcends different generations. And may take on new meanings as times change. Therefore, images are not only used as an artistic means to record and describe the state of a particular moment. And can be a bridge between the past and the present and even the future.
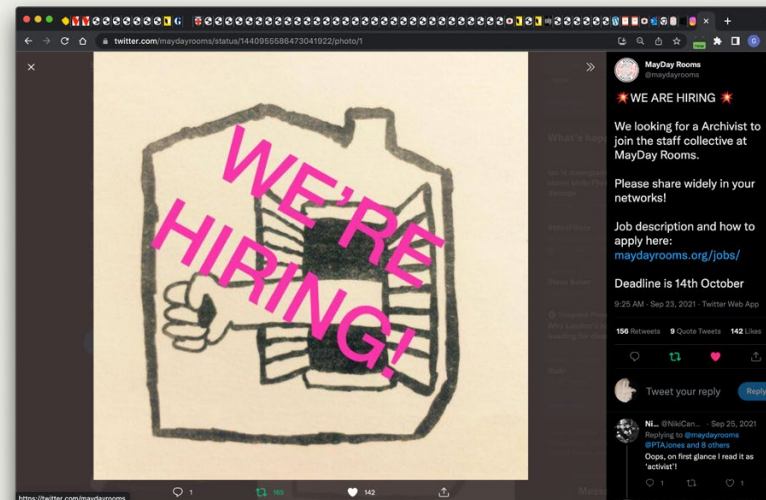
LL, GR
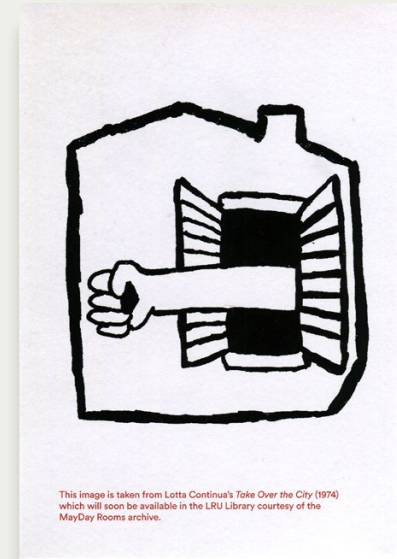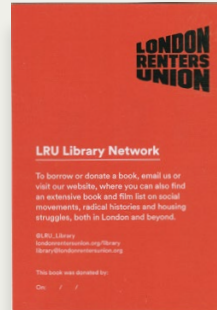
This image is taken from Lotta Continua's *Take Over the City* (1974) which will soon be available in the LRU Library courtesy of the MayDay Rooms archive.

Layered Cities
–Dilek Yördem, Merve Akdağ and Susanne Käser

The two online panel presentations collected here both address the palimpsest that is the city, and how to visualise this. Shared themes emerged during the conversation following the presentations, key points representing these are collated at the end of the article.

Building a Historical Layer on a City with AR Images: Illustrated guide book project for the church of St. Polyeuktos
–Dilek Yördem and Merve Akdağ

This study was created for the St.Polyeuktos Church in Istanbul about the documentation of its layers from the past to the present and its communication with the public. It is known that after the church that inspired Hagia Sophia was buried under the ground for various reasons, a Turkish bath, mosque, etc., was built in the same area. The area has been studied as an archeopark by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, and our work began in 2022 to document the process of the land and establish the first communication with the neighborhood.
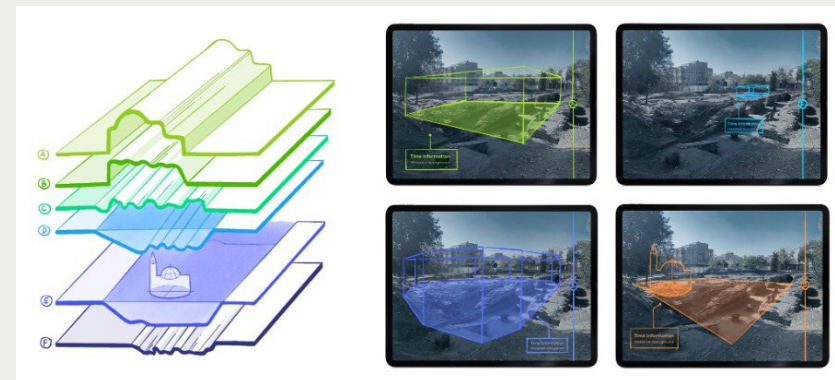
[1] Fokdal, J. (2008) *Power and Space: Appropriation of Space in Social Housing in Copenhagen*. Vol. 10. LIT Verlag Münster

The research questions on the surrounding were: "How can we experience different time layers in the city? How do we experience destroyed areas/buildings/structures? How can spaces experienced in contemporary times reproduce a self-generating reality by using the method of urban archeology?" According to these questions, the project aim is the Visualization of Time Layers; Illustrations and informational images prepared using Augmented Reality (AR) technologies were examined to re-experience the Church of Polyeuctus, which was destroyed over time in Istanbul.

