Being In Touch, The Important Thing For Folks To Be

Student Kay Williamson
School Konstfack University College of Art, Crafts and Design
Department Textiles
Term Spring 2016
Course Masters CRAFT!

Abstract This project considers the potential impact of learning relations between hobby craft makers and formally educated makers. It questions how the craft based relationship of a formally educated artist and a self taught/amateur maker can be renegotiated and implemented in a broader learning context. The artistic research aims to propose that a facet of ‘new knowledge’ in the field and future of contemporary art and craft production is one of togetherness; by embracing discomfort and the unfamiliar to affirm and reveal the knowns and unknowns of one’s own practice and field. The question is considered in discussion with social/relational art practices, amatuer craft theory and gift theory. The project culminates both in this paper and an exhibition piece as part of Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design Spring Exhibition 2016.

Key Words Crochet, Knitting, Hobby, Amatuer Craft, Artist Residency, Social Art Practice, Relational Art Practice, Relational Craftsetics, Pickled Boobs, Pickled Bums, Grandmother, Nan.

Contents

WELCOME p. 1  METHOD pp. 8-9  REFERENCES
DEFINITIONS pp. 1-2  DISCUSS pp. 9-12  IMAGE LIST
BACKGROUND p.2  CONCLUDE p.13  IMAGES
THEORY pp. 2-4  POST EXAM pp.15-17  APPENDICES
PROJECTS pp. 4-8  EXHIBITION pp. 17-18  SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES

Chapter headings are in GREEN CAPITALS. Projects and artworks are in blue italics.
Hello! WELCOME. Come on in. The kettle’s on.

I am going to take you through a body of work from the last 18 months; the foundations of which can be traced back 30 years, well 80 years, no, more than that probably. This work nestles under the umbrella question of - ‘How can the craft based relationship between myself, a formally educated artist and my grandmother, a self taught and amateur maker be renegotiated and implemented in a broader learning context?’ This is my research question. And though only formulated in recent months, it is the question which connects all the mini-projects that make this one whole.

How often has a sentence to the effect of, ‘I have always loved making things. My grandmother taught me to knit when I was 5.’ been said? Quite often. Often enough. Rarely, I suggest, is it a sentence expanded on. You’ll meet my own Grandmother a lot in this project; I’ll introduce her to you properly later. Many of these mini-projects are spurred by her home-based textile craft; whether in collaboration with her, about her, for her or to consider her more generally as an example of this overlooked informal and often familial source of craft knowledge. By overlooked, I refer here to the existing academic research within the art, design and crucially craft fields, into the potential of learning interactions of which there are few examples. Much of the research into hobby or home based craft is from an object based perspective, looking at the material based culture of this type of making. The wider pedagogic or didactic possibilities of hobby craft practices are less considered, though recent artistic projects in similar vein are considered later on in the paper.

Overlooked too, or perhaps more accurately, unaware of their important influence by hobby makers themselves. Artists Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane raise this point from a tentatively labelled ‘folk art’ perspective in Folk Archive (2005), by working with makers who “do not consider themselves as such, [one might suggest, is] because they have not been considered as such by others”. Whilst this curation focuses very much on celebrating the object based output of the overlooked artist/maker, it additionally, and usefully provides stimulus for the

---

1 R. Mason ‘The Meaning and Value of Home-Based Craft’, International Journal Of Art & Design Education, vol. 24, no. 3, 2005, pp. 261-268 There is case for replicating this important research [In a seminal study carried out in Chicago in 1981, Cziksentsmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton interviewed 82 families and talked with children, parents and grandparents about ‘objects that were special to them in terms of their experience of home.] with a focus on active participation in craft-based activity and learning in domestic environments rather than on craft objects. What might this reveal about the social and emotional benefits of home-based craft?

2 J. Millar, ‘Poets Of Their Own Affairs’ in Folk Archive, J. Deller and A.Kane, Book Works, 2005. p. 149
discussion of the question, “well who’s asking and why?” 3, referring to the position of the selector, the commentator, or indeed the ‘the other’ artist.

A few **DEFINITIONS** before we go any further. I use the terms ‘hobby craft’ and ‘amateur craft’ making. There are many criteria which can distinguish a professional from an amateur; from economy, to productivity, to success, to pleasure, to free time and so on. 4 However, for the purposes of this paper the main distinguisher between my grandmother and I, aside from age of course, is our education. The context and purpose for which we learned craft are very different. Therefore, the defining distinction in my definition of a hobby maker is one who is not formally educated in an art institution.

That leads us to a brief **BACKGROUND**. This project is conducted by someone who's, as many others, craft learning began in the familial home before continuing either simultaneously (in my case - and with several pauses) or exclusively in formal institutes of arts education. My teacher was and is Cynthia Williamson, my paternal Grandmother. I call her Nan. She was born in 1936 - I was born in 1986 - both in England. Cynthia left school before the age of 16 and trained as a florist, giving up work to look after her son. She tells me she has ‘done crafts’ for as long as she can remember. So have I, thanks to her. I however haven’t stopped my formal education just yet; I have a BA in Printed Textile Design, a teaching qualification and very nearly an MA. We both enjoy textile crafts - specifically knitting and crochet. We have also worked in other materials, including soap, marzipan, pressed flowers, old tights and tissue boxes. 5 I have a professional interest and experience in art and craft education, most recently leading textile craft workshops behalf of Hemslöjden at Tensta Konsthall and SyFestivalen. And Cynthia tap dances every Tuesday.

So that is me and that is Cynthia.

---

5 See Images Fig. 1 Tissue Box Bed Cover
A short introduction to the **THEORY** drawn upon in this writing.

**Collaborative and Social Art Practices.** In discussing the ethics of art projects that involve participants in addition to the artist, I refer to the contemporary art trajectory of ‘relational art’ or ‘aesthetics’, an approach to art making observed and coined in the late 1990’s by Nicolas Bourriaud. Relational art prioritizes subjective human, social interaction and action. A slightly more recent example of this in a craft context is Jihani Kalapour (2006-7), a long term collaborative project between the Center for Women in Tensta-Hjulsta, Nationalmuseum and Tensta Konsthall. It “centered around theme of individuals coming together and relationships.”.\(^6\) Contending with different oral languages, the participants utilized aesthetic negotiation through workshops and making. This project, in questioning the nature and allocation of subjective choice in exhibition making, encouraged the curatorial role of the individual in the context of art institutions. In a similar vein is the Stockholm based platform project Editions in Craft (EiC), led by curators Renée Padt and Ikko Yokoyama. EiC facilitate projects which ‘merge traditional techniques with contemporary practice’ through the collaboration and expertise exchange between contemporary artists and traditional crafts. The difference in outcome here however, is the production of a saleable objects.\(^7\)

I refer most frequently to Stephen Knott’s exploration of relational practices in an experimental education project - Department 21, at the Royal College of Art, UK, which brought students out of their familiar studios for collaborative work. Here Knott devised the notion of ‘craft as a strategy of discomfort’ after observing that:

