# MATERIALISING MEMORIES: INVESTIGATING THE RE-ARTICULATION OF PERSONAL NARRATIVES THROUGH THE CRAFTED ARTEFACT

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# Abstract

This practice-based study explores the re-articulation of personal narratives through the crafted artefact with a focus on memory, collaboration and object relations. The research uses a craft-based approach to understand how stories of lost love are processed through making in the production of a series of crafted artefacts informed by original narratives. It questions the role of the object within memory and storytelling, how narrative can be embedded into a newly crafted artefact and considers collaboration as a tool to share experiences. It uses a new qualitative methodology 'narrative-led making' and applies oral history theory, collaborative practice and documentation, to further investigate theories of making, such as thinking-through-making, hylomorphism, haptic and tacit knowledges.

In order to explore the re-articulation of narrative, stories were collected with a focus on lost love – including familial and romantic – that featured specific objects and related to the relationships. Nine participants were selected and their stories were transcribed to create narratives that dictated the choice of materials, techniques and processes to create material memories. My own practice of traditional leather working and silicone casting, and skills such as crochet, forging, and wood turning, learned through the formation of collaborative relationships with craftspeople, were selected to complete each artefact. I worked alongside participants and craftspeople whilst developing new craft production methods through which I created a series of nine new artefacts that are imbued with meaning, comparable to a pre-existing memory object or material memory.

Reflective interviews with participants revealed their instant attachment to the completed artefacts in which feelings of pride and happiness for their lost loves were common. Presenting the artefacts in an intimate gallery setting allowed for the wider audience to connect with the artefacts on a personal level and begin to revisit their own memories through their relation to the object.

The finished artefacts resemble objects that have been lost, forgotten or are still in existence and are a part of daily life: rolling pin, brass shoes, football, medal, trainers, toilet dolly, handbag, box camera, watch. As artefacts they are imbued with the emotions of the participants' own stories. Undertaking creative research with participants (as a co-creative research process) in this way contributes to new forms of knowledge and understanding about the nature of storytelling practices in craft making.

# Acknowledgements

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### Conferences

- Making Material Memories. Making Futures. Plymouth College of Art. 19 - 20 September, 2019

- Materialising Memories. Making Futures. Plymouth College of Art. 21 - 22 September, 2017.

- Creating artefact from memories of lost love. Love Letters (inter-disciplinary.net) – Mansfield College, Oxford. 2 - 4 July, 2016.

- Artefacts of Lost Love. The Materiality of Mourning. University of Warwick, funded by the Wellcome Trust. 19 - 20 May, 2016.

- *The N-exlace:* Imprints of a Lost Relationship. Fashion and the Body. University of Minnesota, St Paul. 29 - 30 April, 2016.

## Exhibitions

- Embedding Emotion: An Exploration of Co-production and Craft. Biennial International Conference for the Craft Sciences. The Craft Laboratory, Mariestad, Sweden (online). 4 - 6 May, 2021.

- Making Material Memories, Temporary Contemporary – The Market Gallery, Huddersfield. 15 April - 3 May, 2019.

- Making Material Memories. Dean Clough – The Bookshop Gallery, Halifax. 21 July - 30 September, 2018.

- Absence. Momenting the Memento – IFFTI. Santa Croce, Florence. 14 - 15 May, 2015.

## Publications

- Goldthorpe, C. (2016). Moment 2. In *Culture.* In L. Loppa (ed.), *#Moments: A research laboratory on fashion (*pp. 51-61). Skira.

# The Artefacts

*Figure 1 − Finished collection of nine artefacts − For access to the full portfolio see 'The Artefacts'. (2018).*

# Introduction

*"When the rhythm of work has seized him, he listens to the tales in such a way that the gift of retelling them*

*comes to him all by itself" (Benjamin, 1999, p. 91).*

## 1.1    Research Aim

The main aim of this practice-based research is to explore making as a way of re-articulating personal stories as newly-crafted artefacts. I am fascinated with the idea of being able to create an artefact that appears to contain memory and evoke emotion. Through my own studio practice, I want to investigate if an object can function as a container for memory and if so, can a newly crafted artefact function in the same way as a pre-existing memory object.

Specifically for this study, I chose to use stories of lost love as a starting point for making a series of artefacts, through which to explore the idea of re-articulating an original story in the form of a narrative, what I am terming a 'material memory'. I use the term 'story' to describe a memory that a person may have in their head, and narrative as the articulation and communication of this story. I use the term 'material memory' in the context of my research to mean the creation of a tangible artefact from a narrative (processed through making into material form) so that it can be touched and felt.

I acknowledge the extent to which this notion of transferring the intangible into the tangible through making is problematic. I am not trying to prove that a memory can be made concrete

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or to suggest that a narrative could be physically inserted into an object, but I am exploring the translation of emotional stories – such as those surrounding lost love – to inform my studio practice in the creation of new physical artefacts. As opposed to a quantitative, analytical study seeking empirical verification, the research investigates the aesthetic, haptic experience of making memory material through exploring processes of articulation and translation through craft. Another potential problematic arising from the term 'material memory' could be to interpret it as meaning the memory of the material and its material qualities. I am not investigating the possibility of materials having a physical memory, nor the properties of materials themselves, for example, the ways in which elastic once stretched can return to its original state. Instead, this research investigates the collection of a group of participants' previously unrecorded stories of lost love, and the making of artefacts using specific materials and methods to re-articulate these stories. Through these processes I consider to what extent memory and emotion can be conveyed through a newly crafted artefact.

## 1.2   Research Questions

The study considers four key questions / problems I set out to address that fulfil the overarching research aim which is to understand how narrative is re-articulated through the crafted artefact.

- What role do objects play in memory and storytelling?

- How can narrative be embedded through studio practice into a newly-crafted artefact?

- How is collaboration used as a tool to share experiences?

- Can a new methodological framework be created to understand the making of material memories?

The research questions demonstrate the different themes arising from the research such as object relations, my own studio practice and collaboration within making, and will be fulfilled through the objectives set out below.

## 1.3 Objectives

In order to address the above questions, the study considers interlinking objectives that are addressed through: the written thesis, a portfolio of practice and through nine newly-crafted artefacts.

### 1.3.1 Objective 1

To review the theoretical and practical themes of object relations; love and loss, archives and memories, narrative storytelling and craft, and making and embedding, all of which will be explored through a contextual review (Chapter 2). By establishing reviews of literature in each of the fields above, I examine relevant practitioners, artworks and their techniques in accordance with my own practice.

### 1.3.2 Objective 2

To examine methodological frameworks of artistic practice that can address the production of newly-craft artefacts from stories of lost love (Chapter 3). I explore a hybrid of craft and arts-based research and oral history theory to identify new methods of practice-based research relevant to this study.

### 1.3.3   Objective 3

To create a new body of work exploring how memory is felt and transmitted through my own craft practice. To determine this, I will create nine artefacts, from nine individual narratives to explore thinking-through-making and haptic knowledge with materials. The documentation of each process allows me to evaluate shifts within my own practice and explore whether newly crafted artefacts can re-articulate the same narrative and have the same connection as a pre-existing memory object (Chapter 4).

### 1.3.4   Objective 4

To evaluate new research perspectives on collaborative making by working with a network of participants and craftspeople with whom narratives and skills were shared, through a series of verbal and process-based exchanges. These exchanges involve comparing ways in which collaborative making is part of the research processes that transform original stories into material memories and the significance of collaborative relationships with participants and craftspeople (*The Artefacts*).

### 1.4   Structure of the study

This PhD research is compiled of two central components that run in parallel:

1. The practice – A series of a nine completed artefacts and a reflective portfolio titled *The Artefacts*.

2. The written thesis – A critical commentary which contextualises the research practice.

The nine completed artefacts form the body of the practice-based research. They are discussed and analysed throughout the thesis (as explained below) and throughout the portfolio of practice, *The Artefacts*.

The analysis of the nine craft objects within *The Artefacts* uses historian Jules David Prown's material culture methodology which he sets out in his seminal 1982 paper, 'Mind in Matter' (3.3.4.3). This offers an in-depth review into narrative, social and historical contexts, my own craft journey, and reflection of the finished artefacts (see also Appendix 2). It was important to document and analyse each artefact individually, to understand the connection with the different stages of development and practice and to draw new insights into objects, making processes, participants and the finished artefacts. *The Artefacts* provides a visual portfolio documentation of the completed artefacts.

The structure of the thesis is as follows:

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the project including further insights into the research questions, aims and objectives and the purpose of the study. It documents my connection to familial storytelling and ideas around how making can be used as a process of embedding narratives into newly crafted artefacts. The reasons for exploring this are discussed in 1.4.1. It encompasses my experience as a maker to date through my own personal journey and training in different craft disciplines, outlining particular learning experiences and methods of working. This is followed by my previous practice and how I have explored the relationship and connection between people and artefacts.

The Contextual Review (Chapter 2) examines relevant texts and artworks which address themes of object relations, love and loss, narrative and storytelling, craft, making, and embedding. This provides an overview of historical, theoretical and artistic approaches that have already been established, to identify my position as a researcher within the existing field of practice research. With the scope of my research encompassing the different themes listed above it was important to explore each one individually in terms of thinking and practice.

Chapter 3 maps the methodologies of the research, creating a new framework for the study called 'narrative-led making'. It signposts the reasoning for taking a constructivist approach (3.1) and the use of a qualitative research design primarily using a craft and arts-based methodology (3.2). I identify three strands; studio practice, theory and documentation and explain how they interlink throughout the research. I clarify the methodological approaches for each element of these strands and examine how each approach fits into the overall study. These comprise of oral history, collaboration, the making process, documentation and analysis (3.3).

The development of the practice is extensively documented in Chapter 4 implementing the framework set out in the methodology. It provides a chronological overview of each process from exploring embedding narrative using my own lost love experience in a pilot study (4.4.6) to the collection of participant narratives, making and the analysis and display of the finished artefacts, supported by relevant theoretical underpinning of the practice (4.1).

Chapter 5 concludes by highlighting the findings related to the objectives I pose in Chapter 1. It reflects back on the research aims to establish shifts within my own practice for the purpose

of understanding how narratives can be re-articulated through the crafted artefact. It provides an evaluation of the methodology (5.3) and reflections on the contextual review (5.2) and discusses how they were used and developed throughout the research. I draw on my contributions to knowledge, new insights into making through tacit and haptic encounters through the lens of a practice-based researcher and in relation to the scope of the research (5.6). I conclude by suggesting how the research could be taken forward by myself and other practitioners who may wish to explore the idea of articulating narrative through making (5.7).

Both the portfolio and the thesis run in parallel and interconnect with each other throughout. The referencing for sections and figures within *The Artefacts* portfolio is prefixed with a 0 for clarity.

### 1.4.1   Background to the Research   Personal Context

My grandpa (fig. 2) died when I was 13 which at the time was the first significant family death I had encountered. It was heart-breaking, but the stories my father has since told about him, such as his wartime escapades, have kept his memory alive for me. Each story has made me admire him more, which has subsequently enshrined him for me in what writer, Lisa Appignanesi might describe as "an aura of imaginary perfection" (2011, p. 36). I cherish these stories and replay them in my head, keeping his memory alive and ready to pass on. Objects associated with these family narratives have become embodiments of, and embedded within, his memory. He taught me how to make origami birds from Breakaway biscuit wrappers. Sitting next to him whilst working the paper, gently folding and creasing, I would replicate his every move. The repetitive haptic experience led to the knowledge and the memory of making becoming embedded within me. Through these educative yet bonding encounters, I have gone

on to teach the skill to other fascinated onlookers and every time I begin to fold, I am transported back to the memory and sense of that smooth paper passing through my Grandpa's fingers.



*Figure 2 – David William Goldthorpe. (n.d.)*

From this encounter I was interested to explore whether stories could be embedded in a newly crafted artefact, via making experiences, such as the creation of an origami bird and the story of the experience becoming embedded in it, and if so, how this might happen? I also wanted to explore whether other people handling an artefact I had made, like the origami bird, were also able to relate to the story from their own experience.

Folk singer and musician Sam Lee's 2012 research saw him become a custodian of traditional traveller songs learned from Scottish travellers, the Roma and in Gypsy camps. As many of these songs were never written down, Lee effectively saves them from being forgotten and ensures their survival for new generations. His methodology of learning straight from source captures the experience of the performance, offering an authentic representation of the song, its emotion and the passion embedded within it. By representation in this context, I mean the creation of a rearticulation. The reference to 'authentic', shows Lee's desire to produce as faithful a recreation to the original songs as possible. Lee preserves both the song and subsequently the experience as it has been taught to him (Vulliamy, 2012). My research draws a parallel with Lee's own research through conservation of told narratives and the concept of learning-through-making from skilled practitioners, in order to re-articulate a narrative through a newly-crafted artefact, which could also be perceived as materialising intangible heritage through the creation of the handmade object.[1]

## 1.5   Background to the Research

Prior to this study my craft knowledge has been acquired over the years, through GCSE level Design and Technology, to A-Level Product Design, a BA Honours in Design for Television, and an MA in Fashion Artefact. I have designed and made fashion accessories for commercial companies including brands such as Pollyanna, Nomad, and Anthesis, for whom I developed new ranges of bags and travel accessories for the high street and luxury markets. I have also run my own lingerie and accessories business for over fifteen years. Concerning commercial

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[1] This is part of a much wider debate around the preservation of intangible cultural heritage for example UNESCO are working to safeguard worldwide practices in dance, rituals, traditions, music, food customs to name but a few (UNESCO, 2021).

design, I find the initial design process exciting, however, having to fit into the constraints of a brief can make me quite anxious. The technicality of production takes the creativity out of the process and mass manufacturing by hand becomes repetitive and mundane due to the prerequisites and the need for similarity.

My confidence in making comes with working more spontaneously and intuitively: feeling the materials, their weight, colour and malleable qualities. Experimentation with materials is a key part of my practice; testing the physical capabilities and pushing the boundaries of their typical use is part of my making process. I enjoy producing different components that can be linked together to create experimental finished artefacts that are all individual and could not be easily reproduced. Making gives me a sense of purpose and achievement.

The practical skills involved in making something with my own hands outweighs the experience of buying a finished product, such as a bag. Both craftsmen, Peter Korn and Richard Sennett express this same feeling of wonder that making can rouse; the idea of filling a space with "something where before there was nothing" (Sennett, 2008, p. 70).

On my quest to explore different materials and techniques I have attended a number of 'making' courses, including printmaking, letterpress, traditional corsetry, shoe making, jewellery casting, and ceramics. Learning in this way means I have a broad spectrum of basic skills to draw on which extends the variety of techniques and processes I can use within my practice and experimentation.

### 1.5.1 Absence (2010)



*Figure 3 – The Brogues from the Absence collection. (2010).*

In my previous practice, such as the *Absence* collection (2010), I explored and questioned the functionality of objects. In this case each artefact acted as a symbolic representation of its owner. All objects were based around people close to me and used an object associated with the individual. For example, an atomiser was used as a starting point to represent my mother as she had used one herself at home. It symbolised the smell of her perfume and evoked memories of her going out, on a rare occasion, to dinner with my father. I sought to capture the beauty, elegance and detail of these representational objects, allowing the viewer to see the space that they once occupied without them actually being present. To play with the idea of absence and presence of form and the solidification and inversion of space, the pieces were created from a void. I wanted to harness mould-making techniques, and use what would

normally be considered a component in the making process, to form part of a finished artefact. Combining the ghostly impressions of a cast object with the traditional skills of leatherwork allowed the artefacts to be familiar, yet unconventional in terms of their materiality.

*Absence* was exhibited in 2015 as part of the *Momenting the Memento* conference in the Galleria dei Monumenti Sepolcrali (Monument Gallery, Santa Croce) in Florence. This allowed for new opportunities to interpret the work by reflecting on the environment and curation techniques used.[2] The space where *Absence* was exhibited consisted of a wide, long corridor in which the walls were lined with burial and funeral monuments of Florentine residents from doctors to poets (fig. 4). Each of the artefacts were displayed alongside a particular monument to represent the identity of the person with the possession. The artefacts were transformed from personal mementos to material memories that allowed the audience to question the significance of the artefacts as if they were the embodiment of an individual. The word 'embodiment', in this context, is to be understood as the representation of a person through a tangible artefact and is the understanding I take forward here in this research. The curation addressed relationships between person and artefact, and created a new sense of identity for the individuals to which they related. The display cultivated a sense of curiosity in the viewer as to who these people were, by materialising the stories associated with those individuals. For example, *The Brogues* (fig. 3) were associated with a poet who travelled between Florence, Paris and London, who, whilst on a voyage, was captured by pirates and forced into slavery in Algeria. *The Brogues* aim

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[2] The International Foundation of Fashion Technology (IFFTI) conference was hosted by Polimoda, Florence in 2015 and titled Momenting the Memento. It was curated by the director of Polimoda, Linda Loppa.

to embody the poet's identity and also represent his journey. Exhibiting the works showed, however, that other individuals were able to experience and connect with these representations of domestic objects in their own way, the artefacts awakening their own memories as they were viewed.

