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University of Huddersfield

School of Art, Design and Architecture

**An exploration of the relationship between art and audience, in an aim to better understand the influence of the encounter with art.**

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## **Abstract:**

This thesis considers and investigates the relationship between art and audience. An attempt is made to comprehend and articulate the changes which manifest in the viewer as a consequence of their encounter with art. This is achieved through the exploration of four strands of enquiry: a reflection of existing literature and artist practices. The audience encounter with art in a public setting. An ethnographic investigation of two gallery sites and an analysis of an alternative model for experiencing art through mindfulness. Furthermore, creative practices are used as a means to investigate the audience encounter, in addition to a combination of ethnographic methodologies. Such as: a range of participant observations, data retrieval through observation and interviews. It is the aim of this thesis to expose the authority and value of the encounter with art.

## **Glossary:**

### **Active Viewer:**

A viewer who is consciously aware during their viewing experience. As a result, they are able to respond and engage intellectually from an investigative mind-set.

### **Aesthetic Object:**

An intellectually stimulating object or display. Otherwise recognised as art.

### **Aesthetic Experience:**

In reference to the experience encountered with art, or that which relates to art.

### **Body Scanning:**

Body scanning is a mindful technique which produces a mental awareness of the body's sensations. The scan gradually travels through the length of the body.

### **Connection:**

A link or relationship.

### **Emotional Transitioning:**

Transitioning from one emotion to another.

### **Encounter with Art:**

The audience or viewer's engagement with art.

**Encountered Stimuli:**

The 'spectacle'. This applies to both theatre performance and the varying forms of art.

**Intellectual Presence:**

A state of mind liberated from distraction. To be consciously aware in the present moment.

**Passive Viewer:**

A viewer who has intellectually surrendered to the viewing experience. Consequently, losing their intellectual freedoms.

**Participant Observation:**

An ethnographic research method used in the field to observe and participate in the subject of investigation's activities.

**Presence (mindfulness):**

A consciously aware state of mind. A person who experiences presence is consciously aware in that moment of time. A person undergoing presence will have a heightened awareness of their senses and physical position.

**Spectacle:**

An aesthetically stimulating object or scene, (encountered stimuli).

**Viewing Relationship:**

The relationship established between the viewer and that which is being observed, or associated with the encountered stimuli.

**Viewing Experience:**

The experience of the visual engagement when confronting the encountered stimuli.

**Visually Engaged:**

Engaged in the act of viewing.

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## Introductory Artist Statement

The painter's way of seeing is reconstituted by the marks he makes on the canvas or paper. Yet, although every image embodies a way of seeing, our perception or appreciation of an image depends also upon our own way of seeing. (Berger, 1972. P. 10).

The relationship which is born out of 'looking' at art, is complex and multi-layered. The visual relationship is the first connection that the viewer makes when exposed to artworks, and while it is acknowledged that the same statement can be made for any object that falls upon the eye of the viewer. The effects and response evoked in the viewer when confronted by art, is unique and differs from that which may be beheld in any other setting.

The relationship between art and its audience has come to be the focal point of my practice. The instant which the viewer encounters an artwork and feels compelled to act on that which they have seen or experienced, is the point which I am most interested. This way of thinking has evolved within my practice into generating works which perform as inclusive artworks and, as a means to translate and document the viewers encounter with art. The intention of my works are to investigate the reaction that occurs in the viewer when exposed to an artwork, and to understand the changes which manifest in the viewer as a consequence of art.

In 2019, I participated in an exhibition within Huddersfield's Queensgate Market as part of the *Situating Practices* (2019) exhibition. *Situating Practices* (2019) showcased a range of artworks which shared examples of artists using their practices, as a means to investigate their topics of enquiry. The exhibition was curated by Claire Booth, who had drawn inspiration from Donna Haraway's *Situating Knowledges* and explored concepts around research as art practice in its varying formations. The artworks showcased in this exhibition ranged from sculptures, photographs, socially engaged installations, paintings, print and projected videos. The artworks exhibited displayed a broad collection of concepts, materials, processes, and methods of using art as an investigative instrument. Additionally, the broad variety of the work presented a range of approaches to communicating with their audience and recruiting their engagement.

The exhibition opportunity emerged from the *Temporary Contemporary* initiative.

*Temporary Contemporary* is a collaborative programme developed by Huddersfield University School of Art, Design and Architecture, Kirklees Council and the Queensgate Market. *Temporary Contemporary* performs as a bridge-way between the local community and the creative arts. The initiative has sought to provide Huddersfield's people with the chance to engage within visual culture. *Temporary Contemporary* has provided a platform for lecturers, artists, musicians and students to share their work. The *Situating Practices* (2019) exhibition is one example of the many projects made for this initiative.

*Situating Practices* (2019) took place in The Market Gallery and in an additional satellite exhibition space located in an empty unit in the market. The additional space served as an intersection between the market and the gallery. In this space my artwork- *the forum*, was situated. It was my belief that the satellite space would be beneficial, as the location of this unit gave the artwork the opportunity to present as part of the exhibition and the market. Thus, allowing the artwork exposure to a varied audience, (such as: those with the intention to visit the gallery and those who intended to visit the market) and the potential exposure to a greater number of viewers.

Through *the forum* it was my aim to recruit, collaboratively engage and expose the audience experience, in an effort to further understand the audience's relationship with art, and the effects as a consequence of the viewer's connection with art. The artwork performed as a locus to mediate, evidence and translate the engagement between the viewer and the artwork. *The forum* presented as an interactive, collaborative structure, comprised of a large wooden frame, a typewriter, a large roll of paper, a chair and an embroidered cushion. The wooden frame was developed as a self-functioning paper feeder, desk and display.



Fig 1. *The forum* (Eagles, 2019).

Each element used in the design and construction of this work, was chosen with the intent to be as accessible as possible to everyone exposed to the artwork. Due to the location of this exhibition and the space which *the forum* existed, I determined that it was likely that the artwork would be encountered by both the ‘non-exclusive’ and ‘exclusive’ audience. Since the artwork was installed in the satellite space within the market, the artwork was exposed to visitors of the market with differing motives for their visit.

I agree with Thomas Hirschhorn when he writes “[...] art is inclusive; art never excludes.” (Hirschhorn, 2013, P.79). I believe that art should not belong to, or be solely accessed by the ‘exclusive’ audience. Everyone has the right to access art and feel comfortable doing so. Every reaction to art is authentic, despite whether it falls in line with the intention or history of the artist. There is no right or wrong way to react to art and whether the viewer has an advanced knowledge of art, their experience is valid. In my practice I make a conscious effort to create works which can connect with the audience, whatever their level of experience with art.

*The forum* was developed to engage the attention of the ‘exclusive’ and ‘non-exclusive’ audience. Hence the selection of the materials used to comprise this artwork, i.e. a typewriter, chair and the wooden frame. I believed that the typewriter and by extension- the keyboard is an object which is widely recognisable, easy to use and accessible to most people. Each generation will have some sense of familiarity with this object, whether it is a keyboard used in modern technology (such as a mobile or computer), or experience with a typewriter.

I intended that the typewriter would evoke a sense of curiosity, nostalgia or play in its viewer and thereby recruit their collaborative engagement. The chair and cushion was used to convey a feeling of comfort, and inviting to those encountering the structure. The large wooden frame displayed the collaborative narrative produced by those who used the typewriter. This element within the structure operated as a point for the collaborators to react to, or investigate the text developed- should they choose not to collaborate. Each aspect of this work was created to entice the viewer.

When making my observations of the audience engagement with this piece, I found that *the forum* appeared to alter the behaviour of those exposed to it. I saw that the artwork triggered intellectual stimulation, as the audience began to examine the structure. Those who appeared

to be market goers would pause to observe the work, engage with the work or inspect it in some way. This was particularly noteworthy, due to the nature of those exposed to the artwork, i.e. the 'non-exclusive' and 'exclusive' audience. Despite their varying familiarity to art, existing knowledges of art, or their lack of it. I observed that those exposed to the artwork shared similar, if not the same experiences with the artwork. They were provoked into action, in some capacity.

The artwork's ability to alter the behaviour and attention of the market goers led me to question: what power does art hold on its viewer and to what extent are they impacted by this experience? How does art alter its audience and what are the changes which manifest in the viewer? How does the audience engage with art and what does it mean to be activated by an artwork? In this thesis, it is my intention to establish and further articulate the authority art can have on its viewers from three perspectives: the artwork, the artist and the audience. The three perspectives are explored through the information gathered from *the forum*, my own account as an artist and ethnographic research methods. Such as: observations, informal conversation, interviews and group activities.

The sites which my investigations have taken place in this thesis, have each been sites which cater to, and are accessed by the 'non-exclusive' and 'exclusive' audience. The two sites investigated are: The Market Gallery and The Huddersfield Art Gallery. The Market Gallery (as established above) is located in the Queensgate Market and The Huddersfield Art Gallery is located at the top floor of a building shared with the Huddersfield Library, in the town centre. Each of these sites reside in spaces with dual functions and identities.

In order to develop a greater insight into these questions and to add to the conversation surrounding the audience experience of art, I shall be exploring four strands of enquiry throughout this thesis. The first strand within chapter one, reflects on existing literature, theories, artworks and artistic practices. Chapter one considers how these selected works have contributed to our understanding of the experience of art. Chapter two investigates the experience of the audience when engaging with *the forum* and contemplates the audience confrontation with art when situated in a public setting.

Chapter three, is an ethnographic investigation of two gallery sites: Huddersfield Art Gallery and The Market Gallery (*Temporary Contemporary* Queensgate indoor market). In chapter

three, I shall provide an insight into the relationship and experience of the audience when engaging with art in the gallery setting. I shall present the perspective of the viewer and my own observations in these settings. Lastly, the fourth strand of enquiry in chapter four explores an alternative model for experiencing art through mindfulness. This chapter considers the intellectual and emotional authority the art encounter has on its audience and how this has been used to support the mental well-being of the public. I hope that through this thesis, I am able to share the value of the relationship between art and audience, and to present art as an instrument of action.

## **Chapter One:**

### Literature Review:

In the last chapter, I recognised that art has the capacity to stimulate agency in its audience. I acknowledged through the engagement with *the forum*, that art has the ability to manifest change in the viewer regardless of their familiarity with art, or existing knowledges of it. In other words, it appeared that those who I identified as the ‘non-exclusive’ audience were activated by the artwork. It was this realisation that led to my questioning of the relationship between art and audience, and the extent of arts influence.

The relationship between art and audience is a point of interest in art writing, philosophy and art practices. In this chapter we shall navigate the existing literature, theories, artwork and artistic practices which have contributed to expanding our current knowledges of the audience’s experience with art. I shall explore intellectual positions assumed by the audience, the varying audience forms, aesthetic environments, the effects of art and the utilisation of art practice as a means to generate agency in the audience. This chapter has been divided into two sections, each considering the influences and changes which manifest in the viewer as a consequence of their encounter. The two sections are ‘activation’ and ‘experiential’. Activation considers art as a means to activate and generate agency in the viewer. While experiential focuses on art, the art environment and its effects.

## **Activation:**

The shock of the splinter's penetration, the accompanying shudder of the wounded and parallax vision of the pained is the power and freedom specific to art, [...] (Hellings, 2012, P48).

Art's ability to interact with a viewer is unlike any other. Here Hellings shares, that art- the 'splinter', protrudes the viewer's eye and through this has the ability to present perspectives which challenge and intellectually awaken the viewer within their encounter. The 'splinter' performs as a shock which frees the viewer from passivity and thus triggers an intellectually active viewer. This section of the chapter shall consider what 'activation' means, how it can be stimulated and where it is located within an art audience.

In order to ascertain the meaning of 'activation' within an audience, we must first familiarise ourselves with the behaviour and role of the viewer. The audience, or individual viewer acts as the counterpart to the encountered stimuli. I use the words 'encountered stimuli' here, as this definition for audience can be applied across many disciplines. For instance: the various forms of art and theatre. However, it is the audience's engagement with its counterpart and the range of intellectual stimulation that occurs during their encounter which has been debated.

Ancient philosophers, Plato and Gorgias condemned the authority of the encountered stimuli on its audience. In the opinion of these philosophers, the audience would be compelled to intellectual and emotional subservience during their encounter. They judged viewership to be deception, which seduced the viewer into ignorance. It was believed, that the audience would experience pathos as a consequence of their engagement.

Fearful shuddering and tearful pity and grievous longing come upon its hearers, and at the actions physical sufferings of others in good fortunes and in evil fortunes, through the agency of words, the soul is wont to experience a suffering of its own. (Janaway, 1995, P.43).

Here the translation of Gorgias's text refers to the effects on a theatre audience. It is in these observations, which we can begin to shape our understanding of passivity within an audience.

Texts such as Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* and Ranciere's, *The Emancipated Spectator*, make similar suggestions that passivity is located in the viewer who has intellectually surrendered to the encountered stimuli. It seems that passivity is the condition of being "[...] separated from both the capacity to know and the power to act." (Ranciere, 2009, P.2). While these texts consider the influence of the theatre performance, they are strong examples of the counter to the active state. In this context, it seems that the visual deprives the viewer of their intellectual freedoms.

The alienation of the spectator, which reinforces the contemplated objects that result from his own unconscious activity, works like this: The more he contemplates, the less he lives; the more he identifies with the dominant images of need, the less he understands his own life and his own desires. The spectacle's estrangement from the acting subject is expressed by the fact that the individual's gestures are no longer his own; they are the gestures of someone else who represents them to him. (Debord, 1994, P.16).

Therefore, we can assume that passivity is the absence of intellectual independence and, or awareness.

If we accept the judgement that an audience experiencing passivity is unable to think freely, then we must establish how passivity is exchanged for an intellectually awakened state. We must determine how the 'splinter' is produced within the encounter with art. Ranciere proposes that to be liberated from passivity, the viewer must be compelled to adopt the role of investigator.

He will be shown a strange, unusual spectacle, a mystery whose meaning he must seek out. He will thus be compelled to exchange the position of passive spectator for that of scientific investigator or experimenter, who observes phenomena and searches for their causes. (Ranciere, 2009, P.4).

The encountered stimuli must rouse the viewer from their passivity and provoke them into an intellectually awakened state. They must receive the "[...] capacity to know and the power to act." (Ranciere, 2009, P.2).

Similarly, Hellings suggests, that the passive viewer must be exposed to a shock to create an active spectator. To initiate this change, the passive spectator must be made to shudder or can, “[...] be shocked, estranged, and/or alienated in order to stir them from their dogmatic slumber [...]” (Hellings, 2012, P53). The viewer must be roused from their passivity, in order for them to be intellectually liberated. Such an example of activation was demonstrated through Bertolt Brecht’s *Epic Theatre*. Brecht shocked his audience into activation through directly addressing his theatre audience. This reminded the viewer of their position within the visual relationship and shifted the viewer into action. The intellectual liberation from passivity provided the viewer the capacity to independently contemplate and respond to the encountered stimuli. The intellectual stimulation provides the viewer the ability to interpret the ‘openness’ within art. Through these examples, we have begun to establish the meaning of activation and how it is stimulated. We must now consider ‘activations’ position within the encounter with art.

Immanuel Kant suggested that it is the human condition to be affected by our perceptions of objects. “The capacity (receptivity) to acquire representations through the way in which we are affected by objects is called sensibility.” (Kant, 1998, P.345). It is through ‘sensibility’ which people can develop understandings of that which they have seen. Marcel Duchamp’s practice is a noteworthy example of how re-appropriated objects stimulated an active mind. Duchamp is known for his conceptually engaging ready-mades, such as: *Fountain* (Duchamp, 1917/1964), *Bottle Rack* (Duchamp, 1914/1964), *Bicycle Wheel* (Duchamp, 1913), *Why not sneeze Rose Sélavy?* (Duchamp, 1921/1964).

Duchamp’s ready-mades were an enigma to those that saw them. Through the re-appropriation of ordinary objects and re-establishing their purpose as art. Duchamp evidenced that through art, the audience is activated. His ready-mades invited its viewers to delve further and seek meaning. The viewer adopted an intellectually investigative position, subsequently freeing them from passivity and familiarity. His sculptures contradicted the traditionalist expectations of what art was considered to be, thereby alienating and estranging the viewer. Duchamp removed the beauty from art and presented concepts in its place. It is documented that those who saw *Why not sneeze Rose Sélavy?* (Duchamp, 1921/1964) “[...] found it hard to understand, but too strange to be meaningless.” (Mink, 2000, P.7).

Duchamp’s audience was provoked “[...] to exchange the position of passive spectator for

that of scientific investigator or experimenter [...]” (Ranciere, 2009, P.4). Through Duchamp’s practice we can acknowledge the difference in how the viewer contemplates an object when it is presented as art. Similarly, Arthur C. Danto recalled that when he encountered Andy Warhol’s *Brillo Box (Soap Pads)* (1964) he was intellectually activated by the artwork. Through being presented with an artwork which almost perfectly imitated the original object, he concluded “[...] that works of art are embodied meanings.” (Danto, 2013. P.37) Danto suggested that art differs from the original object, as it is infused with invisible meanings. Thus, the *Brillo Box (Soap Pads)* (1964) was an object to be contemplated.

The activation of an audience is a key feature within contemporary practices. The provocation of an artwork to generate agency and action within an audience, is at the forefront within participatory, interactive and socially engaged art forms. It is an essential trait to fulfil the artist’s intentions. As cited by Bishop, GRAV’S manifesto states that participatory and socially engaged art intends to “[...] develop in the viewer a strength of perception and action. A viewer conscious of his power, [...]”. (Bishop, 2012. P.89). Artists such as the late, Adrian Howells *Foot washing for the sole* (2008) and *May I have the Pleasure...?* (2011) and Emma Smith *Playback* (2011), *Rehearsal (Act 1)* (2015) and *Public Domestic* (2013) recruit the audience engagement by shocking their audience through direct address. They provided their audience the “[...] capacity to know and the power to act.” (Ranciere, 2009, P.2). However, these two artists relied on the audience interpretation and participation to complete their works. The audience is offered an artwork which they must complete.

Similarly, Jenn’s Haaning practice activates the audience through direct address. Though Haaning additionally provokes the contemplation of his artworks through alienating and exposing the divisions within those who encounter his work. *Turkish Jokes* (1994) and *Turkish Jokes* (1995) exposed the social breakdown between two communities. *Turkish Jokes* (1994) broadcasted jokes in the Turkish language through speakers situated within a populated area in Oslo, Norway. This artwork awakened those who heard the work. One half of the audience would laugh at the joke, while the other half would be alienated by it. Haaning’s used his artwork in an effort to expose and generate conversation regarding the disparities within society.

According to Hirschhorn “[...] the most important activity that an artwork can provoke is the

activity of thinking.” (Hirschhorn, 2018, P.62) Hirschhorn’s practice is particularly significant when considering the activation and inclusion of all audience forms. His work intellectually challenges the audience and generates agency within them. This was evidenced through his monument series. In particular, the *Batallie Monument* (2002). Through this piece, Hirschhorn alienated the audience through exposing the divisions between them. This was achieved by situating the artwork within the ‘non-exclusive’ audience’s territory. Hirschhorn employed the help of those native to the area, by asking them to take ownership of the installation. The ‘exclusive’ audience was then transported to, and abandoned within this location. The installation provided a library containing books regarding Batallie, a bar and a TV studio. Each aspect, object and encounter within this piece was intellectually provocative.

In this section, the artists I have considered have evidenced examples of the how varying forms of audience can be employed as a collaborator, or as a point to be reflected on. These artists have connected with their audience intellectually and used the ‘splinters’ influence to generate agency through their work. The artworks have been provocative and engaging. They have presented examples which maintain an active and investigative audience, or have shared examples of how art disturbs the viewer from passivity to an awakened and active state. They have evidenced that art activates the audience and through activation they have stimulated agency.

My aim in this section was to provide an insight to what ‘activation’ means, how it can be stimulated and where it can be located within the art encounter. We have learnt that to be activated is to be roused from the conditions of passivity, to be stimulated into intellectual independence, to think critically and receive the “[...] capacity to know and the power to act.” (Ranciere, 2009, P.2). Art activates its audience. The object of art is the object to be contemplated, and the object which generates contemplation. Perhaps, the encounter with art, should be considered as the “[...] art of encounter as activated thinking [...]” (Bishop, 2005. P.35).

### **Experiential:**

The ‘one-of-a-kind’ value of the ‘genuine’ work of art has its underpinnings in the ritual in

which it had its original, initial utility value. (Benjamin, 2008. P.11)

Walter Benjamin reflects on the uniqueness of art and technologies inability to reproduce it. Benjamin suggests that the auric mode of art cannot be recreated. The original artwork is authentic to its point in time and space. Historically, if the audience desires to experience the authentic artwork, they must travel to the location it is exhibited. The appeal to view the original artwork, paired with the exhibition environment provides the audience with an experience. Throughout this section, I shall consider the literature and investigations which have reflected on the experiential influence of the exhibition environment. I shall attempt to reflect on the audience motive to visit the exhibition, and the effects of this experience.