Our approach designing illustrations and informational images using AR technologies were examined to re-experience the Church of Polyeuctus, which was destroyed over time in Istanbul. Within this method, studies were carried out on the idea that a new experience layer could be created in the region with these visuals. This creates a new space and a new social practice, as Josefine Fokdal's statement about the power of space: "Space has been defined as an abstract aspect of a place that is not linked to any specific location. Space is created through the social practice of individuals… Furthermore, space has the ability to change meaning and to be used differently than planned, an aspect that is important for the following work" (Fokdal, 2008: 15).[1] In the region, it is aimed to revive the buildings and structures, which have been destroyed over time, with the help of visual illustrations that visitors watch on their mobile devices.
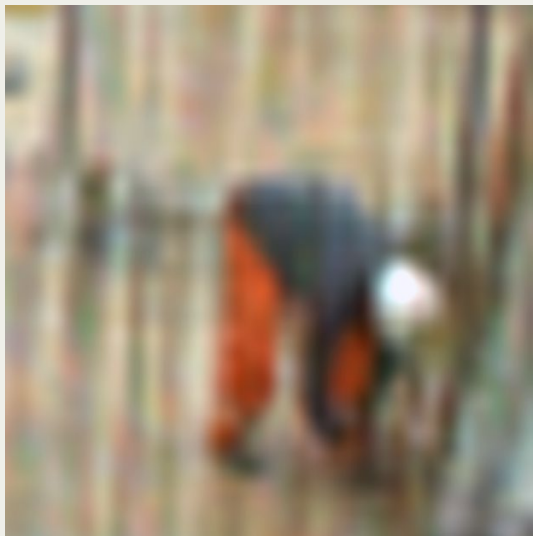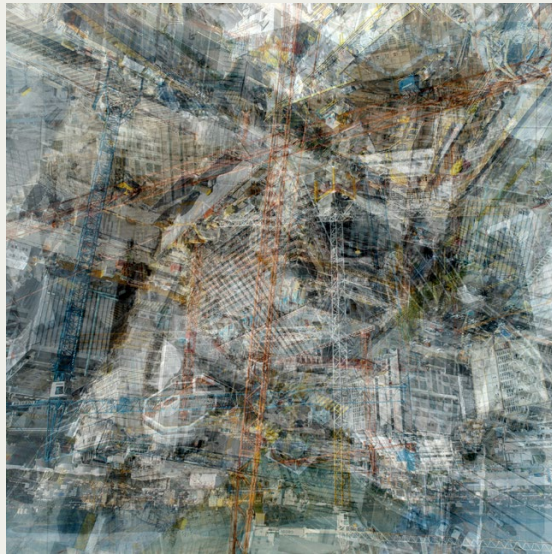
In conclusion; The project has an effect to be able to widen the experience of area on a part of Historical Peninsula; strengthen connections between visitors/history/ area and archeology. By creating these; increasing interest to the region, raising awareness on the city's different time layers (archeological layers) are supposed to be developed.

Subjective Aspects of the Top-view Perspective
–Susanne Käser

This contribution explores the possibilities of incorporating subjective qualities into documentary images taken from a top-view perspective. This investigation is part of the long-term documentary project Novartis Campus Documentation conducted at Institute Digital Communication Environments at the Academy of Art and Design in Basel Switzerland.

From 2003 to 2018, the pharmaceutical company Novartis transformed its headquarters in Basel from a former chemical production facility into a state-of-the-art center for research, development and management. The goal of the documentation project was to preserve this urban redeployment of the company's site by exploring experimental documentary image strategies including the perspectives of many different authors. This approach challenges the conventional and often criticized understanding of documentary images as static and objectifying representations of truth. It reinterprets the

IMAGES
Novartis Campus
Documentation
2003–2018, Susanne
Käser

[2] Haraway, D (1998): The Persistence of Vision. In: Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Visual Culture Reader*. London / New York: Routledge. pp. 677–684

[3] Schuetz, A. (1945). On Multiple Realities. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 5(4), Pp. 533–576. https://doi.org/10.2307/2102818

concept of objectivity by providing an assemblage of many different and even contradictory positions including the viewer as an active participant in the narration of the past.

One of these positions are the Top View Sequences. For the documentation of urban transformation processes, the top-view perspective seems in-dispensable. It is a systematic approach that provides an analytical overview of the transformation process of architectural structures by minimizing the photographer's influence, thus legitimizing the objectivity and factuality of the image. An analytical, distanced view that cannot be perceived from a citizen's everyday perspective. The following investigation challenges this approach in light of Donna Haraway's statement saying: "Top view perspectives provide an illusion of an overview, promising objective vision as a kind of totalization or godly view". [2]

From today's perspective it's impossible to know what kind of information people will need in the future to grasp the complexity of an urban transformation process. But an analytical series of top-view photographs certainly cannot accomplish this task. Too many of the subliminal layers of information are lost that one is able to experience on site. "The origin of all reality is subjective, whatever excites and stimulates our interest is real". [3] Inspired by this quote of the Philosopher Willian James, this investigation proposes to balance the tendency of

over-objectification by enhancing the photographs with additional layers of information that reveal a trace of the author's subjective perception of the transformation process. These images are meant to be seen as one author's perspective in the context of the Novartis Campus Documentation project.

Shared observations on themes emerging

Past, Present, Future

Susanne: From a documentary point of view the present moment will be the past of the future. Therefore one of the guiding questions during the process of image creation is how an actual situation must be visualized in order to make it tangible for future generations. There will never be an immediate answer to this because we can only speculate about how the world will be like in some decades. Nevertheless, to supplement a regular series of top-view photographs where the aim is to show the process of transformation in a continuous flow of time, one strategy could be to combine different moments into one image to highlight the nonlinearity of such a process.

Merve: The top view perspective, which we are accustomed to looking at as a person experiencing the space in a space or as an urban observer, is not an effective angle for us to know an area with all its aspects and to experience it all the time.

Experience in the field is experienced from many different angles over time and sometimes from perspectives we never considered or anticipated. A single angle is not enough to define the space.

Dilek: However, the images taken at different times and from different views of the space also provide us with a record of the time spent there. When various points of view and particular time records are combined, the silhouette of the place over time can be captured. All these records also provide some numerical data that can be analyzed, such as the overlooked creatures over time or the sound of space.

Subjectivity

Susanne: In the theoretical discourse about documentary images it has been outlined many times: it's impossible to take an objective photograph. Therefore it seems to be important to inquire about the opposite, the subjectiveness, more in depth and discover how it could contribute to the field of documentary images if different realities co-exist.

Merve: In a place or (when we think of it as a living space) in a public space, even if a single route is presented to the users, it cannot be experienced the same way by the users/observers. The place exists from different angles, with different experiences and perspectives. While the existence of the space is subjective in this way, the records taken from a single perspective and the narratives created are

insufficient to reflect the entire space. Different perspectives create different layers, allowing the space to exist in a 3-dimensional way and time.

Participation

Susanne: In a traditional understanding of documentary images the participation of the beholder is reduced to the act of understanding the message that is imposed by the author of the image in a hierarchical setting: that's how it happened. The aim of the images proposed here is to leave, in between the shown facts, some space for interpretation, to give to the beholder the possibility to play an active role in the construction of the past.