It was through the curation process and re-interpretation of *Absence* within the exhibition that I was able to formulate a new area of research enquiry. The idea of working with objects that became representations of loved ones helped me to develop an area of investigation whereby I could work with other people's stories rather than my own and re-articulate these in and through my studio practice.

Understanding how inanimate objects can create an emotional response through their evocation of personal narratives has been discussed by sociologist, Sherry Turkle, in *Evocative Objects.* Turkle argues that objects can be used as reflections on life transitions, markers of relationships and even companions. She explores the idea that objects can be "centrepieces of emotional life" (Turkle, 2007, p. 6) and it is through this notion that I have considered how individuals interact with objects that evoke memories of their own relationships with others. Reflecting on Turkle's work has been a starting point for me to question whether the emotional connections between object and individual can be harnessed through the making of a newly-crafted artefact.

*Figure 4 - View of the Monument Gallery, Santa Croce, featuring Absence. (2015).*

## 1.6   Summary

This study offers a new understanding of the relationship between narrative and craft. It uses a variety of practical and intellectual approaches including traditional craft techniques, object analysis, oral history and an exploration of ideas around making to offer fresh perspectives on the material culture of memory. The research proposes that stories can be re-articulated as material memories, and thus contributes a new perspective in the ways in which objects are made and function in relation to memory and narrative. By re-articulating stories in material form through my practice, an archive of new craft artefacts – which are material evidence of the possibilities inherent in this practical and intellectual hybrid approach – is created.

# 2 Contextual Review

## 2.1 Introduction

The idea of embedding memory in material artefacts has been a cornerstone of western culture throughout history, for example, Ancient Egyptians memorialising their dead through artistic, bodily and material methods, the Victorians' use of memento mori, or the building of monuments to symbolise loss. Much has been written about the material culture of memory, and many artists have addressed themes of absence. This contextual review provides an overview of the relevant literature divided into thematic components and subthemes that guide the avenues of enquiry for this study. It considers both academic literature and artists working within the fields of objects, love and loss, archives and memories, narrative, storytelling and craft, making and embedding, and situates where my own research is positioned in relation to these ideas.

Further literature and artistic practices are reviewed and embedded throughout the thesis, where relevant, to contextualise my own evolving processes and findings.

## 2.2 Objects

Objects have been described as having a voice (Miller, 2008, p. 2; Kwint, 1999, p. 3) being containers or embodiments of individuals and memories (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981, p. 37) or companions to our own emotional lives (Turkle, 2007, p. 5). The idea of objects becoming imbued with emotion, attachment and sentiment has been widely researched from a theoretical perspective by scholars in different fields such as anthropology, (Appadurai, 1986), psychoanalysis, (Winnicott, 1986), material culture (Miller, 2008 & 2009) and history, (Ash, 1996).

Within my practice, objects simultaneously act as the starting point, the source material, and the output (newly made artefact), with the intention of exploring whether memory can be transferred from a narrative into an artefact through the process of making. It is therefore important to contextualise objects and the attachment people feel towards them, to understand why they are used as memory objects. Memory objects for the purpose of this study are the objects that already exist and act as symbols of remembrance for something such as an event, a person or a particular time in their lives. This is not to be confused with a material memory, which is how I define an artefact that is made as a representation of a story. The following literature investigates this idea and how I have used this information as a craft practitioner, to investigate whether a newly-crafted artefact could contain the same sense of emotion as a memory object could.

Dress historian, Juliet Ash in *Memory and Objects* argues that objects can be considered a 'prompt' to "our conscious lives …as reminders of people who are absent" (Ash, 1996, p. 220). She describes objects that represent a person as "small part(s) of a whole that can never be complete" (1996, p. 220), from the representation of their eyes in a photograph, their scent on a shirt or their words in a letter. The objects she discusses, all have connections to the physical body in some way, therefore there is a constant association to an individual and their form, even in their absence (see also Buse & Twigg in 09.3; Sampson in 05.3; Shoeser in 4.4.6.1). These types of objects can embody memory for individuals relating to a specific time, such as the last time someone wore a particular shirt or the event at which a photograph was taken. I want to explore whether all objects have an embodied connection, or can become personified in the absence of their owner and leave a physical connection for the next recipient. An object that can be worn, used or admired is still capable of being held, felt or touched, which therefore

provides a personal, tactile connection and an emotional connection to its previous owner. Objects therefore become transitional (Winnicott, 1986, p. 255), imbued with the identity of a person (a previous owner) and can subsequently become memory objects for others to remember that person by.

D.W Winnicott's theory of object relations and that of the transitional object are referred to by Attfield (2000, p. 126) and Turkle (2007, p. 8). The idea that as babies we form connections with soft objects that remind us of, or are associated with comforting experiences, such as holding a blanket or stroking fabric with one hand whilst feeding from a mother's breast. Winnicott explains how the comfort blanket, with its positive associations in turn becomes a valuable object to the child (Winnicott, 1986, p. 257). These transitional objects, sometimes referred to as "not-me-objects" (Winnicott, 1986, p. 255), could be the start of our connection to objects and how we emotionally invest in them or recognise them as symbols or stand-ins for a specific person; an embodiment of memory.

Design Historian, Judy Attfield considers Winnicott's theory of the transfer and separation process by furthering the thinking of the blanket as substitute suggesting, "what starts out as a random, temporal adoption of a napkin or cot cover develops into a process of cathexis which transforms it into a personal possession" (Attfield, 2000, p. 130).[3] The adoption of this process allows the individual to project their own memory onto an ordinary object, investing it with emotional value - these become the objects that are stored away for posterity, rather than fully

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[3] Attfield describes cathexis as "a form of emotional investment transferred into an object to form a link between a person and the outside world, so that a simple object like a mug or a sweater becomes a mediator and is experienced as a reinforcement to the sense of self" (2000, p. 130).

parted with. Often, objects that have been put away for safe keeping or cannot be parted with take on the status of being 'shrine like' or a 'reliquary'. (Attfield, 2000, p. 131). This could also be true of other people's objects that have already been imbued with emotion and handed down, becoming representative of a memory object.

In a similar manner Ash muses on the impact of memory objects and their emotional affectivity when considering her husband's tie collection after he died. Expressing that our next of kin, live with memories embodied within objects, garments and photographs which live on when living is over for the dead" (Ash, 1996, p. 219). It demonstrates how objects allow the departed to carry on living in other people's memory, complimenting Attfield's idea that objects, although inanimate, can transition in purpose: from an anonymous item of clothing to a memory object of a lost love, for example. The ability to "feel a past human presence through looking at (an) object", leads naturally to the idea that objects also have a history (Ash, 1996, p. 222). I would argue that the idea of transition of object status is most apparent after death, due to the memories objects can evoke in the absence of a person to whom the object was once connected.

Value is explored through different ways within the study, from the value of stories, time and objects (4.6). Here I explore how value is created through exchange and classification. The renowned anthropologist Arjun Appadurai's *The Social Life of Things* is a seminal work in which he argues that commodities come to be imbued with value through processes of exchange (Appadurai, 1986, p. 3). [4] The value of commodities in this study is framed in terms of

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[4] Commodities - A useful or valuable thing / object. For the purpose of this study this also encompasses artefacts.

sentimentality and personal meaning, rather than monetary value per se; therefore, these relate to the memory objects or treasured items associated with lost love. Sociologist, Marcel Mauss also offers a meaningful interpretation of exchange value through the process of gift giving and that to "give something is to give part of oneself" (Mauss, 1966, p. 10).

Connections are made with objects for specific and definite reasons. Ash and Attfield have suggested, that objects can be reminders of important times or events and become sentimental. Objects can also be functional in that they serve a specific purpose; whether practical or emotional. Specifically, when an object is exchanged for example, given as a gift, if the recipient of the object has no use, or emotional connection with it, the object may have neither functional nor sentimental value to them. Yet if an object is received that serves a useful purpose, such as a tool or implement, or, for example, in the context of my research if it acts as a reminder of a lost love, value is created in the object by the recipient. Arguably the giver has also been embedded into the exchanged commodity, as Mauss would have it, the object is alive and often becomes personified, adding a further layer of memory to the gift (Mauss, 1966, p. 10). The practical function of an exchanged object may be seen as less important by its recipient-owner if its value was related to memory, and this is when objects can transition into a different classifications. The classification of objects as suggested by Prown (1982), duly noted in the methodology (3.3.4.3) are art (paintings, drawings, sculpture), diversions (books, toys, games), adornment (links to the body), modifications of the landscape (architecture), applied arts (furniture, receptacles), devices (tools implements) (Prown, 1982, p. 14). This taxonomy provides specific categories into which all objects can be sorted. Objects may or may not transition through these classifications as a result of an exchange process, and of course the classification of objects is also subjective, dependent on various factors relating to the recipient

including taste, use and time. What may have been an important functional tool for one person – a weaving shuttle, for instance – could be passed on through exchange and transition to become a decorative ornament to another, depending on their connection with the object. Appadurai revisits this idea in his 1986 essay *The Thing Itself* (2006), in which he discusses how social relationships with objects can change over periods of time from gift to commodity, junk to heirloom, commodity to found art object (Appadurai, 2006, p. 15). The fluctuation of classification suggests the onus is on the owner as to how it is regarded and positioned in terms of value. I would therefore suggest, in regards to this study, that the artefacts created gain value through the process of exchange between myself and the participants: the exchange of stories for making artefacts and the exchange of artefacts for remembering stories, each becoming imbued with memory and personified in their creation.

As the historian, Joanne Begiato explains, "we all possess or remember objects that move us" (Begiato, 2018, p. 229). This suggests that although objects differ materially and aesthetically, the projection of emotions upon, and attachment to objects is commonplace. Materiality allows a physical manifestation of a memory. Producing artefacts from collected stories creates a snapshot in time of how participants felt about a lost love at a particular stage in their life. Begiato suggests that changes to personal object connections, with life changes or cultural shifts, can see meanings realigned, which is fundamental to the understanding of how objects become more or less connected to an individual throughout their life and their significance (Begiato, 2018, p. 231). My study takes into account life changes and samples a wide age range of participants, with some having experienced their lost love in the last few years, or over fifty years ago. This experience gives a broad overview of how life-changes may affect feelings of emotion, causing stronger or weaker connections over a period of time (05.2).

There are many sources that relate to personal accounts of object relations such as collections of edited essays *Evocative Objects* (Turkle, 2007), *The Object Parade* (Lenney, 2014) and *The Comfort of Things* (Miller, 2009) which provide insight into the emotional connections with objects. In *The Secret Life of Objects* Dawn Raffel recounts memories of significant people in her life and how they are remembered through specific objects. It is within these narrations that she captures the importance of specific objects to her, that are seemingly insignificant to others, such as a cup, a mirror or a dress just as those in the collated editions listed above do. In the chapter entitled 'The Dress', Raffel discusses her own attachment to an item of clothing that is "far beyond repair", which to another individual would be of no value. Describing how it is faded, stained and doesn't fit, she keeps it because it "holds in its weave the summer of 1984" (Raffel, 2012, p. 71). This idea suggests memories are produced and attached to objects relevant to the time, event or person related to their use. The meaning of the memory is then projected onto the object making them emotionally valuable.[5]

Through the interviews conducted as part of this research, different life stages and situations were almost always revealed, with participants discussing them as part of the account of their relationship with a lost love. Considering further the experience of objects at different life stages, artist, Grayson Perry's *Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman*, is an artwork that explores how collections of historical artefacts in the British Museum allow people to find themselves and see themselves and their own personal concerns reflected back at them (Perry, 2011, p. 11). Perry's methodology is discussed in more detail in 2.8.3. The idea that objects allow people to become

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[5] See also Alison Slater's 'Wearing in memory: Materiality and oral histories of dress'. (2014).

themselves through interaction is reflected in my own participants' stories about their lost loves and how objects, such as a rolling pin or a football, played some part in making participants who they are today. Although over time participants may perceive relationships in different ways, or tell different versions of stories to re-live a memory, in the present, the artefacts I have created embody the present-day perceptions of the storytellers behind them, materialising their existing memories. It is hoped that this allows the artefacts to become further embedded in participants' own memories of their lost love.

## 2.3   Love and Loss

The texts and art practice within the contextual review are those that address the idea of loss and memory of a loved one. I have explored love from these angles to serve as an introduction to the types of relationships I chose to work with within the research.

Epidemiologist, Thomas C. Timmreck's, paper, 'Overcoming the loss of a love' (1990), sees him attempt to classify romantic love as a personal response. He states that it "matters little whether the love feelings are founded in infatuation, sexual response or true love to the person experiencing them" (p. 517). Love cannot be measured or proven scientifically, therefore it has to be assumed to be real when expressed by an individual, however, time can change opinion on what love actually is. Reflecting on a relationship after the event, love can then be measured against other relationships or experiences. I would argue that time can change the perception of a relationship and the type of emotion felt, be it love, lust or something else.

Timmreck states that "empirical studies are rarely reported because measuring love is difficult so developing sound research methods that will produce data on a subject difficult to quantify is full of problems" (Timmreck, 1990, p. 516). His point is accurate in its suggestion that how

we might measure love is unclear and unscientific, which is why this study is explored using a qualitative approach. Focusing on clinical observations of those who had suffered the loss of romantic love, Timmreck showed individuals "may continue the quest to re-establish the pleasure experienced" (1990, p.519). This re-establishment could be through experiences such as recreating sexual encounters or listening to music to rejuvenate memories related to a particular event or person (p.523). These could also link to objects that are used as prompts for memory such as a teddy bear being hugged or clothing being worn, as discussed by Attfield previously.

Familial love could be argued as being the first 'type' or area of love that is experienced within a lifetime. There are different experiences of familial love that depend on life stage. C.S. Lewis determines familial love in two parts, 'Need-love' and 'Gift love' (1960, p. 33), that of a child 'needing' the parental love and the parent 'gifting' their love to a child. 'Gift and need' love can alternate as children and parents age, reversing the need love of the parent from the child and gift love from the child caring for the parent. With the loss of familial love, such as that of a parent or grandparent, come feelings of losing connections with the past and historical memories. Appignanesi describes how, at events such as Christmas time, or with the death of a parent, childhood emotions resurface and "infantilise" grown adults. With regards to sibling rivalry and 'divvying up' parental possessions, she argues, "a mother's necklace (or) a father's preferred painting, can take on a near magical value as aged toddlers scrabble over the relics of favouritism" (2011, p. 331). This 'infantilisation' of adults due to the loss of a parent or elder and the enshrining of objects create feelings of nostalgia, meaning items chosen to represent parents or elders may be those that conjure childhood memories. My understanding, which is similar to that of Appignanesi is that the state of familial love is in constant flux throughout a

lifetime, starting with the child needing love, through different stages such as becoming a parent or caring for parents, each stage requires a different type of love, and ultimately ending in a desire for reciprocation of love when it can no longer take place after loss.

As well as hypothetically defining what love is in the context of differing relationships, an explanation of 'lost love' is to be explored, as this affects an understanding of the status and type of emotion felt. Lost love for the purpose of this study is defined as love felt for a person who is estranged from, no longer in contact with, or passed away from the participant. The reasoning behind using lost love as the starting point is summed up by Appignanesi, who states that:

> Lost or dead loves, enshrined in an aura of imaginary perfection, seem to hover over all our loves…within the imagination, they take on a magical and healing power. We idealise their attributes, make them the bearers of all our good and wholeness, the healers of our wounds. (2011, p. 36)

The lost love becomes a void or shadow as loss allows emotions to become enlarged and emphasised leading to a "yearning (that) can be stronger than lived love itself" (Appignanesi, 2011, p. 36). Appignanesi's definition of lost love provides a more heightened sense of emotion than that of 'just' love. Other scholars who propose this idea are (Fisher, 2004 & Timmreck, 1990) who state that the idea of infatuation and the pain that is felt when love is lost can be more than just an emotion, but a physical ailment. In conclusion, the sense that loss of love leads to yearning offers a powerful feeling, almost tangible, and a deeper sense of emotion, and thus, for the purpose of this study, the possibility of harnessing this within a narrative.

## 2.4   Archives and Memories

Contemporary artists and museums working with ideas around lost love have approached the subject in different ways. The Museum of Broken Relationships collects and archives objects and stories that have been left behind after the loss of a relationship that are potentially too painful to be kept by the original owner.[6] As stated in conversation with former collections manager of the Museum of Broken Relationships, Ivana Družetić, objects donated to the museum are "strictly by anonymous people…with unedited stories" (I. Družetić, personal communication, December 2, 2015). The museum's collection is based around relationships of different types, from mostly romantic, but also familial and that of friendship. It has developed into an archive "composed of keepsakes, trinkets of no apparent value, either monetary or artistic, all of which bear witness to an end of a relationship" (Vistica, 2014, p. 8). The museum's creators, Olinka Vištica and Dražen Grubišić, feel society obliges us with our marriages, funerals, and even graduation farewells, but deny any formal recognition of the demise of a relationship, despite its strong emotional effect. (Museum of Broken Relationships, 2015a). The museum provides a home for objects where the previous owners could no longer keep them, but are reassured their past possessions will be looked after rather than disposed of. The process of donation is a way for people to relieve themselves of an emotional burden without the object and its associated story being lost completely, since both object and its narrative become archived. The object takes on a new existence, relinquished of its personal possession status and in turn becoming part of an archive of unlikely objects, that are linked through their aura of memory and symbolism of lost love. This again recognises the transformation of object

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[6] The Museum of Broken Relationships is described as 'a physical and virtual public space created with the sole purpose of treasuring and sharing (personal) heartbreak stories and symbolic possessions. It is a museum … about the ways we love and lose' (Museum of Broken Relationships, 2015b), thus both museum and archive.

classification as discussed previously. My own practice takes a similar approach in the collection of narratives and objects as a starting point, but works closely with participants, rather than anonymising them, therefore portraying the objects and the relationship more positively rather than as a burden that needed to be let go.

