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SIX YEARS IN HALIFAX: A SHORT HISTORY OF THE
HENRY MOORE STUDIO, DEAN CLOUGH FROM 1986 TO
1992.

SOPHIE RAIKES

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

The University of Huddersfield in collaboration with the Henry
Moore Institute

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1. Foreword

Looking back now over the course of my PhD study, which feels like it has been a very long journey, it appears to me as a series of revolutions: that is, transformations in my way of thinking (hard now to contemplate that I have come out the other end of them) which completely changed my view, not just of my subject - the Henry Moore Studio at Dean Clough - but the art world within which I was working, and the way I wanted to write about it.

When I embarked on the study in 2016, I was working as a collections curator at Leeds Art Gallery, based at the Henry Moore Institute. As the Institute is affiliated to the Henry Moore Foundation, which is the parent body of the Henry Moore Studio, I was – in theory - an insider to the project. In reality, the Studio had closed many years before I arrived on the scene, and I had never met Robert Hopper or any of the core group of people who worked there, so I came with little prior or special knowledge of the organisation. However, that is not to say that I came to the project empty-handed. Quite the opposite. As I see now (but only in retrospect), I was carrying around in my head an encompassing view of the art world, which permeated my professional practice. This did not relate to my work at the Institute or Leeds Art Gallery specifically, but a career spent working in and around institutions: from my art historical training (undertaken in a traditional university department), through several years of curatorial practice, latterly within the framework of a municipal gallery and specialist centre for the study of sculpture.

Essentially, my job at the time was to categorise, evaluate and document works of art; then place them within the established canon of art history by displaying them in thematic, chronological or genre-based configurations; and, initially, I intended to explore the Henry Moore Studio in exactly this way. I wanted to define what it was, then compare it with other similar art organisations and situate it within a particular segment of art history, so that it could be better understood within my art world; and possibly used to inform future practice. It was not that I felt this method would be best particularly, but that I didn't really know any other way.

From reading around the subject, I knew that the Henry Moore Studio had been a making and exhibition project, which generated a series of large-scale projects, in which the site was often a key element. Whilst the Studio had been funded by the Henry Moore Foundation, I understood that it had been run on the ground by a group of artists, based at Dean Clough, Halifax, under the leadership of Paul Bradley, who had been highly instrumental in the first project by Giuseppe Penone and subsequently managed most aspects of its programme. As a project operated by artists for other artists, under the auspices of an institution, I attempted to sketch a lineage for the Studio amongst artist-led initiatives, as they had evolved in the post-war period, specifically from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Having emerged in the 1950s, I understood that the artist-run scene had flourished particularly in the ‘travelling culture’¹ of the 1960s, when young people, including artists, were able to travel and mingle much more freely, establishing new galleries and places for art across Europe and America. In line with other counter-cultural and protest movements of that decade, it had been defined in opposition to mainstream commercial and institutional art systems, empowering artists to live and work in alternative ways. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, artist-led galleries had become crucibles for new types of practice, now considered art historically under the headings of minimalism, post-minimalism, conceptualism, Arte Povera and performance, which existing art systems had been unable or unwilling to accommodate. Through the later 1970s, and certainly by the 1980s, as art in the expanded field of post-1960s practice was absorbed into established systems, their oppositional character had started to dissipate. Increasingly, they were defined not so much against, as within mainstream systems, plugging holes in existing infrastructures; highlighting new talent; and providing an essential platform for young artists to show their work; hone their skills; and connect with the established art world.

This overarching history has been documented in a British context by Andrea Tarsia (2003) and Claire Glossop (2003), who look principally at developments in London; Gabriel Gee, in *Art in the North of England, 1979 – 2006* (2017) which explores grassroots activity in northern Britain; and texts by Sarah Lowndes (2003) and Craig

¹ Youth Movements: Travel, Protest, and Europe in 1968. Author(s): Richard Ivan

Richardson (2016), which focus on the Glasgow art scene specifically. It can be sketched loosely as a journey from the Arts Lab, Drury Lane, London (1967-69), which ‘provided a space and a context for almost any type of cultural experimentation’²; to the artist-organised exhibition, *Freeze* (1988), which propelled its young protagonists, many of whom are now associated with the Young British Artist (YBA) movement of the 1990s, towards commercial success almost instantly. The space between these polarities can be filled with a string of other artist-run galleries which operated across the period including Acme Gallery (London, 1976 - 1981), 2B Butler’s Wharf (London, 1975 – 1978), Matt’s Gallery (London, established 1979), Chisenhale Gallery (London, established 1983), The Basement Group (Newcastle, 1979 – 1983) which became Projects UK (Newcastle, 1983 - 1992), Transmission Gallery (Glasgow, established 1983) and City Racing (London, 1988 - 1998).

I could see how the Studio might slot into this trajectory, as it had unfolded in the mid to late 1980s, specifically in relation to Projects UK, and Transmission Gallery, with whom, as I discovered, the artists at Dean Clough had connected; but also to *Freeze*, which had opened in London a few months before the pilot project for the Studio in Halifax unfolded late in 1988. Consequently, I spent time summarising each one of these projects, to provide points of comparison for my study.

I learnt that Projects UK was a performance-orientated art-commissioning agency, which facilitated projects by international artists in and around Newcastle. It came out of The Basement Group, a performance collective comprising tutors and former students at Newcastle Polytechnic, who together had operated a venue in an old warehouse building in Newcastle ‘for the regular staging of temporal and transient activities within the Fine Art tradition’³, with funding from Northern Arts. The

² “They're Giving Away YOUR Money to Spoon Feed Hippie “Art” | Notes from The Arts Lab Newsletter 1969-1971 | 16 November, 6-8pm”, *Tenderbooks*, https://tenderbooks.co.uk/blogs/events-window/theyre-giving-away-your-money-to-spoon-feed-hippie-art-notes-from-the-arts-lab-newsletter-1969-1971-16-november-6-8pm?_pos=1&_sid=9a12ca79c&_ss=r. Retrieved 5 February 2021.

³ R. Grayson, *A History of The Basement Group to Locus+*, 2006. <http://www.richardgrayson.co.uk/texts/TWNHWYEssay.html>, n.p. Retrieved 20 November 2018.

Basement Group venue had been envisaged by its progenitors as ‘an alternative art space’⁴, providing a platform for ‘experimental and time-based art’⁵, which was not well represented by established museums and galleries anywhere in the country; and creating a new base for art in the north of England, with an international outlook, as an alternative to mainstream systems, which revolved around London. Projects UK, when it emerged in 1983, maintained The Basement Group’s strong sense of regional identity and internationalism. However, it had tightened up its operations, replacing the latter’s open access exhibitions policy with an invitation-based system; moving out of its basement into an office space, dedicated to administration; and forging new, productive partnerships with municipal galleries and other government agencies. By the late 1980s, its focus was shifting from performance work per se, to the professional facilitation of temporary site-specific projects in public places in and around Newcastle; a strategy which aligned with official strategies for the regeneration of post-industrial towns and cities, in which art was instrumentalised as a spur for new economic activity.

Transmission Gallery was Glasgow’s first artist-led gallery, established by graduates of Glasgow School of Art in 1983 in order to spotlight the work of young, early career practitioners operating in the city. It had emerged at what Craig Richardson calls ‘a crucial moment in the development of Scotland’s visual arts’⁶, when Glasgow in particular was looking to reinvent itself as a new centre of art on the international stage, after decades of decline in the post-industrial period. Within this context, Transmission’s approach, according to Richardson, can be ‘simplified as ‘local artists over internationally renowned artists’⁷. In its earliest years, the gallery’s programme was focused on so-called New Image painters, who came to international prominence shortly afterwards. In the mid-1980s, it had slanted towards time-based and performance art, under the direction of artist, Malcolm Dickson. From 1988, it showcased the work Douglas Gordon, Christine Borland and other future stars of the

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ C. Richardson, *Scottish Art since 1960: Historical Reflections and Contemporary Overviews*, Routledge, 2016, p.137.

⁷ Ibid.

Glasgow scene, who went on to achieve ‘long-awaited commercial success’⁸ in the early 1990s, in parallel with the Young British Artists operating in London around *Freeze*.

Freeze, of course, was a one-off event rather than a long-term project, like Projects UK and Transmission, taking place in summer 1988. It had been instigated by artist, Damien Hirst, then in his second year at Goldsmiths College of Art; with the support of his friends, most of whom were fellow or ex-Goldsmiths students; and the backing of his tutor, the American post-minimalist artist Michael Craig-Martin, who had always ‘encouraged professional initiative among his students’⁹. For Hirst, *Freeze* had not been about providing an “alternative” to the established art world: having spent time working the private views at Anthony D’Offay Gallery, he knew how that world operated, and had wanted to make it work for him. Circumventing the ponderous public funding system – that bank rolled Projects UK and Transmission - he had secured private sector backing: from the London Docklands Corporation, which gave him the use of an empty building in Surrey Dock, just then slated for redevelopment; and developers, Olympia and York (concurrently engaged with the construction of nearby Canary Wharf), who paid for the exhibition catalogue to be professionally designed and produced, in return for publicity. Prior to the exhibition opening in July 1988, he and his friends spent weeks cleaning and redecorating the space, in order to evoke ‘the white cube aesthetic of the Saatchi Collection’s renovated warehouse in St John’s Wood, in northeast London’¹⁰. Then, using the art world contacts of Craig-Martin, they persuaded Norman Rosenthal, Head of Exhibitions at the Royal Academy of Art, Nicholas Serota, Director of Tate, and Richard Shone, Director of New Contemporaries to attend the private view. Later, art dealer, Charles Saatchi visited, purchasing a work by Matt Collishaw directly from the show. According to Altshuler (2013), ‘the primacy of Hirst’s entrepreneurship and marketing ties “Freeze” to its time, to the credo of self-help and personal initiative promoted during the Thatcher years’.¹¹

⁸ Ibid, p.138.

⁹ B. Altshuler (ed), “Freeze”, *Biennials and Beyond Exhibitions That Made Art History, 1962-2002*, Phaidon, 2013, p.255.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

Each one of these enterprises had something to tell me about the origins of the Studio. Like the artists involved with Projects UK and Transmission in Newcastle and Glasgow, Paul Bradley and his team of artists at Dean Clough, had been operating in a post-industrial town in the northern part of Britain, far away from the established centre of the British art in London, where there was little existing infrastructure for art, and they had to create something from nothing. Bradley had a background in performance and had engaged with Projects UK first as an artist. He had set up an art-commissioning agency based on the Projects UK model at Dean Clough in 1986. His earliest operations were performance orientated. In 1987/8, his focus had shifted from performance per se to the facilitation of temporary, site-specific projects in and around Halifax and towns and cities across the northern part of Britain. Then, in 1988, he had had his own *Freeze* moment, making a bold play for the mainstream art world, by attracting the attention of two of its senior curators – Robert Hopper, Director of the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust and Barry Barker, Director of Arnolfini, Bristol, who brought with him the major Italian artist, Giuseppe Penone. Together, they had established the Henry Moore Studio in the ground floor of old mill building at Dean Clough.

It was at this point that my art historical narrative became more complicated because – for all its correspondences with Projects UK, Transmission and *Freeze* at point of origin – I could see that the Studio itself, as an art enterprise, had little in common with any of them. Of course, Projects UK and Transmission had evolved through the early years of their operations, adapting to the times in which they were operating: both had become more professionally focused and connected to mainstream institutional and commercial networks, particularly from 1988 onwards. Yet they had retained their core purpose, which was to provide a platform for artists and/or practices neglected by mainstream infrastructures. *Freeze*, in its own way, had been attempting to do the same thing. The Studio, meanwhile, appeared to have been heading off in multiple different directions.

Essentially, as a making and exhibition project, dedicated principally to the work of established late and mid-career international artists, it looked to me a lot like a

number of other institutional programmes that had been happening concurrently in the 1980s and 1990s, not so much in Britain, but across Europe and America. Through these decades, new museums and galleries of modern and contemporary art, often housed in former industrial buildings, had started to commission new work by artists of the 1960s generation, who wished to work site-specifically within the exhibition space.

However, it was not as simple as saying that the Studio was an artist-led enterprise, which had turned into an institutional programme, because the ethos of the project, set out by Barry Barker in the 1993 HMS catalogue raisonnée, was consciously anti-institutional. Indeed, it was all about empowering artists, looking after their interests and sheltering them from the pressures of the institutional and commercial art worlds. As Barker indicates, it had come straight out of the artist-run world: not, that is, the increasingly pragmatic, institutionally-aligned and commercially savvy world of the late 1980s, but the “alternative” artist-led scene of the 1960s, where the main currency had been creative freedom.

What was I to make of this curious, hybrid entity, armed only with the analytical tools in my institutional armoury? Having tracked the origins of the Studio through an artist-led context, I had expected to place the organisation itself into the same or some other category. However, as an institutional project, with a “1960s” ethos, which was run on the ground by artists, it did not fit neatly into any genre of gallery practice with which I was familiar. Even on its own terms, as an art enterprise, I found its operations difficult to explain without collapsing into contradiction.

Ostensibly, the programme was about nurturing the creativity of great artists. However, as the *raison d’être* for a new kind of institutional project, this approach did not stand up to scrutiny. Setting aside questions of “greatness”, it was clear that many of the visiting artists didn’t really need the help were being offered: they came to the Studio as fully formed creative practitioners, with significant bodies of work (and arguably their most significant productions) already behind them. They were well resourced and supported; and blessed with a great deal of creative freedom and numerous opportunities to exhibit. In principle, the Studio was a place of retreat

where they could think, create and recharge their batteries, before plunging back into the maelstrom of established international exhibition circuits. In practice, they used the resources at their disposal to create complex, museum-scale installations, which relatively few people (in museum terms) would ever see, because they were tucked away in a mill building at the back end of Halifax.

Perhaps it was enough, I thought, that the Studio had attracted stars of the international art scene to spend time in Halifax: a small town in West Yorkshire, that was still in the depths of post-industrial depression, with no mainstream art lineage or infrastructure. However, it seemed to me that the organisation's ethos – geared entirely towards the needs of the resident artists – had prevented it from capitalising on this remarkable achievement, which in any case was never formally part of its remit. Busy international artists had been flown in and flown out, for a few days or a week at a time, between other engagements; and, when on site, cocooned by Bradley and his team, so in reality there was little connection between the Studio and the town; and, when the organisation eventually folded in 2000, its footprint had quickly faded.

Having arranged the pieces of the Studio's peculiar jigsaw puzzle into a variety of different art formations, I had to acknowledge that they fell into place more easily when placed in the shape of a business, run by Paul Bradley, in which local artists were paid by the Henry Moore Foundation – on a project by project basis - to facilitate the work of their international counterparts. From a commercial standpoint, it made perfect sense for the operation to have offered excellent customer service, and advertised absolute freedom, whilst encouraging its residents to devise increasingly ambitious and complex projects, without worrying too much about audiences. Indeed, as an artist-run business venture, it had been quantifiably successful, generating income for a group of struggling artists, in a depressed part of West Yorkshire, where there was no art market, and public funding for artists was thin on the ground. It had worked particularly well for Bradley, who went on to forge a substantial career as a freelance arts administrator, most recently in Venice, where he manages the production and installation of work for the Biennale by major international artists, several of whom were resident at Dean Clough in the 1980s and 1990s.

However, even this hypothesis, as a stand-alone explanation, raised more questions than it answered. Because, as I very well knew, the Henry Moore Foundation had never considered the Studio to be a commercial operation. It's true that Hopper had been personally supportive of the team of artists on the ground, but his primary purpose had not been to make them a living. And, from a broader institutional perspective, they had only ever been bit part players, there to support the big name residents, who were the lead actors in this drama. So, how had whole thing happened? Was it really possible that the Studio – as an idealistic institutional experiment – had been hijacked by a canny group of artists, in their own financial interests? It didn't seem plausible. For one thing, Hopper was no idealist or ingénue: over the course of a decade, he had risen through the ranks of the municipal art world – my art world – to become Chief Arts Officer in Bradford City Council, before taking up his position as first Director of the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust, in 1987. For another, as Michael Craig-Martin said of his pupil, Damien Hirst, it is 'laughable' to think of the locally based artists as 'cynical careerists': indeed, 'nothing could be further from the truth'.¹²

Paul Bradley was a performance artist, who had founded his own theatre company; and spent several years touring it through colleges and small venues around Britain and Europe, surviving hand to mouth, with some public funding, but little revenue. David Wilkinson was a young man with 'fire in his belly'¹³, who had joined Bradley's company straight out of art college. Chris Sacker was a process-based painter, who had come of age as an artist in the late 1960s and early 1970s, immersed in the studio scene that flourished in London at that time, before linking up with Wilkinson and Bradley at Dean Clough. They weren't moneymen, but dreamers and romantics.

Having spent many hours in my job revising collecting policies and making arguments for the acquisition of this or that object, I desperately wanted to itemise and then analyse the Studio in similar terms: as a self-contained project - whether

¹² Michael Craig-Martin, "My pupil Damien Hirst", *The Independent*, 30 March 2012. <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/my-pupil-damien-hirst-michael-craig-martin-on-the-making-of-arts-wunderkind-7600564.html>. Retrieved, 7 March 2018.

¹³ Sheila Gaffney, interviewed by the author, 30 November 2016.

business or art or anything - which had been rationally conceived by a single guiding intelligence, and consistently performed according to a defined set of principles. However, I could not make it fit.

In the end, in order to get to the bottom of what had been happening at Dean Clough in the late 1980s and 1990s, I had to step outside the self-imposed, but well-policed boundaries of my institutional mind-set, and – slowly and painfully - change my whole way of thinking. Rather than defining what the Studio had been, and then interrogating that model, as had been my intention, I had to go back to first principles and re-build my story from the bottom up. In the absence of other sources, I went back to my interviews and started really listening, without preconception to what people had been telling me about the place they remembered. Previously, I had been fishing out of these conversations those elements that would either confirm or disprove what I thought I knew already. Now, I embraced the mass of information they provided – often confusing and sometimes contradictory - as the raw material for my study. I attempted to model it into some kind of shape, by pulling out key threads from the spoken narratives I had collected, contextualising them with information collected from published and archival sources, and organising them into some kind of chronology.

In this way, I gradually came to understand the context for the Henry Moore Studio very differently: not as one distinctive art model or another; but as terrain of ideas, whose contours were constantly changing and evolving, shaped by all the different people that had made the project happen. This topography was not bounded by the art world; indeed, it ranged far across the boundaries of that world, into the real world, from which discussions of art are usually insulated, encompassing matters of class, politics and the exigencies of economic necessity. Within this broad landscape – effectively the ideological terrain of Britain - the Studio appears as one small, distinctive landform that had taken shape in the late 1980s, specifically at Dean Clough in Halifax.

From the beginning of my study, I had considered the location of the Henry Moore Studio in an old mill complex at Dean Clough to be an important aspect of its

operations. However, in my institutional mind, this was because of what it had offered to the visiting artists – flying in and out between other projects - many of whom had taken inspiration from the mill’s history and architecture; and used the area’s manufacturing resources, left over from its industrial heyday. I had not really considered what had been happening there in the mid to late 1980s, outside the walls of the Studio, but all around it, as it came into being.

I understood already that Dean Clough was a site of some cultural significance, because, as the former the site of Crossley’s Carpets, which had been the largest carpet factory in the world in the earliest twentieth century, it encapsulates more than 150 years of Britain’s industrial history. It knew that its closure had been a potent symbol of economic decline, physical decay and social breakdown, not just in Halifax, but across the north of England; and its subsequent purchase by entrepreneur, Ernest Hall – who planned to redevelop the site as a business park - had been a huge boost to the local area. However, I had not realised that Dean Clough - in the mid to late 1980s, under Hall’s auspices – had become a cauldron for new ideas about art and business that were just then taking shape in Britain under Margaret Thatcher’s third Conservative government.

In the early years of Hall’s enterprise, when Dean Clough was still vast, empty, and unreconstructed, he had opened some of its interiors to locally based artists, to use until the spaces were ready for commercial redevelopment. Across the country, since the beginning of de-industrialisation in the late 1960s, artists had been occupying former industrial buildings in more or less this way. However, as part of his publicity for the project, Hall had projected it as a “Utopian” community of northern artists and business people who would help to drive Britain’s recovery in the post-industrial period. Having been broadcast nationally in a series of articles in The Guardian newspaper and two television programmes in 1987-8, it was lauded by Mrs Thatcher’s Conservative government – as well as the centre left commentariat - as a model for the regeneration of former industrial towns and cities across the North of England, in which art was combined with business, as an engine of economic development.

In this configuration, Dean Clough was not so much as a bricks and mortar entity, as an ideological construction, encompassing the artists on site, who were conceptually part of its architecture. Many of these artists, including Paul Bradley, David Wilkinson and Chris Sacker, were the children and grandchildren of mill workers: for them, the site was not just a resonant historical artefact or useful resource for making, but a powerful symbol of on-going social and cultural change, in which they were implicated directly. As the mills changed, it seems that they had changed too. In 1986, Bradley in particular had still been devising performances in an unconstructed corner of A Mill, at the back end of the complex. By 1988, he had moved into office accommodation and become much more administrative, combining art with commerce on the model of Ernest Hall.

Having mapped Dean Clough, as the ideological terrain on which Paul Bradley conducted his working life through the mid to late 1980s, in the run up to the Studio; I had to look again at the institutional art world, whose representatives - in the form of Robert Hopper and Barry Barker - had converged on the site in 1988. At the time, I was submerged in that world, specifically in the microclimate of the Henry Moore Foundation, from which Hopper had also emanated; and struggled to see it in any kind of perspective. I had to relearn it completely as an ideological entity, with its own constructed realities, which were being dismantled and reconstituted in the 1983 to 1988 period, just as surely as the interior architecture of the mill buildings.

Through the 1980s, during Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher's second and third terms in office, I learnt that the established British art world had been evolving from its post-war incarnation – characterised by art historian, Martin Kemp as a 'cosy club'¹⁴, sheltered from art's commercial realities by public money - of which the Foundation, for all its private resources, was in its personnel one manifestation; into something that was equally exclusive, but much more ruthless and business-like. Of course the Henry Moore Studio, with its "alternative" ethos, had not been defined in opposition to the established art world: Hopper, like me, was totally immersed in that world, and couldn't really see past it. Rather, it was set up in opposition to a new

¹⁴ Art historian, Martin Kemp described the post-war British art establishment as a 'cosy club', as quoted in R. Hewison, *Culture and Consensus* (1995), p. 231.

institutional milieu, which was increasingly focused on income generation, product marketing and visitor numbers. Above all, it can be understood as a curious expression of the established art world's internal struggle, as it transitioned painfully from one thing to another: not so much a coherent art project as a symbol of resistance and attempted bulwark against ultimately irresistible change.

From my original, somewhat blinkered position, I had assumed that Barry Barker, as a senior curator in a British institution, emanated from the same art world as Hopper (and myself). In fact, as I discovered, they had come from quite different places. Having trained originally as an artist, Barker had learnt his skills as a curator in the "alternative" artist-run galleries of Europe in the late 1960s and 1970s, whose practices and ideals – as a constructed ideological entity - he had carried with him, almost uniquely, into the British institutional sphere. He lent them to Hopper, who used them as a conceptual framework for his own project, which – having been defined mostly in the negative, against a deeply felt, but barely articulated internal threat - did not really have one of its own.

The Henry Moore Studio, as it emerged at Dean Clough in 1988, was a strange amalgam of the constructed worlds that Bradley, Hopper and Barker had been carrying around in their heads. Whilst Hopper and Barker were important actors in its drama, Bradley was clearly driving force behind it, connecting with Hopper, introducing him to Barker and knitting their disparate visions together into a functioning operation that would support the lives of himself and his team of artists at Dean Clough for nearly a decade.

However, this was not the end of the story. Whilst the Studio may have been a commercial venture for Bradley, it would be totally wrong to think that money was his only – or even his principal - motivation. As I came to realise, he was driven by something else entirely, whose presence emerged from the interviews, when I listened to them more closely. Bradley's background, I learnt, was in physical theatre, a theatrical genre in which the actor – rather than the writer or director - is the creative force, 'transform[ing] himself before the spectator's eyes using only his inner

impulses'¹⁵. Specifically, he was immersed in the work of Jerzy Grotowski and Tadeusz Kantor: a physically extreme and materially focused strand within this broad area of practice, which had gestated in the febrile atmosphere of post-war Poland, coming to international attention via Grotowski's published work, *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968). Generally little known or practised in this country, Bradley's group, Babel (established in 1981) was one of the only British-based Grotowski-trained theatre companies operating in the 1980s.

For years, Bradley had been creating physical environments in different venues, using everyday materials, which he elevated into objects of special cultural significance through symbolic actions, in order to provoke a 'magic transformation'¹⁶ in the event's participants. From 1986, when he moved his practice to Dean Clough, the atmospheric interiors of the mill complex – still semi-derelict and rich in material residues – had become his platform. In parallel with Ernest Hall's constructed reality, as it was taking shape in the front part of the development, in the atmospheric interiors at the back of the complex – which were still semi-derelict and rich in material residues - he had been constructing his own immersive environment. Spliced with myths and rituals associated with Poor Theatre and other areas of post-war European art practice, but grounded in the material reality of the mills and his own history, he had conjured 'using only his inner impulses'¹⁷, a community of working class people, stretching back into the past, but projecting into the future via himself and the other artists, who were cast in the drama as key actors and agents of change. This constructed world seems to have enveloped them all and empowered them as creative players in the "real world" drama that was unfolding concurrently all around them.

When Bradley "transformed" himself from an artist into a businessman, he had not abandoned the world he had invoked in A Mill. Instead he had carried it with him, superimposing it onto the Studio, as a site of transformation in the "real" world. Then he had incorporated the immersive environment of A Mill world into his vision for

¹⁵ J. Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968, repr. New York: Routledge 2002), p.119.

¹⁶ Ibid. p.76.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.119.

the Studio, opening it to visiting artists, including Giuseppe Penone – the first resident artist - who gave it concrete form in *Contour Lines*, the work he made at Dean Clough in winter 1988. For the “local” artists, Bradley’s worlds and Penone’s work together had provided a well of purpose and passion for the Studio that went well beyond matters of money, propelling the project forward in its early years, and staying with some of them for many years to come.

In writing up the Studio, I could not have quantified it as an autonomous “thing in itself” rationally conceived and consistently executed, or evaluated it against a set list of criteria, or placed it securely in a particular segment of art history, even if I had wanted to. However, through the course of the study, I had lost faith in this kind of analysis altogether; and chose to do something quite different. In line with the process of my research, I wanted to model the ideological terrain of the Henry Moore Studio, using material drawn directly from my interviews, interspersed with contextual information from published and archival sources, and show – rather than tell – how the shape of the project had emerged from the rich soil of the ground that I had mapped.

To provide a framework for thinking about what might otherwise appear as an amorphous matter or subjective experience, I sourced and applied appropriate theoretical models. My key theoretical text was Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (1983), in which he argues that all places (‘larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these)’¹⁸) are to some extent constructed or “imagined”: held together by a web of ideas, grounded in everyday experience and material reality, but spliced with rituals, traditions, myths and legends. By showing how “fictional” communities can be instrumental in the real world, Anderson’s framework helped me to explain the curious power of the Grotowskian environment that Paul Bradley had conjured in the mill buildings at Dean Clough. Filtered through writings of other thinkers, including cultural theorist, Stuart Hall; and art critic, Lucy Lippard, it also illuminated for me Ernest Hall’s art and business world; Barker’s 1960s milieu, and the established British art world of Robert Hopper

¹⁸ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1983/2006), p.6.

and the Henry Moore Foundation, which are less obviously imaginary than Bradley's world, but nevertheless "imagined" in Anderson's terms.

In structuring my text, I rejected conventional formats, in which the elements of a tightly constructed analysis are set out one by one, and looked around for an alternative model. I found Lippard's anthological text, *Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (1973), which conjures the 1960s art world as an imagined community of artists, particularly instructive in this regard. As Lippard explains in her foreword, she too had rejected traditional art historical arrangements. Instead of imposing order retrospectively on what had been a complex phenomenon, she had adopted an anthological approach, drawing together diverse texts, written and spoken by artists at the time, which she arranged in chronological order, spliced with her own commentary. I considered transposing the structure of *Six Years* onto my thesis. However, as I came to realise, the form of Lippard's work is tied to the "imagined community" it was delineating: a de-centralised network of artists, dispersed across nations and continents. The world of the Studio, meanwhile, was focused specifically on the old mill complex at Dean Clough.

With this in mind, I chose to model my text on Giuseppe Penone's work, *Contour Lines* (1988), because its form relates precisely to my subject: it is a portrait of Dean Clough, – in steel, glass and sand – as an "imagined community" of working class people, as it was revealed to him by Paul Bradley in 1988. Like Lippard, with the 1960s art world, Penone evokes his community as a terrain of ideas, evolving through time. However, rather than an expanding network, he visualises it as a stream, constantly changing shape as it flows - like water over sandy rocks - through spiralling cycles of history, from its source in Britain's industrial past into a new, as yet uncertain future, bracketed by the immutable structures of the mills.

I conceived the Henry Moore Studio as a small segment of this long, continuously evolving narrative. My text tracks back into history, but focuses on the events of 1986 to 1992, revolving around the pivotal year of 1988, when the stream of working class people at Dean Clough joined with other moving bodies of communal water to form a

new single channel that manifest for a time as the Studio, before rolling on into other areas. It is written informally, sometimes in the first person and always foregrounding first person narratives. Told through the prism of an artwork, it flows and meanders a bit like a river, presenting (what I hope is) a cumulative argument, rather than a tightly constructed analysis.

By imagining the Studio in this way, I opened the door to a more creative telling of its story. Of course, it was never my intention to create a fiction: my aim has always been to capture my subject as accurately as possible, based on the experiences of the people who were there at the time. However, as part of this process, I wanted to invoke the creative visions and imagined worlds of the artists that brought the Studio into being, because they were absolutely central to its formation. In doing so, I may have constructed my own version of reality, but I would argue that it gets closer to the “truth” of what happened at Dean Clough in the late 1980s than a dry recitation of the facts.

Ultimately, the text that follows is my evocation of an idiosyncratic organisation; and I wouldn't hold it up as a model for anyone else's work – after all, everyone has to find their own way. However, by revealing the Studio, not as an autonomous “thing in itself”, but a phenomenon, strange and wondrous in equal measure, arising out of a very specific set of circumstances, and absolutely enmeshed in the economic, political and social conditions of its time and place, I believe it can help us to think differently about all such operations. At least that is how it helped me.

2. Recovering the Henry Moore Studio, Dean Clough, Halifax: a research journey.

2.1 Introduction to the Henry Moore Studio

The Henry Moore Studio was the first discrete public iteration of the Henry Moore Foundation in Yorkshire, opening formally in October 1989, three and a half years before its sister organisation, the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds, which was then still all in the planning. Overseen by Robert Hopper (Director, Henry Moore Sculpture Trust, 1987 – 1999) from a base in Leeds (located initially in Leeds Art Gallery and later the Institute), it was managed on the ground by a team of locally-based artists, headed by Paul Bradley, within an old carpet factory complex at Dean Clough, Halifax, which was then in the process of being redeveloped as a business complex by entrepreneur, Ernest Hall and his son, Jeremy.

Over the course of a decade, the Studio operated a programme of residencies for established artists, concentrated in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when it hosted Richard Long, Bruce Mclean, Ulrich Ruckriem, Christian Boltanski, Janis Kounellis, Giuseppe Penone, James Turrell and Lawrence Weiner, all of whom had been key figures of the post-1965 international art scene. Under the auspices of the Foundation, they generated a series of large scale works and installations, realised by Bradley and his team of artists, in which the site was often a key element.

Most of the works created in the Studio were notable for their strong sense of materiality, created from iron, coal, stone and other locally sourced materials. However, when the operation closed its doors in 2000 - it left few visible traces behind it. The spaces themselves slipped back easily into the wider context of the business complex at Dean Clough; and today – with a few minor decorative changes and one sub-division – they are run as a wine bar and conference venue (where, notably, then Prime Minister Theresa May launched her ill-fated 2017 manifesto).

For a few years in the early 2000s, large scale works and components of installations were stored elsewhere at Dean Clough, in the so-called Jute Shed, before being

returned to the artists. Of all the works created there, some toured internationally, whilst others have entered private and public collections - including the sculpture collections of Leeds Art Gallery, managed by the Henry Moore Institute, where I used to work as Assistant Curator – but often it has been difficult to definitively locate them. Indeed, a number were too big for the artists to keep or had no life, at least in their original form, beyond the place in which they were created and were discarded or recycled.

The Henry Moore Studio didn't just vanish physically, but conceptually also. That is not to say its projects weren't documented at the time: quite the opposite, they were photographed, filmed and published extensively by the Henry Moore Foundation (much more thoroughly than is now generally possible). However, they have hardly been considered in retrospect, at least in any detail, by anyone in the world of art history; and, truthfully, until I was appointed as the researcher on this PhD project, I had rarely thought about them either. I hadn't been in Yorkshire when the Studio was operating, and had never visited; it did not feature on the Henry Moore Foundation website; and, all through my time at the Institute, I was hardly aware that it had once existed, even though I had started work there in the mid 2000s, only a few years after it ended. Occasionally, I would come across its traces, perhaps in the stores in Leeds Art Gallery, where one or two components of larger works were sequestered; or flicking through its catalogues, when I would wonder at the scale and technical difficulty of some its projects and ask myself how and why and by whom they had been created. However, by this time, the Institute had been running successfully for nearly a decade as a research centre and exhibition venue, under the direction of Penelope Curtis; and the Studio seemed alien to the organisation: it appeared to me almost as a mythological place, or the manifestation of a different civilisation.

That being said, echoes from this period of the Foundation's history had occasionally reached me, as they ricocheted round the office. About the Studio itself I heard little, except sometimes that it had cost a lot of money; or that the projects were great, but unfortunately no-one had visited. However, I came to understand that there had been a rupture in the Foundation's workings, brewing from 1993 onwards, when the Institute had opened, but enacted in the late 1990s, when the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust was

dissolved; and Hopper replaced as head of the Institute by Curtis. In 1998, Hopper had been redeployed as Director of Henry Moore Foundation External Projects, to develop external art projects, initially at the Studio but also other venues. In effect, this development had signalled the end of the Studio, but the break was precipitated by the sudden death of Hopper himself one year later, just before Christmas, which made it so much more decisive and painful that the whole thing was rarely spoken of. When Hopper died, the Studio essentially went with him, which is very much how it felt looking back on the operation: its projects were weighty and the place – to me – had a sad, heavy feeling about it.

By 2015, a whole other cycle had passed in the life of the Institute, with its own upheavals. Curtis herself had left the Institute, and taken up a new role as Director of Tate Britain, to be replaced by Lisa Le Feuvre, who in 2010 was appointed as the new Head of Sculpture Studies. Only one member of staff had been on the pay roll long enough to have experienced operations at the Studio directly, so for most of us in the Institute building, it really was the past and another country. And, presumably, it would have stayed that way had not two of its key protagonists, Paul Bradley and, one of his team at Dean Clough, the artist, David Wilkinson, visited the Institute independently, like apparitions from another life, to ask why the place they once inhabited had disappeared so completely, which - by that time - nobody could tell them.

In this context, Lisa LeFeuvre proposed the Henry Moore Studio as the subject for a PhD study, driven not so much by critical questions about its operations, but in a spirit of enquiry: as the head of an organisation that had travelled a long way, and was still evolving, she wanted to understand what it had been in its first incarnation, which in less than two decades had vanished into the fog of history. From the beginning, when I was appointed to the project, I perceived it as a process of recovery, relating to something that was lost and a kind of catharsis. However, as the study progressed I realised that time was at the very the heart of the matter: or rather, time passing, not in a straight line from one thing to another, but in inexorable cycles, endlessly repeating, in which everything sort of looks the same, but is infact totally different. And, as the world revolves and changes, we all change with it.

2.2 Lots of Catalogues and a Few Useful Articles

The Henry Moore Studio is documented in slides, video recordings and a series of publications relating to individual projects, generated contemporaneously by the Henry Moore Foundation; and two catalogues raisonnées - *The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust Studio at Dean Clough, Halifax, 1989 – 1993* (1993) and *Second Sight: Robert Hopper and the Henry Moore Foundation, 1989 – 2000* (2001) - which together, occupy around half of one shelf in the Henry Moore Institute library. The first catalogue raisonnée, which was published in 1993 to mark the operations of the Studio up to the point when the Institute opened, incorporates an essay by Barry Barker, who – as Director of Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol (1986 – 1991) - had been instrumental in the very first project with Giuseppe Penone. He introduces the Studio as a ‘place for artists’¹⁹, whose ethos was to be as open and generous to its residents as possible: an approach he situates loosely within the studio culture of the 1960s, when young artists started to gather in post-industrial buildings to make and display work and create their own communities, outside established art systems.

Taking Barker’s text as my starting point, I attempted to locate the Studio’s operations art historically, within the context of artist-centred curatorial practice in Britain, aspects of which are sketched by Claire Glossop and Andrea Tarsia in the ‘Display’ section *Sculpture in Twentieth Century Britain, Vol I* (2003). Glossop locates the origins of these types of practice in artist-run galleries of the 1960s and 1970s, such as Arts Lab, Drury Lane, London, (1967 – 1969), Acme Gallery, Covent Garden (1976 – 1981) and Matt’s Gallery (1979 to the present), often attached to studio communities. Tarsia extends Glossop’s history into the 1980s and 1990s, via Chisenhale Gallery (est. 1980) and the plethora of artist-run spaces that emerged in London as part of the YBA phenomenon. Sandy Nairne, in *The Institutionalisation of Dissent* (1993) maps the progress of artist-run galleries, mostly in an American context, from ad-hoc spaces and studio collectives, supporting artists whose practices which were not institutionally recognised; into officially sanctioned versions of the

¹⁹ Barry Barker, “A Space for Artists” in *The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust Studio at Dean Clough, Halifax, 1989 – 1993* (1993).

same phenomenon which helped to launch the art world careers of younger artists in the 1990s; and monographic commissioning programmes in mainstream institutions, which provided space for big name artists to make large scale, site specific work, in order to attract visitors. Within these trajectories, the Henry Moore Studio can be understood either as a late version of an artist-run enterprise, situated physically within the walls of an art institution, which supported artists whose careers were already well established. Or, as Tarsia suggests in *Conditions of Display*, an early example of a site-specific commissioning programme in a mainstream British gallery, tucked away in Halifax, where very few people would ever see it, prefiguring the 'Duveen Commissions' at Tate Britain (which started in 1990); and 'The Unilever Series' at Tate Modern (from 2000), both of which are major spectacles, seen by hundreds of thousands of people. Either way, it appears as a curious, contradictory phenomenon, which made little sense within surrounding frameworks.

In his introduction to the 1993 HMS catalogue raisonnée, Barry Barker considers the Studio in relation to new museums of 1980s dedicated to the display of art of the post-1965 period, which was just then being incorporated into the established canon. In continental Europe and America, this development had gathered steam from 1980 onwards, via Halle für Neue Kunst, Schaffhausen (est. 1980), DIA Art Foundation, New York (est. 1980), Museum of Modern Art, Frankfurt (est. 1981), Temporary Contemporary, Los Angeles (est. 1982), CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux (est. 1984), Magasin Grenoble (est. 1986) and other organisations. However, it was still only just trickling through to Britain in the late 1980s, via Tate Liverpool (est. 1988), which had been envisaged (but never realised) as a museum of modern and contemporary practice. It finally took root here in 2000, when Tate Modern – Britain's first national museum of modern art - opened its doors to the public. In this context, the Studio appears somewhat prescient, because it hosted international artists in Halifax, whose work had rarely been seen anywhere in Britain, and was still little known in established art circles. However, it was also utterly anomalous, because it had no collection; and was dedicated to making, rather than the exhibition of historical artefacts, which was the primary function of most of the other organisations.

More recently, in *Art in the North of England, 1979 – 2006* (2017), Gabriel Gee documented the Henry Moore Studio amongst grassroots initiatives, including the Projects UK/Locus +, Newcastle and East Street Arts, Leeds, for example, which emerged in the principle cities of the North of England in the late twentieth century, in the context of industrial change and urban reconstruction. However, as an institutional project, with lots of money, run by local practitioners for the benefit of big name artists from outside the area, it was unlike any of the other operations that he evaluated. Here, as in every other art historical context in which I tried to locate it, it wouldn't fit, seemingly out of place or time in all of them. I was left wondering where the Studio had come from and what its purpose had been.

2.3 Fifteen Bulging Boxes

In order to generate some new information, beyond the dry and confusing histories I had mapped via my literature review, I turned to the fifteen bulging banker's boxes of archive material, which had been shipped from the Henry Moore Foundation's base in Hertfordshire to Leeds for the purposes of the study. They held files of unsorted matter relating to the operations of the Henry Moore Studio, untouched since the year 2000; and slightly musty from the deep storage in which they had been sequestered for more than a decade. The files had been compiled by Robert Hopper and the management team of the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust; and, as an institutional curator myself, I was not surprised by their contents, which included purchase orders, receipts, budget projections and wage, work and visitor records, interspersed with memos, letters, faxes, slides, photographs, Trustee reports, project proposals, vision statements, press releases, visitor information sheets, newspaper articles, and printed matter relating to external organisations.

These are the bread and butter of my trade, and I had always regarded them as important documents, so I spent some time analysing their contents. They mapped out a cast of characters, revealing the on-site team of artists, whose identities were otherwise buried deep or hidden within the Studio catalogues; making clear the agency of key players (including Paul Bradley, Chris Sacker and David Wilkinson whose names appear on studio reports, faxes and other documents); and highlighting

external artists, curators and critics who had interacted with the project in one way or another. They also charted a trajectory for the Studio from its heyday in the early 1990s, to its demise late in the decade, by which time its costs had spiralled, whilst visitor numbers had remained in the very low thousands. I knew already from office conversations that this had caused increasing consternation amongst the Trustees of the Henry Moore Foundation. However, I found their concern reflected in letters that Hopper had put away in his files, perhaps not knowing quite how to deal with the matter.

Ostensibly, the archive covers the entire period of the Studio's operations from 1987, when Hopper was appointed to his role as director, until 2000, when the project had ended. However, material relating to the early years - when Hopper was busy with projects in Leeds; and affairs at Dean Clough were being run on a fairly ad-hoc basis, by the local artists - is scanty. It increases dramatically through the mid-1990s, when control shifted to staff at the Henry Moore Institute, and things got less interesting. Occasionally, within the mass of printed matter, I would stumble upon a jewel of information, like the notes Robert Hopper had made in advance of his interview for the role of Director in 1987; or grainy photos of the Penone exhibition, which took place in Spring 1989, before the Studio had officially opened, and hadn't been documented in any of the catalogues; or a leaflet from the Halle Fur Neue Kunst, Schaffhausen, which Paul Bradley had brought back from his travels in Europe in the late 1980s. However, I increasingly got the feeling that the life of the enterprise had happened elsewhere; and I wasn't accessing it. It was at this point that I started my interview programme.

2.4 Some Long Conversations

In the second part of the study, I conducted thirty two interviews, some extending over several sessions, all of which I recorded and transcribed with the subjects' permission: the vast majority – twenty six - with artists, who had been working in and around Dean Clough in the late 1980s and 1990s, and interacted with the Studio as technicians, invigilators or visitors, identified mostly via the HMS Archive, whose stories had not been recorded in any of the published materials. I spoke with two

curators, including Barry Barker, Director of Arnolfini, who wrote the introduction to the 1993 HMS publication; and James Hamilton, Director of Yorkshire Contemporary Art Group, who was a friend of Robert Hopper from university and had been active in West Yorkshire art scene in the late 1980s; and four British artists who had been resident at the Studio in the early 1990s, including Bruce Mclean, John Newling, Glen Onwin and Alison Wilding. I audio recorded and transcribed all of these conversations, either fully or partially, with the subjects' permission.

Before each interview I compiled a list of questions, hoping to uncover concrete facts about the operations of the Studio and the mechanics of each project. However, I found this approach to be ineffective: at a distance of thirty years, people were digging into the recesses of their memories, and struggled to remember specific details to order. I had to let them tell me about the Studio in their own way.

For many, the Studio had in fact meant very little: it was a peripheral part of their existence, a way to make a living; something they had been vaguely aware of and visited occasionally; or one episode in a long and successful career journey, which was the case for most of the resident artists. However, for the core group of artists, who had helped to set the project up with Robert Hopper, it had been absolutely central to their existence; and it was through my conversations with them – sometimes rambling, protracted and difficult to unravel – that the project finally started to spark into life for me.

Rather than an institutional art project – which might perhaps be evaluated according to the numbers of people who had visited; or the happy memories of its resident artists; or mapped against theoretical concepts in art history - they conjured the Henry Moore Studio as a community of people, based at Dean Clough in the late 1980s. They described the grim reality of the smoke blackened old mill town of Halifax, under the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher, when factories everywhere were closing and thousands of people were being made redundant, casting a gloomy pall over the entire district; but also the romance of the old mill buildings at Dean Clough before they were refurbished as offices; their vast, empty, encompassing spaces; and the biting cold and damp you had to put with if you were an artist there.

They remembered the turmoil of the mid-1980s in Yorkshire, as the industrial battle of the Miners' Strike played out on the county's coalfields; the difficulty of making your way as a young artist in that environment, when public subsidies for the arts were being cut or redirected to heritage causes; and the surprising success of Ernest Hall's new business development, which had started to rise from the ashes of the old carpet factory in the late 1980s. There was the moment that Robert Hopper came to Halifax, wearing his pale coloured suit, and bringing with him the wealth of the Henry Moore Foundation; and Giuseppe Penone arrived, with his luxuriant hair – and eyes like mirrors - straight from the mountains of northern Italy, with Barry Barker, Director of Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol. I was riveted.

2.5 A Doctoral Symposium.

On 20th September 2017, I convened a symposium at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds – *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio: A Doctoral Symposium* - as an extension of the interview programme, in order to create a space for dialogue and discussion between key subjects. I had already conversed extensively with most of the speakers, but engaged for the first time at the symposium with Barry Barker, whose voice then became a critical part of my research.

The day was organised into three sessions, under the headings of “Origins”, “Artistic and Social Life” and “Impacts”. In each session, pairs of speakers were invited to make short presentations and then engage in discussion with a convenor. The first session, convened by Dr Alison Rowley (Huddersfield University), brought together Barry Barker (b.1947) and Paul Bradley (b. 1956), to talk around the project of Giuseppe Penone, which they had instigated together and became the pilot for the Henry Moore Studio. The second session, convened by Dr Gabriel Gee (Franklin University, Switzerland), brought together David Wilkinson (b. 1964) and Chris Sacker (b.1950), who had been artists at Dean Clough, with Paul, in the 1986 to 1988 period; and became key members of the Studio team, helping Penone and other artists to create work, under Paul's direction. The third session, convened by curator and collector, Greville Worthington (formerly a Trustee of the Henry Moore Foundation),

brought together artists, John Newling (b. 1952) and Glen Onwin (b.1947), who had been residents at Dean Clough in the early 1990s.

I recorded and transcribed all these presentations and dialogues, so that they became part of the bank of information I was collecting from my interview programme. However, it wasn't the presentations themselves or even the sessions as stand alone discussions that mattered most in this context (though they were all very interesting). It was getting the people of the Henry Moore Studio together, for the first time since the operation had closed its doors in 2000. From the conversations around class, politics and community, that swirled around the whole occasion from dinner the night before, through the event itself, and continuing afterwards (with Barry and Chris in particular), the place finally re-emerged: not as an institutional project, or in terms of its day to day reality, but as it had existed in the minds and imaginations of the people that made it happen, which was much more beautiful and interesting.

Paul, Chris and David had all grown up as the children or grandchildren of mill workers in northern towns in the 1960s and 70s, when Britain was going through its process of de-industrialisation and working class mill communities everywhere were breaking up and disintegrating. They had 'escaped'²⁰ to go to art school, as part of a wider exodus of young people from their areas: Chris to London in the early 1970s; Paul to Bretton Hall, Wakefield in the late 1970s; and David to Nottingham in the mid-1980s. As Alison explained in conversation with Barry, 'a lot of young people, working class people went through art schools [in that period], as I did at Hornsey [College of Art, London]. You didn't go into academia because you didn't have an academic background necessarily, so you went to art school'. Or, 'you started a band', as Barry said.²¹

After a decade of social and political turmoil, in which the economy of the north had imploded, as Margaret Thatcher pulled the plug on already failing industries, Paul,

²⁰ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

²¹ B. Barker in conversation with Paul Bradley, with Alison Rowley, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

Chris and David had come together at Dean Clough in Halifax in the mid-1980s. Between 1986 and 1988, they had formed a new community, initially around their own art projects; but then as a cultural enterprise, in which they would produce art for other people, as part of the service economy that was emerging around them in Ernest Hall's business park. This became the Henry Moore Studio, under the auspices of Robert Hopper and the Henry Moore Foundation.

When he travelled to Dean Clough with Italian artist, Giuseppe Penone, at Paul and Robert's invitation, Barry was Director of Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, one of the most important contemporary galleries in the country. However, like Paul, Chris and David, he had come from a working class background ('similar, but different' to theirs, because it was based in London); and trained originally as an artist in London in the 1960s. In the late 1960s and 70s, he had travelled 'incessantly' in Europe where other young artists were just then gathering, experimenting with new ways of making and showing art, in a plethora of new galleries and spaces for art, outside established art systems, run by artists themselves and small-time dealers who were close to the people they represented. When he entered the curatorial arena in Britain in the 1970s, he remained 'half an artist'; and always prioritised the needs of artists, over those of curators or galleries. He brought this ethos with him to Halifax, and gifted it to the Studio.

For all the main speakers at the symposium, the Henry Moore Studio and Dean Clough had been much more than just work places: they were microcosms of other places they had experienced, or heard of, or inherited via their family histories; and repositories of dreams they had carried with them through the post-war period, and were hoping might be realised. For Paul, Chris and David, the old factory complex at Dean Clough, which at the time was still semi-derelict, had embodied the demise of industrial working class culture in the 1970s and 80s. The Studio was a new kind of working environment, rising literally from the ashes of industry, run by working class people themselves, for a change. For Barry, the Studio, as it emerged through the project with Penone, was a revival of the international art world he had encountered in Europe, as a young artist and aspiring curator: a place of sophistication, culture and freedom – books, truffles and espresso coffee - beyond the bounds of little Britain,

where artists would be in pole position. For Chris, it was the London art community that he had entered in the early 1970s, when the studio scene was just getting going and young artists were moving into former industrial buildings in the Docklands area of the city. David, who was a few years younger than the others, thought of it in relation to other ‘communities’ of young artists across Britain, setting up their own projects in the late 1980s. He said, ‘It was City Racing [London], Transmission [Glasgow], Cubitt [London], Collective Gallery [London]’.

For all of them, the Studio had been a place of promise As Paul explained at the symposium, ‘[it] could have been anything it wanted to be’.²² He said:

I was thinking about Michelangelo Pistoletto’s Citta del’Arte ... He had this factory outside Biella, very much like Dean Clough ... He’s got a university there. He lets students come from all over Europe to live and research there ... It could have been Beuys’ free university. It could have been a phenomenal research museum centre. We could have actually started to get rid of the Halifax building society and taken more space and turned it into a factory of ideas. Which unfortunately it’s not these days. It could have been anything.²³

2.6 The Conceptual Framework

To help me conceptualise the Henry Moore Studio as it had emerged at the symposium, I looked to the writings of three different thinkers, all of which deal with communities of people, but in different contexts. Firstly, the political scientist, Benedict Anderson, whose seminal text, *Imagined Communities* (1983/1991) draws attention to ‘the dynamics of socially and culturally organized imagination as

²² David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

²³ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

processes at the heart of political culture, self-understanding and solidarity'²⁴ (Craig Calhoun puts it). Then art critic and writer, Lucy Lippard, whose anthological text, *Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (1973), describes the international art world of the late 1960s and 1970s – that Barry had encountered in Europe – as an “imagined community” of people. Finally, the political essays of Stuart Hall, which map the “imagined community” of Britain through the second half of the twentieth century.

Anderson’s text provided me with a theoretical framework. Hall’s helped me to situate the Studio temporally, between the late 1960s and late 1980s, and within the social and political context of Thatcherism in Britain. The writings of both Hall and Lippard were important formally, because of how they document the communities they are delineating: not through retrospective analysis, but year by year, almost in real time, detailing their inner workings and showing how they unfolded and changed across a defined period in history.

2.6.1 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1983/2006)

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson introduces the idea of a community that is at once imagined and political. In Anderson’s framework, the “imagined community” is not a fictional place, because it is experienced in real locations where people physically gather. However, it encompasses – imaginatively - a much larger population who ‘[will] never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them’²⁵, yet feel connected by a complex web of ideas – relating to history, culture, society and politics – swirling around in the ether above all of their heads at a particular moment in history, ‘[so] in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’.²⁶

²⁴ Calhoun, Craig. (2016). The Importance of Imagined Communities – and Benedict Anderson. *Annual Review. Debats. Revista de Cultura, Poder i Societat*. 1. 11-16. 10.28939/iam.debats-en.2016-1. P.11 (Abstract).

²⁵ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1983/2006), p.6.

²⁶ Ibid.

The shape of ‘the image’ is constantly changing in response to events in the real world. However, its basic structure is immutable. As Anderson explains, it is ‘always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship, between autonomous subjects, ‘loom[ing] out of an immemorial past, and ... glid[ing] into a limitless future’. By conjuring a common image of ‘freedom’ and ‘comradeship’ in the minds of otherwise disparate people, it binds them together around a particular political project, because, according to Anderson, we all ‘dream of being free’; and the ‘emblem of this freedom’ is self-government.

Anderson developed his framework in relation to the “imagined community” of the nation: a geographically-bounded social entity, whose diverse populations are connected by a shared sense of national identity, constructed from myths of origin, rituals, shared beliefs and collective memory; and circulated by print and broadcast media. Within the context of capitalism in the long twentieth century, “imagining” the nation has been construed by post-Marxist theorists as a coercive activity, linked to ‘fabrication and falsity’²⁷, whereby wealthy elites, who control the means of intellectual production, persuade ordinary working people to rally around the established system of rule, against their own economic interests. However, as Anderson points out, you cannot ignore its ‘creativity and invention’.²⁸ The Utopian vision of a ‘sovereign’²⁹ state, whose subjects are free and equal, inspires real passion, so strong that ‘over the past two centuries, [it has propelled] many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for [their country]’.³⁰ What’s more, in principle, these dynamics can be harnessed in the opposite direction, by anti-establishment forces, to create an alternative ‘image’ of the nation, run according to a different system; or by marginalised groups of people within society to project themselves imaginatively out of the geographical bounds of their present reality into another, more free and equal “place” altogether – which is what Paul, Chris and David were trying to do in the late 1980s. As working class people in the grim reality of Halifax under Thatcherism, they had harnessed ‘the dynamics of socially and

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., p.7

culturally organized imagination'³¹ to project themselves into a new “place”, where they could operate more freely; and this is how they ‘imagined’ the Henry Moore Studio.