> collaborative labour within in the context of the art school is largely comfortable, for despite the diversity of students from different departments, each with their own particular culture, most have a level of pre-education…picking up a spanner when you are used to scissors and thread is not much a jump compared with the fear of tools a beginner faces when commencing his first do-it-yourself project.\(^8\)

The purpose of this discomfort is to reveal an awareness or appreciation of one’s abilities and knowledge and that of your fellow participants. I also consider his term ‘collective silliness’, a phenomenon occurring when institutional expectations are hidden and a group of people are gathered together to make; a feeling of individual

---

\(^6\) S.Teleman, et al., Jihani Kalapour, Stockholm, 2007. pg 9
\(^7\)http://www.editionsincraft.com/index.php?page=0
authorship is lessened and a ‘breathing space’ for creativity ensues.\(^9\) A common critique of relational and social art practice is that benefit and ownership of the production lies with the artist. Given my working relationship with Cynthia in this project, I consider the traits of ‘single’ and ‘double’ collaboration. Single being the critics fear of relational art - the artist conceives the idea, the participants produce. Double being a more even balance of the two, both artist and participants sharing responsibility.\(^10\)

**Gift Theory.** I briefly look to Lewis Hyde and his writing on the nature and function of the gift, particularly in the interpretation of “teachings as transformative gifts” and the potential for art to be the same.\(^11\) I consider this in relation to the notion of gratitude

**Amatuer Craft Theory.** I turn again to Stephen Knott for his recent research, which provides new perspectives on the “constrained freedom” of amatuer craft practice and explains how and why “amatuer craft practice has become so essential to the experience of everyday life.”.\(^12\)

**PROJECTS** By sharing with you chronologically the smaller parts of this project’s entirety, I hope to reveal the development of the project question/s and my changing methods and positions in exploring these. I came to Konstfack with the open ambition to win (nomination is not enough) the Turner Prize. My tongue is mostly in my cheek when I say this, but the desire to have some form of relation to the establishment of fine art is there. Despite Grayson Perry’s successful championing of craft, I considered the suggestion that I might work with knitting (despite my deep enjoyment of the craft) at Konstfack, deeply troubling. I struggled, both in my head and with my hands, with knitting anywhere but at home, as documented in the film *Struggle With Secret Knitting*.\(^13\)

That is when *Correspondence* was born.\(^14\) I had forgotten the initial reasons for starting (what wasn’t then even called) ‘Correspondence’. Luckily, my inherited hoarding tendencies or learned documentation skills, meant that I have the original invitation to Cynthia. “I miss being able to learn from you like I did when I was younger (and


\(^13\) See Images Fig. 2 Struggle With Secret Knitting (film stills)

\(^14\) See Images Fig. 3 Correspondence
geographically nearer). I can no longer pop round for help with a knitting pattern, to do my washing or have Sunday dinner with you and Grandad.” - surprisingly more sentimental than I remember, and very much derived from a desire for learning and guidance. As I explain in the invitation, I began by knitting a sample roughly 15 x 10 cm. Much like ‘Struggle With Secret Knitting’, I knit in a free formation, without a pattern or plan using a peachy cotton-synthetic mix. When a section was finished, I did not properly cast off, but thread un-knit stitches with a thin red cotton, in the hope that they would be picked up. And picked up they were.

For a mid term examination, I recorded a Skype Conversation with Cynthia. It was short and the first time we had spoken about ‘Correspondence’. In this conversation I told her that the piece was currently being exhibited in Stockholm - I thought that this was good news! An accolade! But no; “That’s a bit frightening that is. Because I don’t consider it worthy of that.”. It was at this point I realised that Cynthia’s craft knowledge could offer more insight than solely technical proficiency. Nobody else thought of exhibiting a crochet-swan-nilipped-in-cellophane at Moderna Museet either. So I made that happen, with Cynthia’s Swan. Feeling encouraged by my grandmother’s energy and engagement, I selected Cynthia as my muse when being set the artistic task of ‘paying homage’. Sometime ago she had given me said crochet-swan-nilipped-in-cellophane, insisting that I should make one myself (it’s very easy, so why wouldn’t I?). Given my allegiance to the Turner Prize establishment, I identified all of the Stockholm galleries where Turner Prize nominees and winners had exhibited. Armed with a camera, I took Cynthia’s Swan to Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Index, and Moderna Museet - where momentarily Cynthia exhibited alongside art superstar Louise Bourgeois. With the photographs, I made a profile for Cynthia on the Saatchi website and on Instagram ‘Cynthia’s Swan’ got one ‘like’ - from Moderna Museet no less! Success! Recognition! - but for whom?

So if Louise Bourgeois is deemed an art superstar, we get to look through her life’s artwork in a hit retrospective. What might a Cynthia Williamson retrospective look like? I considered Cynthia’s oeuvre and a gem
remembered itself to me. *Pickled Boobs and Pickled Bums*! 23 These miniature body parts are stuffed and sewn old nylon tights, with a touch of strategically applied fuchsia blusher and then crammed into a rinsed jam jar on a bed of fragrant pot pourri.24 Surprisingly, this was a craft I had never learned in my early craft apprenticeship. In May 2015 Cynthia came to visit Stockholm for the first time. This was my opportunity to learn! I invited Cynthia to the textile studios at Konstfack, and I invited my colleagues to come and learn Pickled Bum and Boob making with me. All 12 participants engaged in conversation about making habits, crafts fairs, growing old and the usefulness of nylon tights. By inviting Cynthia to Konstfack, I wanted provoke the question amongst my colleagues of to whom do we look to for our craft knowledge? 25 The workshop also resulted in spin-off product being designed, the pickled bum brooch by participant Laia Ribas Valls - who subsequently made and gifted one to myself and Cynthia! 26

Reflecting on my first year at Konstfack, I exclaimed (as melodramatically as you wish), “I wouldn’t have a Masters project without Nan! I might not even be doing a Masters without Nan! I might not even like textiles!” A sense of gratitude lingered, a need to express my thanks for her recent participation and ongoing influence on my learning. Usually I would just send a greetings card, and I did; but that wasn’t big enough, loud enough or public enough. I made *Two Neons : One For Each*, a ‘mock’ neon comprising two parts, knitted with neon pink yarn on a french loom and manipulated into the form of my own handwriting.27 Following the recent passing of my maternal grandmother, I was struck by how wonderfully celebratory funeral services can be. But there was a feeling it was all too late. Each neon is a monument to each grandmother, one too early and one too late. I produced a greeting card with this neon image on to send to Cynthia.28

It was time to hone the direction of the project in preparation for Spring Examination. So too was it important not to drop the questions raised in aforementioned works, if anything I needed to get even closer to them. I proposed and planned a 3 week residency with Cynthia for the coming January and February. The word residency is used as it highlights a frequent method in my work which tends to displace activity typical of certain areas; here the ‘artist residency’ intrinsic to the mobility and development of many contemporary art careers.