Many artistic approaches which use archival techniques such as the collation of related or unrelated objects to preserve the memory of relationships make use of readymade objects, such as the work of Christian Boltanski discussed later within this chapter. I use the term readymade as proposed by Marcel Duchamp in 1917 (Tate, 2021), that consider ordinary objects selected by an artist and given a new function as a piece of art. This also relates to the idea of objects changing value and status as discussed in 2.2. The work of Leanne Shapton, whose work uses all readymade objects, relates specifically to that of a lost love. She created *Important Artifacts and Personal Property from the Collection of Lenore Doolan and Harold Morris: Including Books, Street Fashion and Jewelry* (fig. 5), as an homage to a lost love relationship. The relationship of Lenore and Harold is documented through objects in chronological order in the style of an auction catalogue. The relationship's narrative is explored through the mundane and ordinary as a selection of auction lots that questions sentimental value and worth through the price tags associated with each piece. The use of a catalogue style display could be seen to trivialise the relationship, however in the context of this study, it shows a deeper understanding of the importance objects play within a relationship's duration.

*Figure 5 – Page 49 of Important Artifacts and Personal Property from the Collection of Lenore Doolan and Harold Morris, Including Books, Street Fashion, and Jewelry. (Shapton, 2009).*

Both the Museum of Broken Relationships and Shapton's *Important Artifacts and Personal Property from the Collection of Lenore Doolan and Harold Morris, Including Books, Street Fashion, and Jewelry* provide examples of making the absence of a relationship present within a material form, using readymade objects. My own study treats readymade objects or memory objects as the starting point to producing a narrative that becomes the source material for the creation of newly-crafted artefacts.

## 2.5   Narrative, Storytelling and Craft

Storytelling is considered as one of the oldest forms of craftsmanship (Rowley, 1997, p. 76) and plays an integral role within the research, as part of the collection of source material and the making process . In 1936, Walter Benjamin addressed the idea that stories were told and remembered through communities and craft, but also how the art of storytelling was being lost as a result of the loss of craft communities. In *The Storyteller*, Benjamin discusses how stories are more easily absorbed by the listener if they are pure (chaste), meaning those that have not been subject to analysis. He describes analysis as "psychological shading" (1999, p. 90), a means of adding other dimensions to a story, thus making it harder for the listener to commit it to memory and to be able to retell it subsequently. Within the practice (Chapter 4) I explore methods of collecting oral histories, in order to retain the participants' voice and memory which in turn creates a clear transcript for the use of making a newly-crafted artefact or material memory.

The rhythmical nature of spinning yarn or passing a weaving shuttle back and forth is repetitive and becomes hypnotic, but also a mindless task. Within this process Benjamin suggests that workers can become "self-forgetful" (p. 91) as they are embodied in the making experience. This is discussed later in the chapter by Sennett and the skill of mastering a craft. In relation to storytelling, once skills have already been acquired, not having to think about the process allows the mind to wander. As Benjamin states "the gift of retelling them comes naturally" (p. 91). This allows conversation to flow and subsequently become part of the process becoming embedded, usually, allowing them to be remembered or recalled at a later date, potentially when performing the same task again. Benjamin further emphasises the relationship between storyteller and craftsperson, by using craft as a metaphor and describing how "traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way hand prints of the potter cling to the clay vessel" (Benjamin, 1999, p. 91). This idea suggests that through the processes and environment of making, stories can be told, retained and passed on, and in turn traces of the craftsperson become embedded in the crafted object. Initially, I had considered storytelling to be purely part of the narrative collection process, however, through working with craftspeople and the journey of making it became a fundamental part of my own learning, as discussed in (4.4).

Benjamin suggests the decline of storytelling started during the Industrial Revolution when processes of industrialisation and mass manufacture began to isolate workers. (Benjamin, 1999, p. 91). Automated processes allowed for the breakdown of communication between craftspeople; concurrently, an increase in basic mass education, including reading and writing, also contributed to the decline of oral traditions such as storytelling. Glenn Adamson in conversation with Grant Gibson, reiterates Benjamin's position, that craft was re-classified as a "necessary opposite" to the industrialisation process and was labelled as low skilled, low paid,

predominantly women's work, that took place in people's houses (Gibson, 2019). The "systematic de-prioritisation of craft" (Gibson, 2019) was a way of changing the power dynamic, but thus losing the craft communities.[7]

Craft communities such as those in weaving and spinning were decimated as part of industrialisation processes. Where master crafts people had worked side by side, they now worked alone. Where stories would have once been told and passed on, isolation meant that important and traditional stories such as those of family lore or artisanal process were lost through the lack of social interaction. Sue Rowley argues that Benjamin predicted the decline of storytelling within the twentieth century. Writing in 1997, Rowley describes how stories have started to be re-collected within communities. Within her article 'Craft and narrative traditions', she explains how certain societal groups lack representation in history due to a lack of literature and not being the subject of "mainstream investigations of literature and history" (Rowley, 1997, p. 78). She explains how groups began to excavate their own past, by examining stories that have been kept alive by word of mouth, as well as letters and diaries to form a picture. I used similar oral history modes of enquiry to capture participants' narratives of their experiences and relationships preventing them from loss. Many participants have used letters, photographs and objects as prompts to help tell their story, which allows for a fuller picture to be created through a visual, auditory and kinaesthetic experience.

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[7] Adamson's view echo those claims of John Ruskin's at the start of the Arts and Crafts movement in that industrialisation and the machine degrades the worker and distances them from the artistic process (Triggs, 2012, p. 26).

Like readymade objects and discussions around artists' interpretations of love, storytelling in my research is not seen as an end point for the objects, but as part of the process of collecting and making the finished artefacts. All elements of the process are combined within the artefact, with the intention of embedding those narratives of lost love – and the memory objects which connect with those narratives – into a newly-crafted artefact.

## 2.6   Making

Within this research, making is the fundamental method of exploring whether personal narratives can be re-articulated through the crafted artefact, therefore understanding the use of making and the role of the craftsperson is key within the contextual review. I have looked at the current position of making from writers within craft, craft practitioners and artist perspectives to understand different approaches to the concept of embedding emotion into artefacts through the making process.

Like the use of narrative in the process, the choice of materials and techniques play a significant role within the process of creating the artefacts. The techniques and materials I select are driven not by practical concerns, but by emotion and feeling. Peter Dormer in *The Art of the Maker* builds on this concept, explaining that unlike, for example, industrial design with its pre-set attributes, craft is a process that can evolve and "tell us about the process of the work itself" (Dormer, 1994, p. 88). This is also reiterated by craft theorist Pamela Johnson, who suggests that the act of making can be a "piecing together of deeply felt experience as a three-dimensional form" (Johnson, 1998, p. 139). Korn, Dormer and Johnson all refer to craft in a similar way; as a process that involves attachment to the chosen materials, which through working with them connections are made between the process and finished artefact.

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In regards to fabrication techniques in *The Nature and Art of Workmanship* (1968), David Pye addresses the concept of the workmanship of risk and the workmanship of certainty in which he explores the idea of making by hand and making by machine (Pye, 1968, p. 4). It is through the methods of production, such as the tools used, that levels of risk or certainty can be judged, for example, working with the laser cutter to decorate leather, rather than by hand, has a more controlled result that can be predicted at the outset (02.5). In a discussion between Pye and Frayling, it is suggested that often it is the prescribing of final outcomes such as pre determining what will be made that limits freedom of choice, rather than the processes or materials available (Frayling, 2011a, p. 94), however I would argue that working with the workmanship of certainty by using certain processes can also limit risk and, therefore, creativity.

Social Anthropologist, Tim Ingold's ideas on making have formed a starting point to my own making process. In his 2012 conference presentation *Thinking through Making,* Ingold discusses both concepts of making-through-thinking (a hylomorphic way of making to a pre-determined idea) and thinking-through-making (morphogenetic where by the maker works through feeling the material and processes and the artefact grows in this way) which are both pertinent within my own practice (Ingold, 2013, pp. 20-21; Pohjoisen Kulttuuri-Instituutti, 2013). He explains an artefact produced using making-through-thinking, or the hylomorphic model of making is "the materialisation of a thought…in order to make something you have to first think it" (Pohjoisen Kulttuuri-Instituutti, 2013). Ingold takes issue with the hylomorphic model of making as it follows a linear path from material and idea to artefact and leaves out the creativity of the process stating "we have to read backwards from the finished artefact to the idea that gave rise to it" (Pohjoisen Kulttuuri-Instituutti, 2013). In contrast, he argues that thinking-through-making allows for ideas to be generated through the flow of materials "in the

movement in the imagination under sensory awareness" (Pohjoisen Kulttuuri-Instituutti, 2013). He explores the notion that making is a process of growth that allows the maker to explore materials and "join forces with them" (Ingold, 2013, p. 21), allowing materials to lead the maker's choices and enmesh creativity within the process (this is further discussed as part of my own practice in 3.3.3). In a similar discussion based around the role of making within the creative process and production of knowledge, researcher, curator and author Martina Margetts suggests ,"the plan of a design alters in the doing, or conversely, the beginning of making with the hands enables a plan to evolve (Margetts, 2011, p. 40). This strengthens the argument that at the core of thinking-through-making are non-verbal, haptic and embodied processes that take place as mind, material and hand work together. A hybrid of both hylomorphic and thinking-through-making approaches could be used whilst creating a piece of work. Whilst I agree that my own experience of making includes improvisation as part of the process; letting the materials guide the processes, it is also driven by a starting point; the participant narratives and transcripts, whose prompts to some extent outline and dictate the artefacts' shape and form. This is further explored through the practice in Chapter 4.

Using a personal narrative as a starting point brings in another level of emotional significance and biographical relevance to the process of craft, as I am working with narratives that represent a lost love. Design historian, Jo Turney argues that the act of making for another person develops closeness, more so in objects such as a "toy to be cuddled or a sweater to hug the body", and that this tactile nature could be "indicative of an embrace" (Turney, 2012, p. 307). Similarly, Noreen McGuire acknowledges the connection between maker and recipient being an "emotional connection" (McGuire, 2014, p.53) that manifests in the home-made object. Historian, Rozsika Parker underpins the idea that making for others rather than oneself

created a different emotional response in the seminal text *The Subversive Stich.* She argues that aristocratic women who practiced the craft of embroidery for themselves in the late 18th century, could be seen as decadent or "a cardinal sin of vanity" (Parker, 1984, p.142), whereby if it was practiced in the "right spirit (it) made women into selfless, domestic beings" (1984, p.143). As such there was an upsurge of embroidery for others, such as for the home or husbands through the 19th century. Making for others was seen as an act of love. These ideas of emotional connection through making lead on to Attfield and Ash's ideas of the feelings that objects have and why people hold onto them after the loss of an individual. Korn splits the two contexts of craft into the person who creates a craft object (the maker) and the person who encounters the object (the respondent) (2015, p. 50). The closeness developed between maker and the respondent shows how craft can form a common bond. Korn explains that the "more closely a respondent shares a maker's cultural orientation, the more accurate his reading of an object…will be" (Korn, 2015, p. 63). This is important within the study due to the collaborative nature in which the narratives were created and the bond that has developed between myself and participants throughout the process (4.2.2). However, it is understood, that as the maker I have limited control over a respondent's perception of the finished artefact. Korn suggests this is due to how each person's worldview "informs what he notices and how he interprets it" (Korn, 2015, p. 63). Frayling, like Korn and Sennett, talks of the "patient mastery of technique until it becomes second nature" (2011a, p. 33). It is important to remember that at the novice stage, every step requires "conscious deliberation" (Korn, 2015, p. 51) until techniques become instinctive. Korn terms this as craft becoming "a fully integrated application of one's capacities" (Korn, 2015, p. 52), whilst Sennett suggests 10,000 hours of experience is needed to become a master craftsperson (Sennett, 2008, p. 20). When a craftsperson reaches the level of working instinctively it allows for the mind to wander (such as being able to chat to others 2.5).

## 2.7 Embedding

The idea of embedding – transfiguring memory into an artefact through making – is subjective and I discuss this in context of my own practice in 4.4. Much is covered in this thesis by artists and theorists, in regards to readymade objects having an aura or memory projected onto them and physically translated into their fibres through knocks, scrapes and dents that each tell a story, when they have been handed down or used as a memory object (see 2.2 Objects and 2.8 Artists and Practice). The artefacts I create – to a certain extent – could be considered reproductions of the original source objects, however, they do not in all cases bear a resemblance to the initial objects, but where they do, as Benjamin would have it, the reproduction is able to bring out aspects of the original (p. 6, 2008) that would not normally be seen. Through the making process I have been able to incorporate auratic elements of the narrative into the artefacts such as making Emily's mother's handwriting tangible and, in turn, embedding it into the construction of a new rolling pin (02.5).

Tacit knowing and knowledge is fundamental to the construction of the artefacts. As Michael Polanyi argues that "we know more than we can tell" (Polanyi, 2009, p. 5) therefore trying to remember all stages of making each artefact would be impossible with the myriad of techniques that are used. There is also much debate regarding how the heart, head and hand work together and how, once skills are acquired, the maker works uninhibited (Benjamin, 1999, p. 91; Korn, 2015, p. 49) with a "constant interplay beween tacit knowledge and self-concious awareness" (Sennett, 2008, p. 50). This afirms the idea that through the making process the interplay between the heart, head and hand works instinctively to produce what is required. The notion that the hands work in conjunction with the thought process, reaffirms, the viewpoints of

Ingold, Adamson, Korn and Sennett (2.6), and through my own experiences as a maker, where I draw upon my own tacit knowledge, I can reimagine the sentiments from participants stories which become embedded into the artefacts through the joining and manipulation of materials.

## 2.8 Artists and Practice

The work and practices of a number of artists is fundamental to my own understanding of how practice can be used to convey and re-articulate meaning. Through drawing on particular works of Horst Hoheisel and Christian Boltanksi and the methods used and meanings conveyed in the works of Grayson Perry and Rachel Whiteread I have an understanding of where my own arts-based research sits within the field. It was important for me to situate my own practice to understand how my own methodology differs from and reflects that of my contemporaries.

### 2.8.1 Hoheisel   Aschrott Brunnen

Statues and memorials have been used to portray the memory of people and events in different ways, from permanent forms cast in bronze, replicating human likeness[8], to piles of shoes, symbolising atrocities and the loss of life during the Holocaust[9]. The work of Hoheisel's anti memorials or counter monuments, specifically his 1987 *Aschrott Brunnen* work has allowed me to question the significance of using the void to represent a memory or what now doesn't exist, in solid form. These types of memorial have been created by others, including Boltanski and Whiteread, discussed later within this review and work, not to replace or compensate loss, but to highlight what is missing through the suggestion of its absence. His representation in negative of a former fountain (fig. 6) destroyed by the Nazis in the Second World War allows for

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[8] As this thesis moves towards completion, global anxiety surrounding memorialisation, in respect to statues such as slave trader Edward Colston have become sites of contested memory. This is beyond the scope of this research, but noted as to how memorials are being realigned with present day issues.

[9] This is further discussed in the portfolio – 05 *Running Shoes*.

contemplation by the viewer rather than "relieve us of our own responsibility to remember" (Spitz, 2005, p. 419). The creation of a negative replica extending below the ground, leaving the footprint on the surface allows the viewer to re-imagine what once stood there, however, rather than them fully understanding or perceiving its physical reality. The idea of the readymade has already been discussed within this chapter (2.4, 2.7), with artists using existing objects to symbolise others. Of a monument in its 'traditional' form, in his 1999 paper 'Memory and counter memory', James Young posits the idea that "once we assign monumental form to memory, we have to some degree divested ourselves of the obligation to remember" (1999, p. 2). In this way, therefore, the monument allows us to forget the event or truth of what it actually stands for. However, the use of the anti-memorial and negative space combined with the restricted viewing nature of a monument such as the Aschrott Brunnen fountain, creates the opportunity for the viewer to think around the subject matter, rather than considering a 'something' that stands for something else. Young's consideration of the unfinished monument is also poignant within this argument. In the context of Germany never being able to forget the Holocaust and its history, he argues that an unfinished memorial allows the memory of what it stands for to live on. "Only an unfinished memorial process can guarantee the life of memory" (Young, 2004, p. 164), therefore a final solution should never be reached and constant reinvention of memorials should take place as this then allows people to forget. The notion of continuation of memory is important within art practice and I would argue that a piece of work is in a constant state of flux, for example, materials used continue to change through ageing as also suggested by Ingold (2013, p. 22), therefore the viewer witnesses a change over time and a constant re-making of the work by nature. Hoheisel's work, although on a larger scale to that of my own, uses absence to enhance presence, encouraging the viewer to experience this

through use of their own imagination. His work represents the void left by those killed during the Holocaust, seemingly highlighting their absence with more absence.