2.6.2 Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Verso, 1973/1997).

In *Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (1973/1997), Lucy Lippard documents the international art world of the late 1960s and early 1970s – which converged on Halifax in the late 1980s and early 1990s – as an “imagined community” of people, bound together by ‘the chaotic network of ideas’³², that was swirling around in the ether above all of their heads across the six period of her title. Lippard’s art world was “imagined” within Benedict Anderson’s conceptual framework, because – like ‘all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact’ - its members ‘[would] never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each live[d] the image of their communion’.³³ However, it was not a geographical entity. Rather, it comprised a network of places, criss-crossing nations and continents, around which the community convened, in different configurations, at particular moments.

From Lippard’s perspective the community had originated in the “real” ‘studio community’ of The Bowery in New York where she was living and working in the 1960s, amongst ‘a small group of young artists’³⁴, including Robert Ryman, Sol Le Witt, Eva Essa, Ad Reinhardt, Carl Andre, Donald Judd, Joseph Kosuth and others. However, it had manifested more or less simultaneously in a plethora of other studio communities, and spaces and places for art, run by artists and small-time dealers, across ‘the Americas, Europe, England, Australia and Asia’ (as Lippard states in her

³¹ Calhoun, Craig. (2016). The Importance of Imagined Communities – and Benedict Anderson. *Annual Review. Debats. Revista de Cultura, Poder i Societat*. 1. 11-16. 10.28939/iam.debats-en.2016-1. P.11 (Abstract).

³² L. Lippard, *Six Years* (Verso, 1973/1997), p.5

³³ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1983/2006), p.6.

³⁴ L. Lippard, “Escape Attempts” in *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. viii.

long title), through which young artists (like Barry) were constantly travelling, carrying with them the ‘bar and studio dialogue’³⁵ of the places they had come from. In all these different locations, young artists were experimenting with new ways of making and showing, including ‘so-called conceptual or information or idea art’, which was the focus of her study, and ‘such vaguely designated areas as minimal, anti-form, systems, earth, or process art’³⁶, which feature in her writings, but also ‘Proto-conceptual art in the guise of the Fluxus group’s “concept art”, ‘Happenings, concrete poetry’ and ‘performance and street works’³⁷, which she acknowledged as part of the same conceptual landscape, though they were beyond the scope of her publication.

Looking back today, as Lippard acknowledged, these diverse practices – now considered art historically as Minimalism, Post-Minimalism, Conceptualism, Arte Povera and Performance - might appear ‘supremely apolitical’³⁸, certainly compared to issue-based art of the later 1970s and 1980s. However, as she explained, it was ‘the form rather than the content of the work that carried a political message’³⁹.

Lippard situated these activities firmly within ‘the political ferment of the times’ in which they were operating, which was centred for her on ‘the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam, the Women’s Liberation Movement and the counter-culture’⁴⁰, but encompassed industrial actions, art school sit-ins and other demonstrations against established authority taking place internationally around the critical moment of “1968”, when everything erupted. As students, workers, women and minority ethnic groups were protesting against capitalism, the class system, patriarchal structures and institutional racism; she saw young artists challenging the authorities of art by transgressing the medial boundaries of sculpture and painting; and breaching the established canon. In other words, they were enacting a formal revolution whose mechanism, according to Lippard was “dematerialisation”.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ L. Lippard, *Six Years*. Title page.

³⁷ Ibid., p.6.

³⁸ L. Lippard, “Escape Attempts” in *Six Years* (1973/1997), p.xiii.

³⁹ Ibid., p. xiv.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. vii.

Contrary to the way it has sometimes been interpreted by mostly hostile critics, the endpoint of “dematerialisation”, in Lippard’s formulation, was not an absence of materiality (which in any case would be impossible); but rather a ‘de-emphasis on material aspects (uniqueness, permanence, decorative attractiveness)’⁴¹ or what you might call art’s object quality. As much as anything, it was defined in opposition to mainstream art criticism of the 1950s and 60s, epitomised by the writings of Clement Greenberg (1909 - 1994), in which artworks were judged purely on a narrow set of formal criteria, pre-determined by Greenberg and other art historians. According to Lippard, this approach had promoted an aestheticized, abstract, object-based art, which was as far removed as possible from ‘the real world’⁴²; and, at the same time, particularly amenable to ‘capitalist marketing devices’⁴³.

By shifting focus from art’s ‘decorative’ qualities to the ideas behind its creation, Lippard and her associates were attempting to find ‘a drastic solution to the problem of artists being bought and sold so easily, along with their art’⁴⁴. This wasn’t so much about money, as freedom: by decoupling art from the ‘gallery-money-power structure’⁴⁵, they were hoping to release artists from ‘the closed claustrophobic spaces of the gallery system’ and ‘the sacrosanct ivory walls and heroic, patriarchal mythologies with which the 1960s opened’.⁴⁶ In idealistic moments, they even envisaged that art might be able to ‘function in a different context altogether’,⁴⁷ where ‘artists [would be] free to let their imaginations run rampant’⁴⁸, liberated from the burden of ‘object status’.⁴⁹ In this respect, their community was political, because, as Lippard explained,

the way artists handle their art, where they make it, the chances they get to make it, how they are going to let it out, and to whom – it’s all part of a life style and a political situation. It becomes a matter of artists’ power, of artists

⁴¹ L. Lippard, *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. 5.

⁴² L. Lippard, *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. 264.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ L. Lippard, “Escape Attempts” in *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. vii.

⁴⁷ L. Lippard, *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. 7.

⁴⁸ L. Lippard, “Escape Attempts” in *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. vii.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

achieving enough solidarity so they aren't at the mercy of a society that doesn't understand what they are doing.⁵⁰

Lippard's art world was "a place of the mind", where artists could operate freely outside established art structures, and the artist was situated as a powerful figure right at the centre of things. It provides a key point of reference for the Henry Moore Studio, for a number of different reasons. Many of the Studio's big name residents, including Penone had grown up as artists in that environment in the late 1960s. It was also one part of the mental architecture of Paul, Chris and David, whose practices came out of the expanded field of art practice that Lippard delineates. However, it is important above all because it lived in the head of Barry Barker, who had encountered Lippard's world in Europe in the late 1960s and 70s. He projected it onto the Studio when he came to Halifax twenty years later.

2.6.3 Stuart Hall, political essays.

In a series of political essays, published in *Marxism Today* and other periodicals (and gathered together retrospectively in *Selected Political Writings* (Duke University Press, 2017) and *The Hard Road to Renewal* (Verso, 1988)), Stuart Hall plotted a history of Britain, as Thatcherism emerged and became established in the last quarter of the twentieth century. His purpose was not to complete a 'comprehensive analysis of Thatcherism'⁵¹ or even a 'substantive assessment'⁵² of its economic policy (though he does not neglect the economic dimension). He avoided 'issues of foreign policy, war and peace'⁵³: the stuff of "official" histories, 'mentally disciplined by the institutional horizons of Westminster, as if these provide all that needs to be known about how politics operates', as Sally Davison puts it⁵⁴. Instead, he sought to unpick the 'chaotic network of ideas' (in Lippard's terminology) swirling above the heads of the British population at 'significant political moments'⁵⁵, in order 'to tease out [their]

⁵⁰ L. Lippard, *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. 8.

⁵¹ S. Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal*, Verso (1988/1990), p. 3

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Sally Davison, David Featherstone & Bill Schwartz, 'Introduction' in S. Hall, *Selected Political Writings*, Duke University Press, Durham (2017), p.4.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.1

complex contours’, ‘get a sense of what was shaping them’⁵⁶ and ‘identify the nature of specific shifts and currents that [had] coalesced in to the moment he is analysing’⁵⁷. This approach has been described by social scientist, Doreen Massey as ‘conjunctural analysis’⁵⁸; but, in effect, it explores the nation as an “imagined community”, within Anderson’s framework.

On occasion, Hall will look back across the span of history in the long twentieth century. However, he focuses above all on his own times – the “place” where he is living - tracking, almost in real time, ideas changing; and the birth and growth of a new political movement, as Social Democracy – which had been the ‘historical conjuncture’⁵⁹ of the post-war period - gave way to Thatcherism in the 1980s, separated by the ‘crisis of the 1970s’⁶⁰. He teases out the ‘shifts and currents’ eroding the old ‘image’ of Britain as a ‘welfare state’, ‘dominated by ... public ownership and wealth redistribution through taxation’⁶¹. He explores the battle of ideas that followed, as different political forces attempted to shape a new vision for the country; and right wing forces stole the narrative, ushering in ‘the neoliberal, market-forces era unleashed by Thatcher and Reagan’⁶². Finally, he analyses the complex contours of the new political landscape, as it took shape in the late 1980s.

Within this unfolding process, Hall identifies “1968” and “1988” as ‘significant political moments’, in which ‘different forces [came] together, conjuncturally, to create the new terrain’⁶³ in British society, at either end of the crisis of Social Democracy. He frames “1968” – when Lippard’s art world came into being - as the moment of disjuncture (or ‘ruptural unity’⁶⁴) when the network of ideas around Social

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Doreen Massey, in conversation with Stuart Hall, ‘Interpreting the Crisis’ in *Soundings*, Issue 44, Spring 2010, p.57.

⁵⁹ S. Hall, “Gramsci & Us”, *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p.16.

⁶⁰ Stuart Hall, in conversation with Doreen Massey, “Interpreting the Crisis”, *Soundings*, Issue 44, Spring 2010, p.57.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ S. Hall, “Gramsci & Us”, *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p.16.

⁶⁴ Stuart Hall quoting French philosopher Louis Althusser, in conversation with Doreen Massey, “Interpreting the Crisis”, *Soundings*, Issue 44, Spring 2010, p.57.

Democracy, which had held the nation together previously, started to unravel.

According to Hall:

‘1968’ unleashed an avalanche of protest, dissent and disaffiliation: student occupations, participatory democracy, community politics, second-wave feminism, ‘turn on, tune in and drop out’, an ambivalent libertarianism; but also the iconic image of ‘Che’ Guevara, Vietnam, the IRA, industrial unrest, Malcolm X, black power, the red brigades.⁶⁵

As cracks had opened up in the social architecture, ‘popular energies’⁶⁶ were released into the atmosphere, and different groups within society – including Lippard’s artists - projected themselves imaginatively out of the geographical places in which they were domiciled into alternative realities, where they could be more free and equal, because as Lippard tells us, ‘the power of imagination was at the core of even the stodgiest attempts to escape from “cultural confinement”’⁶⁷; and ‘we were imagining our heads off and, to some extent, out into the world’⁶⁸.

“1988”, on the other hand was the moment of resolution, when the network of ideas around Thatcherism had finally settled above the heads of everyone in Britain; and ‘popular energies’ were re-absorbed back into the system, under a new, more extreme form of capitalism, known today as Neoliberalism. It was at just this moment – when ‘political ideas of liberty [had become] harnessed to economic ideas of the free market’⁶⁹ - that the Henry Moore Studio was established, as a free place for working class people and artists, under the auspices of the Henry Moore Foundation.

2.6.4 ‘An Earthquake in People’s Minds’⁷⁰

⁶⁵ S. Hall, “The Neo-Liberal Revolution”, *Cultural Studies*, June 2011, p. 712, DOI: 10.1080/09502386.2011.619886.

⁶⁶ S.Hall, “The State – Socialism’s Old Caretaker”, *Marxism Today*, November 1984, p.27.

⁶⁷ L. Lippard, “Escape Attempts” in *Six Years*, p. vii.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

⁶⁹ S. Hall, “The Neo-Liberal Revolution”, *Cultural Studies*, June 2011, p. 710, DOI: 10.1080/09502386.2011.619886.

⁷⁰ Beuys in conversation with Michele Bonuomo, December 1985 in *Zweite* (1986), p.92. Quotation translated by Fiona Elliot.

If Lippard's world was an "imagined community" within Anderson's framework, it was also a community of the imagination, because its political goals were ultimately creative. By rejecting traditional ways of making art – either abstract or figurative, categorised as painting, sculpture, drawing or print-making - and finding new ways to engage with world, beyond convention, she and her friends were hoping to change people's perception of reality; and spark what Joseph Beuys called 'an earthquake in [their] minds'⁷¹. In *Six Years* (1973/97), she didn't really describe this part of her revolutionary agenda. Instead, she embodied it within the book she was creating.

Through the 1960s, Lippard had been making her living as an art critic. However, as she explained: 'I never liked the term ["critic"]... Having learned all I knew about art in the studios, I identified with artists and never saw myself as their adversary.'⁷² She eschewed 'the traditionally unified approach' of art criticism, by Greenberg for example, in which a so-called expert, looking in from the outside, interprets events, usually in retrospect. Instead, she planned *Six Years* as an active participant in the world she was delineating, attempting to produce an account that was 'phenomenological rather than historical'⁷³ – in other words, as close to lived experience as possible.

To this end, Lippard compiled her research into what she called 'a bibliography into which are inserted a fragmented text, art works, documents, interviews, and symposia'⁷⁴, 'intentionally [reflecting] chaos rather than imposing order'⁷⁵. Most of the texts she included were spoken or written by artists of her community, whom she allows to communicate directly with the reader rather than via an "informed" intermediary, without privileging one voice over another. Within this mass of material, she presents her own voice as one amongst many others, through editorial notes marked out from the rest in italics. She arranged all these items into

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² L. Lippard, "Escape Attempts" in *Six Years*, p. x.

⁷³ L. Lippard, *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. 6.

⁷⁴ Ibid., title page.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

chronological order, month by month, year by year, in order to reveal - almost in real time - ‘ideas changing’⁷⁶ and the birth and growth of a movement.

In the late 1960s, Lippard had been hoping for a revolution, in which art would be decoupled from capitalism. However, by 1972, ‘the major conceptualists’, whose work she championed, ‘were selling work for substantial sums here and in Europe; and represented by (and still more unexpectedly – showing in) the world’s most prestigious galleries’.⁷⁷ At this point, she realised that the dream was over; and ended her anthologies. In the years that followed, she left the “dematerialised” art world behind her, and moved into other areas. *Six Years* went out of print, seemingly forgotten, except by a few rich collectors who added it to their inventories, ‘paralleling the fate of the art it espoused’⁷⁸, as Lippard tells us.

It was only in 1995, when the Museum of Contemporary, Los Angeles (LACMA) staged its exhibition, *Reconsidering the Object of Art 1965 – 1975*, in order to examine ‘a generally underexposed (and therefore often misunderstood) period in contemporary art’⁷⁹, that Lippard revisited the world she had once inhabited. She composed a text for the LACMA catalogue, reflecting on events of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which was re-published as “Escape Attempts”, in the second edition of *Six Years* (1997); and, so became part of the documentary project that she had started twenty years earlier.

In the spirit of the original enterprise, she did not write *Escape Attempts* as an ‘authoritative overview’⁸⁰ of the art of that era; nor did she attempt to re-interpret events in the light of more recent developments. Instead, she went back to the primary source material she had gathered in her anthologies, to explore the ‘ideas in the air’⁸¹ that had been swirling around in the ether above her community all those years ago,

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 263.

⁷⁸ L. Lippard, *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. 3.

⁷⁹ Press blurb for Anne Rorimer and Ann Goldstein, *Reconsidering the Object of Art, 1965–1975* (MIT, 1995). <https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/reconsidering-object-art>. Retrieved 5 June 2019.

⁸⁰ L. Lippard, “Escape Attempts” in *Six Years*, p. vii.

⁸¹ L. Lippard, *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. 5.

and uncover their ‘hidden narrative[s]’⁸², quoting liberally from her own editorial writings, because, as she said, ‘I knew more about it then than I do now, despite the advantages of hindsight’.⁸³

She resituated the international art world of the late 1960s and early 1970s within her own experience, and the politics of the 1960s, focusing on ‘so-called conceptual or information or idea art’⁸⁴, which had been her principle interest; and charting her own progress through the period in question. Her essay sizzles with life and energy, conjuring the post-1965 art scene as a living organism, rather than dead historical matter – and, as such, it captivated me immediately.

2.6.5 *Six Years* as a model for my own study

I decided to conduct my research as a “conjunctural analysis”, mapping the “imagined community” of the Henry Moore Studio through the ‘historical conjuncture’ of Thatcherism, around the significant political moment of “1988”, when Barry and Penone came to Halifax. Using *Six Years* as a model, I gathered primary source material from the archive and library into an anthology, organising events and extracts from published and unpublished sources chronologically, so that I could explore ‘ideas in the air’ and uncover the ‘hidden history’ of the place, as it had evolved across a six year period from 1986 to 1992. I have written my thesis in the spirit of *Escape Attempts*, not as an authoritative overview of the period, or an analysis of the work of a few great artists at the Henry Moore Studio, but, as far as possible, from the perspective of the artists who made it happen on the ground, drawing liberally on the material I had gathered from the interview programme and symposium, contextualised by Stuart Hall’s contemporaneous political writings. Throughout, I used Lippard’s art world as a benchmark for thinking about the Studio, as it unfolded twenty years later, at the opposite end of a political demi-cycle – noting the similarities, and of course the very obvious differences.

⁸² Ibid. p. 3.

⁸³ L. Lippard, “Escape Attempts” in *Six Years*, p. vii.

⁸⁴ L. Lippard, *Six Years* (1973/1997), title page.

Obviously, unlike Lippard with her world in the 1960s and 70s, I did not experience the Henry Moore Studio directly. However, to plug this deficit, I borrowed the eyes of Giuseppe Penone. When he came to Halifax in the pivotal year of 1988, he looked at the reality of what was happening there beyond convention, and produced *Contour Lines I - IV* (1988/9), with the help of Paul, Barry, Chris and David. It constitutes a portrait of the “place” as an imagined community of people, moving through the time and the cycles of history, but frozen in the critical moment of its making; and I used it to structure my own writings; allowing the structure of the work to guide me down into the world of the Studio, which has now come to feel like part of my own being.

3. A Spiralling History of Halifax (Figs 1 – 5)

2.1 Giuseppe Penone, *Contour Lines I-IV*, 1988/9

In December 1988, Italian artist, Giuseppe Penone (b.1947) came to Dean Clough, Halifax, where he created *Contour Lines I-IV*, a four part work, consisting of slim, negative casts in iron of 6 landings, and a flight of two steps in the sandstone staircase in A Mill, which is the oldest building in the factory complex. Whilst in reality the stairs in A Mill rise in straight flights, back and forth through the building, the work has a sense of spiralling motion, because – in the first three parts - opposite landings are brought together in pairs; and, in the fourth, the steps rise as if revolving around a central axis.

In Part I, a slender glass tube filled with layers of sandy soil rises from the centre of the conjoined casts to a height of two metres; and, in Part II, a similar tube lies horizontally in the crevice. The tubes, which are a bit a bit like an auger core sampling tubes used by geologists, introduce the idea of the sedimentation. However, they also map the space of the stairwell; and by sampling its thick air make it solid.

The casts capture in reverse the contours of the sedimentary stone landings, whose grainy layers had been worn down by generations of mill workers, like a landscape eroded by natural agents. Each one was created by levelling out with a dash of iron the furrows in the stone, so that it captures just the amount of material that had been displaced by the workers, like a layer of sedimentary material that has been dispersed and re-solidified on the Earth's surface. Finished with oil, so they take on the appearance of liquidity, their undulating surfaces appear as rippling streams of water swirling round and round and up and down within the enclosed space of the well.

3.2 Uncovering Reality

When Penone came to Halifax in December 1988, he was, as art critic, William Packer (1989) commented, ‘already a sculptor of international reputation’⁸⁵: a well established and successful practitioner, whose work was circulating through mainstream public and commercial galleries across the European continent. At the time, as Barry Barker explained at the HMS Symposium, he was known primarily as a ‘rural’⁸⁶ artist, because – as one contemporary reviewer put it - he ‘[was] us[ing] mainly natural materials – clay, leaves, stone, earth, wood – combined and juxtaposed in ways which remind us of our interdependence with the natural world’⁸⁷. In 1989, Andrew Graham-Dixon described his vision as ‘essentially an updated form of pastoral’, ‘the realisation of an old Romantic dream’, in which man exists in ‘a condition of oneness with nature’⁸⁸, apparently as far removed as possible from the hard political, economic and social realities of life in post-industrial northern Britain, under Margaret Thatcher.

However, Penone had come of age as an artist within the emerging international art world of the late 1960s and early 1970s (the same world that Lucy Lippard had documented in *Six Years*), amidst a wave of insurgent activity against established authorities, that was manifesting simultaneously in towns and cities across Europe and America. According to Penone himself, ‘It was the post war period and people just wanted to start a new historical moment ... Younger people were finding new values.’⁸⁹ So, as Lippard explained in “Escape Attempts” (1997), in relation to her own and others’ creative work of the same period, whilst Penone’s practice might appear to later observers as ‘supremely apolitical’⁹⁰, it had been forged in an intensely

⁸⁵ William Packer, “Figures of the imagination”, *Financial Times*, 24 Jan 1989. Clipping in Henry Moore Studio Archive.

⁸⁶ B. Barker in conversation with Paul Bradley, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁸⁷ Review of *Giuseppe Penone* (Arnolfini Gallery), *Architects Journal*, 8 Feb 1989. Clipping in Henry Moore Studio Archive.

⁸⁸ Andrew Graham Dixon, “Timber Merchants”, *The Independent*, 21 Feb 1989. Clipping in Henry Moore Studio Archive.

⁸⁹ G. Penone in conversation with Andrew Cross in A. Cross, “Penone”, *Art Monthly*, November 1993, No 171, p.18.

⁹⁰ L. Lippard, “Escape Attempts” in *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. xiii.

political environment; and its strategies ‘reflected those of the larger political Movement’⁹¹. However, it was ‘the form rather than the content ... that carried a political message’⁹².

Both Penone and Lippard were engaged with what the former has called ‘the dialectics of art in those years, which was based on minimalism ... [that said] there’s something different inside the material that escapes us, and that’s real... A reality that isn’t just a human product’.⁹³ It proposed, in other words, that everything in the material world holds within itself fundamental truths about the nature of being, which Penone calls ‘the radical logic of [...] existence’⁹⁴. By exploring the physical world in detail, without preconception – or ‘the reality that surrounds [us] beyond conventions’⁹⁵ – he believed it should be possible to uncover how it had developed and how it could evolve into the future, not in isolation, but in relation to what was happening around it, ‘determined by politics, the market, the economy, religion, everything’⁹⁶. In this way, he argued, art could have what he called ‘political value’⁹⁷: that is, by ‘perform[ing] that which is real, understanding that what is important is not life, work, action, but the condition in which life, work and action develop themselves’⁹⁸, as his first curator, Germano Celant (1968) put it. According to Penone:

if you manage to make a good piece, in the sense of having the ability to make work after a direct analysis or understanding or intuition of the surrounding reality, that piece has a political value. Because by entering into the understanding of reality, it helps to change things, more than a work whose

⁹¹ Ibid., p.x.

⁹² Ibid., p.xiv.

⁹³ G. Penone in conversation with Benjamin Buchloh in L. Busine et al, *Giuseppe Penone: Forty Years of Creation* (Yale University Press, 2012), pp. 17 – 18.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.17.

⁹⁵ G. Penone in conversation with Alexis Dahan in A. Dahan, “Giuseppe Penone”, *purple magazine*, Issue 26, 2016. <https://purple.fr/magazine/fw-2016-issue-26/giuseppe-penone/>. Retrieved 15 September 2018.

⁹⁶ G. Penone in conversation with Benjamin Buchloh in L. Busine et al, *Giuseppe Penone: Forty Years of Creation* (Yale University Press, 2012), pp. 17.

⁹⁷ Germano Celant, *Arte Povera* (Milan: Gabriele Mazzotta; New York: Praeger; Tubingen: Wasmuth; London: Studio Vista, 1969), n.p.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

sole function is to denounce something by means of a form or expressive conventions created by the system that it is criticising.⁹⁹

In the late 1960s, Lippard as a critic and curator, and Penone as an artist had each set aside the established forms of their creative disciplines, and engaged afresh with their own “realities”. As Barker explained at the HMS Symposium, ‘it was a situation of going back to the source’¹⁰⁰. At the time, Lippard was based in The Bowery studio community in New York; but travelling constantly through the plethora of small galleries and new spaces for art that had proliferated across Europe and the Americas. In order to document this “reality”, she had eschewed the narrative structure and authoritative tone of conventional art criticism, in favour of an anthological approach, that was ‘phenomenological rather than historical’¹⁰¹: mirroring as closely as possible her own experience of a milieu that she was simultaneously living and documenting. In *Six Years*, she created an incredible portrait of a world in motion, still in the process of becoming.

Meanwhile, Penone had been attending art school in the industrial city of Turin, which was at the centre of the so-called “1968” maelstrom, boiling with student protests and a series of workers’ strikes and occupations. However, the reality he recognised was not really that of the city, where initially at least he had felt like an alien; but the vertiginous landscapes of Garessio, a Piedmontese town in the Ligurian Alps, above Turin, where his family had farmed for three generations, surrounded by forests and overlooking the Mediterranean ocean. As he explained in a recent interview: ‘Not having culture, not being knowledgeable about art, the only reality and identity I had [in the late 1960s] was that of the place where I’d been born, with its local reality’¹⁰². Consequently, in 1968, the artist had quit art school and returned

⁹⁹ G. Penone in conversation with Benjamin Buchloh in L. Busine et al, *Giuseppe Penone: Forty Years of Creation* (Yale University Press, 2012), p. 17.

¹⁰⁰ B. Barker in conversation with Paul Bradley, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

¹⁰¹ L. Lippard, *Six Years*, p. 6.

¹⁰² Thomas Marks, ‘Force of Nature: Interview with Giuseppe Penone’, *Apollo*, 19 September 2015. <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/force-of-nature-interview-with-giuseppe-penone/>, Retrieved 14 November 2019.

to the environment of Garessio, which started then to yield – physically and conceptually - the raw material for his practice.

Penone experienced the “local reality” of Garessio – as Lippard had the international art world of the late 1960s and early 1970s - not as a static entity, but an intricate ecosystem, encompassing a network of different elements, spread across a large geographical area, all of which were nevertheless intimately connected and constantly evolving in relation to one another. In this context, (unlike Lippard’s perhaps, where the natural world was not immediately relevant), ‘there [was] no difference between man and nature’¹⁰³, because in the enclosed world of the mountains, the two had been bound together for centuries. As Penone explained:

where I come from in the mountains near Turin, there are some areas of the mountain where for centuries the land has been terraced for agricultural purposes. This [human] process changes the form of the mountain and therefore becomes 'nature' itself.¹⁰⁴

The artist encountered trees and other natural forms and phenomena as living beings, analogous to humans; and regarded humans as natural organisms, absorbing and transmitting energy, like trees in the forest, subject to their own physical logic. It was an “imagined community” in which saplings, trees, streams, stones and people were all active participants. Within this biosphere, Penone – like Lippard - operated both as an artist and an organism: simultaneously uncovering and exploring its systems of growth and contributing to those processes.

In December 1968, soon after he had returned from Turin, Penone had created his seminal work, *Alpi Marittime* (1968): ‘a set of actions, realisations made in time’¹⁰⁵ performed by the artist in a wood near his home in Garessio, which now appear as a series of photoworks. During this intense period of creative activity, he had attempted

¹⁰³ G. Penone in conversation with Andrew Cross in A. Cross, “Penone”, *Art Monthly*, November 1993, No 171, p.18.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ G. Penone in conversation with Benjamin Buchloh in L. Busine et al, *Giuseppe Penone: Forty Years of Creation* (Yale University Press, 2012), p. 20.

to insert himself into the biosphere of the forest, a process which he described at the time as one of total immersion. As he recorded:

I [felt] the forest breathing/ and [felt] the slow inexorable growth of the wood/
I match[ed] my breathing to that of the green world around me.¹⁰⁶

He had pressed his body to a tree trunk and marked on it the points of contact with barbed wire; placed a cast of his hand in iron around the trunk of a young tree; interlaced the stems of three saplings; enclosed the top of a tree in a net weighed down by plants; and mediated the flow of a stream, whose waters gave strength and life to the entire forest. Through these gestures, he had intervened – subtly and quietly - in the growth systems of the trees around him, altering, without interrupting, the direction of their development, as it unfolded over the days, months and years that followed. As Celant put it:

like an organism of simple structure, the artist mix[ed] himself with the environment, camouflage[d] himself ... [he drew] from the substance of the natural event – that of the growth of a plant, the chemical reaction of a mineral, the movement of a river, of snow, grass and land, the fall of a weight ... in order to live the marvellous organization of living things.¹⁰⁷

After 1968, Penone rarely made site-specific or action-based works like *Alpi Marittime*. Nevertheless, the actions he performed in the Garessio forest provided the creative fuel for the rest of his practice, in which he has worked mostly with trees (but also other natural forms and materials) to uncover the systems of growth embedded within them. Today, he is particularly known for his *Albero (Tree)* works, created from industrially sawn beams of wood, from which he has removed excess material to expose their internal structures of narrow heartwood and developing branches - a process he describes as uncovering ‘the tree within a mass of wood’¹⁰⁸. The on-

¹⁰⁶ G. Penone, *Alpi Marittime*, 1968.

¹⁰⁷ Germano Celant, *Arte Povera* (Milan: Gabriele Mazzotta; New York: Praeger; Tübingen: Wasmuth; London: Studio Vista, 1969), n.p.

¹⁰⁸ G. Penone in conversation with Benjamin Buchloh in L. Busine et al, *Giuseppe Penone: Forty Years of Creation* (Yale University Press, 2012), p.16.

going nature of this series, which started in 1969 and has continued into the present, is indicative of the consistent nature of the artist's practice, whose overall direction of travel hasn't really altered through five decades of activity.

That pattern of development has rarely been broken. However, it happened in 1988, when he came to Dean Clough, Halifax, because he encountered there— perhaps for the first time since 1968 – an alternative “reality” that he found as compelling as the world of Garessio, in which he was already embedded.

3.3 The Local Reality of Halifax

Dean Clough is a group of factory buildings, built for Crossley's Carpets between 1841 and 1869, on the north side of the mill town of Halifax, whose 19th century wealth came from the cotton, wool and carpet industries. Often cited as the birthplace of the industrial revolution - and the ultimate realisation of William Blake's vision of “dark, Satanic Mills” in his 1804 poem¹⁰⁹ - the town is served by Hebble Brook, a tributary of the River Calder, whose power drove a wave of industrialisation that swept through the Calder Valley in the first half of the 19th century - from Todmorden through Hebden Bridge, Mytholmroyd, Sowerby Bridge and Halifax; and on to Elland and Brighouse; and across to Huddersfield, Keighley and Wakefield - radically transforming the landscape and the entire social fabric of West Yorkshire. As men and women from the surrounding countryside and further afield migrated into towns to service the textile mills, and metal and engineering industries that had grown up around them, their populations had expanded dramatically¹¹⁰, creating substantial communities of working people in and around Halifax and all along the valley. Of all the mills in the area, Crossley's was by far the largest, extending for half a mile on either side and over the Hebble Brook; and employing at its height in the late 19th century more than 5000 local people.

¹⁰⁹ W. Blake, “And did those feet in ancient time”, 1804. First published in W. Blake, *Milton, a Poem* (1808).

¹¹⁰ Dr Bob Morley, Prof. Sam Davies, *County Borough Elections in England and Wales, 1919–1938: A Comparative Analysis: Volume 4: Exeter – Hull*, Ashgate Publishing Ltd (Ashgate, 2013), p.342. Between 1850 and 1900, the population of Halifax expanded fourfold from 25,000 to over 100,000.

Ostensibly, the environment of Halifax is completely different from that of Garessio, because one is rural and the other urban. However, historically, they had both been working communities, somewhat removed from major urban centres, where – as Penone described in relation to the latter - ‘very specific environmental conditions’¹¹¹, had combined with ‘man’s activity’¹¹² to produce ‘a particular kind of economy and therefore cultural identity’¹¹³, in which ‘man and nature’ were intimately bound together. In Garessio, that activity had been mainly agricultural, shaped by the ‘extreme weather’¹¹⁴ that whirled round the steep, forested slopes of the mountains overlooking the ocean, where Penone’s father and grandfather had carved out terraces, tilled the soil and diverted streams for the cultivation of olives, vines and other fruit and vegetables. In Halifax, it was industrial, linked to the ecology of West Yorkshire, which had yielded coal, iron and stone for the mills, powered by water crashing down from the surrounding hillsides and generations of working class people. In 1989, Phillipe Piguet described the area around Dean Clough as:

an active landscape where the monuments are linked to the very nature of the place, to the production from its belly. Remarkably enough, total harmony exists between the idea of interior and exterior, between the natural and the industrial landscape ... Industry of nature, industry of man merge as if it were one and the same organic sedimentation.¹¹⁵

Effectively, Halifax, with Dean Clough at its core, is like a dark, industrial version of Garessio; and, when Penone arrived, he seems to have recognised immediately these underlying similarities: indeed, according to Barry Barker, the whole experience ‘provoked a profound reaction in him’¹¹⁶. So, in late Autumn 1988, twenty years after his epiphany in the alpine forest, the artist ‘match[ed his] breathing to that of the

¹¹¹ G. Penone in conversation with Andrew Cross in A. Cross, “Penone”, *Art Monthly*, November 1993, No 171, p.18.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ P. Piguet, “Dean Clough: Contour Lines” in G. Penone, *The Eroded Steps*, (Aegis, HMST, 1989), p. 33.

¹¹⁶ B. Barker, “A Space for Artists” in *The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust Studio at Dean Clough, Halifax* (HMST, 1993), p. xiii.

[soot-blackened] world around [him]’¹¹⁷ and, ‘like an organism of simple structure’, ‘mix[ed] himself with the environment’¹¹⁸, immersing himself in the surrounding reality ‘in order to live the marvellous organization of living things’.¹¹⁹

3.4 ‘The Eroded Steps’¹²⁰

Penone’s experience of the biosphere of Dean Clough is captured for posterity in the artist’s own writings and those of his chosen author, the poet, Phillipe Piguet, which were published in *The Eroded Steps* (1989), shortly after the project had been completed. Piguet compared the factory complex to ‘a beehive’¹²¹, because it was a man-made structure built to house thousands of workers who had been corralled by the architecture of the place into a single unit, carefully calibrated for the purposes of production. Within this hive of industry, as Piguet said, Penone

imagined the crowd of people passing here to reach their workplace; he heard the bell punctuating their comings and goings and the sudden buzz of their voices. He imagined the happiness of the workers descending to go home, despite the fatigue of their long working day; he heard their furtive remarks covered by the noise of their hobnail clogs.¹²²

However, rather than a swarm of bees, the coordinated action of the workers appeared to the artist like that of a churning river. He had explored this analogy between human and hydropower before in *Like a River* (1981), in which he carved a stone into a new shape, to imitate the action of a flowing body of water. However, at Dean Clough, he saw that it had a particular kind of resonance because the place itself was named after the stream that flowed through and under the site, once powering the production of the factory. In the mill’s heyday, as Piguet described, the stream had ‘[wound] and

¹¹⁷ G. Penone, *Alpi Marittime*, 1968.

¹¹⁸ Germano Celant, *Arte Povera* (Milan: Gabriele Mazzotta; New York: Praeger; Tübingen: Wasmuth; London: Studio Vista, 1969), n.p.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Quotation taken from the title of G. Penone, *The Eroded Steps* (Aegis, HMST, 1989).

¹²¹ P. Piguet, “Dean Clough: Contour Lines” in G. Penone, *The Eroded Steps*, (Aegis, HMST, 1989), p. 35.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p.41.

stretch[ed] itself in endless comings and goings' in subterranean passages, whilst the masses of workers 'rumbl[ed]' and 'murmur[ed]' through 'a whole architecture of networks and labyrinths' above ground level; and both had been 'vital and necessary' to its operations.¹²³

What's more, like flowing water that had since evaporated, leaving behind its imprints in the river valley, in gravel, sand and other deposits that it had dragged along the bottom; the "masses" at Dean Clough had left their impression all over the building, which 'preserve[d] the traces of one hundred and fifty years of labour'¹²⁴. According to the artist, this was partly an accumulation 'of grease left during [their] passing through'; and of 'nails and hairs, cut off and dispersed. The skin [they] shed'.¹²⁵ However, it was also a dispersal of material, caused by the activity of 'generations of workers shod in clogs'¹²⁶ who had worn away the surfaces of the stone floors '[which had] slowly become concave, polished by the never ending displacement of an indistinct mass of human flesh that remind[ed] one, in its effect, of the never ending stream of riverwater'.¹²⁷ To Penone, in this context, the floors of the mills appeared almost as fossils, capturing in their form the energy of an organic entity, and holding information about the way it had lived and evolved over a period in history.

When Penone creates an *Albero* for example, he '[tries] wherever possible to find a kind of archetype of the possible form of the material'¹²⁸. In other words, he selects a wood beam that is as complete as possible, and capable therefore of yielding a coherent account of the tree it relates to. At Dean Clough, he found his "archetype of the possible form" in the stone floors of the mills' stairwells, which as Piguet described:

¹²³ Ibid., p.39

¹²⁴ G. Penone, *The Eroded Steps* (Aegis, HMST, 1989), p. 57.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

¹²⁶ Ibid. p. 57.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ G. Penone in conversation with Benjamin Buchloh in L. Busine et al, *Giuseppe Penone: Forty Years of Creation* (Yale University Press, 2012), p.19.

constitute proper spaces, like small towers adjacent to the factory buildings. Their function is clear. They are meant to distribute the crowd of workers to the different floors, and it is easy to imagine the mounting flow in the evening, swelling and swelling until it is liberated into the night that is their own.¹²⁹

Many of the stairwells in the complex were self-contained entities – tall rectangular spaces, containing six flights of steps, each going in opposite directions, separated by a landing which occupied the full width of the well. They had all retained their original function at the heart of the mill’s operations; and, ‘as places of passage, ephemeral by nature’¹³⁰, had carried, more than any other part of the mill complex, ‘the weight of the footsteps, the voices, the memory of the traces of men who [had] passed here’¹³¹. However, Penone selected the one in A Mill, which was the oldest building on site, because it had been in use for the longest period, through one hundred and fifty years of the mill’s history. It constituted - in the artist’s words– ‘a small space that ... contain[ed] so many things’¹³².

With an *Albero*, the artist removes matter from the beam in order to ‘journey back into the mass of wood to map the history of its growth’¹³³. With the staircase in A Mill, his task was to add substance, in order to make visible the fluid energy of the workers – an “imagined community” of working people - whose presence he had felt churning round and round in its interiors. As he described, looking back in 2011:

The steps on the staircase were eroded by the continuous walking of workers. It was an empty space. My work was to cast these eroded steps, to reverse them. Not the empty space, but the full space.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ P. Piguet, “Dean Clough: Contour Lines” in G. Penone, *The Eroded Steps*, (Aegis, HMST, 1989), p. 39.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.41.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² G. Penone in conversation with Benjamin Buchloh in L. Busine et al, *Giuseppe Penone: Forty Years of Creation* (Yale University Press, 2012), p.19.

¹³³ Thomas Marks, ‘Force of Nature: Interview with Giuseppe Penone’, *Apollo*, 19 September 2015. <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/force-of-nature-interview-with-giuseppe-penone/>, Retrieved 14 November 2019.

¹³⁴ Giuseppe Penone in conversation with G. Celant in G. Celant et al, *The Hidden Life Within* (Black Dog, 2013), p. 87.

3.5 The Structure of History

When Penone makes an *Albero*, he works methodically around the knots in the wood, removing the growth rings layer by layer until he gets to the heartwood. On occasion, he has done this performatively, in front of an audience, demonstrating in effect how the tree grows in reverse. The finished sculpture always retains a section of the beam from which the “tree” has fully or partially emerged, so that the process remains comprehensible. In other words, his intention is not simply to present the tree in its younger form, but to reveal the systems by which it has subsequently grown and developed. Similarly, in *Contour Lines*, the artist didn’t just want to reveal the energy of workers, but to represent them collectively, as a body in time, which had been subject - like any other natural organism - to the complex processes of change that were happening all around it.

As Stuart Hall tells us, the nature of progress - in any context - ‘does not consist of what Benedict Anderson calls ‘empty, homogeneous time’¹³⁵, in which everything pulls all at once in the same direction. Rather, it consists ‘of processes with different timescales, all convened in the same conjuncture’¹³⁶. Within the setting of a forest, each tree is subject to geologic, climatic and elemental processes which unfold across completely different time periods. In the context of human history, as Hall explains, there is:

Political time, the time of regimes and elections, [which] is short: ‘a week is a long time in politics’. Economic time, sociological time, so to speak, [that] has a longer durée. Cultural time [which] is even slower, more glacial.¹³⁷

In *Contour Lines*, it is possible to understand the casts themselves as setting the workers of Halifax in “cultural time”, effectively as a sliver history within a very long

¹³⁵ S. Hall, “Brave New World”, *Marxism Today*, October 1988, pp. 27- 28.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid. p.28.

and slow narrative of West Yorkshire and its flora and fauna, stretching back into pre-history, whose “glacial” movements are captured in the vertical glass tube, with its layers of sedimentary soil. Meanwhile, the spiralling motion of the petrified stream of workers is much quicker, churning round and round within the walls of the mill.

Penone has often highlighted the spiral form as a figure of growth and change in nature. However, it has also been applied by philosophers, including the idealist, G. F. Hegel (1770- 1818) and materialist, Karl Marx (1818 - 1883) to the development of human history, because according to Vladimir Lenin, it offers a particular model ‘that repeats, as it were, stages that have already been passed, but repeats them in a different way, on a higher basis’¹³⁸. It is in this context, that Penone harnesses the spiralling motion of the stairs to denote the movement of people through ‘economic time, sociological time, so to speak’.¹³⁹

In Hegel’s eighteenth century model of history, a spiral is used to describe the evolution of Western societies, through different stages of history, towards what he called “the consciousness of freedom”, via a “dialectical” process. Each stage had started with an incomplete concept of freedom which was in conflict with its external opposite. This had developed into an internal contradiction where the concept grappled with itself; and, through this struggle, was dissolved and reconstituted at a higher level. Then the reformed concept went through the same process, and so on into the future, so that humanity was continually progressing in a sort of spiral towards an absolute consciousness of freedom.

Marx adapted Hegel’s spiral model of history to the context of Europe in the mid-19th century, at the height of the industrial revolution. Rather than an expansion of consciousness, which he argued was constrained by material realities, Marx argued that social progress was driven by faultlines within the economic framework. Throughout history, he said, a dominant class had used its money and power to exploit the labour of a larger class of workers; and it was this structural tension - or inherent contradiction - that had eventually led to the dissolution of one unequal

¹³⁸ V. Lenin quoted in N. Israel, *Spirals: The Whirled Image in Twentieth-Century Literature and Art* (2015), p. 95.

¹³⁹ S. Hall, “Brave New World”, *Marxism Today*, October 1988, pp. 27- 28.

system and its replacement by another, fairer formation. Just as the bourgeoisie had displaced the land owning gentry and substituted feudalism with capitalism, he anticipated that capitalism would eventually collapse under the weight of its own contradictions, enabling the workers - or “proletariat” - to overthrow the bourgeoisie and replace the capitalist system with communism.

In the early twentieth century, post-Marxist thinkers, including Antonio Gramsci (1891 – 1937) experienced the collapse of capitalism, in its original 19th century formation. They realised that it was just as likely to result in the constitution of a new version of the same system, as any form of communism. Half a century later, Stuart Hall - building on Gramsci’s work - applied the spiral model of history to his own reality in the 1970s and 80s, which saw the collapse of Social Democracy and birth and growth of Thatcherism in Britain. He argued that capitalism was capable of dissolving and re-making itself over and over again, in repeating cycles. It is in this configuration that the spiral model of history becomes relevant to the workers of Dean Clough, Halifax.

3.6 A Factory in Time

For the best part of two centuries, Dean Clough had channelled tens of thousands of working people through cycles of technological and political change, which, as Stuart Hall tells us, ‘remade both capitalism and the working classes’ across the 19th and 20th centuries: from Industrial Capitalism and Liberalism through Monopoly Capitalism and Imperialism at the end of the 19th century; into Mass Capitalism and Social Democracy, which emerged in its settled form in the post-World War II period.

From small beginnings in the early 1800s, when the first water-powered mill on the site was established by John Crossley, the complex had grown exponentially through the mid-19th century from a family business into a huge corporation. At the peak of its operations, between around 1870 and 1920, it had been the largest carpet factory in the world, exporting its products globally. From 1920 onwards, through the Great Depression, the business had begun to stagnate in the face of growing international competition, particularly from the United States of America, where Mass Capitalism,

(or Fordism), was invented. Through the mid-twentieth century, the factory had failed to keep pace with technological changes to the carpet making process coming out of America; and become increasingly uncompetitive in the global market place.

As one of the largest 19th century factory sites in Britain, the demise of Dean Clough was a powerful symbol of wider problems facing the whole of British society. Having entered the twentieth century as the world's first industrial power, Britain's economic base had been faltering since the 1930s. In the immediate post-war decades, the Social Democratic state – headed by a succession of different governments - had attempted to manage this decline, subsidising failing businesses, and managing wages, in order to keep the wheels of capitalism turning. Through the 1970s, as long term structural weaknesses in the old industrial economy were compounded by acute economic ruptures, including a worldwide energy crisis, this strategy had become increasingly unviable, sparking a series of industrial actions by unionised workers. By the end of 1975, as Stuart Hall put it, “the post-war ‘settlement’ had collapsed”: ‘in the dim light of the three-day week Ted Heath declared the country ungovernable’¹⁴⁰; and the country entered full-blown crisis.

As Stuart Hall reminds us in his essay, “Gramsci and Us” (1987): ‘When the left talks about crisis, all we see is capitalism disintegrating, and us marching in and taking over’¹⁴¹. However, history tells us that this course of events is very unlikely to happen. Through the early 1970s, left wing forces in Britain, represented in parliament by the Labour Party, had been discredited by the failures of Social Democracy, with which they were most associated. After 1975, right wing forces, represented by a new segment of the Conservative Party headed by Margaret Thatcher, seized the initiative.

At the 1979 general election, Mrs Thatcher conquered large swathes of the country, pushing Labour back into its traditional heartlands in the North, Wales and Scotland (and parts of inner city London) and taking power in Westminster. Once in power, as Hall tells us, ‘[she] launched [her] assault on society and the Keynesian state’¹⁴²,

¹⁴⁰ S. Hall, “The Neo-Liberal Revolution”, *Cultural Studies*, June 2011, p. 712, DOI: 10.1080/09502386.2011.619886.

¹⁴¹ S. Hall, “Gramsci and Us”, *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p. 18.

¹⁴² S. Hall, “The Neo-Liberal Revolution”, *Cultural Studies*, June 2011,

taking on the collective power of the Trade Unions, in what was almost a pitched battle, culminating in the Miners' Strike (1984-5), from which she emerged victorious. At the same time, according to Hall, '[she] began a fundamental reconstruction of the socio-economic architecture with the first privatisations'¹⁴³; launching a monetarist agenda which encouraged the free flow of capital amongst wealthy individuals, but resulted in deep cuts to public services, mass unemployment, and the decimation of manufacturing industry.

Industrial towns and cities in the North of Britain, like Halifax, had been sickening since the late 1960s, when they started to fall behind the South economically. From 1979, as Mrs Thatcher's administration took away their life support system, and factories collapsed all across the North in quick succession, they fell apart completely. By the early 1980s, according to David Rutlin: 'most people [would] find it impossible to conceive how far Manchester and indeed most northern cities had fallen... from the heart of the city to its edge, a distance of some 6 miles, we walked through uninterrupted dereliction.'¹⁴⁴ Effectively, the new Conservative government had promoted economic recovery in the financial hub of London:

at the cost of allowing vast numbers of people in the North East, the North West, in Wales and Scotland, in the mining communities and the devastated industrial heartlands, in the inner cities and elsewhere to be consigned to the historical dustbin.¹⁴⁵

Crossley's was at the epicentre of these developments. Having already contractd its operations dramatically, it closed its doors completely in 1982, making all its workforce redundant, which in a place like Halifax –where everything revolved around industry - was devastating. As Graham Robinson of Robinson's Engineering, Halifax told me:

p. 712, DOI: 10.1080/09502386.2011.619886.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ D. Rudlin, "4 Recessions Part 2: The 1980s: Manchester and Thatcher's Britain", in *Climax City*. <https://climaxcity.wordpress.com/2014/05/25/4-recessions-part-2-the-1980s-manchester-and-thatchers-britain/>. Retrieved November 2018.

¹⁴⁵ S. Hall, "Gramsci and Us", *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p. 19.

Apparently, originally, Crossley's Mill employed 6000 and when it finished it was still employing maybe 3500 people. So, 3500 people in a small town and all the people they employed indirectly. If that happened today, they'd be a massive outcry. Then, everybody just carried on. You wondered where all those people got other jobs from.¹⁴⁶

According to entrepreneur Ernest Hall, the closure of Crossley's in 1982, had been 'the equivalent in the City of the Bank of England going bust and probably the most public manifestation of the decline of traditional industry'¹⁴⁷. Nevertheless, despite all this devastation, by May 1983, Dean Clough was entering a new phase of capitalist development, under the auspices of E. Hall himself, who had purchased the site as part of a property consortium with his son Jeremy, and friend, the businessman, Jonathan Silver. As Paul told us at the HMS Symposium, 'everybody thought Ernest was coming to asset strip Dean Clough - to asset strip the stones, which were worth about £1,000,000 at the time'¹⁴⁸. Instead, he decided to redevelop the old factory as a business park.

3.7 The New Workers of Halifax

With an *Albero*, Penone strips away layers of growth to reveal the tree at an earlier point in its development. As he has explained,

'What fascinated me was the idea of recovering things in time. It's partly the fascination that archaeology can have, when they find things in layers of sediment, layers of history.... I'd supposed that would give me the unbelievable possibility of going back through the time of the tree to rediscover its form at a particular moment of its existence'.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Graham Robinson, interviewed by the author, 12 December 2016.

¹⁴⁷ Peter Hetherington, "Decaying Mills Reborn as a Model of Modern Industry", *The Guardian*, September 23, 1987, p. 4

¹⁴⁸ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

¹⁴⁹ G. Penone in conversation with Benjamin Buchloh in L. Busine et al, *Giuseppe Penone: Forty Years of Creation* (Yale University Press, 2012), p. 19.

Looking at *Contour Lines* from a later perspective, it would be tempting to think that he was attempting something similar in Halifax: to recover an organism whose energy had long ago dissipated, as an archaeological exercise. Indeed, when the work appeared in the exhibition, *Imagined Communities* (1999), it was described by curator, Richard Hylton as ‘a memorial to a community now gone’¹⁵⁰, and that’s how it must have seemed in the context of Britain in the 1990s: as an historical artefact.

However, in 1988, that wasn’t necessarily Penone’s intention, because, by casting the landings of the stairwell in A Mill, he was capturing their shape, not at some earlier point in the history of the factory, but exactly at the moment of making. It’s true, as Hylton said, that Crossley’s Carpets had ‘closed down in 1982 to become ... an archaeological ruin in the wastelands of a post-industrial society’¹⁵¹; and that production in A Mill in particular had started to wind down some years earlier. However, time had not stood still in any part of the factory since then. From 1983, when Ernest Hall started his redevelopment, a new stream of workers had flowed into the site; and there was a strong sense of continuity between the old and new layers of habitation because many of Hall’s early tenants were working class people drawn from the surrounding area or similar industrial localities, including artists, Paul, Chris and David, whose particular haunt was A Mill. They – as much as any of the earlier mill workers - held within their consciousnesses the spiralling history of Halifax. What’s more they had just lived through the last turbulent demi-cycle in that spiral, running from the late 1960s to the late 1980s.