The exhibition environment can assume many forms. For instance: museums, re-appropriated heritage sites, public spaces and the variation of galleries. Each of these spaces provide a different experience of the artwork, owing to the curation and, or the environment. We shall begin by considering the audience motive for their encounter with art and the exhibition. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill's 1994 essay, *Forces for Change* (1994) reflects on the social and educational aspects of the experience in the gallery. She observed in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, that the audience's desire to generate links with the exhibits was increasing. Links which support the conditions for education and social relation. Similarly, Devine-Wright & Breakwell's *Evaluating Visitor Behaviour in a Museum Gallery* (1997) discovered that the experience of the gallery provided the audience with new knowledges. The investigation found that "Knowledge-gain was linked strongly to finding the gallery visually pleasing." (Devine-Wright & Breakwell, 1997. P.6). Each of these texts found that the audience sought after an experience which provided educational, social and, or visually pleasing stimulation.

This trend has persisted to the present-day. According to The Audience Agency's 2019 report, *Audience for Visual Arts* (2019), learning and socialising are the two key motivators for audience engagement with the visual arts. The report elaborates by presenting five specific reasons for the audience to visit the gallery. Such as: intellectual stimulation, inspiration, desire to learn, the visual arts are tied to their sense of self, and social activity with family and friends. This report further supports that the audience seeks an intellectually engaging encounter, which inspires and teaches them new knowledges. In addition to a socially engaging experience that is used as a means to develop social connection between themselves, and relational connections to the artwork. Given the findings from the

‘activation’ section, it is not surprising that the exhibition provides an experience for knowledge-gain, reflection and intellectual stimulation. Since art intellectually activates the viewer and, encourages a contemplative and investigative state.

Furthermore, the social and relational consequences of the exhibition have been considered to be a fundamental element in the art encounter. Nicholas Bourriaud suggests that “[...] art has always been relation to some extent. It has, in other words, always been a factor in sociability and has always been the basis for a dialogue.” (Bourriaud, 1998. P. 161). He continues by stating that the exhibition space offers the visitor an immediate opportunity for discussion. “I see, comment and move around in one space-time.” (Bourriaud, 1998. P.161). While the artwork offers the social and relational encounter amongst the audience, an addition dialogue is generated between the artist and the audience. Bourriaud regards the artwork as the artist’s instrument to communicate information. Thus, art can provide a form of “[...] disengaged engagement.” (Hellings, 2012. P.49).

While it seems that the audience motive to visit galleries is associated with intellectual and social stimulation. Mieke Bal’s *Exposing the Public* (2006) considers the gallery experience for the encounter with art to be flawed. She suggests, that by supplying the audience with the history of the artwork, the biography of the artist and muted aesthetics, the audience is provided a prescribed experience of the artwork. This inevitably influences what they see. The audience’s pre-existing expectations for this experience, essentially dilutes the experience of the art and neutralises the audience. She states that “[...] comfort counters the act of looking.” (Bal, 2006. P.533).

Comparably, Tröndle et al’s, *An Integrative and Comprehensive Methodology for Studying Aesthetic Experience in the Field: Merging Movement Tracking, Physiology, and Psychological Data* (2014) questioned the audience experience and behaviour in the gallery space. The study found that the more dynamic the gallery environment, the greater the impact on visitor reactions. However, the gallery as a space is constantly changing. Artworks are temporarily displayed, until they are replaced by another collection of artworks. This cycle continues and maintains the audience attraction. “In the gallery we seek the space of whatever: a space that is constantly coming into being as ‘a series of crescendos without climax’, a place for the constant reiteration of voices that are never concluded.” (Smith, 2012. P.290).

Traditionally gallery and museum spaces opt for muted aesthetics in an effort to focus the audience's attention on the exhibits. Though some galleries use alternative curative methods and locations to their advantage. The Yorkshire Sculpture Park is one example of how utilising an alternative space for exhibiting art, engages existing audiences and recruits new ones. "YSP's driving purpose for 40 years has been to ignite, nurture and sustain interest in and debate around contemporary art and sculpture, especially with those for whom art participation is not habitual or familiar." (Yorkshire Sculpture Park, n.d.). Through exhibiting in a 500-acre landscape, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park is able to provide a unique experience of art to those who intended to visit the sculptures and for those who had planned to visit the park.

Nick Cass's *Numinous Experiences in the home of the Brontës*, considers the merge between the experience of art and an alternative space, the Brontë home. The collaboration between art and the Brontë home enhanced the visitors experience of the artwork and the site. The union between the two individually informed the experience of the other half. The collaboration between the site and the artwork evoked emotional responses and self-reflection in the visitors. In this instance, the visitors pre-existing knowledge and attachment to the Brontë legacy enhanced their experience of the art and the site. Cass discovered that "[...] 'deeply meaningful personal connections' [...]" (Cass, 2020. P.197) were produced as a consequence of their attachment to the Brontë legacy and owing to the art encounter.

Similarly, Gaynor Bagnall and Jill Randall's *Understanding the audience experience of contemporary visual arts at Geevor Mine World Heritage Site: A dialogue between a contemporary artist and a sociologist* (2020), also discovered that the site contributes to the experience of the artwork. By situating artworks which reflect on mining history in the mining museum, the collaboration provided an art encounter for those who had not anticipated it and provided an additional layer of context to the art. The artwork impacted the visitors emotionally due to their existing connections to the context of the work.

The collaboration between art and alternative sites have proven to introduce an additional layer to the context of the artwork, in addition to provoking relational responses. It would seem that the location which the artwork is situated can be beneficial. Anna Powell's *Bruce Nauman at York St Mary's: A hermeneutic enquiry into 'the intersection'* contemplates the

union between art and the heritage site. She suggests that the location supported the experience of the artwork. The church exhibition location for Bruce Nauman's *Violins Violence Silence* (1981-1982) "[...] enhanced and guided the direction that interpretation might take." (Powell, 2020. P222.). If we were to reconsider Haaning's *Turkish Jokes* (1994), Hirschhorn's *Batallie Monument* (2002) or Howell's *Foot washing for the sole* (2008) in a gallery environment. The experience of the artwork would have lost some of its richness and would likely be less impactful. The environment of the exhibition significantly supports the experience of the artwork.

The experiential influence of the exhibition environment proves to be an important component in the art encounter. This experience can be used to the benefit of the artwork. The experiential influence of the exhibition environment proves to evoke intellectual, relational and social simulation in the audience's encounter with art. This appears to be both the audience's motive to visit and a consequence of the art encounter in the exhibition. Through this experience, the audience can generate meaningful connections owing to their existing attachment to the environment, the context of the work, or the activity of engaging with art. Galleries provide spaces which stimulate the audience visually, while focusing their attentions on the artworks. However, alternate sites have proven to contextually support the audience engagement with art, while facilitating the art encounter for those unfamiliar to art. Overall, I believe that the literature which we have examined indicates that the experiential influence functions as a supportive foundation in the audience's encounter with art.

### Conclusion:

In this chapter, I have considered the intellectual positions, audience forms, aesthetic environments, the influences of art and the deployment of art practices as a means to generate action within the audience. Through reviewing existing literatures, theory, artworks and artistic practices, we have learnt that activation provides the viewer with intellectual independence and critical thought. In other words, through the art encounter the viewer is given the "[...] capacity to know and the power to act." (Ranciere, 2009, P.2). Art challenges and intellectually awakens the viewer through activation. It is an object of mystery which the viewer is compelled to investigate. The artwork is the object to be contemplated and a producer of contemplation. It is a provocateur for intellectual awakening and "[...] activated

thinking [...]” (Bishop, 2005. P.35). In the examples of art practices, I have presented how artists have used activation from the art encounter as an instrument for action.

Additionally, I have established that the audience’s motive to engage with art is linked with its ability to intellectually, socially and relationally stimulate. This is both a reason for their visit to the gallery, and a consequence of the encounter with art within the gallery. The audience has utilised the experience of the gallery as a source for knowledge gain, social and relational connection. The experience of the art encounter can produce meaningful connections as a result of the location and context of the artwork. While galleries offer the audience with a space to encounter art, I found that alternative locations can both support and enrich the art engagement, whilst appealing to a diverse audience.

## **Chapter Two:**

### **An Exploration of the Audience when Confronted by Art and the Aesthetic Experience in a Public Setting.**

In the last chapter, I recognised that art functions as an intellectual, social and relational stimulant. I learnt that when located within an alternate setting, the artwork can develop meaningful connections owing to the viewers pre-established attachment to the location. In addition to supporting the artwork contextually and engaging the attentions of a diverse audience. However, if we are to gain a greater comprehension of the audience during their encounter with art, an exploration of the audience must be undertaken when engaging with art. This chapter explores how an artwork can activate an audience when situated in a public setting. Thus the gallery environment was traded for a public space.

The underlying questions throughout this investigation are: how can art generate agency in its viewer and what can that look like? The deployment of my art practice and ethnographic observations were key methodologies throughout this investigation. The development of my artwork: *the forum*, and its exhibition location drew inspiration from Hirschhorn’s creative practice, particularly in reference to his monument series and the *Spectrum of Evaluation*

(2008). As I previously noted in the introduction, as an artist I strongly believe that “[...] art is inclusive; art never excludes.” (Hirschhorn, 2013, P.79).

Similarly, to Hirschhorn, I choose to discount the disparities produced from the hierarchies in art. It is important to me, that I create artworks and environments which encourage audience engagement and connect with the viewer without judgement of their existing knowledges of art, or their familiarity to it. In other words, I want to create artworks which serve all audience forms. Since there are “[...]no privileged points of view, and all available perspectives are equally valid and rich in potential.” (Eco, 2006, P.35). Furthermore, I believe that the inclusion of all audience forms will strengthen the investigation’s findings for the audience encounter with art.

*The forum* was developed as an apparatus to evidence and translate the audience encounter with art. *The forum* dually functioned as an artwork and as an investigative instrument to provoke and document the audience engagement. Additionally, I too assumed two roles. The role of the artist and the role of the researcher. This is reflected in the language and tone used in this chapter. The introduction and creative development sections in this chapter are written from my perspective as an artist. While the results and observations for *the forum* is written from a position of a researcher.

I recognise that my involvement as an artist could be considered as a conflict of interest within this investigation. Since I have influence over how the artwork can connect with the audience. It is for this reason, that I wanted the artwork to have the capacity to document the audience engagement. Furthermore, I acknowledge that “The ‘one-of-a-kind’ value of the ‘genuine’ work of art has its underpinnings in the ritual in which it had its original, initial utility value.” (Benjamin, 2008, P.11). In other words, my descriptions will always be failures in comparison to the experiential aspects of this piece. Though, I will attempt to clearly describe *the forum* and the audience experience of it. This chapter is divided into three parts: the creative development, *the forum* observations and the conclusion.

### Creative Development:

As established in the introduction of this thesis *the forum* was situated in Huddersfield’s,

Queensgate indoor market. An open call opportunity arose to contribute an artwork for the *Situating Practices* (2019) exhibition. *Situating Practices* (2019) was developed and curated by Claire Booth. Her inspiration drew from Donna Haraway's *Situating Knowledges* and explored concepts around research as art practice. The exhibition showcased artworks such as: sculptures, photographs, socially engaged installations, projected videos paintings, and prints. The artworks displayed a collection of concepts, materials, processes, and methods of utilising art as an investigative instrument. The variety of artworks presented a range of approaches to communicating with an audience and, or recruiting their engagement. *Situating Practices* (2019) ran for two weeks and was held in The Market Gallery, and a satellite space located in an empty unit in the market. This space functioned as an intersection between the market and the gallery.

I considered the exhibition as a valuable opportunity, owing to its location and the provisions in place by the *Temporary Contemporary* initiative. *Temporary Contemporary* aims at “[...] supporting the conditions for creative and cultural activity, and creating democratic cultural activity produced by and for ‘non-exclusive audiences’.” (Temporary Contemporary, 2020, P.83). I believed that this exhibition would provide access to a greater number of people and a diverse audience. Such as, those with the motive to visit the market and those who planned to visit the gallery, who amongst them would be the ‘exclusive’ and the ‘non-exclusive’ audience.

I wanted to develop an artwork which was accessible, relatable and inclusive, to all audience forms. “The best participants have been the persons not normally engaged in art or performance, but are moved to take part in an activity that is at once meaningful to them in its ideas yet natural in its methods.” (Kaprow, P.103, 2006). It was my intention, to develop an artwork which would infiltrate the environment, and recruit the engagement of all audience forms. It was important to situate the artwork in a space which could be easily accessed by the ‘non-exclusive’ audience.

I determined, that the ‘non-exclusive’ audience was less likely to seek out an encounter with the artwork, as opposed to the ‘exclusive’ audience who actively pursue and engage with art. The location that the artwork was situated, was essential to the potential successes of this piece. To the benefit of the artwork, it was assigned to the intersecting space. The intersecting unit was close enough to the Market Gallery so that it could be seen from the entrance, but far

enough that the artwork could exist separately in the market. The unit was surrounded by a café, a food vender, a shoe stall and a hat stall. However, this meant that the artwork exhibited for five days, as the unit was occupied by another artist for the first half of the exhibition, and the loss of time due to installation and removal.

As previously explained, I wanted to create something which would engage with the audience as an artwork and as an instrument for this investigation. I wanted the artwork to have the capacity to infiltrate, activate, recruit and expose the audience encounter, while evidencing and mediating their confrontation with this piece. This artwork was to be accessible and serve all exposed to it. I determined that if I was to successfully gain an insight into the viewers experience of art. It would be proactive to create a work which could mediate and document the audience experience, while attaining an immediate, personal reflection of the viewers time with the artwork. Therefore, I opted to create a structure that could perform as a participatory, interactive artwork.

The artwork was designed to activate, and be used by the audience. I designed a wooden structure that comprised of a desk, display and a self-feeding paper roll. I placed a typewriter on the desk and fed the paper through it. The audience was expected to collaborate by developing a narrative and communicating their thoughts and experience to *the forum*. The display was to provoke and present the engagements of the audience and support their participation. This way the audience would have a choice of their level of engagement, they could either inspect the display or participate.

*The forum* needed to generate agency within those exposed to it. Much like Duchamp's ready-mades, I wanted to create something that would provide mystery in familiarity. I wanted to trigger the viewer into curiosity and contemplation. I drew inspiration from: Duchamp's ready-mades, Hellings *Shocks and Shudders*, Hirschhorn's *Spectrum of Evaluation* (2008) and his monuments series, Ranciere's *Emancipated Spectator*, Eco's *The Poetics of the Open Work*, Smith's *Practice of Place*, Bishop's *Artificial Hells* and Haaning's relational approach to infiltrate and unite an audience through commonalities.

The materials I used for *the forum* were consciously selected for their ease of use. It was important to select a tool which was familiar and could be identified with. I re-appropriated a typewriter for this piece, as I believed that the typewriter (and its keyboard) was an object

most generations of people would have experience using. It was essential to select a tool that all ages, interests and capabilities could access, enjoy and feel comfortable with. I hoped that the typewriter would evoke a sense of curiosity, nostalgia or play in the viewer and allow potential collaborators to easily and clearly communicate their thoughts.

The scroll of paper was designed to be suspended on a wooden dowel to display the audience entries and developing dialog. This element was to function as a means to stimulate engagement, visually or collaboratively. The new paper moved from the back of the typewriter and with every entry, the typewriter would feed the paper to the wooden dowel for the display. (See Fig. 2 for blueprint). In an effort to ensure that the structure was not tampered with, a weighted bag attached to a long piece of string was wrapped around the dowel. The bag was used to pull the dowel and create tension, so that the displaying paper remained taut. A chair and cushion was selected to create a sense of comfort and thus appear inviting to those exposed to the structure. Failing this, the cushion was hand embroidered with a prompt: 'Tell me about your market'. Owing to *the forum*'s location, I felt this would expose a commonality amongst the 'non-exclusive' and 'exclusive' audience. The cushion was to encourage the dialog, though I didn't want to limit it.

However, there had to be restrictions to the language used. The artwork existed in a communal, public space and was accessible to people of all ages. I designed two cards to lay beside the typewriter. One explained that *the forum* was an opportunity to write about the market, stories, memories, tips, etc. To be mindful and respectful of their language and that offensive language would be removed. The second card shared the instructions to use the typewriter. Three options were available to the audience: they could collaboratively engage with developing the narrative of *the forum*, they could visually engage and inspect the artwork, or they could ignore, reject and pass it by. My final hope for this artwork, was that it would provoke the viewer into some form of activation, without exploitation. I wanted the artwork to seem familiar enough that it was approachable, but strange enough to awaken them from passivity in mundane routines. To "stir them from their dogmatic slumber [...]" (Hellings, 2012, P53).

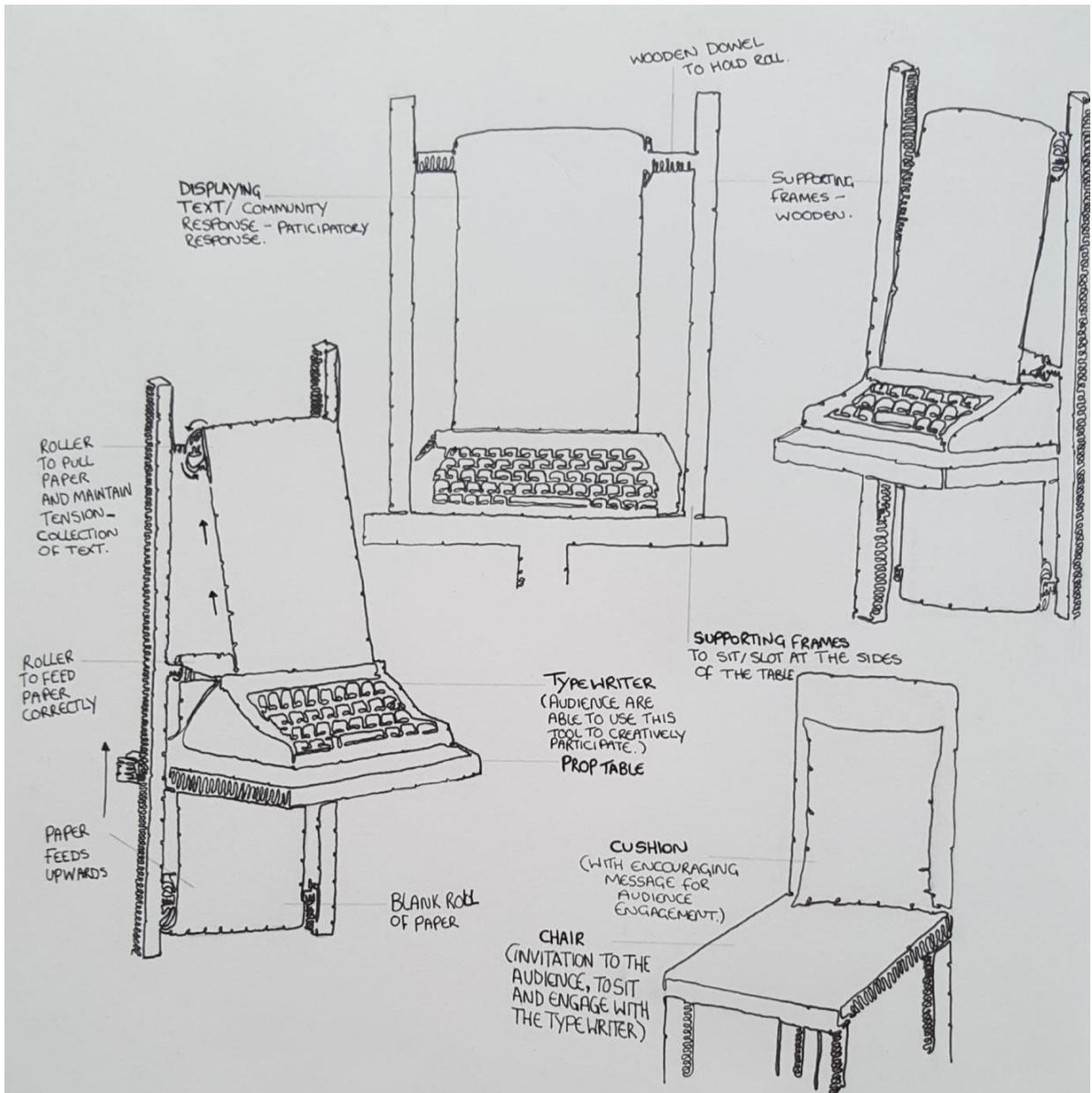


Fig 2. The forum design proposal (Eagles, 2019).