---

23 See Images Fig. 8 Pickled Boobs and Pickled Bums
24 This is not official, but I can only guess that its origins lie in the British Isles.
25 See Images Fig. 9 Pickled Boobs and Pickled Bums Workshop
26 See Images Fig. 10 Laia’s Pickled Bum Brooch
27 See Images Fig. 11 Two Neons : One For Each - Installation view
28 See Images Fig. 12 Two Neons : One For Each - Greetings Card
relocated to a domestic, 3 bedroom home. For me, this home is a familiar one, at least in the sense of being a granddaughter within it. In discussion of the current state of artistic residencies, Odile Chenal aptly suggests that “While a residency was formerly about going somewhere else, in a geographical sense, mainly involving travel outside one’s own country, artists now also want to experience difference in terms of a social, cultural or professional otherness”. From experience (In April 2015 I undertook a month long residency at the Icelandic Textile Center) I agree that these additional aspects are vital in the progression of the artist and the residency format, especially when these experiences are a result of an exchange with, ideally the non-artist (or in this case, the host artist). How the host can benefit from a visiting artist has been of particular consideration in relation to the project intentions.

It was important from the outset that I treated the residency as an exchange; of knowledge, company, experience, inspiration and anything else that came up. The term ‘apprenticeship’ had been suggested, but it was clear from early on that Cynthia and I were both teachers now, as much as we’re learners. Aside from wanting to look closer into this craft centered relationship between myself and Cynthia, I did not have a specific goal in mind, but a long list of possible questions, a rough schedule (including gallery visits and shopping trips) and the crochet pattern ‘Swan Symphony’. The 3 weeks were characterised by kinship, jokes, negotiations, rephrasing, adapting and a lot of TV time. In fact there is much too much to share here in detail (109 White Residency publication coming soon).

Returning from the residency was like bringing home a treasure chest, a really heavy one that incurs airline charges, with jewels and gems inside, all tangled up in each other. I had collected hundreds of photographs, hours of audio and video and myriad pages of notes. This abundance of information was to be sorted, reviewed and ultimately shared. Strangely, I reverted my making focus to considering (or even replicating) aspects of Cynthia’s home - specifically the walls. I was overwhelmed by the depth and variety of interior textures in her home and even more so when I returned to the vast white walls of Konstfack. I made crochet panels in puff and lace stitches and experimented with setting them in A-Crystal and SP3 plaster. The results were somewhat

31 See Appendix 3 and Fig. 13, Swan Symphony Crochet Pattern
32 See Appendix 4. Selected Residency Conversation Transcripts (i, ii, iii)
illustrative of the densely painted walls I had spent 3 weeks surrounded by. But this was just a small fraction of the residency findings. I needed to find a way to share this treasure chest. 33

With the Konstfack spring exhibition looming, I started by identifying my two aims: What conversations or questions do I want to stir? Tricky, as I have so many to choose from. It was a case of prioritising in relation to what I have observed is lacking in the field (and wider). 1. *Who do we or could we learn from (craft based or otherwise)?* 2. *How can we recognise what knowledge we have in order to be able to share it?* 3. *What and for why are some crafts and their makers selected to be shared publicly?* The second aim was to consider - *What situation do I want to create?* Firstly, the collision of parallel worlds (those of the home based and institutional maker) is an affect I want to display. The consequential momentum which this interference of worlds led to. Secondly, the running theme of correspondence (in both its definitions) is something that should be continued and used to bind the various project facets. In the definition of communicating by exchange, and also in its meaning of finding agreement and harmony. In relation to the notion of collision this could either provide balance or tension. And finally, “celebratory and shot through with melancholy...” are sentiments I also wish to evoke. 34 Humour can be added to that mix too.

With the above in mind I considered which aspects of the 2 years work best illustrate or ideally continue the conversation I hope to start. I’ll be both curator and artist. 35 I have chosen the gallery gift shop, the gallery education space, the gallery lobby, (in fact anywhere but the assigned exhibition space) to be the conceptual model for my installation in the spring exhibition - the assigned exhibition space. 36 Tracey Emin and Sarah Lucas used a more literal, functioning (money exchanged hands) shop format in ‘The Shop’ (1993), when they leased a former dentist’s (or doctor’s - depending on whose version you read) surgery in the east end of London. 37 They produced both collaborative and solo ‘merchandise’ to sell, also accepting commissions. Interestingly, ‘The Shop’ is described by tate.org.uk as mode of marketing for the artist pair. In my installation, the suggestion of purchase is perhaps there, but will not be viable.

---

33 See Images Fig. 14 Plaster Wallpaper Samples
34 “His art could be viewed as both celebratory and shot through with melancholy: it is a once an affirmation of the ways in which self-expression can instil life with value and meaning, and a memorial to life’s passing.” About Jeremy Deller in V.Button. The Turner Prize, Tate Gallery, 2005, p. 204.
35 See Images Fig. 15 Exhibition Components Sheet
36 I address the individual components in ”DISCUSS”.
The **METHOD** in this project has been to approach the craft centered relationship between myself and Cynthia from different standpoints; at the same time addressing the discrepancy between amatuer modes of making and representation in art institutions. For example, early on in the project with *Cynthia’s Swan*, I act as a champion of Cynthia’s work by attempting to re-home her craft work in contemporary art institutes. At other times I am less active and allow Cynthia herself to take the lead, particularly with the *Pickled Boobs and Pickled Bums* workshop. And with each position comes a different question and a different relation to both Cynthia and the context in which I publishing. Learning about concepts of otherness, ownership authorship, private and personal (and dabbling with autobiography) have challenged by habitual working methods as I forage for this seemingly elusive position. I can perhaps take some lead from artist Allison Smith when she describes her work as presenting...“an uneasy relationship to authorship, avoiding a definitive stance.” 38 Smith’s work also pairs social practices with craft ones, and often implements the method of re-enactment for renewing craft and contextual understanding. The project ‘ARTS & SKILLS Service’ (2012), which too derived from an artist residency, bought together ‘Bay Area makers, veterans, art students, and art therapists together in dialogue through forms of making and doing’.39 Much like Allison Smith, I am starting to relate aspects of my project, specifically the residency, and my intended direction as one where my stance is more catalytic.40

This aim at discerning my position was not conducive to a smooth conduction of a single methodology; seemingly flitting from attempted anthropology of material culture to a pedagogical study and everything inbetween. Perhaps a single method is not imperative and can instead contribute towards a depth of perspectives. This entire project can also be seen as the outcome of an invitation; of being remembered, recognised and engaged with. My oscillating position in relation to Cynthia (the recognised, the remembered and the continuous object of relation) has for me, been a trial in the development of this project.