3.7.1 Chris

Born in 1950, in the Halifax area, where his family had lived and worked for generations, Chris was old enough to have experienced the whole of this curving trajectory, from “1968” onwards, which he had witnessed as a pivotal moment of change in the life of his working class community. He told me:

¹⁵⁰ R. Hylton, *Imagined Communities* (National Touring Exhibitions, Hayward Gallery, 1999), p.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

1968 changed everything/Lots of things changed/1968 was the beginning of the end of industry... [Before that], you could easily get a job, so my cousins and the other kids from the village went to work in the factories ... What I am trying to say is that there was an affluence, which changed around 1968, because the factories started making people redundant ... In my village, there was Murgatroyd's Mill. We lived next door to the mill owner. He began to contract his business. He sold it to United Weavers, a United States based [carpet] company, who began to streamline. My mum was a warper there. She kept her job but others didn't ... Screen-printed carpets came in. They were cheaper. Pure wool carpets [like they made at Crossley's, for instance] were very expensive [...] There was a lot of Asian immigration. I think it was cheaper labour. They started doing the [unsociable] shift work. The village people wanted to keep their old seven to five [pattern]. Things began to change in the textile industry everywhere.¹⁵²

Chris left home as part of an exodus of young people from industrial communities. He told me,

In 1968, the young people started to leave ... For instance, in my village, the kids my age who had gone into the mills at fifteen, and trained in the technical side, coming out as skilled technicians. They were head hunted by companies in the United States and Canada – the [same] American companies that bought the [British] textile industry... Like my cousin, Glyn. He was at British Furtex in Luddenden Foot, then Firth Carpets, Cleckheaton, then he went to the States. My second cousin, Graham Hague went to Canada. Because they had skills, they were creamed off entirely.¹⁵³

According to Chris, 'I was destined to go into the mill. My mum said, "You're good with colour, you should be a colour matcher"'. That meant matching the stripes for

¹⁵² Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 18 December 2018.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

worsted suiting'¹⁵⁴. Instead, like many other working class young people in the 1960s and 70s, he applied for art school, attending first in Hull, and then in London. He said,

I think I was quite a savvy 18 year old, in that I was looking for something that was new [...] I looked through the prospectus for Hull School of Art and saw the list of part-time tutors there, including Harold Herold, Bainbridge, Victor Newsome, Baldwin. It was the Art & Language people. I thought this was a place where I might find something new [...]. [After Foundation] I moved from Hull to London to study art at Waltham Forest School of Art which was changing into the North East London Poly. It was a very free and open educational environment. It was the nearest thing I could get to somewhere that was quite radical at that time , which was Hornsey or Guildford, because they were responsible for the 1968 student revolutions [in London] [...] I was aiming to change things. I was wanting my paintings to be more radical than other people's paintings [...]. This was 1971,2,3.¹⁵⁵

Back in Halifax, Chris had been aware of political tumult in the wider world, including protests by student and workers, clamouring for change as they felt the old systems starting to disintegrate. He said,

When I was doing my A Level art, I remember doing paintings from photos in Paris Match of the riots in Paris. That subject was current. It was the beginning of the end of industry [across Europe and America]. That's why the riots in Paris and Italy were happening.¹⁵⁶

As an art student in the late 1960s and early 1970s, he became part of the ferment. He felt himself to be part of an encompassing international community of young artists who wanted to change the world conceptually by pushing at the boundaries of their work: the "imagined community" that Lucy Lippard describes in *Six Years*. Whilst Chris had never travelled out of Britain, he was plugged into the same international art networks as Lippard. He said:

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 18 December 2018.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

Oh yes, through magazines. There was Flash Art, Studio International. I was aware of [that world] from 1969, when I first saw the good shows'. '[On my foundation course in Hull] I made friends with a number of Dip Ad students... They took me to London with them on a couple of trips: one was to see *Art of the Real: Aspects of American Painting 1948-68* [Tate Gallery, London, 1969] ; and [the other] to see *When Attitudes become Form* (1969) at the ICA. These [were] seminal shows that influenced my work ... The books that I was reading were by Clement Greenberg, David Rosenberg and Lucy Lippard.¹⁵⁷

David Wheeler, Director of IOU Theatre, who attended art school in Wolverhampton in the same period, described similar feelings of international connectedness and common purpose:

I mean, nationally, internationally, we were the baby boomers. The universities and colleges were full. Polytechnics were full. There were ready [young] audiences for stuff as well as hundreds of small groups trying to do stuff... Everybody we knew was in a band, or wanted to be in a band, or in the art world. Even the pop music world was kind of new, it had only got going in the 1960s [...] If you weren't in that generation who won't realise it. Actually, "The world was ours". Us and them: the old suits, and us looking how we wanted to look. It was a conversation amongst the new generation, we didn't really care about what had gone on before [...] Everything was coming out of a very dour post-war world, and the baby boomers wanted to do it all differently... We all wanted to be... revolutionary – both socially and artistically.¹⁵⁸

After art school, Chris became part of a real-world manifestation of this "imagined" international community of artists – a sort of British version of The Bowery studio community in which Lippard had participated - that had been growing in London

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ David Wheeler, interviewed by the author, 28 March 2017.

since the late 1960s, under the auspices of ‘Space Provision, Artistic, Cultural and Educational Ltd’ (abbreviated to S.P.A.C.E.).¹⁵⁹ As he said: ‘SPACE studios had just started up in 1968’¹⁶⁰. It catalysed the London art scene by negotiating low-cost leases on empty buildings in the docklands areas of London, for artists to occupy collectively and use as studios. Chris remembers:

There was Old Street, then just next to Old Street roundabout there was Tabernacle Street, so that was a big warehouse complex. There was another school where Martin Naylor was and John Loker. I think Carl Plackman was down there too. They were all in this same area. The main bulk of spaces were around Old Street, but you went on through Hoxton where Georgina Starr’s studio was lately and across Hackney Road into Shoreditch, so you had Shoreditch Church, where there was Richard Rowe and John Maine just up the road, under the railway bridge. Then you came along past the tenements to Columbia Road where my studio was... Then there was Acme, the housing association. Acme was the one where you got houses, an empty house and if you renovated it then they were rent free. There were also some down on the south side of the river [at Butler’s Wharf] in Bermondsey. That’s where Bernd and Hilla [Becher] had theirs.¹⁶¹

Between 1973 and 1976, Chris occupied a S.P.A.C.E unit in Columbia Studios, in Ravenscroft Street, ‘which was an old veneering factory’¹⁶². He said:

You became part of a community. The studios didn’t have doors on. You could see people’s work so you could identify who you were affiliated with, who you could have a discussion with¹⁶³. [...] You would [go to their studio and] have a coffee [...] When you went to get your glass of water, or go to the

¹⁵⁹ Established in 1968, as a non-profit making organisation, by artists Bridget Riley, Peter Sedgley and Peter Townsend, SPACE negotiated low-cost leases on empty buildings in the docklands area of London, made redundant by changes in the shipping industry, for artists to occupy collectively and use as studios.

¹⁶⁰ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 18 December 2018.

¹⁶³ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 14 February 2018.

toilet, you were meeting peers, people who were in the real world. [...] There was John Cobb, Robert Mason, Linda Packer, Andy Wamon...a very wide ranging set of artists [...] It was just really interesting. A really interesting place to be, because you were like a community.¹⁶⁴

3.7.2 Paul

Born in 1956, Paul had grown up in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, as the son of mill technician. By 1976, when he left home to go to college, Britain had plunged into a protected period of economic chaos; and the feelings of optimism for a better future, described by Chris and David Wheeler, had already started to dissipate. As Paul told us at the HMS Symposium:

It was not a great time to live. The music was good, remember we all started to dress in bin bags in those days. But we were [in the middle of a] recession ... you know waste was piled up on the streets of Liverpool and all this kind of stuff.¹⁶⁵

He carried with him many of the same revolutionary aspirations as the “1968” cohort, but his conception of the struggle was much darker and more overtly political than Chris’ had been. As he explained: ‘[my generation] experienced the punk revolution, the ‘Winter of Discontent’ and the Miner’s strike. Key events and experiences that shaped attitudes’.¹⁶⁶

Paul said:

I trained as an actor at Bretton Hall [near Wakefield] [...] [which] in terms of theatre was pretty cool. It was doing quite radical stuff [...] [At Bretton], they’d do Shakespeare, but they’d always do a two-month cycle on [Jerzy]

¹⁶⁴ Chris Sacker in conversation with David Wilkinson, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

¹⁶⁵ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

¹⁶⁶ Paul Bradley in conversation with Daniel Maclean, “Fail Better: The art of Paul Bradley”, *Corridor8*, Annual 2010, p. 51.

Grotowski as well to show the alternatives, and I fell for it, left, right and centre. It just seemed to me to be something [...] [In 1976] I went to see *The Dead Class* by Kantor, who is not Grotowski, but from the same Polish generation, at the Riverside and I was knocked out. I just thought – working class kids can do this shit. You don't have to have a plummy accent. It opened up everything.¹⁶⁷ [...] We read. Science fiction was very big, but so were the modern and contemporary classics. Everyone was reading Burroughs. We were also into Céline, Morse Peckham, Theodore Roszak and Beckett. Roszak's *Where the Wasteland Ends* and *The Making of a Counter Culture* were important.¹⁶⁸

According to Chris Squire, who performed with Paul in the early 1980s:

Poor Theatre was a kind of European approach... It came out of the Polish experience [of World War II and its aftermath] - Catholic, communist, repressive [...] The Western tradition of theatre had got locked into finding the motivation, the character and the emotional connection.... Grotowski was looking at new ways of approaching performance very much from the physical side [...] So instead of adding character and adding other things, you take things away until you reveal the core essence of the performance [...] That became Poor Theatre – that's what it was.¹⁶⁹

Poor Theatre was part of the wider world of art practice that Lippard documented in *Six Years*, though it was beyond the scope of her anthologies. As a genre, it had emerged from theatrical investigations conducted by Jerzy Grotowski (1933 – 1998) at his experimental theatre in Poland in the 1960s, which he published in a treatise, *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968). His writings introduced the idea of “poverty” into wider art discourses of the 1960s and early 1970s; inspiring the term “Arte Povera”, which curator, Germano Celant used to describe the practices of young Italian artists of the 1968 generation, including Giuseppe Penone. As Paul told me: ‘You had things

¹⁶⁷ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

¹⁶⁸ Paul Bradley in conversation with Daniel Maclean, “Fail Better: The art of Paul Bradley”, *Corridor8*, Annual 2010, p. 51.

¹⁶⁹ Chris Squire, interviewed by the author, 9 June 2017.

like punk stripping everything back. You had the Arte Povera movement stripping everything back. You had Grotowski and Poor Theatre, stripping everything back [...] I just thought: “What! You can do theatre like the music that I like”¹⁷⁰.

At college, Paul set up his first Grotowski-based performance group, named Stuka, after ‘the myth of the Beuys plane crash during the Second World War in Russia, when Beuys was apparently saved by being wrapped in furs and animal fat’¹⁷¹. In 1980-1, he ‘went to Berlin to train with Grotowski’s actors’¹⁷²; then ‘to Denmark with Barba, which was an offshoot of Grotowski’¹⁷³. According to Squire:

The Odin Theatre in Denmark was a big centre with Eugenia Barba, who worked alongside Grotowski [...] the core of performers there were from all over – Italy, America. Lots of people. I don’t know what was happening in the States really, but stuff was developing over there I think. There was definitely a feeling of looking at, well, world culture in a way. Actors who had trained round the world were trying to connect with those approaches [...] [Babel] were sort of trying to find a British way of doing it.¹⁷⁴

Afterwards, he established his first professional theatre company, Babel, with his then-partner, Charlotte Diefenthal in what he laughingly called ‘The People’s Republic of Holmfirth’¹⁷⁵, near Huddersfield. As he told me, ‘Babel was never any hippy commune [...] Sometimes we would train for 18 hours a day [...] It made my feet bleed’.¹⁷⁶ Babel’s first production, *Memorial* (1982-3), according to its listing in *Performance Magazine*, ‘evolved from the confrontation existing between inhabitants and their environment – the wasteland of war. Of Passchendale, of Hiroshima, of future possible wastelands, the wasteland created by, and surrounding humanity’¹⁷⁷. It

¹⁷⁰ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

¹⁷¹ Paul Bradley in conversation with Daniel Maclean, “Fail Better: The art of Paul Bradley”, *Corridor8*, Annual 2010, p. 51.

¹⁷² Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

¹⁷³ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

¹⁷⁴ Chris Squire, interviewed by the author, 9 June 2017.

¹⁷⁵ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ *Performance Magazine*, Feb/March 1983, No. 22, p. 20.

was inspired by Jerzy Grotowski, Tador Kantor and New Wave science fiction, but also the urban “wastelands” of Margaret Thatcher’s Britain.

3.7.3 David

Born in 1965, David is the grandson of a mill worker in Colne, Lancashire; and the son of a butcher in Doncaster. As he explained at the HMS Symposium: ‘I’m from a pretty working class background. I went into the butcher’s shop for a brief period’.¹⁷⁸ However, he had ‘escaped’¹⁷⁹ in 1984, first to Doncaster Technical College, to study for his A Levels and then to Nottingham Polytechnic (now Nottingham Trent University), where he took a degree in Creative Arts.

During David’s last year at college and first year at polytechnic, the Miners’ Strike (1984-5) had been raging. He told me:

‘When I was doing my A levels, there was the National Coal Board Headquarters [on one side] and the South Yorkshire Police Headquarters [on the other] and Doncaster Tech was in the middle. When I went to do my A level in sociology, there was just a blockade of policeman. As they waived me through the cordon, there were police in formation, probably soldiers, because they brought the army into South Yorkshire. That was when we were at school’.¹⁸⁰ When I went up to Nottingham I can remember going between Doncaster and Nottingham and these Ford Capris would pass us weighed down at the back, and it was the flying pickets’¹⁸¹. ‘There was rioting in Nottingham the year I arrived. We occupied the city hall as students. There was a stuff going off’.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017.

¹⁸¹ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

¹⁸² David Wilksinon, interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017.

David said: ‘The strike was deeply entrenched in my psyche. It created argument. It created debate. There was so much turmoil’.¹⁸³ He was very aware of it as a pivotal moment in a wider process of change that was affecting the culture from which he had emanated. He told me:

It [was] working class culture going through a process of deindustrialisation, factories closing, moving from being a manufacturing culture that put a great emphasis on your ability to work and have a job and then suddenly there weren’t any jobs. There were people hanging around on street corners. You’d see all the ex-miners just walking their dogs in the afternoon. [The] same [thing was happening] in Glasgow with the ship yards.¹⁸⁴

In the aftermath of the strike, as mainstream political resistance to Thatcherism fell away, and working class communities in the north of England continued to disintegrate, David was looking for something new to feel part of. He said,

We were all a bit politicised because of Thatcher [...] That was part of the environment, that’s part of what made Dean Clough, it’s part of what made us. It’s something that we have to bear in mind when we’re thinking about those times.¹⁸⁵ I think that motivation carries you forward into art. The art – it’s not heavily politicised, it’s not a literal connection always, but I think it motivated us to talk about things and to really form communities.¹⁸⁶

At Nottingham, a lot of the students on David’s course ‘were doing more [conventional] theatre stuff, which right from the beginning I wasn’t into - luvvies parading around on stage doing shows about their relationships. Oh God!’¹⁸⁷ So when Paul came with *Babel* in 1985 to introduce ‘the ideas of Grotowski and extreme physical theatre’¹⁸⁸, he immediately found it appealing. He said,

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

¹⁸⁶ David Wilksinon, interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017.

¹⁸⁷ David Wilksinon, interviewed by the author, 2 March 2017.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

‘Paul did the most incredible workshop - this physical theatre workshop that I participated in’.¹⁸⁹ ‘I was hooked. I was into Grotowski. I was into physical theatre. I think the interesting thing about Poor Theatre - poor meant the stripping away of all that was unnecessary and leaving a stripped and vulnerable actor, plying the principles in his laboratory in Poland, Jerzy Grotowski dropped all costumes and staging and preferred to work with black sets and actors in a plain black rehearsal costumes atleast in the rehearsal process’.¹⁹⁰

In Autumn 1985, Paul invited David to join him and Babel at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, where they were debuting their performance, *Humdrum Plan 5*, which had been commissioned by the festival organiser, Richard Demarco. Here, for the first time, he saw the group in action. He remembers:

‘We went up to Edinburgh and Richard Demarco was hosting, I was just like "This is amazing". You know, Richard Demarco, Paul Bradley, I was a second year student, I was "Wow, I've made it". Unfortunately, nobody turned up for the performance, we'd not been publicised. [Paul was] furious and I was like "Oh boy what's going off". I just knew that it was really, really serious. Everything was really serious. Paul had this framed picture of Man Ray's eye and he went to give it to Demarco’¹⁹¹. ‘He always had a dramatic act, something he would do that was laden with meaning’¹⁹². ‘Demarco had turned up with these two very well attired ladies. It was obviously a ruse because he was expecting trouble, and Paul just went BANG. He smashed the picture and handed it to Demarco. And that was it we were going home.’¹⁹³

So, David was attracted by Paul’s performance techniques, but even more so perhaps by his fierce operations in a hostile-feeling world. He said:

¹⁸⁹ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017.

¹⁹⁰ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 2 March 2017.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

'I hardly knew them at this point, I thought "Oh my god, this is so serious, this is what real artists do". These people are bonkers'.¹⁹⁴ I was like, "Right, I'm in". It was moody. It was serious. It was everything that I wanted at the time. It was exciting. When you are young, you are looking for art - and I found it [with Paul and Babel]'.¹⁹⁵

In 1986, one year after the Miners' Strike had ended, Chris, Paul and David all found themselves at a cross road in their lives and practices. Having left SPACE and London in 1976 to start a family, Chris was living back in Halifax with his wife and young children. He said:

I came back to a cultural desert. [Initially] I had no job, no space to make my work. So eventually I took a job as a petrol pump attendant in Sowerby Bridge. At that time it was pumping gas, it wasn't automated and by doing this I met other artists who lived in the valley...I got my first part-time teaching job by contact with other people who were teaching.... I continued working. I found it very difficult. I always tried to have an exhibition every year, but these were in local galleries so that I could see my work in context. So that was in places like Bradford and Oldham, places where I was doing my teaching...But ultimately, it was a dead end. I felt like I was turning into a local artist. It was becoming a very dark time for me. Very frustrating.¹⁹⁶

Having moved away from Holmfirth in 1983, Paul - as he told us at the HMS Symposium - 'was totally isolated and lonely in Keighley, which in the late 1980s was not a great existence'. David was coming to the end of his time in Nottingham and wondering what to do next, when 'Paul said "Do you want to join Babel?". [And] I said, "Yes, I'd love to"¹⁹⁷ It was at this point, in 1986, that the move to Dean Clough happened: Paul came first with Babel, Chris separately at the invitation of

¹⁹⁴ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 2 March 2017.

¹⁹⁵ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

¹⁹⁶ Chris Sacker in conversation with David Wilkinson, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

¹⁹⁷ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 2 March 2017.

another artist, and David a few months later to join Paul, when he had finished his degree course. Following all the change, upheaval and turmoil they had witnessed through the previous decades, they found themselves back in a mill environment, as part of a new working community, taking their first steps into a new epoch, as if on the spiralling treads captured in the fourth part of *Contour Lines*.

3.8 The Ideological Terrain of Dean Clough

If the glass vials in *Contour Lines* set the workers of Halifax as an organism within ‘cultural time’¹⁹⁸; and the four parts of the work map its spiralling trajectory through ‘economic time, sociological time’¹⁹⁹; then the undulating casts themselves, whose surfaces have been modelled – day by day, week by week, month by month - by the feet of the workers moving up and down, and round and round, as they perform their daily activities, capture its progress through ‘the time of regimes and elections’²⁰⁰, in which the shape of the organism is continually changing. Within the realm of political theory, these on-going processes operate at the level of “ideology”; within sociology it is the “culture”: in both cases they relate to a conception of the world that people hold in their collective consciousness, that may be presented as stable or constant, but is in reality constantly changing and adapting to circumstances.

For Hegel, these internal dynamics – which he compared to eddies and currents within a river - were of critical importance, powering historical development and generating new, ever more perfect social formations. For Marx, they were of secondary consequence to surrounding political, social and economic structures – the “base” of society – which, in any case, shaped the flow of ideas within the culture or “superstructure”. Gramsci accepted Marx’s basic premise. However, in the light of the failure of working class uprisings and the election of extreme right-wing governments in Italy and Germany, after the World War I and during the Great Depression (1929-39), which he had considered a uniquely propitious moment for socialist revolution, he understood that it would be necessary to pay close attention to the undercurrents of collective consciousness in order to understand Capitalism’s

¹⁹⁸ S. Hall, “Brave New World”, *Marxism Today*, October 1988, pp. 27- 28.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

ability to collapse and re-establish itself, seemingly by popular consent, despite the gross inequalities it perpetuated.

As a prisoner of the Fascist regime of Benito Mussolini, in the 1930s, Gramsci had adapted the Marxist theory of Capitalism - whereby one class imposes its will forcibly on the other - to what he called the “conditions of modernity” which he argued were becoming increasingly complex. He developed an alternative thesis, in which the ruling class constructs popular consent for its operations by harnessing them to the collective consciousness: in other words, it creates an overarching narrative around its programme, that speaks to everyday experience, and can be propagated endlessly by newspapers, broadcasters and other instruments of mass communication, which it invariably dominates, in order to achieve what Gramsci calls “cultural hegemony”. Seen in this way, historical change can never be just an event – as Marx had envisaged it might be, in a time of crisis – but only an on-going process, unfolding over months, years and decades, in which old ideas are dispersed and a new conception of the world gradually solidified in the people’s imaginations. What’s more, he visualises this process geographically as a “terrain”, ‘on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle’²⁰¹, just like Penone’s casts in *Contour Lines*. In this configuration, it is quite possible for policies that are favourable to the economic interests of the ruling class, to be accepted as what Stuart Hall calls ‘ordinary common sense’²⁰² by everyone.

As Penone explains, the ‘generations of workers shod in clogs’²⁰³ running up and down the staircase in A Mill, ‘[had] not worn out the floors and stairs’.²⁰⁴ Harnessed into production by economic necessity, they could not break down the structures of capitalist power, as Marx had wanted them to do. Rather, by their directed daily activities – which became habits, rituals and traditions, reflected back through images and stories - they were continually modifying its surfaces, literally bedding into its

²⁰¹ Antonio Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*. Ed. & Trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (NY: International Publisher, 1971), p. 377.

²⁰² S. Hall, “Gramsci and Us”, *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p. 17.

²⁰³ G. Penone, *The Eroded Steps*, (Aegis, HMST, 1989), p. 57.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

biosphere: or, as Penone put it, helping to ‘form the landscape in which [they] live[d]’²⁰⁵, so that it felt like part of their own being.

S. Hall applied Gramsci’s notion of cultural hegemony to the context of Britain in the 1980s, where the Conservative Government was persuading more and more working class people to vote for its policies, apparently against their own economic interests. He argued that Thatcherism had become a success precisely because its strategy was “hegemonic”, aiming not only to revolutionise the economic structures of British society, but to entirely reshape people’s conception of Britain. According to S. Hall:

what we are talking about is the use of political power in order to ‘wind up’ one whole historical era – the welfare-state, Keynesian, full-employment, comprehensive education-era on which the post-war settlement was constructed - and its replacement by another entirely new type of social order’. [politically incorrect].²⁰⁶

From 1975, as Britain descended into crisis, Mrs Thatcher had started to construct an ideological narrative, in which the Social Democratic state was characterised as a ‘tyrannical and oppressive’²⁰⁷ entity, from which – as Richard Hewison puts it - ‘the individual, empowered through the sovereignty of the consumer, was to be liberated by the freedom of the market’.²⁰⁸ Then, in 1979, when her Conservative government came to power, she immediately set about cementing her political project within the systems and structures of British politics. Indeed, during her second term in, as Stuart Hall recorded, she ‘did not make a single move which was not also carefully calculated in terms of this hegemonic strategy’²⁰⁹. To this end, she stepped up the pace of privatisation; and dismantled or reconfigured state institutions around free market principles, so that ‘open, competitive and unregulated markets, liberated from state

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ S. Hall, ‘Some “Politically Incorrect” Pathways Through PC” in S. Dunant, *The War of Words: The Politically Correctness Debate*. Virago, 1994. p. 170.

²⁰⁷ S. Hall, “The Neo-Liberal Revolution”, *Cultural Studies*, June 2011, p. 706. DOI: 10.1080/09502386.2011.619886.

²⁰⁸ R. Hewison, *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics since 1940*, (Routledge, 1995/2015), p. 166.

²⁰⁹ S. Hall, ‘Blue Election, Election Blues’, *Marxism Today*, July 1987, p.32.

intervention and the actions of social collectivities [appeared] as the optimal mechanism to socioeconomic development'.²¹⁰

When the Halls purchased Dean Clough to convert into a business park, the site had been 'just this vast amalgum of buildings and spaces'²¹¹, as Jeremy Hall described it to me. However, by 1986, when Paul, Chris and David arrived as artists, it was starting to exhibit in real time the rapidly changing contours of a new political landscape, which was framed by Thatcherism, but rooted in 'deep movements and tendencies which [had] been reshaping the British political map'²¹² since at least the late 1960s, when the once stable configurations of Social Democracy in the post-war period had started to disintegrate. The artists came in (and indeed left) hating Thatcherism for what it had done to the working class culture from which they had emanated. However, as they wound round and round the staircases in A Mill and other parts of Ernest Hall's business development, they started to bed into its biosphere: helping to 'form the landscape in which [they] live[d]'²¹³, so that it became part of their own being. The following sections of text will follow their progress through "political time" in the 1986 to 1988 period.

²¹⁰ Theodore, N., Peck, J. & Brenner, N. (2011) 'Neoliberal urbanism: cities and the rule of markets', in *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*, eds S. Watson & G. Bridge, Oxford, Wiley, p. 15. Quoted by S. Hall in "The Neo-Liberal Revolution" (2011), p. 706.

²¹¹ Jeremy Hall, interviewed by the author, 27 February 2017.

²¹² S. Hall, "Blue Election, Election Blues", *Marxism Today*, July 1987, p.30.

²¹³ G. Penone, *The Eroded Steps*, (Aegis, HMST, 1989), p.9.

4. A ‘Fascinating Place’²¹⁴ (See Figs 6 – 21)

4.1 ‘A Unique Time’²¹⁵

In 1986, when Paul, Chris and David got together in Halifax, the town, according to Paul, was a ‘fascinating place’²¹⁶, where you could see and feel the tectonic plates moving. As Dean Clough curator, Vic Allen told me: ‘[we were] in a unique time - that period when the industrial base had been destroyed and no one quite knew where we were heading’²¹⁷. In that moment, different temporalities co-existed. On the one hand, there was Dean Clough itself, which embodied ‘one whole historical era’²¹⁸ of industrial capitalism. On the other, as various interviewees described, there was the grim reality of present day Halifax, gutted by the closure of Crossley’s Carpet factory in 1982. This was a bleak, forgotten place – ‘a cowboys and indian town’²¹⁹ and ‘a cultural desert’²²⁰ - where as Reverend Stephen Croft (vicar of Ovenden Parish, 1987 - 1996) recalls, ‘patterns of family life were chaotic, depression and suicide were relatively common’²²¹ and ‘the Ridings School achieved national notoriety and was closed [in 1996] because of violence breaking out in the classroom’²²². Artist, Christian Boltanski, when he visited the town around 1990 – and again in the mid 1990s - experienced it as ‘a very, very sad place’²²³.

Meanwhile, on the northern edge of the town, at Dean Clough, a new world was coming into being, driven by ‘millionaire turned social entrepreneur’²²⁴ Ernest Hall

²¹⁴ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

²¹⁵ Vic Allen, interviewed by the author, 2 December 2017.

²¹⁶ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

²¹⁷ Vic Allen, interviewed by the author, 2 December 2017.

²¹⁸ S. Hall, ‘Some “Politically Incorrect” Pathways Through PC’ in S. Dunant, *The War of Words: The Politically Correctness Debate*. Virago, 1994. p. 170.

²¹⁹ Gary Cromack, interviewed by the author, 24 May 2017.

²²⁰ Chris Sacker in conversation with David Wilkinson, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

²²¹ Reverend Steven Croft, *Developing Disciples in the City*, blog posted on 15 June 2015. <https://blogs.oxford.anglican.org/developing-disciples-in-the-city/> Retrieved August 2020.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Christian Boltanski in conversation with Chris Sacker, 29 September 1995. Published in *Henry Moore Foundation Review*, Issue No.1, 1995, p.20.

²²⁴ Peter Hetherington, “Decaying Mills Reborn as a Model of Modern Industry”,

who had purchased the derelict factory site in 1983 and was redeveloping it into a business complex with his son Jeremy. When the Halls first arrived, as Vic Allen told me, ‘most of the site was in a complete mess and shambles’²²⁵. According to J. Hall:

For the first year therefore, from 1983 to early 1984, the process started where we were just re-using bits of the buildings as easily as we could...And that led to a whole amalgam of odds and sods of customers being here’. ‘We were doing incredibly primitive re-use of spaces in the most simplistic way for all the right reasons, because that was what was enabling the process of change to start. It was the right approach at the time, because it was what allowed you to start to get life and activity back into the buildings.’²²⁶

Many of the Halls’ early business clients were fabricators, whose operations came out of the old economy of West Yorkshire, or - as J. Hall described it – ‘the engineering know-how in this area. A lot of it born out of these industries that were here like the carpet manufacture’²²⁷. One of these was Robinson’s Engineering, a sheet metal working company, who worked extensively with the Henry Moore Studio in the 1990s. As Graham Robinson remembers:

I’d been going about 4 years and we were expanding, and we expanded into Dean Clough. I think we were one of their first clients. It must have been 1985/6 or something like that. I met Sir Ernest, who was just Ernest Hall then and his son Jeremy. They found me a spot about 10,000 square foot in area. It was quite unique really, because you can imagine Ernest Hall had bought an old mill and it was absolutely derelict’. ‘He just started by letting out the ground floor units out initially. There was myself, Afax Films, a plastic extrusion company, KPI Electronics, which is still in Halifax now. Various companies. It helped people get off the ground, because it was cheap and easy and you got looked after [by the Halls].’²²⁸

The Guardian, September 23, 1987, p. 4

²²⁵ Vic Allen, interviewed by the author, 2 December 2017.

²²⁶ Jeremy Hall, interviewed by the author, 27 February 2017.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Graham Robinson, interviewed by the author, 12 December 2017.

Then, Graham told me, ‘the artists arrived’²²⁹. Companies like Robinson’s had taken up residence in the Halls’ development in the middle 1980s because it offered them vast amounts of space, that was rough enough to suit their physical processes, at very reasonable prices; and artists came to Dean Clough in the same period, for similar reasons. The first creative practitioners to take up residence were a performance collective, called IOU Theatre, who moved there in 1984, from their former base in Mytholmroyd. As IOU director, David Wheeler explained:

the move was just fortuitous, because Ernest Hall had bought the place and was doing it up ... [Previously] we had rented a mill building in Mytholmroyd. ... The space [there] was small and difficult to work in ... [So] we gravitated [to Dean Clough] ... Like many of the mills around here, it was half empty – or in fact almost completely empty at that time.²³⁰

Individual artists started to arrive after year or so later, under the auspices of Bradford-based artist, Doug Binder, who had been introduced to the complex by printmaker, Ralph Gratton (a colleague from Bradford School of Art), who was setting up his own business in one of the old mill buildings. A few years earlier, in 1982, Doug had helped to establish, with other colleagues and students, the Thornton and Ollerton art community, with studios and a gallery, in a street of empty workers’ cottages in Thornton, near Bradford. He went to Ernest Hall with the idea of creating studios in some of the defunct mills at Dean Clough, Halifax. He told me: ‘Ernest left it all to me... He didn’t want anything to do with it - “You know what you are doing”. Which is what you want really’²³¹. Originally, E. Hall had intended to charge the studio-holders a small amount of rent, like all his other tenants – which, according to Doug, ‘the artists never paid of course, because they couldn’t’²³². However, at Doug’s suggestion, he agreed instead to accept a piece of work as payment: according to Chris, ‘the rent was covered by the selection of a couple of paintings per year which

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ David Wheeler, interviewed by the author, 28 March 2017.

²³¹ Doug Binder, interviewed by the author, 27 February 2017.

²³² Ibid.

went into Ernest's Dean Clough archive. Which was a fantastic way of supporting artists'²³³.

4.2 New Art in Yorkshire

The art community that emerged at Dean Clough in the mid-1980s, in and amongst the mill buildings in Halifax, can be understood as part of a much wider pattern of activity, associated with de-industrialisation in the post-1965 period, in which artists moved into buildings vacated by industry, keeping them 'occupied and useful'²³⁴ (as Vic Allen put it) until they were ready for more commercially rewarding forms of redevelopment. This pattern had started in the late 1960s, in the docklands area of London, where the introduction of containers in the shipping industry had rendered the Port of London redundant. From 1968, as Chris remembers, artists had started to move into the empty spaces that this innovation had created, 'spreading from St Katherine's Dock throughout the East End and just over the river [through Butler's Wharf] into Stockwell, in disused warehouses and Greater London Council buildings'²³⁵. He explained:

There was nothing there in the East End [when I was there], only shit. And that's why you worked there, because it was cheap. That's why SPACE took over the empty, derelict buildings [...] Now it's been redeveloped, they're all night clubs or offices.²³⁶

By the mid-1980s, the first wave of studio occupations in London, which powered the art life of the capital in the late 1960s, had dissipated, as developers gobbled up former industrial buildings in the East End and Shoreditch, including St Katherine's Dock which had been converted into the Tower Hotel and World Trade Centre; and Butler's Wharf, which was just then being transformed by designer, restaurateur and businessman, Terence Conran into what the developer describes as 'a thriving

²³³ Chris Sacker in conversation with David Wilkinson, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

²³⁴ Vic Allen, interviewed by the author, 2 December 2017.

²³⁵ Chris Sacker in conversation with David Wilkinson, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

²³⁶ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 14 February 2018.

community of restaurants, bars, shops, galleries, flats and offices'²³⁷. Having recognised its huge potential, Conran had purchased the site in 1979 and, according to the *Southwark Notes – Whose Regeneration* website, 'put forward a development proposal for a luxury marina, hotel, office and apartment blocks and a floating pub, espousing the idea that a more 'chic' class of tenant would pay much higher rents for the privilege of a view of the Thames'.²³⁸ The artists had moved out shortly afterwards. By 1986, the old warehouses had been converted into 'a combination of luxury apartments and offices...[and were becoming] a gastronomic destination'.²³⁹

Meanwhile, in the northern part of Britain, as de-industrialisation gathered steam during the early years of Margaret Thatcher's government, empty, unreconstructed space in former factories and warehouses was becoming much more plentiful. So, from the mid-1970s, in northern towns and cities, including Glasgow, Liverpool, Newcastle and many others, artists had started to perch in empty mill buildings, on low rent, short-life tenancies staying for a few months or years, until the places they occupied were destroyed or reclaimed for commercial redevelopment, much like Chris had in Tabernacle Street in the East End of London a few years earlier. According to David Wilkinson: 'The culture [had] changed and that made spaces available. Artists love that. Space is an opportunity'.²⁴⁰

In Yorkshire, the first official studio grouping was formed in Sheffield, in 1977, by art graduates from the polytechnic, who took up residence in Washington Works, a former cutlery factory scheduled for demolition under the banner of the Yorkshire Art Space Society (YASS), followed by others in Hull, Mirfield and York. In 1982, Doug and others set up the Thornton and Ollerton art community; and, that same year, Leeds Art Space Society (LASS) was established by a similar grouping of tutors and

²³⁷ Introduction to 'Butler's Wharf Ltd' by Conran & Partners. <https://conranandpartners.com/project/butlers-wharf-limited-butlers-wharf/>. Retrieved 5 May 2020.

²³⁸ "Art and Empty Buildings: Butler's Wharf 1971 to 1979" in *Southwark Notes*, <https://southwarknotes.wordpress.com/art-and-regeneration/art-empty-southwark-industrial-buildings-1971-1979/>. Retrieved 20 November 2019.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017.

ex-students from Jacob Kramer College, including Gary Cromack (who later worked at the Henry Moore Studio). Gary told me:

I had just completed a Postgraduate degree at Manchester Polytechnic, and came back to Leeds, which was my home town, in 1981. I was looking for a studio space, but there were no studio groups in the area at the time. I heard about a group of artists who were trying to set one up [...] Garry Barker - a lecturer at Jacob Kramer College, who taught me on Foundation (in the mid-1970s) – was part of it'. 'We pinpointed Dock Street, near Leeds Bridge, where there was an old chainsaw building. It was a long space, very dark, with windows onto the riverside. It was cheap. More or less derelict [...] It was part of a complex of dock buildings – there was a huge unit on other side [of the river], which had been turned into a recycling centre, another social enterprise. Interesting things were happening.'²⁴¹

A couple of years later, LASS moved from Dock Street to Stowe House, opposite Leeds Station, under the auspices of Yorkshire Contemporary Art Group (YCAG), with funding from the Yorkshire Art Association (YAA). YCAG was apparently conceived by YAA as a more official version of S.P.A.C.E Ltd and Acme, whose activities in London in the 1960s and 1970s had helped to catalyse the art scene in the capital. It was headed by young curator, James Hamilton (appointed in 1984, previously of the Graves Gallery, Sheffield), who also ran a small art space, adjacent to the LASS studios (together the studios and gallery occupied one floor of the building). James' remit, as he told me, was to help stimulate grassroots and other art activity in the region, by supporting the nascent studio scene, running a programme of contemporary projects and exhibitions, and creating opportunities for young artists.

In 1987, James staged *New Art in Yorkshire* - 'an open exhibition for all artists born, living or working in Yorkshire'²⁴² – designed to showcase 'the wealth of talent in the

²⁴¹ Gary Cromack, interviewed by the author, 24 May 2017.

²⁴² J. Hamilton, *New Art in Yorkshire: an open exhibition for all artists born, living or working in Yorkshire, October 17 – November 29 1987*, Yorkshire Contemporary Art Group, 1987, n.p.

visual arts in our region'²⁴³. In his introduction to the exhibition catalogue, he asserted that:

‘a hundred years after the rest of Europe, Britain [was] at last becoming a country with distinct art regions [...] [because] graduates [are] staying on in the city of their art studies in a direct reversal of the trend at the beginning of the century which drew Moore, Hepworth and others from Yorkshire down to London’²⁴⁴.

He cited Glasgow as ‘a prime example of how artists can carve a high international profile which reflects brilliantly on their home city’²⁴⁵. Here, young artists had been gathering in abandoned commercial buildings in the Trongate area, since the late 1970s, creating – as Sarah Lowndes has documented - ‘a major focus for art activity’.²⁴⁶ In 1983, they had established Transmission, Glasgow’s first artist-run gallery, organised and run by a rotating committee of artists, mostly ex-students of Glasgow School of Art, who felt dissatisfied with the exhibition opportunities that were otherwise on offer to them.

Transmission’s first committee (1983 – 1986) had been dominated by young painters, including Ken Currie, Lesley Raeside, Alastair Magee, John Rogan and Alastair Strachan, who – by the mid-1980s – were starting to make a name for themselves on the international stage; and it is to this group that James was referring in his catalogue essay. However, in 1986, the management of Transmission had passed to a new generation of art school graduates, including Malcolm Dickson (b.1962), who was active in time-based and performance work. More generally, through the mid to late 1980s, it was from performance culture, rather painting, sculpture and other more traditional areas of practice, that the impetus came for a resurgence in art activity in the northern part of Britain, – as manifest, not just in Glasgow, but in other post-industrial towns and cities, including Belfast, Dundee, Newcastle and - as we shall see - Halifax.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ S. Lowndes, *Social Sculpture*, 2003. p.55.

4.3 'A Certain Sense of Regional Self-Determination'²⁴⁷

At point of origin, British performance culture of the 1980s came out of the encompassing international art world of the late 1960s and early 1970s, documented by Lucy Lippard in *Six Years* (1973). Whilst, as Lippard noted in her Preface, 'most performance and street works'²⁴⁸ had been beyond the scope of her anthologies, it had seeped in at the edges, for instance via the activities of Joseph Beuys, which crossed between 'conceptual or information or idea art'²⁴⁹ and other types of practice. More significantly, she acknowledged it as a "dematerialised" practice, emanating from the ecosphere of 'ideas in the air'²⁵⁰ that she was seeking to map through her work, because - like 'textual and photographic work'²⁵¹ and 'such vaguely designated areas as minimal, anti-form, systems, earth, or process art' - it was a form 'in which the idea is paramount and the material form is secondary, lightweight, ephemeral, cheap, unpretentious and/or "dematerialised"'²⁵². By relieving artists of the burden of making, moving, displaying and selling 'bulky difficult-to-transport object[s]'²⁵³, Lippard believed that such forms could literally free up the art world, by enabling practitioners to travel, meet and mingle more easily, away from established centres of commercial and political power.

The post-1965 performance scene in Britain – unlike more traditional areas of art practice - had never been London-centric: it was intrinsically mobile, touring nationally and internationally from bases in towns and cities across the country. Indeed, as Malcolm Dickson discussed recently with Professor Stephen Partridge, it seems to have flourished particularly outside the capital, including in 'Northern

²⁴⁷ Interview with Malcolm Dickson by Professor Stephen Partridge, Emile Shemilt and Adam Lockhart, 30th January 2007, *Rewind: Artists' Video in the 70s & 80s*, p. 8.

²⁴⁸ L. Lippard, *Six Years* (1973/1997), p.6.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., title page.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p.5.

²⁵¹ Ibid., title page.

²⁵² L. Lippard, "Escape Attempts" in *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. vii.

²⁵³ L. Lippard, *Six Years* (1973/1997), p.26.

cities’, which, according to Dickson, ‘were distanced enough from London to give it its radical and maverick stance’.²⁵⁴

As evidence for his assertion, Dickson cited the work of performance artist, Jeff Nuttall, who moved from London to Leeds in the late 1960s, linking up with John Fox and Albert Hunt, to create a vortex of performance activity in the Yorkshire area, which Nuttall documented in *Performance Art: Memoirs* (Volume 1, 1980). Centred on Leeds Polytechnic and Bradford College of Art, where Nuttall, Hunt and Fox were all tutors, it was connected to live art scenes in London, across the country and into Europe, via outside practitioners whom the trio invited to work with their students. It also spawned a number of home-grown performance groups, including Welfare State International (1968 – 2006), founded by John Fox and Roger Coleman (from which IOU Theatre emanated); and John Bull Puncture Repair Kit (1969 – 1976) set up by Al Beach and Mick Banks. In this context, even Halifax had a profile, because, in 1970, Beach and Banks had established Northern Open Workshops (N.O.W.) – also known as “the Halifax Arts Lab” – in an old warehouse on Cheapside in the town centre. Running for only one year, it nevertheless provided ‘space that [was] used for dance, theatre, groups rehearsing, but mainly for workshops...like a small St Katherine’s Docks²⁵⁵’; and, as such, appears as the very first studio collective in West Yorkshire, pre-dating LASS by nearly a decade.

Concurrently, and slightly prior to all this, another core of performance energy had been forming in Edinburgh, around Richard Demarco, who co-founded Traverse Theatre in 1963, with Jim Hayes (who went on to found the Drury Lane Arts Lab in London, 1967-9). In 1966, he set up the Richard Demarco Gallery (1966 to 1992), as an exhibition space, and performance venue during the Edinburgh Fringe Festival

²⁵⁴ Interview with Malcolm Dickson by Professor Stephen Partridge, Emile Shemilt and Adam Lockhart, 30th January 2007, *Rewind: Artists’ Video in the 70s & 80s*, p. 8.

<http://www.rewind.ac.uk/documents/Malcolm%20Dickson/MD510.pdf>.

Retrieved November 2018.

²⁵⁵ “Alternative to Marriage?”, *International Times*, 10 – 23 October 1969, p.16.

http://www.internationaltimes.it/archive/index.php?item=IT_1969-10-10_B-IT-Volume-1_Iss-66_016. Retrieved 10 June 2020.

(where he hosted Paul and Babel in 1985). Demarco worked hard to promote cultural links between Scotland and Europe, by hosting key European performance-based practitioners, including Tador Kantor, Joseph Beuys and Marina Abramovic; and establishing outgoing connections for Scottish artists. According to Bryan Biggs, Director of Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool - who cites Demarco's practice as a source of inspiration for his own gallery operations in the 1980s and 1990s - '[the Demarco Gallery] always had a connection to Europe. [...] He was the first person to show Joseph Beuys, or Kantor in the UK. He didn't go to London to do that, there was a direct connection'²⁵⁶.

By the mid-1980s, the first wave of performance activity around Nuttall and Demarco had dissipated – Nuttall had moved to Liverpool, where he was starting to focus on painting; and Demarco had had to scale back his operations for a time, having lost Arts Council funding for his gallery. However, a second wave had come out of the embers of the earlier upsurge, via for instance, IOU Theatre (established in 1976), based in Mytholmroyd and then Halifax; Theatre Babel (established 1979), based in Holmfirth and then Keighley; and the Basement Group (established 1979) in Newcastle.

The Basement Group was a performance collective, like IOU and Babel, but orientated towards art rather than theatre. It comprised a loose association of young artists including Ken Gill, John Bewley and Richard Grayson, all based in Newcastle, as well as John Kippin and Belinda Williams, who had migrated north in 1979 from 2B Butler's Wharf, London, when that site was taken over by Conran. They came together initially in an old warehouse in Pilgrim Street, Newcastle, where – from the beginning – they provided a platform for other live art practitioners, as well as devising and performing their own projects. In 1983, the Basement Group morphed into Projects UK (1983 – 1990), Britain's first office-based art commissioning agency, led by Gill and Bewley, which initiated and facilitated 'temporal and

²⁵⁶ Gabriel Gee, *Art in the North of England, 1979-2008* (Routledge, 2017), p.153.

transient'²⁵⁷ work by international artists, for non-art venues principally in and around Newcastle, but also in other parts of the country via a series of touring projects.

Through its activities, Projects UK was highly instrumental in establishing new art networks in northern Britain, linking up performance cultures with emerging studio groupings and mainstream, municipal art systems, where they came together in cities like Newcastle, Manchester, Bradford, Glasgow and Derry. It was also key to the development of other artist-led initiatives, including Transmission in Glasgow. As Malcolm Dickson remembers:

while I was at Transmission [in 1985-6], one of the other organisations in the UK who was quite supportive was Projects UK. There was very little in Scotland but [they were] the people who took an interest in what we were doing.²⁵⁸

According to Dickson, Projects UK 'recognised a certain complexion to Transmission that reminded them of the Basement group in that it was a supposedly free, experimental space in which anything could happen'.²⁵⁹ However, that wasn't the only affinity between the two organisations, because – as he explained – they both came out 'of an assertiveness of a certain regional self-determination that deliberately sidestepped with an attitude of, "Oh that comes from London so, you know, we can do it just as well"'²⁶⁰ which framed their activities and those of other artist-led projects in places across Britain, whose economies and communities had been laid waste through the 1980s by de-industrialisation and the onset of Thatcherism.

²⁵⁷ Richard Grayson, *A History of The Basement Group to Locus+*, 2006. <http://www.richardgrayson.co.uk/texts/TWNHWYEssay.html>, n.p. Retrieved 20 November 2018.

²⁵⁸ Interview with Malcolm Dickson by Professor Stephen Partridge, Emile Shemilt and Adam Lockhart, 30th January 2007, *Rewind: Artists' Video in the 70s & 80s*, p. 8.

<http://www.rewind.ac.uk/documents/Malcolm%20Dickson/MD510.pdf>. Retrieved November 2018.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

4.4 'The Place of Place in Art'²⁶¹

As David told me, the ideas churning around in the ether above northern performance networks in the mid-1980s (in which he participated with Paul and Babel), were focused on 'notions of place'²⁶². Rooted in the late 1960s, these "notions" can also be found amongst the "ideas in the air" documented by Lucy Lippard in *Six Years* (1973): not so much within her anthologies, though they are featured there to some extent, but the Preface and introductory essay to the 1997 edition, "Escape Attempts", where the author narrates and reflects on the world in which she had been operating. Here, she talks about 'the redistribution of site or place'²⁶³, of which 'decentralization [sic] and internationalism [were] major aspects'²⁶⁴: it was about evacuating art from 'the closed claustrophobic spaces of the gallery system'²⁶⁵; 'getting the power structure out of New York and spreading it around wherever the artist feels like being at the time'²⁶⁶ and establishing 'another culture, a new network'²⁶⁷ – another "place" for art - outside the 'present gallery-money-power structure'²⁶⁸.

In Lippard's formulation, this notion of "place" had concrete manifestations, via studio and performance collectives, such as SPACE in London and Welfare State International in Burnley, and what Lippard described as '[the] flock of co-operative galleries'²⁶⁹ and artist-run spaces and projects, including Transmission in Glasgow and Projects UK in Newcastle, that emerged in the decade from the late 1960s onwards. However, in essence, it wasn't about practical art infrastructure (though that was one aspect of it): rather, it was an "imagined" place – 'a sort of geographical metaphor' or 'state of mind'²⁷⁰, as Stuart Hall put it - where the "imagined

²⁶¹ Quotation taken from the title of an article, "The Place of Place in Art", featuring Declan McGonagle in Conversation with Christopher Coppock, which was published in *Circa* (No. 29, Jul. - Aug., 1986, p. 13).

²⁶² David Wilkinson, in conversation with the author, 20 January 2017.

²⁶³ L. Lippard, "Escape Attempts" in *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. xx

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xx.

²⁶⁶ L. Lippard, *Six Years* (1973/1997), p.8.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ L. Lippard, "Escape Attempts" in *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. xxii.

²⁷⁰ S. Hall, "Blue Election, Election Blues", *Marxism Today*, July 1987, p.34.

community” of international artists could work freely, beyond the control of institutional galleries and the art market.

In Northern performance networks of the late 1980s, such ideas of “place” were live and current, rippling through the pages of *Performance Magazine* (1979 – 1992) and Scottish and Irish contemporary art periodicals such as *Variant* (est. Glasgow, 1984) and *Circa* (est. Belfast, 1981). Belfast-based performance artist, Alastair Maclennan (b. 1943) – who was a catalytic figure in artist-run networks running from Belfast, through Dundee (where he was from), to Glasgow and Newcastle (via Projects UK) – imagined the “place” for art as an international web or network, superimposed over the existing art map of ‘the Americas, Europe, England, Australia and Asia’²⁷¹. For him, the important thing was for artists to generate their own local networks within an encompassing international context, by-passing established centres which he argued would eventually become obsolete. As he explained in two articles published in 1987 in *Performance Magazine* and *Variant*:

New wave communications and information media now contribute to the disintegrating stranglehold of centres built by, and for redundant technologies and attitudes. ‘Centres’ are becoming peripheries, peripheries ... ‘centres’. Future/present provinces might be more at the ‘hub’ than New York or Paris’.²⁷²

He was saying that ‘the centre of the art world [can be] wherever you breathe’²⁷³, because:

If a gallery won’t give me a show, where I live, or in the street, I’ll invite friends. They can invite me to theirs. Before long, essential art may bypass official institutions and operate another circuit, run by artists. There are

²⁷¹ L. Lippard, *Six Years* (1973/1997), title page.

²⁷² A. Maclennan in conversation with Declan McGonagle, “I See Danger”, *Performance Magazine*, May/June 1987, p.14.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.16.

precedents. In numerical terms, an operation, though miniscule, can yet be effective. One simple networks may map new worlds.²⁷⁴

For Ken Gill, in the context of Projects UK in Newcastle, it was more about manifesting the “place”, in microcosm, in your own locality by inviting the encompassing international art world to come to you. As he said in the organisation’s founding statement: ‘The way I see Projects UK being is an international organisation which is based outside London (very important). So it is provincial in geographical terms but international in real terms’²⁷⁵.

For Lippard – and Maclennan and Gill – the imagined place, where art could be free, was “real” because it could be experienced in any number of physical locations. However, I don’t think that any of them would have considered tying it to or even defining it in relation to a specific geographical place or area. Indeed, as Lippard tells us, where notions of ‘place and site’²⁷⁶ came up in conversation in the 1960s and 1970s, ‘the more abstract notions of space and context usually prevailed over local specificity’²⁷⁷, of which Smithson’s conceptions of ‘site’ and ‘non-site’ are key examples. However, she noted that some artists, operating ‘at the utopian extreme’²⁷⁸ end of things, had actually ‘tried to visualise [the] new world’²⁷⁹ in a much more tangible way. This more ‘extreme’²⁸⁰ and ‘utopian’²⁸¹ strand of thinking about place was promulgated most prominently by artist, Joseph Beuys. It is important here because it wove its way into the biosphere of Dean Clough in the mid-1980s.

Beuys’ approach came out of a particular area of post-1965 art practice, that was focused on materials, not in relation to form (as in more traditional sculptural arenas)

²⁷⁴ “Alastair Maclennan Interviewed”, *Variant*, Issue 4, Winter 1987/Spring 1988, p. 28.

²⁷⁵ Richard Grayson, *A History of The Basement Group to Locus+*, 2006. <http://www.richardgrayson.co.uk/texts/TWNHWYEssay.html>, n.p. Retrieved 20 November 2018.

²⁷⁶ L. Lippard, “Escape Attempts” in *Six Years (1973/1997)*, p. xx.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. vii.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

but to process, crossing between conceptual art, physical theatre and performance, and encompassing the work of Jerzy Grotowski, Tador Kantor, and the Arte Povera artists, for example. In this world, alchemical discourses were current: it was the idea, as David Wheeler told me in relation to his own physical theatre practice, that the world is composed of ‘a conglomeration of substances’²⁸², in which the human body is one amongst many other interconnected elements or materials. All these materials have their own life, intelligence and agency; and it is the artist’s role to extract what Chris Squires described as their ‘core essences’²⁸³; thereby releasing their energy into the world and effecting wider transformations. It is in this context that Beuys developed his idea of life as a “social sculpture” in which ‘every human being is an artist’²⁸⁴, because we are all imbued with energy and therefore have the ability to release energy from ourselves and other elements into the world through our activities.

As Marc Gundel, Rita Tauber et al have recently documented in *Joseph Beuys and Italy* (2016), Beuys applied this kind of alchemical thinking to particular physical locations. Travelling through Europe in the late 1960s and early 1970s, he started to identify special places, rich in material energy, where he judged that ‘a new world and the art that would reflect or inspire it’²⁸⁵ would be able to flourish. For Beuys, these were ancient places - connected to what he called ‘old cultures’²⁸⁶ - that had been subject to a conglomeration of natural and man-made forces, where ‘culture and landscape’²⁸⁷, including people, buildings and natural phenomena, were intimately bound together. They included landscapes in Scotland, Ireland, and Italy that had been shaped by ‘extreme meteorological and physical conditions’²⁸⁸ (like the Alpi Marittime around Garessio); but also urban places with long and turbulent histories: old working cities like Naples (or Turin or Glasgow or Halifax, for that matter): tough and gritty environments that, according to Alastair Mackintosh, existed far from ‘the

²⁸² David Wheeler, interviewed by the author, 28 March 2017.

²⁸³ Chris Squire, interviewed by the author, 9 June 2017.

²⁸⁴ Statement by Joseph Beuys (1973), first published in English in Caroline Tisdall, *Art into Society, Society into Art* (ICA, London, 1974), p.48.

²⁸⁵ L. Lippard, “Escape Attempts” in *Six Years* (1973/1997), p. vii.

²⁸⁶ Marc Gundel, Rita Tauber et al, *Beuys in Italy* (Kerber Verlag, 2016), p. 33.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Ibid, p.121.

centres of culture, the great museums, the private dealers ... not in New York, Paris or London'²⁸⁹ where 'people still talk to each other, still get drunk to forget, where they couldn't give a damn about modern art'²⁹⁰. Beuys believed that such places channelled subterranean forces that could be released into the world by artists. Connected together across continents by 'forces existing beneath the surface'²⁹¹, they could start to map 'a new world' based on humanistic principles: that is, 'Freedom, Democracy, and Socialism'²⁹² as the artist stated.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, Beuys had travelled in Scotland and Ireland multiple times, under the auspices of Richard Demarco, exhibiting in Demarco's Edinburgh gallery, delivering two lectures at the University of Ulster in Belfast, and touring through the landscapes with the impresario. According to Lowndes, these visits had 'greatly enhanced', '[his] influence over the Scottish art scene'.²⁹³ However, it wasn't just in Scotland that his work was current: young artists working in tough and gritty environments across the north of Britain were captivated by his thinking, including Paul Bradley in Yorkshire, whose first performance group, Stuka had been formed around Beuysian precepts.