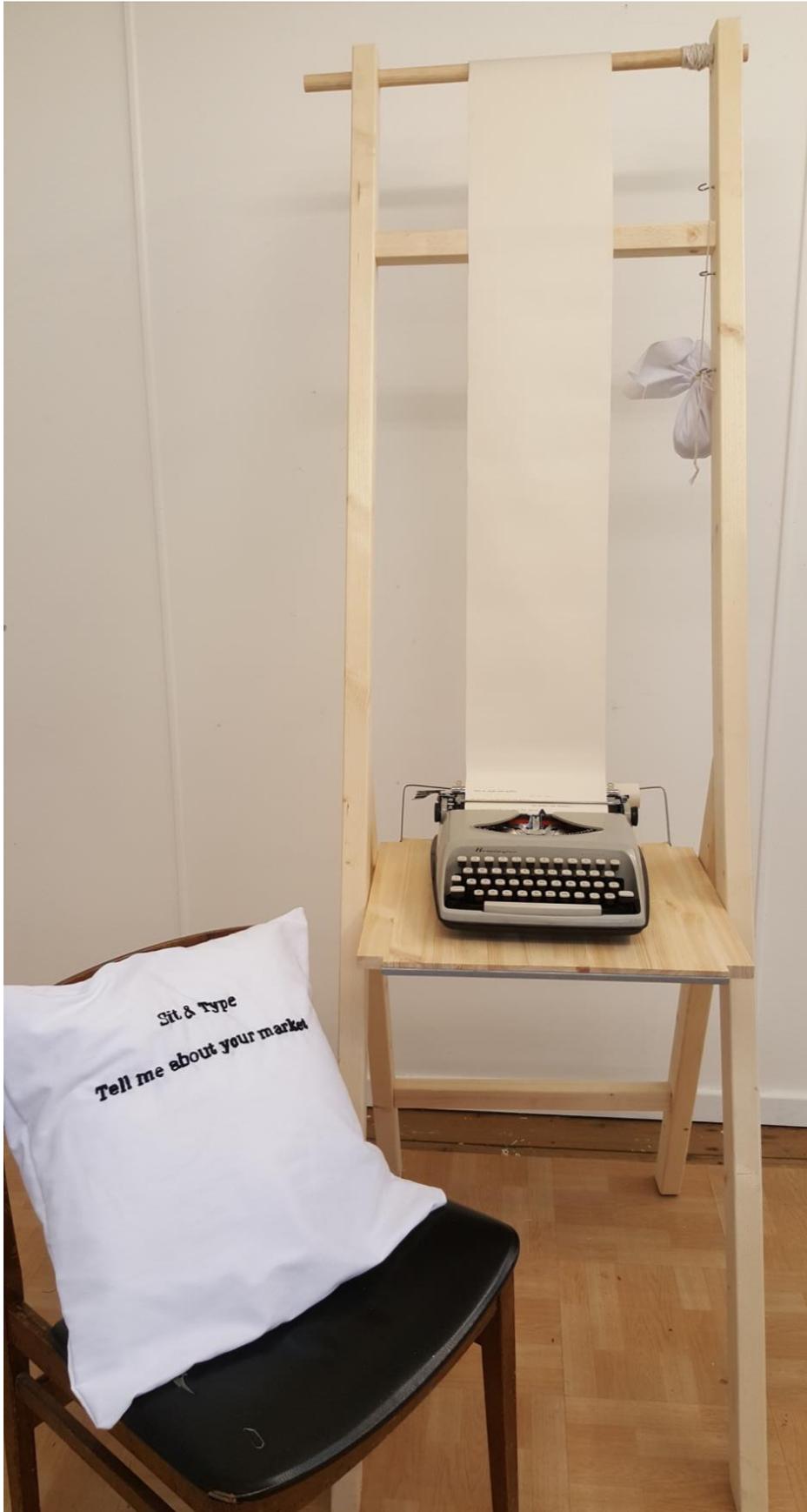


Fig 3. *The forum installation*. (Eagles, 2019).

### The Forum Observations:

It is here that my tone and language shall shift to reflect my role as researcher. I shall attempt to remain neutral and present my notes from observations in an effort to remain unbiased. I hope that these descriptions will support the grounds for further contemplation of the audience encounter with art. While the artwork was exhibited in the ‘*Situating Practices*’ (2019) exhibition, I adopted ethnographic methodologies to record the interactions between the art and the audience. I assumed the position of invigilator in the gallery for one day (the fourth day that the artwork was live). I returned to the artwork at additional points throughout the five days, to observe the engagement with *the forum* and to maintain its functioning. Throughout my observations, I remained out of sight from the audience, as to not impact their experience. *The forum* was in line of sight from the gallery.

### First Entry Observations:

During my first inspections, I discovered that *the forum* had many entries. Each varied in tone and narrative. Some of the entries stated why they had visited the market and which shops were favourable. One entry expressed a sincere fondness and attachment to the market and wrote: “The market is the family that you never knew you had and one you should have known sooner. I’ve been coming here for 47 years and have very fond memories [..]”. While another entry used *the forum* to promote the products which were sold in the florist where they worked. Another entry expressed that the market was failing.

Notably, some participants used the platform to respond to one another. Though, these exchanges appeared to be very short. They did not progress beyond one response from each participant. It appeared as though one entry was made and another participant would respond to it. It was also established that participants would state their name and nothing more. Others would format their entries by introducing themselves and write a personal fact. For example, one person wrote about how they liked arts and crafts and had planned to go glamping. One entry stated that the participant had visited the market with their friend and had travelled from another town. Lastly, one participant used the platform to write profanities.

Unfortunately, the amount of participant engagement may have been impacted, as I

discovered that the ink in the typewriter was low. The entries appeared faded with each new response. One participant used their entry to express this issue. The problem was rectified and the ink was replaced immediately. Furthermore, some participants had failed to notice when the typewriter had progressed to the furthest point on the page. The typed letters at the ends of some sentences had been pressed on top of one another and were no longer distinguishable. During this time, I did not observe any audience encounters.

### Second Entry Observations:

On the fourth exhibiting day for *the forum*, the Market Gallery invigilator expressed that the artwork had multiple new entries which contained offensive language. One entry included racial slurs, another included homophobic language and the last to be removed had a phone number to call to purchase drugs. They were redacted immediately, (Fig. 4). Despite the offensive entries, participants did not seem to deter from engaging with this piece. (As shown in fig. 4 & 5). The collaborators continued to co-produce the narrative by writing about the market. One entry stated: “I have blisters on my heels and they hurt, I couldn’t find the sweet shop [...]”, another shared: “Shame that it is so deserted, empty stalls...” It is in these responses, that we can see that *the forum* was provoking intellectual stimulation, as the audience members had been activated by the artwork.

Alternatively, it was discovered that some participants used the typewriter playfully by practicing their typing, and wrote: “The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.” While others chose not write words, but instead play with the keys. Similarities started to arise in the entries. The entries showed that the artwork had been used as a tool to communicate amongst one another, to convey their experience of the market, or to share a personal fact. Additionally, during the fourth day, it was the first time that an entry mentioned ‘the show’ (Fig. 4). It was later confirmed that the participant was referring to the exhibition.

it is currently two fifteen in the afternoon.

the clatter of cutlery can be heard from the cafe in the distance.  
conversations can be heard from all areas of the market.  
The piano plays on.

hello our first visit came to see show while shopping

drag queen star hewwo uwu whats this-?

-h-hewwow? i-is anybod thwere? OwO

somebody just look my kids. now, they re fortnit dn cing over me to assert  
dominance. :)

hi howare my n meis ellie and i love queensgate its wsome chela  
is a full time [redacted] lost lots of love bettie

farhad hannah rases and aara

r aaaaaa

Fig. 4. The forum entries. (Eagles, 2019).

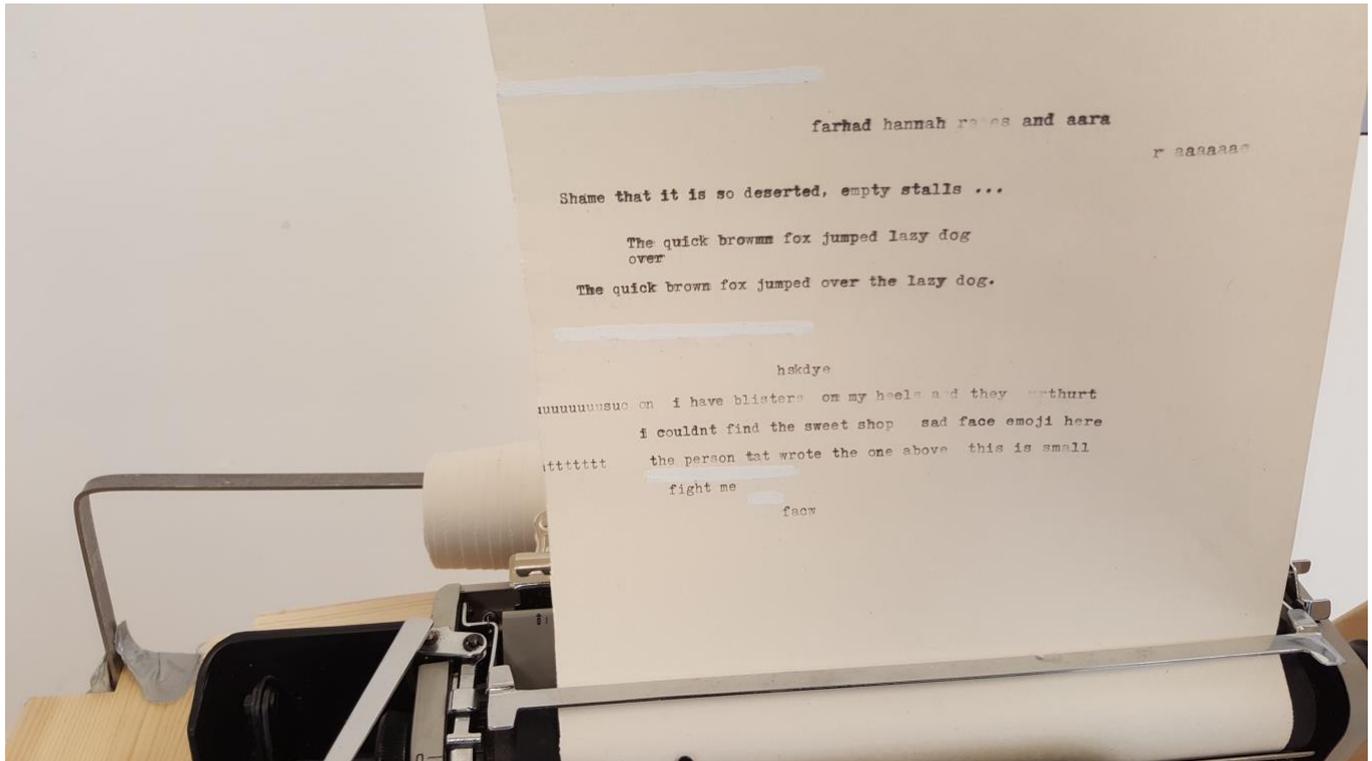


Fig. 5. *The forum removals*. (Eagles, 2019).

### Audience Observations:

On the fourth day, I assumed the position of invigilator and began to observe the audience's encounter with this piece. One of the first details acknowledged during my observations, was that the sound of the typewriter carried through the market and to the gallery. Throughout my time observing the audience engagement with the artwork, I discovered that varying positions were assumed. Some audience members were activated by the artwork and would choose to participate. Some would sit with the typewriter for varying lengths of time and write their entries. While others would use the chair to sit and read the displaying entries, or take a moment to rest.

I also observed that when *the forum* was in use, an additional audience member would inspect the structure and, or stand back to watch the participant's engagement with the work. I noted, that at one point a small crowd of six people gathered to observe a participant writing their entry. One couple had stopped to watch and through this action, they attracted the curiosity of other market goers to join and observe. The congregation of people caused one couple to approach the other viewers within the crowd, and enquire as to what the structure

was.

Later that day, two companions spent some time with the artwork. One appeared to type, while the other read the entries. Once the first participant had finished, they swapped positions. Additionally, I observed that some people would walk by the artwork without stopping. Though, it wasn't always clear if they had noticed it or not. Overall, of those who stopped to engage with *the forum*, dominantly they appeared to be shopping, as they were often carrying bags. It is also important to note, that during the invigilation I noticed that of those who did engage with the artwork, a small number progressed to visited The Market Gallery.

#### Final Entry & Engagement Observations:

I discovered on the last day of observations, that additional entries had been made. The entries appeared to follow similar patterns of engagement. The entries indicated that the participants had used the artwork to communicate with one another, state their name, play with the typewriter, declare a personal fact or write about the market. During my observations of the audience encounter with *the forum*, most people happened to pass by. Though, occasionally they would stop and briefly regard the artwork before moving on.

However, one participant spent a great length of time with *the forum*. This participant sat with the artwork and appeared to read each displaying entry before making their own. They used the artwork to express how they felt about the market. They wrote: "This wonderful place is the heart of our town. It makes the darkest day's spark with its artificial lighting, wonderful food stalls, people bustling in their day to day travels; habits founded years ago, passed through generations, just like the towns around us. Very few know just how it got here." This was the last entry. In total, approximately fifty-one entries had been made to *the forum*. (Since some entries were closely grouped or widely spread across the paper. The entries were counted based on the differences in narrative and, or distance between the texts.)

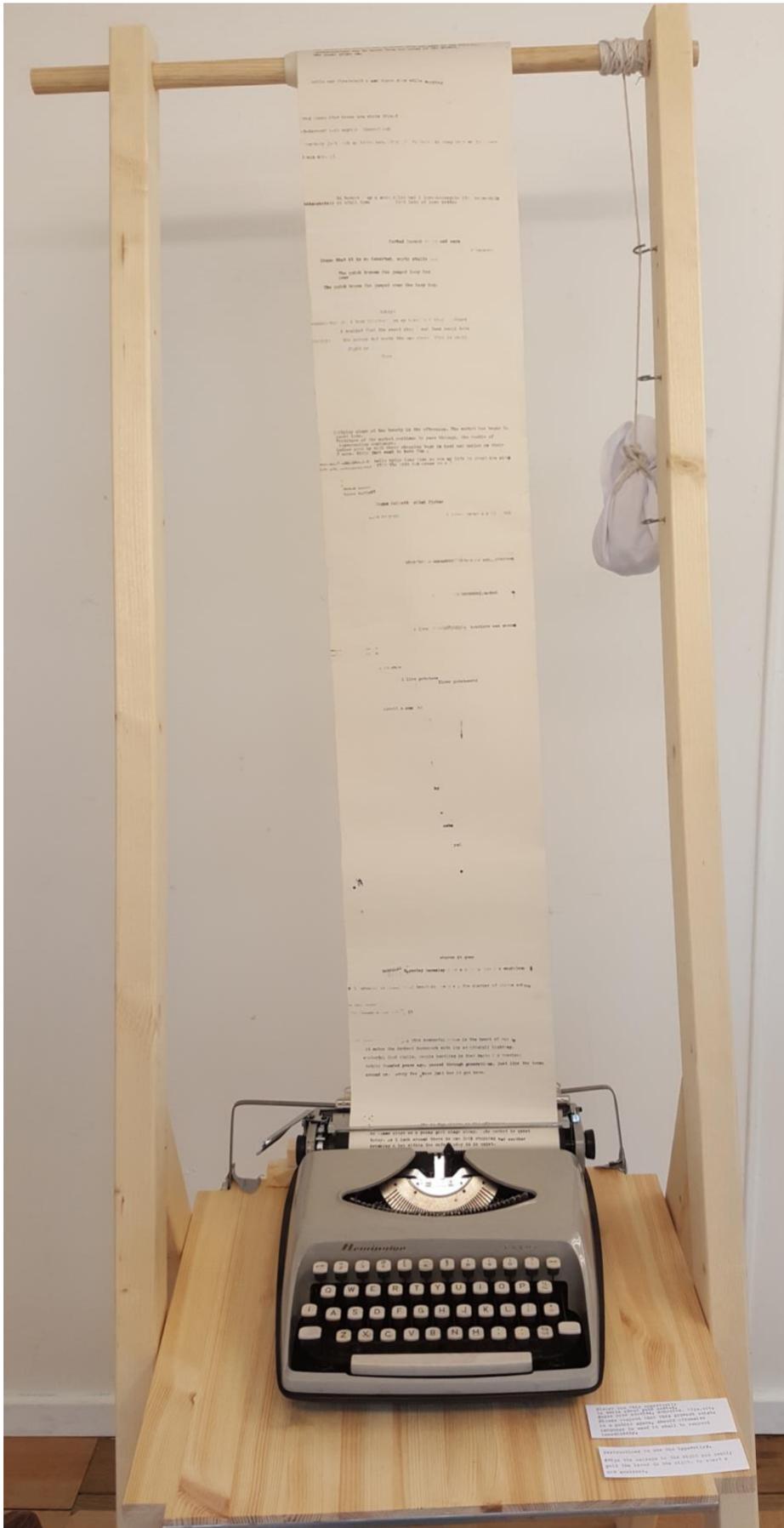


Fig. 6. *The forum* (Eagles, 2019).

## Conclusion:

Through the employment of using the artwork as an investigative tool and my ethnographic observations, I was able to gain an insight to the audience engagement with art in a public setting. I believe that this investigation provided an account of how an artwork can generate agency in its viewers and what that can look like. I observed that *the forum* engaged a variety of people, of all ages. Dominantly they appeared to be market visitors, due to the number of people who did not progress from, or to the gallery. However, I do acknowledge that there could be a number of reasons as to why this may have been. Since this artwork was installed in the exhibition for the last week, it stands to reason that some of these people may have already seen the exhibition. Nevertheless, *the forum* successfully gained fifty-one entries during the five days it was live. Each entry varied in narrative, format and approach to interacting with the artwork.

Based on the entries alone, it would seem that the artwork provoked action and agency during the encounter. *The forum* evidenced that the artwork compelled these audience members to act, and thereby collaborate. The entries demonstrated that the audience used this opportunity to communicate with one another. Whether it was through: a social exchange between strangers, friends, the promotion of goods, share a personal fact, express their thoughts or feelings for the market and, or to use the typewriter playfully. The collaborators used the artwork as a tool for expression, reflection, social interaction and play. It was observed that some participants would first spend time with the artwork, read the displaying dialog and were then compelled to add their entry.

Additionally, I documented that the artwork visually stimulated the audience. Though the visual engagement varied. I observed that people would stop to regard the artwork once they had noticed it. At times, the activated artwork presented as a performative piece which attracted a larger audience. It was noted, that the largest crowd which visually engaged with the artwork at one time, was six people. It appeared as though this was due to the crowd's curiosity of one participant's engagement with the structure.

Though I believe this piece was informative and exposed an example of the audience

encounter with art, I feel that my efforts to provoke the audience was flawed. On reflection, this artwork could have been much stronger had there have been no prompts. (Such as the cushion and the cards.) Perhaps, much like Duchamp's ready-mades, the mystery generated by this artwork would have produced a contextually stronger reflection of the audience encounter with art. Instead, the artwork may have appeared as a tool to reflect on the market. Nonetheless, the public exposure of the artwork provoked the immediate engagement from those who were triggered, or moved to act. Based on the number of entries and the observations of audience encounters, it would seem that *the forum* successfully infiltrated, recruited and, intellectually and physically generated action in these people.

*The forum* provoked action from a community of people who are connected by and, or are attached to the market. The artwork produced 'meaningful connections' amongst the audience and *the forum*, owing to their pre-established attachment to this territory. Regardless of their knowledge of art, the artwork roused the market visitors from their daily tasks and transformed them into an awakened, activated audience. If anything, *the forum* presented an example of the power art has to communicate to, intellectually trigger and produce action from those exposed to it.

### **Chapter Three:**

#### **An Ethnographic Investigation of The Market Gallery and The Huddersfield Art Gallery.**

In the last chapter, I provided an account of the audience encounter with art in a public setting via the utilisation of my artistic practice. I found that the artwork generated action and agency in those who had been exposed to it. Throughout this chapter, I shall investigate the conditions for the audience encounter with art in two gallery sites: The Market Gallery (Temporary Contemporary) and The Huddersfield Art Gallery. I intend to provide a perspective of the audience encounter with art by gaining an insight into their experience and behaviour in the two galleries, in addition to their motive to visit. I shall continue to consider

the experience of the ‘non-exclusive’ and ‘exclusive’ audience, as a means to comprehend the effects and experience of art. This is reflected in the locations of the two galleries. The buildings which house these galleries have dual identities and functions. The Market Gallery is situated in the Queensgate Market and The Huddersfield Art Gallery is located on the top floor of a shared building with the Huddersfield Library.

In an effort to attain an insight to the audience motive, behaviour and experience during their confrontation with art in these galleries, I employed ethnographic methodologies. I embedded myself in the two sites, either as an invigilator or visitor. The audience engagement with the artworks was documented and timed. Additionally, I aimed to provide the audience personal perspective of their experience in the galleries through informal conversations. In this chapter, I shall present the data accumulated from the investigations in two sections. The sections are divided into two separate accounts based on the site under investigation. The first account presents the data acquired in The Market Gallery and the second account explores the data gained in the Huddersfield Art Gallery.