### 2.8.2 Boltanski   The Lost Workers

Boltanski's *The Lost Workers (1994)* was based around local factory employees from Crossleys Carpets in Halifax, which closed in 1982. The factory was based in the Dean Clough site where the work is situated. It captures the memory of 'lost' workers from the Crossleys Carpets through personal artefacts stored in 60 boxes that are displayed in the basement of the factory – suggestive of a crypt containing individual shrines to those who worked there (fig. 7). The absence of the worker was curated through the presence of objects that were collected via open calls for artefacts in the local area to previous employees or family members. This is evocative of how object and memory are portrayed above by Hoheisel, with the idea of the heightened status of the memory object becoming symbolic of the 'lost worker'. Boltanski's work is relevant to my own in the fact it is symbolic of representing narratives of the 'lost', however, for this work, Boltanski worked with the readymade and created an archive to represent individuals and a group of people he did not know or have connection with. His previous works have seen him use the subject matter of memory and individuality, and his method of fictionalising these relationships by using anonymous photographs and objects to construct a narrative that references events such as the Holocaust (Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2021). In this way, *The Lost Workers* differs in that there is a link to specific individuals being portrayed, in the same way the creation of my work relies on a relationship with real people. Having exhibited my own work at Dean Clough in 2018, it was interesting to draw these distinctions between my

practice of creating new artefacts from narrative, and Boltanski's methods of collating and collecting.

In the collection of the narratives behind the artefacts I created, it was also fundamental that I remained connected to the story, therefore having to collect narratives first hand, and seek approval to do this was an important ethical element of my practice. Having read reviews of *The Lost Workers* from the time, it seems the lack of Boltanski's engagement and knowledge of the feelings and emotions of the workers meant that actually collecting relevant materials through open calls presented a lack of engagement (Searle, 1995). This is emphasised by the further search for ex-employees in 2013 by The Arts Charity at Dean Clough's Executive Director, Vic Allen in a bid to complete the work that Boltasnki did not complete (YorkshireLive, 2013). This lack of engagement, however, does not take away from the overall concept and impact of the work; the display and duration of *The Lost Workers* (fig. 7) added to the atmosphere by accentuating the forgotten nature of those who had once worked at the factory. What I have taken from Boltanski's *The Lost Workers* is that the evocative feel and archival aesthetic is still present through curatorial choices including the setting for the installation, yet the process of collecting and collating is to me less significant here and therefore lacks the level of connection I need to feel as a maker in what I produce.

*Figure 7 – Christian Boltanski, The Lost Workers archive beneath the Henry Moore Studio, May 1994-1999. General view. (Crowe, 1998, cited in Hobbs, 1998).*

### 2.8.3 Grayson Perry

More relatable practitioners' methodologies include those adopted by Grayson Perry. Perry's methodology focuses on the concept of gathering stories from differing social, political and religious groups to underpin a specific issue his work is exploring. He has deployed similar

methods of collection throughout his career which have parallels with my own practice. In early works, *The Charms of Lincolnshire* (2004) and *Unpopular Culture* (2008), Perry's starting point was to investigate collections of artefacts and to respond to them to create new works. He states that a "strong thread of overt historical reference survives as one of the constants" within his art (Perry, 2011, p. 14). His use of relating artefacts to his personal experiences is part of a methodology which is underpinned by social engagements with the experiences of others. As part of his documentaries for Channel 4, he has analysed themes of gender, class and religion, using interactions with different audiences to create new pieces of work. *All in the Best Possible Taste (Crombie, 2012), Who Are You (Crombie, 2014)* and *Rites of Passage (Crombie, 2018)* are documentaries that have investigated social constructions of identity and meaning-making in people's lives.

*Figure 8 – Tapestry by Grayson Perry - Expulsion from Number 8 Eden Close. (Grayson Perry, 2012).*

As part of *All in the Best Possible Taste,* in the work *The Vanity of Small Differences (Crombie, 2012)* the finished pieces formed three woven tapestries which documented the changing statuses of social class through deep, intimate, social relationships (fig. 8). Perry gathers stories of lived experience, by conducting interviews and discussing people's attachments to their possessions. This has allowed him to embed himself as a researcher into different cultural and social contexts. Building trust with participants allows him to obtain further knowledge on areas he wants to research and portray within his work. In examining Perry's research practice as a mode of enquiry I have identified similarities between his research processes and my own, in particular his method of involving active participants as key consultants in the creative process. The narrative providing the source material to work with is key to the arts-based methodological approach of re-articulation in my work, however in my own practice I am

concerned with how the finished artefact is perceived as a reliquary of meaning, rather than these objects being a means of trying to accurately retell the stories behind them.

### 2.8.4  Rachel Whiteread

Artist and sculptor, Rachel Whiteread's use of subject material is based predominantly on the domestic object, beds, baths, rooms, books, but it is her concept of inverting these objects through casting and making the absent present that, gives objects usually considered ordinary and mundane a heightened sense of significance. By using casting as a process of inversion; a means of exploring ways of solidifying the void, Whiteread makes the absent materially present. Shelley Hornstein considers Whiteread's process and in inverting objects "heightens the materiality of the thing, making it seem more than what it is in its physical form" (Hornstein, 2004, p. 51). This relates to the idea suggested by Appignanesi (2.3) in regards to love and loss, whereby in absence, the sense of emotion towards the person becomes heightened and, with this, objects belonging to a lost love become their embodiment. In solidifying the space around an object, the void where it once existed is amplified.[10] Whiteread takes an existing object and uses it as a mould, creating a new object by transforming (inverting) the readymade and subsequently immortalising its character, including its knocks, dents and scratches, in the process. Her work preserves the memory of the object, but also the presence of a life lived, within the solidification process.

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[10] Anthony Gormley also used a technique of inverting space in his 1990-1993 concrete works *Flesh* and *Immersion.* The finished sculpture *Immersion* appears a rectangular concrete box, however on the inside is the void imprint of Gormley's body. The only part of the body the viewer can see is the out turned palms of the hands with the arms leading up to the 'body cavity'. It has been described by Art historian, Malin Hedlin Hayden as 'a repository for the body' (Hedlin Hayden, 2003, p. 171).

Her 2000 seminal work *Holocaust Memorial* is important in relation to my own practice as this relates to the use of objects to symbolise loss of people, and is also relevant in its connection with Boltanski and Hoheisel's work.



*Figure 9 – Rachel Whiteread, Holocaust-Mahmal, Wien, Judenplatz. (Schaefer, 2005).*

Whiteread was one of a number of artists approached to submit a proposal for a national Holocaust memorial in Vienna. Interestingly, both she and Hoheisel submitted proposals for this memorial as their work focuses on the void the Holocaust left rather than the images of destruction (Young, 2004, p. 167). In *Holocaust Memorial* (Whiteread, 2000), (fig. 9), Whiteread cast rows of books to symbolise the thousands of Jewish books burnt in the 1930s in the place it was to be located at Judenplatz, Vienna as a reminder "that bodies were burned as easily and remorselessly as paper" (Townsend, 2004, p. 26). The books personify those who were lost as a result of the Holocaust and the rows of what appear to be empty shelves are actually symbols of missing knowledge; memories that could have been made and memories that could have been shared and passed on if the events of the Holocaust had not taken place. Whiteread's work

does not just signify absence but "provokes reflection of the meanings of that absence" (Townsend, 2004, p. 25).

From Whiteread's body of practice I have been inspired to experiment with materials and their behaviours (4.4.2). Her choices of materials such as resin, concrete, plaster and rubber allow her to create casts in differing scales to capture the form of particular objects. For example, by using hot-water bottles as moulds throughout her career, Whiteread was able to 'test' materials, their capabilities and their finishes. *Untitled (Torso)* is a collection of hot-water bottle casts from 1988 to 1998 (fig. 10). The different materials show contrasting imprints of line, form and their capabilities and properties. From my own experience, casting requires dedicated periods of time to experiment with materials, shape, form, surface and compatibility to ensure the desired result. Whiteread's method of casting into hot-water bottles as a form of material exploration has produced tactile objects that have connotations of social history linked to "senses of comfort and care" (Young, 2017, pp. 162-163). These torsos act as experimentation for Whiteread to adopt the techniques and materials to use in her larger pieces of work. The materials chosen by Whiteread provide a neutral colour palette and materials can be easily identified by the viewer allowing for less focus on the manufacturing process and more on the subject matter. Interestingly her choice of material is also apparent in the artworks' mass and volume. Historian, Shelley Hornstein muses that although the mass is greater in the casts than the original form, it does not exceed its original physicality and retains a weightlessness (Hornstein, 2004, p. 51). Although in some works such as *House* (1993) or *Holocaust Memorial* (2000), solidifying the void does create an imposing structure, the choice of a single, neutral coloured material, creates the illusion of quiet and stillness. It is through Whiteread's exploration of materials that I have been encouraged to experiment widely to find suitable techniques and

processes for the artefacts I have created. Where Whiteread presents the solidified inversion as the finished piece, I use an inversion as the central component to work with and build upon, in collaboration with craftspeople, to create the finished artefacts (4.4.1).



*Figure 10 – (Untitled) Torso - Rachel Whiteread. Displayed at the Tate Britain. (2017).*

## 2.9   Summary

This review has demonstrated the predominant literature and artwork that has influenced my own research in relation to its key themes including objects, love and loss, archives and memories, narrative, storytelling and craft, making and embedding, and has attempted to demonstrate how they interlink within this study. The first objective sought to position my own research with the context of both theory and practice. Through the contextual review it has become apparent that material culture and object relations are central to the understanding of why and how I make, from understanding the idea of loss (Timmreck), to how stories can be passed on (Benjamin), to how we can think with materials can guide the making process (Ingold)

and how value can be produced through the process of exchange (Appadurai & Mauss). The contextual review thus contributes to an understanding of how new artefacts can be produced that can be seen to embody emotion, but that can also convey embedded narratives surrounding lost love, while exploring the role of storytelling in the craft process.

# 3   Methodology

The central aim of this research is to consider how narrative can be re-articulated through the creation of new artefacts. The thesis forms an investigative practice study, that takes a craft and arts-based, qualitative approach to contextualise the research. In deciding what methodological approaches to take, I used Creswell and Creswell's framework for research that shows how the different research approaches interlinked within my study. Creswell and Creswell pose this framework as a way to understand how to plan a research study, be it theory or practice based. They suggest:

> In planning a study, researchers need to think through the philosophical worldview assumptions that they bring to the study, the research design that is related to this worldview, and the specific methods and procedures of research that translate the approach into practice. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 5)

Working through each of these elements helped me to understand how my own practice-based research sits within the philosophical worldview (3.1) by determining my own position within the production of knowledge. From this I established my own framework (fig. 11), enabling me to visually identify how each research approach interconnected and resonated with my own approach, shaping my methodological framework and research methods for gathering, making and analysing data.
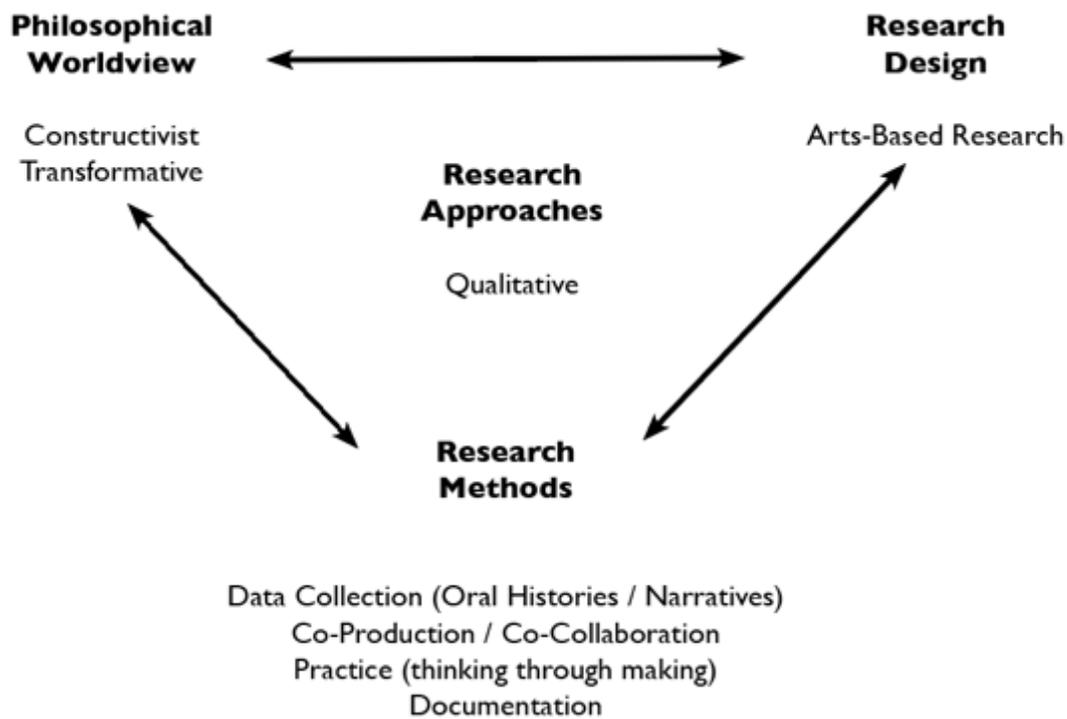
*Figure 11 – A framework for research – Adaptation of Creswell's interconnection of worldviews, design and research methods. P. 5. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).*

## 3.1   Philosophical Worldviews

The four philosophical worldviews I refer to are: constructivist, post-positivist, transformative and pragmatic. Philosophical worldviews are a "basic set of beliefs that guide action" as described by methodologist, Egon Guba (1990, p. 17).

My research aligns mainly with the worldview of constructivism. Constructivists, also known as interpretivists, "seek understanding of the world in which they work… develop(ing) subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed towards certain objects or things" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 8). The aim of constructivism is to rely on participant voice and the

creation of data or source material through interaction and discussion. This is what drives my study of narrative objects.

Constructivism explores subjective narratives based around social and historical contexts that allows us to make sense of the world. Constructivists "recognise that their own backgrounds shape interpretation" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 8), as discussed in Chapter 1, in which I explained how my life choices have forged a path in learning crafts and skills that have led to formal study, jobs and teaching within practical art and design environments. This background knowledge of working with craft, both as a team in industry and education and being taught by craftspeople and in higher education, has been of influence throughout the study in shaping the gathering of narratives, physically making decisions, thinking and documenting. Within my work I am always intersubjectively involved, situated in and connected to the process. I construct and interpret as part of my own practice and the processes I use. In this study this is expanded to the extent where I become a channel through which immaterial narratives are processed – from mind to hands – into a physical artefact (4.4.5). Therefore, in this respect a constructive world view in this context might suggest that knowledge can be produced, made and experienced in and through newly-crafted artefacts.

Elements of the transformative worldview are also relevant within the collaborative element of the study. Creswell and Creswell define a transformative worldview as that of empowering collaborators and engaging them within the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 9). The use of collaboration within my research allows participants to speak openly about their experiences of lost love. I engaged participants in the process of the research and thus becoming co-creators of the artefacts by providing a feedback loop where ideas were discussed and

translated within and through the making process (3.3.2, 4.2.1). It does not, however, consciously investigate love or emotion from a political viewpoint or support reform or change, but instead promotes discussion and the idea of participants feeling part of the research.

## 3.2   Research approaches / Research designs

The constructivist and transformative worldview perspectives are aligned within a qualitative research approach. The research approach for this study is based around a crafts-based methodology that is informed by an arts-based research framework. The use of both arts and crafts-based research approaches does not seek to compare craft to art in terms of status as this has already been covered by many craft researchers (Adamson, 2007; Dormer, 1997; Greenhalgh, 1997; Sennett, 2008) but to highlight where and how both approaches are used in my own research. Craft is the key approach I take to the research in terms of the practical aspects: how I make, what materials and objects feel like, and the making process in general. The arts-based research framework is used to identify and articulate the significance of these craft-practice processes in relation to my research aims, and is fundamental to understanding and exploring the significance of the finished pieces and what they might mean.

In 2011, the V&A, in collaboration with the Crafts Council, hosted *The Power of Making* exhibition which showcased an array of crafted artefacts and highlighted the importance of craft and making. The exhibition questioned what it means to make and how crafting an object can also "make (sic) you more than you otherwise had been" (Miller, 2011, p. 15). In some cases, the objects showcased were not extraordinary in the sense of being revolutionary, such as a dry-stone wall and a brewery barrel, but demonstrated the thought processes and choices the craftsperson had to make to create them and their link between craft, value and material

culture (see 2.2 and 4.6). Frayling considers craft as "learning by doing – experimental learning rather than learning from books or screens (Frayling, 2011b, p. 11), Dormer states that craft can evolve and the work can "tell us about the process of the work itself" (Dormer, 1994, p. 88) and Niedderer & Townsend who explore craft experience and emotion argue that, "emotion is central to most makers' practice" and makers imbue craft objects with "personal emotions, memories and meanings" (Niedderer & Townsend, 2014, p. 627). My own research approach draws on these perspectives of craft in the sense that I reflect on how objects of material culture are carriers of meaning. I explore craft through making and use these experiences to understand my own role as a practice-based researcher.