Dilek: A place can only show its existence with the participants/observers. Different participants (users) or observers are needed for a space that lives in time. The participants, who sometimes observe and sometimes personally experience a space, prove to us the existence of it in any time. The total experience resulting from all this participation enables us to draw the most accurate picture of the place.

DY, MA, SK

Visualising and spatializing time –Juliana Ferreira de Oliveira and Juliana Bueno

Graphic designer Juliana Ferreira de Oliveira (Federal University of Paraná, Brazil) and UX designer Juliana Bueno (Senior Lecturer, Graphic Design Department, Federal University of Paraná, Brazil) reflect on their experiments in visualising multiple times

Recognizing historical time in its anthropological multiplicity involves allowing oneself to question "*how much*" time and "*how many*" times does the past have. Through this perspective, we aimed to understand how timelines can be an exercise of creativity through narrative and visual structure, by expanding its layers to multiple temporalities.

Working with temporal visualisation was motivated by curricular transitions in Brazilian high school to a transdisciplinary model. In this shift, as the humanities became one single field of study, addressing fundamental dimensions such as time became imperative in order to trigger connections between disciplines. Based on curricular requirements, but shaping the path together with teachers and students, we sought ways to investigate the past through graphic language. Our main goal was to conduct experiments that expressed time in its socio-cultural dimensions, to spark debates around diverse perceptions.

We initially suspected that, in order to address the past as discourse, the traditional "western-globalised" timeline was not enough. Although an easy target for critics of linear and one-sided representations, timelining is not a broken practice: at least not in a way to justify its full reinvention. Our teacher and student collaborators were fond of the familiarity that this specific model provided — and, for conveying impasses regarding single-narratives, verbal language was enough. However, although familiarised with it, they still found difficulty in constructing complex, yet didactic, timelines.

Jordheim (2014) describes how global historians investigated this issue of complexity across the centuries, by dissecting diachronic segments of the past into synchronic cuts. We hoped that, by understanding the main questions and improvements in historiographical timelines, a contemporary collaboration tool could emerge in order to facilitate visual debates about the past among students.

The archetypal composition of multiple temporalities evokes a layered composition inspired by Braudel's (1995) durations: a time of structures (long-term) at the bottom, of conjunctures (medium-term) at the middle and of events (short-term) at the top.

[ ] Jordheim, H. (2014) Introduction: multiple times and the work of synchronization. *History and Theory*. 53 (4). 498–518

[ ] Jordheim, H. (2012). Against periodization: Koselleck's theory of multiple temporalities. *History and Theory*. 51 (2). 151–171

[ ] Braudel, F. (1995). *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper & Row Publishers
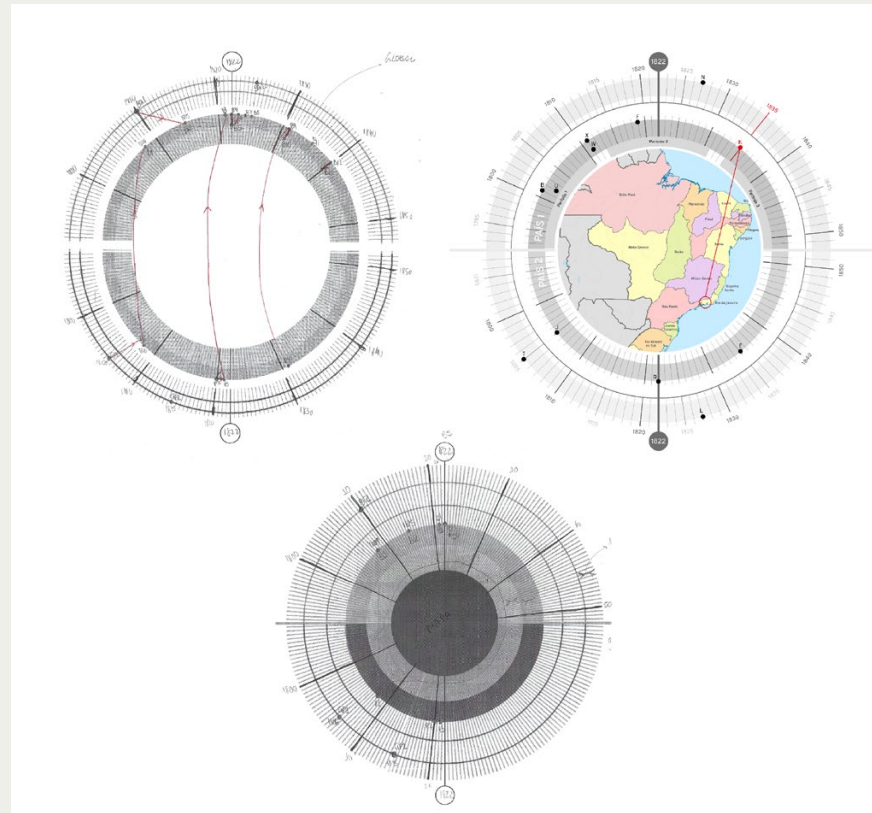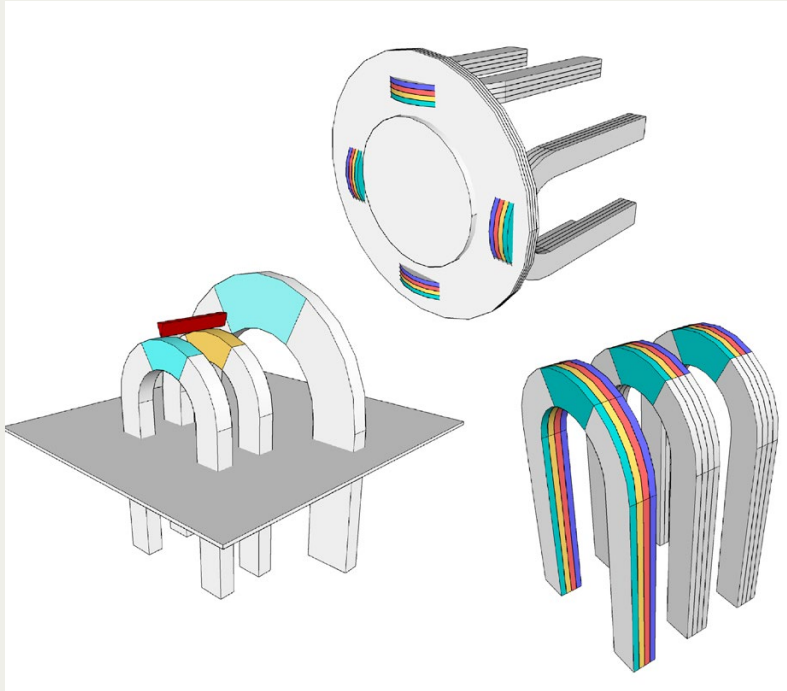
IMAGE LEFT
Figure 1: Visual experiments with multiple timelines. In these experiments we twisted simultaneously a few tridimensional timelines, establishing short-term frames