#### Methodology:

I believed that the gallery site would provide the ability to conduct research without impacting or influencing the audience’s confrontation with art. Positioning the investigation in the gallery offered access to observe and document the audience behaviour, experience and personal perspective when engaging with the artworks. It was important that I implemented methodologies which would minimally effect the audience, so as to not bias their experience in the gallery. Therefore, I chose to embed myself in the two gallery sites. I adopted the role of invigilator in The Market Gallery and assumed the position of a visitor in the Huddersfield Art Gallery. The two galleries have a neutral ‘white cube’ aesthetic.

As previously established, these two galleries are located in Huddersfield’s town centre. The galleries are situated in buildings with dual functions and dual identities. For that reason, I believed that the two galleries could provide a perception of both the ‘exclusive’ and ‘non-exclusive’ audience’s encounter with art. As I determined in the ‘experiential’ section of the literature review, the location of the exhibition can support the recruitment of new audiences. Therefore, I believed that the location of The Market Gallery would be particularly

informative, owing to its location in the Queensgate Market and the support of the *Temporary Contemporary* initiative. Since, the initiative supports “[...] the conditions for creative and cultural activity, and creating democratic cultural activity produced by and for ‘non-exclusive audiences’.” (Temporary Contemporary, 2020, P. 83).

The methodologies applied in this investigation were inspired by the investigative methodologies conducted in Tröndle et al’s *An Integrative and Comprehensive Methodology for Studying Aesthetic Experience in the Field: Merging Movement Tracking, Physiology, and Psychological Data* (2014) and Devine-Wright & Breakwell’s *Evaluating Visitor Behaviour in a Museum Gallery* (1997). As such, a combination of ethnographic methodologies was used in the galleries. For instance: observations, documentation, placement mapping, tallying footfall, timing engagement, and the collection of data through exit informal conversations.

#### Research Results: The Market Gallery (Temporary Contemporary).

The investigation in The Market Gallery took place during October 2018 and lasted for three days. At this time, the *Showgirl Manifesto* (Carr, 2018) exhibition was on display. The exhibition consisted of nineteen artworks that comprised of: drawings, prints, photographs, videos, and audio accompanied with headphones. The Market Gallery was open to the public from 11:00 - 16:00. During this investigation I assumed the role of the invigilator in the gallery. I hoped that assuming the position of the invigilator, would provide a sense of being both invisible and visible to those visiting. As the invigilator, I was responsible for the functioning of the gallery. For example, the opening and closing of the gallery, ensuring that the art was working to the artists instructions and supporting the needs of the visitors. The additional responsibilities offered a greater insight to the functioning of the gallery and provided a familiarity to the site and displaying works of art.

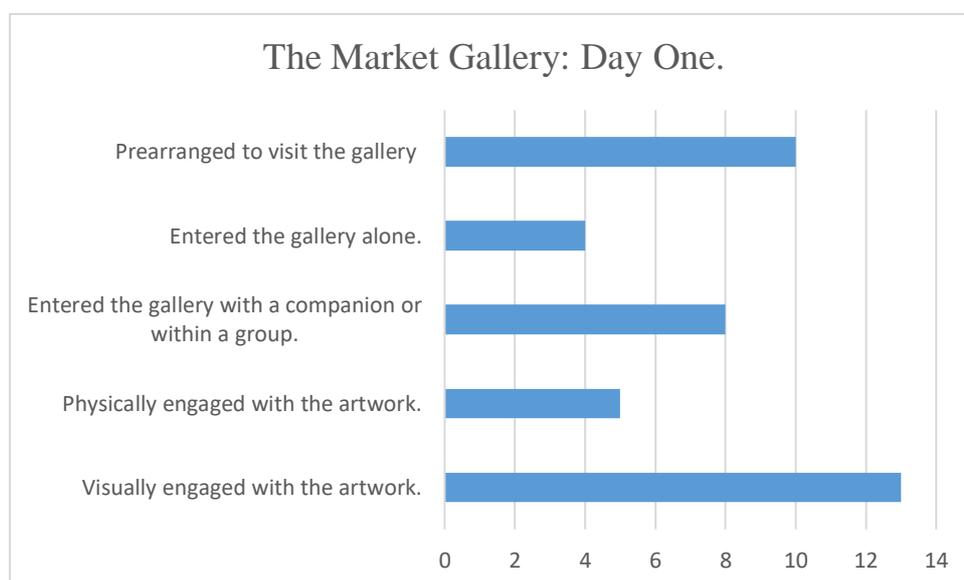
Due to time limitations, I determined that each day would concentrate on a different investigative approach as to gain a wider range of data. Day one consisted of observations and documentation of: footfall in the gallery, the behaviour and engagement of the audience when engaging with art, and the audience responses from exit questions. On day two, I combined the research methodologies from day one with: recording the time of day that the

gallery was visited, the length of time spent in the gallery and data gained from brief informal exit conversations. During day three, I conducted semi-structured informal exit conversations and developed individual profiles for each visitor in the gallery. Each profile was created by combining the methodologies employed throughout the previous days.

Conversation was used as a key methodology in this investigation. It provided a way to develop and understand the audience motive, perspective and their experience with the artworks and site. It is important to note that, the conversations remained informal, keeping the tone light and flexible. This allowed for a less invasive approach as a methodology. Thus, appealing to those who had limited time or confidence. The conversations lasted approximately between one to ten minutes.

### Day One:

The following section shall navigate through the data accumulated during day one. I shall present the footfall in the gallery, observations of the behaviour and engagement of the audience when encountering artworks, and the audience responses from the exit questions. Once the gallery had been set up for the day, the public entry point was opened and I would position myself by the entrance. This provided a visual of the gallery floor, and the ability to observe and document the audience from the start of their gallery experience. The footfall of gallery entries was recorded via a tally chart.



On day one, fourteen visitors entered the gallery. Thirteen visually engaged with the artwork by maintaining visual contact with an artwork for five seconds or more. Additionally, of the fourteen visitors, five physically engaged with the work. (This means that the artworks that had elements which could be physically handled, had been handled.) It was observed that of those who had physically engaged with the work, they proceeded to move around the entire exhibition, and visually engage with each displaying artwork in the exhibition.

I also found that of the fourteen who had entered the gallery, eight visitors had arrived either with a companion or in a group. The largest group consisted of four people, and the remaining four arrived in two sets of two. It was observed that of the eight visitors, six seemed less focused on the artwork and sustained conversations during this time. This appeared to affect the length of time spent with the artwork and in the gallery. Whereas, the remaining two split up and regarded the artworks individually. The remaining two came together once they had concluded their engagement with the art. At this point they began to discuss what they had thought of the artworks.

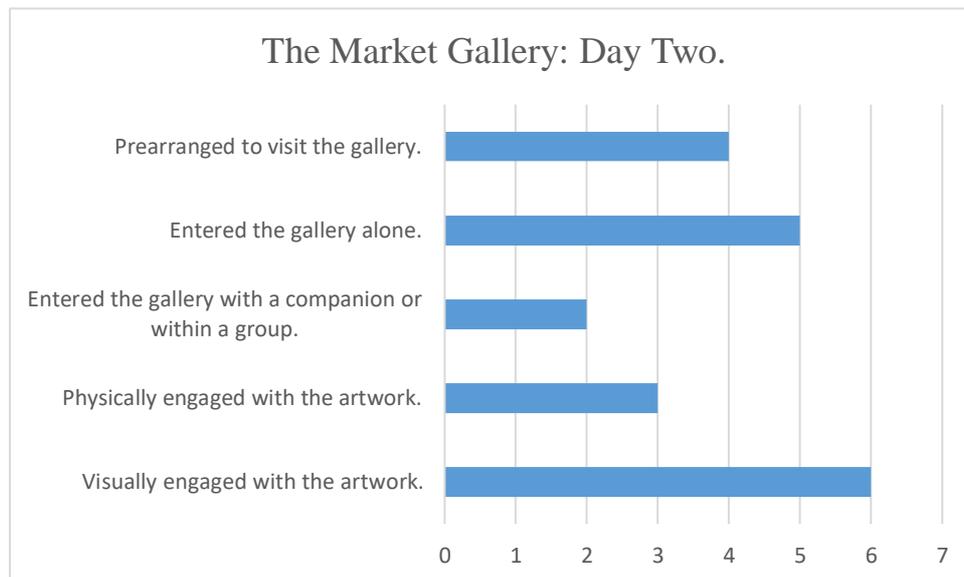
Lastly, thirteen of the fourteen visitors were asked whether they would like to fill in a comment slip for the gallery. I found that the comment slip was a good way to begin conversations with the visitors. I used this opportunity to ask what it was that brought them to the gallery. Ten of the thirteen expressed that they had been informed about either the exhibition or the gallery. While the remaining three stated that they had happened upon the gallery as a consequence of their visit to the market. It was also expressed that those who happened upon the gallery felt strongly in favour of a gallery being situated in the market.

Overall, the key discoveries gained from day one's data showed that the majority of visitors visually engaged with the artworks, while less than half physically engaged with the artwork. However, it was learnt that of those who physically engaged with the artwork, they appeared to commit themselves to the experience more so than those who had not. They spent a greater length of time with each artwork. Additionally, I observed that arriving with a companion or in a group created distraction from the artworks. The gallery was used as a space to socialise. Though, the art was not always the subject of the conversation, it was observed that the artworks did stimulate discussions in the group and one pair. Therefore, the artworks appeared to create social connections amongst those with a companion or in a group. Finally,

the exit question found that ten of the fourteen had known about the gallery prior to their visit, and had prearranged to visit the gallery. This did not present any differences in behaviour between those who had happened upon the gallery and those who had intended to visit the gallery.

### Day Two:

An attempt was made to gain an understanding of the audience encounter with art through: informal exit conversations, examining the time of day that the gallery was entered, tallying footfall, and timing engagement with the artworks and the gallery. Unfortunately, on day two the number for visitors dropped to seven. During the exit conversations, one of the following questions would be asked: Why have you visited the gallery today? What prompts you to visit a gallery? What are your thoughts when looking at an artwork and does it make you feel anything?



On the second day, one visitor entered the gallery and immediately exited. Six out of seven visually engaged with the artworks, while three of the seven visually and physically engaged with the artworks. Much like the observations of day one, those who had physically engaged with the artworks, appeared to be more committed to the experience of the gallery. They visually engaged with every artwork in the exhibition for greater lengths of time. The highest amount of time spent in the gallery, was twenty-four minutes and sixteen seconds. While the

shortest time was, one minute and fifty-seven seconds. I observed that the highest number of visits occurred between 11:00 – 12:00 and 14:00 – 15:00 and the lowest number of visits was between 15:00 - 16:00. However, the time of entry did not present any differences in the behaviour or engagement from the visitors.

Two of the seven visitors entered the gallery with a companion. Unlike the observations from day one, the companions did not appear to be distracted by one another. The artwork appeared to remain as their point of interest. The pair engaged with the artwork both individually and together, and discussed the artworks which they found particularly interesting. The artwork functioned as an stimulator and mediator for social interaction and connection.

At the point that the visitor was leaving the gallery, I would ask if they would participate in an informal exit conversation. Five of the seven visitors participated. Four responses were that the visitor had been told by an acquaintance to visit the gallery or a specific exhibition. The remaining three stated that they had happened upon the gallery, as a consequence of their visit to the market. In an attempt to continue the flow of conversation, I followed up by asking what it was that motivated them to visit a gallery. It was at this point, that the responses began to differ.

Three visitors expressed that it was part of their creative research process. One person elaborated and stated that they enjoy visually studying the artwork, as to understand the motive of the artist. One other visitor similarly expressed that they were intrigued and fascinated by how and why artworks are created. Finally, when asked ‘does it make you feel anything when looking at artworks?’ All three expressed that they experienced some form of emotional response. Two of the three explained that the gallery as a site caused a relaxed or calm reflective state within them. One visitor further explained that they have a personal attachment to galleries as an environment, as it reminds them of childhood activities with their parents.

I began to recognise consistencies in the behaviour of the visitors during day two. It appeared that those who physically engage with the artwork, spent a greater length of time in the gallery and proceeded to visually engage with each displaying artwork. Additionally, the artwork functioned as a mediator and stimulator for discussion between those who entered

the gallery with a companion. Lastly, I discovered that intellectual curiosity influenced the visitors motive to visit a gallery. The results from the exit conversation showed that the gallery was used as: a resource for research, a space to explore the artist's work and meanings through art. I also discovered that both the artwork and the gallery caused transitions in emotions and, or intellectual state. It was expressed that the artworks caused emotional transitioning, as the gallery environment induced nostalgia and calmness in its visitors. In addition to intellectual stimulation through investigating the artwork and contemplating the creative process of the artist.

### Day Three:

The final day of investigation consisted of a combination of all methodologies applied throughout the previous days, in addition to semi-structured conversations. Conversation proved to be the most informative approach throughout this investigation. It achieved valuable data and has allowed visitors of the gallery to share their personal perspective of their experience. The combination of data collected on day three has been developed into individual profiles for visitors who participated in the exit conversation. The following profiles are numbered and ordered linearly based on the time of entry. On the final day, the gallery had six visitors and five participated in the exit conversation.

#### **Visitor Number One:**

Entered at 11:34. Length of time in the gallery: 15 minutes.

Visitor number one entered the gallery alone and engaged visually with the artwork. When they were asked why it was they had visited the gallery. They expressed that they had been made aware of the gallery opening and was interested in the current exhibition. However, it was also expressed that their visit to the gallery was as a consequence of their visit to the market. The visitor suggested that they had an attachment to the market and that they hoped that the addition of the gallery would help to save the market.

#### **Visitor Number Two:**

Entered at 12:30. Length of time in the gallery: 12.16 minutes.

Visitor number two entered the gallery alone and engaged visually and physically with the exhibits. It was noted, that this visitor was documenting their experience on their phone by

taking photographs. When asked, why it was that they visit galleries, they responded that they have an active interest in how artists think and create artworks. They continued to elaborate and stated that artworks cause a sense of comfort and pleasure. They also expressed that they were comforted by the gallery environment. When asked why they visited this gallery, they explained that it was part of their research, creative process and curiosity of how artists think.

**Visitor Number Three:**

Entered at 12:54. Length of time in the gallery: 13.09 minutes.

Visitor number three visited the gallery alone and engaged visually with each artwork. It was observed that they would regard the artwork from a distance and then move closer to inspect it. When asked why they had visited the gallery, they stated that they had planned to visit the market and had happened upon the gallery. They stated that they loved installation artworks and have a history creating them. They continued to express an enthusiasm for art, by stating that they enjoy gaining other perspectives and stepping beyond the artwork, particularly when viewing installation artworks or interactive artworks. They believed that these two forms of art allowed for varying approaches when interacting with the art, as well as the development of connections between themselves and the artworks.

**Visitor Number Four:**

Entered at 14:04. Length of time in the gallery: 28.06 minutes.

They entered the gallery alone and engaged with the artworks visually and physically. Visitor number four spent time with each artwork in the gallery. This visitor communicated in the exit conversation, that their reason for visiting was to view the current exhibition. They stated that they found the artworks to be stunning and enjoyed the space.

**Visitor Number Five:**

Entered at 15:38. Length of time in the gallery: 6 minutes.

Visitor number five entered the gallery alone and visually engaged with the artworks. This visitor moved through the gallery and spent a short time focusing on the displaying artworks. When asked why it was that they had visited the gallery, they responded that they were visiting the market and had noticed the gallery. They expressed that it was not a place they would usually visit and that they had entered the gallery out of curiosity. However, they stated that they found the exhibition to be interesting.

### Summary:

The Market Gallery investigation presented an insight to the experience, influences and perspective of the audience's art encounter. This was achieved through the combination of observation, documentation and conversation. I made an attempt to share the personal perspective of the audience's engagement with art through informal conversation. This methodology proved to be the most informative in the investigation. While I recognise that three day's worth of research may not give an accurate reflection of the audience experience, it has provided some insight.

I observed that: relational connections, intellectual curiosity, an attachment to the space and the effect of the aesthetic triggers emotional and intellectual transitions. This proved to be the visitor's motive to visit and, or a consequence of their experience in the gallery. The gallery and art encounter was suggested to be a resource for knowledge gain, reflection and creative research. Additionally, the experience in the gallery and the encounter with art provided social stimulation for those in a group or with a companion. The art performed as a mediator and provocateur for dialogue. However, those who were alone expressed that they wanted to have a contemplative experience.

It is important to note, that not all visitors had planned to visit the gallery that day. While the majority of visitors had intended to visit the gallery and had a pre-existing interest or knowledge of art prior to their visit. Some visitors communicated, that they don't regularly visit galleries and that they entered The Market Gallery out of curiosity as a consequence of their visit to the market. These results evidence that The Market Gallery is accessed by both the 'exclusive' and 'non-exclusive' audience. Overall, the audience encounter with art in this location proved to stimulate the audience intellectually, socially and relationally.

### Research Results: Huddersfield Art Gallery

The ethnographic investigation in the Huddersfield Art Gallery occurred during November

2018. Due to the size of the gallery and the multiple active exhibitions, the investigation was situated in Stuart Roy Clarke's *The Game* (2018) exhibition. Throughout this investigation an ethnographic approach was used. I observed and documented the audience's behaviour and experience during their encounter with art and in the exhibition. I conducted research in this gallery from the position of a visitor. I intended to document observations of the audience, while blending in. The following section shall present my description of the exhibition and my observations of the audience experience when viewing Clarke's photographs.

### Audience Observations:

The collection was exhibited in a room with a 'white cube' aesthetic. The walls were lined with photographs which Clarke had shot over a period of thirty years. The photographs documented the development, culture and experiences associated with football. In the centre of the room resided a sofa and a TV screen. The TV silently displayed a slideshow of Clarke's photographs and a notebook in the form of a football pitch sat upon the arm of the sofa. The notebook contained feedback from the visitors of the exhibition. The arrangement of the sofa and TV evoked a sense of comfort and resembled the home environment of a football fan during a football game. The room was quiet, almost silent.

I documented that seven visitors entered the exhibition. For that reason, I dominantly focused on their behaviour in the gallery and their encounter with the artworks. I observed that four visitors entered the exhibition in a pair. The first pair moved around the entire exhibition and conversed quietly throughout this time. They read the information accompanying the artwork and then progressed to inspect it.

The second pair behaved differently. When arriving in the exhibition, the two separated from one another and began to move around the exhibits. They viewed every artwork individually. Once they had worked their way around the collection of photographs, the two started to discuss their thoughts. They discussed the photograph in front of them and their opinions of the exhibition overall. In this instance, the artwork and gallery space appeared to function as a social instrument for dialogue and social connection.

The remaining three visitors entered the gallery alone and moved silently through the

artworks. The three visitors visually engaged with each of the exhibiting photographs. They observed the artwork from a distance and then stepped closer, as to inspect the finer details of the photographs. I noted that the majority of the visitors who entered the exhibition were male and dressed in sports clothes. Such as, football club tops, or sporting tracksuits. Finally, I discovered that the entries within the feedback notebook expressed that the visitors had endured emotions of nostalgia when engaging with the exhibition. One entry wrote in the notebook that, 'it takes me back'.

The exhibition attracted an audience with a pre-existing knowledge of the subject matter. This was evidenced through the observations of the visitor's clothing. It appeared as though the majority of those who visited this exhibition during the investigation, were active supporters of football. It seemed that the sporting context of the photographs was the visitors motive to visit the gallery. While the exhibition successfully attracted the football community, I cannot be certain whether these visitors identified as the 'non-exclusive' or 'exclusive' audience. Furthermore, I observed that the gallery functioned as a space for social and relational stimulation. Visitors used the artworks as a topic to develop a dialogue between one another and, or re-live sporting moments from their past.

### Conclusion:

In this chapter I have presented two examples of the audience engagement with art in two gallery settings. I have observed the audience behaviour and experience when actively engaged in the gallery space, and gained an insight to the audience's personal perspective and motive to visit the gallery. In this investigation I documented the audience experience of twenty-six visitors in The Market Gallery and seven in the Huddersfield Art Gallery. While the investigative methodologies varied between the two sites, I observed that the art encounter functioned as a socially, relationally and intellectually stimulating experience. In both galleries the artworks performed as a provocateur for dialogue and the gallery experience performed as a social activity amongst visitors in a group or pair. I established through informal conversations that the visitors who arrived alone wanted a contemplative experience.

I discovered that the visitors within The Market Gallery used the experience as a resource for

intellectual stimulation. For instance, for knowledge gain, creative research, and contemplation. Through informal conversation, it was expressed that the gallery experience triggered the visitors emotionally and intellectually. Additionally, the context of the exhibits proved to recruit audience engagement. *The Game* (2018) evidenced that the context of the artwork can attract the attentions of a diverse audience. In this instance, sports enthusiasts. Alternatively, I discovered that the location of The Market Gallery was a contributor to the audiences visit. It was communicated that some visitors had ‘happened’ upon the gallery owing to their visit to the market. While I cannot confirm if the visitors of the Huddersfield Art Gallery identified as the ‘non-exclusive’ audience, it was evidenced that the location of The Market Gallery recruited visitors who did not actively pursue art. Overall, I believe this chapter has demonstrated that the two galleries have provided their visitors with an intellectually, socially and relationally stimulating experience through visual engagement.