Arts-based research provides the casing in which craft-based research sits. Sociologist, Patricia Leavy uses Arts-Based Research (ABR) as an umbrella term for "all artistic approaches to research" (Leavy, 2018, p. 4), while Robin Nelson uses "practice as research" (PaR) to describe the same approach, encompassing outputs such as those which my own research identifies; literary, visual art and multi-method approaches (Leavy, 2011, p. 68; Leavy, 2018, p. 4; Nelson, 2013, p. 9). Leavy and Nelson both suggest researchers utilising ABR methodologies are able to discover and produce research that would be otherwise inaccessible through conventional modes. The use of ABR allows questions that could not be answered without the use of practice to be explored, and questions that have not utilised ABR to be re-evaluated and explored through the use of creative practice (Leavy, 2018, p. 9; Nelson, 2013, p. 9). Shaun McNiff describes ABR as "a process of enquiry whereby the researcher, alone or with others, engages the making of art as a primary mode of enquiry" (McNiff, 2014, p. 259). In order to investigate the re-articulation of narrative through the crafted artefact, this ABR framework is at the core of the study, as research thinking can only be achieved in parallel with the making process.

Throughout the rest of the thesis, I will refer to my research approach as ABR, which comprises of the above framework including my position within craft.

## 3.3 Research Methods

Working within an ABR framework allows for three significant strands of investigation that interlink and support each other: studio practice, theory, and documentation. The studio practice is supported by a studio blog documenting the processes of the research and offering a visual, and personal outcome and insight into the research journey.[11] The written thesis is a critical, holistic overview that engages with the theory surrounding the different processes and underpins the areas of investigation. My own framework follows a linear structure, allowing me to write through the process, analysing accounts of other practitioners and theorists to align or question my own practice. I have expanded the three strands to show the research methods used and give further clarification to the selection of each methodological approach employed including; oral history, collaboration, the making process, documentation and analysis of practice and the finished artefacts.

### 3.3.1 Oral History

Oral history is a type of interviewing technique, used by historians to gather, preserve and interpret the voices and memories of people (Oral History Association, 2020). Patricia Leavy defines oral history in an arts-based context as "collecting narratives from individuals for the purpose of research" (Leavy, 2011, p. 4). It is widely used in disciplines ranging from humanities

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[11] For details of processes see my studio blog www.charliegoldthorpe.com/blog.html

to social science and ABR research, with different aims for the data collected from documenting, understanding, or rationalising what is gathered. It is due to the flexibility of how the data can be used and the effectiveness and suitability of the method fitting with how I work as a practice-based researcher that it was chosen for this research.

An awareness of oral history theory and practice underpins how the narratives were collected and interpreted within this study. The historian, Lynn Abrams suggests that the creation of an oral history narrative is a collaborative endeavour, involving both researcher and participant, which aligns with the constructivist philosophical world view, so it was important to use a gathering system that allowed for "joint enterprise" in the production of the oral histories (Abrams, 2010, p. 24). Similarly, Clandinin & Connelly describe the end result of a narrative research approach as combining views from a participant's life (narrative) with those of the researcher's life (making experience) in a collaborative narrative: "What is told, as well as the meaning of what is told, is shaped by the relationship" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.94) between participant and researcher.

As well as the collection of the audio interviews, Abrams suggests that oral history exists in four forms: "the original oral interview, the recorded version of the interview, the written transcript, the interpretation of the interview material" (Abrams, 2010, p. 9). I use the four forms of oral history as starting points for different stages of my own practice; using the recorded version to transcribe and further interpret the narrative so it becomes further embedded into my mind to use throughout the making process (this is further discussed in Chapter 4). Abrams notes that the way the interviews are conducted will influence the interpretative approaches that are used

(Abrams, 2010, p. 9). My role in the production of the interview was to guide the conversation, for example, if clarification or further detail was needed (4.3).

### 3.3.2   Collaborative Relationships: Participants and Craftspeople

Collaboration and co-production were areas of interest at the start of the study, and I attended two workshop retreats at the University of Huddersfield in 2015, where PhD students discussed co-production within their own fields of research. From this, ideas were formed surrounding the type of co-productive research that was being explored such as working with people from different settings and backgrounds. Historian, Paul Ward who facilitated the event later wrote of co-production:

> People may make different contributions to (the) research, involving different amounts of time and effort at different points of the research process. However, all contributions are regarded as equally valuable. 'Co-production' refers as much to the spirit and philosophy of the research as it does to the mechanics of doing it. (Banks, Hart, Pahl & Ward, 2019, p.5).

The discussion in 2015 mirrored that of Ravetz, Kettle and Felcey, who argue that collaboration is not about transmitting pre-existing content, but creating "new forms of collaborative expertise" (Ravetz, Kettle &Felcey, 2013, p.1). They acknowledge that collaboration within craft extends its parameters, be it across materials or techniques and allows interactions within other fields and provides further opportunities to learn and *un*learn to think more alternatively (2013, p.2). It is the idea of being able to collaborate with others to both learn new skills and create new ways of working that shapes my practice.

Collaboration was initially used as a process of producing narrative as I explore above in my discussion of Abrams' ideas. Design anthropologist, Sarah Pink and Creswell & Creswell argue that the ethical approach to working with participants in this way is to engage them as part of the research rather than exploiting them as objects, or source material (Pink, 2015, p. 68;

Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 94). Once involved, participants were invested in achieving a common goal, of understanding whether narrative could be re-articulated through a crafted artefact. As I wanted to use real stories, it was important for me to build a relationship with my participants, allowing us to be equal within the production of new knowledge, therefore forming a collaborative relationship. Throughout the making of artefacts and analysis, participants became part of a feedback loop within the making process, so continued to be involved in an advisory role as discussed above in the form of joint enterprise (discussed as part of my process in 4.2.2). In this respect participants are ethically valued (3.3.2.1) in the research process and given visibility and representation.

Other collaborative relationships within the study were not planned initially, but developed with craftspeople, who became involved with the making of certain artefacts. Working in a thinking-through-making way (discussed later in this chapter) and being guided by an arts-based methodology, collaborative relationships grew to be part of the process. Again, echoing Pink and Creswell & Creswell, these relationships were driven by exchange and development of skill for both parties.

### 3.3.2.1 Ethical Consent

Before the involvement of participants took place, I gained approval for the study from the School of Arts and Humanities Research Ethics Committee. A participant information sheet and consent form were created (appendix 1) and before each interview took place participants were asked to read through and consent to being involved in the project. They had the opportunity to withdraw consent at any time during the study. All participants and craftspeople

where named have been anonymised throughout the study with the use of pseudonyms. Participants also had the opportunity to feedback on the artefacts within reflective interviews (3.3.4.5 and *The Artefacts*), at two gallery exhibitions (3.3.4.6 and 4.5.3) and were sent a final copy of the portfolio *(The Artefacts)* with the opportunity to give feedback as part of good ethical practice.

### 3.3.3   The Making Process

All of the artefacts were created using a variety of craft techniques, such as the use of saddle stitching, wood turning and casting. The transfer of narrative is understood through my own interaction between realised methods of fabrication and my engagement with the materials (4.4, 4.4.1).
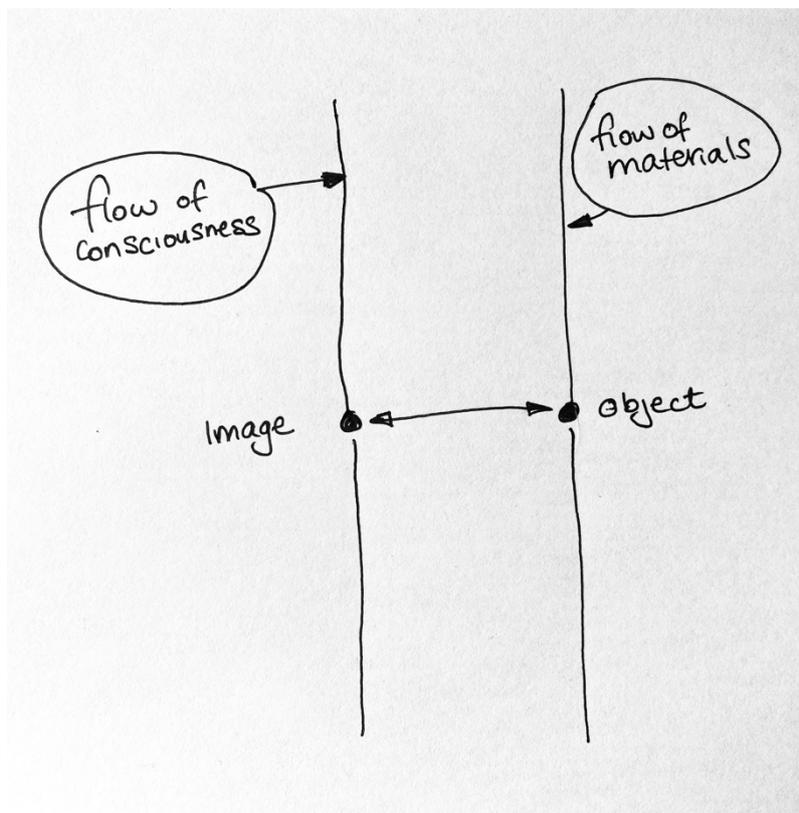


*Figure 12 – Consciousness, materials, image, object: the diagram. Redrawn from p. 21. (Ingold, 2013).*

In my own practice I use a combination of thinking-through-making and hylomorphism as discussed in the contextual review (2.6). It could be considered that the hylomorphic model of making is used as a starting point within the research as the participants' stories function to direct initial decisions about what/how to make, providing a template that is then imposed onto materials to create a finished artefact. In section 4.4.1 I consider questions around material consistency, and in section 4.4.4 I discuss how I make and consider how Ingold's ideas around thinking-through-making, feed into my practice. Throughout the practice, a dialogue between thinking and making occurs, with the two running in parallel. In this sense, the feel of the tangible materials I work with feeds back into the thought process. In *Making* (2013), Ingold similarly makes reference to a parallel between the flow of consciousness and flow of materials between the image of the object (fig. 12), which applies to my own practice in terms of what I perceived I was making (image) and the physical artefact (object) being produced (Ingold, 2013, p. 21). Ingold's discussion of how materials continue to change and develop after an object has been made through the morphogenetic process (thinking-through-making) is pertinent to my own work (Ingold, 2013, p. 22). Therefore, reflecting on Ingold, the choice of materials that I am familiar with in my own practice (discussed in 4.4.1), are those that continue to change organically over time; such as leather and silicone ageing (becoming darker and looking older), like the person it represents. During interviews, ordinary things such as rolling pins, watches and cameras dominated the narratives and thus provided the initial ideas and forms with which I worked with in the making process, again, demonstrating my leaning towards a hylomorphic framework. However, as Ingold suggests "even if the maker has a form in mind, it is not this form that creates the work. It is the engagement with materials" (2013, p. 22). My own documentation of the theory and practice behind the work created a personal retrospective flow of process similar to that of Ingold's parallel between the flow of consciousness and flow of

materials. It highlights the extent to which thinking-through-making took place, as well as how this practice was inspired by theory and vice versa, and how form was firstly considered and materials were chosen (fig. 13). It is through such exploration, as part of the ABR, that my own framework for making was developed from both hylomorphism and the thinking-through-making (4.4.4).



*Figure 13 - Interlinking Strands - Theory, Practice and Documentation. (2017).*

In Roberta Bernabei's doctoral thesis which investigates emotionally-invested and mnemonic jewellery through the sensitising of materials, she argues that "the act of embedding memories is in the hands of the maker or is a collaborative decision, which unfolds through depicting the memory with imagery, supported in some instances by the use of specific colours that can trigger memories" (Bernabei, 2019, p. 24). I would add to this that the embedding of memories can also be enhanced by familiar shapes and objects, such as those taken from within the narratives. The smooth cylindrical shape of the rolling pin that invites the hand or the worn running shoe, that has become shaped to the foot, already has connections to the body, its presence, its absence and therefore connections to memory.

As Ingold and Bernabei suggest, different factors such as preconception or engagement with materials can affect the finished work and I have factored in how the emotion of the narrative or relevant theory can also intersect with the making process. As a maker there is a continuous dialogue and parallel between thinking and making and negotiation between matter and form.

### 3.3.4   Documentation of the Research Process

As a practitioner using an ABR methodology, documentation of the process is key to my understanding of the finished artefacts. The main method of documentation was through a studio blog featuring photography of the experimentation and making processes and how they developed including my own artist's voice through personal commentary. This has become a valuable resource in the understanding of the re-articulation of narrative whilst drawing conclusions from the research.

### 3.3.4.1 Studio Blog

The studio blog offers a personal, in-depth reflection and analysis of all areas of the research and is considered as part of the practice and runs alongside the whole research process. Carole Gray and Julian Malins suggest reflective journaling provides a platform to capture the dynamics of a studio practice creating a "flexible, responsive, improvisational, reflexive account" (2004, p. 59). It demonstrates how my practice has developed from the beginning to the end of the research journey. Using a reflexive approach has allowed for observation and the generation of new insights throughout the whole process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 184), which has been invaluable in understanding why certain decisions were made and the ways in which the research developed over time.[12]

Working with a number of emotive personal narratives became hard to manage in terms of the amount of information I could handle at once, and it becoming a mental burden, and so McAleese's model (in Gray & Malins, 2004) which entails 'off-loading' via a reflective journal and concept mapping (fig. 14), became useful as an unburdening technique and to become ready "for new learning experiences" (Gray & Malins, 2004, p. 58). McAleese describes off-loading as "the process of shifting workspace from working memory to some external space or facility" (McAleese, 2000, p. 8). Being able to emotionally 'unburden' myself through documentation via the blog created the opportunity to revisit and relive certain moments and emotions throughout the process.

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[12] Elements of the Studio Blog are referred to within Chapter 4 and the *The Artefacts*.
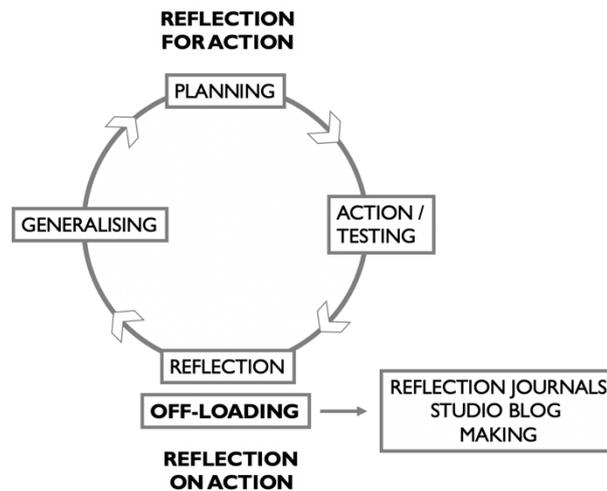
### 3.3.4.2   Photography and Videography

I used photography throughout the study to catalogue development in the practice. Being able to track the journey of the production of artefacts visually as well as through written analysis has allowed for reflection and consideration of the process in the writing up period as developments and progression can clearly be seen. As Gray and Malins state, juxtaposing photographs with text or the use of annotated photographs "allows us to 'see' what we 'mean'" (2004, p. 152). Thus, the combination of studio blog and photographic documentation has acted as a reflective visual manual and repository or archive.

Video was a method that I thought would be insightful to the practice. Initially I had envisaged a series of films to show the physical making process of each artefact, including the learning of skills and the different techniques used to construct each piece. Having re-watched a portion of the footage it did not serve to enhance the practice or give any insightful conclusions to the research question, as playback of the processes in two dimensions did not 'show' how emotion can be embedded through making in the same way, as noted by Benjamin, that aura cannot

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be reproduced by mechanical reproduction (see 2.7). In fact, the presence of the camera distracted me from my practice as it recorded, meaning I could not fully commit to the making process at hand as I was conscious of what I was doing and the framing of the recording, so this was discontinued early in the making process. I did, however, attempt to edit some of the early footage together which was shown within an exhibition and is discussed further in 4.5.3.