What was so intoxicating to young artists, like Paul and many others, was the idea that old working class towns and cities, which had suffered or been neglected or abandoned by mainstream society – places, like Glasgow or Newcastle or Halifax in the 1970s and 80s– could become special places for art in the post-industrial period. And it was not only that they might provide particularly rich material environments for artists to work in, but also that art activity could actually make a real difference there, helping to breath life and energy back into their shattered urban landscapes and

²⁸⁹ Alastair Mackintosh quoted by Charles Stephen in "I See the Land of Macbeth: Joseph Beuys and Scotland (1970 – 1986)", *Variation* (Summer 1988), No. 6, p. 10.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Joseph Beuys quoted in Marc Gundel, Rita Tauber et al, *Beuys in Italy* (Kerber Verlag, 2016), p. 33.

²⁹² Willoughby Sharp, *Joseph Beuys, Public Dialogues* (1974), video recording of Beuys's first major public discussion in the United States. Here, Beuys elaborates three principles - Freedom, Democracy, and Socialism - saying that each of them depends on the other two in order to be meaningful.

²⁹³ Quoted in S. Lowndes, *Social Sculpture*, 2003/2010, p.108.

to transform the lives of their devastated people. As an obituary published in *Circa* (1986) noted:

Beuys represent[ed] a strand of thinking in contemporary art which, with the current drift further and further to the right, has been much maligned: ie the concept of a real interaction between art and society.²⁹⁴

According to Lowndes, these ideas were central to the development of the Glasgow art scene: as she said, 'Beuys' idea of "social sculpture" informed many of the debates around Transmission, *Variant*, the Environmental Art Department [at Glasgow School of Art], and affiliated organisations'.²⁹⁵ They were also instrumental in Northern Ireland, where Declan McGonagle, Director of the Orchard Gallery (1976 – 1990), developed them in relation to the context of the city of Derry: a place that had been ravaged by de-industrialisation, but also fractured by sectarian division, through the civil unrest of The Troubles; and where Beuys and his partner, Caroline Tisdall had chosen to establish a fishing tackle co-operative in the 1970s. Around 1986, McGonagle had started to implement at the Orchard a programme of exhibitions focusing on 'conceptual' art of the post-1965 period, inviting international artists of the 1960s generation to exhibit and make work for the city. In "The Place of Place in Art" (*Circa*, 1986), he argued that 'this place is special; its negative reasons which make it special as much as positive ones, but it's out of that context that something important can be developed'²⁹⁶. As he explained:

with a country that's in trouble, the barriers start to break down, structures start to loosen, and it's in that state of flux that I think culture can be of real use. Whereas in a really established place like London I was aware of the deep deep traditionalism and conservatism within London and even within the contemporary art world. There is no way it can be turned around - 800 years of an uninterrupted power base. The conservatism you are dealing with in a

²⁹⁴ *Circa* 26, 1986, p. 4-5. Quote in S. Lowndes, *Social Sculpture* (2003/2010), p. 108.

²⁹⁵ S. Lowndes, *Social Sculpture* (2003), pp.108-9.

²⁹⁶ Declan McGonagle in Conversation with Christopher Coppock, "The Place of Place in Art", *Circa*, No. 29 (Jul. - Aug., 1986), p. 13.

place like London negates the possibility of development, whereas in a situation like Derry nothing has been established in that way up to now, it's all development. In this situation you have lots of social and political problems, but I'm not saying that social and political problems are good because they create possibilities for cultural activity. I'm just saying that in these situations culture can have more meaning.²⁹⁷

McGonagle and the Glasgow artists running Transmission in the mid-1980s used Beuysian ideas about the interaction between art and society as a framework for thinking about the role that art might play in the regeneration of their cities. However, McGonagle was a curator who had trained originally as a painter; and amongst the Transmission group, Malcolm Dickson, for example, was involved at the time principally with video art. None were engaged directly with the type of alchemical thinking about materials that was at the root of Beuys' philosophy.

Richard Demarco, on the other hand, was absolutely immersed in Beuys' world: having worked closely with Kantor and Beuys himself over a long period, he channelled the German artists' ideas, via his gallery in Edinburgh, in a much more visceral way. In "Ex-Cathedra" (*Performance Magazine*, 1987), Demarco asserted that Edinburgh had become '[a] new world capital for culture'²⁹⁸ (via the Edinburgh Festival, part of which he administered), because of 'the beauty and sacred nature of its historic Old Town fabric'²⁹⁹, which held within it spiritual energies that had been lost in the commercial capitals of Europe, including London, 'where the towers and skyscrapers of New York's Wall Street'³⁰⁰ had taken over. He believed that the city embodied subterranean energies, which it could transmit through the art world as an antidote to market-driven London. This type of utopian thinking was niche and unusual, even in the post-1965 art world. In Demarco's writing, it was also potentially problematic because it strayed into fundamentalist interpretations of ancient 'Christo-

²⁹⁷ Ibid., p.16.

²⁹⁸ Richard DeMarco, "Ex Cathedra", *Performance Magazine*, Nov/Dec/Jan 1987-8, No 50/51, p. 36.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., p.38.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., p.36.

Judaic³⁰¹ spirituality as the core essence of European culture, corrupted by later incursions into its territory. However, in a different form, it bubbled away equally at Dean Clough in the mid-1980s.

4.5 Art at Dean Clough

The art community at Dean Clough, Halifax, as it emerged in 1986, was part of the studio movement that was developing concurrently through many parts of northern Britain. However, the sheer scale of the factory complex set it apart from other studio locations, because - across the various buildings - it was able to accommodate very different types of art practice, as well as art and non-art activities, which in ordinary circumstances would not have co-habited.

The artists who gathered around Doug Binder in the mid to late 1980s, including Tom Wood, Ian Judd and Edward Cronshaw, were traditional painters and sculptors. Binder himself was a figurative painter and graphic artist: originally from Bradford, he had attended the Royal College of Art in the early 1960s; and then co-founded *Binder, Edwards and Vaughan*, a highly successful graphic design company in London. As Vic Allen explained to me: ‘Doug had been a very significant artist in the 1970s, slightly in the wake of the Bradford Mafia³⁰². He was not impressed by the glamorous London world. He came back up North to escape the whole thing³⁰³. Wood was a portrait artist (who completed an officially approved portrait of Prince Charles in 1989); and Cronshaw and Judd monumental statue-makers. This group clustered in the middle of the site, on the top floor of E Mill, where Hall had partitioned off the vast weaving space into individual studio units; and the stable block area, where the ground floor spaces were suitable for casting and other heavy sculptural activities.

³⁰¹ Ibid., p.35.

³⁰² The ‘Bradford Mafia’ refers to a group of Yorkshire men, including David Hockney, Norman Stevens, John Loker, David Oxtoby and Michael Vaughan who all studied art in Bradford in the 1950s and 1960s, before moving to London and forging successful careers as artists.

³⁰³ Vic Allen, interviewed by the author, 2 December 2017.

Meanwhile, a very different, literally more dynamic kind of art culture had been gestating, based on performance. This was happening at the far west end of the site, on the top floor of A Mill – which of course was the oldest building, and rougher than other areas, having been abandoned during the 1970s, when Crossley’s first started to contract its operations. As Chris told me, ‘Performance art at that time was quite dirty. They were wanting rough spaces to work in. Not a white cube gallery space’³⁰⁴. It had started in 1984 with IOU Theatre, which moved its headquarters to Dean Clough from its former home in Mytholmroyd, before even Doug arrived on site. Its director, David Wheeler told me,

We had the top floor of A Mill – which was massive, about the size of two football pitches. There were massive carpet lifts – you could actually take a car up in one of those and you could drive around. We did do that – probably [Ernest] didn’t know. We didn’t have races. We would take a car up and adapt it to something.³⁰⁵

It expanded in 1986, when Paul Bradley and Babel Theatre took up residence. As David Wheeler explained, ‘We had to give up some of our second football pitch. But it was a massive space – you couldn’t quite see them in the distance’.³⁰⁶ As David Wilkinson told me:

When I arrived [in 1986/7], it was Paul and Graeme [Russell] and they were Babel Theatre and had a space on the top floor of A Mill. They had been given that space by Ernest Hall and they were doing their weird theatre stuff.³⁰⁷ Graeme Russell later became the director of the Institute of Architects or something. He was a kind of strange intellectual kind of figure. Ex-public schoolboy, kind of tightly fitted. And [then there was myself, Fiona and] Neil ... an old friend of mine from Doncaster, who’d studied painting at Goldsmiths.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁴ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 27 November 2018.

³⁰⁵ David Wheeler, interviewed by the author, 28 March 2017.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ David Wilkinson interviewed by the author, 20 January 2017.

³⁰⁸ David Wilkinson interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017

Originally, Chris had come to Dean Clough as part of the group around E Mill. As he told us at the HMS Symposium: ‘I had been invited by Doug to take a studio after a visit to Dean Clough Gallery to see an exhibition [he’d put on] by Willy Turn... I was shown a purpose-built studio on the top floor of E Mill on a rent-free basis’³⁰⁹. At the time, as he explained:

I was still making process paintings which most viewers didn’t really understand and was possibly an out-dated art language. Or I was doing commissioned figurative paintings, which I’d sell to bars and restaurants to make money.³¹⁰

However, he never really felt settled amongst the painters and sculptors, because (as he said) ‘My process was different to their process. My interest was different. I felt I was more encompassing’³¹¹; and, as he got chatting with Paul, he started to gravitate towards the art that was happening in A Mill. He said:

Paul was at the centre of this younger group of artists [...] A couple of them were ex-students at Nottingham. David [Wilkinson]. Fiona Durdey, his then girlfriend. Neil Pougher [who was David’s cousin from Doncaster]. And Graeme Russell, who was part of Babel performance group.³¹² [...] My affinity was with this younger group, [rather than the older painters and sculptors], because they had more vibrancy’.³¹³

4.6 ‘It was Kind of Amazing’³¹⁴

³⁰⁹ Chris Sacker in conversation with David Wilkinson, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

³¹⁴ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

Panning over the little art world at Dean Clough of 1986, even from a distance, you can see that its core of energy was situated amongst the performers in A Mill rather than the painters and sculptors E Mill. However, it's only by zooming in on A Mill; and looking more closely at the people and practices churning around in its vast, empty interiors, that it's possible to understand where the "Sturm und Drang" was really coming from.

IOU and Babel were both physical theatre companies operating in the expanded field of post-1960s art practice, whose approach to performance was collective and sculptural. David Wheeler very helpfully explained it to me as follows:

[For us], the work doesn't begin with a text or narrative generally, it begins with a location or something that you want to make and gradually the idea accrues around the object in space, with the performers as part of some kind of conglomeration of substances which produce the thing that the audience looks at.³¹⁵

Ostensibly, the two companies had much in common: indeed, they could be considered as niche organisations in what was already a niche area of practice. However, despite their obvious affinities and physical proximity, as David Wheeler told me, they hardly interacted; and were actually very different entities. At this point, it becomes necessary to pay attention to what Stuart Hall calls 'difference and specificity'³¹⁶.

For one thing, the companies were at different stages in their development. Whilst IOU had started in 1976, just three years before Babel, its members – having worked previously with Welfare State International - brought with them already established credentials. Consequently, as David Wheeler told me, they were 'lucky enough'³¹⁷ to have had their activities supported quite generously by the Arts Council from the very beginning. So, by 1986, IOU had been operating as 'a pretty stable company for

³¹⁵ David Wheeler, interviewed by the author, 28 March 2017.

³¹⁶ S. Hall, "Gramsci and Us", *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p.16.

³¹⁷ David Wheeler, interviewed by the author, 28 March 2017.

around 10 years'³¹⁸. Meanwhile Babel was only just starting to make a name for itself on the performance circuit. It's members were younger than IOU's, and its grouping less stable, having already dissolved and reconfigured once when it moved from Holmfirth to Keighley. And, whilst Paul had been remarkably successful in extracting a pot of money for its work from what was then West Yorkshire County Council³¹⁹; which he supplemented with income from freelance teaching assignments (such as that at Nottingham Polytechnic), the company's finances were much more precarious. As David Wilkinson told me: 'We were literally just clinging on to existence, I think we were all on Enterprise Allowance Schemes. Living just hand to mouth. Living in Sowerby Bridge which was a bit grim'.³²⁰

However, IOU wasn't just more financially stable than Babel, but in every way a calmer, gentler and more settled organisation. It came out of WSI, which comprised 'a loose association of freelance artists bought together by shared values and philosophy', whose purpose was to make art as accessible to ordinary people as 'freedentures, spectacles and coffins'.³²¹ As David Wheeler told me:

We all came from [different] art school backgrounds – some of us were sculptors, some of us were more installation, some of us had done a bit of performance art work, there were musicians, people who write and played music, poets. We came together to create work in a collective way.³²²

David Wheeler and his colleagues took some pains to maintain WSI's communal and inclusive ethos. He said, 'we tried really hard not to make the work that we did

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Copy of article in *Huddersfield Examiner*, 8th June 1982: 'West Yorkshire County Council seems set to approve a grant to one Huddersfield charity but to refuse another. At their meeting in County Hall, Wakefield yesterday, members of the council's Recreation and Arts Committee agreed to give £1386 to Theatre Babel, an experimental Holmfirth-based theatre company which has been active since September'. Theatre Babel archive.

³²⁰ David Wilkinson interviewed by the author, 20 January 2017.

³²¹ John Fox, *Eyes on Stalks*, 2002.

³²² David Wheeler, interviewed by the author, 28 March 2017.

identifiable with any one person in particular. We kept the lid on the egos... We were very careful not to make it become someone's company'³²³.

Paul, on the other hand, had never really been interested in collaboration or inclusivity, though he liked to gather people around him. In Babel, as David Wilkinson told me, 'me, Neil, Graeme and Fiona were the team and Paul was the boss'³²⁴. Indeed everything about Babel was quite extreme and somewhat authoritarian, because, according David Wilk., 'Paul's a pretty kind of extreme individual'³²⁵. He told me:

'Babel was something, it really was something. It was kind of a cult. You had that kind of belief and I was sucked into that for a while. I think those theatre companies have that element. It's immersive. Which is what a cult does. It can hypnotise you into running around naked'.³²⁶

Physically, Paul would push himself and others to the absolute limit. According to David Wilkinson:

Paul would get to a point of utter exhaustion, he would make himself ill, pushing himself so hard physically, that he would become a little bit psychotic, a bit delusional. Then he would do something really odd, which was a bit crazy, and kind of gave the performance its power.³²⁷

On one occasion, according to Chris, 'he virtually set himself on fire with flour'.³²⁸ As David Wilkinson recounted,

They had built this large construction out of wooden pallets, with machines that people operated ... At one point, Paul stood underneath this thing that

³²³ David Wheeler, interviewed by the author, 28 March 2017.

³²⁴ David Wilkinson interviewed by the author, 20 January 2017.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ David Wilkinson interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 27 November 2018.

released a load of flour, and got covered in it, but there were naked flames on set too and the flour ignited and he went up in a ball of flames. People were screaming and running around. Luckily, when the flour burnt off Paul didn't continue to burn, the fire just went out ... I remember the whole of IOU Theatre were there to watch it. IOU were like "Wow, we couldn't do that".³²⁹

Whilst the fireball incident was accidental, Paul liked to unsettle and provoke his audiences. David Wilk. said, 'He always had a dramatic act, something he would do that was laden with meaning'³³⁰. According to a review by Rob La Frenais [Performance Magazine, 1986], at the end of a performance in Nottingham: '[Babel, under Paul's direction] smashed their heads against the corrugated iron of their constructed environment, smashed a slab of stone and handed it symbolically to the organiser'³³¹. This was because some viewers had been drinking and chatting during the event, and Paul 'felt [the company] were not being taken seriously enough'.³³²

So, temperamentally, IOU and Babel were almost opposite, but – even more strikingly – their practices belonged to very different sections of the physical theatre arena, both originating in the 1960s, but separated by oceans both geographically and in terms of experience. Like WSI, IOU drew upon English folk theatre traditions such as Carnival, Feast of Fools, mummers plays and fairground. Babel, conversely, was steeped in the work of Jerzy Grotowski and Tadeusz Kantor, which, as Chris Squire told me, 'came out of that Polish experience. Catholic, communist, repressive'³³³. As Robin Morley noted in 1983: 'It [was] one of very few performance and theatre companies [in Britain to] explore the attitudes and techniques that Grotowski developed'³³⁴. The work of Joseph Beuys – which Paul had discovered at Bretton Hall College – was an equally important influence. Indeed, Babel's performances were full of Beuysian objects and materials: one involved 'a ton of coke, water, rhythmic

³²⁹ David Wilkinson interviewed by the author, 2 March 2017.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Rob Le Frenais, "English Dream (Midland Version)", *Performance Magazine* (Nov – Feb 1986-7), Nos. 44/45, p. 39.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Chris Squire, interviewed by the author, 9 June 2017.

³³⁴ Robin Morley, Theatre Babel, *Performance Magazine* (Apr/May 1983), No. 23, p.32.

actions, references to the region's industrial history, etc'³³⁵; another, 'a wooden structure with raw jute - the stuff that you make sacks out of - stretched all over it. It had a meat larder at one end that [Paul] had renovated. He'd got this big barbed wire ball that he'd rolled up'³³⁶. According to artist Roland Miller, the company's aesthetic was:

reminiscent of the Dusseldorf performance school of Klauz Rinke, Joseph Beuys and contemporary German painters, like Jörg Immendorff, Anselm Kiefer. War and the death camps [were] never far away. Military discipline, male masochism, khaki pain and endurance [were] persistent themes.³³⁷

However, it wasn't just that Babel's brand of performance was darker and more confrontational than IOU's. It was also what Paul described as more 'volatile'³³⁸ - by which he meant that it was looking in some way to change the world. It is precisely for this reason that Richard Demarco loved Babel's work in the mid-1980s (in spite or more likely because of his antics with the Man Ray photo at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival). In an article in *Performance Magazine*, the impresario praised the company for its 'deadly seriousness', a term he still uses to describe artists (like Joseph Beuys and Tadeusz Kantor, for instance), who display a certain kind of 'passion' and 'commitment'.³³⁹ He said, 'they don't seem to work in the same sort of British way, very much influenced by Eastern Europe, and they know they're in competition with Eastern Europe. It gives me hope; there's something going on there'.³⁴⁰

In the early 1970s, when they were with WSI, the members of IOU had applied their art to social and political purposes. Indeed, from 1973 to 1975, they had camped out on a reclaimed rubbish dump on the edge of Burnley - 'a repressed working-class

³³⁵ Rob La Frenais, "English Dream (Midland Version)", *Performance Magazine* (Nov - Feb 1986-7), Nos. 44/45, p. 39.

³³⁶ David Wilkinson interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017.

³³⁷ R. Miller, "Freedom", *Performance Magazine*, (May/June 1987), No.47, p. 36.

³³⁸ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

³³⁹ "Running at great speed across a great distance: Chrissie Iles talks to Richard Demarco", *Performance Magazine*, (March/April 1987), No.46, p.15.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

town, more so than many³⁴¹ - where they had attempted to engage and integrate with the local community. However, when they broke away to form their own grouping, they had abandoned this kind of activism, which – by the mid-1970s, with the social and economic fabric of Britain collapsing all around them – felt impossibly idealistic. As David Wh. explained,

We produced probably smaller stuff, less overtly political [than WSI] – for us, more mysterious, less declamatory. More mysterious in the sense of what people came to look at. We felt that the demand for freedom of expression was political enough ... In relation to the world of theatre, we [were] fairly introspective... we create[d] worlds which people look[ed] in on and [tried] to interpret ... As soon as something look[ed] like it “meant something” we [would] probably shy away from it³⁴².

Paul, on the other hand, having graduated through punk into the social and political turmoil of Margaret Thatcher’s Britain, wasn’t yet ready to settle down peaceably. He still wanted to shake up the social system, not as WSI had attempted, through well-meaning engagement with local working class populations, but in a more fundamentally Beuysian way, by unleashing the creative energies embedded in the surrounding industrial landscapes, in order to spark what Beuys described in 1985 as a ‘revolutionary earthquake in people’s minds’³⁴³.

4.7 ‘A Magical Place’³⁴⁴

In the 1986 to 1988 period, Halifax and its environs, from Dean Clough through the town itself into the Calder Valley and across towards Huddersfield, Keighley and Bradford, was a material treasure trove, encapsulating in its fabric two hundred years

³⁴¹ John Fox quoted in “Conflict with the Burnley community”, *Unfinished Histories*. <https://www.unfinishedhistories.com/history/companies/welfare-state-international/conflict-with-the-burnley-community/>. Retrieved 30 June 2020.

³⁴² David Wheeler, interviewed by the author, 28 March 2017.

³⁴³ Beuys in conversation with Michele Bonuomo, December 1985 in *Zweite* (1986), p.92. Quotation translated by Fiona Elliot.

³⁴⁴ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017.

of industrial working class history. As David Wilkinson told me, the whole area was ‘still brooding and dark and satanic and dirty [...] a very moody place with industry’³⁴⁵, still smoking with the residues of what Stuart Hall calls ‘one whole historical era’³⁴⁶. There were empty and abandoned mills everywhere: ‘There was the old Asquith’s engineering factory which is up on the hill, in a space the size of a football pitch with an overhead gantry. It was abandoned. The industrial heritage was spread all over’.³⁴⁷ And the mills themselves, having been abandoned and left unoccupied, were still strewn with the debris of previous occupations.

Dean Clough – as one of the largest mills in the area – was particularly rich in structures and deposits. Across and through the different buildings, it was layered with matters and residues generated by workers at different stages in its history. The blocks at the east end of the site, including Bowling Mill, which was the first to be converted into office accommodation; and D Mill, containing the Halls’ offices and Doug’s gallery, were relatively neat and tidy, having been occupied by Crossley’s until the early 1980s. However, as you travelled west through the site, you started to encounter evidence of what David Wilk. called ‘this other very physical world’³⁴⁸ that had existed there previously. As he told me, in E Mill, where the Henry Moore Studio was later domiciled:

there was a very dark cavernous parking garage. If you walked off that it was just like these abandoned rooms with desks, paper, some packing cases. It was constantly like walking into a Mike Nelson installation. You’d find things that shouldn’t be there, because people had been there [surreptitiously] and they’d brought things. You’d get magazines kind of pinned to the wall, the detritus from people’s working lives.³⁴⁹

Elsewhere, as Paul remembers:

³⁴⁵ David Wilkinson interviewed by the author, 20 January 2017.

³⁴⁶ S. Hall, “Some ‘Politically Incorrect’ Pathways Through PC” in S. Dunant, *The War of Words: The Politically Correctness Debate*. Virago, 1994. p. 170.

³⁴⁷ David Wilkinson interviewed by the author, 20 January 2017.

³⁴⁸ David Wilkinson interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

There was ... this water tank [on which] this lad had done a really nice drawing of a boxing match. Primitive, but good. It was “Webbo v Van Goff”. Webbo was a character on the TV from Webster’s brewery [in the 1970s]. He was going to put one on Van Gogh... Probably when the inland revenue moved in [to the top floor of E Mill] they took it out.³⁵⁰

Beyond that, in A Mill - where the physical theatre companies had taken up residence – and B and F Mills, at the very far west end of the complex, you entered another world completely. Having been abandoned in the 1970s, they were thick with dust and partially reclaimed by nature. According to Bruce Mclean, who created *Work for Nine Rooms* (1987) in F Mill, these interiors comprised ‘miles and miles of broken glass and pigeon shit’³⁵¹. Paul told me, ‘Walking through those mills then, it was like a Tarkovskian landscape. You’d have a mill floor at the top of F mill and there would be a three-inch lake in it with a tree growing and two tawny owls’. John Newling remembers:

There was a mill that was bricked up, completely bricked up and hadn’t been unbricked since [the factory] closed and [when] I took three bricks out of one wall, and the gush of air from it into my face – air that had literally not escaped - it was amazing, it was a different temperature to the mill that I was in ... In another space, there was] just a hole in the floor ... There must have been something very big and heavy there and they’d just taken it away and the floor had gone ... The dust in the mills was extraordinary - a mixture of skin and carpets.³⁵²

For all these historical residues, the materiality of the site was not entirely retrospective because – across the different mills - a new layer of substance was being generated by Ernest Hall’s first business community many of whose operations were associated with the old industrial economy; presenting – like those of the textile

³⁵⁰ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

³⁵¹ Anthony Gardner, “Art and Business: a practical Utopia”, *The Spectator*, 23 October 1993, p.50.

³⁵² John Newling, interviewed by the author, 13 December 2016.

workers in previous decades – a microcosm of current activity in the surrounding area. As David Wilkinson explained:

There was still a lot of the light industry in the area that had developed round the industrial process [...] I mean Halifax had been called the town of 100 trades, so you could get virtually anything made there [...] You know, still what facilitated the place was that there were a lot of small manufacturers that had diverged and were doing manufacturing jobs'.³⁵³

According to Ernest Hall, in the 1986 to 1988 period, there was 'a mix of traditional industry, new technology and craft'³⁵⁴ operations: printers, 'someone... making wooden mobiles, a warping business...[and] every kind of metal working business, [from] sheet metal, machine tools [to] heavy engineering'³⁵⁵, including for instance Robinson's Engineering.

Then, in and amongst the manufactories, there were the artists, experimenting with materials in a different context: Doug Binder's group working with paint, clay and plaster in their own individual practices and studios; and the physical theatre companies, devising their performances around large-scale sets and environments which they developed concurrently, using cars, wood, metal, pallets, coal, flour and other found materials, surrounded by the haunted interior landscapes of the oldest factory buildings.

For both IOU and Babel, the old mill complex was a fruitful context for their creativity. As David Wheeler explained:

³⁵³ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 19 January 2017.

³⁵⁴ Ernest Hall speaking to camera in *Northern Line: One Man's Mill*, Yorkshire Television, 1987. Held by the Yorkshire Film Archive. Film ID: YFA 5783. <http://www.yorkshirefilmarchive.com/film/northern-line-one-man%E2%80%99s-mill>. Transcribed by S. Raikes 15 August 2017.

³⁵⁵ Ernest Hall speaking to camera in *Signals: Making It Happen*, Channel 4, 5 October 1988. Video tape recording held at the British Film Institute National Archive, London, transcribed by S. Raikes on 4 May 2017.

It was incredibly beautiful. [And] in those days we had to scavenge for bits of metal and timber and stuff like that and there were a lot of raw materials that were just lying around. So it was a very useful setting for us to do what we do.³⁵⁶

However, for Babel, the old factory wasn't just "beautiful" and "useful", but something much more emotive and consuming. As David Wilkinson told me:

Even though he's from Kidderminster, Paul loves Yorkshire. He's so in love. I understand it. The Calder Valley is a magical place [...] [with] the landscape and the industries that the landscape gave birth to ... the particular air and grass and light and the weird industrialised spaces. That's what we used to talk about.³⁵⁷

In Paul's Beuysian imagination – which he shared with his companions - that whole area of West Yorkshire, running from Halifax into the Calder Valley and across towards Huddersfield, Keighley and Bradford - was a "special" place, far from the established 'centres of culture'³⁵⁸, but rich in history and materiality, whose topography had been shaped by the sweat and toil of tens of thousands of workers, and where consequently 'culture and landscape'³⁵⁹ were intimately connected. Within this 'weird industrialised'³⁶⁰ terrain, the mills and factories, driven originally by water from the surrounding hillsides, appeared to him as nodes, where buildings, landscapes, objects and people came together, channelling creative and destructive energies out into surrounding area. Even before coming to Halifax, the members of Babel had been drawn to them like bees to a honey pot. As Paul told me,

We were Factory Romantics as Bruce Mclean used to call us. We loved factories, we still do, because of the memories they contain. We were pillaging the local mills that had closed. Ripping objects out. Wonderful objects. There

³⁵⁶ David Wheeler, interviewed by the author, 28 March 2017.

³⁵⁷ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017.

³⁵⁸ Marc Gundel, Rita Tauber et al, *Beuys in Italy* (Kerber Verlag, 2016), p. 33.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017.

was a ladder that we had that was like a solid piece of oak, and they'd cut holes in it. We'd scour these spaces and take objects out because they were "pieces".³⁶¹

Amongst all the other mills in the area, Dean Clough with its long history, vast scale and extraordinary siting – seemingly carved out of the surrounding rock, and straddling a rushing river – presented itself to him as a kind of a nucleus, where different material energies had conglomerated. As David Wilk told me:

It [couldn't] escape you that that place has a terrible history. It's on the site of the invention of capitalism. They used to pay the workers in a tied system, so the workers were paid in the currency of the mill, they had to pay that currency in the mill shops and if they wanted to leave Halifax, they had to basically exchange that for pounds. There's a lot of darkness in Dean Clough. I mean darkness is always a pretty good material for artists to work with and very necessary as well.³⁶²

Paul, David – and Chris when he joined them - immersed themselves completely in the mills' strange, dark environments. David told me, 'it was a pretty intense period of time', camping out on the top floor of A Mill - the oldest and darkest part of the complex - 'without any electricity or heating or anything'³⁶³. He said:

We didn't need electricians, we could use saws and nails. No windows ... I think that was the big Beuys period really. We'd talk about Beuys. Arte Povera / It was kind of romantic. It was kind of amazing.³⁶⁴

According to David, 'before Henry Moore was established and [they] were just artists based there', they 'would spend a lot of time just wandering round those dark mills'³⁶⁵. He said,

³⁶¹ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

³⁶² David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 19 January 2017.

³⁶³ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

There's something special about the spaces. Something haunted and something quite spiritual about a large empty mill. If you're in there for a day on your own wandering round with a sketch book, it kind of gets inside you.³⁶⁶

Moving around these spaces, the artists felt what Beuys would have called 'the forces existing beneath the surface'³⁶⁷ of their stone interiors, because, as David explained:

[A space may be] empty, but it's never truly empty. It's got its reasons for being empty. Particularly looking at industrialised landscapes [...] [At Dean Clough] everywhere you looked there were remnants of human activity [...] I would wander around the site, just wander into the deeply abandoned areas. It's such a massive site. There's that whole feeling that nobody's been up there for like 10 or 15 years. There's the feeling of habitation, there's that you know 10,000 people have been working there and you know its empty.³⁶⁸

And, gradually, the stones started to release their energies, as the workers who had previously animated the mills' interiors crowded into Paul, Chris and David's consciousnesses. What's more the artists embraced these ghostly presences not as strangers, but in some sense ancestors, because as David pointed out at the HMS Symposium, 'what's fascinating is that [their] history is our history'³⁶⁹. He said:

You're from a mill workers family, Chris. My grandma was from Colne, she worked in the mills. I don't think my grandparents could have ever imagined what we would do, what we would go on to do.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁵ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 19 January 2017.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Joseph Beuys quoted in Marc Gundel, Rita Tauber et al, *Beuys in Italy* (Kerber Verlag, 2016), p. 33.

³⁶⁸ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

Paul told me: ‘You've got to remember that most of the people working at Dean Clough were working class’.³⁷¹

4.8 ‘This idea of the North’³⁷²

At the HMS Symposium, a couple of years ago, David Wilkinson brought to my attention two key notions (separate but related), that were important to himself and the other artists, and therefore help to frame their activities at Dean Clough. He said ‘We’ve talked a lot about northernness, about location, about this idea of the north’.³⁷³

These ideas of “the north” and “northernness” swirled around in discussions at the symposium, but, on the day, no-one actually delineated them; and that’s not surprising because, as Karl Spracklen points out in *Theorising Northernness and Northern culture* (2016), they are ‘simultaneously as real as the millstone grit of the Pennines, and as inauthentic as the *simulacra* Roman texts that gave the hills their name’³⁷⁴. In other words, they are concepts that ‘everybody in England knows about’³⁷⁵ and can use in some way as shorthand for an entire social ecosystem, but which yet have no fixed definition and do not even appear in the dictionary.

In his introduction to *The North (and almost everything in it)* (2014), writer, musician and “northern” commentator, Paul Morley attempts some kind of comprehensive explanation. There, he lists ‘almost everything’³⁷⁶ he remembers about growing up in a working class community in the North of England during the 1960s and 70s, including:

³⁷¹ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

³⁷² David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Karl Spracklen (2016), “Theorising northernness and northern culture: the north of England, northern Englishness, and sympathetic magic”, *Journal for Cultural Research*, 20:1, p.1. DOI: [10.1080/14797585.2015.1134056](https://doi.org/10.1080/14797585.2015.1134056)

³⁷⁵ Ibid., p.3.

³⁷⁶ Paul Morley, *The North: (And Almost Everything In It)*, Bloomsbury (2014), p.1.

stories, fights and journeys, crimes, games, plans and ventures, proposals and accidents, public lives and private schemes, mysteries, changes of heart and false starts, rivers and obsessions, apologies and murders, words and spells.³⁷⁷

But also ‘the mountain to climb’, ‘the breath-taking viaduct’, ‘the vast nineteenth-century mill’³⁷⁸, amongst a whole swathe of other items. For him, “The North” is a kind of feeling or atmospheric presence or essence, distilled from an amalgam of landscapes, buildings and people in the north of England, that captures in concentrated form a culture working class culture that he remembers from his childhood – which is exactly how Paul, Chris and David experienced Dean Clough in the late 1980s. As David said, ‘Dean Clough kind of encapsulates that for me’³⁷⁹.

Spracklen – drawing on the work of Benedict Anderson – frames “the North” as an “imagined community” of working class people, tied to a geographical location within the nation of Britain; and “northernness” as the identity associated with that place and grouping. Socially constructed from myths of origin, rituals and collective memory; he understands that it can be ‘authentic only at the level of the imagined’³⁸⁰. Nevertheless, he argues, it is a powerful construction, developed within a political context, which serves very effectively to bind together a disparate collection of people (who may in actual fact have very different interests) around a particular ideological project.

Looking at the identity of “northernness” through the prism of life in the second decade of the 21st century, Spracklen (who himself identifies as northern) considers it as a sub-section of Britishness. He argues that it has been constructed hegemonically by ‘cultural and political elites in the South’³⁸¹, aided and abetted by poets, writers, artists, filmmakers from the 19th century onwards, and, more recently, what he calls “professional northerners”³⁸², who know on which side their bread is buttered

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

³⁸⁰ Karl Spracklen (2016), “Theorising northernness”, p.10.

³⁸¹ Ibid., p.11.

³⁸² Ibid., p.9.

(amongst whom I imagine he would include Morley), for the purposes of keeping ‘the potentially revolutionary, post-industrial working classes in their place’³⁸³. It operates by excluding other groups of people, including minority ethnic groups and women (who he says exist only at the margins of northern culture); thereby ensuring that white, working class men stay ‘happy in their subaltern state’³⁸⁴, because whilst they may be debarred from the centres of social and political power, they can rest assured that those “Others” are even more on the edge of things than they are. Its practices – ‘eating fish and chips, drinking bitter with a head, listening to brass bands and watching rugby league’³⁸⁵ - are enacted by “northerners” (including himself as he makes clear) as a kind of superstitious ritual, based on ‘the logic of sympathetic magic’³⁸⁶, in which ‘[we] cling onto meaning and the simulation of meaning’³⁸⁷, because in the post-industrial Britain, ‘[white, working class men] are bereft of meaning, of power, and of purpose’³⁸⁸.

Looking back now on the artists at Dean Clough, from the outside and at a distance of 30 years or more, it may be tempting to impose this construction upon them, because they were, of course, white and male; and - over time – they were absorbed as “subalterns” (or technicians) within the wider story of the Henry Moore Studio as an establishment (Henry Moore Foundation) project. However, no matter how events unfolded, Spracklen’s version of “northernness” as an inward-looking subordinated identity, enacted out of a sense of powerlessness, was not the one conceived or experienced by Paul, David and Chris in the 1986 to 1988 period, when they were gathering in the old mill buildings – in fact, it was quite the opposite.

In his essay, *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1989)³⁸⁹, Stuart Hall provides an alternative way of looking at “northernness” that may be more applicable in this context. Here, Hall applies Anderson’s conceptual framework to the identity of

³⁸³ Ibid., p.11.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., p.10.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., p.9.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., p.13

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” (1989), in J. Rutherford (ed.), *Identity* (Laurence & Wishart, 1990), pp. 222 – 237.

“blackness”, adopted or performed by black people living in the diaspora during the 1980s, for whom “Africa” had become, not so much a geographical entity (because they had never been there), as an “imagined community”. Like “the North” and “Northernness”, the place of “Africa” and the identity of “blackness” that Hall describes are invented notions, that could be “authentic only at the level of the imagined”. However, rather than having been imposed by elites from the outside, as Spracklen would have it, he argues that they had been constructed internally, by black people themselves, as a tool of empowerment. This “Africa” wasn’t confined by geographical boundaries - though, imaginatively, its epicentre was in the African continent – a bit like Lippard’s community of artists in the 1960s, it was a virtual network of places, superimposed on the existing map of the world including ‘the Americas, Europe, England, Australia and Asia’³⁹⁰, where black people had been dispersed at different moments in history.

In other words, “Africa” in this context was what Hall calls ‘a state of mind’³⁹¹ where ‘the black subject’³⁹² was situated as a powerful figure, right ‘at [the] centre’³⁹³ of things; and black people could operate freely, beyond the control of the dominant “white” cultures in which they were domiciled. According to Hall, in an international context where black people in the diaspora had been facing discrimination and oppression for centuries, it was a necessary construction because it gave them a sense of what he calls ‘belongingness’³⁹⁴ in a hostile environment; enabling them to organise as a cohesive group and assert themselves politically. It is much more in this sense that the artists at Dean Clough were thinking about “the North” in the late 1980s.

The identity of “northernness” that Paul, Chris and David would recognise had been forged in the political environment of Britain through the late 1970s and 1980s, when, as Hall tells us, Margaret Thatcher had ‘launched [her] assault on society’³⁹⁵,

³⁹⁰ L. Lippard, *Six Years* (1973/1997), title page.

³⁹¹ S. Hall, “Blue Election, Election Blues”, *Marxism Today*, July 1987, p.34.

³⁹² Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” (1989), in J. Rutherford (ed.), *Identity* (Laurence & Wishart, 1990), p. 222.

³⁹³ *Ibid.* p.224.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.232.

³⁹⁵ S. Hall, “The Neo-Liberal Revolution”, *Cultural Studies*, June 2011, p. 712, DOI:

reconfiguring the British economy after the slump of the mid-1970s, by promoting economic recovery in London and the South East, at the expense of industrial working class towns and cities in Northern Britain. In this configuration, “the North” was not so much a ‘geographical entity’, as a place of the mind – an “imagined community” - encompassing all ‘the vast numbers of people in the North East, the North West, in Wales and Scotland, in the mining communities and the devastated industrial heartlands, in the inner cities and elsewhere’³⁹⁶, whose lives had been laid waste by Thatcherism.

In the late 1960s and 70s, Gramsci’s “war of position” had been framed as a struggle between what David Wheeler called ‘the old suits and us looking how we wanted to look’³⁹⁷: young people against the establishment, fighting for the overthrow of the capitalist system. During the 1980s, as capitalism re-asserted itself in a more extreme configuration, the war had become a rear-guard action, in which the battle lines were drawn geographically. It was “North” against “South”: or working class people and their allies and representatives in ‘the devastated industrial heartlands’³⁹⁸ and other places left behind by Thatcherism; against a new, re-invigorated, right-wing establishment, whose power base was in the City of London and its dormitory counties, fighting for some kind of self-determination. As Paul told us at the HMS Symposium:

I’ve got to be blunt, we hated London, we still do. I’m sorry. Simply because of the control that it’s got over the country and how arrogant - well, I’m arrogant, I know that - but how arrogant they are down there... What we were talking about was London being the establishment.³⁹⁹

After 1983, when Margaret Thatcher secured her second general election victory, revolutionary discourses were progressively marginalised in national politics. However, they found new currency in Northern England through high profile

10.1080/09502386.2011.619886.

³⁹⁶ S. Hall, “Gramsci and Us”, *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p. 18.

³⁹⁷ David Wheeler, interviewed by the author, 28 March 2017.

³⁹⁸ S. Hall, “Gramsci and Us”, *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p. 18.

³⁹⁹ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

conflicts between central government and left wing metropolitan councils, elected to power in cities, like Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Newcastle and Glasgow (as well as Greater London)⁴⁰⁰ after the 1979 to 1981 crisis; and the 1984 – 5 miner’s strike, led by Arthur Scargill, President of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) against the National Coal Board (NCB), which had fermented in Yorkshire coalfields. Looking back, Paul considers the miners’ strike as ‘arguably the last possible opportunity for the working people of this country to claim access to what was rightfully theirs – their participation in the profits derived from their labours’.⁴⁰¹

Considered ‘the most bitter industrial dispute in British history’⁴⁰², the strike had played out in a series of violent confrontations between police and workers, including at the Battle of Orgreave, near Sheffield in June 1984, where police on horseback charged with truncheons drawn at picketing miners and their supporters. Paul told us at the HMS Symposium that ‘my colleagues and I were very instrumental in Orgreave’.⁴⁰³ He recalled:

being... in a line of miners and supporters, arms linked, with the police a metre away from us, tooled-up in their riot gear. Then a rumour spread that some old guy had recognised his son in the police ranks almost opposite him. Some families were divided then, but what made this striking was the fact that his son was not a policeman, but a serving soldier. It beggars belief. I believe Tony Benn refers to this in his Diaries. Then the police horses came and all hell broke loose. After, there was an eerie calm. I could not believe what had happened, and I have a difficult perception of the police to his day.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰⁰ See R. Crawshaw, *Postcolonial Manchester: Diaspora space and the devolution of literary culture* (Manchester University Press, 2013).

⁴⁰¹ Paul Bradley in conversation with Daniel Maclean, “Fail Better: The art of Paul Bradley”, *Corridor8*, Annual 2010, p. 51.

⁴⁰² "1984: The beginning of the end for British coal". *London: BBC News*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/12/newsid_3503000/3503346.stm. Retrieved 4 May 2019.

⁴⁰³ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁴⁰⁴ Paul Bradley in conversation with Daniel Maclean, “Fail Better: The art of Paul Bradley”, *Corridor8*, Annual 2010, p. 51.

As Stuart Hall documented in *Faith, Hope or Charity* (1985), the miner's strike had 'released enormous confidence and energy on the Left'⁴⁰⁵, as a focus of opposition to Thatcherism. However, it had ended in comprehensive defeat for the National Union of Mineworkers, which was all the more devastating because it was caused, not just by the Conservative government using strong arm tactics (for example, at Orgreave, as Paul recounted), but a fragmenting of support amongst the miners themselves operating in different areas of the country, and amongst workers nationally, who could not be persuaded to come out in solidarity. According to Paul,

although Arthur Scargill, the miners' leader, may have made some mistakes at this time, the greatest mistake was the inability of the working classes, and more specifically their executives, to mount a national strike. Hardly anyone else came out. They, and the East Midland pits, were driven by fear and insecurity. If there had been a national strike then imagine the effect on our social, political and cultural destiny. Would it have been as significant as the 1968 movement, which brought both political and cultural change?'⁴⁰⁶

For Paul, Chris and David, in the context of Margaret Thatcher's Britain, in which traditional working class culture was being progressively marginalised, the "North" was a place of the mind – an "imagined community" - where working class people could come together and operate freely beyond the control of the dominant 'southern' culture to which they had been harnessed for centuries. It was not confined to a particular location or even geographically bounded: rather it comprised a virtual network of places tracking across Britain, through towns and cities, like Glasgow, Newcastle and Derry; and out into Europe, through Turin, Naples and Garessio for example – potentially anywhere in the world that working class people congregated. However, for the artists at Dean Clough, its epicentre was in West Yorkshire, located specifically at the old mill complex where they were domiciled.

⁴⁰⁵ Stuart Hall, "Faith, Hope or Charity", *Marxsim Today*, January 1985, p. 18.

⁴⁰⁶ Paul Bradley in conversation with Daniel Maclean, "Fail Better: The art of Paul Bradley", *Corridor8*, Annual 2010, p. 51.

4.9 'Halifax as the New Cultural Centre of Britain'⁴⁰⁷

Before he arrived in Halifax, Paul already had had quite substantial experience of arts administration – applying for funds, organising events and touring projects - through his work with Babel Theatre. He had used the National School in Holmfirth, where Babel was originally headquartered as a venue, running workshops there and hosting European actors working in the same area of practice (as Paul told us at the HMS Symposium, 'I bought two of Grotowski's actors to the UK, to do workshops around different theatre schools'⁴⁰⁸); as well as a base for devising and touring his own performances. Through the mid-1980s, Babel had travelled across Britain and through northern Europe, teaching at colleges and festivals; and presenting their work in a variety of different settings. By summer 1983, according to a flyer in the Theatre Babel archive, it '[had] given over 50 performances [of 'Memorial'] in the U.K., Denmark, Germany and Holland, and [was] scheduled to visit Ireland and Poland in the near future'⁴⁰⁹.

According to Chris Squire, Paul – as a young artist in Holmfirth in the early 1980s - had mentally positioned the National School (an abandoned Victorian school building that had once served the local mill community), as a national hub of Grotowski-based performance practice in Britain. When he came to Dean Clough, he immediately saw the potential for something much bigger to happen, based on the model of Projects UK, which had been running successfully by then for three or four years, and with whom he was starting to liaise in this period. Artist, Shaun Pickard, who moved to Dean Clough in 1986/7, under the auspices of Doug, and became part of Paul's group a little bit later, remembers, 'Paul being friends with the guys that did Projects UK and going out to dinner with them'⁴¹⁰.

⁴⁰⁷ Quotation taken from P. Corner: 'I don't like meetings like this', *Performance Magazine*, Nov 87 – Jan 88, Issue 50/51, p.43.

⁴⁰⁸ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁴⁰⁹ Flyer for performance of *Memorial* at Students Union, Sligo. Theatre Babel Archive. Courtesy Chris Squires.

⁴¹⁰ Shaun Pickard, interviewed by the author, 9 February 2017.

From 1986, Paul started to commission and organise new performance work by international artists in and around the Halifax area - much like Projects UK was doing in Newcastle - under the banner of Babel Administration, which he ran alongside Babel Theatre from a room on the top floor of The House, a small building adjacent to A Mill, which he took over as an office. He used Dean Clough as his administrative headquarters, but also occasionally as a venue for projects - as he told us at the HMS Symposium, 'Ernest [Hall] was very, very good ... he just let things happen as long as you were active'⁴¹¹ - drawing in members of Babel, then Chris, Shaun and other Dean Clough-based artists, to help with facilitation. David remembers: 'We were just all there in place as Paul's little team. Paul would shout and we would run and shift things. Put things up, take things down, be involved with things'⁴¹². Chris said: 'We would explore the many derelict mill buildings in Dean Clough to find enigmatic and spectacular spaces in which to facilitate performances and projects that Paul was administrating and running'⁴¹³.

Paul's first project with Babel Administration was *The Circuit for Performance* (1986), which presented live art events in and around Halifax and Huddersfield between July and November, including by British physical theatre companies, Forced Entertainment and Dogs in Honey, the London-based musical group, Bow Gamelan Ensemble, who created environments and theatrical experiences, Polish performance artist, Stefan Szczelkun who had been instrumental in setting up the Brixton Artists Collective and the Working Press (the latter with a group of working class artists who wanted to self-publish books under a collective imprint); and Polish performance group, Akademia Ruchu, with funding from Kirklees and Calderdale Councils and the Yorkshire Arts Association. That was followed a few months later by *No Quarter* (1987), in collaboration with Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool and The Green Room, Manchester, which commissioned new performance work and held workshops for practising and emerging artists across the three venues, supported by the Arts Council's Performance Art Promoters Scheme (PAP).

⁴¹¹ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁴¹² David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 19 January 2017.

⁴¹³ Chris Sacker in conversation with David Wilkinson, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

In 1987, Paul collaborated with Projects UK on *The Cenotaph Project* (1987) by Stuart Brisley and Maya Balcioglu, which was installed in the Jura Building, Dean Clough as well as Kettles Yard, (Cambridge), Chisenhale Gallery (London), Aspex Gallery (Portsmouth), Pearce Institute (Glasgow), Chapter Arts Centre (Cardiff) and Orchard Gallery (Derry). Then, Babel Theatre itself was commissioned by Projects UK to make a new performance work, *Shelter* (1987), which toured through the Laing Gallery, Newcastle, Cornerhouse, Manchester and Cartwright Hall, Bradford (where Bradley first encountered Robert Hopper, then Chief Officer of Bradford Museums & Galleries), as part of *New Work Newcastle* (1987), also featuring Kerry Trengrove, Rose Finn-Kelcey, Anne Bean, Rose Garrard, Andre Stitt and others. In between all these projects, Paul had been hosting Turin-based performance collective, Mutus Liber; and touring them through Britain, where they came to the attention of Richard Demarco, who praised Babel for promoting this ‘extraordinary group of Italian performance artists’⁴¹⁴.

In October 1987, Paul invited artist, Bruce Mclean to make a new work at Dean Clough, in one of the derelict mill buildings, with a group of his students from the Slade School of Art in London. As Mclean himself remembers,

All the audience got in a bus in one part of the building and went to another part of the building. The lights were on in the bus. As the bus drove outside the building, the lights illuminated all the rooms, and we started making a performance...That was with [my] Slade students. They did it with me.⁴¹⁵

According to Leeds-based artist, Chris Taylor, who came as a spectator, ‘It was on Halloween and we were put on a coach and driven off round the tops and back into the far end of Dean Clough, which I think was F Mill, something on the hillside. [Mclean] did a performance there with all these doors which were open with fires behind them, or a loaf of bread. Things taking place’.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁴ “Running at great speed across a great distance: Chrissie Iles talks to Richard Demarco”, *Performance Magazine*, (March/April 1987), No.46, p.15.

⁴¹⁵ Bruce Mclean, interviewed by the author, 5 April 2018.

⁴¹⁶ Chris Taylor, interviewed by the author, 15 January 2017.

Babel Administration's inaugural series, *Circuit for Performance* had culminated in November 1986 in a conference, entitled *Abandon London*, which Paul hosted at Dean Clough in November 1986. It served as a kind of manifesto for all his activities in this period. According to Pippa Corner, who reviewed the event in *Performance Magazine*, it was:

a flourish of "come unto me all you that are heavy laden and I will refresh you" by Babel administration in the Dean Clough Mills, which are enormous and largely unused. They are being developed as a business centre whose income has already funded a gallery space.⁴¹⁷

As Corner tells us, 'the day was organised around installations, theatre, film, video and talks'⁴¹⁸. It happened alongside an exhibition of the work of Joseph Beuys, curated by Paul from the archive of Richard Demarco, who according to Corner, also spoke at the conference⁴¹⁹. As Corner told her readers, 'the atmosphere [of the day] was one of Possibility'; and 'the vision' was 'of Halifax as the [new] cultural centre of Britain'.⁴²⁰

4.10 *Abandon London* (1986)

Abandon London (1986) was not just an event, but – as Paul indicated at the HMS Symposium - an imaginative projection. Its evocative title was derived from that of a Victorian fantasy novel by Richard Jeffries called *After London* (1885), which is often cited as an early example of the post-apocalyptic science genre. Paul said:

⁴¹⁷ P. Corner, "I don't like meetings like this", *Performance Magazine*, Nov 1987 – Jan 1988, Issue 50/51, p.43

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Corner also mentions Bruce Mclean as being present, but the artist himself does not remember attending, so her account may not be entirely reliable.

⁴²⁰ P. Corner: 'I don't like meetings like this', *Performance Magazine*, Nov 87 – Jan 88, Issue 50/51, p.43.

I've read it. It's quite a rare book and it was republished [in 1980] by some sort of fashionable literary thing I subscribed to. It talked about a plague that took control of what is so-called Great Britain.⁴²¹

The first part of the novel, entitled *The Relapse into Barbarism*, depicts in vivid visual detail the landscapes of England following an unspecified natural disaster, in which the industrial Britain has collapsed, leaving London and southern England submerged in poisonous swampland; and the rest of the country overrun by wild animals and vegetation. The second part, called *Wild England*, opens several years later in the violent and anarchic place that Britain has become in the intervening period. It follows the journeys of a young protagonist who roams through the country's post-apocalyptic landscapes, gathering a band of followers around him, and looking for somewhere to make his fortune and start a new life amidst the ruins of the old civilisation.

The atmosphere of *After London* is dystopian; and the novel ends without resolution, never offering a clear vision of what a new, re-formed British society might look like. However, as novelist John Fowles noted in his introduction to the 1980 Oxford University Press edition, which Paul was reading, its first, 1885 edition had inspired William Morris's dreams of a socialist, workers' Utopia, encapsulated in *News from Nowhere* (1890), which he published a few years later. Like Jeffries' work, Morris' novel is set in the future, following the collapse of industrial society. It envisages the formation of a new classless society, based on common ownership and democratic control of the means of production, where all work is enjoyable and creative; and, as Ruth Livesey puts it, people take 'their pleasure in nature and the architectural repositories of tradition [which] feeds a new communal artistry'⁴²².

This was the vision embodied in Paul's project, *Abandon London*: of Britain in the post-industrial period as a creative community of autonomous working class people,

⁴²¹ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁴²² Ruth Livesey (2004), "Morris, Carpenter, Wilde, and the Political Aesthetics of Labour, Victorian Literature and Culture", *Victorian Literature and Culture*. 32, 2, p.606.

oriented around making and materials - framed by the Joseph Beuys exhibition from Demarco's archive – whose 'cultural centre' was in the old mill town of Halifax. By re-inventing Dean Clough as a new "place" for art within national and international performance networks, he was aiming to unlock the "forces existing beneath the surface"⁴²³ of its stone buildings – distilled from the toil of the many thousands of workers who had powered their operations in preceding decades - and channel them into the art world; thereby creating a new core of material energy that could generate its own art infrastructures outside established, London-based systems. Because, as Alastair MacLennan put it, 'the centre of the art world [can be] wherever you breathe'⁴²⁴, and 'One simple networks may map new worlds.'⁴²⁵

Paul's *Abandon London* dream of a workers' Utopia, rising like a phoenix from the smoking ashes of the old world that had been torched by Thatcherism, may have been a fantasy, but it generated real heat and light almost immediately. Chris' first encounter with Paul had in fact been in 'the Joseph Beuys exhibition which he put on via the Richard Demarco's archive in the galleries'⁴²⁶. As he told us at the HMS Symposium,

That meeting ... changed my life and outlook ... [It] was an escape from the beer and painting culture. Lunchtime and early evening pints in the Dean Clough Tavern. It was exciting, liberating, a breath of fresh air. You know, I didn't live in a cultural desert any more. I was in my own town and there were people who were really, really exciting. Artists who were really exciting.⁴²⁷

Not only did Paul's inaugural event spark a "revolutionary earthquake" in Chris' mind, awakening energies that had been lying dormant in him since the mid-1970s, when he had returned to West Yorkshire from London; it also helped to channel these energies - and those of the other artists gathering in A Mill – out of Halifax and into Europe. As Chris said:

⁴²³ Beuys quoted in Beuys in Italy. P.32.