In my work, I like to play on contextual (specifically institutional/non institutional art and craft) agreements and tropes, to mix and match them to create something new or complicated. Perhaps in itself, this method is typical of institutional art making! For example the word and activity of the ‘residency’ is used, as it highlights this displacement; here the ‘artist residency’ intrinsic to the mobility and development of many contemporary art

---


39 http://www.allisonsmithstudio.com/p-r-o-j-e-c-t-s/arts-skills-service/1 (accessed 8 April 2016)

a I discuss this more in ‘DISCUSS’.
careers, relocated to a domestic, 3 bedroom home. In the piece *Have You Any More?* made in preparation for the residency, I digitally manipulated a 1980’s British knitting pattern.\(^{41}\) Whilst replicating and repeating the grinning cover model, I diminished the number of sheep motifs on her jumper. In a similar way of medium re-appropriation, I adopted contemporary art’s ubiquitous neon signage in ‘Two Neons : One For Each’.\(^{42}\) Retaining the tendency to convert handwriting into neon, saying into signage and affixing to a clean white wall, I instead chose neon pink synthetic wool and french knitted a manipulable tube.\(^{43}\) This also acts as a nod to the others that I have learned from, my other loyalties and the other narrative of art in which I swim.

As previously touched upon, the topics of private and personal are ones which I grapple with. My approach here, I think, is to use humour. Humour as a tool for teasing out more serious, ontological topics or a certain sensitivity in the audience, by playing on this ambiguity of the private/personal. Some of this humour comes with displacement too, but that can, I am aware rely on ‘inside’ or field specific knowledge.

It’s time to **DISCUSS** this evolved project, its method and its numerous questions. Perhaps it is most pertinent to go back to the research question - *How can the craft based relationship between myself, a formally educated artist and my grandmother, a self taught and amatuer maker be renegotiated and implemented in a broader learning context?* **How** is the operative word here. How implies action, strategy, doing. To consider this further, I will use the selected components of the intended exhibition installation to navigate this discussion.

**Honorary Master of Textile Craft Certificate.**\(^{44}\) I will design and cross stitch an honorary certificate to award to Cynthia. It will be professionally framed, displayed during the Spring Exhibition and then gifted to her in June (subject to exhibition loan!). And **Twice Wrapped Cellophane Swan.**\(^{45}\) Included in the installation will be Cynthia’s crochet swan. Wrapped for presentation in cellophane once by her, then twice by me for exhibition last year; I will wrap several times more for this occasion.

As earlier lifted, my position has been one which shifts with each mini-project and each action undertaken, sometimes simultaneously, sometimes unconsciously. From curator, to granddaughter, to the educated

\(^{41}\) See Images Fig. 16 Baa Baa Gone Sheep


\(^{43}\) See Images. Fig. 17 Neon knitting in progress

\(^{44}\) See Image Fig. 18 Honorary Master Certificate

\(^{45}\) See Image Fig. 19 Twice Wrapped Cellophane Swan
granddaughter, artist, photographer, storyteller, commentator, participant, catalyst, observer, to critic. A juicy mix of private, personal and professional poses - all with their own responsibilities. When talking about art practices which involve and engage a group of people to work with an artist, Maria Lind notes “…it is important to emphasize the differences in the types of relations established between the artist and those involved: Are the latter given a role or task by the former or do they develop it together?” 46 As I edge closer to regarding aspects of the project and indeed my practice in the vein of relational aesthetics, this is a poignant question. And when I reflect on the evolution of our shared knitted piece ‘Correspondence’, the attitude towards authorship of ‘the latter’ - Cynthia, has shifted from “Well I just thought of it as your idea, that I’m helping you with. A project that I’m participating in”, to directing me to regulate the number of knitted offshoots, taking photographs to send to her friends and assuming that the piece will be shown in the Spring Exhibition. 47 This can as, Lind explains be what differentiates the “single” and “double” collaboration. The “single” being an instance where the author realises a pre-determined idea with an external contribution or the “double” where collaboration between author and participant occurs in both the formulation and production of an idea, affording equal status to all involved. 48 Whilst “double” is the now the most common and accepted method, this project I believe straddles both forms; given its person to person (as opposed to person to group) and its familial context, the allocation of authorship, ownership and benefit can be even more fluid and playful. This does beg the question, who is the beneficiary here and in such projects? Can it be planned or predetermined?

Thank You Nan Neon 2. I will develop an earlier piece ‘Two Neons: One For Each’, by changing the sentence from Thank You Nan to Thank Your Nan. And Thank You Nan Cards. Again, an adaptation of the original greeting card, originally just producing one. I will now produce over 100 to display wrapped in cellophane envelopes in a commercial card rack.

In mentioning beneficiaries, I am led to the notion of gratitude, which is prevalent in this body of work. I go back to the word ‘how’ - how can gratitude manifest? To be grateful prerequisites an acknowledgement or recognition of the receipt of something. This something could be viewed as a gift, in both the sense of giving and the given (an ability or talent). I am interested in one of Lewis Hyde’s many interpretations of the gift, where he considers

---

47 See Appendix 2. Skype conversation with Cynthia Williamson Transcript
“teachings as transformative gifts.”.\textsuperscript{49} It highlights the act of ‘passing on’- knowledge or skill for example, and is applicable to the craft centered relationship between Cynthia and I. When devising the research question for this body of work, I proposed that the hobby maker who teaches their craft, does so from the position of “love, honesty and patience - of the generous and unconditional sort.”. To view this as a selfless ‘gift’ is problematized by Glenn Adamson as a “mutually advantageous trade”.\textsuperscript{50} Perhaps this is not a problem at all, but an aspiration, a reconciliation.

To raise the gift and gratitude theme in this work, the greetings cards and neon motif aim to serve as a suggestion for action or this “agent for transformation”, which Hyde assigns to the giftifying of art.\textsuperscript{51} Whilst, of course acknowledging questions of commodification and reciprocity. I change the neon greeting from ‘thank you’, to ‘thank your Nan’, intending the imperative sentence to more directly prompt reflection or action.

\textit{Craft Table. Pickled Boobs, Pickled Bums & Workshop.} During the exhibition period I will offer one to one classes in Pickled Boob and Pickled Bum Making. It is planned that Cynthia will also be present to lead some classes. We will use the same table for making as displaying the crafted object of attainment. And \textit{Swanscape Photograph.} serving as a backdrop or wallpaper, will be a large scale photograph of the completed Swan Symphony crochet doilies, taken in Cynthia’s home.\textsuperscript{52}

It is easy to dismiss the practice of the hobby maker as one secluded and free from the critical realities of the outside (or art) world.\textsuperscript{53} Perhaps here we can enjoy advice given by Eliza Woodworth in 1865, who assured Victorian hobby crafts makers “you have a refuge - in your home. [A] haven in a heartless world.”\textsuperscript{54} Yes, it is a dated source but my suggestion is to consider ‘the professional’ practice - in particular the art school, or indeed the traditional residency, as equally secluded havens. Stephen Knott explored this in his work with art students in Department 21, aiming to shake up “the regimented structures familiar to programmes and projects occurring within each department” to cause a sensation of discomfort. Knott reflected that a “tool de-territorialization”, could have been a more revealing production of this discomfort, compelling “...the practitioner to more accurately

\textsuperscript{52} See Image Fig. 20 Swanscape Photograph
\textsuperscript{53} S. Knott, \textit{Amateur Craft}, Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.
consider the skills inherent to his or her discipline, encourage empathy for the abilities of the other labourers and show the limitations of individual abilities.”. Applied to my own project, I suggest that the encouragement of discomfort has been most fruitful; the small change of having to use the synthetic (as opposed to my preferred natural) yarn Cynthia supplied during the residency was a marker of my own making tendencies and comfort zones.