### 3.3.4.3   Analysing Artefacts

As discussed above, I have recorded the process of the study through each stage of the production of artefacts, which has provided a holistic view and a personal account of the journey upon which to reflect. In order to read the finished artefacts, I used a material culture analysis methodology to analyse each finished artefact based on Prown's 1982 paper, 'Mind in matter: An introduction to material culture theory and method'. Prown's methodology was chosen as a starting point because of the strength of his argument that artefacts are "primary data for the study of material culture, and, therefore, they can be used actively as evidence rather than passively as illustrations" (Prown, 1982, p. 1). Prown's method is held in high regard where the study of objects is concerned, being one of the most used by material culture scholars due to its simple three step process which encourages intellectual and emotional engagement with the object in question. Prown goes on to state that "objects made or modified by man reflect, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, the beliefs of individuals who made, commissioned, purchased, or used them, and by extension the beliefs of the larger society to which they belonged" (Prown 1982 p.1). This is important for this research because the artefacts created need to be read in relation to the emotions they convey, for both myself and participants, to understand to what extent a particular narrative has been re-articulated through the production process. Prown's methodology allows me to use my position as the

maker, my own beliefs and ideas, in the analysis of the artefacts in order to understand what I have produced. Essentially, the reason for choosing Prown's methodology is that it starts with the object and ends with the information. My own method of working uses Prown's analysis of material culture in reverse (6.4): starting with the information (story) and ending with the object (artefact). Using Prown's methodology at the end of the making process allows us to understand how the nuanced information (story) can still be sensed and experienced within the newly-created artefact.

As this study has adopted an ABR approach, the finished artefacts are the fundamental evidence of understanding my role as a craft practitioner, and how my method of thinking-through-making could be used as a framework for other practice-based researchers.

Prown's method is designed to extract information from an object in order to understand more about the culture in which that object was conceived, made, and used. He notes that academic disciplines such as art history and archaeology have created their own methodologies designed to answer discipline-specific questions (Prown, 1982, p. 7). Prown proposed a new method for analysing material culture, comprising of progression through three key areas: Description, Deduction, and Speculation (Prown, 1982, p. 7). His method involves looking at and engaging with the artefact including observing, touching, and feeling emotional connections with the piece and finally deciding what it stands for as outlined in Table 1. Prown outlines quantitative data collection within the description and its substantial analysis adhering to the mixed methods approach of archaeology and art history. However, as this study seeks to understand re-articulation of narrative, exact measurements or weights are not important within the study, although size and weight may be loosely referred to in a visual and tactile sense.

| Description | |
|---|---|
| Substantial analysis | Physical dimensions, measurements used |
| Content analysis | What it represents. Signs/symbols |
| Formal analysis | Visual character / materials / colour / texture |
| Deduction | |
| Sensory engagement | Handling the artefact |
| Intellectual engagement | Consideration of what it does or how it does it. |
| Emotional response | Reactions / joy / fright / awe / revulsion / indifference curiosity |
| Speculation | |
| Theories and Hypotheses | Review of information gathered through description and deduction. Summing up |
| Programme of research | The artefact as research linked to outside evidence (material culture) |

*Table 1 – Prown's framework for the analysis of artefacts.*

Interpreting objects using Prown's method adds much to my understanding of what they are and where they sit in the context of the culture in which they were conceived, made, and used. The artefacts that I have produced may resemble domestic objects, however, they cannot be considered working reproductions, and therefore Prown's method of analysis allows a new reading of them. Ways in which Prown's methodology have been applied to my own artefacts include personal observation and analysis, reflective interviews with participants and audience responses to the exhibitions. This is demonstrated through each artefact in the portfolio.

### 3.3.4.4 Personal Analysis of finished Artefacts

*The Artefacts* communicates each artefact's journey from initial interview (the storytelling), through each stage of the making process, considering the social and historical contexts of the memory-objects behind the artefacts and the final analysis of the artefacts I created. They provide my personal reflections on my experience of the approaches taken for processing each

of the artefacts, and I use Prown's methodology criteria to describe, deduce and speculate on them throughout the chapter.

### 3.3.4.5  Reflective Interviews with Participants

The reflective interviews were conducted to gain responses regarding participants' understanding of the newly-crafted artefacts as material memories (4.4). Reflective interviews mirrored the methodology utilised within the initial narrative collection, drawing on Abrams' oral history techniques discussed above, with the participant and myself both involved in the discussion and analysis of the artefact. Elements of Prown's methodology were applied, with participants observing, touching and reading the artefacts to allow me to gauge their emotional reactions verbally and through observation. Conducting reflective interviews with participants in this way allowed me to reflect on the value and importance of oral history, storytelling and ways of thinking about how objects carry meaning. It emphasised the significance of objects as vehicles of remembrance and gave insights into how participants saw their artefacts in relation to their own story of lost love.

### 3.3.4.6  Exhibition of Artefacts: Analysis and Reflection

Exhibiting the finished artefacts provided the opportunity for observation and analysis to take place in a collective context and in a curated environment (fig. 15). The artefacts were intended to be viewed not just as a distillation of one person's story, but to allow a wider audience to connect with them and relate to their own personal narratives through engagement with the works on display. Different curation techniques were applied across two exhibitions I designed in 2018 and 2019, to explore perception, reaction and understanding of the work. Responses

were collected through email, a comments book and a suggestion box that offered audiences an opportunity to feed back on the artefacts, which is evidenced in (4.5).
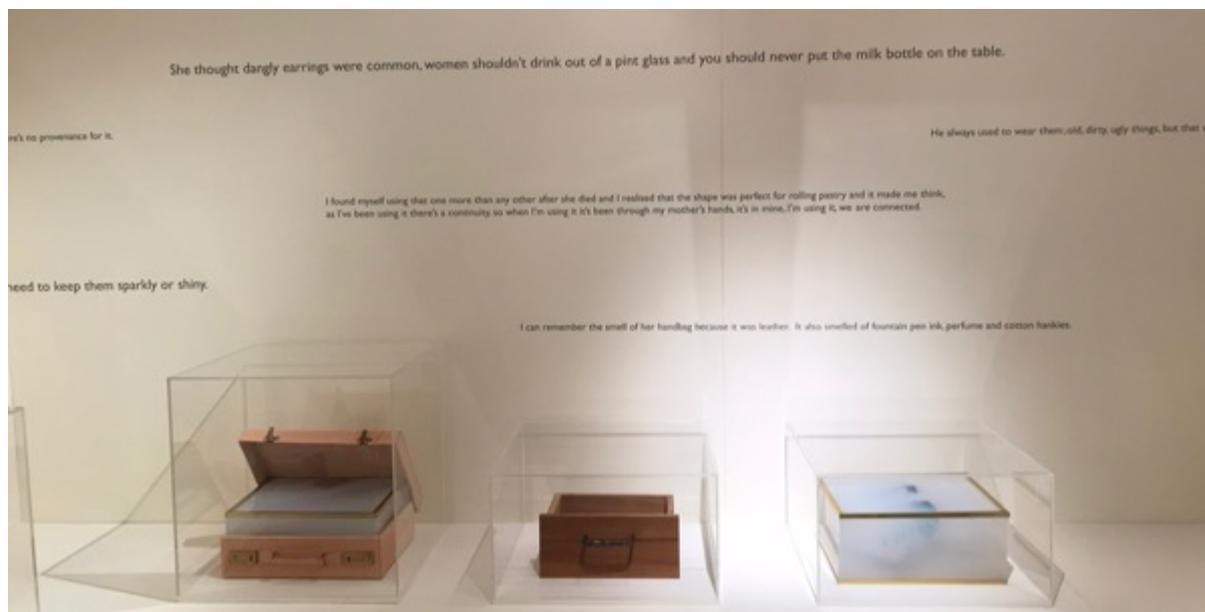


*Figure 15 – Dean Clough exhibition 'Making Material Memories'. (2018).*

## 3.4   Summary

This chapter has explored methodological frameworks of oral history theory and looked at both crafts and arts-based approaches to research. Given the interdisciplinary nature of this research it has been essential to embrace a variety of approaches, and as such this study makes use of a diverse range of methods, creating a hybrid methodology anchored in a crafts-based, qualitative approach. Using this hybrid approach has allowed me to identify new methods of practice and create a framework that has guided the process, from collection of stories to the display of the finished artefacts. In parallel it has led to the development of co-productive relationships through the use of oral history theory and making, demonstrated the significance of documentation, and established a method of analysis to understand if narratives have been re-articulated through and in the newly-crafted artefacts. I am calling this hybrid methodological approach 'narrative-led making' and employ it in my practice-research process

as a new methodological framework. The narrative-led making methodology is put into practice in Chapters 4 and 5 to understand and convey the making of material memories from collected stories.

# 4    The Process

## 4.1    Introduction

This chapter explains how narratives can be transfigured though the making process from memory – to story – to material memory by investigating the collection of narratives and considering how the process was conducted. One of my objectives was to explore new methods of making that inform material choice, process and technique and to establish how emotion is felt and transmitted through my own craft practice (1.3.3). The chapter offers an overview of the ways in which materials and techniques used in the production of the artefacts were developed, and how skills were learned from other craftspeople, building collaborative relationships. What follows provides a chronological overview of each process involved in this research, including any theoretical underpinning of the practice where appropriate.

The initial overarching theme for the purpose of creating artefacts was that of lost love. As discussed in the contextual review, scholars and artists have defined love that had been 'lost' as having a more heightened sense of emotion, expressing painful feelings and evoking strong memories. For the purpose of this research, I decided that the two types of love that would be discussed were familial and romantic love, as both offered a deep connection between participant and subject.

As part of the creation of narratives – which is to say, as a part of the process of galvanising memory and teasing out stories – participants told me about an object that was linked to their own lost love. They did not need to actually have the object to hand, they just had to be able to remember it clearly and fondly. Thus, this memory object provided an anchor for the story that was told; the only essential requirement from the point of view of this research, was that

they could link the object – in a detailed and descriptive way – with the lost love in question, and with the emotions that it inspired.

## 4.2   Collecting

Initial research to find participants with interesting stories about lost love took place between 2016 and 2017. Firstly, I collected anonymous stories in which I invited people to tell me a story about someone they had loved and lost, including any objects that reminded them of that lost love (fig. 16). I also asked them to leave their contact details if they would like to be involved in a more substantial project. Collection boxes (where stories could be deposited safely) were placed in a variety of locations that were decided through my own connections and forthcoming engagements, including a local coffee shop, the University, a women's Probus club in West Yorkshire, and at academic conferences where I presented research, in Oxford, Warwick, and Minnesota, USA.[13] I also established an online submission form that was linked to my website so that stories could be submitted from anywhere in the world. Through these I hoped to achieve an interesting mix of stories from different age groups and backgrounds. Through this collection process approximately thirty stories were deposited, with over half of the participants leaving their contact details for further involvement. Although the written stories provided some interesting details, they lacked the presence of an individual. For me as a maker, this generated questions such as who was the storyteller? And why did they want to tell this story? The written word, in this case, felt less spontaneous and, in some cases, less intimate than I felt the spoken word would have. Typed – rather than hand-written – submissions also put the storyteller at a distance. I also had participants who did not want to write their stories down,

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[13] Probus is a club or society for retired men or women who were professionals or business people in their working life. They normally meet each month and have talks from professional or business people from different fields.

but rather, wanted to tell me them in person, which meant this process of inviting written stories was limiting the scope of my research and alienating some potential participants. It was important that a personal connection between the story, the participant, and myself was established to allow me to develop this research further, and so I began contacting those who had left their details and signalled their interest in participation.
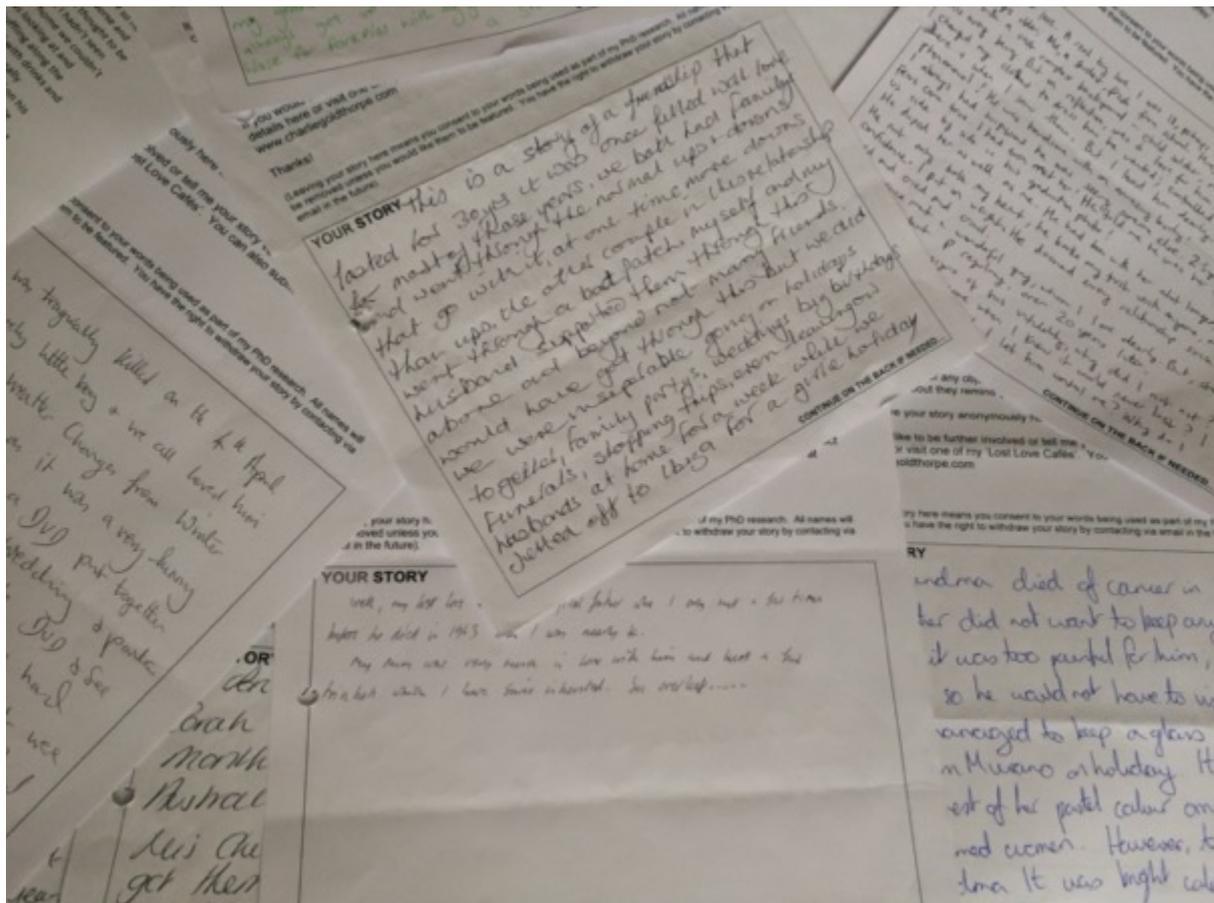


*Figure 16 – Stories collected in the Lost Love collection boxes. (2016).*

### 4.2.1 Participant Involvement

In the initial stages of this research, I had envisioned that participants would function purely as sources of data, to supply narratives that could be used to create artefacts. However, it became clear very quickly that this was a problematic and unsuitable approach because of the emotional

substance participants had invested in their stories, and my own unavoidable engagement and empathy with these. Feeling emotionally connected to, and subsequently developing friendly relationships with participants meant they became further involved – not as data sources, but as valued collaborators; this is an archetypal example of what the historian Michael Frisch (cited in Abrams, 2016, p. 27) has described as 'shared authority' (this idea is discussed in more detail later in this chapter). Collaboration with these individuals involved their participation in an advisory capacity, giving them the opportunity to tell their stories again, in more detail, and with further context. This sustained collaboration, therefore, became a means of creating important touch points throughout the period of research. This strengthened the study because it created a feedback loop, allowing me to test whether my own making skills and the concept of creating a narrative from their original story and embedding it into an artefact through making still allowed the original story to be understood.

## 4.2.2   Reading Stories and Choosing Participants

In total there were some thirty stories deposited in the project's collection boxes. Reading these was a privilege and at times emotional. After reading, I transcribed each story and this process of transcription allowed me to immerse myself in the world of the storyteller and, ultimately, to choose the stories and the participants that felt strong enough to be embedded into a material artefact. These stories appealed to me through associations such as relatable experiences and relationships. Clandinin and Connelly suggest we connect ourselves with participants and narratives through personal experience and recognise narrative history is part of this parallel (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 70). I chose stories that portrayed a variety of significant relationships; between grandchildren and grandparents or children and parents, or stories of fleeting and enduring romances. These intense relationships allowed for an exploration of

different emotions and feelings in the making process, and each story touched on the importance of memory-objects. Objects and the material world are an important element in how we tell stories and objects are important talismans in real life as well as in story life – which is to say – memory. I use the word talisman to mean objects imbued with meaning where individuals feel they evoke a certain memory or presence. These important objects in the story were largely mundane, domestic, everyday objects, yet each of these objects provided an interesting connection and the opportunity for me to work with them. The involvement of the participants in this way allowed me to gain new insights into individuals' relationships with objects and how they are valued, but also to see how participants interacted with and used the objects to narrate a story (*The Artefacts*). This allowed me to see the intertwining relationships between elements. This informs my making as I explore how words, objects and stories become embedded within each other.