## **Chapter Four:**

### **An Alternative Model for Experiencing Art Through Mindfulness**

In the last chapter, I established the art encounter within the gallery as a resource for intellectual, social and relational stimulation. I recognised that art had the capacity to emotionally and intellectually effect the audience through their engagement. In this chapter, I shall consider the intellectual and emotional authority art has on its audience and how this experience has been adapted to support the mental well-being of the public. This investigation took place within the Huddersfield Art Gallery. The gallery runs three mindful workshops and each workshop combines the art encounter with mindfulness.

The workshops were created in response to the *Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy* (Kirklees Council, 2014). The Kirklees Council wanted to encourage opportunities that support and strengthen the mental health of the community. They aimed to achieve this by creating events which encouraged positive social behaviours and mental health. The workshops have been developed to provide moments of presence, free of distraction and judgement. The workshops are directed by two mindful practitioners: Maggie O’Keefe and Becky Bracey.

The two focus on combining the mindful practice and art engagement. Bracey shared that,

Mindfulness is about being here and now in the present. The best way of doing that is to focus and notice how our senses are reacting to the present. Therefore, we use a very sensory approach to explore the art. (B. Bracey, Personal communication, May 2019).

In total there are three mindful workshops: mindful audio, mindful art and mindful drawing. The workshops aim to provide participants with techniques to engage with art, whilst being guided through a mindful experience. The workshops welcome people of all backgrounds, experiences and knowledges of art to participate.

### Methodology:

In this investigation I used ethnographic methodologies. I believed that participant observations would provide an insight to the participant's art encounter through the mindful workshops, and a personal perspective of this experience. I participated in and documented my experience of all three workshops. Additionally, in an effort to expand my knowledge of the mindful workshops and its effects, I interviewed the two mindful practitioners: O'Keefe and Bracey. The following chapter has been divided into three individual accounts of the mindful workshops. Each account presents a description of the mindful sessions with a summary of the experience and its effects.

### Mindful Audio:

Mindful audio, is a collection of digital recordings on the gallery's MP3 players. The MP3 players are available at request, at the Huddersfield Art Gallery reception. The MP3's contain mindful exercises guided by the mindful practitioner, Bracey. Each recording has mindful exercises tailored to a selection of artworks in the *Perspectives: Aspects of the Kirklees Collection* (Huddersfield Art Gallery, 2014-) exhibition. Each recording lasts for approximately fifteen minutes. The mindful audio exercise I selected for this investigation was tailored to the oil painting *Self Portrait with Jumbie Bird and Alter Ego* (Lyons, 1990). It is important to note my emotional and intellectual state prior to the mindful experience, as to

recognise the changes which occurred as a result of the mindful audio. At the beginning of the audio exercise I was feeling anxious and distracted.

Once I was stood in front of the artwork assigned to the audio, I started the recording and waited for the session to begin. Bracey spoke in a soft and calming tone. She encouraged the listener to inspect the painting, without reading the information accompanying it. Bracey then asked the listener to take deep, calm breaths and let go of everything that had happened before this moment. She instructed the listener to close their eyes and breathe deeply. A moment was dedicated to breathing and appreciating this time. Bracey encouraged the listener to use their senses to connect and anchor to the moment. Once the moment had passed, Bracey advised the listener to look at the painting whilst maintaining the breathing exercises.

Bracey began to guide the visual experience of the art encounter by asking questions and motivating the listener to inspect and think about the painting in different ways. She instructed the listener to consider how they responded to the painting and how it would feel to create an artwork of this scale. To notice the brushstrokes and areas of stillness within the painting and consider how your body would move if you were the one to paint it. Bracey then encouraged the listener to view the artwork from differing angles and distances. To move away from the painting and look at it again to see if something new was revealed.

Intermittently Bracey would prompt the listener to maintain the deep breaths established at the beginning of the audio. In an attempt to bring the listener back into a moment of presence, and preserve the calm and reflective nature of the exercise. Bracey finished the session by asking the listener to be still and to consider how they felt in this moment emotionally and physically.

### Summary:

I discovered that I became more receptive to the painting as a result of the mindful audio. The combination of breathing exercises, prompts to remain in the moment and the encouragement to consider the painting in varying ways, provided an enhanced sensitivity to the visual experience. I began to notice details within the painting which I had not noticed at the start of

the session. The painting gave an impression of high energy and humour. The brushstrokes appeared chaotic and the colour seemed to explode onto the canvas. I discovered, that as I assumed the various angles and distances, a new detail or a different colour would stand out and alter the appearance of the painting. The artwork performed as a mystery that I wanted to investigate. The more I inspected the painting, the more I wanted to know. Overall, the session provided a calm, reflective and intellectually stimulating experience with art. At the end of the session, I felt calm and contemplative.

### Mindful Art:

Mindful art is a monthly workshop, held at the Huddersfield Art Gallery. The sessions start at 12:30, for a duration of twenty-five minutes. In an attempt to make it accessible to all potential participants, the time was selected to facilitate those with working schedules. Mindful art is a live group session guided by the mindful practitioner, Bracey. The session combines mindful techniques and the art encounter. The mindful art workshops focuses on one artwork from the *Perspectives: Aspects of the Kirklees Collection* (Huddersfield Art Gallery, 2014-) per session. “The idea of exploring one artwork in detail is to encourage people to slow down and take notice, something that we have less and less time to do and which research shows can improve people’s mood.” (B. Bracey, Personal communication, May 2019).

The artwork used to conduct the session was selected by Bracey. Prior to the participant’s arrival, the selected artwork and the space surrounding it was prepared. The artwork had chairs laid out in front of it and the identifying information was covered. Bracey explained that, “[..] we always cover up the label as we don’t want people to come with a pre-conception of the art – we want them to be led by their own personal response [...]” (B. Bracey, Personal communication, May 2019). The artwork was a large painted portrait. The colours were muted and the subject was a small girl. In total, five participants attended. All five had an active interest in art and, or mindfulness. I documented that, on arrival I felt unfocused and fatigued.

Once everyone had arrived, Bracey invited the group to sit down. She explained who she was, what it was that we would be doing and why we would be doing it. The group was asked

if they had any experience with the mindful workshops. Of the five in attendance, one participant had no experience with the mindful practice, two participants had attended the mindful drawing workshop and the remaining two participants were regular attendees of mindful art.

Bracey began the session by instructing the participants to adjust their posture to maximise the mindful techniques. It was recommended to keep feet firmly onto the ground, to sit alert within the chairs with shoulders relaxed and hands resting on laps. Bracey instructed everyone to close their eyes and breathe deeply. While engaging in the breathing exercises, the group was guided through a mindful technique called 'body scanning'. The technique was used to enforce an awareness of the sensations within the body, as to remain focused on and within the moment. Bracey asked the group to consider how our bodies connected with our surroundings, starting from our head and moving down to our feet. During this exercise, she instructed the group to consider the sounds that could be heard.

The group was asked to slowly open their eyes and approach the artwork. A moment of time was given for everyone to examine this work. Bracey encouraged the group to inspect the artwork closely and from a distance, as to gain new perspectives and reveal new details. After everyone had finished, Bracey instructed the group to sit, divide into pairs, and discuss the discoveries from examining the painting. Each pair appeared to respect the opinions of one another and engaged in conversation. Once the conversations had concluded between the pairs, everyone was asked to discuss their experience of the artwork amongst the group. This stimulated conversation and a sense of connection. The group appeared enthused throughout discussing their perspective of the art. It was expressed that everyone had recognised and interpreted the artwork differently. However, two participants stated that they were discomforted by the painting. One participant shared that they found the painting to be eerie and cold, and therefore more interesting. Once the discussions had finished, the breathing exercises were repeated and the session was concluded.

### Summary:

The mindful techniques used within this session enforced a consistent state of presence, and an active intellectual state. I experienced an appreciation and sensitivity towards the painting

throughout my engagement. As a result of Bracey's prompts and mindful techniques, I became consciously focused on the artwork. I felt free of distraction and worries beyond this moment. The prompts maintained my focus on the painting and encouraged alternative ways to observe the artwork. Through inspecting the artwork from various angles and distances, I was able to appreciate various details which I had not noticed at the beginning of my inspection.

The painting appeared cold and absent of joy. It was muted in colour, the young girl was unsmiling and appeared small in comparison to her surroundings. The painting made me feel uncomfortable and empathic towards the young girl. Similar feelings were echoed in two other participants, as they expressed that the painting made them feel discomforted and cold. Evidently, the visual engagement with the painting produced transitions in the emotional state of myself and two participants. It was also acknowledged that each participant had interpreted the artwork differently. Lastly, I discovered that the mindful art experience generated social connections through conversation. The collaboration between the workshop and the artwork functioned as a stimulant for dialogue. The conversations generated positive responses within the group. Mindful art provided an intellectually, emotionally and socially stimulating experience. I departed from the gallery feeling rejuvenated, reflective and grateful for the experience.

### Mindful Drawing:

Mindful drawing is the longest workshop of the three. The workshop starts at 11:00 for a duration of two hours and takes place in the Huddersfield Art Gallery on selected Saturdays. Mindful drawing was situated within two areas of the gallery, the *Perspectives: Aspects of the Kirklees Collection* (Huddersfield Art Gallery, 2014-) exhibition and a private creative space. The workshop welcomes people of all backgrounds, experiences and knowledges of art. Mindful drawing is a live group session, led by practicing artist and mindful practitioner, O'Keefe. O'Keefe has been combining mindfulness and her art practice since 2016. Unlike the previous workshops, mindful drawing is divided into four sections. Each section focuses on providing a unique experience through the combination of mindful techniques, guided drawing and the encounter with art. In this session, the participants are encouraged to explore art through creativity.

O'Keefe explained that the "Participants are invited to spend time with the artwork, if possible to connect with the artwork." (K. O'Keefe, Personal communication, May 2019). She believes that "Drawing or making work in response to something encourages a deeper exploration and examination." (K. O'Keefe, Personal communication, May 2019). Through this experience O'Keefe shared that her participants have expressed via feedback, that they found the workshop to be a restful and rejuvenating experience that is thought provoking and challenging. I documented that on arrival, I felt flustered but eager to start.

### Exercise One:

The session began within the private creative space. This space had one large table adorned with art supplies. Such as, various sizes and styles of paper, paints, oil and chalk pastels, colouring pencils, scissors and glue. In total there was seven participants in attendance. O'Keefe introduced herself to the group and asked if anyone had any prior experience with art or mindfulness. Two expressed that they had little experience and confidence with art, and they hoped this experience would help them. One participant was a regular attendee to the mindful drawing workshops and four participants had expressed a level of knowledge and experience with art.

O'Keefe began the session by asking the group to select three coloured pencils from the supplies and to place them in front of their space at the table. The group was instructed to close their eyes and breathe deeply. It was recommended that everyone maintained a strong posture, as to fully benefit from the exercise. O'Keefe asked that everyone plant their feet firmly on the ground, sit alert within their chair and keep shoulders relaxed. While engaging within the breathing exercises, the 'body scanning' technique was implemented. The group was asked to think about how their bodies felt at that moment. To consider the sensations which could be felt and how it was that the body connected with the surroundings.

The participants were then asked to grasp one of the three selected coloured pencils, while keeping their eyes closed. O'Keefe instructed everyone to use their free hand to locate the paper laid out in front of them, and consider the sensations encountered in this action. On locating the supplies, the participants were asked to place the tip of the pencil to the paper

and draw a line with every inhale and exhale. The line was to represent the sensation of breath, while anchoring the participants within a present state. The pencils could be used as the participants desired, so long as a line was drawn with every breath and their eyes remained closed. The group was instructed to inhale to their maximum point and to exhale until all of the air was released. Once the exercise was concluded, everyone opened their eyes and briefly discussed what they thought of the experience. The results from this session are shown in fig 11.



Fig 11. *Mindful Drawing: Inhale, Exhale.* (Eagles, 2019).

### Exercise Two:

O’Keefe instructed the participants to select pastels and pieces of charcoal for the second exercise. The group then closed their eyes and began the breathing exercises. A moment was dedicated to appreciating this time and maintaining a present state. O’Keefe asked the group

to keep their eyes closed and locate the selected pastels and charcoal. She instructed that one hand was assigned to touch and explore the face, while the other hand mapped the sensations of what was felt. O'Keefe encouraged the group to be playful, and use the pastels, charcoal and fingers to create with. The sensations from touch was used to connect with the creative process and preserve the state of presence. Additionally, as a prompt to maintain the breathing exercises, or bring the focus back to the present, O'Keefe used the chime of her Tibetan singing bowl. Throughout the exercise the group maintained a calm steady breathing rhythm. Once the drawing exercise had concluded, the group opened their eyes and was given the opportunity to discuss, and appreciate one another's drawings. The results from this session are shown in fig 12.



Fig 12. *Mindful Drawing: Touch*. (Eagles 2019).

Exercise Three:

The third activity was situated in the *Perspectives: Aspects of the Kirklees Collection*

(Huddersfield Art Gallery, 2014-) exhibition. O’Keefe selected *The Falling Warrior* (Moore, 1956) sculpture as the artwork of focus. The group was given paper and a pencil, and was advised to walk around the sculpture. O’Keefe instructed the group to assume various distances and consider the different details from assuming new perspectives. Once the participants had walked around the sculpture, O’Keefe instructed the group to choose a point to start a continuous line drawing. The drawing was to be consistent, while steadily moving around the sculpture. The line had to remain continuous and the pencil could not break away from the paper. The group was asked not to think about how the drawing was developing, but instead concentrate on drawing the details observed within this moment. The participants were asked to maintain visual contact with the sculpture and draw without looking at the paper. Once the group had completed their drawings, O’Keefe directed everyone back to the creative space to discuss the creations. The creative outcome for this exercise is displayed in fig 13.

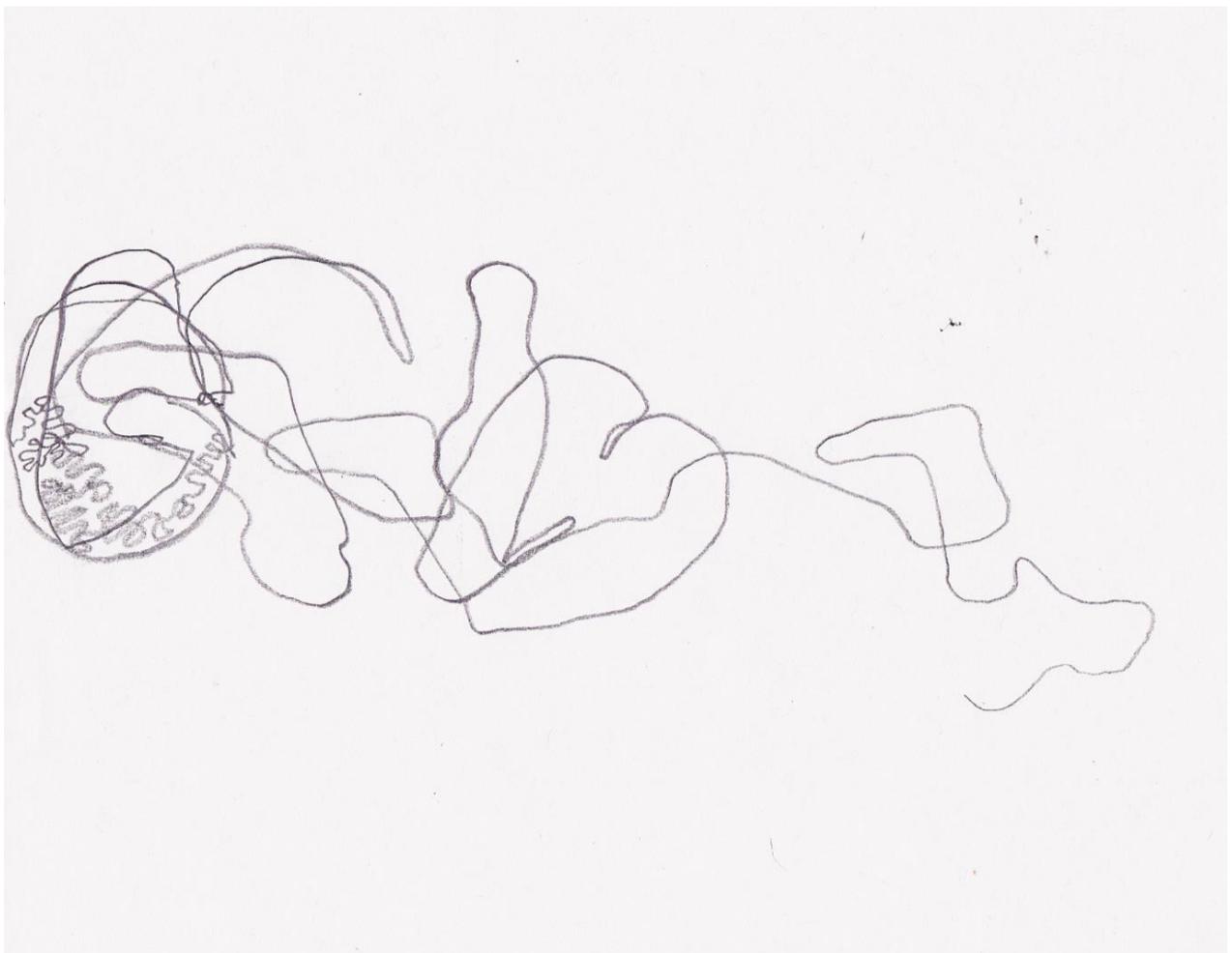


Fig 13. *Mindful Drawing: Perspectives*. (Eagles, 2019).

#### Exercise Four:

The final section of the workshop used mindful techniques, drawing and the art encounter. This exercise followed the same pattern as the previous exercises. The group was asked to close their eyes and O’Keefe started the guided breathing. Each breath was to be deliberate and focused. O’Keefe reminded the group that they must maintain their focus on, and within this moment, and to forget about any worries beyond this time. The group was reminded to keep their posture alert, ensuring that their backs were straight and connected with the chair. Once the breathing exercises had been completed, O’Keefe invited everyone to explore the *Perspectives: Aspects of the Kirklees Collection* (Huddersfield Art Gallery, 2014-) exhibition.

O’Keefe instructed the group to observe each artwork and select one that they were most drawn to. She asked the group to avoid reading the artworks identifying information and instead be led by their personal response to the work. In an effort to maintain the groups focus on the present moment, O’Keefe would chime her Tibetan singing bowl. With every chime, the group was to take one focused breath. Once the artworks were selected, the participants were instructed to choose materials to create with and return to their chosen artwork. O’Keefe then asked the group to creatively respond to their selected artworks. During this exercise, visitors of the gallery began to observe those who were drawing. The observing visitors approached the members in the group and began to discuss the creative responses and the selected artworks.

At the end of the activity the group was invited to take their drawings back to the table to discuss why and what it was that they created. Six of the seven shared their thoughts. It was learnt that, two participants had selected their artworks as they found the ‘stillness’ in their selected paintings visually pleasing and evoked a sense of calm within them. Two other participants shared that they had been attracted to the visual narrative of their chosen artworks and had related to it on a personal level. One participant selected their painting owing to its vibrant colours and organic forms, and I selected an artwork as I was attracted to the vibrant colour and energy. The result from this activity is shown in fig 14.



Fig 14. *Mindful Drawing: Reaction* (Eagles, 2019).

### Summary:

Mindful drawing provided an explorative, creative and calming experience. The session prompted a consistent focus on the present and encouraged a deeper connection to the art. I found that I was altered due to the mindful exercises and the exposure to the artwork. The exercises soothed me mentally and prepared my focus, while the visual exposure to the artwork triggered my intellectual position. Additionally, creatively responding to the artworks offered an alternate method for visually considering and exploring the works. Through the creative explorative exercises, I found that I was intellectually activated. My focus was enhanced as I consciously inspected the artworks. The more I investigated the artwork, the more I discovered within the artwork. I found this to be visually and intellectually rewarding. In addition, I discovered that the artworks ability to: visually please, calm, or relate to the participants influenced their motive to engage with their selected artworks.

Overall, the workshop supplied a safe and judgement free environment. It presented the group with the freedom to explore mindfulness, the art encounter and creativity. Each section offered the participants the opportunity and focus to connect with art. The mindful techniques employed a constant state of presence through the manipulation of sensations. The social elements within the workshop provided a sense of unity within the group. The participants displayed friendly and animated behaviours, and appeared stimulated by one another's experience, opinion, or creative outcomes. It appeared to be a positive experience for all involved. I departed from the workshop feeling mentally focused, rejuvenated and contented.

### Conclusion:

In this chapter, I have presented an alternative model for experiencing art through mindfulness. I have considered the collaboration between the influences of the art encounter and the benefits from the mindful practice. The participants were encouraged to disregard their worries beyond this experience and, instead redirect their focus to the present and the art encounter. The workshops encouragement to focus on the present, enhanced the visual engagements and provided a deeper connection to art.