⁴²⁴ 'I See Danger', *Performance Magazine*, May/June 1987. P.15-17

⁴²⁵ 'Alastair MacLennan Interviewed', *Variant*, Issue 4, Winter 1987. P. 28.

⁴²⁶ Chris Sacker in conversation with David Wilkinson, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

Paul's performance art contacts were international, with Babel and all the other things you've heard this morning. He hosted a Turin-based performance group called Mutus Liber in Dean Clough and on a tour and they invited a group of artists, the group of artists that Paul was working with – David, myself, Fiona, Susan, Graham, Neil...to Turin and that was our first experience into Europe. All thanks to Paul. From then on I rarely exhibited in the UK. Mostly in Italy, Ireland, Germany and France.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

5. ‘A Passion for Enterprise’⁴²⁹ (See Figs 22- 30)

5.1 ‘Reinventing the North’⁴³⁰

Paul’s activities with Babel Theatre and Babel Administration were a driving force behind the creation of the Henry Moore Studio. However, they are only one part of the story, because – whilst Paul’s dreams of a new “North” had been cooking in the dark, Beuysian world of A Mill - another, ostensibly very different community of the North had been gestating in parallel around an alternative core of energy, emanating from D Mill, where Dean Clough’s business operations were headquartered. It was driven by Ernest Hall, who, like Paul, was an ambitious and powerful working-class man, with a strong sense of materiality (focused on money, rather than other substances, in a business context). And Hall’s vision was equally instrumental in shaping the activities of the Studio, as they unfolded.

As Paul told me:

Ernest was working class originally, which is important in these times. He came from a rougher background than any of us. It's quite remarkable that he bought [Dean Clough]. I think he built it up as a way of turning his own path, the mill, into a reinvented mill.⁴³¹

Raised as the son of a cotton worker in the Lancashire mill town of Bolton Hall (b.1930), Hall had taught himself to play the piano as a child, and gained entrance to the Royal Manchester College of Music. Having hoped originally to make his way as a composer and concert musician, he found that paid gigs were scarce and went instead into business – or, rather, as the flyleaf of his autobiography tells us ‘a passion for enterprise took over’⁴³². He said, ‘As a businessman, I felt for the first time that I

⁴²⁹ E. Hall, *How to be a Failure and Succeed* (The Book Guild Ltd, 2008). Flyleaf.

⁴³⁰ Paul Bradley, in conversation with the author, 23 February 2017.

⁴³¹ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁴³² E. Hall, *How to be a Failure and Succeed* (The Book Guild Ltd, 2008). Flyleaf.

was in control of my life, and I never doubted that I'd made the right decision in moving from music to textiles'.⁴³³

Hall started his business career in 1954 as an office junior at Mountain Mill, a small woollen company in Dewsbury, Yorkshire. However, within three years he had risen to become Managing Director; and, in 1961, led a buy-out of the company, taking on 'ambitious boy'⁴³⁴, Tony Clegg as his partner. Together, he and Clegg acquired Leigh Mills, which was a much bigger company; and then went into property development, forming Mountleigh group, which has since been described, in the business world, as 'a star of the late '70s and 80s'⁴³⁵. Mountleigh went from developing industrial parks and shopping centres, into more ambitious takeovers of other companies, on the initiative of Clegg primarily. At that point, Hall sold his shares; and formed a new consortium with his son, Jeremy and young entrepreneur, Jonathan Silver, with whom he had already acquired C & J Hirst, a woollen mill in Huddersfield. Jeremy Hall told me:

[In 1983] I was working with Jonathan Silver - who subsequently went on to Salts Mill - over at a place in Huddersfield. He was in partnership with my Dad, but my Dad was still in the business which he'd been involved with for donkey's years which was over in the Leeds area. And cutting a long story short, Jonathan saw in the estates gazette that Dean Clough mills were up for sale in - I don't know - March '83 and we came for about four hours to look around and it was a sort of misty day, so you couldn't even see the tops of mills, and we were sort of walking round and then - and all the place was locked up, so you'd get in to places and you couldn't get out. It was an extraordinary experience really ... we put an offer in, the offer was accepted, we came to the site and we first started working on the site in about May 83, I think.⁴³⁶

⁴³³ Ibid, p. xi.

⁴³⁴ Chris Blackhurst, 'Ernest Hall', *Management Today*, 1 June 1992.

<https://www.managementtoday.co.uk/uk-profile-ernest-hall/article/410071>. Retrieved September 2019.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Jeremy Hall, interviewed by the author, 2 February 2017.

In his autobiography, *How to be a Failure and Succeed* (2008), Ernest Hall tells us that it had always been in his mind to create at Dean Clough ‘a community of artistic and commercial enterprise’⁴³⁷ that was ‘both practical and Utopian’; in response to the ‘terrifying, in exorable decline’ of old working class communities in the north of England, ‘and the general mood of apathy and depression as a consequence of growing unemployment’ he had observed in the late 1970s, ‘when [he] was enjoying [his] greatest financial success [as a property developer]’.⁴³⁸ Apparently, this was based on ‘new ways of thinking about education and enterprise’⁴³⁹, and a belief, derived from his own experience of music, ‘that the creative arts are crucial to prosperity and happiness’⁴⁴⁰. It’s certainly true that E. Hall had a pre-existing interest in artistic endeavour. As Vic Allen said:

Ernest was a musician, trained at Manchester. He had hoped to be a pianist, but recognised he wasn't going to make the grade and went into business instead. He had an artistic splinter in his soul. I think there was always a determination to have art in the round.⁴⁴¹

However, as Vic also added, ‘perhaps it wasn't as worked out as it might appear in retrospect’. The fact is that when the Halls first arrived at Dean Clough ‘most of the site was in a complete mess and shambles’⁴⁴², freezing cold and unfit for office and most other types of commercial occupation. So, ‘the bones’ of the art community had begun ‘with having a number of spaces that weren't worth doing up and if you could give them to artists and let them for a peppercorn rent, they were occupied and useful’⁴⁴³. Looking back now, J. Hall too describes the entire development as a pragmatic process of evolution. He said:

The thing we’ve always had in abundance is space...[So, we were able to] think about and use that resource in a way that allowed creative things to

⁴³⁷ E. Hall, *How to be a Failure and Succeed*, 2008, p. 305.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ Vic Allen, interviewed by the author, 2 February 2017.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

happen, because [we] physically had it ... There was the opportunity for people to use spaces and areas and environments in a way that didn't overladden the use with a cost, because the thing existed, it was current.⁴⁴⁴

J. Hall described the early years of the development to me as follows:

For the first year... the process started where we were just re-using bits of the buildings as easily as we could... And that led to a whole amalgam of odds and sods of customers being here [...] We were doing incredibly primitive re-use of spaces in the most simplistic way for all the right reasons, because that was what was enabling the process of change to start. It was the right approach at the time, because it was what allowed you to start to get life and activity back into the buildings.⁴⁴⁵

In early 1984, according to J. Hall, 'we had maybe 20 customers, most of whom were in car repairs and it was a very simple carry on [...] I'd probably describe it by saying we were at the arse end of the property market'.⁴⁴⁶ However, from there, the development had accelerated quickly, because - by 1987, when the first snapshot of the development⁴⁴⁷ was recorded, the project was becoming successful - Dean Clough was home to 160 companies, employing around 1000 people, including a number of start-up companies, but also established businesses such as Suma Wholefoods (Leeds), Robinson's Engineering (Halifax), Afax Plastics (Elland) and KPI Electrics (Halifax), which had outgrown their premises in town and expanded into ground floor units and single storey sheds at Dean Clough to house stock and machinery, as well as up to twenty artists and two theatre companies.

Within the Halls' business partnership, as Vic described,

⁴⁴⁴ Jeremy Hall, interviewed by the author, 2 February 2017.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ *Northern Line: One Man's Mill*, Yorkshire Television, 1987. Held by the Yorkshire Film Archive. Film ID: YFA 5783. <http://www.yorkshirefilmarchive.com/film/northern-line-one-man%E2%80%99s-mill>. Transcribed by S. Raikes 15 August 2017.

Jeremy worked hard at making the business work, whilst Ernest got to focus on the whole showy public front thing. In effect – it’s a parody of what they did - but Ernest was the puppet that kept everyone looking, whilst the magician’s left hand, Jeremy was doing the business.⁴⁴⁸

Ernest Hall involved himself with local politics and promoted the project tirelessly, not just as a commercial venture, but as a business-led social enterprise. In 1986, at his instigation, Dean Clough hosted the launch of job creation scheme UK2000, which was attended by Richard Branson, and Lord Young, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in Margaret Thatcher’s government; and the inaugural session of Business in the Community (BIC), chaired by Prince Charles, who was its president and subsequently ‘adopted Halifax with gusto’⁴⁴⁹. BIC, which ‘appeal[ed] to the corporate conscience to help regenerate older industrial areas’⁴⁵⁰ and was ‘seen by the Prime Minister as a principal instrument in the Government’s much-vaunted inner city drive’⁴⁵¹, chose Halifax for ‘[its first] experiment in public-private partnership’⁴⁵². As Paul recalls:

we were in a millionaire’s environment - it was all that kind of yuppy nonsense. Prince Charles liked it, Branson liked it. ... I used to sit down with Ernest and the Prince of Wales and just talk about stuff. It was phenomenally successful. It was doing things at the same time as Canary Wharf [in London’s docklands] was just beginning. And it was looked on politically and economically as reinventing the North.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁸ *Northern Line: One Man’s Mill*, Yorkshire Television, 1987. Held by the Yorkshire Film Archive. Film ID: YFA 5783.

<http://www.yorkshirefilmarchive.com/film/northern-line-one-man%E2%80%99s-mill>. Transcribed by S. Raikes 15 August 2017.

⁴⁴⁹ Anon., “Halifax: Farewell Dark, Satanic Mills”, *The Economist*, Vol. 320, Iss. 7720, (Aug 17, 1991), p. 54.

⁴⁵⁰ Peter Hetherington, “Decaying mills reborn as a model of modern industry”, *The Guardian*, Sep 23, 1987, p. 4.

⁴⁵¹ P. Hetherington, “Decaying mills reborn as a model of modern industry”, 1987

⁴⁵² Anon., “Halifax: Farewell Dark, Satanic Mills”, *The Economist*, Vol. 320, Iss. 7720, (Aug 17, 1991), p. 54.

⁴⁵³ Paul Bradley, in conversation with the author, 23 February 2017.

5.2 Business and the Arts

The arts and business community at Dean Clough may not have been pre-planned as Ernest Hall recounts in his memoirs. However, it was in some sense “Utopian”, if not in quite the way you might imagine. As J. Hall told me frankly:

If you’d spoken to my father, he’d probably cite things that he’d seen, like, for example, Dartington school in Devon, where you had a combination of art, education and certain elements of business. And actually most of his children went to Dartington. I went to Dartington. I think he latched onto that as an idea to some degree... But first and foremost, we were a commercial organisation, so it had to be business-based. [...] We had to be a self-sustaining business. There wouldn’t be the opportunity to be anything other than that.⁴⁵⁴

The fact is that the community at Dean Clough, which had evolved somewhat organically with small businesses and artists, became caught up in new ways of thinking about art in a business context, promoted by Margaret Thatcher’s government, which E. Hall embraced with gusto in the mid to late 1980s; and, in this respect, it was certainly an ideological project.

Through the 1980s, as Richard Hewison describes in *Culture and Consensus* (1995), the arts in Britain and across Europe had been ‘caught in an irresistible tidal change: the shift towards what Lord Gowrie’s successor as Arts Minister, Richard Luce, called ‘the culture of wealth creation’⁴⁵⁵. In this period, “value for money”⁴⁵⁶ entered the lexicon of arts organisations, which had their state funding frozen, cut or rerouted from towards ‘heritage’ projects; and were obliged to look for alternative means of support, including private sponsorship. Likewise, according to Hewison, ‘the arts themselves.... became “cultural industries”’: they were discussed in terms of their

⁴⁵⁴ Jeremy Hall, interviewed by the author, 2 February 2017.

⁴⁵⁵ R. Hewison, *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics since 1940*, (Routledge, 1995/2015), p. 256.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

economic potential - ‘their contribution to employment and as adjuncts to tourism’⁴⁵⁷; and increasingly from June 1987 onwards, when Margaret Thatcher declared in her victory speech on election night that there was ‘work to be done’ in ‘the inner cities’⁴⁵⁸ – as key factors in ‘the success of [towns and] cities in the post-industrial era’⁴⁵⁹. In 1988, the Arts Council launched its pamphlet, *An Urban Renaissance*, John Myerscough’s published his report, *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain* via the Policy Studies Institute, and conferences on ‘the subject of the arts as an engine for inner city re-generation’⁴⁶⁰ were held in Glasgow and Kent, bringing together ‘local politicians, businessmen and arts administrators’⁴⁶¹. In these and other forums, the arts were praised for their ability to ‘create a climate of optimism – the “can do” attitude essential to developing the “enterprise culture” this government hopes to bring to deprived areas’⁴⁶² and ‘transform the image of depressed areas as a means of attracting new industries’⁴⁶³.

In May 1988, Tate Liverpool – England’s first dedicated museum of modern art (the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh had opened in the 1960s) – opened in Albert Dock, which was then in the process of being refurbished as a leisure and retail complex. According to James Dunnet, writing in the summer edition of *Art Monthly*, the gallery was ‘funded largely by the Merseyside Development Corporation in the hope of drawing successful commerce to the city’⁴⁶⁴. As he explained,

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Margaret Thatcher, notes for election night speech, 21 June 1987.

<https://4d873702cd2b0ea65fa5-f2a742ff9c6ab8f02020c1057d396e49.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/870612%20MT%20notes%20CEN%20OFF%20SP%20THCR%202-7-5-64%20f25.pdf>

⁴⁵⁹ John Myerscough, *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain* (Policy Studies Institute), Issue 672, p.2.

⁴⁶⁰ *An Urban Renaissance: A special report by John Davison, Sunday Times*. Arts Council, Annual Report, 1987/8, p.28.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² R. Hewison, *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics since 1940*, (Routledge, 1995/2015), p. 275.

⁴⁶³ John Davison, *An Urban Renaissance: A special report by John Davison, Sunday Times*. Arts Council, Annual Report, 1987/8, p.28.

⁴⁶⁴ James Dunnett, “The Tate in Liverpool”, *Art Monthly*, July – August 1988, No.11. p. 5.

[it] is approached (from the car park) through a 'speciality' shopping centre and past a development of luxury flats, for which it is the principal attraction. In that sense the Tate Liverpool is perhaps the quintessential gallery of the Thatcher years in which, as Jocelyn Stevens reminded us recently on television, 'Art is earning its keep, in the spirit of the times.'⁴⁶⁵

In Autumn 1988, the Arts Council published a special report on *Business and the Arts* by Antony Thorncroft of the Financial Times, which cited Dean Clough as an 'exciting' example of the new way in which 'art is integrating with business ...[with] both sides...benefiting from the new entrepreneurial approach'⁴⁶⁶. It concluded with a message from Ernest Hall, who said: 'we are demonstrating...that the arts... play a vital part in economic regeneration; and also that artistic integrity need not be compromised by moving art into enterprise and enterprise into art. Arts and business don't have to be two separate worlds, they can act as one.'⁴⁶⁷ In November 1988, the Arts Council held their conference, 'Marketing the Visual Arts' at Dean Clough, whose subject was appropriate in the circumstances. In 1990, Hall was appointed to the Council's board and as Chair of the Yorkshire Arts Association.

5.3 'The Economic Situation of the Visual Artist'⁴⁶⁸

Within this political climate, it wasn't just "the arts" that were expected to adapt to the new "economic and political climate", but artists also. In 1985, in an Arts Council, William Rees-Mogg (Chairman of the Council from 1982 to 1989 and, at one point, a prospective Conservative politician) had confessed to being 'depressed by the way in which many artists seem to be trapped in a dated and provincial set of attitudes, the post-Fabian Guardian consciousness of genteel academic English collectivism'⁴⁶⁹; and

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ A. Thorncroft, "Business and the Arts", *Arts Council 43rd Annual Report, 1987/8*. P. 31.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ Quotation taken from the title of N. Pearson and A. Brighton, *The Economic Situation of the Visual Artist* (Calouste Gulbenkian, 1985).

⁴⁶⁹ W. Rees-Mogg, *The Political Economy of Art, An Arts Council Lecture*, Arts Council, 1985, p.6. Quoted in R. Hewison, *Culture and Consensus*, 1995, p.249.

pressed them for a revival in ‘human and individual values against 20th century collectivism’⁴⁷⁰.

In 1986, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation had released its report on *The Economic Situation of the Visual Artist* (1985), compiled by Nick Pearson and Andrew Brighton, which was never published but circulated through art school libraries - and entered the Dean Clough story because it landed on the desk of Robert Hopper, who cited it in his interview for Director of the Henry Moore Foundation in 1987. The report, based on research conducted in the late 1970s and early 1980s, found that few artists of any age, in any area of Britain, had been making much money from selling their work in an art market that was still focused primarily on old master paintings. However, in the post-war period, they had been able to rely on the state to provide alternative sources of income and opportunity, through teaching jobs, grants and local authority exhibitions and commissions for example, all of which were now less readily available. For Brighton and Pearson, a return to the old model of state patronage was not the answer. Indeed, they found that dependence on the state had helped to depress artists’ incomes, by preventing them from developing commercial competences. In a follow up article, published in *Art Monthly*, Pearson noted with approval that:

More artists today combine an idealism about and commitment to their artistic work with a sense of the organisation and business skills necessary to operate as an artist. And, even where they lack the experience, knowledge or skills necessary to use and control (rather than be a victim of) their situation, they are more usually aware of this.⁴⁷¹

According to the report, in order to thrive and flourish under Thatcherism, it was necessary to get better at business.

All the artists at Dean Clough came to the site – nominally atleast – on a business footing via Mrs Thatcher’s Enterprise Allowance scheme, which gave “unemployed”

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ N. Pearson, “More on the Economic Situation of the Visual Artist”, *Art Monthly*, April 1986, No.95. p. 8.

people who set up their own business a guaranteed income of £40 per week.⁴⁷² Introduced in 1981, against a background of mass unemployment in Britain, and continuing into the late 1980s, it funded around 325,000 people, including many creative practitioners and artists. Anyone wishing to claim money under the scheme was required to fund the first £1000 out of their own funds, and also to produce a basic business plan.

A few artists had set up their own functioning commercial operations at Dean Clough, including Ralph Gratton, who according to Doug Binder, ‘was in a separate building with a commercial studio, nothing to do with art as far as he was concerned. It was commerce with his partner’⁴⁷³. Most of the others, including Doug himself and Paul, Chris and David, used the scheme to support their creative endeavours. Doug told me:

I had to come in as a business. I was on Enterprise Allowance. Which meant that I had to find some capital that I didn’t have, of a £1000. Which I didn’t have. That would be measured by Enterprise Allowance, they would put in their money as well. It’s so long ago, literally 30 years ago now. But it was a lot of money. So I had to borrow it from my Mum. Bless her. She didn’t know anything about art, she never knew what I did really. She worked in the co-op in Bradford. It was a world that she just couldn’t understand ... I think I was on an allowance of I think £100 per week, which to me was a fortune, but I had to pay for everything, all transport, all publicity, everything about setting up the gallery you know. Which is expensive.⁴⁷⁴

As he said: ‘It was all business’.⁴⁷⁵

5.4 North and South

⁴⁷² Charles Dellhein, “Thatcher’s Self-Employment”, *Inc.* 1 July 1996. <https://www.inc.com/magazine/19960701/1725.html>. Retrieved 4 June 2019.

⁴⁷³ Doug Binder, interviewed by the author, 27 February 2017.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

In the late 1980s, a few years after the 1984-5 Miners' Strike, it would have been difficult for anyone on the left of politics to believe that working class people in the North of England would ever be persuaded to support the project of Thatcherism. This kind of logic could have been applied, with some justification, to any working class person in any town or city where Margaret Thatcher had unceremoniously pulled the plug on industries that had supported its' peoples' lives and shaped their sense of identity, but particularly, you might suppose, to Halifax, where – as Graham Robinson (of Robinson's Engineering) said – 'originally Crossley's Mill had employed 7000 and was still employing 3500 people when it finished. So 3500 people in a small town and all the people [the factory] employed [indirectly] had been made redundant'⁴⁷⁶; and to Paul, who had stood with the miners at Orgreave, and, at one point, as Chris told me, been a member of The Socialist Workers' Party.

The supposition was somewhat born out by the results of the 1987 general election, which - despite Mrs Thatcher and the Conservative Party being returned to office with a healthy majority – showed that the Labour Party had by and large held on to power in post-industrial towns and cities (whilst gaining no traction in the south of England). Indeed, according to Stuart Hall [*Election Blues*, 1987], in the immediate aftermath of the election, Labour had consoled itself for yet another disappointing defeat with the idea that it had at least retained the support of half the country - 'the North'⁴⁷⁷ – which it imagined as a community of working class people who would always be immune to Mrs Thatcher's ideology.

However, writing at the time in *Blue Election, Election Blues* (July 1987) – without even the benefit of hindsight that the 2019 general election has most conclusively given us – Stuart Hall warned against any such complacency, because “North” and “South”, in this configuration, '[were] not just ...geographical entities', but 'state[s] of mind'⁴⁷⁸. In other words, they were “imagined communities”, operating in places

⁴⁷⁶ Graham Robinson, in conversation with the author, 12 December 2016.

⁴⁷⁷ S. Hall, “Blue Election, Election Blues”, *Marxism Today*, July 1987, p.34.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

without solid boundaries, which were not immune to ‘Thatcherite inroads’⁴⁷⁹, because, as Hall explained in *Gramsci and Us* (1987):

make no mistake, a tiny bit of all of us is also somewhere inside the Thatcherite project. Of course, we're all one hundred per cent committed. But every now and then - Saturday mornings, perhaps, just before the demonstration - we go to Sainsbury's and we're just a tiny bit of a Thatcherite subject.⁴⁸⁰

What’s more, Mrs Thatcher and the Conservative Party under her jurisdiction had grasped this fact in a way that Labour under Michael Foot and then Neil Kinnock hadn’t. As S. Hall tells us, ‘She [had] never supposed Thatcherite subjects were already out there, fully formed, requiring only to be focus-grouped into position’.⁴⁸¹ Instead, she realised that she would have to mould them from ‘the mix of altruism and competitiveness of which ordinary mortals are composed’⁴⁸²: in other words, from the raw clay that is inside every one of us.

One of Mrs Thatcher’s great political talents, from the beginning, had been to intuit (without, of course, reading or subscribing consciously to Gramsci’s post-Marxist analysis) that she would need to “construct” consent, across different classes in society, for policies that were – in their modes of operation and effects – divisive and slanted towards those who were already wealthy. As S. Hall pointed out, this was not (as the Left preferred to believe) simply a matter of ‘dup[ing] unsuspecting folk’⁴⁸³ into voting against their own interests (although story telling was a big part of it), but of addressing the ‘real problems, real and lived experiences, real contradictions’⁴⁸⁴ of ordinary people, that the Left during its years in power had never even properly identified, let alone successfully tackled, and ‘represent[ing] them within a logic of

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ S. Hall, “Gramsci and Us”, *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p.19.

⁴⁸¹ S. Hall, “The Great Moving Nowhere Show”, *Marxism Today*, Nov/Dec 1998, p.9.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ S. Hall, “The Great Moving Right Show”, *Marxism Today*, January 1979, p.20.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

discourse which pull[ed] them systematically into line with [her own] policies and class strategies'⁴⁸⁵.

The contradiction at the heart of Social Democracy, as Stuart Hall identified, had always been its statist tendency: for all its manifest achievements in the post-war decades, when Labour in office moved the country in a more equal and democratic direction, it was and remained always a 'benevolent dictatorship'⁴⁸⁶ in which 'a political elite' ('experts and bureaucrats' drawn largely from the ranks of the upper middle classes) had 'legislat[ed] on behalf of the working classes'⁴⁸⁷, balancing their interests against those of business owners, industrialists and other bosses, in order to keep the wheels of Capitalism turning. It had never been a truly democratic socialist form of government, in which power was devolved to ordinary people.

In the boom years of the late 1950s and early 60s, when the Social Democratic state could afford to be generous, this balancing act had appeared to be working. However, during the late 1960s and 1970s, as industry started to collapse, and successive governments hunkered down to manage social unrest and economic stagnation, people had experienced the state much more in its bureaucratic and authoritarian aspects. In this context, as S. Hall points out, it is hardly surprising that working class people – of different political persuasions – in search of agency, had turned away from the state, towards 'a certain conception, or rather, a certain experience of *the market*'⁴⁸⁸. By this, S. Hall was not referring to big business, or anything from 'the storehouse of corporate capital', whose interests Thatcherism can now be seen to have ultimately prioritised, but small initiatives operating 'in what we can only call the interstices of the market', 'where the big battalions and competition to the death do not entirely dominate'.⁴⁸⁹ Hall used as an example the myriad of 'local or 'grass roots' initiatives'⁴⁹⁰, supported by 'younger people on the Left'⁴⁹¹ from 1968 onwards,

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ S.Hall, "The State – Socialism's Old Caretaker", *Marxism Today*, November 1984, p.25.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., p.28.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., p.27

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., p.28.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

‘where people, by their direct self-activity, [had been] persuaded to supplement or develop new struggles around the existing bureaucratic forms of provision of the state’⁴⁹² amongst which SPACE Ltd, Acme Gallery, Projects UK, Transmission and Babel Administration itself could be numbered.

Mrs Thatcher understood working peoples’ desire for “self-determination” (as Malcolm Dickson put it⁴⁹³), much better than the Labour politicians who were supposed to represent them in the 1980s. She grasped – as Benedict Anderson put it – that all ‘nations’ in the post-Enlightenment period, ‘dream of being free’⁴⁹⁴, and that the slippery concept of “freedom”, open to all sorts of different interpretations, was a cornerstone of the social imaginary, prized by everyone in society, but denied historically to the working classes.

With this in mind, building on what S. Hall calls ‘the ground of already constituted social practices and lived ideologies’⁴⁹⁵, she set about constructing ‘a logic of discourse’⁴⁹⁶ which pulled this longing for autonomy and the idea of freedom itself in a right-ward direction, supported by a print media, owned mostly by business moguls, that was almost universally enamoured of policy direction. In other words, she constructed an “imagined community” around her political project: a place where all British people could operate freely, beyond the control of the state and its army of pompous experts and bureaucrats, by throwing off the shackles of the “welfare state” and diving into the “free” market economy. The overall ethos of this “place” was called “enterprise culture”.

It is Margaret Thatcher’s former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson who claims credit for having coined the term ‘enterprise culture’⁴⁹⁷ in the early 1980s. Like any good slogan intended to bind a group of people together, it is impossible to define

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Interview with Malcolm Dickson by Professor Stephen Partridge, Emile Shemilt and Adam Lockhart, 30th January 2007, *Rewind: Artists’ Video in the 70s & 80s*, p. 8.

⁴⁹⁴ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1983/2006), p.7.

⁴⁹⁵ S. Hall, “Gramsci and Us”, *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p.20.

⁴⁹⁶ S. Hall, “The Great Moving Right Show”, *Marxism Today*, January 1979, p.20.

⁴⁹⁷ Roger Penn, Michael Rose, Jill Rubery, *Skill and Occupational Change*, Oxford University Press, 1994, p.35.

in itself, but can be understood in opposition to what it is not, in this case “dependency culture”: a term coined by Thatcher herself to sum up the “postwar settlement”, which as Kent Worcester (1989) tells us was ‘built around the promises of Keynesian macroeconomic policies: universal welfare provision, full employment and moderate income redistribution’⁴⁹⁸. Separating the population of the country into “strivers” and “scroungers”, and re-framing, as Worcester (1989) said, the ‘recipients of public funds as future participants in markets’⁴⁹⁹, it advocated a return to supposed Victorian values of hard work, self-help, innovation and “enterprise”. Its purpose, as Lawson took some pains to point out in his memoirs, was ‘not simply to remove various controls and impositions [on business], but by doing so to change the entire culture of a nation’.⁵⁰⁰

According to S. Hall, the key “political subject” in Thatcherism’s free market paradise was, ‘Entrepreneurial Man’⁵⁰¹. On the one hand, he could be a (supposedly) visionary, swash-buckling, free-wheeling financial impresario, like Richard Branson for instance, quickly making his first million; or, on the other, a more careful, first-time small businessman, becoming his own boss and carving out for himself and his family a better way of living. Either way, he was a self-starter, in attitude, if not social background (Branson is a public schoolboy of course), who – conveniently for this right-wing prime minister - spurned any state help or government intervention (though in reality big and small businesses were receiving a lot of direct and indirect support from the government in this period), because he preferred to take responsibility and make his own way in the world.

Already, by 1987, Mrs Thatcher’s vision had caught the imaginations of many working class people in Britain, because in successive general elections, as S. Hall pointed out, ‘the ‘new’ working class in the geographical ‘South’ [had] identif[ied]

⁴⁹⁸ K. Worcester, “Ten Years of Thatcherism”, *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 6, No.2 (Spring 1989), p. 301.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 303.

⁵⁰⁰ N. Lawson, *The View from No.11: Memoirs of a Tory Radical* (Bantam Press, 1992), pp.64 – 5.

⁵⁰¹ S. Hall, “The Great Moving Nowhere Show”, *Marxism Today*, Nov/Dec 1998, p.9.

and vot[ed] in a majority for Thatcherism'⁵⁰². Through the mid-1980s, whilst the North was still experiencing the full force of the financial hurricane caused by de-industrialisation, the City of London had been emerging as a global financial centre, spreading wealth through some parts of the capital and its surrounding southern counties; and creating a sense of optimism. As Hall told his readers in *Blue Election, Election Blues* (1987),

If nobody was prospering under Thatcherism, ideology alone could not parachute such an 'illusion' into the heads of the majority. However, if some people are doing well – as they are, especially in personal terms, in the 'South' – and the ideological climate is right, and the alternative ways of measuring how 'well' you are doing are effectively silenced or stigmatised, then the small numbers who define themselves as 'doing well' will be swelled by a much large number who identify with this way of 'getting on'... [and] see themselves in their political imagination as likely to be lucky in the next round.⁵⁰³

So, whatever the reality of working people's individual financial situations – and some were doing well in that period, whether through enterprise or buying their council house in London in the middle of a property boom - the promise of prosperity had clearly been enough to convince a very substantial number living in the South of England that better times were coming. What's more, S. Hall argued, just as there were clearly 'many people [in the South] who [might have been] 'North' in their living standards, conditions and even origins [but had], nevertheless, become 'Southerners' in their heads'⁵⁰⁴; there were already 'plenty of 'South-minded' working class people living in the 'North''⁵⁰⁵, and plenty more who could be persuaded in that direction.

⁵⁰² S. Hall, "Blue Election, Election Blues", *Marxism Today*, July 1987, p.34

⁵⁰³ Ibid., p.32.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., p.34

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

All Mrs Thatcher had to do, S. Hall said, in order to conquer ‘Labour’s Northern bastions’ was ‘to lay a base for just enough people to put their feet, tentatively, on the new Thatcherite ladders of success’⁵⁰⁶. In the next few months, he predicted:

there [would] be a flood of small businesses, pump-primed by industrialists who know on which side their bread is buttered. The press [would] trumpet its immediate ‘success’ and Lord Young [would] be ‘economical’ with more statistics ... Labour authorities [would] be side-lined by ‘alternative’ private channels of growth, and isolated for attack (some version of the London ‘loony left’ ideological missile is at this moment cruising up the M1).⁵⁰⁷

Mrs Thatcher couldn’t and never intended to restore the old industrial base that had supported “the North” in previous decades; but she realised that it was possible to persuade working people that there was a better and freer way of living. Her evocative stories would not convince everyone, but as S. Hall said, ‘that is not necessary ... [Indeed, Thatcherism had] never had an overwhelming social majority on anything’⁵⁰⁸. In the absence of other ways of getting on, enough working people in the North would start to ‘identify ideologically with the enterprise culture as the way of the future’⁵⁰⁹; and form ‘an ‘imaginary community’ around Thatcherism’s political project’.⁵¹⁰ Ergo, ‘the balance shifts. The “North” [would begin] its symbolic journey ‘Southwards’’.⁵¹¹ Today, Stuart Hall’s words feel almost eerily prescient, because they describe more or less what happened at Dean Clough through the 1986-8 period.

5.5 *One Man’s Mill* (1987)

In Autumn 1987, Dean Clough entered the national consciousness via *One Man’s Mill*, a film made by Yorkshire Television; and two positive articles published in the Guardian newspaper: “Decaying mills reborn as a model of modern industry” by Peter Hetherington and “Ex-mill owner breaks the mould” by Alexandra Buxton.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

These documents are remarkable because they capture in microcosm developments that were happening across Northern Britain in 1987-8, demonstrating in real time how Mrs Thatcher was managing to shift the ideological terrain of “Labours Northern bastions”, just as S. Hall had predicted she would a couple of months earlier.

Together, they presented Ernest Hall’s redevelopment project as ‘a symbol of self-help and regeneration’⁵¹², ‘amidst the blight of Northern industry’⁵¹³: ‘an environment in which not only would small businesses flourish and expand but a sense of community develop’⁵¹⁴. It was ‘a self-contained industrial community’ - ‘a mix of traditional industry, new technology and craft’⁵¹⁵ – ‘where output [was] creative as well as profitable’⁵¹⁶. Hetherington explained that ‘It [had] an art gallery, an innovation centre [and] a job club’, as well as ‘a range of businesses from computer software to hairdressing and engineering’⁵¹⁷, because, as Ernest Hall told viewers in *One Man’s Mill*:

Creativity in art, creativity in music, creativity in business is all the same thing ... The vision is an environment in which success is available to everyone; and that environment to me must be one where exciting things are happening.⁵¹⁸

And, as Hetherington enthused, this enlightened approach made good business sense, because ‘the rateable value [had] increased tenfold and the complex [had] become hot property without a penny of government or local council support’⁵¹⁹.

Featuring interviews with Lord Young and another Conservative minister – exactly as S. Hall prophesied - the documentary held up Dean Clough as a model for ‘how we

⁵¹² Ernest Hall speaking to camera in *Northern Line: One Man’s Mill*, Yorkshire Television, 1987.

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Alexandra Buxton, “Ex-mill owner breaks the mould”, *The Guardian*, 8 Oct 1987, p. 26.

⁵¹⁵ *Northern Line: One Man’s Mill*, Yorkshire Television, 1987.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ P. Hetherington, “Decaying mills reborn as a model of modern industry”, *The Guardian*, Sep 23, 1987, p. 4.

⁵¹⁸ *Northern Line: One Man’s Mill*, Yorkshire Television, 1987.

⁵¹⁹ P. Hetherington, “Decaying mills...”, p. 4.

can restore the North': it was 'an example to others of a new forward plan for helping the economy, employment and the environment'; considering 'the enormous change in something that would have been derelict three years ago'.⁵²⁰ When Crossley's closed, 'the heart [had been] ripped out of the West Yorkshire town'⁵²¹. 'Now', wrote Hetherington, '[Hall could] survey a transformation, from decaying Victorian colossus to modern industrial village'⁵²². E. Hall said to him: "It may seem incredible but a seemingly insoluble problem has become the symbol of a new enterprise culture"⁵²³.

If Nigel Lawson himself could have constructed an "imagined community" around Thatcherism for the purposes of illustration, it would have been very close in character to Dean Clough as it was presented in *One Man's Mill* and the newspaper articles by Hetherington and Buxton. Ernest Hall featured as "Entrepreneurial Man" in his most perfect and encompassing formation: a boy from a working-class family, who '[had] joined a small weaving company near Halifax in the early 1950s, [risen to become] managing director [and then] expanded into his own business'.⁵²⁴ Having floated his company on the stock market in the mid 1960s, '[he had] gradually diversified into property development to form Mountleigh group, which is now bidding for Terence Conran's Storehouse'⁵²⁵, before purchasing Dean Clough in the early 1980s. By 1987, he was living with his family in a seventeenth century manor house, hung with tapestries, somewhere in the hills above Halifax, where he was filmed by the documentary makers, chatting in the Great Hall and, on horseback, riding around a paddock in tweed cap and jodphurs.

In the film, Conservative ministers hailed Hall as a 'New Victorian', 'an archetypal Victorian entrepreneur', 'very much in [the] mould' of John Crossley 'who formed the wealth of this town' 'three hundred years ago'; and the man himself stated that 'we [had] a tremendous amount to learn from the Victorians'.⁵²⁶ Meanwhile, Buxton

⁵²⁰ *Northern Line: One Man's Mill*, Yorkshire Television, 1987.

⁵²¹ P. Hetherington, "Decaying mills..." (1987), p. 4.

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ *Northern Line: One Man's Mill*, Yorkshire Television, 1987.

spotted in his office strategically placed copies of *Self Help*, an 1859 treatise by Samuel Smiles, the Scottish author and government “reformer” who had promoted thrift and “self-help” as routes out of poverty for working class people. Quoting from Smiles, she advised her readers, ‘there is no reason why the condition of the average workman in this country should not be a useful, honourable, respectable and happy one’ – if only they pulled up their socks and adopted a positive attitude.⁵²⁷

In this drama, small businessman, Mark Wade, who operated a family-run printing service, was assigned the role of “average workman” turned “small businessman”. Wade had spent 21 years working at Dean Clough, moving up from the shop floor to a managerial position, until Crossley’s went bankrupt, when he set up his own company in the former mill complex. As he told Peter Hetherington, he had experienced this transition as liberating:

At the mill, the family directors were always known as “Mr Jonathan” or “Mr Charles” which was indicative of their almost parental relationship with the workforce. Today the old social barriers – working class, middle class – are no longer relevant. People are much more in partnership with their employers.⁵²⁸

The only dissenting voices running through the documents were those of local Labour councillors, who cautioned that Dean Clough was not ‘the only way forward for jobs’ in the area, and made a plea for the ‘role of local government’⁵²⁹. They may have been the ‘few Labour left wingers’ who Peter Hetherington dismissed in his article as ‘instinctively anti-business’⁵³⁰. In any case, their words dissipated into the ether, as Ernest Hall stated with vigour: “We’re moving to a new era of politics – the days of being governed by Whitehall or under the thumb of a council are gone’.⁵³¹ He declared, ‘I believe in the spirit of enterprise’.⁵³²

⁵²⁷ Alexandra Buxton, “Ex-mill owner breaks the mould” (1987), p. 26.

⁵²⁸ P. Hetherington, “Decaying mills...” (1987), p. 4.

⁵²⁹ *Northern Line: One Man’s Mill*, Yorkshire Television, 1987.

⁵³⁰ P. Hetherington, “Decaying mills...” (1987), p. 4.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*

⁵³² *Northern Line: One Man’s Mill*, Yorkshire Television, 1987.

5.6 The North Moves Southwards ('Welcome to the North, Prime Minister'⁵³³).

One Man's Mill and the articles by Hetherington and Buxton depict Dean Clough as an 'imagined community' of northern working class people reconfigured around Thatcherism, wrapped up in dreams of the glory days of Victorian England; and clearly this vision resonated well beyond Thatcher's own natural constituency, because the articles were commissioned by the Guardian newspaper, which then (as now) was the only left-leaning broadsheet newspaper in Britain. Perhaps it is not surprising that the film's rather cosy vision of an artsy-craftsy 'self-contained industrial community'⁵³⁴ should appeal to the sensibilities of liberal, left-leaning middle class and professional people, looking in from the outside, who hadn't really experienced the grind of industry or been affected by de-industrialisation. However, it also struck a chord in the hearts of many working class people operating in and around the old factory complex, who had felt Mrs Thatcher's policies explode like dynamite in the middle of their community, and were living the reality of Dean Clough in that period.

On the surface, this last fact is confusing; but, according to S. Hall, we shouldn't be surprised at the apparent contradiction. As he said in *Gramsci and Us* (1987)

We are all perplexed by the contradictory nature of Thatcherism. In our intellectual way, we think that the world will collapse as the result of a logical contradiction: this is the illusion of the intellectual –that ideology must be coherent, every bit of it fitting together, like a philosophical investigation. When, in fact, the whole purpose of what Gramsci called an organic (i.e, historically effective) ideology is that it articulates into a configuration different subjects, different identities, different projects, different aspirations.⁵³⁵

Hall was explaining that for any ideology to be effective in creating a majority for any one political party in the endemically unequal democratic societies of late Capitalism,

⁵³³ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁵³⁴ *Northern Line: One Man's Mill*, Yorkshire Television, 1987.

⁵³⁵ S. Hall, "Gramsci and Us", *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p.19.

it must create an “imagined community” around the hopes and aspirations of people whose material and other interests are actually very different or even opposite to one another’s. In other words, it must construct ‘a ‘unity’ out of difference’⁵³⁶; and that is essentially a contradictory endeavour.

In 1987, very few people in Halifax would have supported Mrs Thatcher politically. Indeed, As Vic Allen told me:

if you talk to Doug Binder [or any of the other artists] they would all assume that not one of them would vote Tory. Anti-Thatcher feeling was just of the time. Everyone was aware of having been dumped on and the regions were aware of having been abandoned by London, which was chasing after the financial sector and showing not only disregard but contempt, and in terms of the miners’ strike, aggressive contempt, for... the working classes.⁵³⁷

Nor were they overly idealistic about Ernest Hall’s intentions: they realised that he was first and foremost a businessmen, who had come to Halifax to make money, a fact that Jeremy Hall reiterated when I spoke to him more recently. Indeed, as Vic told me:

Ernest Hall, history will lay him down as a great man with a vision. That's not necessarily how it seemed at the time. He was seen by some as a bit of a carpet bagger.⁵³⁸

So, it wasn’t that everyone on site bought wholesale into the picture of Dean Clough presented in the film and articles wholesale. On the contrary, according to Vic, they recognised it for what it was, a ‘good story’⁵³⁹, for which Hall was a good front man (one small business resident, speaking to camera in *One Man’s Mill*, described him as a “good talker”) who was happy to ham it up for the cameras in order to promote his project. Vic said:

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Vic Allen, interviewed by the author, 2 February 2017.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

At that point there was a real hunger for good stories from the North and when Ernest started putting the arts into the place, it was such a good story. We got all sorts of stories about this arts paradise and so forth [even though] the actual resources for the arts were very small and very minor at that time.⁵⁴⁰

However, after years of regional depression, the working people of Halifax also appreciated that stories might be necessary because, as Ernest Hall himself said, ‘if we want to make improvements in the North, then we have to pretend things are better than they are and then people feel better’.⁵⁴¹

The thing that made the story being told here particularly powerful was that it worked on what S. Hall calls ‘the ground of already constituted social practices and lived ideologies’⁵⁴², mapping onto an “idea of the North” that many people on site – and Paul in particular – were already carrying around inside of them. It was ‘a place of the mind’⁵⁴³, where working class people could operate freely beyond the control of the dominant “southern” culture to which they had been harnessed for centuries; and the “working class subject” – epitomised by super-entrepreneur Ernest Hall, but replicated also in the “entrepreneurial” independent businessmen who clustered around him – was situated as a powerful figure, right at the centre of things.

It’s true that Ernest Hall supported Margaret Thatcher when nobody else did, but that wasn’t everything; because, as Vic explained, ‘there was [also] a very strong sense of political resistance to London’, and ‘a sense that if you were in an out of the way place, then don't look to the centre, the trick is to become your own place’.⁵⁴⁴ In 1987, Hall’s project was generating excitement and energy in a depressed part of West Yorkshire, which otherwise felt abandoned by mainstream politics; and, in this

⁵⁴⁰ Vic Allen, interviewed by the author, 2 February 2017.

⁵⁴¹ Ernest Hall speaking to camera in *Signals: Making It Happen*, Channel 4, 5 October 1988. Video tape recording held at the British Film Institute National Archive, London, transcribed by S. Raikes on 4 May 2017.

⁵⁴² S. Hall, “The Great Moving Right Show”, *Marxism Today*, January 1979, p.20.

⁵⁴³ S. Hall, “The Great Moving Nowhere Show”, *Marxism Today*, Nov/Dec 1998, p.13.

⁵⁴⁴ Vic Allen, interviewed by the author, 2 February 2017.

respect, everyone could buy into what he was doing. To make yourself feel easier, you could argue - as Paul did when speaking to me - that 'Ernest was apolitical. He was just interested in putting Dean Clough on the map'⁵⁴⁵. What's more, according to Vic, there was 'something political', 'about putting two fingers up at London'⁵⁴⁶ by making things happen in Halifax at the end of a deep recession.

In Spring 1988, Mrs Thatcher joined her government's battle for hearts and minds in the North of England, leading the charge by visiting Manchester to deliver a speech at Salford University, where she was pelted with eggs by demonstrating students⁵⁴⁷. During that trip, she had broken her journey at Dean Clough, which must have appeared as a safe haven - a fortress of Thatcherism - in otherwise hostile ideological territory. A month or so later, she gave an address to the party faithful in Pavilion Gardens, Buxton, where she lauded Ernest Hall's redevelopment as 'a remarkable example of business enterprise'.⁵⁴⁸ Waxing lyrical, she said:

When the old Victorian Crossley Carpet Mill which dominates the centre of the town closed in 1982 it seemed like the end of an era. In a sense it was. Those very same buildings are now alive again with activity and enterprise under the leadership of an outstanding entrepreneur, Ernest Hall. Dean Clough, as it is now called, now has some 1,700 people working in it, virtually all of them in new small businesses.⁵⁴⁹

What's more, as she explained, this new model army of small business people – 'our new shareholders, our new home owners, our new capitalists' – were not just 'more comfortable, more prosperous or more secure' than before. They were also 'more independent', and that was the crucial thing for everyone.

⁵⁴⁵ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁵⁴⁶ Vic Allen, interviewed by the author, 2 February 2017.

⁵⁴⁷ "Journey of a cut - how Salford University took the pain", *BBC News: Magazine*. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/8545982.stm>. Retrieved 5 November 2019.

⁵⁴⁸ Margaret Thatcher, in speech to the Conservative Central Council, 19 March 1988. <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107200>. Retrieved 10 September 2019.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

When Mrs Thatcher came to Dean Clough, most of the artists on site (and I am sure many of the small business people) were horrified, but E. Hall was keen to introduce the Prime Minister to the art side of his enterprise. According to Doug Binder:

Ernest said we've got Margaret coming this afternoon, and... I said, "I'm not meeting her". He sort of grabbed me by the lapels and said, "you will meet her", jokingly, semi-jokingly. I said "I won't, I'm sorry"... [Myself and other artists] went across to the pub and made all sorts of rude signs to her as she passed by in the car. She wouldn't have been able to see us. We weren't supporting the government at that time. Ernest was. He'd support any government that was in really.⁵⁵⁰

Of all the artists, it was Paul who agreed to meet the prime minister. As he recalled:

No one wanted to see her, but I said "sure". Chris wouldn't meet her. He asked – "why are you going to meet her with your politics?". I said, "I would have liked to meet Pol Pot or Hitler". I will never forget that she came up. She put her hand out and I shook it. "Welcome to the North, Prime Minister".⁵⁵¹

When you think of Paul – who had been setting himself on fire in the Piece Hall six months earlier and railing against the police in a picket line two years before that - lining up in Doug's gallery to greet Mrs Thatcher (he said, 'there was Thatcher, me, Ernest and the whole British Press Corp'), it becomes clear that the balance was shifting, and "the North" was beginning its symbolic journey "Southwards".

5.7 'Things Turned Around'⁵⁵²

In 1987-8, Paul vacated the firey world of Babel Theatre which he and the other artists had inhabited in A Mill both conceptually and physically. First, he shifted his

⁵⁵⁰ Doug Binder, interviewed by the author, 27 February 2017.

⁵⁵¹ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁵⁵² David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

art practice from Grotowski-based performance towards installation (creating environments which he would fabricate on the exhibition site, so he didn't necessarily need a large making or rehearsal space). Then, he moved his operations entirely into The House, where he continued to fire off funding applications and plan future projects, under the banner of Babel Administration.

David described the process of change/transition as follows:

We were hosting things, we were based in Crossley's Carpets. I was part of Babel for a while. I can remember being buried up to my waste in some derelict bit of ground somewhere and being asked or told to suck pebbles.⁵⁵³ [...] I remember sucking pebbles. I remember Paul setting fire to himself in the Piece Hall, by accident during a performance. I remember being on the top floor of A Mill without any electricity or heating or anything [...] The theatre side, the performance side for me is fascinating and I'm fascinated in the relationships that actually forged for us, that reached out to other places and people [...] But slowly that aspect of it turned around [...] It was like, a feeling of abandoning the theatrical. There was this kind of element that was under criticism... I'd become much more interested in objects. I think maybe Paul had exhausted performance as well.⁵⁵⁴

David and Paul experienced this transition as something that was happening inside of them, of their own volition and in their own interests. However, it was actually affecting the entire world of performance, as the forces of Thatcherism laid siege to the North of England, where (as Malcolm Dickson said) that world was conceptually headquartered. Through the late 1980s, performance art as a whole became at once less oppositional and more administrative; more sculptural and less performative (or it was siphoned off into a theatrical silo, which is what happened to IOU in this period, for example). By 1984, The Basement Group had folded, so Projects UK had already lost its own creative aspect. However, from 1987/8 it started to focus more on facilitating site-specific installation and less on time-based and action work. Artist

⁵⁵³ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁵⁵⁴ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017.

Richard Grayson - who was a founder member of the Basement Group and Projects UK and has drafted a short history of both organisations – argues that Projects poured its performativity into administration (much like Paul did with Babel). As he explains,

the development and production of work was itself an act - performative and durational, with the site cast almost as mise-en-scene. The collaboration between organisation and artist was in this context itself an 'action'.⁵⁵⁵

Both Grayson and Simon Herbert, co-director of Projects UK (1985 – 1992), have attempted to place what was happening in their own lives and organisations within a wider political and economic context. According to the former, ‘any potentiality the 'alternative' might have had seemed increasingly to be denied by events in the world’⁵⁵⁶, including Margaret Thatcher’s three successive election victories, her defeat of the miners, and the moral collapse of the Soviet Union (particularly from 1986 onwards, after Chernobyl), which ‘undermined some of the deeper held assumptions of 'avant-garde' practice; [because] not only was the existence of an alternative system to that of late capitalism problematised, but so was its desirability’⁵⁵⁷. At the same time, as Simon Herbert tells us, it was becoming increasingly clear that performance itself – which as Grayson said, saw itself as ‘de facto radical or engaged’ – had never been immune from late capitalist incursions.

For instance, in Spring 1987, *Performance Magazine* – considered by its readers as one of the last editorial bastions of oppositional practice – had featured on its front cover a portrait of London uber-dealer, Anthony D’Offay under the by-line, “Beuys’s Line to Bond Street”⁵⁵⁸. Inside, D’Offay himself discussed his investment in ‘artists as much known for their live and experimental work as for a traditional contemporary art production’⁵⁵⁹ including Bruce Mclean, Gilbert & George and, of course, Joseph

⁵⁵⁵ Richard Grayson, *A History of The Basement Group to Locus+*, 2006. <http://www.richardgrayson.co.uk/texts/TWNHWYEssay.html>, n.p. Retrieved 20 November 2018.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ *Performance Magazine*, March/April 1987, No. 46.

⁵⁵⁹ Anthony D’Offay in conversation with Gray Watson, “Beuys’ Line to Bond Street, *Performance Magazine*, March/April 1987, No. 46, p.10.

Beuys – whose radical teachings and practice had served as a lode star for the Northern performance scene through the 1980s. What’s more, Beuys involvement with the commercial art world wasn’t a new thing: he had been selling his work for large sums of money for many years and showing at the D’Offay gallery since 1980, because as the dealer explained, ‘Beuys was always making sculpture here and doing other things, showing other things’⁵⁶⁰, which were eminently marketable. As Simon Herbert noted:

It was perhaps uncomfortable for some to realise that the links between the commercial world and the cutting edge were more comprehensive and fundamental than some romantics would have liked. This pattern in many ways prefigured a prophesy made flesh and formaldehyde in the [later] phenomena of the yBa.⁵⁶¹

In this context, as Richard Grayson tells us: ‘having been ‘oppositional’ for so long and seen no shift either in the social or aesthetic fabric’, ‘live art’ and performance-based practices ... were succumbing to exhaustion’.⁵⁶² However, it wasn’t just that people in the performance world were losing their radical zeal and belief from the inside, but that they were being actively steered in a new direction by the hand of government.

Through the 1970s performance artists had operated mostly outside the established art world, presenting in artist-run spaces, fringe theatres, student halls and public spaces (via street theatre); and occasionally, in more esoteric manifestations, in contemporary art places, such as the ICA, London; whilst surviving sketchily on the dole, pockets of teaching and other engagements, boosted by small sums of public money if they were lucky. From 1985, they were increasingly hooked into the mainstream, as Herbert has documented, by two Arts Council initiatives: ‘the Franchise Promoters Scheme’⁵⁶³ ... (a scheme to enable a variety of regionally-based

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., p.11.

⁵⁶¹ Simon Herbert, “Performance Magazine”, *Variant*, Issue 6. Autumn 1998. https://www.variant.org.uk/6texts/sup_Herbert.html. Retrieved 6 June 2019.

⁵⁶² Richard Grayson, *A History of The Basement Group to Locus+*, 2006.