IMAGE RIGHT
Figure 2: Experimenting processes on paper, with multiple notes from participants. The hand-drawn visualisations were then translated to a more digital approach

The vertical overlapping gradually resembles a timetable — a model that quickly becomes overly saturated and illegible without graphic assistance (Jordheim, 2012), but with a wide graphic space for experimentation.

In practical operations, we started delimiting a tool structured around short time frames for diachronies, which would allow synchronic comparisons and still provide enough contextualization for events. Following the layered system, we suggested glocal and local spatial frames; milestones, represented by dots; events, connected by cause-consequence segments, etc. As we imposed more graphic rules, the more structured the system turned. However, it is imperative to consider that, based on epistemological perspectives, the past might be as much a structure as it might be a narrative (Burke 1992), which poses an important frontier for understanding that visualising multiple times also implies in addressing multiple lenses of visualisation.

In this way, a few subversive exercises emerge (Figure 1): distorting the clock intervals (Pschetz and Bastian, 2018), braiding the timeline (Risler and Ares, 2013), curving the timetables (we detail a few of these experiments in Oliveira and Bueno, 2022), rotating the layers through *volvelles* (Helfand, 2002). All these were attempts at addressing the matters of narrative, positioning individuals closer to collective experiences of the past.

We often turn to our key audiences to ask more questions, to understand how these curricular changes and new graphic languages have impacted their learning of the past. As the present gains more layers of complexity, developing these graphic experimentations becomes a matter of valuing the visual process (Figure 2), not the visualisation itself.

JFDO, JB

[ ] Burke, P. (1992) History of events and the revival of narrative. In: (org.). *New perspectives on history writing* (2nd ed.). São Paulo: Ed. Unesp

[ ] Pschetz, L., & Bastian, M. (2018). Temporal Design: Rethinking time in design. *Design Studies*, 56, 169–184

[ ] Risler, J., & Ares, P. (2013) *Manual de mapeo colectivo: recursos cartográficos críticos para procesos territoriales de creación colaborativa* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón

[ ] Oliveira, J. F., & Bueno, J. (2022). Visual learning and multiple temporalities. *Seeing across Disciplines: The Book of Selected Readings* 2022, 92–103

[ ] Helfand, J. (2002). *Reinventing the wheel*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press

Illustration X Recycle Archaeology –Phoebe Gitsham and Chris Allen

In preparation for the Colouring In: The Past symposium a group of illustration students (Camberwell College of Arts & Kingston School of Art) created new interpretations and narratives for Archaeological finds. This work was shown as a poster exhibition at the symposium.

Illustration x Recycle Archaeology was a student project between Kingston School of Art and Camberwell College of Art, facilitated by Laura Copsey and Rachel Emily Taylor, in September 2022. The students were all studying Illustration or Illustration Animation, with a shared interest in heritage and histories.

The project was in collaboration with Dr Helen Wickstead, of Recycle Archaeology, an initiative formed in response to the fact that every year archaeologists have to discard thousands of excavated finds that cannot find homes in museums. Recycle Archaeology explores the values and uses of these overlooked objects and shares them with the public through workshops.

For the project, each student participant chose one 'de-selected' archaeological object from Recycle Archaeology's archive. We each gravitated towards very different fragments informed by our curiosity and intuition — the first step of a visual research journey. For example, Mrudula Kuvalekar, one of the KSA students, selected a piece of paper listing excavated objects, typed during the excavation in 1982 which had uncovered many of the other objects that we investigated. Our job as illustrators was, through our visual research, to support Recycle Archaeology's aims to find new meanings for objects that have lost their narrative. We each had a personal encounter with a deselected artefact and, through research and visual storytelling, created a new narrative.

Workshops and tutorials supported the project — we discussed cultural heritage and ethical implications for illustrators, and explored visual practitioners working in this area. As part of the project, we had the opportunity to visit New River Head, the new site of the Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration, to see two exhibitions, each the culmination of residencies. Laura Copsey and Philip Crewe's *New River Folk* was a fictional museum honouring three real working-class people from New River Head's history, while Sharpay Chenyuè Yuán had created *Lost Springs*, Coming Spring, a site-specific drawing combining archival research with exploring the buildings that now form the Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration.

Although we each took very different approaches to research, leading to different outcomes, all our posters share a story from the past and aim to inspire new ideas for the future.

With thanks to Dr Helen Wickstead (Recycle Archaeology) for her generous input and support.

PG, CA

Things My Object Reminds Me Of

Object

Water

Azulejo Portuguese Tile

Pine Tree

Mosaic

Delftware Tile

Sand

Football Shirt

Breton Shirt

Solidate Stone

Lazurite

Lapis Lazuli

Lavender

Pine Cone

Stone

Tea cup and Saucer

Blue Jay Feather

Beach House

Evergreen Bush

Vase

ABIGAIL BARRETT (KSA)

Abigail Barrett (KSA)

My chosen object is a piece of broken ceramic with a blue nature like pattern. The poster includes 'Things My Object Reminds Me Of' based on the colours, material, stripes and floral like pattern of my object inspired by vintage natural history posters. The illustrations are drawn using watercolour and colouring pencil.