By inviting exhibition visitors to learn the craft of Pickled Boob and Pickled Bum Making, I am creating an opportunity for visitors to learn and work with (perhaps) unfamiliar or displaced materials/craft, whilst becoming part of a larger artwork.

**Correspondence.** The shared knitted piece will be displayed as part of the exhibition installation. Correspondence is crucial to this project; it really is the most direct meeting of materials and makers. The somewhat unpredicted/able outcome/s as a result of the limited rules (other than - knit - send - knit - send) remind me of the notion of collective silliness. Whilst Stephen Knott suggests that a product of this ‘silliness’ might not take pride of place in a professional portfolio, he does highlight the pedagogical value in finding “breathing space from trajectories of professionalization and single authorship.”. In Correspondence, Cynthia and I used (and in my case improved) knitting, a technique common to us both, but playfully negotiated our individual contributions, inspiring and learning from each other in the process.

And to (preliminarily) **CONCLUDE…** *How can the craft based relationship between myself, a formally educated artist and my grandmother, a self taught and amateur maker be renegotiated and implemented in a broader learning context?*

How? By being, I suggest, together, by making alongside one another. By stepping into another’s zone, allowing the opportunity to recognize the givens and knowledge of one’s own (zone). Not simply attempting to work like an amateur, or to ask a hobby maker to become more professional. Actually being in the same room, at the same table or on the same sofa; without pressure of making an object which neatly combines both worlds. Keep making

---

55 See Images Fig. 21 Correspondence Silliness
what you make but try changing your company or your room.\textsuperscript{56} In this field, there is much focus on knowledge, but how do we really know what we know? Perhaps this is easier revealed if we step out of the place we know, our safe zone; our comfort zone. Could this be a model for a residency programme - the internship of art school?

\begin{quote}
While studio craft and social practices in contemporary art \textit{don’t often merge}, both share an intimate and direct mode of engagement. One privileges the material object, exchanged ‘hand to hand’ while the other may forego the object altogether in favor of direct actions or conversations. \textsuperscript{57}
\end{quote}

Don’t they merge? How could they merge? Can we privilege both object and conversation? I approach this statement by artist Allison Smith as a challenge for my future practice. I would like to add hobby craft practices into that mix too. I dare even to coin the term ‘relational craftsetics’.

And finally, it would not be craft essay without a quote from John Ruskin via Richard Sennett. So here goes, I wonder if we might be as ‘radical’ as Ruskin when he “refuses the present, looks backward in order to look forward.”. \textsuperscript{58} Instead, I wonder could the formally educated/the professional makers look sideways (in order to look forward), at parallel and not wholly different ways of making?

So that was me and that was Cynthia, welcome back...

\textsuperscript{58} R.Sennett, \textit{The Craftsman}, Yale University Press. 2009, p.114
POST EXAMINATION REFLECTION

Take Care

In my examination presentation I read an extract from the essay Take Care by Anthony Huberman. I was attracted to this essay for several reasons. Firstly it is written from the perspective of a curator, a position which I had related to during this project and when preparing the Spring Exhibition installation; publishing my own work, another’s work and shared work. Huberman promotes the curatorial approach of pairing both the ‘I know’ with the ‘I don’t know’ - this equates to the attitude of ‘I care’, which I consider to correspond with the earlier discussed notion of ‘craft of discomfort’- recognising what one knows, by recognising what one doesn’t.

This essay is also pertinent as it addresses the notion of ‘homage’, in its content and in its construction. In tribute to artists Fischli and Weiss who, in 1991 composed a 10 point manifesto entitled ‘How To Work Better’, guidelines for their own artistic practices as well ethical reminders for the world at large, Huberman concludes this essay by updating and proposing a new set…

How To Behave Better

1. Remember That You Don’t Know
2. Learn To Care
3. Say Thank You
4. Wear Your Heart On Your Sleeve
5. Insist on Talking Face To Face
6. Follow The Life Of An Idea
7. Speak Frankly
8. Take Your Time
9. Be Maladjusted
10. Toast

A set I intend to trial and apply in my future practice.

So what did you learn from Cynthia? What can be learned from amatuer makers?

During the residency, I would occasionally ask a question to gauge what Cynthia had learned from my residency period. ‘Have I taught you anything Nan?’, the answers weren’t always lengthy or unexpected. Asking a child, ‘so what did you learn about at school today?’ will most likely get a shrug of the shoulders or a list of activities undertaken. It can be, to whatever the age of the learner difficult to identify exact learning moments and accomplishments, especially in response to such a direct question.

‘So what did you learn from your Nan?’ I too struggle to pinpoint specifics. What was learned practically and tangibly is so fused with subtleties of shifted appreciation and wider understanding, which may not immediately formulate. I attempted to list what I - a nearly officially professional artist - was able to learn from my time with Cynthia and can now call my (artistic or otherwise) knowledge.

- The bottom band of a knitted garment such as a cardigan or jumper is called a welt
- How to do a cluster crochet stitch
- How to read crochet pattern instructions
- The effect of different sized Aida on a cross stitch design
- That a nail file can be used to mark your place in a crochet pattern (though I tend to prefer a post-it note)
- That the plastic packaging inside a cereal packet can be reused as bag to store craft projects
- That putting a crochet doily with dressmaking pins in it, into the microwave will cause your swan’s head to burn off.

This list may seem facetiously trite, idiosyncratic or (un)specific. And the latter it is. But from the concentrated time spent with Cynthia, I can begin to amalgamate the acquisition these specific tips and tricks with a much broader sensitivity to and appreciation of who she is as a maker, an amateur, a teacher, a collaborator and facilitator and contribute to my skills (material and rhetoric) development. This sensitivity and appreciation is the form of knowledge I would like to illuminate here. It should be said that the idiosyncratic ‘learning outcomes’ on this list are not, in my view to be disregarded but could provide a refreshingly subjective antidote to a standardized, globalized art education.

---

Question!
During the examination it became apparent that the research question did not closely correlate with the direction of project activities.\(^{61}\) It was suggested, and I agree, that the initial question was overly academicised. I think that this is a reflection firstly, of my writing method and secondly, of my attempt at handling a personally rooted narrative within a professional and institutional context. In the new project question I aim to balance this narrative with a norm creative approach to this institutional context.