⁵⁶³ The Franchise Promoters scheme was introduced in 1985.

promoters to commission performance works under a national, monitored initiative)'; and 'the parallel "Glory of the Garden" scheme⁵⁶⁴ (in which funds were made available for municipal institutions)'⁵⁶⁵. Whilst the franchise scheme systematised performance networks, the "Glory" policy routed them through local authority galleries, which had been better known previously for their historic collections of painting and sculpture; and, according to Rob La Frenais, Editor of *Performance Magazine*, both were backed with 'REAL money'.⁵⁶⁶ In Spring 1987, LeFrenais reported that:

Yorkshire Arts [had] doubled their funding...to a total of £6,500.....Top of the form [came] Northern Arts with a staggering £30,000 and it all [went] to John Bewley and Simon Herbert at Projects UK...The amounts may sound piddling to some, but it's an improvement on nothing.⁵⁶⁷

The Glory and Franchise schemes operated nationally, but their effects were concentrated in the North of England, which had long been a hotbed of performance practice. According to Le Frenais in "Look North", an article published in the May/June 1987 edition of *Performance Magazine*:

the presentation of a major season of new experimental work in Newcastle, Bradford and Manchester [was] symptomatic of a discernible increase in performance art initiatives in the North. In the last eighteen months or so new spaces and promoters have sprung up in Halifax, Sheffield, Loughborough, Glasgow, Liverpool, Wolverhampton, Stoke-on-Trent and Huddersfield, whilst London and the South can only boast a handful of new promoters and a

⁵⁶⁴ *Glory Of the Garden* was a report published by the Arts Council in 1984, claiming inequitable funding between London and the regions. It resulted in some award schemes and their allocations being devolved to regional bodies.

⁵⁶⁵ Simon Herbert, "Performance Magazine", Variant 6 Autumn 1998.

⁵⁶⁶ Rob La Frenais, "Performance Support Slowly Spreading", *Performance Magazine*, March/April 1987, p.35

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

renewed interest in performance on the part of established spaces such as the ICA, Riverside and The place.⁵⁶⁸

Meanwhile, as Tracy Warr, the Arts Council's Performance Art Officer noted in her report for the 1985 to 1987 period:

with the encouragement offered by the development funding for contemporary art by the Arts Council's Glory of the Garden scheme, many municipal galleries including the Laing in Newcastle, Cartwright Hall in Bradford and Southampton, Wolverhampton, Stoke on Trent and Manchester City Art Galleries.⁵⁶⁹

Amongst 'new spaces and alternative sites for the promotion of the work', Warr singled out for special mention 'Babel's space in the Dean Clough Industrial Estate in Halifax'⁵⁷⁰.

In terms of the content of the work that it was supporting, the "Glory" initiative inevitably knocked off any extreme edges, for health and safety reasons as much as anything. Indeed, according to Herbert, until the curators and gallery managers got wise to what might happen:

many city galleries unused to presenting the work of any living artist outside of the annual rote of watercolour opens would find themselves enlisting the aid of health and safety officials to pour cold water on the aspirations of nudey confrontational performance artists brandishing buckets of ammonia under the unexpectant noses of the casual gallery visitor.⁵⁷¹

Even at the time, performance people, including Yorkshire-based artist, Roland Miller worried that 'the current revival of interest in performance is coming from inside

⁵⁶⁸ Rob La Frenais, "Look North", *Performance Magazine*, May/June 1987, No 47, p.26.

⁵⁶⁹ Tracy Warr, Gray Watson, Jenni Walwin, *Live Art Now*, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1987, p. 3-4.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁷¹ Simon Herbert, "Performance Magazine", Variant 6 Autumn 1998.

galleries ... instead of from the ‘Revolutionaries’ in the streets’. In an article published in the May/June 1987 edition of *Performance Magazine*, he asked, ‘Is this a case of Marcusean ‘repressive tolerance’ brandished by the Arts Council, like a bunch of roses from its Glorious Garden?’⁵⁷².

The effects of the franchise scheme – or Performers Art Promoters Scheme (PAP), as it was otherwise known – were less striking, but more insidious, because it created effectively a new network of performance hubs - superimposed over older, perhaps more organic and ad-hoc systems - which was directly accountable to the government. Writing in *Variant* (Winter/Spring 1988), Miller described PAP as ‘a very eighties thing’, because:

it relie[d] on the existence of quasi-autonomous non-statutory agencies. Like the public art agencies that have also sprung up recently, these promoters are often small concerns, dominated by one or two individuals. They receive[d] funding directly from the Arts Council and/or Regional Art Association sources.⁵⁷³

On the surface, as LeFrenais and Warr both noted, the scheme increased performance activity in the North of England (or at least its official manifestations). However, it also harnessed that work to the government’s economic agenda, which was increasingly focused on urban regeneration. Already through the 1980s, as Miller noted in his *Variant* article, a host of ‘public art agencies’ - including PADT (London, 1983), Artangel (London, 1985), Art in Partnership, Edinburgh, (1986) and Public Arts, Wakefield (Wakefield, 1986) for example – had sprung up, with Arts Council funding, to commission new work, including permanent or semi-permanent sculptural installations for outdoor sites often in run-down ‘inner cities’. Of course these agencies had their own agendas and generated a number of significant art works. However, in attracting to “depressed areas” new visitors and positive press attention; and (it was hoped) new commercial interest, their operations also dovetailed with the priorities of a government that valued art primarily as a spur for economic activity.

⁵⁷² R. Miller, “Freedom”, *Performance Magazine*, (May/June 1987), No.47, p. 36.

⁵⁷³ Roland Miller, ‘Performance Art from the 70s to 80s’, *Variant*, Issue 4. Winter/Spring 1988. p.11.

From the late 1980s, Projects UK in particular - and the performance world more generally - was drawn into this field of activity, of which the touring exhibitions *TSWA 3D* (1987) and *Edge* (1988) are key examples. The former, organised by administrator, Jonathan Harvey (who had started as a performance artist, and set up Acme Gallery, London in 1976) and curator, James Lingwood, in collaboration with Projects UK, was an exhibition of artwork commissioned for particularly notable and challenging sites throughout Britain & Northern Ireland, including Newcastle, Derry, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The latter, directed by Rob La Frenais (formerly Editor of *Performance Magazine*) with John Bewley of Projects UK, was billed as ‘an international festival of site-specific and performance-based art’, focused on ‘the small, geographically defined limits of the Clerkenwell area of inner London’⁵⁷⁴, which was then still full of empty buildings. Having been vacated by engineering, printing, publishing, meat and various other trades in the post-war period, they would shortly afterwards be redeveloped as loft-style apartments.

In 1987/8, Paul became part of the same trajectory when he planned and executed his own touring venture, *The Drop*, supported by a major grant from the Arts Council. According to the open call for submissions placed by Paul in *Art Monthly*, it invited artists to submit proposals for a new work, based on the idea that ‘Cargo crates [would] appear in the form of an imaginary air-drop in several U.K. cities... [supplying] provisions and materials essential to the well-being, survival and regeneration of an area, or a country, that is in need’.⁵⁷⁵ Through 1988, crates popped up in Halifax, Dundee, Gateshead and Londonderry, designed by the selected artists, including Alastair Maclennan, Andrew Darke, Peter Baren, Steve Carrick and Cornelia Parker. Steve, who had recently graduated from Leeds College of Art when he was invited by Paul to design the Halifax leg of the exhibition (and joined Paul’s unit at Dean Clough shortly afterwards), told me:

It was about this idea of what would it be like if England or Yorkshire required some sort of air drop to help them survive. I entered it and I got into

⁵⁷⁴ Chrissie Illes, “Introduction”, *Performance Magazine*, No.55 (Edge 88: Special Edition), January 1988, p.7.

⁵⁷⁵ Call for submissions in *Art Monthly*, No. 111, November 1988, p.18.

it... There were these great cranes with parachutes and it was as if they appeared overnight. I had this idea of what do people really need - work, warmth and direction. So I got these spades which had heating rings attached to them and a compass, that were just placed around the cranes in some way. They symbolised the idea of movement and digging and keeping yourself warm. ... [Andrew Darke] did a piece that was almost an ecological bomb. It was a great big box full of seeds of different plants, and if you spread it, it would make a forest.⁵⁷⁶

Paul told me, 'My favourite was the elk on heat, an audio work [by Alastair MacLennan] that just emerged from the crate at night. It was quite nice to see the citizens of Dundee waking up to this'.⁵⁷⁷

From the perspective of the artist organisers, *TSWA 3D* (1987), *Edge* (1988) and *The Drop* (1988) were all "Beuysian" projects, focusing – as Lingwood put it – on places in post-industrial towns and cities which 'were 'already meaningful, already alive with the associations of history (cultural, industrial and political) and memory' that artists could 'activate and make anew' through their activities.⁵⁷⁸ However, they had also been generously funded by the Arts Council for a different purpose, which was to 'transform the image of depressed areas as a means of attracting new industries'⁵⁷⁹. These goals may sound very similar –and it is certainly easy to mistake one for the other - but they were actually very different. Both were concerned with "regeneration", but the first was about unlocking the latent creative energies –"forces beneath the surface" –in rough, gritty, textured working class places, that existed far from the centres of cultural power, and channelling those forces out into the world; and the second about unlocking the economic potential of post-industrial places, and funnelling that wealth outwards, mostly to businesses coming in from the outside, in the hope that some of it would trickle down to local people, who would themselves start a raft of new enterprises. In the former scenario, the working class artist

⁵⁷⁶ Steve Carrick, interviewed by the author, 30 June 2017.

⁵⁷⁷ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁵⁷⁸ James Lingwood, "Introduction" in *TSWA 3D* (TSWA, 1987), p.5.

⁵⁷⁹ John Davidson, *An Urban Renaissance: A special report by John Davidson*, *Sunday Times*, Arts Council, Annual Report, 1987/8, p.28.

(embedded in all of us) is projected as a powerful “subject”, in the latter it is the “entrepreneur” or businessman.

Looking back now, thirty and more years further into the social, economic and political cycle that Thatcherism started, the Beuysian idea seems faintly ridiculous, or at least impossibly idealistic. As Steve Carrick told me: [At the time], I was really pleased to be in *The Drop*. Wow all these big names. Now I think [my work] was a bit crap really, a bit too Beuys, but anyway⁵⁸⁰. Whilst Paul still cites Beuys as one of his heroes, he quickly understood in the late 1980s that one type of “regeneration” had been replaced with another: the “magician” artist was dead (literally and metaphorically); and the only way to be powerful and independent as a creative practitioner was to go into business. As he explained at the HMS symposium,

Importantly you have to remember the 1980s. It was not a great time to live. The music was good, remember we all started to dress in bin bags in those days. But we were coming out of recession, a horrible Thatcherite recession, you know waste was piled up on the streets of Liverpool and all this kind of stuff, and there was the actual...the real Orgreave took place, not the one that was manifested in the Venice Biennale a few years ago. And me and my colleagues were very instrumental in Orgreave, and that was a very life enhancing experience I have to say. So it wasn't such a good time. And then when these sparks of regeneration appeared, god we were so lucky. It was a fluke. But because we had been so poor, and had sorted ourselves out, we were able to equip ourselves, we were able to read situations very, very quickly and adapt to regeneration, which a lot of artists have done in the past and still do. So regeneration is a very key element in the Studio.⁵⁸¹

Shaun Pickard, who had a studio at Dean Clough and worked with Paul, Chris and David at the Henry Moore Studio from 1988 onwards, remembers:

⁵⁸⁰ Steve Carrick, interviewed by the author, 30 June 2017.

⁵⁸¹ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

When I was at university, there was still this ethos that you should go and starve in a garret. To be a real artist - you aren't going to get anywhere for a long time, just go and bury yourself, make art, be on the dole, be poor, and you'll earn your spurs. That was the idea when I left in 1982. Not long after that there was that whole YBA thing and young artists were supposed to be successful. But it was also about being business minded. There was that turn and I was very aware that that was happening.⁵⁸²

In an art sense, Paul had always been entrepreneurial – he had to have been to set up Babel Theatre from nothing and run it successfully, touring with his company through Britain and Europe. According to Chris,

He's an incredible administrator. He's incredible at logistics. He also creates strategies for the future. He always has done. For one year, two years in advance, always thinking in advance in time. He's always thinking where he can go from there.⁵⁸³

However, through the late 1980s, when 'he was getting a lot of funding, Arts Council funding, for performance work', 'he became more business-minded'⁵⁸⁴. As Chris said:

He started as a performance artist, then he went into business. He was a businessman.⁵⁸⁵

5.8 'An Enterprising Art Culture'⁵⁸⁶

From the late 1970s onwards, Paul had - of necessity - generated income from a range of different sources. In the early days, when Babel was based in Holmfirth, then Keighley - and at Dean Clough (for the first year or so) - he had obtained relatively small sums of public money directly from local sources, including the Yorkshire Arts

⁵⁸² Shaun Pickard, interviewed by the author, 9 February 2017.

⁵⁸³ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁵⁸⁴ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 27 November 2018.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁶ Chris Sacker in conversation with David Wilkinson, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

Association (which funnelled money from PAP), West Yorkshire Council Council and Kirklees and Calderdale Councils (when the local authority map was reconfigured), which he used to supplement the income he and the other members of Babel Theatre could earn from teaching and training activities.

However, in 1987-8, as he told me, ‘there was a cusp’⁵⁸⁷. Firstly, ‘it started to become easier to get new money – Dean Clough, Ernest Hall, Arts Council - than getting old money [by which he meant local sources of state sponsorship]’⁵⁸⁸. And then more money started to become available. So, as Paul said, ‘it’s like, you still had the austerity from the miners’ strike period, but you also had the yuppiedom coming in’⁵⁸⁹.

Certainly, he paid for Bruce Mclean’s *Work for Nine Rooms* (Dean Clough, October 1987) out of his own pocket. As he told me: ‘Bruce came up with his Slade students. Twenty of them stayed in my house in Thornton in Bradford. My wife, Susan wasn’t too happy’⁵⁹⁰. However, for *The Drop* (1988), which he was planning in the same period, he obtained from the Arts Council a grant of £10,000, one of the largest amounts awarded for an exhibition in the 1987/8 spending round.⁵⁹¹

Around the same time, on the back of his activities with Babel Administration, Paul applied for the role and was appointed as part-time administrator for *New Contemporaries*, the major exhibition for young artists in Britain. Established as *Young Contemporaries* in the post-World War II period, the show had been operating in a student-led format since the mid-1970s, funded entirely by the Arts Council; until 1986, when this model collapsed for lack of money and the exhibition had gone into abeyance. It was re-launched in December 1989, as *British Telecom New Contemporaries* - under the direction of art critic, Richard Shone, assisted by Paul - opening at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) and passing through Dean Clough, Halifax in April/May 1990. As Paul explained at the ICA New

⁵⁸⁷ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁹¹ *Arts Council: 43rd Annual Report and Accounts* (Arts Council of Great Britain, 1988), p. 74.

Contemporaries gallery *Open Debate* (January 1990), British Telecom had contacted him to offer a sponsorship package, pledging £25,000 in the first year and £56,000 in the second, as well as six cash awards for selected artists. Paul joked with the audience: ‘I was like a kid in a chocolate factory’.⁵⁹²

A few months earlier, Paul had been approached by British Airways:

I was in Paris and I got a phone call from my wife, and she said are you passing through London on your way back? British Airways want to see you. It’s something about cultural sponsorship. I went into this meeting with British Airways cultural sponsorship advisors, basically sports consultants. ... They said what’s your fee? I said £250 per day plus expenses. It’s like – “bank”... This was in 1988... [I said] “Let’s do a competition for new artists. You give a prize of £10,000 for the winner”. They said we can give flights as well. We did that and showed it at the London Contemporary Art Fair [The 4th International Contemporary Art Fair, London Olympia, 20 March – 2 April 1989]. It was a totally commercial venture. But it was important for the artists. They were all young artists and we had something like 300 or 400 applications. We showed five of them and every one sold. I was like a gallery dealer. The first person who bought a piece was Timothy Dalton. He was James Bond at the time.⁵⁹³

He explained: ‘[That’s] how the art world worked then. British Telecom came to us. That’s because of what I’d done with British Airways – British Telecom must have heard about it. They asked me to go and see them.’⁵⁹⁴ Curator, James Hamilton, who from 1984 had been running St Paul’s Gallery in Leeds on a shoestring budget provided by the Regional Art Association, experienced a similar phenomenon He said:

We got thousands out of Rank Xerox [for ‘Tradition and Innovation in Printmaking’, 1986-7], thousands out of Deloitte [for ‘New Art in Yorkshire’,

⁵⁹² Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁵⁹³ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

1987]. People did, they handed money out [then]... British Rail was hugely generous [in terms of the Holbeck Triangle project]. And Ernest Hall, who was one of the Trustees of the Holbeck Triangle Trust, got money [for Antony Gormley's Brick Man proposal, 1986-7]. We never saw the money because the whole thing evaporated [when Leeds City Council rejected Gormley's proposal], but [Ernest] got a Yorkshire millionaire businessman to pledge enough money to build it. It was extraordinary.⁵⁹⁵

As Paul expanded his portfolio of external projects, primed with business money, he drew his fellow artists into these more commercial activities, just as he had with his earlier ventures. As Chris explained:

What was happening - it was becoming an enterprising art culture. Paul was creating that. He promoted an ethos of supporting young artists not to work in a vacuum. To make money, to support themselves through their skills and talents, to be able to then make their own work and to function as artists. We would explore the many derelict mill buildings in Dean Clough to find enigmatic and spectacular spaces in which to facilitate performances and projects that he was running. For instance, Stuart Brisley's Cenotaph Project. And Bruce Mclean's a Work for Nine Rooms. Drawing on the Dean Clough Gallery facilities for the New Contemporaries and British Airways Prize competitions... All these activities, working alongside Paul and David, supplementing my part-time teaching income – because I had a family to feed and whatever.⁵⁹⁶

Steve Carrick, who joined Paul's group around this time, also remembers:

He got us all involved in putting exhibitions up and driving the trucks which was hilarious, driving all over Britain with things... There was me and Dave and there was Fiona Durdey... She was a really good truck driver, she could

⁵⁹⁵ James Hamilton, interviewed by the author, 30 May 2017.

⁵⁹⁶ Chris Sacker in conversation with David Wilkinson, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

absolutely nail it [...] It was good, because it actually gave you a bit of money.⁵⁹⁷

When the *New Contemporaries* exhibition (1989/90), administered by Paul, opened in December 1989, it featured work by Damien Hirst and Abigail Lane, both *Freeze* alumni, who had graduated from Goldsmiths that summer. It was the first public exhibition of Hirst's *Medicine Cabinets*, including *Holidays* (1989) and *No Feelings* (1989), which were bought straight from the show by art collector Charles Saatchi. At the *Open Debate*⁵⁹⁸, chaired by Iwona Blazwick (b.1955, Director of Exhibitions, ICA), with co-selectors, Nicholas Logsdail (b. 1945, Director, Lisson Gallery) and Jon Thompson (1936 – 2016, artist and teacher, then just retired from Goldsmiths), and Paul in attendance, there was much discussion of the changing art world; and something of a generational split emerged between the interlocutors with John Thompson and Nicholas Logsdail on one side and Iwona Blazwick on the other. Thompson expressed particular anxiety about what Blazwick called 'the increasing pressure [for young artists] to deal with the market place'. Logsdail told the audience that the established, older artists, including Tony Cragg and Anish Kapoor, for example, that he represented at the Lisson 'are not thinking about selling, but about their work' - which is somewhat ironic given that he was selling their work at the time for very substantial sums of money. He said, 'To my mind, for art to retain its integrity it is necessary to have spiritual meaning. Otherwise it will involve a new breed of artist who is totally commercially minded'. Blazwick (ten years younger than Logsdail) reported that she had received complaints about the exhibition being 'too polished, too professional, too market orientated, too conceptual, too sub-zero', but she regarded these developments more positively than her fellow panellists, detecting a shift in the work, 'compared to the early 1980s, to looking at consumerism and its ideologies in a new way'. She said, 'after 10 years of critical, ironic, cynical distance...[I feel] optimism coming out'.

⁵⁹⁷ Steve Carrick interviewed by the author, 30 June 2017.

⁵⁹⁸ *British Telecom New Contemporaries: Open Debate*, British Library Sound Archive. Shelf No. C95/534. Transcribed by S.Raikes, 7 March 2019.

At exactly the same moment and a little earlier, similar debates had been playing out amongst the older and younger artists at Dean Clough, Halifax. As Shaun Pickard remembers:

There were two camps... there was Chris, there was Paul and the Henry Moore thing that was emerging and [then] Doug Binder, and a couple of sculptors and a print maker...I got a studio at Dean Clough via Doug [in 1988], but quite quickly got to realise that there was this other, cooler group of people. Looking back, it was quite exciting becoming part of that group... we used to go to the café and [later, after the Henry Moore Studio had opened] the trendy wine bar. The older guys, they went down the pub. If you wanted to find them, that's where they'd be.⁵⁹⁹

Binder had been the first to establish a gallery at Dean Clough in corridors around D Mill; and, when Paul swept in, establishing his own programme in E Mill; and calling himself “Curator”, he ruffled quite a few feathers. What's more, for the older artists, his “entrepreneurial” approach was anathema. One described him as: ‘the most frightening man I've ever met in my life’. Another told me,

It was an awful period when he was here. He'd got his own gang, he assembled his own gang – they were nice lads you know, but they were under his thumb all the time... I don't know what he might say – he'd call us a bunch of amateurs. You know. Which doesn't really offend me all that much, because an amateur loves something. He was in it for the career. The money, the career, the power.⁶⁰⁰

However, for the younger artists gathering around Paul, his ‘professional’ approach, and his energy and drive, was exciting – or ‘a breath of fresh air’, as Chris put. As Steve Carrick told me:

⁵⁹⁹ Shaun Pickard, interviewed by the author, 9 February 2017.

⁶⁰⁰ Interview, anonymised.

The 1980s was a quite a dry time in terms of your opportunities. After I came out of Leeds College of Art in 1986, there was the show you talked about – *New Art in Yorkshire* [St Pauls Gallery, 1987] – which was great, it was a really good way of getting some stuff to be shown. But apart from that there weren't many opportunities... The ambition was that maybe one day you might get a show somewhere, but the whole professionalism [thing] wasn't really there. It wasn't really available. Paul Bradley was very energetic and really trying to get stuff done... [He] was an incredible force... somebody who could walk into a room and no matter who was there could feel totally at ease and as comfortable as anybody. He had a real sense of his own persona. He didn't take prisoners... I'm aware that some people might have found him quite abrasive at times, quite hard to deal with maybe. [But] he was just very straight forward. He knew what he wanted and he went out and got it.⁶⁰¹

According to Pickard:

Paul introduced me to lots of things and he had a great excitement about him... If you were susceptible to Paul and to his enthusiasms, you could be swept up and he was generous enough to include you in [whatever he was doing]. Because he couldn't do it by himself, he needed help. [...] Paul used to say – I've found this thing, [and] you'd go - ooh what, really?... I think he used to have a nose for exciting things. I imagine that he used to look very hard at things, and identify avenues that were exciting to go down and that weren't mined by other people. There was a great excitement about the things we might want to do... I remember being really, really excited.⁶⁰²

5.9 'New Contemporaries'⁶⁰³ in Action: Young Artists in the Late 1980s.

As Paul's business life burgeoned in late 1987, the art scene he had created around him at Dean Clough fell somewhat into abeyance: because Babel Theatre had folded

⁶⁰¹ Steve Carrick interviewed by the author, 30 June 2017.

⁶⁰² Shaun Pickard, interviewed by the author, 9 February 2017.

⁶⁰³ Quotation taken from the title of the exhibition, *New Contemporaries* (1989/90).

and Paul himself was focusing on his *New Contemporaries* brief, ‘in an art way, nothing was really happening. It was just a group of fair to decent artists doing their own shit’⁶⁰⁴. He remembers:

So we were all together and I often moaned about the art world, I don’t do it so much these days because it’s less important to me. My fellow artists told me to stop moaning and to do something as they still do today. So we had this idea about opening the studios at Dean Clough to other artists.⁶⁰⁵

Early in 1988, with Ernest Hall’s blessing, Paul took over a large, top lit room on ground floor of E Mill, and established there a “studio space”, in which to produce work for other people. Like all the other empty areas of the mill, it was thick with dirt and bird muck; and he and the other artists spent a month or so cleaning the shell to make it look more respectable. John Newling, who had been Wilkinson’s tutor at Nottingham Polytechnic, came up to see work in progress. He remembers:

Paul showed me his “studio space”, I think he called it. Which was bigger than my house. Huge. They’d been cleaning it up, basically shovelling pigeon shit off it [...] It was dark and dirty, but I found it very exciting. I knew this bunch of people... and I respected them immensely. [But] working with artists can be like herding cats. I thought - they'll never get anything done. How wrong I was... Paul struck me as being very able to get stuff done. Very entrepreneurial... I got to know him fairly well and he’s got a big heart and was very knowledgeable about contemporary art at that time, particularly European art.⁶⁰⁶

The first artist to work in the space was Phyllida Barlow, on the recommendation of Bruce Mclean, her colleague at the Slade School of Art, London, funded by Hall, via the Dean Clough Art Foundation (DCAF). Barlow’s arrival, with a coach load of

⁶⁰⁴ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁶⁰⁵ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁶⁰⁶ John Newling, interviewed by the author, 13 December 2017.

students, coincided with Margaret Thatcher's visit to Dean Clough in February 1988. As Mclean recalls:

Something terrible happened. They couldn't get in because Mrs Thatcher was coming. This guy, Ernest Hall, was going for a knighthood. Phyllida was very cross about it when she came back. I said, "Don't blame me".⁶⁰⁷

David told me:

Phyllida just seemed to arrive. The studio wasn't fully converted (as it would be later for the Henry Moore Studio). It was without its new floor, so it was still quite rough. And Phyllida just did this massive installation in the front space, which was a load of sticks covered in tarpaulin. It filled the front space. We thought 'Who's this crazy person?'. We were supposed to help – I don't think she needed much help. It was mainly her and (her ex-student) Rachel Whiteread. They were just in there and this amazing structure appeared which [seemed to be] tied together with string.⁶⁰⁸

John Newling made an exhibition in the space a few months later:

Like any artist, I was no different, I really wanted to get things done. They helped me get things done... The Arts Council have been very generous to me over the years in many ways, and we'd be in a mess without them. But you know Paul's entrepreneurial thing, although it was so entrepreneurial that at times it was tricky in truth, I could see how that might be very useful, that ability that he's got, plus as I said he's got a big heart.⁶⁰⁹

David remembers:

John acted almost as a kind of template for how the future Studio was going to be. Because he needed things making. He was working in steel at the time. We

⁶⁰⁷ Bruce Mclean, interviewed by the author, 5 April 2017.

⁶⁰⁸ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 20 January 2017.

⁶⁰⁹ John Newling, interviewed by the author, 13 December 2016.

knew fabricators at Dean Clough. John came down, had work fabricated. And we showed it. We showed his work in the spaces that then became the Henry Moore Studio spaces.⁶¹⁰

Just as Paul's studio idea was grinding into action, similar developments were taking place almost concurrently in other parts of the country. Indeed, the picture that John Newling created for me of Paul, Chris and David cleaning the old factory space in E Mill, under the auspices of Dean Clough Industrial Estate, in preparation for the Phyllida Barlow installation, calls to mind another, much more famous image, held by Damien Hirst on his website, of Hirst and his young companions – all current or ex-art students at Goldsmiths, University of London, many, including Hirst, from working class backgrounds - working in 'a grand top-lit semi-derelict building'⁶¹¹ at Surrey Quays, in the docklands area of London, under the auspices of the London Docklands Development Corporation. Taken in summer 1988, a few months after the Barlow project happened, it captures the young artists cleaning and painting the space - which was slated for commercial redevelopment, and wouldn't exist in the same way a few years later - prior to the installation of their exhibition, *Freeze*, which opened that August; and launched many of their careers and the whole so-called Young British Artist (YBA) phenomenon.

In Glasgow, as Lowndes (2006) has documented, 'the do-it-yourself movement amongst local artists had been picking up speed with the establishment in 1988 of the WASPS studio complex in a former John Players cigarette factory off Alexandra Parade in the East End',⁶¹² with the support of the Glasgow Development Agency. In summer 1988, Transmission, under the management of a new committee of artists, including Douglas Gordon and Christine Borland (associated with the YBA movement a few years later), moved into new premises in King Street, which opened the following year. Gordon remembers: 'I got involved with banging up walls and

⁶¹⁰ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁶¹¹ Michael Craig-Martin, "My pupil Damien Hirst", *The Independent*, 30 March 2012. <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/my-pupil-damien-hirst-michael-craig-martin-on-the-making-of-arts-wunderkind-7600564.html>. Retrieved, 7 March 2018.

⁶¹² S. Lowndes, *Social Sculpture*, 2003, p.115.

sanding floors and all that stuff, and I painted the Transmission sign, so for me that was a really big important thing, so I had a kind of physical investment as well as a spiritual one'.⁶¹³

Like Paul's transition from A Mill and E Mill, Transmission's move wasn't just a change of location but a shift in genre from time-based and performance works, which had been Malcolm Dickson's particular area of interests, towards sculpture; and, ultimately, a change in ethos from experiments in Beuysian metamorphosis towards something that was more market-orientated. As Borland remembers, '...[it] was against the advice of the Scottish Arts Council, who felt Transmission should be content in its damp and rat-infested niche which was so suitable for all those atmospheric performances'.⁶¹⁴ Whereas the new gallery had more of a "white cube" feeling. According to curator, Nicola White:

Previously the gallery had deliberately positioned itself outside the cultural mainstream. In the early '90s, Transmission became, not mainstream, but certainly more aligned to the international art scene. Entering the clean-lined space, one could have been in any city in Europe.⁶¹⁵

Meanwhile, in Kennington, London, a few miles east of Surrey Quays, but still on the south side of the river, Matt Hale, Paul Noble, John Burgess, Keith Coventry and Peter Owen were establishing their own small gallery space, City Racing, in a former betting shop, which opened in April 1988. According to Lowndes, the five artists showed their own work there, but also offered exhibition opportunities to 'future YBA stars including Gillian Wearing and Sarah Lucas' and 'several Glasgow-based artists'.⁶¹⁶ Hale said: 'We tried to make it as white-cube like as

⁶¹³ Douglas Gordon quoted in S. Lowndes, *Social Sculpture* (2003), p. 117.

⁶¹⁴ Christine Borland, "Dear Green Place No More", unpublished essay on Transmission, 1995. Quoted in S. Lowndes, *Social Sculpture* (2003), p. 112.

⁶¹⁵ Nicola White, "Perpetual Moon", unpublished essay on Transmission, 1995. Quote in S. Lowndes, *Social Sculpture* (2003), p.118.

⁶¹⁶ S. Lowndes, *Social Sculpture*, 2003, p.120.

possible. There was no high principle behind it, just a desire to show... we were fed up of waiting to be offered a show, so we thought, “show yourself”⁶¹⁷.

According to Paul, he and his team of artists in Halifax were aware of events as they unfolded simultaneously in ‘London and Glasgow. Freeze and Transmission’⁶¹⁸. He said:

The difference was – we were the “quiet world”, we just got on and got things done. We talked a lot to Transmission [...] Freeze was a totally different situation. We were aware of them, we went to the openings ... The thing to say is that it’s almost like [...] Freeze were in it for their own careers, Transmission was 50:50 – they had a real belief in doing things for Glasgow and doing an artist programme. Glasgow was moving towards the City of Culture. They were on a good wave, but they were also building careers. We just got on with stuff, simple as that.⁶¹⁹

In reality, of course, they were all building careers - Paul as a businessman, and the others as commercially viable artists; and they had no alternative but to do so.

According to Alexander Massouras, the situation for young artists emerging from British art schools in the 1980s – as they were in record numbers - was in many ways ‘less propitious’⁶²⁰ than it had been in previous decades. On the one hand, there were fewer opportunities for them to exhibit: by 1986, *Young Contemporaries*, in its original form, had folded; the Serpentine Gallery, London, established originally to showcase the work of young and emerging artists, was redirecting its activities toward

⁶¹⁷ Matt Hale in conversation with David Burrows, “Career Opportunities, the ones that never knock”, *Variant*, issue 5. https://www.variant.org.uk/5texts/David_Burrows.html. Retrieved September 2019.

⁶¹⁸ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

⁶²⁰ Alexander Massouras, *Patronage, professionalism and youth: the emerging artist and London’s Art institutions 1949 – 1988*, 2012. PhD Thesis. Birkbeck, University of London. P.93.

more established practitioners in order to attract private sponsorship⁶²¹; and around the country, according to James Hamilton in *New Art in Yorkshire* (1987), ‘open free-to-all competitions which were truly representative of the art activity in any one area [had become] beyond the technical and financial resources of the average municipally-funded art gallery’⁶²². Meanwhile through the 1980s, in what was already a tight fiscal environment, the Arts Council had started to re-route funds away from artists, channelling them instead through organisations (such as Projects UK and Babel Administration, for example) who mediated between the artist and the public, on the one hand, and the government, on the other. According to William Rees Mogg, this new arrangement was based on the political idea that ‘arts grants should primarily be a consumer not a producer subsidy’⁶²³; and that organisations would be more responsive (whether by choice or through political pressure) to the needs and wants of viewers than individual practitioners. However, as we have seen, it also gave the government more control over the entire art infrastructure. In addition to all this, part-time art school jobs, which had sustained many young artists in the post-war period, had become less readily available, as the entire higher education system was streamlined and professionalised. As Logsdail asked of his audience at the *New Contemporaries* debate, ‘How do you survive financially?’. He said:

alternative support structures have dried up... [Young artists] are doing electrics, plumbing, construction work, just about anything... They don’t believe for one minute that there’s anything out there for them. They have to survive. They don’t have this naivety.⁶²⁴

It was in this context that young artists in London and Glasgow – and in Newcastle, Halifax and elsewhere – took matters into their own hands, by getting together and

⁶²¹ See Chin-Tao Wu, *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention Since the 1980s* (London: Verso, 2002). According to Wu, from 1987, the Serpentine was 50% reliant on commercial sponsorship to support itself (p. 99).

⁶²² J. Hamilton, *New Art in Yorkshire: an open exhibition for all artists born, living or working in Yorkshire, October 17 – November 29 1987*, Yorkshire Contemporary Art Group, 1987, p.5.

⁶²³ W. Rees-Mogg, *The Times*, 15 July 1993. Quoted in R. Hewison, *Culture and Consensus*, 1995, p.249.

⁶²⁴ *British Telecom New Contemporaries: Open Debate*, British Library Sound Archive. Shelf No. C95/534. Transcribed by S.Raikes, 7 March 2019.

finding ways to generate their own opportunities and money. According to artist, Michael Craig-Martin, who had Damien Hirst's tutor at Goldsmiths:

In a country that had few contemporary galleries and even fewer collectors, generations of young artists had survived through art-school teaching, the dole, various enterprise schemes, odd jobs. By the end of Margaret Thatcher's reign, these options had more or less dried up.⁶²⁵

As he said: '[Damien Hirst and his friends] realised that their only hope for survival as artists was through their work'⁶²⁶ - whether that was by selling their own art on the open market, or monetising their skills in some other way. David told me,

You've got to remember the social and political background. I still maintain that so much of what created the British art scene at that time was a reaction against the establishment under Thatcher, against the lie [of opportunity] - there was nowhere for young artists to show their work, the main institutions didn't seem interested.⁶²⁷ [...] I think what Paul showed me and what Glasgow showed me [a bit later], [was] a kind of general attitude, which was that you didn't sit around waiting for Cork Street and for dealers and for somebody to discover you. You did stuff. You went out there. You organised things. You collaborated. You worked together... You were active and collaborative with your friends and your colleagues. And that's how it was.⁶²⁸

In her catalogue essay for *Century City* (Tate Modern, 2001), Tate curator Emma Dexter places such activity 'within the context of the development of "American-style enterprise culture" in Britain under Margaret Thatcher and a "can-do attitude" among artists'.⁶²⁹ And this highlights the strange contradiction that haunts the operations of

⁶²⁵ Michael Craig Martin, *On Being An Artist* (AVA Publishing SA, 2015), p.215.

⁶²⁶ Ibid.

⁶²⁷ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, March 2017.

⁶²⁸ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁶²⁹ Emma Dexter quoted by Colin Gleadell in "Art sales: When artists did the running", *The Telegraph*, 19 January 2001.

artist-led organisations all over the country in the late 1980s, because, whilst the artists themselves often abhorred the politics of Margaret Thatcher, their activities helped to create the mythology of Thatcherism, which still holds sway over Britain. Harnessed into production by economic necessity, like the workers of Halifax that Penone called up in *Contour Lines*, they could not break down the structures of capitalist power. Rather, by their directed daily activities – which became habits, rituals and traditions, reflected back through images and stories - they were continually modifying its surfaces, literally bedding into its biosphere: or, as Penone put it, helping to ‘form the landscape in which [they] live[d]’⁶³⁰, so that it felt like part of their own being.

5.10 Signals: Making It Happen (October 1988)

In October 1988, Dean Clough was broadcast nationally for a second time in *Signals: Making it Happen*⁶³¹, a Channel 4 programme, fronted by Roger Graef, focusing on regional developments in arts provision. The programme also featured an independent poetry press, and a public arts project affiliated to Projects UK, in Newcastle, the sculpture trail at Grizedale Forest, Cumbria, Declan McGonagle at the Orchard Gallery, Derry, Simon Rattle’s orchestra in Birmingham and an alternative theatre project in Glasgow. Once again, Halifax was presented as a town in deep industrial depression, whose ‘regeneration [was being]... largely driven by one man, concert pianist & businessman Ernest Hall’. However, on this occasion, both E. Hall and Paul (under the title of Curator) spoke to camera; and, together, for the first time, at least in a public forum, they presented their joint vision of the art and business community that was emerging there, describing it as ‘a practical Utopia’. Paul described it to Graef as ‘a working environment ... a community of working people’, rooted in the history of West Yorkshire, because ‘at Dean Clough you’ve still got manufacturing industry’. He said:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/4721301/Art-sales-When-artists-did-the-running.html>. Retrieved September 2019.

⁶³⁰ G. Penone, *The Eroded Steps*, (Aegis, HMST, 1989), p. 57.

⁶³¹ *Signals: Making It Happen*, Channel 4, 5 October 1988. Video tape recording held at the British Film Institute National Archive, London, transcribed by S. Raikes on 4 May 2017.

You've still got steelworkers, who I can go to for my own work, woodworkers also. And there's a society within those people. I'm not just saying it. We do talk, we get together in the café. Someone will say: "What are you doing on the 6th floor Paul?". What we are creating here is a practical Utopia. It's not being forced. There's a vision here of a fusion between an art environment and a working environment.

One of the first things that Vic told me, when I spoke to him, was that no such place as this 'practical Utopia' had ever existed at Dean Clough. And, of course, he is right: it was an imaginary place – an "imagined community". Like any such community, in order to be effective, it had to be rooted in aspects of reality; and, in October 1988, the first small business community was still in action at Dean Clough, so fabricators and artists really were working alongside one another (though it was living on borrowed time, because this particular mix of tenants was never part of the Halls' long term business plan). However, in its totality, it had been constructed by Paul and E. Hall, within a political environment, for a particular purpose.

On one level, the place depicted in *Signals* (1988) was very similar to that which Paul had imagined a couple of years earlier in *Abandon London* (1986): an independent community, in which the central figure was the working class artist, whose purpose was to unlock the creative forces that had been lying dormant in Halifax. As Paul said to Graef, 'You've got to give them a chance. It's all well and good the government giving people a start in engineering, the army etc, but what about artists? Who starts up the artists?'. The language that Paul used was even faintly Beuysian. He remembers:

I said [to Graef], "You see this building, this tower – there used to be a beacon in there and when the workers were working here that would be lit. We're going to re-light that and send out a signal to the world."⁶³²

⁶³² Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

This is the version of the Dean Clough art community that most of the other artist-residents, interviewed for *Signals*, projected to the Channel 4 audience. They said, variously: ‘There are so many really big spaces’. ‘For someone who sings its really amazing. You can whisper in corners and you get the echo going for floors. It’s wonderful’. ‘I wouldn’t get such facilities if I worked in a city’. ‘I’ve had a lot of help with my work. It’s a chance to work with other artists’. ‘I was born and bred in Halifax. I saw the decline of the mills and think something is really happening now’. ‘There’s just a good feeling of community. A feeling of something happening all the time - visual arts, theatre, music, whatever’.

However, the Beuysian world of *Abandon London* no longer really existed, even in Paul’s imagination, because it had been mixed completely with the business-based world that *One Man’s Mill* had encapsulated. The “imagined communities” of *Abandon London* (1986) and *Signals* (1988) were both working class Utopias, but the former was a socialist paradise, framed by making and materials, whilst the latter was “an enterprising art culture” framed by money. Of all the artists interviewed by Graef, only David described the latter on camera, capturing for posterity the peculiarity of what it meant to be an artist in that place, at that moment. With a slightly queasy sense of displacement, he told the viewers:

I think something good is going off here now. I don’t know how comfortably the arts do actually fit in with industry. But if you look anywhere else in Yorkshire, I don’t think there’s any money to be got from Yorkshire Arts. This is Enterprise Culture 1988. I don’t know exactly what it means. Dean Clough is a very good place for me to make work, it has practical resources, I feel encouraged to make work. I may be able to go to a place that is politically and ideologically more sound, less dodgy, but I may not be able to make work there.

In Paul’s mind, the distinction between one world and another was (literally) immaterial because ‘money is a material, that’s all it is. You need money in order to

achieve things. It's just like wood. And the key thing about it is to be independent'⁶³³.
As he said to Graef in 1988:

Let's make the business people into artists and the artists into workers.

Yet, for all his protestations, the energy behind *Signals* was fundamentally different from that of *Abandon London*, because its key purpose, in both Paul and Ernest Hall's minds, was to attract inward business investment to the Dean Clough development, just as Mrs Thatcher's arts policy was directing. The Channel 4 programme was a fantastic marketing device for the E. Hall's project: so much so that the image of 'a practical Utopia' in Halifax that it projected to the public still reverberates through national press coverage of the site more than thirty years, when all the industrial fabricators have long since vacated the premises, and the mills have been almost entirely given over to corporate and leisure activities (though they are still home to IOU Theatre and a number of studio-based artists).

Likewise, *Signals* allowed Paul to pitch his own projects on a national stage. As he told me:

The *Signals* programme was important... We talked about what we were doing ... Roger Graef said, "Do you have anything final to say?" and I said, "well, you know, I think we should talk about the future". We're going to do this, this and this. [I told him] New Contemporaries was just coming through.⁶³⁴

In this respect, the broadcast was immediately fruitful because it attracted the attention of Robert Hopper, who had recently been appointed as Director of a new charitable arts organisation, the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust; and set in motion a chain of events that led ultimately to the formation of the Henry Moore Studio.

⁶³³ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁶³⁴ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

The chain started with money, because Hopper brought with him financial resources that the artists scrabbling around for a living at Dean Clough could never have previously dreamed of. However, it ended up somewhere much more Beuysian, because the money allowed Paul to tap into a stream of creative working class energy, coming straight out of the international art world of the 1960s, which he wouldn't otherwise have been able to access, and divert it towards Halifax, via Barry Barker, Director of the Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, who brought with him Giuseppe Penone. As David told us at the HMS Symposium:

We didn't know that Henry Moore was going to arrive. But then one day Robert Hopper dropped by. We were just like: "Who's that?". Big curly, hair, beard, handsome. I was like, "Who's Robert Hopper?". I don't know how it happened, Paul knows that. But after Robert dropped by everything changed ... like you said Chris, it changed everything. Then Penone arrived [with Barry]. The most handsome artist ever, I think, and one of the loveliest people that I've ever worked with.⁶³⁵

In that moment, it felt as if Halifax could really become “the cultural centre” of Britain, not - as Paul had imagined originally in *Abandon London* - in the context of the kind of egalitarian, socialist Utopia that William Morris had proposed in *News From Nowhere* (which was now completely off the political agenda), but as part of Ernest Hall's emerging business park, within Margaret Thatcher's “enterprise culture”. David said:

[Halifax] wasn't at the centre of the art world ... It was a bit of bolt out of the blue'.⁶³⁶[...] Suddenly from being on the periphery, being black-suited pseudo-intellectuals, we were actually at the centre of something... Suddenly from being marginal, from being up North, from inhabiting these mill spaces,

⁶³⁵ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁶³⁶ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 20 January 2017.

you're suddenly like - that's happening in Glasgow, that's happening in London. Something can happen in Halifax.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁷ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

6. Penone Comes to Halifax (See Figs 31 – 37)

6.1 The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust: ‘A Northern Powerhouse of the Arts’⁶³⁸

During the 1980s, whilst art was gestating in a business environment at Dean Clough in Halifax, private money had been entering the West Yorkshire art scene from another direction: via the Henry Moore Foundation. Managed by a board of Trustees, the Foundation had been established by Henry Moore in 1977, as a charitable enterprise and tax-efficient means of managing the wealth he had accumulated through a succession of large-scale commissions, executed internationally, at the height of his extraordinary fame and success in the post-war decades; and judicious investment in the financial markets, which had yielded very good and increasing returns to those who had the money to capitalise under Margaret Thatcher’s government.

The Henry Moore Foundation had had a presence in Yorkshire since 1982, when it founded and financed the Henry Moore Centre for the Study of Sculpture within Leeds City Art Gallery (LCAG) (now reincarnated within a separate building as the Henry Moore Institute), in collaboration with Leeds City Council (LCC); and Moore ceremonially unveiled a new suite of sculpture galleries, attached to LCAG, facing The Headrow. After Moore died in 1986, the Foundation had inaugurated a formal ‘£1,000,000 a-year donations programme’⁶³⁹, as Richard Cork (1994) described it; and set up the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust to be its “active arm”, based in Leeds, with the aim of generating, for the first time, its own public arts programme.⁶⁴⁰ In December 1987, the Bradford *Telegraph and Argus* announced Robert Hopper (b.1947), formerly Chief Arts Officer in Bradford City Council, as ‘the first director

⁶³⁸ “Arts bosses land top posts”, *Telegraph & Argus*, 28 December 1987. Newspaper cutting. Held by the Henry Moore Studio Archive.

⁶³⁹ Cork, R. ‘Happy to spend Moore time with his in-laws: Sir Alan Bowness’ *The Times*, 24 Mar 1994.

⁶⁴⁰ At this stage, Moore’s home at Perry Green in Hertfordshire, which is now a thriving visitor attraction, was still a private family space, with no public-facing aspect.

of [this] new international organization'⁶⁴¹. According to James Hamilton, Director of YCAG, (who was looking on from the sidelines), in his new role:

Robert had SO MUCH MONEY. God, compared to local authority and local arts association levels of funding it was megabucks. Robert had a great job just spending it.⁶⁴²

According to Robert himself, in his interview with the *Telegraph & Argus* reporter, he had been charged by his Trustees with making 'the Trust...a Northern powerhouse of the arts', in order to create '[a] situation where anyone thinking of sculpture will look to West Yorkshire'.⁶⁴³

The job description for the role of Director of the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust, which survives in the Henry Moore Studio Archive, lays out in more detail the component parts of Robert's ambitious mission.⁶⁴⁴ On the one hand, he was charged with 'developing an international centre for the promotion and study of sculpture', with 'its own small staff' and a permanent base in Leeds. Plans in this regard were embryonic, but already in progress, as the Foundation was just then negotiating with Leeds City Council the lease of the building adjacent to Leeds Art Gallery, where the Henry Moore Institute is now long established. In the meantime, Hopper was to establish good relations and forge new partnerships with other, existing arts organisations in the region, including Leeds Art Gallery, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Leeds University Fine Art Department, St Paul's Gallery and YCAG; whilst also looking into another matter that was apparently of 'particular interest' to the Trustees of the Board of the Foundation: namely, 'the provision of studios for sculptors, sculpture fellowships and other ways, as may be, of integrating working artists within

⁶⁴¹ "Arts bosses land top posts", *Telegraph & Argus*, 28 December 1987. Newspaper cutting. Held by the Henry Moore Studio Archive.

⁶⁴² James Hamilton, interviewed by the author, 30 May 2017.

⁶⁴³ "Arts bosses land top posts", *Telegraph & Argus*, 28 December 1987. Newspaper cutting. Held by the Henry Moore Studio Archive.

⁶⁴⁴ Job description for Director of "The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust, Leeds" (n.d., 1987), in folder labelled, "Robert", Box: HMFEP (Pre-April 1999). Henry Moore Studio Archive.

the community’. This broad and rather vague statement is where the institutional impetus for the Henry Moore Studio came from.

6.2 ‘You’ve Got to Connect to Certain Things’⁶⁴⁵: Paul and Robert get together.

In 1988, Hopper visited Dean Clough to see for himself the “practical utopia” of art and business that Paul and E. Hall had described in the Channel 4 programme. Whilst there, he met up with Paul, whom he knew already from a Babel work, *Freedom* (1987) (one of the last iterations of Babel Theatre, as it happens), which Paul and his team had installed at Cartwright Hall, Bradford a year or so earlier. Paul told me:

[The Cartwright] curators [had] introduced me to Robert and we had this kind of discourse going on ... So he knew me. He knew I was at Dean Clough. He just came across to see what shit I was making... We got talking. I asked – “what are you doing now?. I hear you are director of the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust” ...He said that he wanted to have a studio where artists could make work. ⁶⁴⁶

At this point, Paul spotted a golden business opportunity. He said to Robert, ‘Why don’t you take [my studio in E Mill]?’⁶⁴⁷. As he explained:

It’s very, very easy – you read a situation... There’s no more powerful, dangerous person than an artist, because they really do analyse situations’. ‘You’ve got to...connect to certain things and not be lazy.’⁶⁴⁸

When Paul and Robert took the notion of setting up a major exhibition-come-making space in E Mill to Ernest Hall, he actively encouraged it. He offered Robert the space at a peppercorn rent, because he saw that such an operation, funded by a prestigious arts organisation like the Henry Moore Foundation, could be very good publicity for

⁶⁴⁵ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017

⁶⁴⁶ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

his development. According to designer, Andy Law, who worked at the Henry Moore Studio in the early 1990s:

It was that model of the arts stimulating development. It's a known model, I don't know if you've seen that in Central St Martins. They've just used that model in their new site [in London]. The other example of developers supporting the arts is in the Design Museum [which opened in 1989, around the same time as the Henry Moore Studio was officially inaugurated].... Ernest Hall was an entrepreneur. He was using that model by getting the Studio in and then selling the place as being exciting to get other people to buy space... He certainly understood what the point of it was in terms of his own business model.⁶⁴⁹

So, as Paul told me, 'we agreed the space. But we needed a project'⁶⁵⁰. In 1987/8, he was in touch with Barry Barker, Director of Arnolfini, Bristol. Their first point of contact had been via *The Drop* exhibition, which Paul had hoped might tour through Bristol. Barry had turned down this particular invitation, but instead offered Paul the chance to create one of his own installations at Arnolfini; and they had become friends independently. At the time, Paul was a young-ish performance-artist-turned arts administrator; and Barry a top institutional curator; but they had both come from working class backgrounds; and in a British art world where working class people were (and are) scantily represented at any kind of management level, this had created a bond between them. When I asked Barry about their connection, he told me:

I think [it was about coming from a] working class background ... He was a doer, which I admired. I admired him for doing things that I couldn't do ... on the technical side of things. All that kind of stuff. He took a lot off the shoulders. Like with the Penone show I did at Arnolfini, I said I've got to get some work ... He said, "I'll do that". The transport thing. He said, "Oh I'll sort that out". Rather than Momart or someone.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁴⁹ Andy Law, interviewed by the author, 3 March 2017.

⁶⁵⁰ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁶⁵¹ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2017.

However, it wasn't just class, or Paul's get up and go attitude that brought him together with Barry: it was also the money that Paul had access to. In 1988, Barry was in the process of planning an exhibition of the work of Giuseppe Penone, in close collaboration with the artist, which 'was [to be] the first time that [his] work had been seen in Great Britain in any depth'⁶⁵². As such, it had been conceived as a mini retrospective, but Penone had also expressed a wish to make new work as part of the project⁶⁵³. In a political climate where state funding for the arts was shrinking, Barry had been attempting to raise money externally both to enable the exhibition to be shipped from Italy; and to give Penone the possibility of production. To this end, he had hoped to collaborate with another gallery, and the new Tate Gallery in Liverpool had agreed in principle to take the exhibition, but the arrangement had fallen through, seemingly at the last minute. Paul told me:

Barry had a problem - money. Because the Penone exhibition was supposed to go to Tate Liverpool, but they couldn't afford it. Tate Liverpool was grossly underfunded ... I suggested to Barry that I could raise the money that Tate couldn't ... We had four or five weeks to pull it all together. I went straight to [Ernest Hall and Robert Hopper]... I said I needed £2500. Robert said that should be fine. Ernest said, "£2500, sure" [...] [We] hatched the idea to [tour the Penone exhibition to] my studio [...] We put that show on in Halifax, because Tate Liverpool didn't have the money.⁶⁵⁴

It was agreed that the Penone show would tour to Paul's studio in E Mill; and that Paul would personally execute the transport to and from the artist's studio near Garessio. Paul said: 'We went in this hired truck [to Penone's studio in Italy]... We'd always eat in a nice restaurant. David would sleep there because he was driving and I slept in the truck. Lovely'.⁶⁵⁵ At the same time, he suggested to Barry that Penone might like to make work at Dean Clough, funded by Robert and the Henry Moore

⁶⁵²B. Barker, "A Space for Artists" in *The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust Studio at Dean Clough, Halifax* (HMST, 1993), p. xiii.

⁶⁵³ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁴ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁶⁵⁵ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

Sculpture Trust, facilitated by himself and his team of artists. As Barry recalled at the Henry Moore Studio symposium:

My friend Paul came down one day – I don't know what for – and we polished off a bottle of Armenian Brandy in the bar [at Arnolfini] and this notion came up. Paul had very much the wherewithal [to make it happen], he had the contacts – Ernest Hall, Robert ... Paul said maybe the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust would be interested. I said, "That would be great" ... And, dear Robert Hopper, he just took it and he loved it.⁶⁵⁶

6.3 An Imagined Community of the North

Late in 1988, Barry bought Penone to Halifax, to view the space in E Mill, where his exhibition was to be installed. As Paul explained: 'I didn't just show Giuseppe the studio. I walked him through the mills. I think [Chris] came too'⁶⁵⁷. They guided him across the entire complex, from Bowling Mill, through reception in D Mill, to E Mill, back into the abandoned mills at the east end of the complex, ending in A Mill, where Babel had been based and only artists now ventured. Here, they opened to Penone a world that had been their own encompassing reality, which was the "imagined community" of the North, embedded in the fabric of Dean Clough and its surrounding landscapes that they had conjured in the 1986-7 period.