In 1982, an archaeological dig on Fulham High Street (ahead of a Tesco being built) uncovered a number of finds. Not all of these were deemed worthy of being enshrined in a museum, including some broken pieces of medieval pottery. 40 years later, this is the research journey that this pottery has taken me on.

Fulham

London

This dimpled effect is from the salt that medieval potters threw into their kilns to help tighten the lead glaze, which gets its distinctive green colour from copper fillings. These pieces were made in Kingston upon Thames from the 13th to 16th centuries, hence the name Kingston-type ware, a class of Surrey Whitewares.

Kingston upon Thames

Likely transported downriver, Kingston-type ware made up the vast majority of pottery used in medieval London.

The most striking surviving jugs are anthropomorphic. These 'face jugs' appear to derive from the mythical wild man, or woodwose, creature. They are normally fully bearded, and one unusual example has breasts.

Another type of salt-glazed stoneware pottery used both domestically and as witch bottles were Bartmann (bearded man) jugs. These were produced through the 16th and 17th centuries, originally in the area around Cologne.

Aside from many jug forms for domestic uses, witch bottles were also made of Kingston-type ware. People cursed by a witch would employ a folk healer to prepare a witch bottle with contents such as the victim's urine, hair, or nail clippings. The bottle would be buried within the home or thrown on a fire, to break the spell or kill the witch.

Bartmann jugs were the signature product of Frechen, and imitators sprung up in nearby towns, as well as in Raeren (now Belgium), and in England; either English potters or immigrant Germans.

Bartmann jugs are also known as Bellarmine jugs, after cardinal Robert Bellarmine, 1542-1621. Presumably this was to mock the cardinal, although it's unclear whether this was for his anti-alcohol stance, or the cardinal's fierce opposition against Protestantism in the Low Countries and northern Germany.

Exported across much of Europe, Bartmann jugs are also found across the world, as indicators of European trade and colonisation, such as in indigenous graves in colonial North America.

Bellarmine is better known for his involvement as a Cardinal Inquisitor in the first trial of Galileo Galilei, for whom he wrote a certificate which allowed Galileo to continue using and teaching Copernicus' mathematics, and for the sentencing of Giordano Bruno and Fulgenzio Manfredi to burning at the stake.

Frechen

Although in this period Frechen did not have a coat of arms, in 1928 they devised and were granted this one. It features the black lion of the former Duchy of Jülich, which Frechen had been part of, holding a Bartmann jug in its claws.
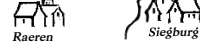
Raeren *Siegburg*

CHRIS ALLEN (KSA)

Chris Allen (KSA)

I chose Surrey whiteware potsherds, and researching broadly introduced me to a range of interconnected stories. Mapping these narratives together meant I could couch these disparate histories, the development of the pottery forms, and my research journey together. I employed linocut to pastiche Medieval and Renaissance woodcuts, while also referencing the materiality of my objects: Pottery and linocuts both begin as a soft form that undergoes a transformative process, whether firing pottery or printing.

Archaeology
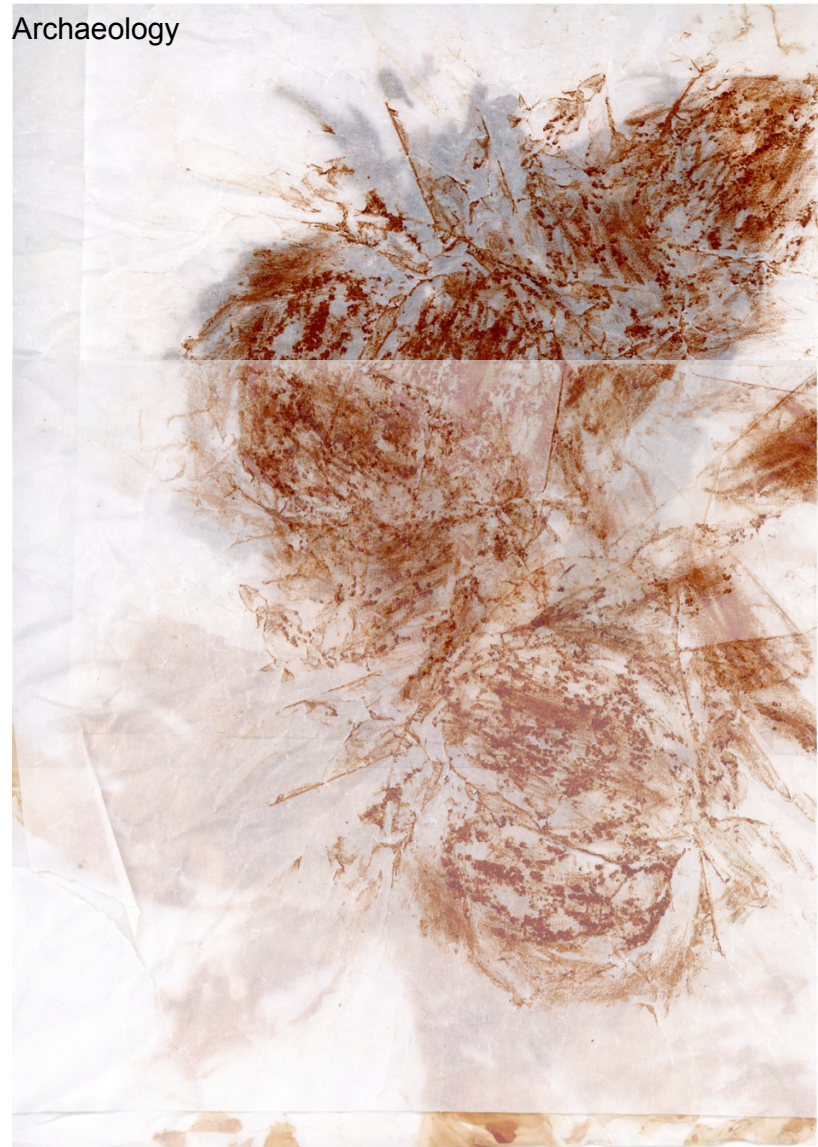
HAOZHENG (UAL)

Hao (Karl) Zheng (UAL)