EXHIBITION REFLECTION
The exhibition installation remained largely the same as presented in the examination, the only additions being the craft display table and photo album. It so happened that with each day of the installation period, I added one component. This gradual way of building the installation allowed me to reflect on what each part brought to the project as a whole. The function of the variety of elements also became clear once the exhibition had opened. Viewers attraction to different parts allowed different opening conversations and ways to navigate both the project questions and their interest in the installation.

The location of the installation worked well with its neighbours, visually and thematically. There was a common theme in this area, of social practice and altruism, which certainly allowed for deepened discussions and connections between exhibitors.

An aspect I would change is the card rack with *Thank You Nan Cards*. Many were taken on the opening day and my solution was to write a note on the card behind the display one, advising that these were to remain in the rack as part of the artwork whilst editioned cards could be purchased in the shop. Understandably this caused frustration and confusion to some, when there is so much other freebie ephemera around. Producing more of these cards to replenish the display could be an option, or even a business card alternative for those who crave a momento. But equally, I would hope that enjoyment of the artwork might warrant an investment in it! An interesting conundrum to experiment with in future exhibitions.

\(^{61}\) ‘How might the knowledge and teaching effort of oft-overlooked hobby craft makers be reappraised in relation to the continued learning of the formally educated maker?’
I presented the exhibition to Cynthia on the opening day. Her first observation being that the swans we had crocheted during the residency were not on display. Also, the swan in *Twice Wrapped Cellophane Swan* was not visible enough for viewers appreciate. So the following day we worked together on making changes to the display. Cynthia’s name was on the project label just as mine was and I was happy to let her lead these alterations. On the table we displayed the swan doilies and draped a crochet panel. And together we unwrapped the layers of *Twice Wrapped Cellophane Swan* to reveal the original that Cynthia had made; an amendment I consider to be most effective, retaining the celebratory feel, with even more transparency! To Cynthia, the installation was now more ‘classy and less sterile’ and showed off ‘the work’. To me, it regained some of the heart in the project, a softness and tenderness which was perhaps recovered in us working together in the same space.

*Thank you…*
Katja Beckman
Sara Elggren
Lizzie Towndrow
Ben Smith
Kristina Skantze
Henrik Hiltula
Ida Johansson

*Thank you…*
Jelena Rundqvist
Johanna Rosenqvist

*Thank you…*
Williamsons

*Thank you…*
Nick Bruton

*Thank you…*
Nan x
Reference List


Button, V., The Turner Prize, Tate Gallery, 2005.


Sennett, R. The Craftsman, Yale University Press. 2009.


Tracey Emin Discusses The Shop [online video], 2009,

Image List

Fig. 1 Tissue Box Bed Cover

Fig. 2 Struggle With Secret Knitting (film stills)

Fig. 3 Correspondence

Fig. 4 Skype Conversation (still)

Fig. 5 Cynthia’s Swan
Fig. 6 Cynthia’s Swan at Galleri Magnus Karlsson
Fig. 7 Cynthia’s Swan Moderna Like / Saatchi Profile
Fig. 8 Pickled Boobs and Pickled Bums
Fig. 9 Pickled Boobs and Pickled Bums Workshop
Fig. 10 Laia’s Pickled Bum Brooch
Fig. 11 Two Neons: One For Each (installation view)

**Image List Continued**

Fig. 12 Two Neons: One For Each - Greetings Card
Fig. 13 Swan Symphony Crochet Pattern
Fig. 14 Plaster Wallpaper Samples
Fig. 15 Exhibition Components Sheet
Fig. 16 Have You Any More?
Fig. 17 Neon knitting in progress
Fig. 18 Honorary Master Certificate
Fig. 19 Twice Wrapped Cellophane Swan
Fig. 20 Swanscape Photograph
Fig. 21 Correspondence/ Swan Silliness

**Text Appendices**

Appendix 1. Invitation To Cynthia
Appendix 2. Skype conversation with Cynthia Williamson Transcript
Appendix 3. Residency Questions
Appendix 4. Selected Residency Conversation Transcripts (i, ii, iii)

**Supplementary Images**

Residency Images
Research Images
The Evolution of Correspondence Images
Images

Fig 1. Tissue Box Bed Cover

Fig 2. Struggle With Secret Knitting (film stills)

Fig. 3 Correspondence
Fig 4. Skype Conversation (still)

Fig 5. Cynthia’s Swan

Fig 6. Galleri Cynthia’s Swan at Magnus Karlsson

Fig 7. Cynthia’s Swan Moderna Like / Saatchi Profile
Fig 8. Pickled Boobs and Pickled Bums

Fig 9. Pickled Boobs and Pickled Bums Workshop

Fig 10. Laia’s Pickled Bum Brooch

Fig 11. Two Neons: One For Each (installation view)

Fig 12. Two Neons: One For Each
Greetings Card
Fig. 13 Swan Symphony Crochet Pattern

Fig. 14 Plaster Wallpaper Sample

Fig. 15 Exhibition Components Sheet
Fig. 16 Have You Any More?
Fig. 17 Neon knitting in progress

Fig. 18 Honorary Master Certificate
Fig. 19 Twice Wrapped Cellophane Swan

Fig. 20 Swanscape Photograph
Fig. 21 Correspondence/ Swan Silliness
Appendix 1. Invitation To Cynthia

Dear Nan,

I miss being able to learn from you like I did when I was younger (and geographically nearer!) I am no longer pop round for help with a knitting pattern, to do my washing or have Sunday dinner with you and Grandad!

So I wonder if you’d like to try something different with me? I have been trying to knit with some leftover yarn. I haven’t followed a pattern and left some rows without being cast off. The knitting could go in different directions now, a bit like a plant with new shoots! Think!

I would like it if you could continue knitting on this piece. You can pick up the stitches held by the red thread, or you could pick up a row of your own. You can choose which yarn(s), size needles, stitches, how much or how little you add. When you are finished or feel you’d like to pass it back to me, you can post it to me in Sweden. Then I will continue and post it back to you and so on and so on.

What do you think? Are you up for it?

I suppose we could think of it as a keed letter, a way of keeping in touch.

Love to you and Grandad.

Love from Kay xxx

Ps. Hope the dance show rehearsals are going well!
Appendix 2. Skype conversation with Cynthia Williamson Transcript

This skype conversation took place in January 2015 and presented to CRAFT! Department in the same month.

Kay : Alright then, ok! So Nan, we’ve got 5 minutes to talk about the project. And this is the first time we’ve like, spoken about the project. And i’ve got questions but I don’t want it to be like an interview. There’s no right or wrong so if you don’t know what to say, you don’t know what to say. But if you had to describe the project that we are doing together, to somebody else, how would you describe it?

Cynthia : Well I would describe exactly what i’m doing. The fact that we are sending a piece of work between ourselves and adding to it each time y’know. And not trying to out do each other, but just do something different!

K : And have you told other people about it? Have you told anyone at dancing (tap class)

C : Have I spoken to anyone? Um I don’t know whether I did. I probably spoke to Beryl about it. I don’t think I have spoken to anybody. I have spoken to someone but I can’t remember who.