While the mindful techniques enhanced and heightened the participant's receptivity and focus on the art, it was the artwork which triggered intellectual and emotional stimulation. The artwork performed as a mystery to be uncovered. In my experience, I found that the more I discovered in the art, the more I wanted to know. This was intellectually and visually rewarding. Additionally, participants expressed in the mindful art workshop, that each person had interpreted the artwork differently. Thus evidencing that the artwork had provided a unique response in each person, regardless of their experience or knowledges of art. This was further supported within the mindful art workshop, as Bracey would remove the identifying information to ensure that the participants were guided by their personal responses. Furthermore, it was established that the artwork emotionally effected two participants and myself during the mindful art workshop, as the art generated empathetic and discomfoted responses. Similarly, in the mindful drawing workshop, participants acknowledged that the effects of the artwork motivated their desire to engage with specific works. Such as: the ability to relate to the artwork, visual pleasure and being calmed.

Lastly, I determined that the artwork performed as a social stimulant. The mindful art and mindful drawing sessions evidenced that art is a provocateur for conversation. During the social elements within the workshops, a sense of unity was developed amongst the group. The groups appeared engaged and enthused during the discussions. While I recognise that the mindful workshops facilitated the development of these conversations. It was evidenced during the mindful drawing workshop that the art stimulated social dialogue between the visitors of the gallery and the participants of the workshop. The visitors independently approached the participants to discuss the selected artworks and the creative responses.

Overall, I found the mindful workshops to be a positive experience and nurturing for my mental well-being. The experience offered a mental escape and rest-bite in the form of the art encounter. The experience was intellectually stimulating, explorative, creative and calming. With each departure from the workshop's, I felt grateful for the experience and, emotionally and intellectually enriched. I believe that through this investigation I have presented that the intellectual, emotional and social influence of the art encounter provides the mindful workshops with a valuable supportive aid for mental health.

## **Conclusion:**

[...] we enrich our lives through art and culture [...] (B. Bracey, Personal communication, May 2019).

In life we encounter objects and accept them without a second thought. However, when a person encounters the object of art, they are altered. In this thesis, I have presented an exploration and articulation of the relationship between art and its audience. I have presented an insight to the authority and influence of the art encounter through three perspectives: the art, the artist and the audience. I achieved this through the deployment of my creative practice, my position as an artist and data retrieval through ethnographic methodologies. Such as: interviews, informal conversation, observation and participant observation.

Through my investigations, I have located art as a provocateur for activation. I established that art has the capacity to alter the audience via their encounter. Common discoveries found throughout this thesis was that intellectual, social, and relational stimulation was a regular response in the audience as a result of their engagement with art. In the ‘activation’ section of the literature review, I recognised that art differs from an ordinary object, as its natural position is to be contemplated. The ‘meanings’ and concepts infused in art operate as a mystery to be investigated. Art invites its viewer to delve further and seek meaning from it. It provokes the viewer into intellectual activation and produces “[...] activated thinking [...]” (Bishop, 2005. P.35).

Through *the forum*, this assessment was given form. *The forum* proved to activate those who saw it and provoked an intellectually active state. I witnessed that the artwork successfully engaged the attentions of a variety of market visitors. *The forum* existed in a public space and therefore was exposed to a diverse audience. Since *the forum* was situated in the market, I was able to observe how an artwork can engage the attentions of the ‘non-exclusive’ and ‘exclusive’ audience. *The forum* demonstrated the artworks ability to rouse the market visitors from their daily tasks, and convert them into an activated and awakened audience through visual engagement. *The forum* conjured a sense of mystery. Market visitors would stop to consider the artwork once they had noticed it.

Through visual engagement, the audience was compelled to act. I observed that the audience would inspect *the forum*, the developing dialogue and were then triggered to add their entry. By activating the audience, the artwork generated agency within its viewers. That is to say, that the artwork provided the audience “[...] the capacity to know and the power to act.” (Ranciere, 2009, P.2). Fifty-one entries were made to *the forum* while it was live. This alone verifies that the artwork generated agency. The entries illustrated that the audience used *the forum* for: reflection, social interaction, expression and play. The artwork produced meaningful connections between the audience and the art, owing to its context and the location it was exhibited. Through observations and the deployment of my art practice as an investigative instrument, I determined that *the forum* operated as an activator and generator of agency.

The art encounter within the gallery site was shown to be a resource for intellectual, social and relational stimulation. Arts capacity to activate the audience proved to be a motivator for

the audience's visit to the gallery. Texts such as, *Forces for Change (1994)*, *Evaluating Visitor Behaviour in a Museum Gallery (1997)* and *Audience for Visual Arts (2019)* presented that the audience's desire to visit the gallery was linked to intellectual and social stimulation. This finding was further corroborated in the investigation of The Market Gallery (Temporary Contemporary) and The Huddersfield Art Gallery. The audience expressed that their reasoning for their visit to the gallery was associated with intellectual stimulation. They used the art encounter as a resource for knowledge gain, creative research and contemplation. This was both their motive to visit and a consequence of their encounter with art.

As previously established in the literature review, Bourriaud claimed that “[...] art has always been relation to some extent. It has, in other words, always been a factor in sociability and has always been the basis for a dialogue.” (Bourriaud, 1998. P. 161). The observations in the two gallery sites supported this statement. The act of viewing artworks provides a social activity amongst visitors in a group or pair. In both galleries, it was observed that by the audience actively investigating and contemplating the artwork, the artwork influenced social connections and dialogue. The art functioned as a mediator and producer for conversation. Additionally, the audience's ability to relate to the context of the art proved to be a stimulator for their visit and a trigger for emotional reactions. *The Game (2018)* illustrated that the context of art can recruit a diverse audience. The art encounter in the gallery offered its audience an intellectual, social and relational experience.

Arts ability to intellectually, relationally, and socially stimulate its audience was used as an asset for the mindful practice. The workshops provided an alternate model for experiencing art and supporting the mental health of the public. The investigation of the mindful workshops demonstrated art's capacity to alter its audience, and how the influences of art can be used to produce positive experiences which support the public's health. The mindful techniques used in the workshops mentally prepared the viewer by directing their focus on the artworks and encouraged a sense of presence. By concentrating the viewers focus onto the art, it enhanced the experience of the art encounter and provided a deeper connection to the art. The mindful techniques enhanced the influences which the art evokes. The investigation of the mindful workshops illustrated: how art can activate and intellectually stimulate the audience, how the art encounter can be used for social connection, and how the engagement with art can produce relational, and emotional responses. The collaboration between mindfulness and the art encounter provided a nurturing and significantly beneficial use of art.

In this thesis, I have made a conscious effort to consider the ‘exclusive’ and ‘non-exclusive’ audience’s engagement with art. Through my investigations, I found that the audience had similar responses from their encounter, regardless of their existing knowledges or experience with art. This further supports that “[...] art is inclusive; art never excludes.” (Hirschhorn, 2013, P.79). While, I recognise that this investigation is small in comparison to the complexity of the subject and has limitations due to: the limited number of viewers observed, the sites explored and the length of time investigating. I do believe that I have presented how the art can influence its audience through their encounter, and a perception of the relationship between art and audience.

I began this investigation questioning the authority of art and how it alters its viewer. Through this investigation I have learnt that the audience is altered by the object of art as: it is an object that intellectually activates, an object that socially stimulates and an object for relational connection. It can educate, generate links and emotionally stimulate. In my opinion, the art encounter is powerful and provides its audience with an invaluable resource.

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## **Appendix Portfolio**

### **Interviews:**

#### **1.0**

*The investigation of 'Well-Being' in association with the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.*

Charlotte Eagles in conversation with Claire Booth, Collaborative Doctoral Award Student (University of Huddersfield and YSP), Huddersfield University, Huddersfield.

April 2019.

CE: Based on your research, how do you feel that the environmental experience of the gallery/site affects the audience?

CB: So, I think people are affected by the environment, to start with. In my research, people told me, that particularly at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, that they appreciated that the environment was quite open. Because of the space they really valued and even the gallery – so that was outdoors. But also the galleries that the things themselves give a lot of space and I think that, that is something you see there, like most of their curation. That it's quite teared back, there's not a lot of information. There's not a lot of labels, it's kind of things like, left to exist in the space and also they have the luxury of having really big galleries. So, people like that. They also really like that it wasn't prescriptive, so there wasn't a set way around. Because they were kind of talking about, in contrast to somewhere like the National Gallery

or the Louvre, where there are kind of routes which you have to-

CE: Have to take?

CB: Well, not necessarily have to, but your like... It's almost like, sign posted and then you know, you kind of get swept up in that and end up in a route march. I have to see this, I have to see this and they kind of were saying that- (and again this is based off of like, fifteen people's opinions, so not like, everyone.) But these particular people were saying, that they really liked, that there was no set way around and you could choose, choose your own experience and that was something to do with the amount of space in the park as well. So that, on one day you go around that way and on another day you go around another way, depending on what you felt like on the day. You could choose to go to certain artworks, or like, if you were feeling kind of down, you can go and see your old favourites- the ones that are comforting. Or if you were wanting to be challenged, you go to something new, or something like that. So that's kind of, that freedom of that kind of space affords, was really important for people. Yeah, it was changing as well. So the environment itself changes, with the seasons and changing exhibitions, new works being installed and through the seasons the landscape changes, you get to see something you wouldn't get to see something before, so something could appear behind the trees, or because it's a different colour to the grass, the sky kind of looks different and things like that. So they were the main things about the environment, that were affecting the experience.

CE: When reading it, (referencing Claire's work) I found it really interesting. I hadn't really thought about the influence or effects of seasons either.

CB: I think that is the thing as well about, people who go there regularly, they go for things like that. Whereas, you know, I did a bit. Because, I was looking, at that point, I was looking for it. I would go out and do bits of writing, at different times of the year. It was really sporadic and normally, it would be when it was really nice weather. You know, I didn't want to go outside when it was raining. But then, I know people who I talked to, that would come at all weathers. You know, come and see something and something like, a particular sculpture that they would like to see when it was raining. Particularly the stone ones, I think, because of the surface when it is wet.

CE: I hadn't thought of that; I imagine that would look quite nice.

CB: Or like, on the Henry Moore's there is one with a plinth, where when it gets wet it gets a layer of water and it reflects the sky. So it is like a mirror, so we saw that and especially when people like to come and take photos, they come for those kinds of things and people who sometimes come when it is snowing, or when it is really dramatic weather because they want to come and take photos. So they'll again, be coming to the same spot to take the same photo, but with different weather. So I thought- especially when they're there on the days when it is really quiet and I was trying to do a piolet questionnaire and it was really bad weather, they were the only people there. The people that were coming to take photos.

CE: Did you find that the environment experience influenced links/connections socially between the audience members?

CB: Yeah, I think the space around, for me- the space around an artwork is always a social space. So one of the things I am really interested in, Alfred Gell's *Anthropological theory of art*. That is one of the reasons that I did the project, the way that I did it. He kind of see's that art's encounter- it's quite similar to Bourriaud, *Relational Encounter*- of the art space as a social one. It could generate relations between the viewer and the artwork, and the artist. The artwork is the pivot between social relations between the viewer and the artist. I really like that. So that space is always a social space, but then obviously they are other people who recognise that as well. It's like, those thoughts of 'I wonder what they were thinking about', that is a social experience, you're thinking about the connection to something else, with the artist. But then people did also, talk about the shared space, in terms of each other. One participant described it as a temporary community, which I quite liked. I like that. But even if you come on your own, you can look at an artwork and you share a moment with somebody who is also looking at it and again, it's kind of space that allows you to do that. It allows you to walk around and interact with it in different ways and walk past and kind of... Or even quite funny experiences, for myself was, walking behind this group of people- and I just wanted to be on my own. I was thinking, thinking-walking and they kept stopping, so I kept over taking them and then I would stop and they would over-take me. I was awkward all the way, all the way around and it was really painful. So, I was having to stop and sit for ten minutes, until they got far enough ahead of me, that I knew I wouldn't overtake them again. So that was an interesting little social interaction going on there, because you want to give

each other space. So I think with those, those kind of facilitated by the space around the artwork. There are some people that will ask, that will go and talk to people and be like 'oh, what do you think about this?' - I would never do that, but those particular kinds of people took part in my research, that are a bit more kind of proud to know stuff...

CE: Have an insight?

CB: Yeah, so they would want to share it.

CE: I have found that you have to be really careful with that, because people are all at different levels of- maybe... confidence in a sense and also, there can sometimes be a bit of a hierarchy around art.

CB: Yeah, definitely, yeah.

CE: Some people tend to shy away from that.

CB: I think what we were talking about- I keep trying not to say people's names and it is really hard... What so and so was talking about, was that if you overhear people talking and they would be like: 'Oh, I don't know what this is about', 'this looks like this to me, but I don't really get it'. He would then kind of, intervene and be like: 'Oh well, you could look at it, like this or you could look at it like that?'. So it's not like, rolling up to people and being like, 'this is what I think, this is what I think!', if he could hear people that were struggling to get it, he would help them to get it. Which, I quite liked that. He was a teacher anyway, so I guess that's why- always a teaching moment or a learning moment.

CE: Did you find that the aesthetic experience influenced relational links/connections either socially between the audience members or the audience and the exhibited work?

CB: Yeah, so I found quite- I guess I answered it in the other question. Yeah, again, what I put down was that the aesthetic experience, for me is always social and that Alfred Gell's work and his idea of artwork as traps. Which I really like. They're thought traps.

CE: From your findings how valuable is it to the audience to relate to this exhibited work?

CB: This is an interesting one, because I was quite interested in a lot of cognitive science studies about aesthetics, stress that understanding that what you do is to always understand the artwork. That's like the motivation, but I didn't really agree with that. I didn't have a reference for that. So as part of one of the workshops I asked people about this and they were saying that actually understanding the artwork in terms of what it is about, that wasn't very important. But understanding what it meant for them was important, so having a personal connection with it was seen as being valuable. But having a knowledge about it wasn't as valuable or not in the moment. So, they were saying that, they didn't want their initial interaction with it to be almost like 'muddied' by knowledge, in a way and then it was a perfect follow up afterwards and go and look it up. But they wanted their initial interaction to be a personal connection and what you think about it and how you feel about it.

CE: Similar to Leeds Art Gallery, a lady who works there said that sometimes she wishes that she didn't have the information out for the artworks. So that people could go in and experience it, as opposed to learn about it and then understand based on what it was they had read.

CB: Yeah, end up having a read and then look up. Yeah. That was important, that kind of general visitors- I feel quite awkward calling them that, because they are people. Though, that was the consensus, was that it didn't really matter, whether you knew about it or not, you just had to know what it meant to you. I think that is again, one of those things as you said, was a kind of nervousness about the hierarchy of knowledge and perhaps it is about presenting that as an alternative. That you don't need to know everything about it, you just need to come and have a way of thinking, that is accepting towards works- maybe.

CE: From your findings, what was the most important/valuable aspects during the audience experience within the YSP environment?

CB: Yeah, so I am going too real off a load of lists now, because this is what was the findings. So these are the things seen as the most important/valuable aspects from my research workshops. So; freedom and choice, but also feeling safe and contained to a certain extent. So, the kind of freedom to choose where you wanted to go, but within limits. That was

quite important, that people felt contained. It's like you can't go on forever, but there is enough to go quite far and that is like a theory called *the restorative environment theory*. Which is a bit of environmental psychology, which is quite interesting. One of those is- one of the things they say mixed with restorative environment, is extent and that is a similar kind of thing. That you can go quite far, but there is a limit and people like that. So after that, it was the open-changing environment, which we talked about earlier. So being able to find new discoveries and having the space to connect with the artwork, and then welcoming, safe and informal environment. So having a sense of belonging, but obviously these people come regularly, so they will have that and I am quite interested in how you can help someone else to have that. Because, that is really important. So, especially the informality of it, compared to whether other places- other galleries that they were talking about, is like you can just turn up and you don't have to be in gallery mode. It's more, informal.

CE: Yeah, because you wrote in your work about how people would picnic and engage in different activities. You can use that space in different ways.

CB: Yeah, in different ways and also, there was a really nice quote that someone said; 'that once I have got here and I haven't run anyone over. I don't have to think about anything'. That was it. 'Once I have got here and I make sure I haven't crashed into a tree' and then after that you can be whatever you want. It doesn't matter, you can just kind of relax. But I am not sure that everyone would feel that way. I think it is certain people that have been coming for a really long time that feel that way.

CE: They will have an idea of what it is that they find acceptable in that space, won't they as well.

CB: Yeah. Whereas, I think it's like a spectrum, isn't there? Because there are people that treat it almost too informally, like disrespectfully. Like, climbing all over the sculptures. I have seen loads of it. So, there is that kind of informality. Because it's a park, people see at as not being art or not being valuable, so there is a thing about value there. Like, if it's in a gallery, it is valuable. If it is outside, it can't be that valuable. So then, that kind of informality almost makes it quite difficult to manage. But then, equally so, those people are coming that wouldn't necessarily go to other galleries.

CE: That is quite interesting, that mind set. As a result of a different layout or environment.

CB: It's like a free for all. So sometimes we have to rope stuff off, it's because someone has climbed on it and the person who is loaning it- either it's been damaged because someone had climbed on it, or it's unsafe. So then, they have to rope things off and then that changes the environment as well. Because the whole thing is that, you have an almost- open access to these works which again, is quite unusual. You could touch it if you wanted to, but if people do... then no one can.

CE: There is a fine line there...

CB: A respect, kind of thing. Which is quite an interesting thing.

CE: I have only ever been to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park once, so I have the one experience in mind. I couldn't imagine anyone climbing on the works... That would never come to my head.

CB: Go in the summer holidays and you will see it all in place. It can be quite stressful.

CE: Did you find that the audience would leave their experience in a particular state, emotional or otherwise?

CB: Not really, people say that they feel better for having come. But I think that manifests in different ways and is a really subjective thing. Everyone would have their own thing that they left with, but it wasn't a specific thing. That was a kind of a difficulty in the project, in the end. What I realised was that, when you try and ask people about those things, you almost need an infinite list of measurements. So, maybe that's impossible, do the stories instead. Do the experience stories, because it's also dependent on what you were thinking about, before you came...

CE: The state of you?

CB: The state of you at that time. All of the things you have seen, there are so many variables there, it just would be nearly impossible to... I don't know

CE: To try and gage?

CB: To try and gage it, yeah.

CE: Did you find that those visiting the YSP, had a common motive?

CB: Well, again. All of the people come for all sorts of reasons. This is their official business statistics, which I found quite interesting. So, the general reason for the visit was mostly for a general day out. That was 56% of people, in their survey, that said they come for a general day out. 42% said they came to take a walk or get fresh air. 33% said to see the sculptures in general and 30% to enjoy the countryside. So that is quite interesting that the sculpture is not the top of the list. That was based on giving them three options and then when they had to choose one option from them... So they could choose three and then they were asked to choose what was the most important one. 48% said a general day out and 21% of people, to take a walk or fresh air and then the third one- I didn't write down the percentage for this one- was to see sculpture. So it's the third on the list. That was from their big survey, which I think is fascinating and then from my own participants, it's quite varied. They would come for a walk- these are things that they have said at our first meeting, when I asked them why they come- to see the exhibition or to see old favourites. To get a bit of space, some come volunteering and some of them said they come for different reasons at different times and have different heads on when they come. They might come to walk and walk for health almost, for a proper walk or they might come for a more meandering walk, or are off to meet somebody and then go and see different things. They will come each time with a different way of viewing things. I found that quite interesting. I did an open day, where I was testing out some of the idea's from the research and what was popular then. So this is where I had a list of things, and people had to select the ones that they agreed with, from the list of stuff that I had selected. What I ended up with was this massive list of stuff of things that people had said, like categories and themes. So, how do you start to differentiating them? Because, I only had fifteen people talking in depth and that isn't enough to kind of- so I did a questionnaire and then had the top most popular things and ask people to circle ones that they agreed with. These are the ones that all got over ten votes: being out in the landscape, spending time in nature, space for a time out or escape, having a cognitive experience, the changing artworks and exhibitions, having the freedom to wonder, a sensory experience of

artwork, sharing experience with other people, emotional responses to artworks in landscape, connecting with artworks, learning about artworks or artists. They all ones that got over ten votes and all the other ones got at least one vote, so they are the most popular ones. So, there are a lot of different reasons and I think people come at different times for different things.

CE: Yeah, because the mentality in the summer would be probably different, like you said, in the winter. That is quite interesting. It would be interesting to ask that question again at another point.

CB: Yeah, I might do. I am running out of time. I would like to do it, though these things do take quite a bit of organising. To do that open day, and it wasn't very well attended, because it was this time last year, during the 'beast from the east'. So we had to cancel it, one week and do it the next week, but it wasn't marketed. I know that 25 people filled in the actual questionnaire and skipping the talking. So, it wasn't a total disaster, but it wasn't as much as I had hoped.

CE: Still very interesting though.

CB: Yeah, well exactly and with those people you could have a proper chat as well.

CE: It shows that they are dedicated as well, if they are coming back again the next week, that they're interested in that.