This poster combines the texture of three layers
of an unknown artefact to convey the long
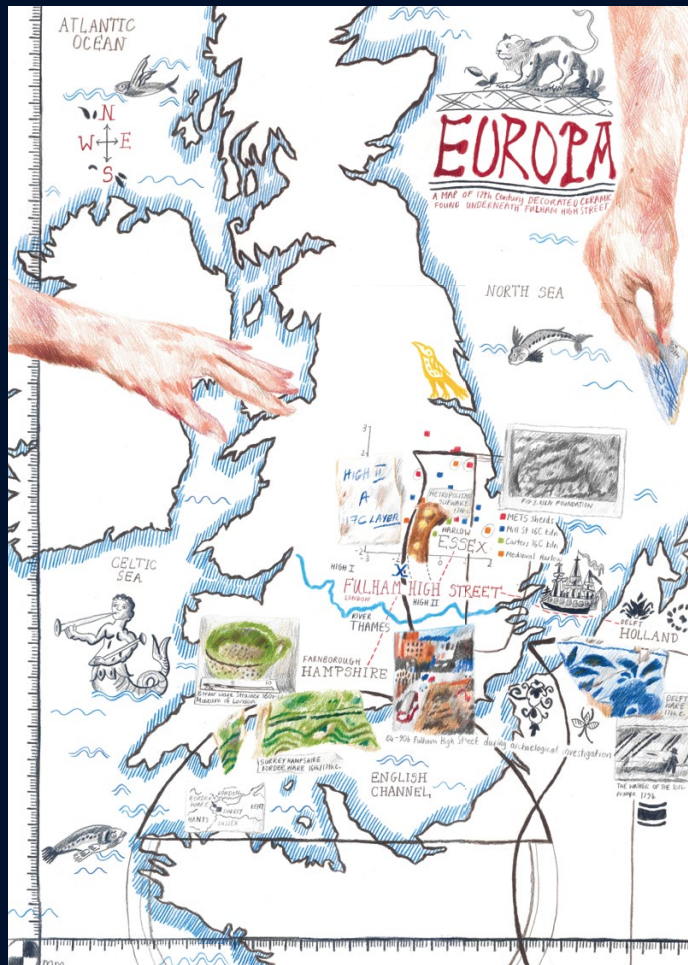precipitation of time.

JADA BOGLE (UAL)

Jada Bogle (UAL)

The poster is a dynamic and exciting representation of the chaos of a food fight. When I had chosen my bag of borderware and animal bones, the fragments reminded me of the aftermath of a food fight. I wanted to create a fun narrative about how the pieces got there.

E U R O P A
A map of 17th century decorated ceramic found underneath Fulham High Street
LAURA BRACEY CURRY (UAL)

Laura Bracey Curry (UAL)

I was looking at three separate items, three types of pottery from different areas but the same time period. Using this time period, 17th century, I created a map of the items and their journey to Fulham High Street. I also researched each of the types of pottery looking at where, how and who would have created them. Visualising this research I decided to create drawings of images I came across as well as drawings of the original items.

LIKUN ZHU (KSA)

Nukil (Likun Zhu) (KSA)

What really piqued my interest was how these items were excavated and how the archaeologists pieced together the object's history step by step. I have therefore made an attempt to present this side of the story and pay my respect to the archaeologists with this illustration of porcelain fragments.

MRUDULA KUVALEKAR (KSA)

Mrudula K. (KSA)

I was working with an approximately 70 year old piece of paper that documented a list of archaeological finds at Finlay Street, Fulham. There were many aspects of this object that fascinated me: the failed attempt at bureaucracy, the incomplete data and documentation and more visually, the scratched out and misprinted words. Through my poster I have tried to replicate the aesthetic of the paper and given the various objects found at this dig a visual form, often filling in the incomplete data with my own interpretation of the objects.

WAS IT EVER PRECIOUS?