K : And do you think of the project as being my project, or our project, or some bits mine, some bits yours. Whose project is it?

C : Well I just thought of it as your idea, that i’m helping you with. Y’know, a project that I’m participating in. That’s a big word isn’t it!

And just helping with it y’know and going along with it! But as far as I’m concerned, you’ve come up with something completely different and I thought, y’know, give it a whirl!

K : And have you ever knitted anything before, that wasn’t to wear, or to y’know, have a function?

C : No I don’t think so and not just for display you mean? Display work, no no.

K : So have you ever had your work in an exhibition before?

C : No! (laughs) I’ve just done practical work you know. Things to wear and whatever. No i’ve never done it for any exhibition or anything.

K : Well, your work, or our project is going to be, or is currently in an exhibition in Stockholm.

C : That’s a bit frightening that is. Because I don’t consider it worthy of that. Well y’know.Well if it’s something different, perhaps y’know it’s gotta be worthy hasn’t it. Because no nobody else has thought of it. It might even catch on!

K : It might do yeah, I should copyright it.

C : People won’t send letters, they’ll send knitted bits!

K : That would be nice! If I said that I was embarrassed that I knit, what would you think? Do you believe that I am embarrassed that I knit?

C : Embarrassed that you knit or or what you knit?

K : Um both. Ummm more that I knit.

C : Not to. Why should you be embarrassed? I think it’s a good asset to be able to knit. And obviously over time, which you have improved, over time you know yourself. You start from doing just plain and now you can probably read patterns. I don’t know whether you’ve got into reading patterns. Er, Swedish patterns. But you’ve improved, I mean. You don’t see it yourself. I don’t think you should be embar…I think it’s an asset. I should teach Nick next to knit.

K : He already can knit.

C : Yeah, yeah there are lots of men that can knit.

K : Can Grandad knit?

C : No, he’s never tried that. I think his, his fingers are too fat.

K : So, are you enjoying the project Nan?

C : It’s a challenge yeah. Yeah, I just wonder what i’m going to come up with next.

K : Alright, well if it stresses you out...

C : Oooh it wouldn’t stress me out love. So how long does it go on for?

K : Forever!
C: Not forever and ever and ever. What’s it going to be like? It’s gonna, we’re gonna be able to wear it in the end! We’ll be able to put sleeves in it!
K: Well as long as it doesn’t get too heavy to post we’ll keep going.
C: Well alright, I might run out of ideas though love.
K: We can inspire each other. Right, that’s our 5 minutes. Thanks Nan.
C: Right and this is me on, oh dear, oh lord, this is me on tape.
K: This is you on tape.
C: Oh dear.

Appendix 3. Residency Questions

This is the schedule and questions prepared for the residency.

Week 1 - Methods and Materials
What does she imagine my school day looks like?
Use our reflections on our ways of working to plan our joint project.
Sharing our current projects with each other.
Explain/discuss norm-criticality.
Challenging assumptions about what each other does/has done.
Talk about our making processes, from idea to outcome to publishing.
How would Cynthia describe her creative development over her lifetime?
From where does Cynthia get inspiration?
What is experience of working with and without craft kits.
Go shopping for materials for joint and other projects.
Look through Cynthia’s collection of materials and craft patterns in the attic.
Start working on Swan Symphony.

Week 2 - Displays and Contexts
Does Nan think she can learn anything from me?
Ask Cynthia to lead a tour of her crafts displayed around her home.
Then focus on the interior decoration and styling of objects in Cynthia’s home.
Talk to Stanley (grandfather) about his knowledge and experience of Cynthia’s craft.
Discuss displaying work outside of the home.
Who does Cynthia make for?
Who does she consider to be her audience?
In which ways, has Cynthia’s craft enabled her to connect with the community?
Does Cynthia look to others for their opinions, in order to inform or validate her work?
What signifies a successfully crafted object or garment?

Week 3 - Traditions and Futures
What do we each consider to be a professional craftsperson?
What makes an expert? Can you be an expert amateur?
What are and were Cynthia’s aspirations for her craft practice?
How do they marry with mine?
In what way is having crafts skills an asset?
Does Cynthia have any unfinished or yet to be tried ideas and crafts?
Has Cynthia ever felt her ideas were restricted. Perhaps by space, time/equipment/knowledge/other?
What aids does or did Cynthia use to help further her own learning?
Does she consider herself to be learning still?
Does Cynthia see any changes in the way in crafts are taught and learned now, compared with her early learning?
Does Cynthia think it is important for me to pass on these skills to my children?

Work on Correspondence.

Appendix 4. Selected Residency Conversation Transcripts (i)
Transcribed audio conversation between Kay and Cynthia. Recorded on the first day of the residency, whilst looking through a powerpoint portfolio of Kay’s MA work. January 2016

Kay : I don’t know if I ever told you about this, but I did a project where, the swan that you made..
Cynthia : The swan. Yeah.
Kay : Cos you made this for…
Cynthia : I gave all the ladies one at tap, yeah I did a swan..
Kay : I didn’t realise, I only opened it the other day, cos I was going to try and make one myself. But there was a bracelet in there, up his bum, I didn’t realise.
Cynthia : Yeah well I put a little thing in, I think I bought those when we went to Tenerife. Cos originally, when I had one of those, oh I don’t whether Aunty Sandra and I used to make them, we used to make them to have a little guest soap in it. Well I tried everywhere and I couldn’t get these little guest soaps. And I didn’t want to spend a lot of money it was just a little erm, a little gift for them and I thought we you can have, they used to have these air fresheners, these like disk air fresheners.
Kay : Yeah that’s what I thought was in it.
Cynthia : Yeah and they’d put one of those in it but then we were on holiday and we went in, there like a jewellery shops, mainly chinese and they’d got quite a selection of these bracelets and they were a Euro .
Kay : That’s less than a pound isn’t it?
Cynthia : Yeah, just. Less than a pound. So I thought oh well I’ll put one of those in, so I put one of those in so there was a little thing. And I mean some of em they reckon they hung them on the (christmas) tree.
Kay : Really? That’s a good idea, I wouldn’t even have thought of that. I’d just always associated it with something for the bathroom.
Cynthia : Yeah well as I say you could put an air freshener in or a toilet soap. But as I say, I did try and get the little toilet soaps, the little guest soap. I had no joy and you could buy gift sets but I didn’t want to go to a lot of expense. But I mean they were quite simple because all you did was crochet 4 disks, disks.
Kay : I tried one recently, but I tried to do them bigger. I think I was doing treble crochet rather than double…
Cynthia : Which made it firm?
Kay : No it didn’t make it firm, it made it floppy. I needed to do a tighter one like you had done. And then I didn’t have pipe cleaners, I just had wire and wrapped…
Cynthia : Cotton wool around..
Kay : Cotton wool?
Being in Touch, The Important Thing For Folks To Be. Kay Williamson.