## 4.3   Turning Stories into Narratives

For the purpose of consistency and clarity I have used the term 'interview' to describe the collection of stories and through a shared authority process these were converted into workable narratives. The interview technique that I used was derived from the oral history tradition and Lynn Abrams outlines three key theoretical frameworks which are the bedrock of this tradition: narrative, intersubjectivity, and memory. Each of these were important in the interview process because each is fundamental to the production and collection of stories, which is the foundation of this research.

Oral histories do not belong exclusively either to the interviewer or the interviewee, rather as Abrams suggests, the interviewer performs almost as a "stage director" in the process (Abrams,

82

2010, p. 25). After stories and storytellers were selected for the project, individual interviews were arranged. Stories become narratives through interview, and because of the necessary intersubjectivity within the situation, face to face interviews were essential because they afforded me the opportunity to focus purely on the story and the storyteller.[14] As is common when recalling memory, we tell stories in a variety of different ways; in chronological order perhaps, tying in relevant objects, or maybe using objects to talk through relevant stories. For this research there were no set pre-planned questions, however, I did want to gather specific information from each story about relationships, objects, times, events, and places (I believed each of these would be important in the subsequent production of the artefacts). As I had already read and transcribed earlier versions of these stories, I was already familiar with their twists and turns and thus I was able to intervene in the story if required to further the conversation, and thus satisfy my curiosity about the connections between memories, stories, and objects and whether these connections could be forged in new ways.

Shared narrative, or joint enterprise as discussed above, was between myself as the interviewer and the participant as the interviewee. As Abrams (2016) stresses, although the story is personal to the participant, in the creation of narrative (through the interview process), external factors are also at play, including interpersonal dynamics such as age and gender. Gestures, words and deeds – also suggested by Abrams (2016) – were important within this research, as they provided a holistic view of the process which again was imperative in the production of emotive artefacts. Intangible factors, such as sitting positions, the time of day and social setting was also

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[14] Intersubjectivity refers to the "relationship between two or more subjectivities or individual identities and outlooks on the world in the production of a shared narrative" (Lynn Abrams, 2016).

important to record as part of the context of the interview, because even if something seemed irrelevant it was important to reflect on this through the transcribing process.

As part of my documentation during each interview, I captured the scene in a short text-sketch which I then used to remind myself of the setting and atmosphere of the interview, and to inform future decisions on analysis and making. For example:

> Helen dressed in smart grey trousers and royal blue cashmere jumper. She is 86 and invited me to her home. She made us a cup of tea and we sat side by side on the sofa. It has (had) just started gently snowing outside. It is (was) mid-morning on a week day in January. (Goldthorpe, 2017)

These text-sketches were helpful because I wanted to collect and document as many elements as possible from each interview that could be beneficial as the research developed. This scene-setting information was essential when visualising the interview within the making process and important for my own transcription (4.3.1) as it allowed me to embed myself back into the conversation when beginning to make the artefacts, to try to remain as focused on the experience as when it happened.

The majority of interviews took place in participants' homes, generally the casual and relaxing atmosphere of the living room where they were most relaxed. Often, participants offered cups of tea and we indulged in the typical inconsequential small talk that happens between strangers, before we started recording the interview. This was important when setting the scene and learning about them as an individual, as it allowed for a connection between us to form and helped us become comfortable in each other's presence (Goldthorpe, 2017a). I would argue that without this time, I would not have felt as connected to the participants as I did and as a consequence would have perhaps felt less able to empathically understand their emotions and

feelings towards their lost loves and memory objects. Some participants felt more comfortable in the neutral territory of the University. In constructing a fruitful and easy intersubjectivity, the participant and I would have a cup of tea or coffee which allowed for small talk and casual getting-to-know each other before starting the interview. Interviews took place either in offices or meeting rooms with desks, however, I tended to make sure we did not sit opposite each other so that it did not feel like a formal question-and-answer situation. One interview was impromptu and took place on a long bus trip. We sat side by side and the participant talked animatedly about her mother. Due to the length of the journey the interview still proved as detailed as those interviews recorded in static environments. One interview took place in a quiet work kitchen, where when anyone entered the conversation would stop, then start again when they left. This resulted in the story initially feeling disjointed in the production stage, but the content within the transcription was so engaging the issue was easily overcome. This was the first off-site interview, so I felt less in control of the situation, but it taught me how to act in other environments and how to use the space provided. There were only two interviews in which the intersubjectivity was more challenging and we found it hard to establish the empathetic connection that is so crucial in the interview process. Both participants were younger than me and so I became the elder figure and therefore the authority, whereas with all other participants, I appeared as the younger, who was 'learning' about life experiences from an elder, which made for a closer dynamic. Their written stories documented ex-boyfriends who were still alive, just as my own pilot study had (4.4.6), and conversely, I felt a lack of engagement or camaraderie, although it would be expected I would have a stronger connection as suggested by Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 81), having gone through a similar experience. I concluded that due to the age of the participants and the opportunity for the relationships to be rekindled, just as my own, there was a lack of finality to the stories, meaning

the lost love may be found again. I used the first of these interviews as an oral history pilot study and a learning experience for how to conduct interviews in the future (Goldthorpe, 2016d). I reflected on this which helped to develop a more robust interview technique. The second of the two younger participants interviews was more successful and subsequently I took this narrative forward to see how I could develop it in the making process (see 05 – *Running Shoes*).

Memory plays a significant part in the construction of each participant's narrative and is much more complex than simply the recollection of a series of events. As Abrams states, "we remember in order to keep a version of the past for ourselves with which we feel comfortable" (Abrams, 2016). Although elements of memory may be historically inaccurate, finding truth is not the driving impetus in the oral history tradition; its aim is to recover and preserve personal narrative experience and to consider how the memory is recollected. William F. Brewer, like Abrams, defines how 'reliving memory' in terms of the self is "to provide an internally consistent account of the topic" (Brewer, 1986, p. 34). This raises the question of the authenticity of memory; however, the use of the word 'internally' according to Brewer suggests that self-assurance about the event is the defining factor. Brewer also indicates that "memories are typically accompanied by a belief that they are a veridical record of the originally experienced episode" (p. 35). He further concludes that personal memories, although not necessarily veridical, carry with them a "strong belief value" (p. 35), therefore, discrepancies may not be intended. In essence, memory is fallible; memories and remembered stories and histories are contingent on a variety of factors: they may have been shaped by other people's memories, or by the passing of time, or by other internal and external factors. However, each story represents one person's interpretation of their own memories, and as Abrams suggests, this shows how they relate to the world around them (Abrams, 2016). As part of this study, the participants told

new stories and thus created new narratives based around their own memories. Taking this into account, I was aware that the stories that were being told and the narratives that were being produced were certainly not a veridical record of the past, rather a personal recollection of a combination of events, feelings, and perceptions.

### 4.3.1   Transcribing and Analysing

The process of transcription is fundamental in the production of oral histories, but it was also fundamental in this research because narratives had to become working documents that could inform the subsequent production of artefacts.

At the outset of this project, I had assumed that transcribing could be delegated to someone else, however, the production of accurate transcripts is dependent on the transcriber's knowledge about the story, the interview, and the narrative. Beyond this, the successful transcript must also be imbued with the spirit of the intersubjectivity of the relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer.[15]

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[15] As discussed in the blog (Goldthorpe, 2016c). It was discovered that re-reading and writing created the opportunity to re-engage with the story, rather than just working from a pre-written transcript.
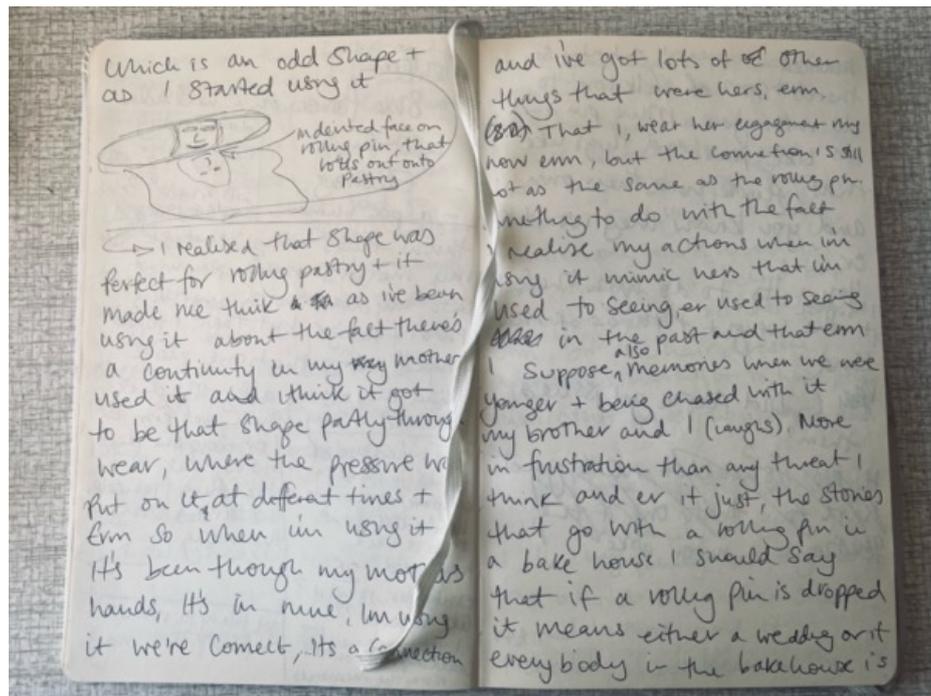
*Figure 17 – Initial handwritten transcription of Emily's story. (2017).*

Although a lengthy procedure, the time spent producing transcriptions of each interview helped me process and categorise my thoughts as to what was significant within each narrative, and helped me to develop tangible ideas for making artefacts. From this three-step process – handwriting, word processing and analysing – I was able to embed each narrative into my mind and thus become more emotionally attached to each through my understanding of its specific content and context. The first stage of the transcription process involved me transcribing the recording by hand, using pen and paper (fig. 17). This not only allowed me to write at speed, it also created the opportunity to begin visualising the story and relationship as artefacts. Therefore, I jotted notes and scribbled ideas within the transcription as I went through the process. It also meant I could transcribe on the train, bus and other locations as handwriting, like photography, allows me to visualise the words and the pages more easily than a word-processed document. Abrams suggests that a transcript that manages to "reflect the narrator's rhythm of speech, dialect and linguistic idiosyncrasies, can be priceless" (Abrams, 2010, p. 12).

The interviews were transcribed, including the natural pauses, coughs, laughs, cries, dialects, suggestive noises and all the other usual tics of spoken language. Any words that were made up, wrongly added or were grammatically incorrect, were still transcribed as close to what had been said as possible. Quotation marks, exclamation marks and question marks were used to indicate type or the way things were said as accurately as possible. Transcribing in this way made the reading and interpretation of the transcript at a later date, in conjunction with the recording, a valuable asset to the creation of the new artefacts, as the emotion could be re-lived and (in most places) remembered from the actual experience. This allowed me to re-immerse myself into the interview environment.

The stage of transfiguring the transcript from hand-written text to word-processed text offered another opportunity for the narrative to become embedded in my mind. The act of transcribing allowed narratives to be re-established and supplement my memories from previous encounters, thereby transforming me into the storyteller as well as the researcher, which was one of the objectives I hoped to achieve. The third process of re-reading and annotating the transcript, highlighting specific text and analysing, allowed the mental picture I had begun to build in my mind to become solidified in design ideas that were forming and leading to the making process. An example of an element of a transcription (fig. 18) shows how I selected certain elements from narratives to question how these could be incorporated into a newly-crafted artefact and how it represented what had been discussed.

CL: Oh yeah she had Brillo pads as well and... Fairy soap, green Fairy household soap and there used to be, there was often people traveling from erm, cause the extended family still live in Dublin so there would be a lot of visitors kind of coming and going and if there was funerals or anything like that they'd just be a kind of you know...I think we kept the ferry to Ireland from Holyhead in business some summers and so erm, and there'd be an empty suitcase that just went backwards and forwards between the two groups of family so coming over from Dublin it would be packed with potatoes, you could get potatoes over here, "it's not the same, not the same" (Nana's voice).  Not the same? Potatoes? Anyway, so there'd be potatoes, there'd be erm "double centres" which was kind of the Irish version of Quality Street and the chocolates were really nice. Beano's which was the Irish version of Smarties.  White pudding, erm so how we didn't die of food poisoning I don't know and erm I think that's, oh Kimberley biscuits, which you could still get and erm jam...oh what were they called?

**Charlotte Goldthorpe**     May 12, 2017
I love the idea of a suitcase that travelled backwards and forwards with different owners bringing potatoes or sweets from Ireland.

Could use the suitcase as a container for the memory of the crochet.  Thinking could crochet and then cast in silicone, and have it in the suitcase?

*Figure 18 – Screenshot of transcription process and annotation. (2017).*

Accurate and reliable transcriptions provided clarity and offered the most authentic representation of the interview. Because this process is one of shared authority – as I already made clear, oral histories do not belong exclusively to either the interviewee or the interviewer – each participant was offered a copy of the transcript of the interview. By this stage, from the 12 interviews conducted, nine were selected to take forward. No guarantee was given to participants that their narratives would be used in the production of an artefact. Participants felt content to have had the opportunity to share their story. In the initial collection of written stories there was the option to donate a written narrative and not be further involved.

In summary, by following the process of oral history research, I have been able to construct four separate documents for each interview, embedding the narratives further into my mind, which in turn, has allowed me to create memory objects in the form of newly crafted artefacts.[16]

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[16] The four documents for each participant interview consist of the interview audio, the handwritten transcription, the typed transcription and the typed transcription with annotation.

## 4.4   Making and Learning

The making process takes into account how the four documents created from the interview process were used to inform the production of artefacts, but also how the memories within the stories became embedded through making. A number of considerations had to be taken into account within the making process as discussed in 2.6 and 3.3.3, such as the choice of materials and processes which led to the production of artefacts that I felt the original story had been transfigured into.

The making and learning subsections explore my own practice and what I understand of embedding narrative through making by experimenting with choice of material, working methods and processes, and I use my own story of lost love as a pilot study. Within this and in conjunction with my studio blog, I document and evaluate the shifts within my own ways of making and learning to explore how emotion might be embedded into the newly-crafted artefacts.

The objects remembered in the stories as discussed above in 4.2.2 were the starting points that later informed the creation of the artefact in most cases. As a maker I appropriate the image or form of that object and imagine it re-made, imbued with memory and narrative, in tangible materials that are selected through experimentation (in terms of their physical and malleable qualities) for transfer of emotion through the making process. Through the process of making, I document and preserve intangible heritages by making newly-crafted artefacts which communicate significant aspects of personal stories through tangible form. It does not necessarily mirror the objects discussed in the narrative, but becomes a memory made tangible and a meaning made material.

### 4.4.1 Material Consistency

Through experimentation with materials, I came to an understanding of which materials were most suitable and appropriate for the process of making material memories, and these choices differed for the different narratives. Working predominantly with familiar materials, such as translucent silicone and veg-tan leather, gave me the opportunity for further in-depth exploration of material capabilities, pushing my initial knowledge of them further.

The translucent silicone has an opaqueness that creates a ghost-like quality to a finished mould. The casting process is methodical, relaxing and solitary, providing the ideal time to reflect upon and mediate between the craft and the narrative. The consistency of the base silicone is that of thick syrup, and pouring it from one vessel to another is time consuming, as the silicone folds itself into the bowl and will not stop without intervention. Working with silicone cannot be rushed and moulds need to be left overnight to cure. It is an all-consuming part of the process which happily leaves plenty of time for fruitful contemplation.

Veg-tan leather has a distinct smell that is rich and comforting. It smells familiar and homely. It is dyed with natural materials rather than chemicals, giving a subtle mellow tanned colour that continues to develop and darken with age. This ageing process adds to the character of the leather, allowing it to mature, develop its own biography and history, and memories of its own. It is mouldable with water and retains the desired shape.

Parallels can be drawn between the materials I use and the content of the work I make. The ageing of the materials used, complements the people in the narratives and the passing of time.

The work organically ages after the production process, continuing the life of the person in the narrative and the developing relationship between myself and the participants.

### 4.4.2 Experimentation and becoming comfortable

Having not worked with casting since my MA, I lacked confidence in my making skills and competency in the university studio. Working alongside other students was initially unnerving, however, a sustained period of studio experimentation throughout Easter 2016 allowed me to develop my confidence again and feel comfortable in the environment and with the equipment. During that time I worked instinctively, and instead of moving towards a planned outcome, my experimentation took an organic approach, with one process informing the next (Goldthorpe, 2016a). Initial experimentation such as using alginate and wax did not get taken forward due to the lack of connection I felt with the materials and their processes and outcomes being unsatisfactory, but working with casting and acetone printing allowed me to become reconnected and familiar again with the studio and its processes and to feel comfortable working in the university environment.

### 4.4.3 Studies with the body

Working with both on and off the body techniques, and focussing on sensual areas such as the hands, neck and face allowed me to explore the power of the body as a conduit to remembering lost loves, but it also reminded me that the body is intimately connected to objects beyond those that touch it (clothing or jewellery, for example); it has profound attachments to items that are carried (a handbag, or a wallet), crafted (a hand-knitted jumper) or used (a tool or an implement).