It was not that Paul imposed his vision on the other artist, but that their conceptions of reality were very similar: in other words, as John Newling put it at the HMS Symposium, Paul's vision chimed with 'the huge cartography that was in 'Penone's head' already.'⁶⁵⁸ As the Italian artist wandered through the spaces in 'the oldest factory, the oldest building', where Babel had been based and only artists now ventured, Chris remembers that 'he felt it': 'it was raw, as he went through all these

⁶⁵⁶ Barry Barker in conversation with Paul Bradley, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁶⁵⁷ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁶⁵⁸ John Newling in conversation with Glen Onwin, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

dark, manky spaces’.⁶⁵⁹ Sensing the ghostly presence of the workers all around him, much like he had felt ‘the forest breathing’ all those years ago in Garessio; he ‘match[ed his] breathing to that of the [dark] world around [him]’⁶⁶⁰ and immersed in ‘the surrounding reality’.⁶⁶¹ Paul said, ‘He saw the staircases that would have been worn away by the workers and he wanted to make *Contour Lines*’.⁶⁶²

In the wood near Garessio, Penone had involved himself with the growth systems of trees, influencing (without interrupting) their development by making simple gestures – damming streams, tying metal around trunks - whose impacts would unfold in the months and years that followed, taken forward by the natural forces of the forest. Likewise, at Dean Clough, he engaged with the forces that were active in that particular biosphere: namely the stream of northern artists who were hosting his visit. The way he worked with the artists in Halifax was quite different from his usual practice: when he creates an *Albero*, for instance, he executes the process himself, in his studio near Turin, latterly with the help of one or more regular assistants⁶⁶³; whereas, with *Contour Lines*, the whole process, from conception through making to display, was far more collaborative.

Having chosen his subject matter, according to David, Penone developed the work by ‘making little sketches and having conversations with us’⁶⁶⁴. Then, once ‘he had decided to do the casts, he pretty much walked away and left us to it’⁶⁶⁵, allowing the artists on the ground to turn his concept into reality. Paul tasked David and Fiona with casting the landings and steps in plaster to create moulds for the foundry. As David remembers:

⁶⁵⁹ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the artist, 27 November 2018.

⁶⁶⁰ G. Penone, *Alpi Marittime*, 1968.

⁶⁶¹ G. Penone in conversation with Benjamin Buchloh in L. Busine et al, *Giuseppe Penone: Forty Years of Creation* (Yale University Press, 2012), pp. 17 – 18.

⁶⁶² Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁶⁶³ G. Penone in conversation with Alexis Dahan in A. Dahan, “Giuseppe Penone”, *purple magazine*, Issue 26, 2016. <https://purple.fr/magazine/fw-2016-issue-26/giuseppe-penone/>. Retrieved 15 September 2018.

⁶⁶⁴ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 20 January 2017.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

It was straight in [...] Nobody told us what to do. Nobody sat us down and said this is the Studio, this is what we expect of you and this is what you will be doing ... Literally, at the time, my skills base was limited. I was just out of art school ... I was brought up on a farm, so I had a practical side. But we didn't know how to cast this stuff, we experimented. Paul must have contacted the foundry. Then we had these conversations [with them] about founding. They would advise us. This is what you need. Through a few failures, we got our head around it and the process was going.⁶⁶⁶

Afterwards, the plaster models were recast in iron by H. Downs & Sons, near Huddersfield, ready for when the Italian artist returned in March 1989 to assemble and finish the various components of his work, including casts, tubes and soil. As Chris and Paul told me, the glass tubes were originally to have been filled with soil from Chris' garden, layered with sand from Garesio, to symbolise the coming together – via Penone's making project - of “workers” from these two places. According to Chris, ‘What Penone wanted for the glass phials originally was [for me] to dig down in my garden – because I live on the edge of a wood [near Halifax]’.⁶⁶⁷ However, ‘it was too difficult to do’⁶⁶⁸. He said:

In my woodland it starts with leaf mould, then you start getting down to top soil and shale and then it becomes really difficult. I was only getting down about that far [gestures with figures] with different types [of soil]...the constituents were too solid.⁶⁶⁹

In the end, ‘it was only the soil from [Italy] that he used ... The layers of sand in the glass are a compromise of the strata’.⁶⁷⁰

Whilst Chris was working on the phials, David was helping Penone to oil the casts; and – through that process – to formulate the title of the work. As he explained:

⁶⁶⁶ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017.

⁶⁶⁷ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 27 November 2018.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

There was one night in the studio [when I was] working very late [with the artist]. We'd just oiled the cast iron slabs. There were all these lines on them, and I said, "Oh look, that's a contour map". It looked like a contour map of the moors. And Penone was like 'What's a contour map?' Then there was a half hour conversation with me explaining what a contour map was. So perhaps because of that he deeply understood: sometimes when you are translating a language and you've got to go through all the hoops and rings, and then someone goes "Ah". They get it.⁶⁷¹

At the end of Penone's second visit, *Contour Lines* went straight on display in E Mill, alongside the retrospect exhibition curated by Barry, which had been transported from Arnolfini to Dean Clough by David, Fiona and Steve Carrick. The show was installed across two spaces in E Mill: Paul's old studio; and an adjacent space, further into the 19th century mill building, which would later become the "back space" of the Henry Moore Studio. According to Paul, 'All we did was paint both spaces before the Penone show'.⁶⁷² The installation is still imprinted in Chris' memory. As he recalls:

You came into [Paul's] space at the top level and you looked down into the space. In that space there were the glass finger nail and the leaves. The tree pieces. A vertical tree and one leaning into the window - a plank. A block with a vertical tree in it. And the breath piece with the imprint of his lips. All those came from the Arnolfini.⁶⁷³

Contour Lines was placed in the back space, which was an older and more atmospheric interior, retaining more of the character of the mill, with barrel vaulted ceilings, a row of iron columns and a flagstone floor whose undulating surfaces echoed those of the casts that were positioned on them. Chris said: 'the flat landings – the cast piece made by us and Downs - were in the centre of the room. Then on the

⁶⁷¹ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 20 January 2017.

⁶⁷² Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁶⁷³ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 27 November 2018.

brick pillars were the fingernail and cardboard pieces. The cardboard fingernail supports were made by us too'.⁶⁷⁴

The making of *Contour Lines* was an intense and immersive process for all the Dean Clough artists. As Paul told me: 'You walked into the space and you were walking into the head of an artist'.⁶⁷⁵ It was particularly so for David, who – as he told me – 'was just out of college'. One night, when he was packing up Penone's works in E Mill, after the show had closed, the young artist found the Italian's vision of the workers of Halifax - as a river flowing through the old mill complex - coming to life for him. He remembers:

I actually packed the Penone show up on my own. I finished packing it one night and went to have a drink in the pub across the road and [the stream broke its banks]. We had a flash flood. The space had sunken. I tried to wade round there with water up to my waist and all the Penones were floating and I had to drag them off to dry land.

In his essay in *The Eroded Steps* (1989), Penone's chosen writer, Phillippe Piguet refers to such an event – possibly the same one, because he was visiting Dean Clough around this time - when 'the stream [that had powered the factory] swells, the water rises, bursts its banks sweeping everything along in its flood'.⁶⁷⁶ He saw it as being 'like the masses of workers in revolt'.⁶⁷⁷ In David's mind also, '[it] was the nature of the place re-establishing itself'. He said: 'I knew about Arte Povera already but on that project I got to experience it very directly I suppose [...] It was a very interesting and inspiring time'.⁶⁷⁸

6.4 Like Stones in a Stream

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁵ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁶⁷⁶ P. Piguet in G. Penone, *The Eroded Steps*, Aegis Publishing & The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust, 1989, p. 39.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.,

⁶⁷⁸ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 20 January 2017.

When *Giuseppe Penone* (17 March – 17 April 1989) opened at Dean Clough, in Paul's studio in E Mill, it was little remarked upon by the British press (which had already reviewed extensively the retrospective part of the show in Bristol); and, presumably, for this reason, it was little visited. Today, it is documented only in a few grainy photos, stashed away in an envelope in one of the files in the Henry Moore Studio archive. However, like the rectangle of stones that Penone built along the course of a stream, or the cast of his hand he attached to a tree trunk in the wood in Garessio in 1967-8, his activities at Dean Clough impacted the biosphere of the surrounding art and business community, modifying its systems of growth in both big and small ways and thereby altering – without interrupting – the direction of its development.

Penone's exhibition in Halifax may not have been seen much by the wider public, but his project attracted the attention of a number of people in the art world, including the artist, John Newling, David's former tutor at Nottingham, who came up to Halifax to see the moulds for *Contour Lines* being made. He said, 'I observed how [Penone] ... managed to fold a huge cartography that's in his head, a map that was in his head into a single work, that somehow carries that cartography'.⁶⁷⁹ Hans Ulrich Obrist (b.1968), then an aspiring curator, and student at St Gallen University travelled from Zurich to Dean Clough to meet the artist in March 1989. Once the exhibition had opened, word also travelled through the art community in West Yorkshire. Artist, Sheila Gaffney (now head of Leeds College of Art) remembers:

I think it was the Penone project that I really thought about – the one with the steps ... It had a connection with contemporary art outside the idea of being a local artist in Leeds. You know, Yorkshire still sells lovely landscapes. I got really attracted by the feeling that art is a very serious business ... I mean, I was teaching in Leeds and Penone had been to Halifax – [it was like] “woohoo, the god”.⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁷⁹ John Newling in conversation with Glen Onwin, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁶⁸⁰ Sheila Gaffney, interviewed by the author, 30 November 2016.

Penone's project also seeped into the business community, via Ernest Hall's marketing strategy, in which it was deployed to help attract a new kind of corporate client to the Halls' evolving development. A photo of the artist standing next to his work in E Mill featured on the front page of *Connect*, the first 'quarterly newsletter from Dean Clough Industrial Park, Halifax', which was published in early summer 1989 by the Dean Clough Press Office, under the banner headline of 'Tax Office makes Dean Clough move'.⁶⁸¹ Within the pamphlet, the making of *Contour Lines* was written up alongside a piece about Dean Clough artist, Tom Wood's portrait of Prince Charles, which was to be created 'on site in his own studio', and unveiled in October; and the news that a nationwide overnight delivery firm, *Nightfreight* had set up its new headquarters within the old factory complex.

Penone's residency had a huge impact on the Northern artists who had worked directly with him: Chris, David and Paul. Chris had been aware of Arte Povera since the late 1960s, when he first saw work by Jannis Kounellis, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Alighiero Boetti and others in *When Attitudes Become Form* (1969) at the ICA, London; and his own early painting work had been heavily impacted by the movement. He said: 'It was about this process of deconstruction ... You don't see the product. You see the process and the thinking'.⁶⁸² In, 1988/9, under Paul's influence, he was moving into performance; and the content and shape of Penone's work influenced his earliest actions, which, as he told me 'were all strong spirals'.⁶⁸³ His first action piece in 1988/9, 'was a large soot drawing in A Mill, [where I placed] big pieces of paper around the walls of the room, dowsed my body in water, covered it in soot which was from my own chimney and laid trails of pigment across the paper in real time and space'⁶⁸⁴, spiralling round and round in the old mill interior, like one of the workers embodied in *Contour Lines*. The next, called *Secret History* (c.1989), was performed in the basement area of D Mill. Based on the true story of seven orphan children who had died working in one of the mills, Chris said, it was 'a narrative

⁶⁸¹ Held in folder labeled "Penone", Henry Moore Studio Archive.

⁶⁸² Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 14 February 2018.

⁶⁸³ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid.

piece about the valley that I was born in ... a dark piece which involved carrying quite heavy steel plates ... like gravestones ... on a very tight spiral'.⁶⁸⁵

David told me:

[Penone] was just wonderful ... He had a terrific influence on me ... I did actually get to spend a lot of time with him. It was the early days so we did actually go out to dinner with him. We did spend hours talking in the Studio... We had some very good conversations and I think that is one of the main things that we had going for us at Dean Clough.⁶⁸⁶

All this helped to propel him from performance into sculpture; and, later that year, he applied for and was accepted onto the MA course in sculpture at the University of Ulster, supported by a grant from Robert, via the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust. There he met a number of young Scottish artists attached to the Glasgow art scene, whose operations around Transmission Gallery were just then starting to rival what was happening with Damien Hirst and his colleagues in London. He said:

After the Penone show, I won a place at Belfast to study with Alastair MacLennan, who was one of the artists that we had worked with on one of Paul's projects, called *The Drop*. Alastair MacLennan was a performance artist who was head of the MA course at Belfast. I got a Henry Moore Scholarship – I didn't realise what a big deal it was at the time. I just thought, I am working for the HMS, and I've got this money to go to Belfast. When I was there I met an artist called Roddy Buchanan who was on the MA with me, so I established strong links which I still continue to this day with the Scottish art scene, particularly Glasgow.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸⁵ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁶⁸⁶ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 20 Jan 2017.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

According to Paul, Penone was a great source of encouragement. He said: ‘Young people need older people like Penone ... [He] gave us the confidence to do it’.⁶⁸⁸ At that time, the Italian artist was starting to buy up land around Garessio so that he could display his own very substantial body of work in the mountain setting that had originally inspired its creation; and he understood Paul’s activities at Dean Clough as part of the same trajectory. Paul told me:

He helped us believe it could be done. I think he also educated us to have no fear. When he knew I was in Turin, he would take me to [see places like the Halle fur Neue Kunst in] Schaffhausen [Switzerland, which was just over the border] ... [Set up in a former textile factory], Schaffhausen was a kind of “Dean Clough” where artist, Urs Rasmüller and his wife [had created a gallery for the display of post-1965 practices] ... That was illuminating.⁶⁸⁹

Above all, the successful completion of Penone’s residency and the production of ‘Contour Lines’, using local artists and industries, gave Paul – and by extension Robert – the confidence to believe that a studio could work in that situation. Already in April 1989, as *Giuseppe Penone* closed in E Mill, Robert was making concrete plans for its refurbishment as a work-come-display space for visiting sculptors; and, in October, the Henry Moore Studio opened officially with a display of work by British sculptor, Richard Long, who was its second resident. As David told me:

Yeah, Richard Long opened the Henry Moore Studio, but to me Penone was really the first artist that created the process. That engaged with the history. That made work that was very relevant and pertinent to place.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁸ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁶⁸⁹ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁶⁹⁰ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017

7. The Ideological Terrain, 1988/9 (See Figs 37 – 39)

7.1 A Pivotal Moment of Change

For nearly two centuries, from 1800, through multiple revolutions in its spiralling history, Dean Clough had channelled tens of thousands of working people through political cycles of disjuncture and resolution, in which one conception of the world had been dispersed and another solidified. Through the 1980s, the workers of Halifax had been - as artist Alastair MacLennan put it in *Performance Magazine* (1987) - 'simultaneously ... living the death of industrialisation and feeling the birth pangs of a new civilisation'.⁶⁹¹ Within this unfolding process, the period from 1986 to 1988 can be understood as 'an awkward stage', in which '[they were] experiencing more the former than the latter'⁶⁹², as the remnants of an old social order co-existed awkwardly with the new world that was still taking shape around it. 1988/9, on the other hand, was the pivotal moment of change – at Dean Clough and throughout Britain under Margaret Thatcher – when the balance tilted in the other direction; and 'one whole historical era' gave way to another.

In *Gramsci and Us* (1987), S. Hall describes the experience of such a moment vividly as '[coming] face to face with the revolutionary character of history itself'⁶⁹³, because events gain their own momentum, and you are swept along with them. According to Hall, it is the point in a historical cycle when 'a [new] conjuncture unrolls, there is no 'going back'. History shifts gears. The terrain changes. You are in a new moment'⁶⁹⁴. As artists on site at Dean Clough in 1988/9, Paul, Chris and David experienced this moment very directly.

On the business side of things, as Jeremy Hall explained, 1988 was right at 'the start of the larger commercial conversions... that enabled big areas of the site to suddenly

⁶⁹¹ A. MacLennan in conversation with Declan McGonagle, "I See Danger", *Performance Magazine*, May/June 1987, p.15.

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ S. Hall, "Gramsci & Us", *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p.16

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

have use and life and activity'⁶⁹⁵; setting in train a on-going process by which the mills were cleaned up and their vast interiors converted into space for offices, then restaurants, hotels and other kinds of service industry. In that year, according to the business registry, the first large corporation, Sun Alliance Insurance moved into Bowling Mill, to be followed by HMRC tax office, Halifax Building Society and others shortly afterwards. Their expanding occupancy would quite quickly make manufacturing in most areas of the complex unviable, pushing many of the Halls' earlier business tenants – the quasi-industrial community of fabricators - out of the complex; and bringing in a new army of office workers. Looking back, Graham Robinson remembers:

there was a massive change. It went from being like an industrial site, with metalworkers, electricians and so on. When the tax people came in and took a floor and then the insurance people took a floor, it moved towards big business.⁶⁹⁶

Meanwhile, in an art context, *Signals*, broadcast in October 1988, had triggered a chain reaction that rapidly unrolled in the weeks and months that followed, and led via Penone to the establishment of the Henry Moore Studio, which was opened formally in October 1989, by Prince Charles, under the auspices of the Henry Moore Foundation, with the exhibition, *Richard Long: New Works, Dean Clough, Halifax* (25th October 1989 – 10th December 1989). Everything was sort of how it had been when *Giuseppe Penone* had opened six months earlier - Long's works were spread across the same spaces in E Mill, including Paul's old studio and the former spinning room adjoining it – but the underlying reality was totally different.

In the intervening period, the whole area had been cleaned, refurbished and fitted with a new lighting system: as Robert said in an interview prior to the opening, 'We've done quite a lot, but I hope that its not too apparent'. The intention was to create 'somewhere that would really serve as an artist's studio/workshop, without the preciousness of art galleries'. Paul's old studio (now called "the front space") had

⁶⁹⁵ Jeremy Hall, interviewed by the author, 27 February 2017.

⁶⁹⁶ Graham Robinson, interviewed by the author, 12 December 2017.

been re-plastered and fitted with a new scree floor, which could accommodate heavy machinery. The back space was left more artfully as it was, because, as Robert said, ‘with its barrel vaulted ceilings and flagstone floor, it retain[ed] more of the character of the mill’⁶⁹⁷, and he hoped it would make a good space for site-specific exhibitions.

Richard Long’s residency had been very different from Penone’s, taking place across a few days in October 1989, when he came up to install his pieces. Long had been Robert’s pick as the next artist; and, unlike Penone, he hadn’t been “wowed” by the site. Indeed, he had to be persuaded to come by Barry, who knew him because they were both based at the time in Bristol. Many of the works he presented were new, but most had been made by the artist in his studio, without reference to the site or any kind of collaboration. In the front space, he created a new mud drawing on one of the newly smooth, white walls, and assembled in the back space a massive, dense, black circle from locally-sourced coal. Shaun said: ‘Richard Long didn’t make anything new. The coal got sold back to the coal merchant’.⁶⁹⁸

At the HMS Symposium, Barry explained the change that happened to their joint project between Penone and the Long presentation as ‘[Robert] want[ing] to formalise it really, as a solid thing’.⁶⁹⁹ This is an interesting and accurate description, because in the same period, across the country, the different forces that had been moving around and knocking up against one another through the 1980s, had started to ‘come together, conjuncturally to create the new terrain’⁷⁰⁰ in British society under Margaret Thatcher.

In “Brave New World” (1988), written in 1988, just as Paul, Robert and Barry were getting together at Dean Clough, Stuart Hall was attempting to map the shape of the new era, which he called “post-Fordist” to denote ‘a whole new epoch distinct from the era of mass production’⁷⁰¹ – as yet unnamed because the contours of its terrain had not yet fully settled. Amongst a host of different facets, Hall identified in his

⁶⁹⁷ *The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust Studio at Dean Clough*, Kinesis Films, 1989 & 1992. Henry Moore Institute Library.

⁶⁹⁸ Shaun Pickard, interviewed by the author, 9 February 2017.

⁶⁹⁹ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁷⁰⁰ S. Hall, “Gramsci and Us”, *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p.16.

⁷⁰¹ S. Hall, “Brave New World”, *Marxism Today*, October 1988, p.24.

article some of the characteristics that Dean Clough was concurrently exhibiting, including ‘a decline in the old manufacturing base’ and ‘the proportion of the skilled, male, manual working class’⁷⁰²; and a rise in computer-based and service industries. But also, concomitantly, a ‘weakening of older collective solidarities and block identities’⁷⁰³, based on class, for instance, that had come out of the industrial revolution and were now literally redundant. However, his purpose in the article was not so much to explain the new conjuncture, but to model its complexity. In order to really understand what was happening, he argued that it would be necessary to look in detail at the different forces that were coming together in specific locations – places such as the Henry Moore Studio, Dean Clough which can be understood as what S. Hall calls ‘a kind of nodal point’⁷⁰⁴ in ‘[this] new historical conjuncture’.⁷⁰⁵

Up until October 1988, when *Signals* happened, the conditions prevailing in Paul’s art world had been relatively simple. It was a group of working class artists, who had emerged through Social Democracy into Thatcherism, in the context of a business park, changing – grain by grain, step by step - from a “volatile” Beuysian community into some kind of commercial operation. After *Signals*, new forces had entered the picture, in the form of Robert Hopper, Barry Barker and the Henry Moore Foundation, bringing with them the biosphere of the established British art world, in which Robert and Barry as institutional curators were both operating. This very particular organism had been going through its own unfolding process of evolution through the 1970s and 1980s in parallel with Dean Clough.

7.2 ‘The Context of So-Called Curating in Britain’⁷⁰⁶

In the immediate post-war decades, the established art world in Britain – embodied by the Arts Council, but incorporating a network of publicly funded galleries, running from Tate Gallery and other national galleries through regional art spaces, to

⁷⁰² Ibid.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ Stuart Hall & Doreen Massey, ‘Interpreting the Crisis’ in *Soundings*, Issue 44, Spring 2010, p.70.

⁷⁰⁵ S. Hall, “Gramsci and Us”, *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p.16.

⁷⁰⁶ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

municipal galleries in towns and cities across the country - had been modelled along the lines of Social Democracy. Like the state itself in that period, as Stuart Hall describes in *The State: Socialisms Old Caretaker*, it had been ‘a gigantic ... complex’ - well-meaning, but fundamentally undemocratic - in which ‘a political elite’, composed of ‘experts and bureaucrats’ governed the art world on behalf of artists.⁷⁰⁷ As much as anything, it was there to regulate and uphold standards – in other words, to manage and contain the activities of artists - by establishing a “canon” of artworks that were considered to be of importance, and controlling how they were displayed and explained to the public. What’s more, this ‘system of rule’⁷⁰⁸ had a strong class element, in line with the rest of British society, because arts administrators operating at all official levels - from retired grandees (‘the voluntary army of the Great and the Good’⁷⁰⁹, as Hewison puts it) sitting on the boards of cultural institutions to directors, keepers and curators working in museum and gallery settings - were mostly drawn from the ranks of the upper middle classes; whilst, according to Barry Barker, ‘there were so many working class artists’.⁷¹⁰

As Barry told me, ‘The context of so-called curating that I grew up in [during the 1960s] was a strange affair ... Curators were basically art historians’⁷¹¹: that is, people who looked after museum collections, displayed paintings, sculptures, prints and drawings, probably in chronological order, based on a thorough knowledge of the established “canon”, divided and ranked according to media, and then told visitors why it was important. The whole thing revolved around what Barry called ‘the idea of scholarship’, ‘the idea of connoisseurship’.⁷¹² He said

as a curator, you had to have studied at the Courtauld, so it was all retrospective. Anyone who had travelled ...and knew contemporary work, that

⁷⁰⁷ S.Hall, “The State – Socialism’s Old Caretaker”, *Marxism Today*, November 1984, p.25.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid., p.28.

⁷⁰⁹ R. Hewison, *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics since 1940*, (Routledge, 1995/2015), p.79.

⁷¹⁰ Barry Barker in conversation with Paul Bradley, with Alison Rowley, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, 20 September 2017.

⁷¹¹ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁷¹² Ibid.

didn't matter. That was empirical experience. "No", [they'd say], "you haven't written monographs".⁷¹³

The critic and researcher, Andrew Brighton described this phenomenon in an article in *Art Monthly*, published in 1987, as 'the half-wit historicism of the English liberal establishment'.⁷¹⁴ On the one hand, it dictated that art was a matter of 'pure aesthetic experience', with 'no ideology and no political economy'⁷¹⁵ – indeed, he said, 'in Britain one qualification for having power in the art world [was] to be ignorant of the kind of discourses that offer accounts of the structures of power'.⁷¹⁶

On the other, it insisted that you had to have studied art history ('the familiar chronological trot') and learnt 'the professional discourse of art bureaucrats...[with its] body of shared assumptions'⁷¹⁷ to be qualified to comment on art practice. According to Brighton, '[this] smothering culture' lay over Britain like 'a great dank blanket... woven of power disguised as morality and naturalised by snobbery'⁷¹⁸. It contained a strong class element, quietly separating curators and artists into white and blue collar categories. According to Barry:

It was very much the old boy network, public school situation... The so-called art historians [who worked for the Arts Council as curators] ... were called "officers". It was all "officers", so a very military kind of thing ...and they treated artists in the same system. Power. That's what it was about. A lot of it.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹³ Ibid.

⁷¹⁴ Andrew Brighton, "WASP Modernism", *Art Monthly*, February 1987, No. 103, p.4

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.

⁷¹⁹ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

7.3 ‘Why Should We Fund the Arts?’⁷²⁰

When Mrs Thatcher came to power, she had set about re-shaping the art world in her own image, replacing “the Great and the Good” of Social Democracy, with ‘a new breed of nabob – entrepreneurs, public-relations experts, newspaper executives’⁷²¹, of whom Ernest Hall (appointed to the Art Council in 1990) is a prime example. This new population was ostensibly less stuffy than ‘the old Establishment’⁷²² with its paternalistic and potentially oppressive attitude. However, in reality, Mrs Thatcher’s reshuffle changed the class-composition of the established art world relatively little: indeed, the class division between artists and their managers was a common thread that runs through the Arts Council in all its incarnations from the 1940s to the 1990s. As Hewison (1995) has documented, of 68 people appointed to the Council’s Board between 1945 and 1970s by successive Labour and Conservative governments, ‘almost none were working-class in origin, only two were below the age of 40, and only a quarter ...had earned their living as artists’.⁷²³ Through the 1980s, when the Council recruited more business-minded people, including Ernest Hall who was working class in origin (though very wealthy and living in a mansion by this time), the vast majority of its nineteen board members were still private school and Oxbridge educated: at least sixteen in 1987/8; and at least thirteen in 1990/1 (when E. Hall is first listed)⁷²⁴. As Barry told me:

I think we forget in this country... [that] the class system is riddled here. The liberals, the whatever, they still don’t know how much it’s there. In the art world... you need money to be an artist, if you want to study art history you need money to go to the Courtauld. You need an independent means... [But] it

⁷²⁰ Quotation taken from D. Edgar, ‘Why should we fund the arts?’, *The Guardian*, 5 Jan 2012. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2012/jan/05/david-edgar-why-fund-the-arts>. Retrieved 25 June 2019.

⁷²¹ R. Hewison, *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics since 1940*, (Routledge, 1995/2015), p. 231.

⁷²² R. Hewison, *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics since 1940*, (Routledge, 1995/2015), p. 236.

⁷²³ *Ibid.* p. 140.

⁷²⁴ See *Arts Council: 43rd Annual Report and Accounts* (Arts Council of Great Britain, 1988) & *Arts Council: 45th Annual Report and Accounts* (Arts Council of Great Britain, 1990).

isn't just about money in that sense. I mean there are poor people, but it's class really. And it permeates institutions.

The big difference between the established art world in its pre- and post-Thatcher manifestations was one of values; or, as Hewison puts it, a matter 'of public responsibility'. For all its authoritarian tendencies, the pre-Thatcher world had upheld a faith in what Geoffrey Crossick & Patrycja Kaszynska [*Understanding the Value of Arts & Culture* (2016)] called 'the older and loftier goals of the arts such as the nurturing of cultural sensibility, the human spirit and moral reasoning'⁷²⁵. In this configuration, as David Edgar explains in *Why Should We Fund the Arts?* (2012), 'art's purpose was ennobling' and should be shielded by public money from 'a rising tide of populism' promoted by consumer culture in a burgeoning capitalist market place: 'a goal', according to Edgar, that was 'summed up in the founding chairman [of the Arts Council] John Maynard Keynes's ringing declaration: "Death to Hollywood"'⁷²⁶.

It is this 'theory of artistic value'⁷²⁷ that was challenged by Mrs Thatcher. For her, it wasn't so important for art to be what Edgar calls 'ennobling'⁷²⁸ – which was, after all a nebulous quality, defined previously according to the taste of a set of patrician art "experts", and easily be branded elitist. What really mattered was whether art offered 'value for money'⁷²⁹ and customer satisfaction, like any other product circulating in the free market place, which could be measured in a much more concrete way by counting the numbers of visitors attending each venue. According to Arts Minister, Richard Luce:

⁷²⁵ Geoffrey Crossick & Patrycja Kaszynska, *Understanding the value of arts & culture: The AHRC Cultural Value Project*, AHRC, 2016.

Ch.1 Rethinking the terms of the cultural debate. p.16

⁷²⁶ D. Edgar, 'Why should we fund the arts?', *The Guardian*, 5 Jan 2012.

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2012/jan/05/david-edgar-why-fund-the-arts>. Retrieved 25 June 2019.

⁷²⁷ Ibid.

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ R. Hewison, *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics since 1940*, (Routledge, 1995/2015), p. xiii.

The most important thing for the arts world is to accept the economic and political climate in which we now operate ... There is no argument that enables us to claim that the arts are sacrosanct and should be insulated from the real world...⁷³⁰

7.4 'The Shock of Serota'⁷³¹

The established art world, like every other part of British society, reached its tipping point in 1988/9, when Thatcherism started to spread like wild fire through its institutions. In this milieu, the crucial moment was marked by a changing of the guard at one of Britain's leading galleries, the Tate Gallery, Millbank, London, where Nicholas Serota took over as Director from Alan Bowness, who went on immediately to become Director of the Henry Moore Foundation. Seen in retrospect, this event was as significant for museum directors and curators as *Freeze* was for artists across the country, and *Signals* for artists in Halifax, with all three events happening almost simultaneously. For art gallery curators up and down the country, the beginning of Serota's tenure signalled an entire change of culture, as well as a major shift in curatorial direction, because, whilst over hauling Tate's finances, Serota also shifted the focus of the gallery onto a new set of art practices - with which the new culture then became associated, though in reality they were separate entities.

According to critic, Waldemar Januszczak in "Shock of Serota" (1987), the Tate Gallery under Bowness' leadership (from 1980 to 1988) had been an 'honourable but dull'⁷³² institution, focused still on the glory days of British art in the inter-war period, when Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and other veterans of the St Ives school (with whom Bowness had a close connection, as Hepworth's son-in-law) were in their heyday. Certainly the gallery had expanded its historical collections; and established new spaces in which to display them, including the Clore extension in London and the new Tate Gallery in Liverpool, which opened in 1987 and 1988 respectively. It had

⁷³⁰ Extract from a speech delivered by R. Luce at the annual conference of the Regional Art Associations in 1988. Documented in R. Hewison, *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics since 1940*, (Routledge, 1995/2015), p.256.

⁷³¹ Quotation taken from W. Januszczak, "The Shock of Serota", *The Guardian*, 26 November 1987.

⁷³² W. Januszczak, "The Shock of Serota", *The Guardian*, 26 November 1987, p. 12.

attempted occasionally an international survey exhibition, for instance *New Art: at the Tate* (1983), curated by its progressive Director of Exhibitions, Michael Compton. However, it had huge gaps in its contemporary holdings, revealed by its collection displays, *Forty Years of Modern Art: 1945 to 1985* (1986), which omitted whole areas of post-1965 practice, including ‘conceptual art’, ‘Land Art’, ‘Fluxus’ and ‘Italian Arte Povera; or represented them only via ‘genteel British alternatives to international developments’.⁷³³ Essentially, according to Januszczak, Bowness’ Tate had ‘devoted itself to catching up with the past rather than re-inventing the present’⁷³⁴; and thereby committed ‘the gravest of all 1980’s sins’, by ‘[failing to] appear young and go ahead’.⁷³⁵

Twenty years Bowness’ junior, Serota (b. 1947) was one of only a handful of institutional curators in Britain to have engaged with post-1965 art practice at an international level. As a regional exhibitions officer at the Arts Council in the early 1970s, he had helped to organise *New Art* (Hayward Gallery, London, 1972), which was the first institutional exhibition of British conceptualism; and since then, as Director of MOMA, Oxford (1973 - 6) and Whitechapel Art Gallery (1976 – 1987), London, he had run ambitious international programmes with a contemporary flavour. In 1988, he was tasked with bringing Tate much more into the present, because – as he told a reporter from the Independent in 1989, one year after his appointment – ‘it was time [the gallery] stopped trying to rival New York’s MOMA as a great museum of early modernism and began the task of making itself “a great museum of late 20th century art”’⁷³⁶.

However, Serota wasn’t just more go-ahead than Bowness in art terms; he was also better equipped and more prepared to surf the wave of Thatcherism that was sweeping through Britain. As Januszczak (1987) tells us, Alan Bowness, in his approach to curatorship, had ‘belong[ed] to the age of old rather than new money’⁷³⁷: through the

⁷³³ W. Januszczak, “Missing Masters at Tate”, *The Guardian*, 19 February 1986, p.11.

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

⁷³⁵ Ibid.

⁷³⁶ Andrew Graham-Dixon reporting Serota’s words from a 1989 interview, in ‘Jannis Kounellis’, *The Independent*, 3 March 1990. Clipping held in HMS Archive.

⁷³⁷ W. Januszczak, “The Shock of Serota”, *The Guardian*, 26 November 1987, p. 12.

1980s, whilst the Conservative government was busy reconfiguring the arts around business, he had still been a vocal advocate for public subsidy which – according to Chin-Tao Wu (2001) - was hardly ‘an attitude that Number ten would have been prepared to countenance forever’⁷³⁸. By contrast, Serota represented what Wu calls ‘a new breed of museum director’⁷³⁹ – termed by Antony Thornicroft, in *Business and the Arts* (1988), as ‘scholarly business managers’ - who ‘like their American counterparts, [were] entrepreneurial’⁷⁴⁰. Whilst they were ‘[not] necessarily Thatcherite in a political sense’⁷⁴¹, they were much more aligned with that political order, because they combined art knowledge with advanced skills in fundraising, networking and marketing. It’s perhaps notable in this context that Serota had studied Economics at Christ College, Cambridge, before moving into Art History. His first degree must have come in useful because - beyond fleshing out the collection and putting on interesting exhibitions - he was required (in Januszczyk’s terminology) ‘[to] turn [Bowness’s] maiden aunt unto a bit of a Samantha Fox’, and ‘the biggest art-fun palace in Europe’⁷⁴²: in other words, to attract more money and visitors (or “consumers”) to the gallery. And this, as anyone who works in the arts today can conclusively verify, was to be the way of the future for arts administration.

7.5 The Old Art Establishment

Within this context, the Henry Moore Foundation, as it existed between 1988 and 1994, when Alan Bowness was Director, can be understood literally and metaphorically as an outpost of the pre-Thatcher British art world – the “old establishment”, pre-Serota: one of the few remaining ‘cosy clubs’⁷⁴³, to use art historian Martin Kemp’s phraseology, within a sea of ‘partisan and managerially-

⁷³⁸ Chin-Tao Wu, *Privatising Culture*, 2001, pp.136-7.

⁷³⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid.

⁷⁴² W. Januszczyk, ‘The Shock of Serota’, *The Guardian*, 26 November 1987, p. 12.

⁷⁴³ Martin Kemp, art historian, quoted in R. Hewison, *Culture and Consensus* (1995), p. 231. Kemp resigned from the V&A in 1989 in protest at the changes wrought in museum governance.

minded bodies'⁷⁴⁴ (whose members were expected to promulgate policies which reflected the economic values of the market), sheltered from the storm – ironically enough - by Henry Moore's money.

Through the period of Bowness' tenure, the Foundation's Board of Trustees was populated by "the great and the good" of the post-war period, when Moore himself had entered the upper echelons of the art establishment including Lord Goodman (1915 – 1995, solicitor and Chairman of the Arts Council from 1965 to 1972), Margaret Mcleod (1925 – 2007, who worked for the British Council from 1942 to 1984, latterly as Deputy Director), Maurice Ash (1917 – 2003, Trustee, Dartington Hall 1964-92, Chairman, Dartington Hall, 1972-84) and Joanna Drew (1929 – 2003, who worked for the Arts Council from 1952 to 1992, latterly as Director of Hayward Gallery). Robert Hopper - though considerably younger than his Trustees - had been personally recommended for the role of Director of the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust by Bowness (whom he knew from the Yorkshire Sculpture Park); and came from the same stable of people. However, as critic Tim Hilton (1993) describes, the Foundation wasn't just 'a direct descendant of the Arts Council before Thatcherism' in its 'personnel', but also in its 'ethos'⁷⁴⁵.

Like the Arts Council (for example) in the pre-Thatcher period, the Foundation was essentially a conservative (with a small 'c') organisation: 'it's realm the nation, it's organisational form the institution, its repertoire the established canon and works aspiring to join it'⁷⁴⁶, to use Edgar's terminology. In terms of contemporary practice it was focused on the traditional category of sculpture, as if "1968" and art in the expanded field had never happened. Its approved cast of art characters is captured for

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁵ T. Hilton, 'Exhibitions: Carving up a fortune: Henry Moore's foundation has been spending again on a new pounds 5m sculpture gallery in Leeds. But is the money being used wisely?', *The Independent*, 1 May 1993.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/exhibitions-carving-up-a-fortune-henry-moores-foundation-has-been-spending-again-on-a-new-pounds-5m-2320486.html>. Retrieved September 2019.

⁷⁴⁶ D. Edgar, 'Why should we fund the arts?', *The Guardian*, 5 Jan 2012. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2012/jan/05/david-edgar-why-fund-the-arts>. Retrieve 15 June 2019.

posterity in *Sculpture Now*⁷⁴⁷, an editorial in *Burlington Magazine*, that was published to mark the inauguration of the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust in Yorkshire in December 1987. It ran from Henry Moore through Eduardo Paolozzi (1924 - 2005), Lynn Chadwick (1914 - 2003) and Kenneth Armitage (1916 - 2002) to Anthony Caro (1924 - 2013) and the New Generation artists: well established names who together comprised ‘the old boy network in British art’⁷⁴⁸, as Januszczak put it. Then it motored on through to Anthony Gormley (b.1950), Tony Cragg (b.1947) and Richard Deacon (b.1950), by-passing the 1960s generation of British artists (even excluding Richard Long, for example). The editor praised the work of this younger generation for ‘its materiality, factual presence in real space, the way it refers to existing recognisable ‘things’⁷⁴⁹ presumably in a veiled rebuke to conceptual practices of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

However, for all these stuffy tendencies, it upheld ‘a theory of artistic value... [in which] art’s purpose [was] ennobling’⁷⁵⁰ and its practice intrinsically worthwhile, so that it must not be left to sink or swim within the stormy seas of the market place. This is something that Robert wanted particularly to reiterate at his job interview: in response to a section in the job description that referred to ‘current problems in the art world in the context of a changing society’, he noted that it would be the Trust’s role to protect the practice of sculpture from ‘Hard-nosed materialism. Devaluation of all things that are not “market led” (market forces)’.⁷⁵¹ As he wrote with regret: ‘Art is not for the first time, in [a] similar position to the church in the face of militant materialism’⁷⁵². Clearly, he – and the entire board of the Foundation as it was then composited - were primed to protect art in its ‘older and loftier’ forms from what

⁷⁴⁷ “Sculpture Now”, *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 129, No. 1017 (Dec. 1987), pp. 783 + 804.

⁷⁴⁸ W. Januszczak, “Missing Masters at Tate”, *The Guardian*, 19 February 1986, p.11.

⁷⁴⁹ “Sculpture Now”, *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 129, No. 1017 (Dec. 1987), pp. 783 + 804.

⁷⁵⁰ D. Edgar, ‘Why should we fund the arts?’, *The Guardian*, 5 Jan 2012. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2012/jan/05/david-edgar-why-fund-the-arts>. Retrieved 25 June 2019.

⁷⁵¹ Job description for Director of “The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust, Leeds”, annotated by Robert Hopper, (n.d., 1987), in folder labelled, “Robert”, Box: HMFEP (Pre-April 1999). Henry Moore Studio Archive.

⁷⁵² *Ibid.*

Edgar calls ‘a rising tide of populism ([in which] art's role [was] entertainment, its realm the marketplace, its form the business, its audience mass)’⁷⁵³. And that’s where its proposal for a ‘studio’ or ‘studios’ came from, because as Peter Murray told me:

everything to do with the funding of the arts, the whole pattern of funding was changing and you had to be able to really justify obtaining money from the Arts Council or local authorities, in terms of numbers and popularity and things like that. [The studio proposal] was an interesting contrast with everything else at the time ... [because it] was trying to do something that forgot about the public and just concentrated on the artist.⁷⁵⁴

So, the Trustees’ particular request that Robert should look into ‘the provision of studios for sculptors, sculpture fellowships and other ways, as may be, of integrating working artists within the community’ wasn’t so much a directive, as a statement of moral intent or purpose. It staked out a position for the Foundation’s new organisation that was markedly different from that of most other cultural institutions in the late 1980s, funded by the government, either directly or via the Arts Council, which were having to focus on revenue streams and visitor numbers.

In this configuration, the Henry Moore Foundation was an ‘imagined community’ of institutional curators and established artists, configured around sculpture, whose purpose was to combat a rising tide of market driven consumption, which had started in the post-war period and accelerated under Thatcherism. Its constituency encompassed the entire nation. However, by 1988, when a new establishment had taken over the art world in London, its geographical centre of gravity had shifted to West Yorkshire, which, as the Editor of *The Burlington Magazine* documented, in a second article (published in September 1989, just before the Henry Moore Studio officially opened), it was intending to transform ‘into the sculptural heart of Britain’⁷⁵⁵.

⁷⁵³ Edgar (2012)

⁷⁵⁴ Peter Murray, interviewed by the author, 24 May 2017.

⁷⁵⁵ ‘Sculpture at Leeds’, *The Burlington Magazine*, September 1989, Vol CXXXI, Number 1038. September 1989, p. 603.

7.6 A European Art World

When Barry Barker (b. 1947) came to Halifax in 1988 at Paul's invitation, he was Director of Arnolfini, which was one of the most important contemporary art galleries in Britain. He was also amongst that handful of British institutional curators to have engaged with post-1965 art practice at an international level, of whom Nicholas Serota was the other most prominent example. Indeed, in that moment, he and Serota – who are immediate contemporaries - were riding high together in the established British art world, through which their careers had developed more or less in parallel. In the mid-1970s, when Serota was Director of the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), Oxford (1973-6), hosting Sol Le Witt and Joseph Beuys, for example, Barry had served as Director of Exhibitions at the ICA, London (1974 – 6), showing work by Lawrence Weiner, Mario Merz, Mary Kelly and Marcel Broodthaers; later, when Serota was working at Whitechapel (as Director from 1976 to 1987), Barry had moved to John Hansard Gallery, Southampton (where he was Director from 1980 to 1986), then to Arnolfini, a year or so before Serota was appointed as Tate Director.

So, Barry and Serota shared an interest in international practice of the post-1965 period; and had shown work of the same school and era, when few of their contemporaries were doing so. Ostensibly, they should have had much in common. However, in reality, the worlds of art that they carried around in their heads were totally different, because they had approached the world of curating from opposite directions. Like Alan Bowness and Robert Hopper, Serota had trodden the well-worn path from private school, through Oxford University and the Courtauld Institute to the Arts Council.

Barry, meanwhile, had come from a working class family in the East End of London. He had been educated from the age of thirteen at Camberwell School of Art, as part of a scholarship programme for talented children from less advantaged backgrounds; and practised for a while as an artist before becoming an institutional curator, which then (as still now) was very unusual.⁷⁵⁶ So, as Barry told me, Serota 'was establishment

⁷⁵⁶ Other non-public school men had operated successfully on the British institutional art circuit in the post-war period, including Norman Reid (Director

absolutely through and through'⁷⁵⁷; whereas 'I was always half an artist'⁷⁵⁸, and – in a British art world where class and power were (and are) utterly blended – this mattered more than their art interests.

Barry had come of age as a young artist in the stuffy British art world of the 1960s, where curators were art historians, trained to organise art and explain it to other people; and artists were expected to know their place within the art world's echelons. Having received a 'very conventional' training at Camberwell, he had been channelled into 'the usual round of part-time teaching'; and was destined to teach and paint a little, without rising any further through the hierarchy. However, this fate hadn't been enough for him. As he told me: 'I didn't want to stay a Camberwell, Slade painter, teaching drawing and perspective as I was then [...] So many people who were teaching were frustrated artists. I thought I can't go on with this all day. I want to be where the action is'.

Like Lippard in the same period, Barry had escaped – imaginatively and physically – from the 'smothering culture'⁷⁵⁹ by which he was immediately surrounded into a new, more free and equal, art world that was just then emerging in the international arena by 'travelling incessantly in Europe'⁷⁶⁰. He said,

It was 1967/68, famous dates, you know. The notion of "68" and so-called conceptual art, fascinated me... I got very tied up in it. I just wanted to know what was going on. I went here, there and everywhere. I would go on a train, by boat ... I was always going backwards and forwards. I went to exhibitions, including all the [Marcel] Broodthaers shows. I went to Dusseldorf. I attended Documenta [in Kassel]. I hate going to openings now, but I went to everything then - I'd go to the opening of an envelope. I'd just go around Europe. I went

of Tate, 1964 - 1979) and Roy Strong (Director of Victoria & Albert Museum, 1973 - 1987), but they had both passed through grammar school and university, which was the accepted route to class mobility.

⁷⁵⁷ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁷⁵⁸ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁷⁵⁹ Andrew Brighton, "WASP Modernism", *Art Monthly*, February 1987, No. 103, p.4

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

all out and met people, [found] artists [where they were] congregat[ing], including [John] Baldessari, [Laurence] Weiner, [Carl] Andre, [Joseph] Kosuth, [Daniel] Buren. Everybody really. Because you couldn't meet [them] in England - there was nothing going on here... American artists, [who became] friends of mine, like Lawrence Weiner and other people, used to fly over England to get to Germany.⁷⁶¹ There was lots of drink. Chatting away, experiencing art... you know, it was interesting, exciting, I came away [from places like Amsterdam, Brussels, Dusseldorf and Paris] generated ... I was able to expand mentally.⁷⁶²

In Europe, Barry had encountered an alternative model of curating to the one he knew in England, in which art was presented “live”, in the moment it was happening, rather than retrospectively, as part of a lesson in art history prescribed from above by an outside authority. This was taking place not so much in public galleries (though there was some overlap, with Harald Szeemann’s exhibition, *When Attitudes Become Form* at the Kunsthalle Bern, 1969, for instance), but in the small commercial or semi-commercial art spaces, which had proliferated in the late 1960s and early 1970s, whose activities are documented in the pages of Lippard’s anthologies. These were run, not by professional curators, but by ‘so-called dealers’⁷⁶³ (as Barker described them), many of whom had themselves started out as artists or were close to the people they represented: As Barry told me:

people like Konrad Fischer [Konrad Fischer Gallery, Dusseldorf], Fernand Spillmaeckers [of MTL, Brussels], Andreane Heerte of Art and Project in Amsterdam. Very important. A few others. Yvon Lambert [of Yvon Lambert Gallery] in Paris. Ileana Sonnabend [of Sonnabend Gallery, Paris]. I knew all these people... I got to know Konrad Fischer really well [through working in Nigel Greenwood’s gallery... I was very friendly with Spillemaekers who sadly was killed in a car crash. He was a wonderful bloke. I nearly took over his gallery when he died. Because he wanted to retire and just go to live in Ostend and work with Art & Language all the time ... They were all very

⁷⁶¹ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁷⁶² Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁷⁶³ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2017.

much there and they were close to artists. It was a different mentality. I just thought – this is for me. It’s where I learnt things. They were all very much there and they were close to artists.⁷⁶⁴

This context had generated new ways of making exhibitions, which have been documented recently by Angela Wenzel (2016), Brigitte Kölle (2014) and Linda Morris (2014) in relation to the activities of Barry’s friend, Konrad Fischer in Dusseldorf who the authors cite as a pioneer in this area. According to Wenzel:

Fischer’s revolutionary idea was for artists not to send finished works, but for them to develop a concept for the exhibition space. The gallerist paid their plane ticket and let them live at his home, while he procured the necessary materials for the exhibition works that were then created on site.⁷⁶⁵

Fischer’s approach to gallery practice reflected the new ways in which young artists were working in the late 1960s, because, as Kölle records, ‘[it] encouraged and enabled a type of art that respond[ed] sensitively and specifically to the site where it [was] to be presented’⁷⁶⁶. According to Barry, ‘it is really [that as a curator or gallerist, you take on] the role shall we say – I hate these words – of facilitator or whatever, but you introduce an artist to a situation’,⁷⁶⁷ by which he meant ‘a set of circumstances that are very particular.’⁷⁶⁸

The European art world was very “real” for Barry, because he experienced it in physical locations, amongst actual artists who became friends and associates. However, it was also an “imagined community” encompassing many thousands of artists operating across ‘the Americas, Europe, England, Australia and Asia’, who he

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁵ A. Wenzel, *Cloud and Crystal: The Dorothee and Konrad Fischer Collection, 24 September 2016–8 January 2017* (Dusseldorf: Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2016), 4. Retrieved 20 June 2019.

⁷⁶⁶ Brigitte Kölle, “Dealing in History I”, *Frieze*, 25 February 2014. <https://www.frieze.com/article/die-kunst-des-handels-i>. Retrieved 20 June 2019.

⁷⁶⁷ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁷⁶⁸ B. Barker, “A Space for Artists” in *The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust Studio at Dean Clough, Halifax* (HMST, 1993), p. xiii.

would never meet but nevertheless felt connected by ‘the chaotic network of ideas’ that were swirling above their heads in that moment, of which Fischer’s curatorial practices were just one aspect. It was the same community that Lippard had documented as a writer in *Six Years*; and Chris Sacker encountered as a young artist in the early 1970s, via his ‘free and open’ education at North East London Polytechnic. It had its own rituals and traditions, like those described by Kölle and Wenzel, but it was more about what Barry called ‘a kind of ethos, a kind of morality, how you treated artists, so on and so forth’⁷⁶⁹, which was very different from the way things worked in Britain, where artists were considered as supplicants within the art world’s social hierarchy. For Barry, in a curatorial context, it was about helping an artist to make work, but also supporting them through this process and putting their needs before your own or those of the gallery, which ‘went contrary to [the idea of] a kind of egotistical, gallery director come curator’⁷⁷⁰ that he had grown up with. As he told me:

I always took the side of the artist, to get the best out of them... I didn’t push myself forward. I stood in the background. That’s the way I did things. That’s the way artists liked it. ... There was a history of doing that [in Europe] in the 1960s and 70s.⁷⁷¹

Ultimately, the “place” that Barry held in his imagination was a “state of mind” where artists could operate freely outside the bounds of the established art world, and the artist was situated as a powerful figure, right at the centre of things. It was very different to the art worlds conjured by Serota and Robert, but quite close to that of Paul, atleast in its original Beuysian formation. Through the later 1980s, Paul’s world had morphed into something different, whilst Barry’s had remained just as it was in the 1960s and 1970s, unchanged, in all its Utopian glory. Nevertheless their alliance is understandable because, at point of origin, they were both working class artists attempting to make their way in the hostile structures of the British art world; and, for each, in a different context, it was, as Lippard put it, ‘a matter of artists’ power, of artists achieving enough solidarity so they aren’t at the mercy of a society that doesn’t

⁷⁶⁹ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid.

understand what they are doing'. However, this begs the question of what Paul and Barry found in common with Robert.

7.7 'The Tsar and Rasputin'⁷⁷²

Ostensibly, the partnership between Robert and Paul was unlikely on every level: – the patrician art boss and the “volatile”, working class performance artist-come-arts administrator; the upholder of “old world” values; and the emerging businessman. As David told me: ‘It was almost like the Tsar and Rasputin. Or maybe Robert was some Roman Emperor’⁷⁷³. He said, ‘I never understood totally the relationship between them, how in control Paul was of Robert or vice versa. Or how convenient it was for them both’.⁷⁷⁴ However, ‘obviously it worked’⁷⁷⁵; and the point was that they needed each other. Of course, Paul and his team of artists, who had been living on scraps in and around the old mill buildings, needed the Foundation’s money. However, Robert – who at the time was juggling all the various briefs that the Trustees had set him, including the last one for ‘studios’ – also desperately needed what Paul had to offer.

In the political climate of Thatcherism, where resources were being redirected from producers to consumers (artists to visitors), the Foundation wanted to help and support artists for ideological reasons. However, as a patrician, old world organisation, it had virtually no experience in this area, either of working directly with artists (except for Henry Moore, in his later years) or of setting up a new, un-tried-and-tested enterprise in any form. Bowness and the majority of his Trustees were “bureaucrats and experts”: upper middle class, public school boys, who had been university educated, whether in art history, law or another humanities subject. They were able managers, equipped to deal with official museum and gallery systems and structures (or at least the old systems and structures). They were also knowledgeable art historians, well used to compiling exhibitions from existing works and writing catalogue raisonnées and monographs. Robert came from exactly the same

⁷⁷² David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 20 January 2017.

⁷⁷³ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 20 January 2017.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid.

background having been educated at Sedbergh School, then trained as a solicitor, before taking a masters degree in Art History at Manchester University. According to Paul: ‘At Bradford, he [had been] mainly an administrator. He had his own exhibitions from time to time’.⁷⁷⁶ However, as Paul said, ‘there's a difference between working on a Frank Dobson exhibition, and working with an artist’.⁷⁷⁷ Neither Bowness nor the Trustees nor Robert really knew what a ‘studio’ project might entail, which explains why that section of the job description is so loosely worded. They just wanted to do “something”, as Murray put it.