C: Well co... I think I put cotton wool around the nose and then put wool around.
K: Oh I was just using wire and wool and it was so floppy it was like a drunk swan!
C: But the idea was there like, you knew...
K: Yeah, but then I did, I did several things with the swan. I did, I took the swan to some galleries in Stockholm.
C: And what was that?
K: And this was a gallery where, this is a famous Swedish painter
C: Oh yeah
K: And so I took some photographs of your swan next to these famous, I was just trying to see if I could make you famous. And then I took it to
C: Simple idea…
Stanley: I'm just going to erm, go down to the doctors to see if they'll do the prescription for you
C: Well I'll have to have a check what medication I've got. I've just lost complete track. So don’t worry about that.

Appendix 4. Selected Residency Conversation Transcripts (ii)
Transcribed audio conversation between Kay and Cynthia. Recorded on the first day of the residency, whilst looking through a powerpoint portfolio of Kay’s MA work. January 2016

Cynthia: So my little simple simple swan has been going around Sweden.
Kay: Yeah. Well Stockholm. But I can take it further.
C: Well dunno, he’s really quite famous isn't he. Now how do you fancy a little clutch of ducks.
K: A clutch of ducks? Is that the word, is that the collective word for er…
C: I believe so yeah.
K: You want me to take a clutch of ducks around Stockholm?
C: No you can have them, but either, you see I thought, I don’t we’ll have to have a look them, I just sat here one night, because you know me, I’ve gotta be doing something. I thought I’ll do little ducks. Now you could either put the creme eggs in them as an easter thing. Or probably you could use em as an egg cosy, I don’t know. We’ll have to have a look at the size of them. So i’ve done some ducks.
K: Maybe I could see if…
C: So if you want some ducks, you could take some with you..
K: My friend works at the Museum of Modern Art, maybe they’ll sell them in there? I’ll say, don’t you remember Cynthia Williamson who exhibited the swan next to Louise Bourgeois
C: Oh I say
K: Well she’s done a range of ducks now!
C: I’m really gonna be quite famous. So those bums!
K: The bums!
C: How many did you do then cos you sold out didn’t you? What was it like, er novelty to them I suppose? (Pickled Boobs and Pickled Bums, I sold at the Konstfack Christmas Market 2015)
K: What I think it was, in the rest of the the fair you, it’s something you’ve got to think about or it means something else. But these were just so instantly funny, people didn’t have to think...
C: …work it out
K: …what should my reaction be. It was just either, ‘oh my god what is that’ and their face would just be disgusted and confused or it would just be…
C: ‘Well that’s hilarious’…
K: And generally people would be, the ones who thought it was hilarious were the ones who bought it and there were a lot of, it was a mixture but I was surprised at, men would really talk to me about them and say ‘I really like this, I think it’s really funny”.
C: And what did you do? Boobs and bums?
K: Yeah and I did...
C: Cos you did the badges didn’t you?
K: Yeah I did some more of them yeah
C : Cos I suppose they were quicker to do because you only had to do one.
K : But then the faffy bit was putting the pins on the back. Yeah I bought some. They didn’t sell quite as well I don’t think.
C : Oh the jars went better?
K : Yeah which surprised me. And a lot of people bought them as joke presents
C : Well yeah. I mean I did one for er Denise at tap ‘Y’know. I says I’ve got a little jar of potpourri you can have either in your bathroom or on your kitchen sill if you like. And she thought it was highly amusing, ‘Y’know, you’ve gotta have a sense of humour really I spose, well..

Appendix 4. Selected Residency Conversation Transcripts (iii)

Transcribed audio conversation between Kay and Cynthia. Recorded one Saturday afternoon, whilst browsing through Cynthia’s cross stitch magazine collection. January 2016

Cynthia : But I mean there’s kits there. You can have a kit and have a go at one of them if you wanted. Have a try at a kit. Cos theres everything in it you see, you’ve got your fabric, your aids and then you’ve got your threads to do the design. So you could have a go, if you fancy a cross.. Once you’re hooked on cross stitch you’ll really enjoy it.
Kay : Do you think though it’s? I suppose it’s only like following a knitting pattern, but it’s less creative because you, you’re using the yarn that they’ve supplied, you’re following their pattern.
C : You are, you’re following a chart. You have to follow a chart. Because it’s all, you do one stitch out and the whole thing can alter. But of course people, you can, you can have a photograph. If I’d got a photograph of you, I could send it away and they would do a chart. And I could do a photograph of you.
K : I saw that for knitting patterns too. I suppose it’s the same thing isn’t it really.
C : Yeah. You see you can do that, that’s er, that’s like stretching your art into something personal. You know, making something like a personal thing, like a photograph of somebody. I mean people have done a wedding photograph and things like that. But you have to have a chart done because it’s obviously, every square is like a dot on your pattern.
K : Imagine doing that by hand. It would be a computer that did it wouldn’t it?
C : The er, the chart? Well it’d all be done on a graph paper. I think you can work, I mean I’ve got the magazine. In fact your Dad paid for my subscription for the cross stitch magazine, and there’s charts in there. And then you have to get your own threads and that, but they’ll give you the number of the threads. But you see some people, they’ll alter, they might say oh I want erm, I want a chart of my Staffy or whatever, but I can only find it in black and white, but he’s brown and white or whatever and they’ll give you alternatives you see. You’ll exchange so and so for so and so and your colours will change different. And Aunty Sandra, she used to have loads of extra threads, in fact I’ve got a lot of her threads here. And she would work on, you know she would find a start in a book, which, there’s stacks of them in there. And she would just er, use her own colours. In fact the girl, when they left next door, I thought oh I’ll do them a little, instead of just sending them a card, I’ll do a cross stitch.
K : That’s nice..
C : And it was er, it was like a frame but it was all different flowers, it was all different flowers, all different flowers and that, and I could use the colours I’d got. Then I wrote in the middle, which I did like, with your stitching and I put, ‘May Health and Happiness Fill Your New Home’, don’t matter about wealth, if you’re happy and you got your health. Y’know, you’ve got everything. I just put on it, ‘May Happiness and Health Fill Your New Home’, you see I just, now, I framed it. I got a little frame, put it in a frame so you see that was something which she could keep. And I just put at the bottom, ‘from Cynth and Stan’.

Supplementary Images
From the artist residency at the home of Cynthia Williamson, White Road, Birmingham UK.
From the Artist Residency at the home of Cynthia Williamson, White Road, Birmingham UK.
Supplementary Images

Spring Exhibition Research Images - taken during residency period
Supplementary Images
The Evolution of 'Correspondence' starting October 2014
Supplementary Images

The Evolution of ‘Correspondence’
Supplementary Images

The Evolution of 'Correspondence'
Exhibition Images by Paul and Stanley Williamson
Being in Touch, The Important Thing For Folks To Be. Kay Williamson.
Being in Touch, The Important Thing For Folks To Be. Kay Williamson.
Being in Touch, The Important Thing For Folks To Be. Kay Williamson.