THE WORLD WAS YOUR OYSTER

NOW CONSTANTLY

TARNISHED BEAUTY
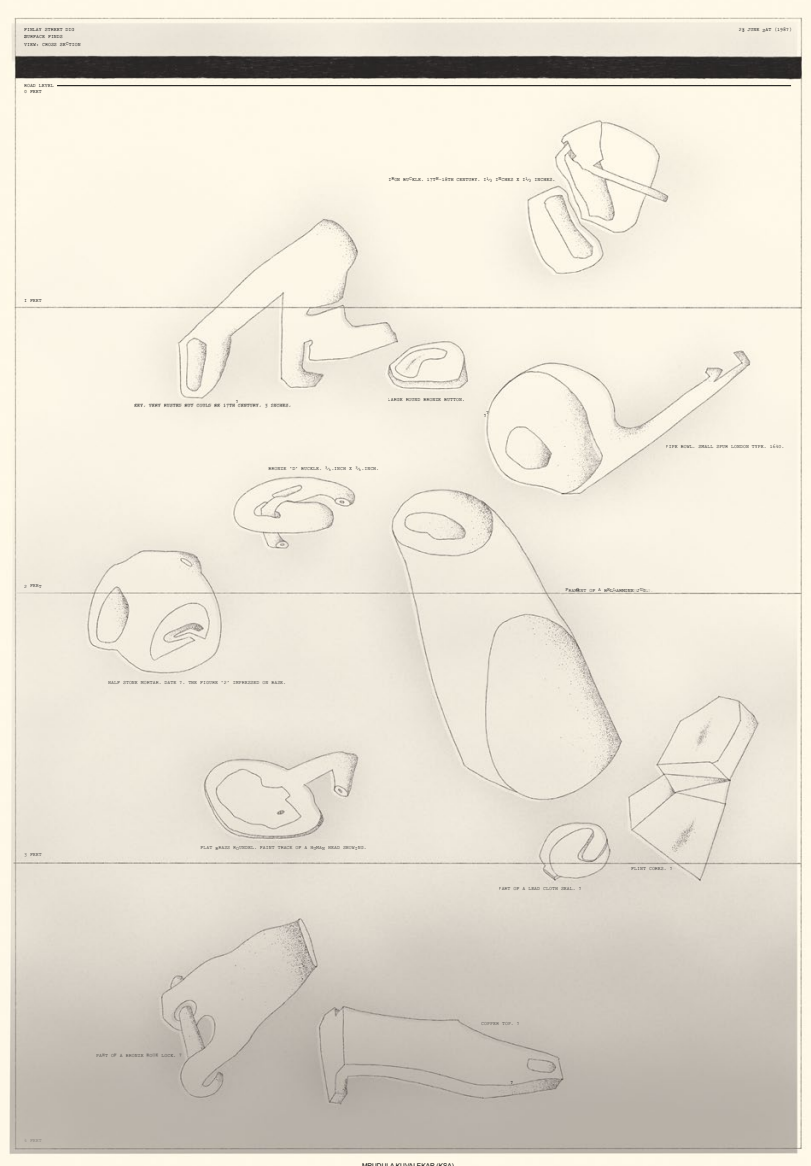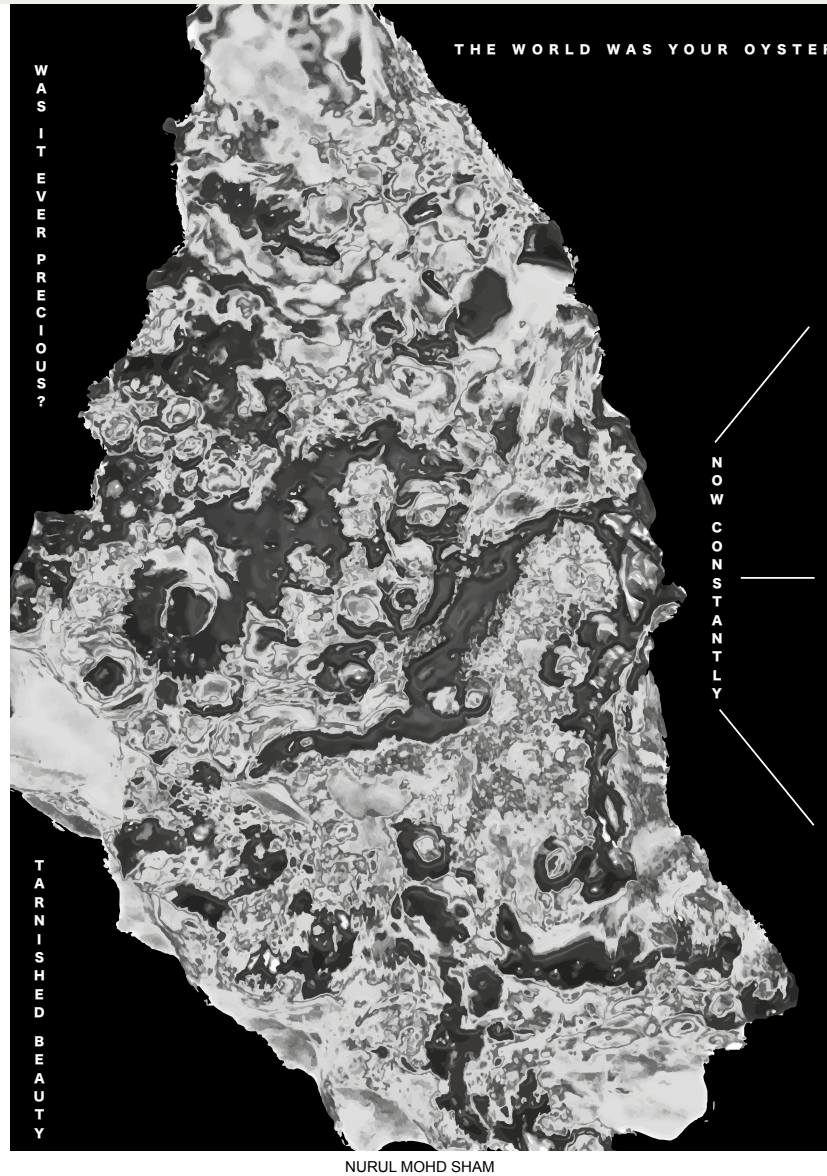
NURUL MOHD SHAM

Nurul Mohd Sham (KSA)

I chose oyster shells as my artefact for this project. I discovered that oysters were a very common and cheap source of food in the past, which contrasts to how oysters are seen as a food for those of higher class and are quite expensive today. I wanted the viewer to consider whether oysters were ever precious even when we are just consuming them and don't really acknowledge the beauty of the form of the shell and the organism that provided us with it. I also wanted to play with the quote "the world is your oyster", even though now oysters aren't as accessible and only available for the higher classes who just consume and discard them without appreciating it.

[ ] Phoebe Gitsham
https://phoebegit-
shamfad.wordpress.
com/

That's a little beauty, the lovely little boots

an elderly lady, a neighbour

probably been standing

for over two-hundred years

had drinking problems and intoxicated

but I'll check again when I get home

a few weeks away...

PHOEBE GITSHAM UAL

Phoebe Gitsham (UAL)

I discovered a Facebook group called 'Bellarmine and Bartmann and other early stoneware jug/bottle, and earthenware'. By interacting with archaeologists, amateurs and fans in this group, I discovered how conversation and social media could be used to think about how heritage creates a community and how that community is important to people. This led me to cutting and pasting images and comments from the facebook group and creating a poetic digital collage for my poster. This project has inspired me to explore further ideas around illustration, storytelling and connecting people.

[ ] Sichang Chen
https://www.
instagram.com/
trimalus.z/

Sichang Chen (KSA)

My object is a coin or button shaped thing, full of rusts, but one can clearly see a head on top. It is difficult to identify the era or origin at all. It led me to think about why people have portraits on coins and what is the meanings of portraits. My answer is: it is a way to memorialise and appreciate. The person may not retain his or her name or any information. They simply became a footprint in history.