CB: To be honest, we were just pulling people in. So we had it in the auditorium, in the main building, which we were pulling people in from the corridor.

CE: So you got them there and then?

CB: I think there are a couple of people who would have come to the week before and it's also another reason why I did it on that day because it was museums and wellbeing week. So, I organised it to be in that week as an event, so it was a national program. There was lots of other stuff going on, so we were having mindfulness sessions and Rachel was going to bring them all out to do my questionnaire afterwards and that didn't happen. So it was just people that were there. Which, again, made it a different thing, because they're the kind of people

that wouldn't have necessarily come for a wellbeing thing. So, it was quite interesting to talk to them and it was quite a lot of families as well, which I hadn't really had access to before.

CE: It is quite interesting that you say the mindful, because I have been looking at that at Huddersfield Art Gallery, I have been doing the sessions and I always find that when I have done the mindful sessions, my state changes. The way I then view art changes as well. So, it would have been interesting to have that... to understand how that would have changed when you asked those questions. The mind-set around that.

CB: The mindful sessions they do there (YSP), I always find the discussions around art afterwards really fascinating.

CE: I said to the lady today, that before I went into the gallery- because I have just done one, that I felt quite aloof and I wasn't really ready to engaged with any artwork or anything like that and once she went through the exercises, afterwards I was much more open. I was able to see things that I wouldn't have necessarily to have noticed, beforehand. It is quite interesting how it opens you up to different perspectives.

CB: I knew that they did them, but I have never been. I have been to the sculpture park, I can go for free, but they're really expensive. They do a mindful moment's one, which is cheaper but it's not- mindfulness still looking, is like £25 a session and it is two hours. It is led mindfulness in the gallery by Sally Edwards, who is really experienced. They're really amazing.

CE: Does she have something to do with Manchester Art Gallery? Because the lady I was speaking to this morning said that they were trained by a Sally.

CB: She is based in Marsden, so I think she is the mindfulness person for this area. So she does it with Rachel, who she trained up. But then they developed 'mindful moments', which is a self-led thing, so you have a pack of cards that you use. I think you get access to the gallery an hour before it opens, so you're there and it is self-led rather than a group. Which is quite interesting, but I have never done that.

CE: Did you find that those visiting the YSP were seeking to rejuvenate their sense of well-

being? (or their emotional and mental state)

CB: Yes, but, not many people will be able to answer that directly. I think that there are people that could identify that as the reason that they came, but they were people that were typically doing mindfulness, stuff like that. They were coming, knowing that, that was what they were doing. Whereas other people come to do that, but they wouldn't be able to articulate it, that immediately. So, when you begin talking around it, then they interpret their experiences in that way. So then when I put my advert out for participants, I said it was about wellbeing and people responded to that. I think most people responded to that because they wanted to be involved in a research project at the sculpture park. They wanted to give something back, that was one of the main reasons as to why a lot of people did it. From then, the initial talking about 'what do you think wellbeing is?' they were like, 'oh, I don't know, that isn't really a term I use in my life'. Once you begin talking around it, you begin to build a picture around what that might be. What I found was that, people often describe a space as; a space of rest bite or sanctuary, or an oasis, or a personal space. They're all things of what people would value for their own wellbeing and also people were talking about keeping the mind active, learning, seeing new things and being challenged, they were also kind of valued towards wellbeing. There's like the five ways to wellbeing as well, be active, connect, keep learning, take notice and give. They were all recognised as being related to the people's experiences, so the first thing I did was give them a sheet with those on and asked if they could describe an experience that you have had, for each of these five things? And they all could do that. I think there is a lot more to it, than that, though it is easy... it is, tick, tick, tick, tick... In terms of that. So, yeah, I think people do come for that, but they wouldn't articulate it in those terms. But, a lot of people come for their own reasons and their own personal space- that came up a lot. I think that is a different terminology for it, perhaps.

CE: Yeah, I suppose it is hard to put people in that box as well...

CB: So, wellbeing means different things to a lot of people. For a lot of people, it means physical health. They say that they come here and they walk. But, it is like, well... what else do you do when you come here? So, you have to help them along.

CE: From your investigation, how have you found that the environmental experience and aesthetic experience impacts well-being?

CB: Yeah, I did find that actually. At the moment that isn't something I can articulate. So, it was understood by the participants that it does do that and I was more interested in how they talk about how it does that. So I guess they think it does that, but then how do you talk about that? As I was saying earlier, it is different for everybody, so it is about finding that common language that is helpful. So, yes... but I don't know the answer to that right now...

CE: Is there anything unique which the YSP can offer, in respect to the relationship between the YSP and its visitors?

CB: Yes, I think that YSP offers something unique in its environment and the sculpture in the environment and that is a unique thing to them. I think the way they curate the landscape as well, I think is quite unique and the journeys that people can go on there, like the way things lead into other things and the spaces that is constructed, I think is quite unique. Additionally, I didn't get to the bottom of this really- but people feel really, really strongly about it and their relationship to the place. I think that because it has been there for over 40 years and it has always been open access, so people have that relationship and family memories and all of that is embedded in the landscape. There are things there, it isn't like a white cube gallery where, every exhibition it changes. There are markers there (YSP), that stay. So, the actual landscape stays the same and the things we marauder in it. So there is a continuity there, that even if all of the artworks change, there is still the tree you like, so there is that kind of thing and there are some things that have been there for ages, like the *family of man* by Barbara Hepworth. It has been there since 1980, so people have a really strong connection to those artworks, because they have been there for so long. Even though they don't have a permanent connection, they have a lot of long term loans because there is nowhere else to put them, where else would they go? Because they're at the big sculpture- well, they're growing now, actually. But so far there hasn't been any other big sculpture parks... Yeah, so, I think it does offer something in its environment, but it is also quite tricky. As I was saying earlier, the people who feel comfortable there, feel really comfortable there. For me, the interesting thing is about how you can provide support for that experience for people who might not feel like it is for them, or don't know how to have it. So actually, the audio guide which you were talking about- the mindful audio guide is really interesting for me. Because it is something like that, that could help like a prompt. It was noticed by my research participants in the workshops that, talking and listening to other people's experience of the artwork was helpful

and helped them build confidence in their own ideas. I did some debriefing interviews with them a couple of months ago, I am yet to transcribe them. But they were talking about that, doing that process of negotiation in a group, has had long lasting effects of their own interpretation of artwork. Because it's nice to hear and it demystifies it as well, so they were saying how good it would be if you could develop a resource, through which you could have access to other people's experiences. So, if you're not confident, you can go and be like, well, this person thought this... that's interesting and it provides that pathway in.

CE: Supplying tools? To be able to-

CB: So, the research participants themselves identified that as being a strength of the research and I didn't really anticipate that. That wasn't what I was intending to do, but it almost provided a model, through which people enhance their own experiences later, which is quite interesting.

CE: Can you surmise how the experience of this site affects the well-being of its visitors?

CB: I think it gives people the choice to have the experience that they want to have, I think that is the most important thing that people really value. Because, you come when you're really happy and enjoy it, or you can come when you're more sad and thoughtful and go through that experience, or you can come when you want to learn something new or you can come when you want to... see some birds. You know, there are all those kinds of things. Again, getting back to the five ways to wellbeing, they're all there but there's also something about the transformative potential of art, that gives something extra- in the experience of being surprised. I think there is something in that, and again, this is something I haven't properly articulated yet, but- I copied this across from something I wrote as a summary for my research, so I will read this out, this is on top of the five ways of wellbeing thing, almost like an aesthetic wellbeing thing, that I am trying to develop but I haven't quite got there yet.

The experience of being surprised or challenged, either from seeing something new or seeing something familiar in a new light, or from a different perspective, was seen as being important. Participants described forceful transformative or emotional experiences of the art objects, which go beyond simply noticing or mindful looking. – So again, it's that thing beyond taking notice, there is something else that happens. There was also a demonstration of aesthetic experience as being a creative act. So, it is not just receiving, some participants said

that it caused them to ‘stretch’ their minds. I see that as being an almost imaginative engagement with form. It isn’t just receiving visually; it is almost as though you go into it as well. There is something active going on.

## 1.1

*Investigating the effects of the mindful practice, the mindful influence within an art practice, gallery environment and the value it holds to its participants*

Charlotte Eagles in conversation with Maggie O’Keefe via email, Mindful Practitioner for the ‘Mindful Drawing’ workshop and Artist. (Huddersfield Art Gallery).

May 2019

CE: When did you begin to combine the use of breathing exercises and drawing - and why?

KO: I began to work with this myself in 2016 having attended a mindful drawing course. I have a mindfulness practice and was trying to find a way to help me establish a focused art practice, so I enrolled on the course. I found it to be more than a way to focus but a wonderful way to work and I strive to include it in my approach to making art.

I began to offer mindful drawing workshops in 2017. I liked how art and mindfulness complimented each other. I got a lot from the course I attended and felt it would be a good way to introduce people to mindfulness, as well as a way to approach art making in an open, curious and playful manner.

CE: What was it that drew you to use the Huddersfield Art Gallery environment for your mindful workshop?

KO: I had been thinking of offering mindful drawing classes and was looking for a venue. I knew about the studio space through my work with the Lawrence Batley Theatre and I knew that it could be used for workshops. I also knew that the gallery worked with other artists and

ran engagement projects from time to time. So I approached the gallery to see whether they would be interested in having mindful drawing classes at the gallery.

CE: Do you believe that the gallery contributes a particular value towards the Mindful experience?

KO: I think so. The studio is a little dark and noisy (air vents) but the gallery space is open and bright, quite peaceful and lends itself to people spending time with and examining work and their responses to it. It invites people to slow down, consider and pay attention.

CE: Similarly, do you feel as though the gallery environment provides any benefits over non-gallery environments?

KO: Not necessarily. It depends on the focus. It certainly offers a lot in terms of responding to the exhibits, which are a great resource. And it's a nice compliment to make art in an art gallery, and use mindful drawing to really connect with the artwork. But there are other venues which offer just as much. For me, mindful drawing outdoors connecting with nature provides a very enriching experience. I think the most important thing is to respond to whatever the setting and devise the drawing exercises which best respond.

CE: In your experience, have you found the Mindful workshop to alter the 'state' of the participant, or yourself? (Emotional or otherwise?)

KO: I usually feel uplifted if the session has gone well, if people seem to have enjoyed it. When participants are open to the activities it is a lovely experience and it's a pleasure to share the practices. Here's a selection of some feedback from participants:

- I floated home
- I feel renewed after the session
- A real pleasure! V. Relaxing J
- Wonderful! A different experience of Art. Loved it.
- Thoughtful. Thought provoking. Restful.
- A marvellous couple of hours. I shall do more of this at home. Thank you!

- Enjoyed it very much
- Took me away from life for a bit!
- Thoroughly enjoyable and thought provoking. Thank you.
- Fascinating. Challenging (in a good way). Interesting.

CE: Do you find that the workshop inspires unique relational connections between the participant and the artwork?

KO: I think so. Participants are invited to spend time with the artwork, if possible to connect with the artwork. Drawing or making work in response to something encourages a deeper exploration and examination.

CE: Have you found that the workshop inspires social links/connections between the participating group members? (For example; creating bonds between those within the group?)

KO: I think creative workshops in general have great potential for this. When planning a mindful drawing workshop, I want to make sure time is allowed for discussion about how people have felt during a mindful drawing practice, or for them to share each other's work, or to introduce each other to the art work they have chosen to sit with. These and the "appreciation" time at the end of the session inspire connections between those sharing the experience.

CE: What do you consider to be a successful session? What is it that you aim to achieve when conducting the session?

KO: Even though it's not entirely in my control, a successful session is one where participants leave feeling calm, or uplifted, and when they tell me they have enjoyed the session. My aim is to offer an opportunity to "drop into stillness", slow down, to have a mindful experience (choosing to be present). Alongside that drawing for drawing's sake is important and I would like participants to experiment, explore, be playful and have fun with drawing.

CE: Have you found that the workshop has regular participants?

KO: There is a very small core group of people who attend regularly. Then there are lots more who come along and enjoy the workshop as a one off experience.

CE: Could you surmise how the experience of the workshop affects yourself and those participating?

KO: Mostly for me it's a real pleasure. As described in question 5 it depends on whether the session has gone well. But generally I think it's a positive, warm, relaxed 2 hours and this definitely affects my mood, and that of the participants.

## 1.2

*Investigating the effects of the mindful practice, gallery environment and the value it holds to its participants.*

Charlotte Eagles in conversation with Becky Bracey via email, Mindful Practitioner for the 'Mindful Breathing' workshop. (Kirklees Council & Huddersfield Art Gallery).

May 2019

CE: When did you begin to combine the use of breathing exercises within the gallery setting and why?

BB: Around two to three years ago as part of an arts council funded project 'Sustainable Collections', we were keen to develop our health and wellbeing offer, using our collections as the stimulus. As a local authority funded museum and gallery service we were keen to demonstrate how our sites and collections contributed to the Kirklees Council's joint health and wellbeing strategy. We went on a study visit to Manchester and visit the Whitworth Gallery which has a wellbeing garden, followed by Manchester Art Gallery where we met their Wellbeing Officer and took part in a Mindful Art session. This inspired us to develop something similar at Huddersfield Art Gallery, using mindfulness techniques to explore individual artworks in detail.

CE: What was it that caused you to use the Huddersfield Art Gallery environment for your mindful workshop?

BB: Visitors often comment on the calm and relaxed atmosphere at the gallery. I see it as a perfect setting for mindfulness as it is a safe public space, which is light and airy where it is easier to focus on the art without distractions. As a town centre venue we were keen to attract people who live and work in the town centre. By holding the sessions at lunchtime the aim is for people who may have busy lives to make room in their day for an opportunity to improve their wellbeing.

CE: Do you believe that the gallery contributes a particular value towards the Mindful experience?

BB: I personally find mindful breathing techniques very difficult to sustain and easily get distracted. I find it much easier to focus on a mindful activity such as mindful art or mindful walking. These sessions give people the opportunity to practice their mindful techniques with the focus on an artwork. During the session we also discuss our responses to the art work which I think people find beneficial. There is definitely an added value to exploring art at the same time – I believe we enrich our lives through art and culture and people leave the gallery with a sense of calm but also having explored an artwork.

CE: Similarly, do you feel as though the gallery environment provides any benefits over non-gallery environments?

BB: I think the gallery has benefits – although we have also delivered mindful sessions at our historic house (Oakwell Hall) focussing on the carvings, the leaded windows, the smell and sounds of the interior of the building, and then mindful walking and sitting in our historic garden - which was also a unique experience. With the gallery we have a changing programme of exhibitions which are very diverse – this gives us the opportunity to explore something very different each session so it could be a traditional oil painting, or a photograph, print, sculpture etc.

CE: In your experience, have you found the Mindful workshop to transform the ‘state’ of the

participant or yourself? (Emotional or otherwise?)

BB: Leading the session is perhaps different to participating, I personally find the experience leaves me feeling calm, content and uplifted. We did carry out some evaluation with participants during a pilot phase and we found that people left the session feeling calmer more relaxed and happier. The idea of exploring one artwork in detail is to encourage people to slow down and take notice, this is something that we have less and less time to do and which research shows can improve people's mood.

CE: Do you find that the workshop inspires unique relational connections between the participant and the artwork?

BB: Before the session, we always cover up the label as we don't want people to come with a pre-conception of the art – we want them to be led by their own personal response which is somewhat different to how many people approach the art by critiquing the work or looking to see if they know the artist, and when it was produced etc. We try to guide people around the artwork to notice details within the piece that they may not have noticed if they had visited the gallery as a usual visitor. Mindfulness is about being here and now in the present. The best way of doing that is to focus and notice how our senses are reacting to the present. Therefore, we use a very sensory approach to explore the art.

CE: Have you found that the sessions have allowed the participating members to gain a new perspective or approach to viewing art?

BB: Yes, many times people say 'I would have just walked straight passed that picture', people find that when they spend 30 minutes with a piece of art it often reveals new things to them during that time. People also seem to enjoy the opportunity to discuss their response to the artwork with others in a supportive environment where there is no right or wrong answer.

CE: Have you found that the workshop inspires social links/connections between the participating group members? (For example; creating bonds between those within the group? A sense of unification?)

BB: Yes. I think people enjoy the opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences with

others in the group and I think this is an important component of the session. People come from very different backgrounds but all have a common interest in mindfulness and art. Sometimes people want to stay and talk after the session. We have had work colleagues attend together.

CE: What do you consider to be a successful session? What is it that you aim to achieve when conducting the session?

BB: A successful session for me is when people have managed to spend some of the session focussing on the artwork, when people leave the session with a smile on their face and seem more contented. I always try and ask for feedback after the session.

CE: Have you found that the workshop has regular participants?

BB: When we ran the sessions on Thursday lunchtimes we had some regular attendees including a number of Kirklees Council staff that work in the council offices nearby. Since changing the day the number of participants has reduced but we do tend to see repeat participants.

CE: Could you surmise how the experience of the workshop affects yourself and/or those participating?

BB: I think the mindful art sessions can be a positive contribution to a person managing their own mental health. Mental health is a sliding scale like physical health and we all need to take time in the day to look after our mental health, this can be very hard to achieve with the busy lives that people lead and the focus of our attention on the future and past rather than the present. As the sessions are only monthly, I don't think they can provide a great contribution on their own to a person's mental health but they can be used to inspire people to continue mindfulness practice in between sessions.

**Documentation of the forum:**

**2.0**



Fig 1. *The forum* (Eagles, 2019).

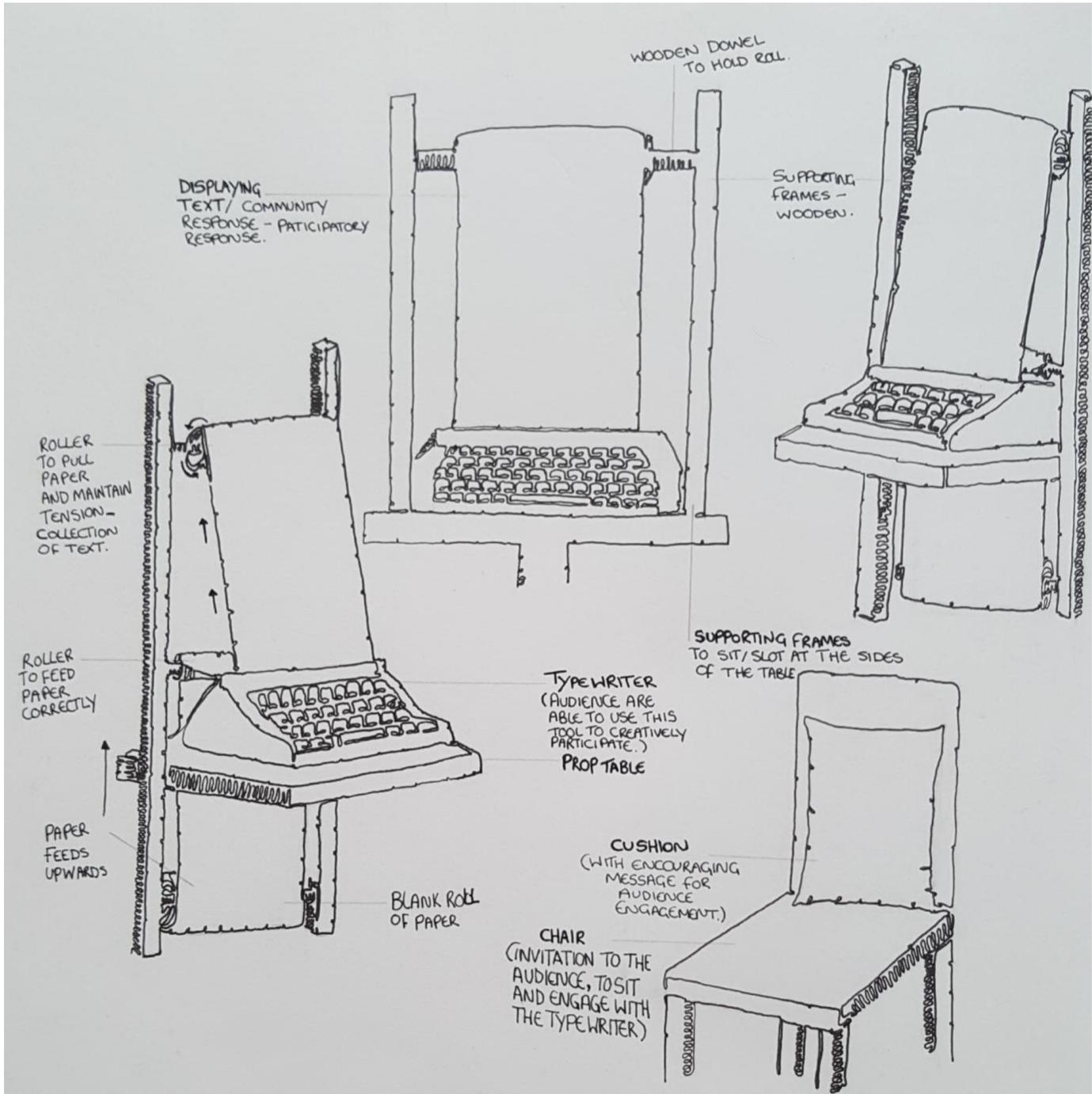


Fig 2. The forum design proposal (Eagles, 2019)

