

Linking Art, Museums & Environment

Exploratory research practice:

My research aims to explore our complex relationship with, and values towards, the natural environment.

I have based my research at Aston's Eyot in Oxford. Originally meadowland, the land was later used as a city rubbish dump. Thereafter abandoned as wasteland, a wilderness of vegetation has thrived to create the nature reserve it is today.

Research methods included:

- Journal keeping
- Photography documenting the rapidly changing landscape
- Collecting and researching “archaeology of the everyday” through examining objects that were deposited on the land while it was a dump and that have now been excavated by badgers.
- Experimenting within the limits of technology and art to explore natural plant structures.
- Participating in the nature reserve work
- Looking at site records including ecological surveys, bird and plant sightings

The process of investigation has made me consider, both through observing my own behavior and that of others, the human temptation to regulate the unregulated, make order out of disorder, to collect things, and to “garden the wild”.

Although this research is site specific, Aston's Eyot could be seen as a microcosm of a world facing myriad ecological challenges. Key findings ultimately seek to open up dialogue about our awareness and understanding of the environment.



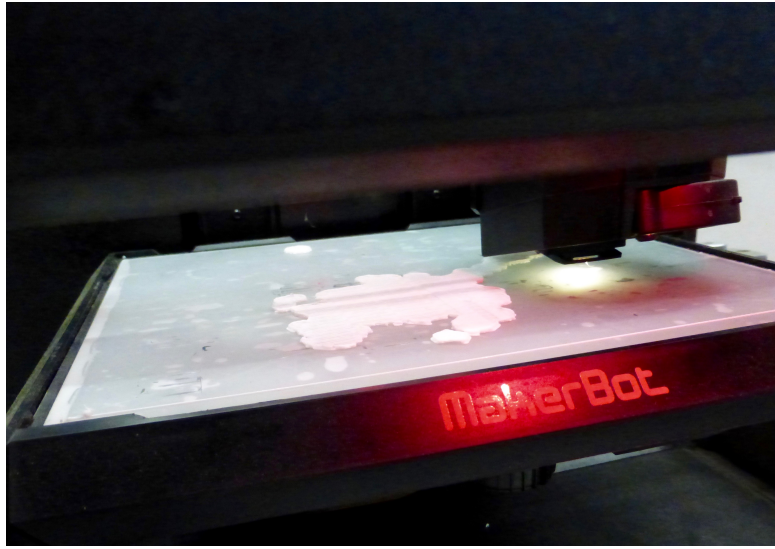
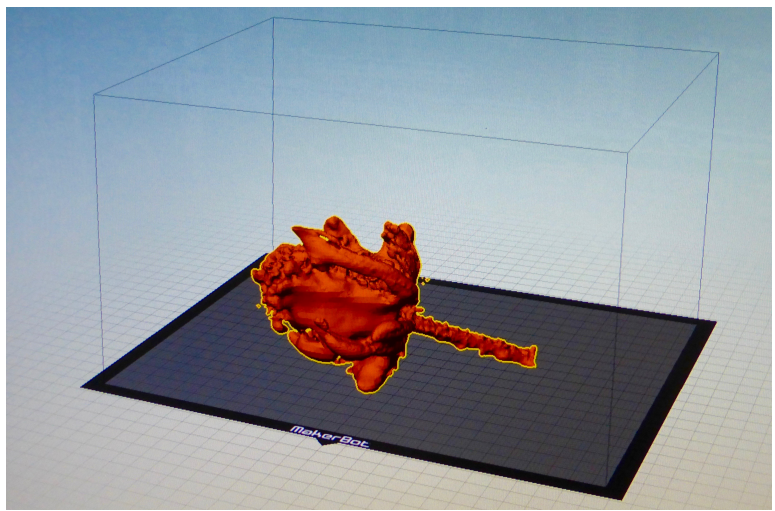
Art Practice

I am interested in how artists can work collaboratively with museums to engage public interest on issues relating to the natural environment.

Recurrent themes and influences include: conservation, preservation, landscape heritage, botany, museums and natural history. Research and field visits that inform my work may later lead to multidisciplinary outcomes in ceramics, metalwork, printmaking and textiles.