DID YOU KNOW THAT GLASS CAN DECAY?
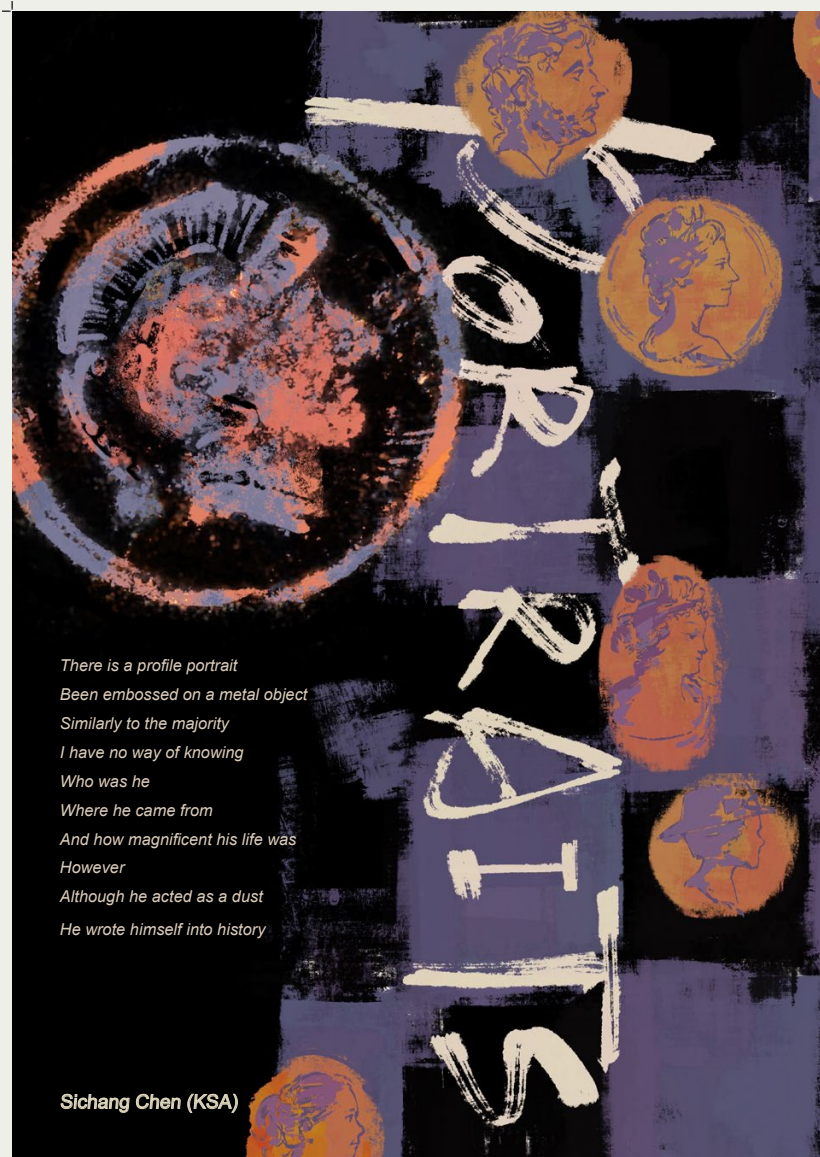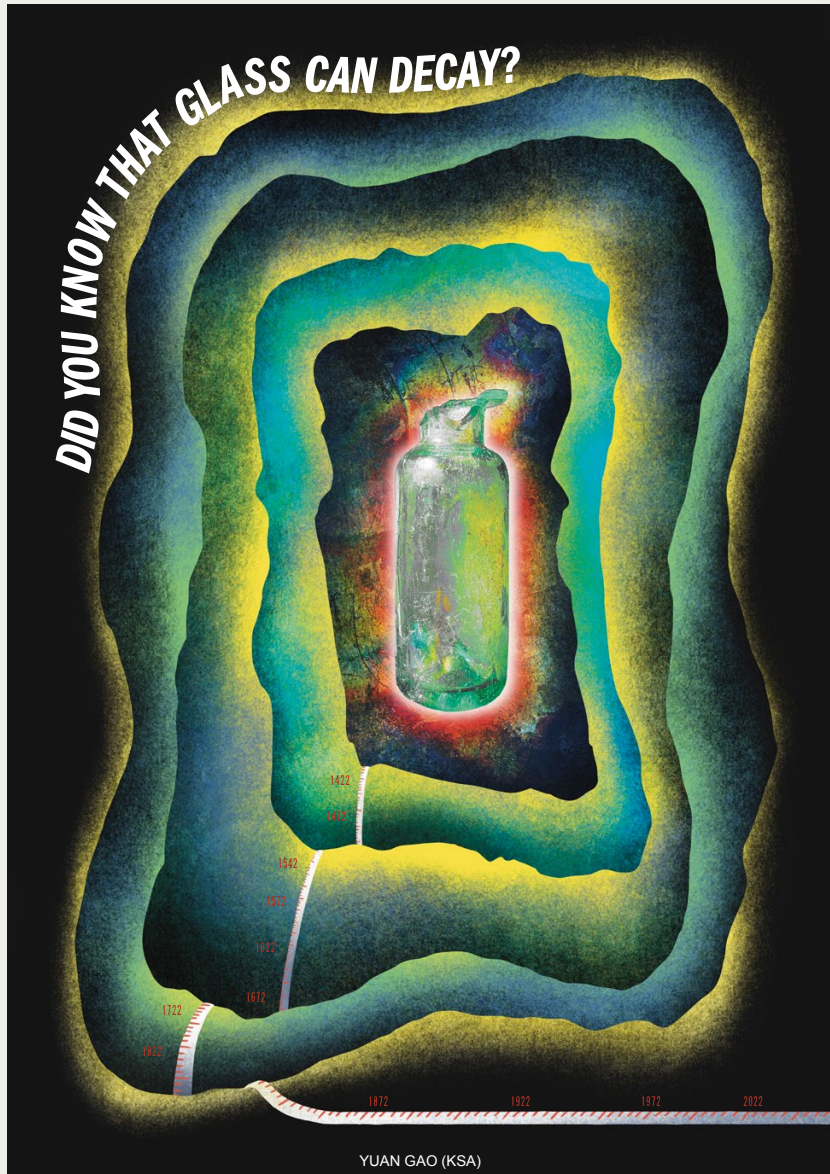
YUAN GAO (KSA)

Yuan Gao (KSA)

Inspired by an old medicine bottle from the 14th century, I see the sparkling decaying glass as layers of coated information, tracing through centuries.