Prior to meeting Paul, Robert had been investigating the possibilities. According to his notes⁷⁷⁸, he had immediately ruled out anything approaching ‘Community Arts in [the] 1960s sense’; and – having read the Calouste-Gulbenkian report on *The Economic Situation of the Visual Artist*⁷⁷⁹ – was wary of paid ‘placements and residencies’, which proliferated in galleries in the 1970s, but according to the report’s analysis, effectively offered artists ‘covert employment’ rather than supporting their practices. As he expressed, ‘[it] was not the objective to “cushion” sculptors, but to provide opportunities’. He looked at the model of ‘YCAG studios’, which offered ‘low rental, provision for artists in 1st stages of career (medium & long term)’; and considered setting up something similar for ‘sculptors 10 years out of college & beyond’. At the same time, he was contemplating ‘Conservation studio facilities. Casting & space for large and heavy work’, and even the possibility of establishing ‘a limited company [offering] specialist work & equipment for sculptors’. One option was to develop such provision at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, possibly at Inn Fold Farm, ‘in [the] New Building scheme’ or around the old Kennel Block, building on its existing programme of residencies. Another was to create studios or whatever they turned out to be within the proposed ‘Sculpture Centre’ in Leeds. However, he was also keen to develop the courtyard in the new building ‘for [a] Public Gallery and for small meeting/lecture space for evenings & weekends’; and quite quickly realised the

⁷⁷⁶ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁸ Job description for Director of “The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust, Leeds”, annotated by Robert Hopper, (n.d., 1987), in folder labelled, “Robert”, Box: HMFEP (Pre-April 1999). Henry Moore Studio Archive.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid. Robert Hopper refers to the ‘Sculptors Census. Gulbenkian Foundation. Report on condition of the artist.’

difficulties of combining all the various functions of the Trust in one building. It was at this point that Paul and Dean Clough entered the picture.

In Roger Graef's *Signals* programme, which broadcast Paul's talents to the world, he had appeared as a person with passion and energy who – as David told me - 'was perfectly capable of dealing with artists'⁷⁸⁰; and had already generated a considerable amount of art activity in the area, from nothing. Effectively, he had achieved in microcosm much of what the Foundation was looking to create; and it was surely for this reason that Robert visited him at Dean Clough shortly afterwards. Paul understood that Robert needed his help; but also that it might be possible to model the Foundation's vaguely worded brief into something that would work for himself and his colleagues financially. As he told me: 'Robert ... had a lot of other responsibilities ... he was a very hard working guy'.⁷⁸¹ David said:

At that point [Robert] was heavily involved in setting the Sculpture Trust up, he had a million different things on his desk and I think he was looking for a situation that was perhaps ready to go... We were a bit rough, a bit unformed, but we'd already been doing stuff.⁷⁸²

Almost immediately after Robert visited him, Paul set in motion a process that would lead to the creation of the Henry Moore Studio - which Robert had been contemplating for months without really making any progress on. As David told me:

Robert [saw] he could walk away and leave the Studio in the hands of someone who was perfectly capable of dealing with artists: talking to them on a very high level, facilitating them and making them feel that they were in a kind of special situation. Paul was brilliant at that.⁷⁸³

7.8 A Cultural Enterprise

⁷⁸⁰ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 19 January 2017.

⁷⁸¹ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁷⁸² David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 19 January 2017.

⁷⁸³ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 20 January 2017.

When Robert told Paul about his prospective plans in 1988, Paul analysed the situation with the acute eye of an entrepreneur and businessman. As he explained at the HMS Symposium, ‘Henry Moore left to artists in this country a great financial legacy, but he was [also] smart’⁷⁸⁴: ‘He wanted to work it so that his tax went to what he believed in.’⁷⁸⁵ According to Paul:

He said take care of my art, spread the word of art ...particularly help sculptors; and, yes, he gave to Robert... the added responsibility of waking up the North, of creating a basis for [art to happen in this area].⁷⁸⁶

Paul wanted to build on what he had already been doing in E Mill, with the Phyllida Barlow and John Newling projects; but realised that he would need to package it up in a way that was appealing to the Foundation’s institutional sensibilities. Since the early 1980s, when he first went to Berlin to train with Grotowski’s actors, Paul had been touring Babel’s productions and travelling through Europe; and was well aware – in a way that Serota was also, but Robert probably wasn’t - of what was going on over there.

Through the 1980s, curators in major European art museums had been engaging with contemporary artists of the 1960s generation in a way that they hadn’t been for the most part in Britain. They had been expanding existing collections and gallery spaces to accommodate the new kinds of practice that came out of this period. They had also been creating new museums of modern and contemporary art, for example, the Halle Fur Neue Kunst in Schaffhausen (est. 1980), Museum of Modern Art in Frankfurt (est. 1981), Museum of Contemporary Art, Bordeaux (est. 1984), and Magasin Grenoble (est. 1986). Of the latter, all but the museum in Frankfurt – for which a new architectural structure was designed by Hans Hollein – had been sited in former industrial buildings whose large, open spaces were better suited than conventional

⁷⁸⁴ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁷⁸⁵ Paul Bradley interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁷⁸⁶ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

galleries for the display of works that were not paintings or sculptures in the conventional sense. At the same time, across various different institutional settings, European curators had started – on occasion – to commission new works by artists who had come of age in the 1960s and 1970s, in line with the way their practices had been developing in the intervening decades. As Paul told us at the HMS Symposium:

The Henry Moore Studio was not an original idea. What was happening in some of the more enlightened museums in the Netherlands and Germany was the idea of the project space and this was a way of successful museums, for instance the Gemeentemuseum [in the Hague] was one of the first to do it [‘about 12 to 18 months before ourselves’, according to Paul’s calculations] ... Magasin in Grenoble was very much set up to be an experimental space. They had the benefit of wonderful collections of historical and contemporary art works, particularly the Gemeentemuseum, but they put aside a room for artists, both known and unknown to take risks. That informed us as a possibility.⁷⁸⁷

Britain was some way behind the curve in this respect. As Januszczak commented in 1987, ‘there was no equivalent in London of the Pompidou Centre or Moma or the Stedelijk, no centre for international new art buzzing with modernist energy, bursting with a sense of the here and now’⁷⁸⁸. However, in 1988, it was just starting to wake up to new developments. Serota was planning to extend the Tate Gallery’s collections properly into the later 20th century, and - whilst there was no dedicated national museum of modern and contemporary art until Tate Modern opened its doors in 2000 - the new Tate Gallery in Liverpool was billed as something quite similar. It was planned, as Chrissie Iles recounted in *Performance Magazine* (1987), with a whole suite of ‘spaces specifically designed for installations, artists’ studios and live work’⁷⁸⁹, on the top floor of the building, to allow ‘considerations of developments in the ways in which artists work and in which art [has been] produced and presented

⁷⁸⁷ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁷⁸⁸ W. Januszczak, “The Shock of Serota”, *The Guardian*, 26 November 1987, p. 12.

⁷⁸⁹ C. Iles, “Live Space for Tate of the North”, *Performance Magazine*, March/April, No.46, p.24.

over the last twenty five years to be taken into account'.⁷⁹⁰ What's more, to mark its early inauguration, the Merseyside Development Company had commissioned a new performance sculpture by Bruce McLean (with David Ward, Gavin Bryars and P.M. Hughes), called *A Song for the North*, which had been enacted on the water of Albert Dock in 1986. However, when the gallery was finally unveiled in 1988, it was without the promised studios and other facilities for artists. As Paul told me, 'they couldn't afford it. Tate Liverpool was grossly underfunded'.⁷⁹¹ The top floor area remained closed and un-converted until the middle 1990s; and, when it eventually opened to the public, it was configured into a hospitality suite and conventional gallery space, which has been used ever since primarily for the display of paintings and sculpture.

Paul understood that he and Robert could achieve in the old mills at Dean Clough what Tate Liverpool had failed to deliver: a space for artists of the 1960s generation to create new work, on the European model, backed by Henry Moore's money. What's more, with a bit of adaptation, it could be made to fit the Trustee's idea of a "studio"; and provide a living for himself and his team of artists. Whilst project rooms in European institutions were often billed as 'studios', they were in reality more focused on display than making. As Paul said, 'Magasin was in the main an exhibition space dealing with large installations, some aspects of which were created for the space'⁷⁹². This was inevitably the case with state-funded organisations whose primary role was to be public facing. However, the Foundation had no such automatic responsibility. Paul's idea for the proposed new studio at Dean Clough was '[to] extend ... the [European] model into artistic production'⁷⁹³; and 'create a special system for innovative projects', where 'everyone associated with the production process ... was an artist'.⁷⁹⁴

The Foundation was happy to fund the project, because, as Paul told me, similar things were happening in major galleries in other countries, which 'gave the

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁹¹ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁷⁹² Paul Bradley in conversation with Daniel Maclean, "Fail Better: The art of Paul Bradley", *Corridor8*, Annual 2010, p. 51.

⁷⁹³ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁴ Ibid.

precedent, gave the confidence, gave people like the Trustees, the original Trustees, the good guys and girls, the ability to finance it'.⁷⁹⁵ He said,

In my opinion it had to be done. It wasn't just happening at Dean Clough. It was something that was happening through European art at that time. Project spaces. You just thought, there's a wave breaking on the shore, we're going to surf it.⁷⁹⁶

7.9 Falls the Shadow: Recent British and European Art (1986)

So, Paul and Robert had the space and the money, but they needed access to international artists of the 1960s generation, who by this time were very senior, very busy practitioners. And this was a tricky problem, because – in 1988 - neither one of them had an easy entrée to these art circles. In theory, Robert was operating at the right level of seniority within the art world to attract their attention. However, he was moving in a completely different milieu. As Peter Murray told me:

I would say that in those days [his] interests were... more to do with [earlier] developments in British sculpture. He was very fond of Moore. When we organised the Henry Moore exhibition here [at YSP], he wrote an essay for the catalogue. I could be wrong, but... I think perhaps his interests were more traditional. More mid-20th Century. [Eduardo] Paolozzi. He thought [Barbara] Hepworth was fantastic'.⁷⁹⁷

Indeed, his position at the Henry Moore Foundation was potentially a hindrance in this regard, because – as Barry told us at the HMS Symposium – the kinds of artists he and Paul were targeting, including Richard Long, for example, associated Moore with an old art establishment that, as young people in the 1960s, they had been trying

⁷⁹⁵ Paul Bradley in conversation with Barry Barker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁷⁹⁶ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁷⁹⁷ Peter Murray, interviewed by the author, 24 May 2017. Murray's account is corroborated by Robin Vousden in Hopper's obituary (*Independent*, 2000).

to escape from. It was a case of ‘Oh, I don’t want to be in the shadow of Henry Moore. You know, I don’t want anything to do with him’.⁷⁹⁸ Meanwhile, Paul’s contacts were mostly in the world of performance, which in the 1980s was also a very different sphere of operation. This is where Barry Barker entered the picture.

Through the 1970s and 80s, Barry had been engaging with artists like Carl Andre, Janis Kounellis, Richard Long, Giuseppe Penone, Mario Merz, Ulrich Ruckriem, Richard Serra and Lawrence Weiner (all later invited to work at the Henry Moore Studio), whom he had met in Europe in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Indeed, he was a pioneer in this area. In the very early 1970s, he had worked as an assistant at Nigel Greenwood Inc. Ltd in Sloane Gardens, which was one of only four commercial galleries in London, including Lisson (run by Nicholas Logsdail), Situation and Jack Wendler showing work by young international artists in this period.⁷⁹⁹ Then, on the back of this experience, and his European contacts, he had been appointed as Director of Exhibitions at the ICA, London (1974 – 1976), where he had implemented his own international exhibition programme.⁸⁰⁰ As he said:

My policy was to show international artists that everybody had read about in Artforum or something, but never seen, mixed in with British artists... My idea was to put younger British artists, like John Murphy, and a few other people, in the context of Lawrence Weiner and other people [I had met in Europe]. It seemed to work’.⁸⁰¹

⁷⁹⁸ Barry Barker in conversation with Paul Bradley, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017

⁷⁹⁹ Nicholas Serota, “Nigel Greenwood: Influential gallerist who helped shape contemporary British art”, *The Guardian*, Wed 21 April 2004. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2004/apr/21/guardianobituaries.artsobituaries>. Retrieved 10 July 2019.

⁸⁰⁰ Press release, *Marcel Broodthaers. Décor: A Conquest and Bricks: 1966-1975*, Michael Werner Gallery (21 November 2013 - 18 January 2014). <http://michaelwerner.com/exhibition/2871/press>. Retrieved September 2019.

⁸⁰¹ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

His project with Marcel Broodthaers, *Décor: A Conquest by Marcel Broodthaers* (1975) is ‘now widely considered to be among the most important artistic manifestations of the twentieth century’.⁸⁰²

During the 1980s, Barry had been involved with two key exhibitions, both at the Hayward Gallery – *Pier + Ocean: Construction in the Art of the 1970s* (May - June 1980) and *Falls the Shadow: Recent British and European Art* (April – June 1986) - the former as an organiser (just prior to his appointment as Director of John Hansard Gallery, Southampton), assisting artists, Gerhard von Graevenitz and Norman Dilworth, who were the selectors; and the latter as co-curator with artist, John Thompson (after which he took up the post of Director of Arnolfini, Bristol). Together with *New Art* (Tate, 1983) which was a larger and more diffuse exhibitions, these had been the first substantial group presentations in Britain of work by international artists of the “1968” generation since *When Attitudes Become Form* (1969) had travelled from the Kunsthalle Bern to the ICA, London.

The international artists who appeared in *Falls the Shadow* were exactly the artists that Paul and Robert wanted to lure into their new studio. By 1986, they were well into their forties and fifties, described accurately by critic, Brandon Taylor in his review of *Falls the Shadow* as of ‘middle-generation former Arte Povera, Conceptual, Fluxus and other denominations’⁸⁰³ In Europe, their work had been circulating for many years on mainstream exhibition circuits, through the new museums of modern art and ‘Kunsthallen in the more privileged parts of the EEC’⁸⁰⁴, as another, more reactionary critic, William Feaver, rather disdainfully put it. So they were big names on the international stage, which was reassuring to Robert Hopper and the Trustees of the Foundation, who weren’t used to taking a punt on new practitioners. However, their practices had still rarely been seen in Britain, ‘except in magazines’, as Taylor

⁸⁰² Michael Werner Gallery press release for *Marcel Broodthaers: A Conquest + Bricks, 1966 – 1975* (21 November 2013 through 18 January 2014). <https://www.michaelwerner.com/exhibitions/marcel-broodthaers3/installation-views>

⁸⁰³ Brandon Taylor, “Falls the Shadow: The Hayward Annual”, *Art Monthly*, May 1986, No 96, p.3.

⁸⁰⁴ William Feaver, “Quiet and Meaningless: The 1986 Hayward Annual”, *The Observer*, 13 April 1986, p. 21.

commented⁸⁰⁵; and so felt quite fresh and go ahead in a British context. More importantly, from Paul's perspective, they were creating the types of 'ambitious' project that, as Paul explained, 'the experience and connectivity of the support staff at Dean Clough could realise'.⁸⁰⁶ He said:

They were confident in their own practice, they were making money. These guys were starting to become very successful financially. They were having exhibitions all over the world. They were carrying ideas. Setting up their own quasi museums.⁸⁰⁷

When Barry brought Giuseppe Penone to Halifax in 1988, he gave Paul and Robert their first point of contact with a section of the post-1965 art world that they would continue to mine throughout the Henry Moore Studio's operations in the 1990s. As David told me,

Barry's absolutely the secret definitive mind behind it all. He had *Falls the Shadow*... Robert looked at art and had a deep relationship with it, but Barry Barker was something different, totally. It's like Barry grew up within contemporary art [of the late 1960s and early 1970s].⁸⁰⁸

However, it wasn't just a stream of artists that he gifted to the Studio, but the "place" for art that he had carried with him since the late 1960s.

7.10 'A Space for Things to Happen'⁸⁰⁹

Through the 1970s and 80s, Barry had been attempting to clear a space for artists – like the one he had found in Europe - within the structures of the British art world. He

⁸⁰⁵ Brandon Taylor, "Falls the Shadow: The Hayward Annual", *Art Monthly*, May 1986, No 96, p.3.

⁸⁰⁶ Paul Bradley in conversation with Daniel Maclean, "Fail Better: The art of Paul Bradley", *Corridor8*, Annual 2010, p. 51.

⁸⁰⁷ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁸⁰⁸ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 15 June 2016.

⁸⁰⁹ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

said, ‘I like the way you put it – I was trying to open a space for things to happen’.⁸¹⁰ This started in the early 1970s, when – as an artist himself - he had become a founder member of the Artists Union⁸¹¹, which campaigned for the rights of artists and democratic reform of national arts bodies; and co-founded Audio Arts, with Bill Furlong, a cassette-based audio magazine, which collected recorded interviews with artists, “provid[ing] a dedicated space for [them] to speak about their work in a free and unmediated way”.⁸¹²

In the mid-1970s, when he entered the curatorial arena, as Director of Exhibitions at the ICA, London, he had created a space for international artists to make and present new work in his gallery, a bit like Fischer had in Dusseldorf. He said: ‘There was no “audience” [in the contemporary sense], which was very useful, it was brilliant actually. You were talking to a defined amount of people... [So] you could do anything’.⁸¹³ This had continued until 1976, when his tenure at the ICA was ended abruptly by the Arts Council, via cost cutting measures. That year he had presented Mary Kelly’s *Post-Partum Document (article)* (1974–6) and collaborated with Ted Little, director of the downstairs galleries, on *Prostitution*, a performance piece by COUM Transmissions. Both events had caused a furore in parts of the national press and, according to art critic, Richard Cork, the Council had responded with ‘shame-faced’ embarrassment: in effect, ‘the national funding authorities ...[had run] scared of their responsibilities [to support contemporary art practice in Britain]’, by forcing ‘the beleaguered ICA’s staff to cut back their multifarious programmes’, and ‘one of the most unfortunate victims was Barry Barker’s bold directorship of the New Gallery’.⁸¹⁴

⁸¹⁰ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁸¹¹ The Artists Union aimed to protect the interests of artists and campaign for the democratic reform of national arts bodies. It was aligned to the wider Trade Union and Labour movements; and supported anti-racist and feminist agendas via working groups.

⁸¹² “About Audio Arts”, Tate. Accessed 2017, <http://www.tate.org.uk/audio-arts/about>. Retrieved 5 May 2019.

⁸¹³ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁸¹⁴ R. Cork, *Everything Seemed Possible: Art in the 1970s*, Yale University Press (2003), p. 26.

At this point, Barry had established his own small commercial space, Barry Barker Gallery at 37 Museum Street, London - 'yeah, yeah', he said, '[it was] the smallest one in Museum Street'.⁸¹⁵ However, when that folded, he had returned to the institutional system – because, as he told me, 'In those days, in order to programme an exhibition, you had to have the power, be a director [of a public gallery]'⁸¹⁶ – becoming Director of Southampton Art Gallery and then Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol.

Arnolfini Gallery in the 1980s was one of the most important contemporary art spaces in the country; and Barry's role as its Director a prestigious one. As he told us at the HMS Symposium, 'I had the privilege of working with the people I wanted to'.⁸¹⁷ However, even there, he found that he was unable to engage with artists in quite the way that he wanted, because money was always tight and visitors had to take priority. He said,

I still had to put up with all the bars - income, Arts Council, all that nonsense - just to be in the position to be able to work with an artist.⁸¹⁸ [...] [It was always] "Where's your education programme, where's it going to be?". "How many people are going to come in the door?"⁸¹⁹

So, when it came to the Penone exhibition, for instance, he had just about been able to muster the funds to put on a retrospective in the galleries at Arnolfini; but certainly not for a making project. It was only when he got together with Paul that he saw the opportunity for something much more ambitious, enabled by Paul and his team of artists at Dean Clough; and supported by the Henry Moore Foundation's money. Barry said,

⁸¹⁵ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁸¹⁶ Barry Barker in conversation with Paul Bradley *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid.

⁸¹⁹ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

The Henry Moore Foundation was an alternative ...[It was] independent, away from the Arts Council and the government. [Robert] had a freedom. That's what made it possible.⁸²⁰

7.11 'The Patrician'⁸²¹ and 'The Provocative'⁸²².

At almost any other point in his career development, it would have been most unlikely for Barry Barker to have forged a connection with Robert Hopper and the Henry Moore Foundation around the Henry Moore Studio. The Foundation itself was an embodiment of the "Old Establishment", packed full of patrician art historians, and, in principle at least, represented everything that Barry found most difficult. Robert, meanwhile, was engaged with a totally different set of (mostly deceased) artists. When Barry was staging his controversial Mary Kelly and COUM exhibitions at the ICA in London in the mid-1970s, Robert had been acquiring works by John Piper (1903 - 1992) and Peter Lanyon (1918 - 1964) for the Whitworth Gallery in Manchester; and whilst the former was gathering together European artists for *Pier + Ocean* and *Falls the Shadow* in the 1980s; the latter had been researching the work of Frank Dobson (1888 - 1963), which was later the subject of a retrospective exhibition he curated at the Henry Moore Institute⁸²³. Their alliance was only made possible by the shifting sands of the established British art world, as they had coalesced around the "1988" moment, because - as David Edgar describes in *Why Should We Fund the Arts?* (2012)⁸²⁴ - one facet of the new terrain that emerged from this process was an unlikely union of 'the patrician' and 'the provocative' against the 'populist'.

Through the 1980s, 'in the arts as in so many other spheres of life', as Edgar explains in his article, 'Margaret Thatcher [had] sought to shift power from the producer to the consumer', using the market to 'disempower' artists and take the heat out of art –

⁸²⁰ Ibid

⁸²¹ D. Edgar, 'Why should we fund the arts?', *The Guardian*, 5 Jan 2012. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2012/jan/05/david-edgar-why-fund-the-arts>. Retrieved 25 June 2019.

⁸²² Ibid.

⁸²³ *Frank Dobson: Selected Sculpture 1915-54*, Henry Moore Institute, 19th October 1994 - 31st December 1994.

⁸²⁴ Ibid.

whether radical or spiritual - by focusing on audiences. In this environment, where 'consumers' were everything, 'the patrician' and 'the provocative' – including Robert and Barry respectively - who had previously defined themselves at least partly in opposition to one another, found that they were moving closer together because they 'shared ... a primary concern for the people making the art', even if their motivations were different.

In 1988, as the balance of power in the established art world tilted decisively away from the "Old Establishment", the Henry Moore Foundation was looking less like a gatekeeper of the established art world. Concurrently, as practices of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which Barry had always championed, entered the established canon via Nicholas Serota, they were coming to the attention even of "old world" curators like Robert. In that moment, for the first time, Robert and Barry were able to come together in opposition to the 'populist' ethos of the "new establishment" that had taken over in London, because they both wanted to do "something" (as Peter Murray put it) for the same set of artists.

By introducing him to some of the artists he had met in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, Barry gave Robert currency in the new art world which he would not have had otherwise. In 1989, when Penone was nominated for the Turner Prize, 'for his remarkable exhibitions at Arnolfini, Bristol and at the Dean Clough Arts Foundation in Halifax'⁸²⁵, alongside Richard Long (the Studio's second resident artist) who was eventually announced as that year's winner, Robert was praised for his forward thinking selection policy. According to Felicity McCormick in her review of the Long show at Dean Clough, it seemed that 'the galleries in the old carpet mill, now transformed into an industrial park, may well have an eye for potential prize winners'⁸²⁶ – but that vision belonged to Barry Barker, if to anyone.

⁸²⁵ "Press Notice", Tate Gallery, The 1989 Turner Prize. Box: "Dean Clough Contents". Folder: "Dean Clough Press". File: "Press". Henry Moore Studio Archive.

⁸²⁶ Felicity McCormick, "Magic Circles", *The Yorkshire Post*, 23 Nov 1989. Press clipping amongst a bundle of cuttings relating to Richard Long's exhibition at Dean Clough. Box: "Dean Clough Contents". Folder: "Dean Clough Press". Henry Moore Studio Archive.

However, the relationship between Robert and Barry was by no means one-way traffic. Barry may have risen to the upper echelons of the curatorial profession, but - as he told me - '[he had] never [felt] accepted by the establishment'⁸²⁷. He said: 'I always felt like an alien'.⁸²⁸ So, his friendship with Robert gave him a sense of what Stuart Hall calls 'belongingness'⁸²⁹ in a hostile environment. According to Barry:

It was one of the happiest times work wise... Robert was a great support ... and having a relationship with the Studio wonderful... We'd have nice dinners occasionally, go out and chat. [The Studio] was well talked through, if that's the way of saying it. We thought of so many options. The best approach. We talked a lot about the artists.⁸³⁰

7.12 'Unequivocally a Space for Artists'⁸³¹

According to Barry in his introduction to the 1993 HMS catalogue raisonnée, the operations of the Henry Moore Studio were set up to be totally different to those of any other institutional programme in Margaret Thatcher's Britain, because they were focused entirely on makers rather than viewers. In other words, the Studio was 'unequivocally a space for artists'⁸³². Its purpose was to provide 'a supportive structure' and 'sustaining environment for the making work'; and 'moral and practical support' to artists, which was 'paramount to any understanding of [its] workings'.⁸³³ Artists rather than curators were to 'dictate the time scale of activity'⁸³⁴. They were also to be relieved of 'the obligation to perform as a public spectacle as so many major international exhibitions would demand'.⁸³⁵ So, they didn't have to show if they didn't want to, which meant that the Studio was 'not a gallery in the conventional

⁸²⁷ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁸²⁸ Ibid.

⁸²⁹ Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" (1989), in J. Rutherford (ed.), *Identity* (Laurence & Wishart, 1990), p. 222.

⁸³⁰ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁸³¹ B. Barker, "A Space for Artists" in *The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust Studio at Dean Clough, Halifax* (HMST, 1993), p. xiii.

⁸³² Ibid.

⁸³³ Ibid.

⁸³⁴ Ibid.

⁸³⁵ Ibid.

sense', because '[it] continue[d] to function without an exhibition'; and - whilst it might open to the public 'from time to time' - it was 'at no time...a 'public space''.⁸³⁶

As Barry explained at the HMS Symposium:

The basis that we - Paul and I and Robert – set it up was that we would invite artists to the Studio and they would stay there and literally we did say “if you are there for a few months and you don’t do anything, fine”. You know. The thing was that we didn’t want anyone to have to justify their existence. It was a double thing. In a way of actually offering artists an opportunity to work and facilities to achieve projects that they wanted to do within that context. We offered them that. But at the same time we took a burden off their shoulders. You don’t have to show if you don’t want to. You can just work there. We took that responsibility off them. This was a breath of fresh air. You couldn’t do that at the Arts Council, you couldn’t do it anywhere, you couldn’t do it through funding, everyone was against it.⁸³⁷

For Barry, this approach was ‘a matter of artists’ power’⁸³⁸ (as Lucy Lippard put it); and related directly to his experiences of artist-led gallery practice in Europe in the late 1960s and 1970s. For Robert, on the other hand, it was about sheltering established artists and the important work they were creating from the social and political environment of Thatcherism. By ‘claim[ing] that the arts [were] sacrosanct and should be insulated from the real world’⁸³⁹, which was exactly the opposite of what Arts Minister, Richard Luce had been arguing when he used those words in his speech to the Regional Art Associations, the Studio was challenging the ethos of the “new establishment” in London, and presenting itself as a beacon of “old world” values.

⁸³⁶ Ibid.

⁸³⁷ Barry Barker in conversation with Paul Bradley *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁸³⁸

⁸³⁹ Extract from a speech delivered by R. Luce at the annual conference of the Regional Art Associations in 1988. Documented in R. Hewison, *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics since 1940*, (Routledge, 1995/2015), p.256.

Looking in from the outside, Sheila Gaffney appreciated this aspect of its operations. She told me:

I knew that the Studio was about the big idea. And actually you don't need someone knocking on your door saying, "You're not going to get the big idea". If you want to live your life partaking in the big idea, then do. And that's what there was space to do [for the resident artists at Dean Clough] ... I held my sense of "What do I want from a piece of sculpture?" very strongly, and if I went to work around it, I went to work around it. I used the same knowledge and skill – I didn't make a piece of work to be sold or to be taken home. And that's what I loved about the Studio.⁸⁴⁰

7.13 'Money was no Object'⁸⁴¹

In his introduction to the 1993 HMS publication, Barry did not mention Henry Moore's money in relation to the Henry Moore Studio. However, it underpinned everything that happened there; and, by omitting it from his essay, Barry was reflecting precisely the Foundation's approach in this area, which was essentially patrician. It held that money wasn't important, and shouldn't be allowed to get in the way of the creative process: a position that was only tenable, of course, because – for the Foundation in that period - money was very plentiful.

The resident artists weren't offered a fee to come to the Studio, because the space was supposed to be free of any market-driven pressures. However, this was on the understanding that everything would be done to cover their expenses and support them financially to make new work when they got there; and that they would own that work once it was finished (returning some of the making costs to Foundation, if they sold it shortly afterwards). As resident artist, Glen Onwin (b. 1946) told me:

⁸⁴⁰ Sheila Gaffney, interviewed by the author, 30 November 2016.

⁸⁴¹

Well the money – the money – it wasn't an upfront thing. We never talked about money. It was just everything that was asked for could be done, or done better than I could possibly imagine.⁸⁴²

According to Shaun Pickard, 'Money didn't seem to be an issue ... The ethos of the Studio [was] that whatever the [resident] artist wanted they always got'⁸⁴³; and this – as much as its exhibition policy – set it apart from any other private or public gallery in Britain. It was not, as Robert explained in 1991 to journalist, Roger Bevan, that the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust was 'a profligate organisation, although we have the resources of the Henry Moore Foundation behind us'⁸⁴⁴. It was just that the Studio put no limits on creativity. According to Barry at the HMS Symposium: 'it was about not saying "no"'. As Chris explained:

A private gallery could not have made [the works we did], because it would have cost them too much to actually build them, even if they could have got the materials into the space [where they were to be exhibited]... At a private gallery, or [a public gallery like] the Serpentine, they would have had problems, whereas we didn't have problems... because of the money [we had available to us] ... It meant you could work for those hours, you could pay the crane "x" number of hours overtime, whereas if you were in a private or public gallery situation, there would have been a limit to the cost [and the time allotted].⁸⁴⁵

For Robert, this approach was about "values": defending art from 'Hard-nosed materialism. [And the] devaluation of all things that are not "market led" (market forces)'⁸⁴⁶; and thereby keeping it 'sacrosanct'. For Paul, on the other hand – and, by

⁸⁴² Glen Onwin, interviewed by the author, 22 March 2017.

⁸⁴³ Shaun Pickard, interviewed by the author, 9 February 2017.

⁸⁴⁴ Robert Hopper in conversation with Roger Bevan, under the heading "Exhibitions", March 1991. Clipping from unknown newspaper. Box: "HMST Exhibition Files, C-D". (contents don't seem to relate to label). File: "Dean Clough" (on back: Kounellis/Shelton). Folder: "Dean Clough Projects". Henry Moore Studio Archive.

⁸⁴⁵ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁸⁴⁶ Henry Moore Sculpture Trust archive.

extension, his companions - it represented something quite different, which was a fantastic stream of income.

7.14 A Production Company

On the ground, Paul ran the Henry Moore Studio more or less as a production company for big name artists. As he said, 'Everyone associated with the production ... was an artist'⁸⁴⁷. And, as the project grew in scale and ambition, the crew expanded. David told me: 'We were the technical crew I suppose'.

There was Matthew Houlding, Matthew who's still based in Todmorden. Joanne McGonigal, Erland Williamson, Richard Bryant, Andy Law... oh god Richard Marsh... He's like the Dean Clough [Halifax] element. An insane brutalist painter [...] Then later on there was Chris Bowling. He's in Doncaster now, he's actually my cousin [...] Nothing really happened that officially [...] It wasn't by interview [...] If we needed someone they came along [...] It was a situation where we just had to recruit who we knew really. [...] Erland was a trained, time-served joiner before he went to Cardiff, but he got dismissed just before he qualified for wearing a plastic mini skirt on site. He sued them and got compensation and went to study art in Cardiff... He was there. Andy was a friend of his'. 'They studied together in Cardiff'. 'Andy's now teaching... He was very good, because he's a designer, he was very good technically [...] I think Joanne [lived near] Halifax, so probably made herself known. Matt, grumpy Matt Houlding came to me... He was a qualified welder and steel worker. We later made the [Anthony] Caro installation together, just me and him. Without him it would have been impossible. He [had] trained as a jeweller in Loughborough. So he had that skill level. [Eventually] on my team, I'd got a joiner, I'd got a welder, I'd got Joanne who can turn her hand to a lot of things and some other people who were kind of floating about, but that was the core team.

⁸⁴⁷ Paul Bradley in conversation with Daniel Maclean, "Fail Better: The art of Paul Bradley", *Corridor8*, Annual 2010, p. 51.

In 1991, the artists were joined John Nielson. According to David:

He was the builder from Laings. Scottish builder who had incredible technical knowledge and the biggest forearms I have ever seen in my life ... I think originally he came through Laing's builders. But he lived in Halifax. He wasn't really a technical advisor, but he was amazing, he was a building site foreman [by trade], so anything that needed jacking up or lifting or constructing [he was your person]. He was just an incredible person to have around... I think he saw, probably a much nicer situation than spending all your days on a cold wet draughty building site. He was great; he fitted in in a weird kind of a way.

The production team were employed by the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust on a freelance basis, so the more hours they did, the more they were paid; and this was an open-ended process. Paul was contracted as Sculpture Consultant, with a salary and project fees. Informally, Chris was second in command (he said, 'I was Assistant Sculpture Consultant'⁸⁴⁸) though both he and David (when he returned from Belfast) took on "Project Leader" roles, which attracted an extra fee of £1000 per project. All the other assistants were paid £8.50 an hour for working on a project, and £5 per hour for invigilating it afterwards, when or if it was opened to the public, which was generous in that period. Chris told me, 'the money was incredible because you were getting £5 per hour just to sit in the Penone [show]'.⁸⁴⁹ According to Paul:

We took care of the guys and girls in Halifax, not obscenely, but they were well paid. If they worked until two in the morning, I would say fine, claim another couple of hours. You've worked bloody hard. It's the smartest thing to do. I still do it today. You make money. You look after your colleagues...not this horrible society today where if you can't do your day for Parcel Force, you have to give £250 of your own wages.⁸⁵⁰

Shaun said:

⁸⁴⁸ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁸⁴⁹ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁸⁵⁰ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

I do remember Paul being very generous. It wasn't his own money, was it? He used to make sure we all got what we deserved. We used to meet at 7.30 and then start claiming at 8am. The lines were quite blurred between work and a social thing. Most of your work colleagues became your mates. It was an all-encompassing thing. In the early days, you used to claim cheques. I seem to remember just putting a work sheet in. Not on PAYE or anything.⁸⁵¹

As Paul explained, 'there was never a set budget'⁸⁵²; and costs varied considerably from artist to artist. This is not to say that he and Robert splashed the cash around willy-nilly, because '[they] had a budget in [their] heads that [they] wouldn't exceed'.⁸⁵³ What's more, Paul was usually able to source local materials and processes, so - as he pointed out at the HMS Symposium - it often cost the Foundation substantially less to produce the works than the artist would have spent on manufacture otherwise. According to Paul, they spent around £18,000 on making the Ganzfield Sphere for James Turrell in 1993, whereas 'when Gagosian [Gallery, London] made it ten years later it cost them [around] £186,000. The idiots didn't bother to [ask us]'.⁸⁵⁴

The HMS archive does not record what the Penone project in cost in total, but Ulrich Ruckriem's in 1990 amounted to at least £17,000; and it's likely that Kounellis', in 1991, cost substantially more than that (as Robert told Bevan in 1991, 'In Kounellis' case, materials and foundry fees [excluding staff costs] will run to not less than £20,000', but, he said, this was 'peanuts for a major exhibition'⁸⁵⁵). For Conrad Atkinson in 1992, this figure was around £25,000⁸⁵⁶; for Lawrence Weiner in 1993, £40,000⁸⁵⁷. By 1992, the overall annual budget for the Studio, including (as Hopper

⁸⁵¹ Shaun Pickard, interviewed by the author, 9 February 2017.

⁸⁵² Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 14 Feb 2017.

⁸⁵³ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 14 Feb 2017.

⁸⁵⁴ Paul Bradley, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁸⁵⁵ Robert Hopper in conversation with Roger Bevan, under the heading "Exhibitions", March 1991. Clipping from unknown newspaper. Box: "HMST Exhibition Files, C-D". (contents don't seem to relate to label). File: "Dean Clough" (on back: Kounellis/Shelton). Folder: "Dean Clough Projects". Henry Moore Studio Archive.

⁸⁵⁶ Based on estimated figure of £23,185, recorded in HMS archive.

⁸⁵⁷ Based on estimated figure of £37,060, recorded in HMS archive.

explained) ‘all overheads, a salary for Paul Bradley, our organiser, as well as our expenses with [three] artists’, was £153,000.⁸⁵⁸

When I asked Shaun why he started working for HMS, he immediately answered ‘money’⁸⁵⁹, and of course that’s true for all the local artists, because it was the way they earned their living. ‘It was a job’⁸⁶⁰, as Chris put it. However, that doesn’t mean they weren’t passionately committed to what they were doing. Shaun said, ‘I had no question in my head that Henry Moore was the most fantastic thing that you could be doing. Financially it made me much better off, it was also my social life to a large extent ... My job was to facilitate the great art we were making’⁸⁶¹. As Chris told us at the HMS Symposium: ‘[We were there] to create the best possible outcome for the artists who were in our care. And I think that’s what the ethos of the Studio was: that we cared for our artists, we left our egos at the door; we were the facilitators for their ideas’.⁸⁶²

7.14 ‘You Could Not Ignore the History’⁸⁶³

Barry’s exhibition system, lifted from Europe in the 1960s and 70s, fitted perfectly with Paul’s business model. However, for the artists on the ground there was much more to it than money. The system also promoted Dean Clough and the whole of West Yorkshire as a “special place” for art of the post-1965 period, which was Paul’s other passion. This took him right back to his Beuysian roots and the Utopian dream of *Abandon London*, where he had envisaged Halifax – as a core of working class energy – becoming the new “cultural centre” of Britain.

Partly, this was about the site itself becoming a subject for art. The artists who visited Halifax were under no obligation to respond to the old mill complex in their work, if

⁸⁵⁸ HMS Archive.

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁰ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 14 Feb 2017.

⁸⁶¹ Ibid.

⁸⁶² Chris Sacker in conversation with David Wilkinson, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁸⁶³ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

they didn't want to. However, as David told me, 'Dean Clough was a classic case of when you invited people there, you could not ignore the history'⁸⁶⁴; and, throughout the Studio's operations, Paul encouraged such engagement, just as he had with Penone in 1988. According to David:

Paul did have [his own] agenda. I don't think there's anything wrong with that [...] He was very romantic about Yorkshire and about Dean Clough. I think to this day he's very attached to the place and he knew the place very deeply and he kind of gave that to the artists who arrived. I think we all did, because he affected us and the place affected us as well.⁸⁶⁵

The local artists would walk their guests through the mills, and tour them around the surrounding countryside, whilst talking to them about the history of West Yorkshire. Paul said:

We would drive them [from the airport] into Halifax on a particular road, a quiet road coming through from Bradford, where you're in the countryside and suddenly you'd turn a bend [and you see Halifax spread before you] and they would just go Wow!"⁸⁶⁶

David remembers:

We'd basically hire a car and drive them up to the moors.⁸⁶⁷ [...] We took them up to Stoodley Pike'.⁸⁶⁸ [...] [We'd tell them] that's John Wesley's Chapel, that's where the Spinning Jenny was invented. At night, we'd come back here. We'd very much give them that historical background. Just because that's what we were interested in.⁸⁶⁹ [...] We'd worked in the space for quite a

⁸⁶⁴ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁸⁶⁵ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 19 January 2017.

⁸⁶⁶ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁸⁶⁷ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 19 January 2017.

⁸⁶⁸ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017

⁸⁶⁹ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 19 January 2017.

few years before the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust arrived [...] We'd inhabited the space and we'd kind of taken the space into us [...] So that relationship that we had with the mills, with the site, I think is what we gave to the artists when they arrived.⁸⁷⁰

The social history of the place was important, but it was also about the resident artists engaging with the human forces active in its contemporary landscapes, including the artists who operated the Studio. As Shaun Pickard told me, '[we were] part and parcel of the fabric of the Henry Moore Studio – we were “it”, because it was the people and the place [that made it]'.⁸⁷¹

Whilst Paul and his team worked directly with their international counterparts, they also connected them with local suppliers and manufacturers, including Down's Foundry, whose workforce had been involved from the beginning, via the casts they made for Penone, and Robinson's Engineering, which first engaged with John Newling's project in 1990. David told me: 'Halifax was amazing. It's still got all these little foundries and sheet metal workers. West Yorkshire is like that. It's superb for producing those artisanal objects, that aren't mass produced. [In] a small factory with maybe 50 guys in it'.⁸⁷² He said,

It was a great situation for artists. If they wanted something made, we could kind of magic it up [for them]. We'd come up with a series of options.

Working right from the word go when we did those casts with Penone, we had fantastic contact with Nigel Downs. He's the owner of the Down's Foundry. I think they had a bit of a spin off working with artists since then.⁸⁷³

For Barry, the Studio was principally about the freedom that it offered to artists. He had no connection to the place, and little interest in its history, which was always of

⁸⁷⁰ David Wilkinson in conversation with Chris Sacker, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017

⁸⁷¹ Shaun Pickard, interviewed by the author, 9 February 2017.

⁸⁷² David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 15 June 2017.

⁸⁷³ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 20 January 2017.

secondary importance. Nevertheless, he saw that the ‘situation’⁸⁷⁴ at Dean Clough had much to offer artists in the round. As he explained:

The interesting thing about Dean Clough as opposed to anywhere else, like the Arnolfini or any other gallery, was its context - it had a wider context, it was part of a place that had a tremendous history, which Penone used [in *Contour Lines*]⁸⁷⁵. [...] It wasn’t just [Yorkshire’s industrial history or] the Yorkshire Moors or the Yorkshire landscape. [...] It was also the skills that were [available there] - the steel industry and this, that and the other.⁸⁷⁶ [...] It came out of the wealth of experience there, whether it’s from somebody casting iron and metal or whatever, all those workshops that Paul had the contact with.⁸⁷⁷ [...] It was – “oh, can we do that?” [...] It’s a powerful thing, an artist saying to someone like Paul, “Can you help with this?” And, you know, [he replies] “I can’t do it, but I know someone who can”.⁸⁷⁸

7.15 ‘A Unity Out of Difference’⁸⁷⁹

The Henry Moore Studio, as it came into being in the 1988 to 1989 period, was a complex and contradictory riddle. Rather than an art organisation, it was a dream space - an “imagined community” of artists -, which meant something quite different to each of its founding actors. For Paul, it was a community of Northern working class artists, fighting for self-determination, in a hostile economic environment; for Barry, a community of international artists of the 1960s generation, clearing a space for itself amidst the rigid structures of the British art world; and for Robert, a community of established sculptors, sheltering from “militant materialism” and other encroachments of the neoliberal market place. For all of them, it was defined in opposition to the forces of Thatcherism that were riding high in the rest of the British

⁸⁷⁴ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁸⁷⁵ Barry Barker in conversation with Paul Bradley *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁸⁷⁶ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁸⁷⁷ Barry Barker in conversation with Paul Bradley *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁸⁷⁸ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁸⁷⁹ S. Hall, “Gramsci and Us”, *Marxism Today*, June 1987, p.19.

art world. Yet it was located geographically at Dean Clough, Halifax, which had not only been conquered by Thatcherism, but was functioning as one of its key northern strongholds.

According to Stuart Hall in “Gramsci and Us” (1987), we shouldn’t be surprised at the Studio’s contradictory nature, because this was a reflection of British society under Thatcherism. Indeed, as Hall explains:

The whole purpose of what Gramsci called an organic (i.e., historically effective) ideology [like Thatcherism] is that it articulates into a configuration different subjects, different identities, different projects, different aspirations.⁸⁸⁰

In other words, Thatcherism was successful precisely because it ‘construct[ed] a ‘unity’ out of difference’⁸⁸¹; and this is exactly what happened at the Studio, because it incorporated different subjects, identities, projects and aspirations into one functioning operation. Robert, Paul and Barry all needed each other in order to realise their individual visions. Robert and Barry needed Paul’s energy. Barry and Paul needed Robert’s money. Robert and Paul needed Barry’s art world knowledge and contacts. Together, they created a strange, hybrid place, which ostensibly suited their individual purposes, but, at the same time, was full of contradictions. So Paul created a centre of working class power, under patrician governance; Barry an open space for artists, where one set of artists in effect serviced the needs of another, more privileged group; and Robert a place where art could flourish, away from the market, that was run on the ground as a business enterprise, using substantial sums of money.

If Penone’s work, *Contour Lines*, teaches us anything, it is that – in the absence of a revolution, which blows apart the walls of Capitalism in a time of crisis - we can never escape the structures of power that frame and contain us, to which we are all harnessed by economic necessity or practical exigency. All we can do, by our daily activities - which become habits, rituals and traditions, reflected back to us through

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁸¹ Ibid.

images and stories – is to modify the surfaces of these edifices, or, as Penone puts it, ‘form the landscape in which [we] live’.⁸⁸² In doing so, we bed into the surrounding biosphere, so that it starts to become part of our own being.

Barry imagined the Henry Moore Studio as a place of freedom for artists, just like Fischer’s gallery in Dusseldorf, and all the other spaces across Europe that he had visited in the 1960s and 1970s. In reality, it was a very different entity – and a comparison between the two is instructive because it tells us something about what “freedom” meant in Britain, under Thatcherism. Fischer’s first space was situated in a tiny space, created from what had been a passageway between two other buildings, where the artist-gallerist had collaborated with other young artists of his generation, whose work he was exhibiting. At the Studio, a whole team of local artists was deployed in the service of one senior practitioner, working in the vast interiors of the ground floor rooms in E Mill, with almost unlimited resources.

The works created by young artists of the 1960s generation in Fischer’s gallery had mostly been light and ephemeral: that is “dematerialised” in Lucy Lippard’s terminology. At Dean Clough those same artists were creating large-scale installations, rich in materiality, in line with their practices in that period. Indeed, the Studio was built around West Yorkshire’s manufacturing capability.

In 1968, as Barry recalls, ‘everything was inexpensive and accessible’.⁸⁸³ By 1988, the Studio was channelling substantial amounts of money and resources towards established practitioners, many of who were already very rich and successful. As Chris told me, ‘[The resident artists] were all millionaires’.⁸⁸⁴ Paul said ‘They looked like brickies’. [Ulrich] Ruckiem, he was basically lumpen proletarian stock. Penone was basically a farmer’.⁸⁸⁵ Shaun Pickard remembers, ‘[Mario] Merz turned up in a pair of trainers and the most crumpled suit. He looked like someone who had been sleeping on the streets’.⁸⁸⁶ ‘But’, Paul told me, ‘they were all millionaires’.⁸⁸⁷

⁸⁸² Giuseppe Penone, *The Eroded Steps*, 1989, p. 57.

⁸⁸³ Barry Barker, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2018.

⁸⁸⁴ Chris Sacker, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁸⁸⁵ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁸⁸⁶ Shaun Pickard, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2017.

According to Shaun: ‘there was this idea around that Richard long had a turnover of £10,000,000 the year that we worked with him - I don’t know how accurate that was, but it was definitely talked about.’⁸⁸⁸ Steve Carrick said:

There were a lot of artists who were already international artists who just flew in and did their bit and went off again. They were given that massive space, there was money behind it, support and that And they didn’t really need it.

⁸⁸⁹

According to Andy Law, ‘[The Studio] was pioneering in a way. You gave a lot of money to [famous] people to make things that were big’.⁸⁹⁰ Effectively, it was a free space for big name artists: a place where they could ‘fulfil their dreams’⁸⁹¹, as Chris told me. And, in this respect, it was a peculiarly Thatcherite organisation, for all its anti-Thatcher orientations.

7.16 ‘Thatcherite colluders, or the Inheritors of Punk's Tradition’⁸⁹²

In May 2016, Felix Petty published an article in I-D magazine entitled, ‘For the love of god not another article on the YBAs’⁸⁹³. Reflecting on the YBA phenomenon, it posed the question – which, as Petty suggested, had been ‘the crux of the argument’ raging in the art world ever since *Freeze* happened - ‘whether the YBAs were Thatcherite colluders, or the inheritors of punk's tradition of DIY building of your own cultural ecosystem’. He concluded that ‘the answer of course is somewhere in between’ those two positions. Petty’s question and his response can equally well be

⁸⁸⁷ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 8 March 2017.

⁸⁸⁸ Shaun Pickard, interviewed by the author, 8 February 2017.

⁸⁸⁹ Steve Carrick, interviewed by the author, 30 June 2017.

⁸⁹⁰ Andy Law, interviewed by the author, 13 June 2017

⁸⁹¹ Chris Sacker in conversation with David Wilkinson, *Mapping the Henry Moore Studio*, Henry Moore Institute, 2017.

⁸⁹² F. Petty, ‘For the love of god not another article on the YBAs’, *I-D Magazine*, 27 May 2016. https://i-d.vice.com/en_uk/article/a3gp4e/for-the-love-of-god-not-another-article-on-the-ybas. Retrieved 10 September 2019.

⁸⁹³ F. Petty, ‘For the love of god not another article on the YBAs’, *I-D Magazine*, 27 May 2016. https://i-d.vice.com/en_uk/article/a3gp4e/for-the-love-of-god-not-another-article-on-the-ybas. Retrieved 10 September 2019.

applied to Paul and the artists he gathered around him at Dean Clough at just the same moment.

Certainly, Paul enacted ‘entrepreneurialism as an [expression of] art practice’; and he was - to a large extent - ‘obsessed with money’, in Petty’s terminology. He also reimagined ‘art [as] a career in a way it hadn't been before’, much like Damien Hirst, according to Petty in his I-D article. In 1988/9, the idea of artists working as facilitators or technicians in a gallery setting was still in its infancy because few British galleries at the time were attempting ambitious installations or working on major projects with living practitioners. As David told me, ‘it wasn’t like it is today, where if you need an art technician you phone up the art technician agency and they send you half a dozen absolutely capable bearded young men. It wasn’t like that [tat all]’.⁸⁹⁴

However, it is equally possible to connect the artists’ activities with the punk movement, which – according to Paul – he had been part of. By linking up with Robert at the Henry Moore Studio to establish a centre for international art in Halifax, a northern town in the midst of post-industrial depression, they had created something from nothing. What’s more, like the YBA movement, according to Petty in his article, they had made art ‘working class in a way [it] hadn't been before’ in Britain. As Vic Allen said:

It was that thing of feeling this is Halifax for God’s sake, it's not a place renowned for visual arts, it doesn't have a significant visual arts gallery itself. If you stopped people in the town they wouldn't have a clue who Matthew Smith is... The battle with the context is the real place. That's the frontier, that's where you want to be. The idea of showing something here which didn't have a reception. It’s the easiest thing in the world to wrap the bloody Reichstadt... There's no heroism in doing that. You're an international artist. But to come up to bloody Halifax and to put up an Egyptian temple made of beeswax [as Wolfgang Laib did] that's really something ... This is a working class industrial place where kindness and decency battle with viciousness and

⁸⁹⁴ David Wilkinson, interviewed by the author, 19 June 2017.

stupidity and it's been that way for years. It's phenomenal to have [artists] like that here.⁸⁹⁵

Of course it wasn't just the place that was working class, but the people who worked in it. As Sheila Gaffney recalls:

it was a different sort of artist that worked out there... A certain sort of artist worked for the Studio and had a lot of energy about them. ... Paul was not friendly. Paul could be gruff and superior. Chris was the friendly face. He would go "Who are you? Come and do this". Chris Sacker was quite central as a communicator. I remember David Wilkinson, he had a kind of fire in his belly. We live in a highly audited world, don't we? The Studio had a kind of feral excitement about it and those guys bought it to [Halifax].

⁸⁹⁵ Vic Allen, interviewed by the author, 28 March 2017.

8. Conclusion

In 1988, when Giuseppe Penone came to Dean Clough, Halifax with Barry Barker, he had seen ‘the staircases that would have been worn away by the workers’⁸⁹⁶ in A Mill, as Paul told me, and decided to make *Contour Lines*. Through his work, he had wanted to make visible an “imagined community” of working class people, embedded in the fabric of the place and its surrounding landscapes, whose presence he had felt very strongly standing in A Mill, with Paul, Chris and David, but saw disappearing, even then, as the old mills were cleaned up and converted into office space, within the Halls’ redevelopment.

Through my text, I have attempted something similar. Using the memories of the people who were there at the time as my raw material, my aim has been to bring back to life the “imagined community” of working class artists which gathered at Dean Clough in the late 1980s, whose activities powered the Henry Moore Studio, but have since been lost in the fog of history. In order to give shape to individual narratives, I have embedded them within broader histories and framed them theoretically, using texts by Benedict Anderson, Stuart Hall and Lucy Lippard, for example. However, as far as possible, I have allowed the artists to speak for themselves, because their words conjure much better than mine could the core of restless of energy that resided at the heart of the Studio’s operations.

In 2012, when Benjamin Buchloh (2012) asked Penone whether he thought art could change the world, he replied in the affirmative. This surprised his interviewer, because Penone’s work is not overtly political or polemical. However, as the artist explained, it wasn’t about making big political statements, or presenting a manifesto of how things might be different. It was about looking at ‘the surrounding reality’⁸⁹⁷ beyond convention, and uncovering the hidden forces that shaped its existence. He said:

⁸⁹⁶ Paul Bradley, interviewed by the author, 23 February 2017.

⁸⁹⁷ G. Penone in conversation with Benjamin Buchloh in L. Busine et al, *Giuseppe Penone: Forty Years of Creation* (Yale University Press, 2012), p. 17.

If you manage to make a good piece, in the sense of having the ability to make work after a direct analysis or understanding or intuition of the surrounding reality, that piece has a political value. Because by entering into the understanding of reality, it helps to change things, more than a work whose sole function is to denounce something by means of a form or expressive conventions created by the system that it is criticising.⁸⁹⁸

Perhaps, by uncovering the hidden history of the Henry Moore Studio, and revealing the forces that propelled it into being, I may achieve something similar.

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid.

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Fig. 4 Giuseppe Penone, *Contour Lines Parts I-IV*, 1988/9.

Fig. 5 Giuseppe Penone, *Contour Lines*, 1988/9 (detail).

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Fig. 6 Dean Clough, Halifax, c.1986.

Fig. 7 Dean Clough Mills, c.1986.

Fig. 8 Dean Clough Mills, c.1986.

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Fig. 38 Richard Long, *Coal Circle*, 1989. Installed in E Mill.

Fig. 39 Janis Kounellis, *HCWW*, 1991. E Mill, Dean Clough.

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11. Appendix 1: Illustrations (see separate attachment).