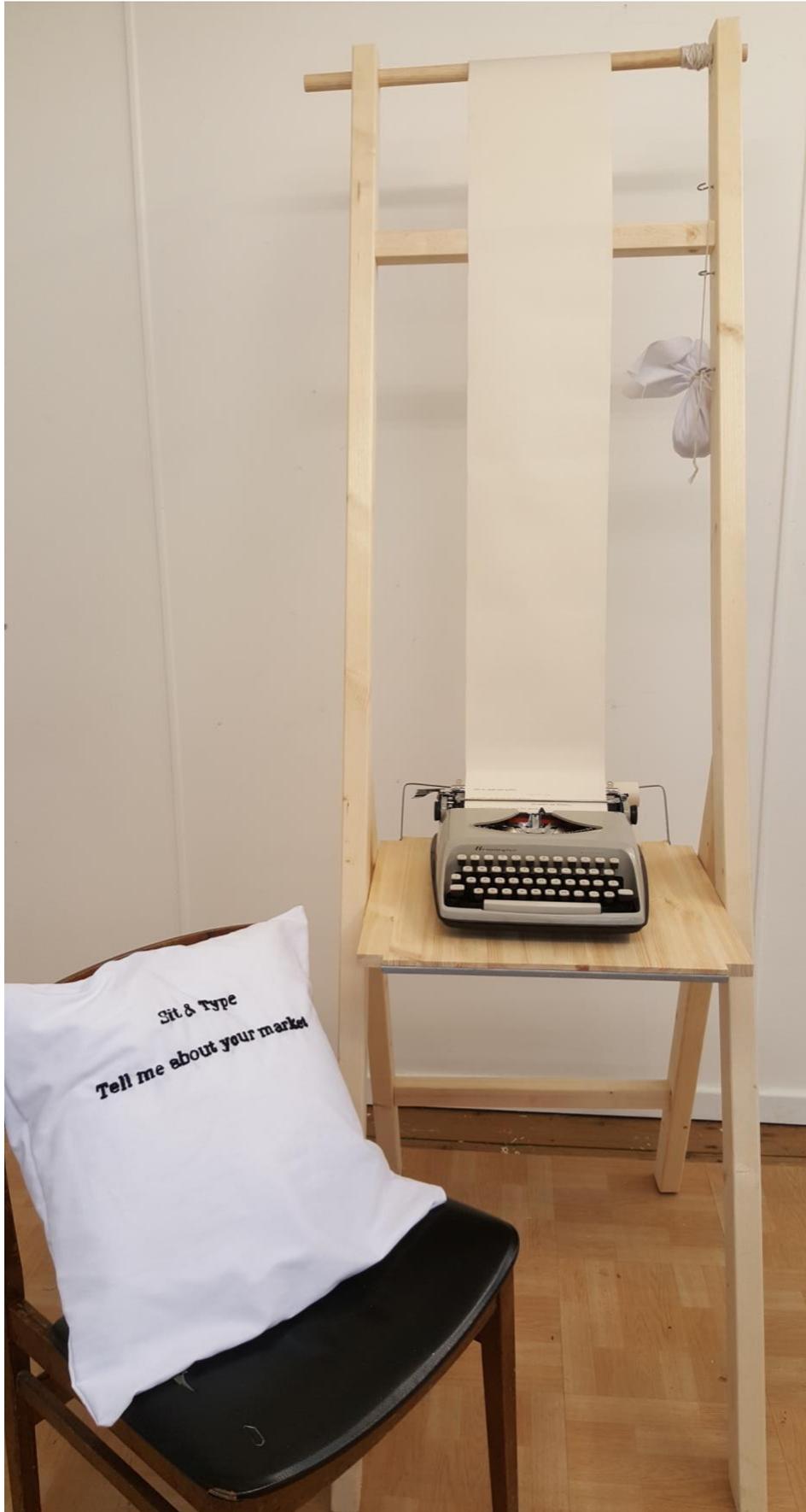


Fig 3. *The forum installation*. (Eagles, 2019)

it is currently two fifteen in the afternoon.

the clatter of cutlery can be heard from the cafe in the distance.  
conversations can be heard from all areas of the market.  
The piano plays on.

hello our first visit came to see show while shopping

drag queen star hewwo uwu whats this-?

-h-hewwow? i-is anybod thwere? OwO

somebody just look my kids. now, they're fortnite dancing over me to assert  
dominance. :)

hi how are my n meis ellie and i love queensgate its awesome chela  
is a full time [redacted] lost lots of love bettie

farhad hannah rages and aara

r aaaaaa

Fig. 4. The forum Entries. (Eagles, 2019)

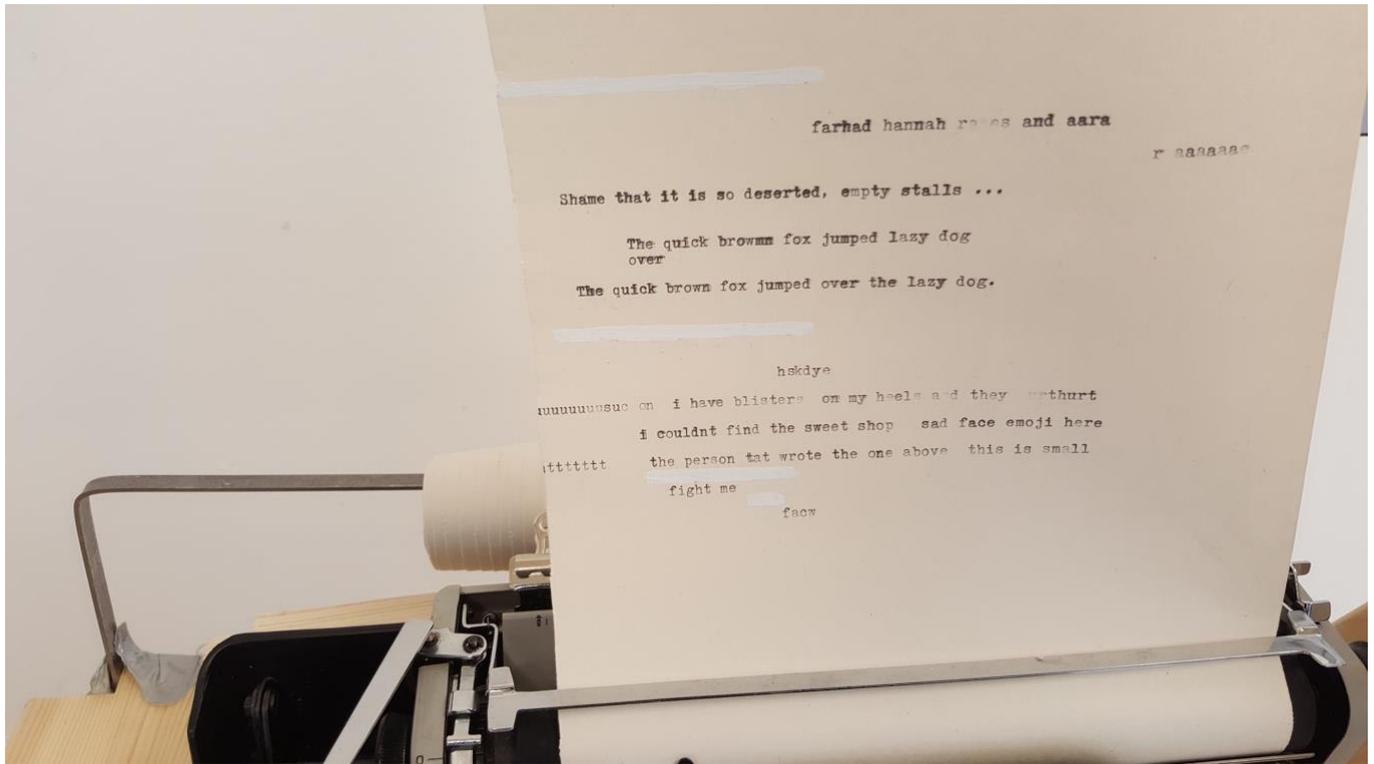


Fig. 5. *The forum removals.* (Eagles, 2019).

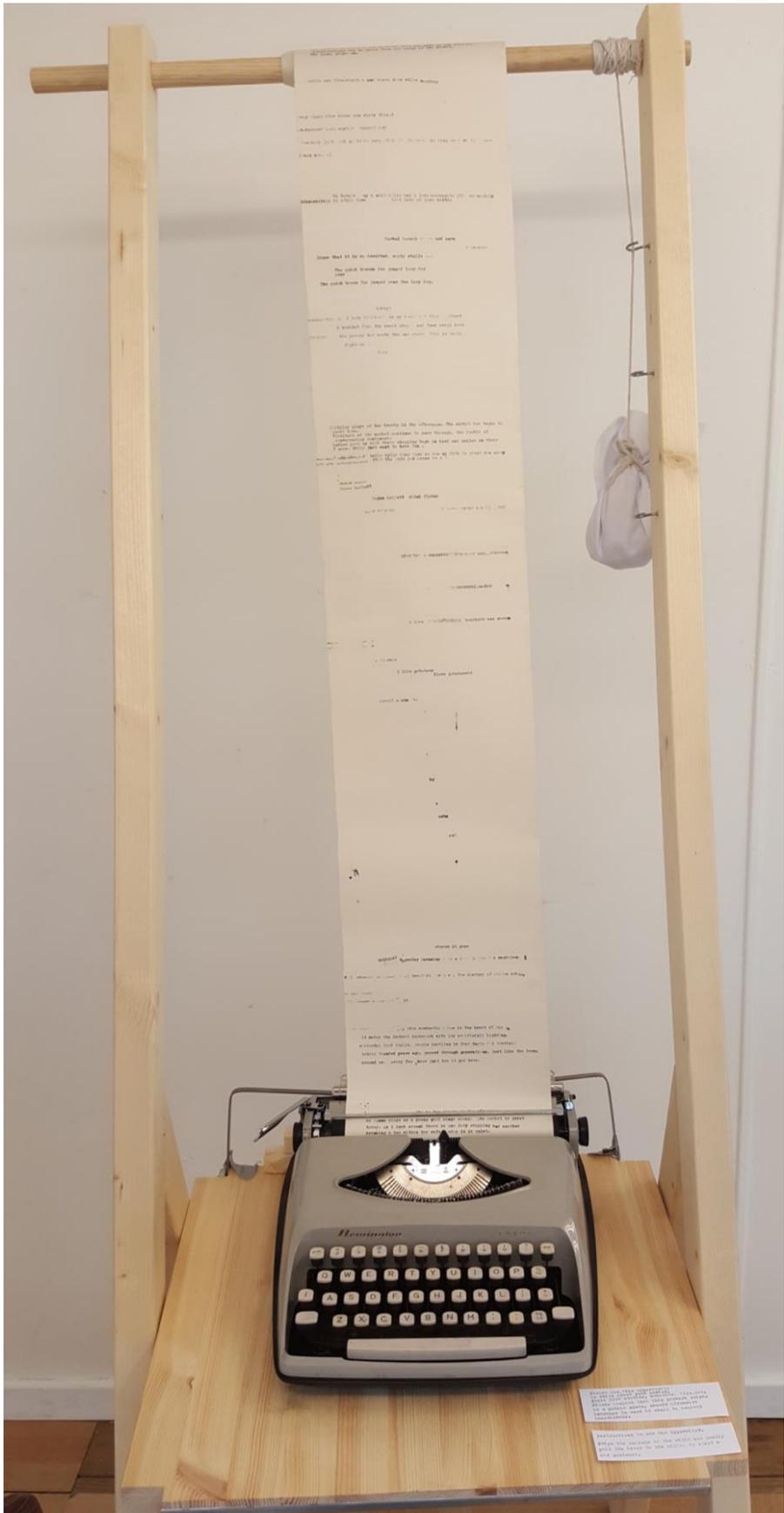


Fig. 6. *The forum* (Eagles, 2019)



Fig. 7. *The forum* (Eagles, 2019).



Fig. 8. *The forum* (Eagles, 2019)

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... this wonderful place is the heart of our to  
it makes the darkest daysspark with its atrificiall lighting,  
wonderful food stalls, people bustling in their dayto day travles;  
habits founded years ago, passed through generations, just like the towna  
around us. wvery few k know just how it got here.

↑ ↑  
↑

Itn is two thirty in the afternoon.

he piano plays as a young girl sings along. The market is quiet  
today. As i look around there is one lady shopping and another  
drinking a tea within the cafe. Today it is quiet.

Fig. 9. Active forum, (Eagles, 2019).



**Documentation of The Mindful Workshops:**

**3.0**



Fig 11. *Mindful Drawing: Inhale, Exhale.* (Eagles, 2019)



Fig 12. *Mindful Drawing: Touch.* (Eagles 2019)

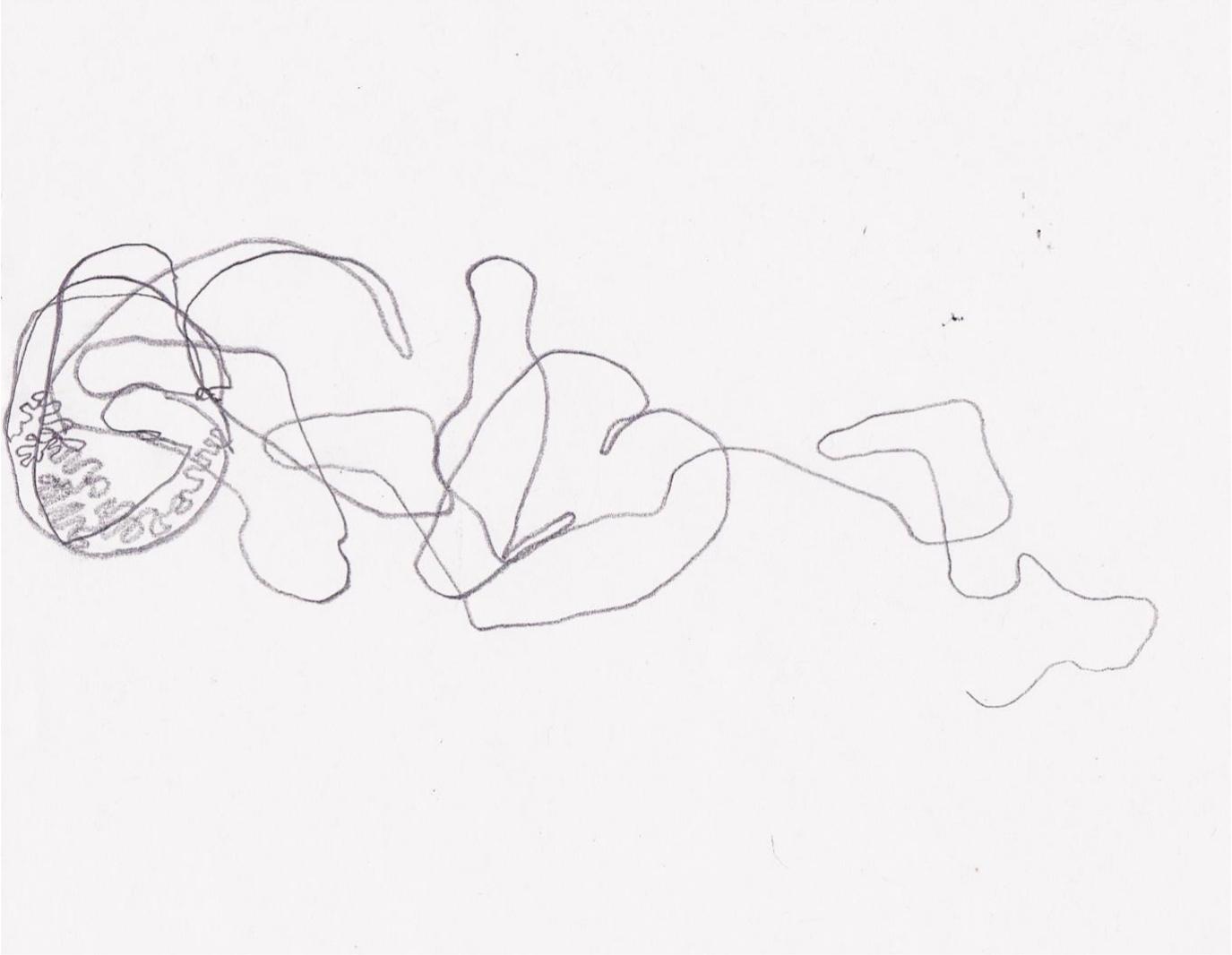


Fig 13. *Mindful Drawing: Perspectives*. (Eagles, 2019).



Fig 14. *Mindful Drawing: Reaction* (Eagles, 2019)



Fig 15. *Mindful Drawing: Breathe* (Eagles, 2019)

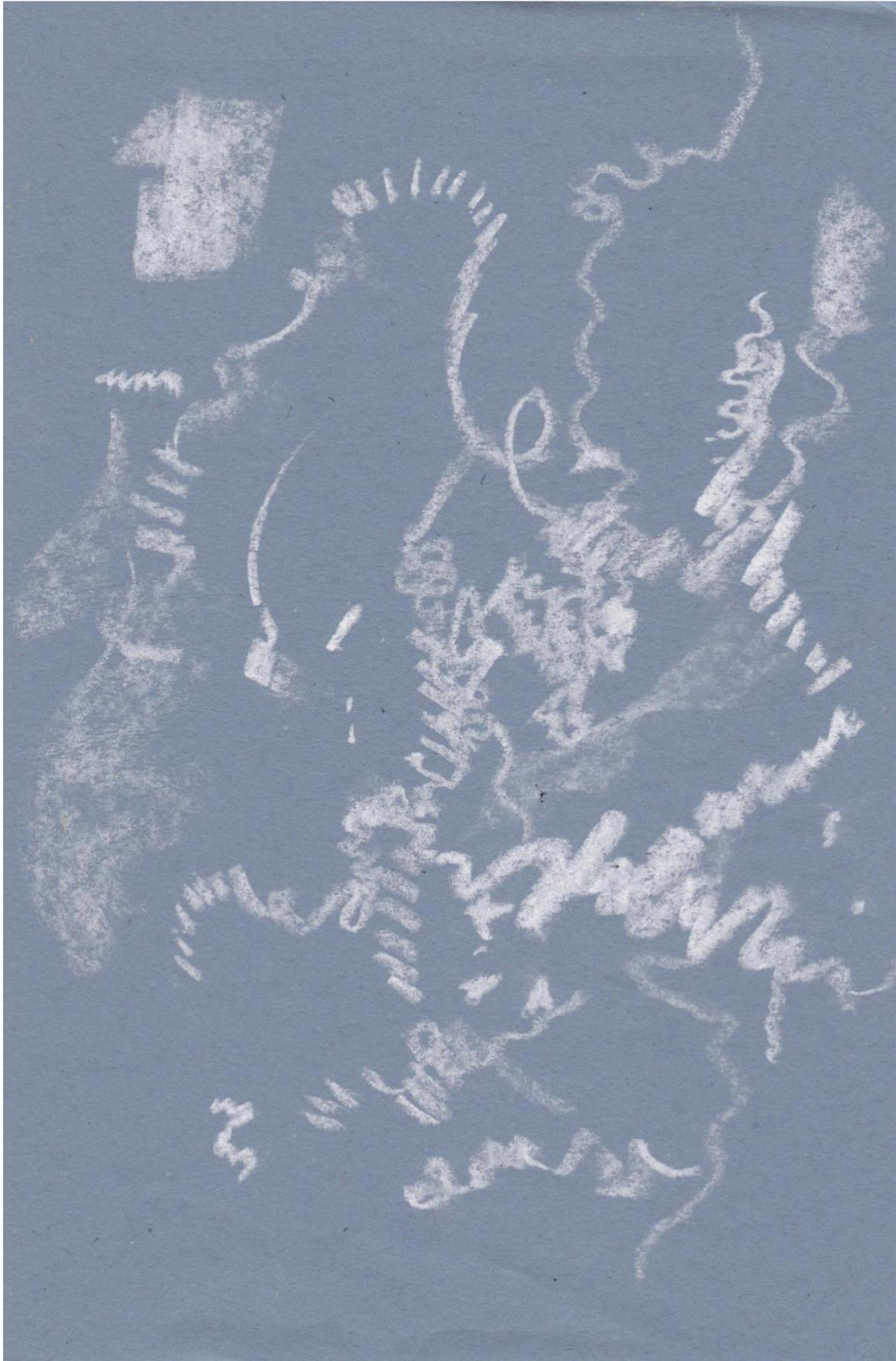


Fig 16. *Mindful Drawing: Sound* (Eagles, 2019)



Fig 17. *Mindful Drawing: Respond* (Eagles, 2019).