My recent work imagines what exhibits might feature in a natural history museum of the future, responding to ideas about environmental change and what measures we may take to preserve our natural heritage.

I find it fascinating to uncover forgotten histories and landscapes in my local area to discover there is far more to a place than meets the eye. Whilst my work explores ongoing conversations concerning the environment, contradictions and uncomfortable questions included, it also seeks to celebrate the uncomplicated beauty and value of nature.



Note: all images used are author owned

References:

- [1] COUTTS, G. AND JOKELA, T. 2008. *Art, Community and Environment: Educational Perspectives*. Bristol: Intellect Books.
- [2] DAVIS, J. AND ELLIOTT, S. 2014. *Research in Early Childhood Education for Sustainability, International Perspectives and provocations*. Oxford: Routledge.
- [3] GOVIER, L. (2008-2009). *Leaders in co-creation? Why and how museums could develop their co-creative practice with the public, building on ideas from the performing arts and other non-museum organisations*. [Online] Available at: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/rmg/projects/leaders-in-cocreation/Louise%20Govier%20-%20Claire%20Research%20-%20Leaders%20in%20Co-Creation.pdf> [Accessed 20 January 2015]
- [4] GRADDY, S. E., (2010). *Creative and Green: Art, Ecology, and Community*. greenmuseum.org. [Online] Available at: http://greenmuseum.org/generic_content.php?ct_id=238 [Accessed 15 November 2014]
- [5] GRANDE, J. K. 2004. *Art Nature Dialogues, Interviews with Environmental Artists*. USA: University of New York Press.
- [6] JULIE'S BICYCLE (2014). *Sustaining Creativity Survey, Actions and attitudes from the creative community: environmental sustainability 2014* [Online] Available at: <http://www.juliesbicycle.com/media/downloads/Sustaining-Creativity-Survey.pdf>
- [7] KENDALL, G. (2013). *Friends of the earth; How should museums tackle environmental issues and engage the public on them?*. Museums Association Journal. Issue 113/09, p28-31, 01.09.2013 [Online] Available at: <http://www.museumassociation.org/museums-journal/features/01092013-friends-of-the-earth>
- [8] KESTER, G. (2010). *Collaborative Practices in Environmental Art*. greenmuseum.org. [Online] Available at: http://greenmuseum.org/generic_content.php?ct_id=208 [Accessed 30 November 2014]
- [9] KING, J. (2015). *Podcast Interview* [online]. Available at: www.anne236.blogspot.co.uk
- [10] MARCUS, C. (2015). *Notes from the day, working with young people across arts*. London: Kids in Museums.
- [11] PUTNAM, J. 2001. *Art and artifact, The Museum as Medium*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- [12] RANE Research Cluster. 2008. *Artful Ecologies, Art Nature & Environment Conference 2006*. Cornwall: University College Falmouth in association with Festerman Press.
- [13] SALTZ, J., GILBERT-ROLFE, J., HOLLOWAY, E. 2006. *'Does art have the power to help protect the environment?'*, Art Review, August 2006, Issue 2, p41-57
- [14] SPOONER, A. (2015). *Podcast Interview* [online]. Available at: www.anne236.blogspot.co.uk
- [15] SPAID, S. (2002). *Ecovention: Current art to transform ecologies*. Available at: <http://greenmuseum.org/c/ecovenion/sect2.html> (Accessed 28 March 2015)
- [16] STATE OF NATURE PARTNERSHIP. (2013) *State of Nature report, The State of Nature in the UK and its Overseas Territories*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/stateofnature_tcm9-345839.pdf [Accessed 30 November 2014]
- [17] STEARN, M. (2013) *Re-making utopia in the museum: artists as curators*. Museumological Review no. 17 –Museum Utopias Conference Issue, January 2013. [Online]. Available at: https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/documents/museumologicalreview/mr17/7_Steam_FINAL21Jan013.pdf [Accessed 22 March 2015]
- [18] THOMPSON, S. & AKED, J., with Mckenzie, B., Wood, C., Davies, M., & Butler, M. (2011). *The Happy Museum, Re-imagining Museums for a changing World, A tale of how it could turn out all right*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.happymuseumproject.org> [Accessed 30 November 2014]