*Figure 19 – Antipode 1 & 2. Plaster casts of hands. (2016).*

Working with alginate and plaster to create exact replicas of the body produced visually satisfying results because of the complex technical process I developed to allow for a negative object to be cast into a positive artefact (fig. 19). The technical development was enjoyable and allowed for consideration of process. However, due to the working time frame with both alginate and plaster there was no opportunity for lengthy connection and closeness with the making process to develop, therefore the artefacts lacked tactile engagement and decisions had

to be made without prior consideration.[17] The finished objects were cold and hard due to the

material choice which again meant the pieces lacked the tactility and emotion I had anticipated,

and so I chose not to use alginate casting or plaster as part of the final artefacts.


In analysing *Antipode 1 and 2* (fig. 19)*,* producing positive replicas of disconnected body parts put

the emphasis on the body, rather than the object. Although my practice of creating a material

memory could be thought of as replicating objects, reproducing actual human representations

felt more like disembodiment than embodiment of memory. The outcome of the

experimentation stage showed that although the body is present within the artefacts I produce,

the body itself does not have to exist to be acknowledged in this process.

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[17] Alginate and plaster of Paris have fast setting and curing time that can be a matter of minutes, so decisions have to be made quickly about how the materials will be used.

### 4.4.4 How I make



*Figure 20 – Toilet Dolly in acrylic yarn. Initial idea. (2017).*

After the collection, selection and analysis of most of the narratives had taken place, I began to design and make with no fixed structure in mind. Initially I moved away from my skills in leatherwork and casting as I felt the emphasis should be in learning new skills from others. In completing an initial idea (fig. 20) I felt disheartened by the outcome, and of the finished artefact my thoughts were as follows: "Although it's a translation of the story into a new object that to me 'embodies' the story, and has been made whilst thinking of the story, it doesn't capture my own practice as a maker." (Goldthorpe, 2017c). Rather than an artefact that embodied a narrative, I had produced a badly-made replica of what already existed. Only after reframing the artefact as a starting point for my own practice – which is to say, using the toilet dolly replica (fig. 20) as a component within the next stage of making – did it make sense as to why I had

made it. From this experience, I began to establish a plan for production and revisited core

materials of leather and silicone due to their familiarity and my connection with them, I could

then establish what I would be making. It was at this point I returned to my fashion design

training and worked on creating a collection of artefacts, that although not interlinked through

narrative, would be similar in execution, through my own design signature. These artefacts are

my intervention within the narratives and contribution to the shared authority of the research.

On reflection, my reasoning for using this as a method of visualising the artefact was as follows:

> What I discovered was as I was reading each story I was designing as I read. It made
> me reflect on my Masters work and how as it was art/accessories I still always referred
> to it as my 'collection' a fashion term I suppose […] As I now have collected the stories
> I want to work with and interviewed the participants and analysed their stories, I feel
> like I am in a period of design and that the objects are a series or collection that all
> interweave and interlink so they need to be drawn up as a collection and then created
> rather than being independent of each other. (Goldthorpe, 2017d)



*Figure 21 – Illustrations of the collection of artefacts prior to making. (2017).*

Even though a number of the elements and one of the narratives changed from these initial

sketches, (fig. 21) they acted as an offloading technique (Gray & Malins, 2004, p. 58) clearing

my mind to start making one or two at a time. At the time, I wrote in my studio blog: "Looking

at the objects assembled together is like looking at a collection of friends and people I know" (Goldthorpe, 2017e).

### 4.4.5 Process and Methods

My practice is a hybrid of both hylomorphism and thinking-through-making. The use of sketching out initial ideas was reminiscent of a hylomorphic method of making, in which, as Ingold makes clear: "to make something you have to first think it" (Pohjoisen Kulttuuri-Instituutti, 2013). This is certainly true of the initial way I worked, using the transcription process as a facilitator for ideas as discussed above. Without this source material there would be no narrative to build an artefact around, therefore initial ideas were generated in this hylomorphic way. However, it was through experimenting with materials to process them that the forms were decided upon. *The N-Exlace* (pilot study) was not formed as an idea, it was created through experimentation of material based round the central theme of lost love. The connection between mind and hand as discussed by Adamson (2018), Sennett (2008), Korn (2015) and Pallasmaa (2009) proved vital for my own experience of embedding the narrative through making. As discussed in 4.4.1 the materials I work with are chosen both for their aesthetic and malleable qualities and my own connection to how they are processed. As for the connection to thinking-through-making, Adamson argues that:

> As you shape the material, it shapes you right back. You are learning the process the whole time that you are engaged in it. In automated forms of making, this doesn't happen, because the feedback loop is not nearly so tight. (Adamson, 2018, p. 28)

Within the portfolio I discuss how my own experience of working with particular narratives has led to an ongoing emotional connection when I work with specific materials now, such as how I still think about Claire's Nana and the craftsperson who taught me when I crochet (01.7).

Throughout my own craft experience I have worked with techniques such as stitching, printing, sanding, and pouring silicone, all of which are rhythmical in their processes and allow for an almost meditative state to be reached whilst working. Korn believes that to know processes and materials the mind, hand and body can read from the same page and work together seamlessly (Korn, 2015, p. 51). Adamson similarly suggests that the experience a maker has with materials and tools coming together is difficult to grasp from the outside, because it is intuitive and embodied (Adamson, 2018, p. 73), while Sennett implies that the familiarity of materials and their capabilities becomes embedded in the hands through calluses and thickened skin, sensitising the area to touch and process (Sennett, 2008, p. 153). Architect, Juhani Pallasmaa in *The Thinking Hand* discusses that to the craftsperson "the seamless and unconscious collaboration of the eye, hand and mind is crucial" (Pallasmaa, 2009, p.82). He argues that the mental and material flow allows the work in some ways to produce itself which is reminiscent of Ingold's notion (fig. 12). Pallasmaa's idea of hand and mind working in tandem is further developed by the idea of the tool becoming and extension of the hand. Although the tool can be a separate entity, when it is held or used it allows the maker to specialise their craft and the hands natural powers and capabilities (Pallasmaa, 2009, p.47). In thinking-through-making one must assume there is already a connection and familiarity with materials before experimentation takes place, otherwise the outcome could lack attachment to what is produced. Processes were considered for the making of artefacts that did not provide the significant tactile experience that hand work provided, or the desired outcome. Experimentation with technical processes considered pyrography, laser cutting and 3D printing to realise handwritten text before casting was decided upon, as documented in the studio blog (Goldthorpe, 2017b; Goldthorpe, 2017f and Goldthorpe, 2017g). It was only through this experience of discovery that I could understand that the making processes to which I felt most connected were the ones

that allowed for the subjective embedding of the narrative into the newly-crafted artefact. Adamson's thinking in this area aligns with my own journey; he states that when someone crafts an object "they put their whole self into it, body and mind alike, drawing on whatever skills they have learned over the course of their lives" (Adamson, 2018, p. 16). Having become involved in the craft process myself I began to intuitively know what the right and wrong processes for each narrative were. This is further explored within (02.5), but highlighted in a reflection from the studio blog in 2017:

> I wanted to use this design somehow and so embossing it or detailing on the leather seemed like the best way. However how the image had been created meant that the laser crudely created a very dark replica. I knew from the first sample that this was not the right method. The burning of the leather felt totally wrong for the story and just didn't feel right. Even lightening up the print to reveal more of the detail didn't help and so I knew instinctively that it was a technique I'd utilised before that I needed to use. In a matter of minutes, I was working on creating an acetone printed piece of leather. Like Sennett and Korn both discussed, I knew how to do this method instinctively, like the back of my hand and so the tacit knowledge kicked in before I knew it and again as I was working, I was processing the story and remembering what we had discussed in the interview. It just felt right. (Goldthorpe, 2017g)

Without thinking-through-making in the form of trial and error or experimentation and play with materials, I would not have fully experienced the sense of connection between the narrative and finished artefacts. Forming a collection helped to start the journey of making, but ultimately the choice of materials and techniques were the driving force in the production of the artefacts. The materials I am familiar with and my own techniques created cohesion amongst the artefacts, and provided the basis for my own signature style to be recognised. Both ideas of thinking-through-making and hylomorphism were needed to create artefacts that both looked and felt like they were material memories; re-articulations of personal narratives.

### 4.4.6  Pilot Study  *The N-Exlace*



*Figure 22 – The N-Exlace artefact. (2016).*

This pilot study offers an overview and analysis of my first experience of embedding narrative into a crafted artefact. Techniques, materials and processes are outlined within this section, but are discussed in detail later in the chapter where signposted.

In order to test the process of embedding narrative into a newly-crafted artefact, I experimented with my own experience of a past romantic relationship. This was to understand how different emotions surrounding the experience of being in love are felt through stages of making, and how this can lead to choices of material and technique. Helen Fisher's anthropological research saw her survey 800 people about their emotions and connections to ephemera, surrounding

their personal experiences of love. She states: "infatuated men and women […] concentrate on all of the events, songs, letters, and other little things they have come to associate with the beloved" (Fisher, 2004, p. 7). Fisher showed how objects act as memory objects and how emotions become bestowed upon them. For what I consider to have been the most significant relationship in my life to date, I had kept things as memory objects of both the relationship and as signifiers of a time in my life. These included an old locket, love letters, notes and photographs which were rediscovered, re-read and reconsidered. These objects represented the material side of the relationship, while entries in diaries from the same period offered my thought process and analysis of the relationship as it unfolded, thereby forming the narrative.

My own recollection of making *The N-Exlace* was recorded on my blog:

> What I also discovered was when printing the leather, I thought of the times within the relationship, receiving the letters and writing my diary and analysing continuously. The emotion that was felt whilst making the piece was quite intense. I wasn't entirely sure whilst making what form it would take. (Goldthorpe, 2016b)

There was no preconceived idea behind the design or form of *The N-Exlace* (fig. 22), although I was driven by a memory object associated with the relationship; the old locket. However, it was not intended or presumed that the finished artefact would take the form of a neck piece; that eventual form was devised through the experience of making. Using my existing craft-based knowledge, working with two familiar materials and a variety of known techniques in my practice (silicone casting and leather moulding), I experimented with the locket, love letters, photographs and notes. Both silicone casting and leather moulding are hand-crafts which means that they are tactile and labour intensive, but also through that they afford a thinking process, as discussed above.

I selected the photographs, letters and objects that held the most emotional charge and represented the most powerful embodiment of the relationship. This helped significant memories to emerge and therefore recalled the time and space of the relationship. The idea of these relationship relics, these objects, being emotionally charged informed the making process. Casting with translucent silicone is central to my practice as it allows the detail of objects to be replicated and inverted. When viewed from the reverse the mould creates a translucent facsimile as if the original object was still present. Experimenting in the past with spherical moulds has demonstrated that the surface creates an exaggerated view of the moulded object, creating the feeling that it is radiating from the silicone making it more present in the wave of its absence. Casting any object in silicone gives the impression of an aura, but working with personal objects added a further intensity to the absence. When using 'aura' in this sense, I refer to Benjamin's concept of aura as a quality integral to an original artwork, and the idea that this cannot be reproduced mechanically (2008, p. 7). In this case, as I have discussed above, the aura of the original object is captured within the negative reproduction and increased due to its recognisable features. Also, as a maker I make one artefact to represent each story collected. Benjamin discusses how the *reproduction* loses the aura of the *original*, however, my work also takes mass manufactured objects as starting points – such as a rolling pin, running shoes or souvenirs – and creates one off original artefacts from their form, which could therefore be considered as distilling the aura from the many into the one.

"Saudade", a Portuguese word approximately translating as 'the love that remains' (Felgueiras, 2015) or a longing for someone or something loved, encapsulates what is felt in engagement with the casted object. Therefore, I would suggest that through the casting process, the familiarity of the original object that is captured within the silicone, also harnesses some of these

feelings of remaining love. An emotional charge offers impetus in the creation of the object, and in turn, the finished object seems to radiate with that charge.

Having tried acetone printing in a staff development workshop in 2016, I experimented with applying this process to leather.[18] This involved placing a laser copy (photocopy) of the image that is to be transferred on top of the leather, then painting on neat acetone to the back of the laser copy paper and rubbing with a hard, smooth implement such as the back of a spoon. The process is tactile and involves rhythmical back and forth motions allowing the hands to guide the focus of the pressure. The more pressure imparted, the darker the image, which in turn came to symbolise the clarity of the memory. The quality of print is unpredictable, leaving letters distressed and faded in parts, however, the lack of clarity added to the impression of elements of memories being forgotten and fading away (fig. 23).
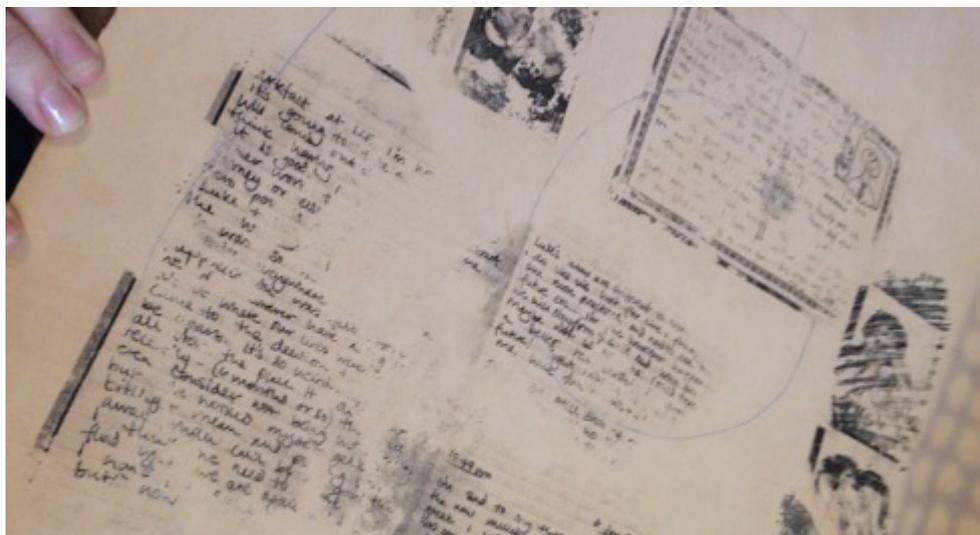


*Figure 23 – Vegetable tanned leather printed with acetone and laser copies of old diary entries and photographs. (2016).*

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[18] Acetone printing is an image transfer technique using laser printer copies and pure acetone, usually to print an image onto another sheet of paper.

The finished leather looked like tattooed skin. Tattoos often depict or represent moments in time and are used to "commemorate important events" (Jones & Kang, 2007, p. 43). They provide their wearer with a permanent visual reminder they can use as a prompt.

The old locket was cast in translucent silicone in a dome-shaped mould, which enhanced the detail and size of the locket, making it appear almost holographic. Wet moulding the leather made it malleable and it was then shaped to the clavicle and chest, an area of the body synonymous with love. The heart, being the symbol of love, and the neck or décolletage being a sensual area on display or waiting to be kissed. Finished with a hefty brass buckle, a choice made purely for the fastening mechanism, on reflection is reminiscent of the fastenings of a straitjacket, as well as evocative of the idea of restraining through strapping and buckling within fetish-wear cultures.

### 4.4.6.1 *The N-Exlace* Analysis

The result of this pilot study was the production of a leather neck piece, *The N-Exlace*. The making process demanded craft techniques that were labour intensive and so a closeness developed between the memory and the method. It allowed me to analyse the relationship through the rhythmical processes of making as discussed by Benjamin and addressed in section 2.5.

Making *The N-Exlace* allowed me to become fully absorbed in the emotions and feelings of the relationship again, almost reliving the experience allowing it to consume me. To release these feelings, through my preferred method of communication – making – allowed me to consider

the process of what Attfield (2000, p. 130), has defined previously as cathexis, to rethink and apply through a tactile material experience, the unburdening of myself through craft.

Finishing the piece also generated the idea of 'closure'. By working through the emotions as a cathartic experience I felt like my personal narrative had been 'processed' through making. From this I explored the idea of art as therapy for loss of a loved one. The notion that craft can be used as a way of expressing what cannot be verbalised is understood. The practice of the intangible being made tangible allows for grief to be channelled, externalising emotion rather than keeping it inside (Buser, Buser & Gladding, 2005, p. 177). The process of art therapy, as well as allowing for the unburdening of emotions, can lead to the creation of new meaning and redirection in vulnerable moments (Buser, Buser & Gladding, 2005, p. 180). Through my own experience, with *The N-Exlace*, I feel that the memory of my lost relationship is now stored within the artefact and was, in this process of making, metaphorically removed from around my neck and externalised. The making process gave me an opportunity to understand the relationship in its entirety through craft in the way that Buser, Buser & Gladding suggest, but it also gave me the opportunity to understand how I could work with the personal narratives of lost love that I had been entrusted with by participants.

I have been asked – in both academic and personal contexts – if I would wear *The N-Exlace*, but having released the burden of my lost love through the embedding of the memories into the artefact through making, I believe that wearing it would be regressive; it would bring back those feelings of restriction and would once again burden me with that memory. It would become part of my body again, rather than being externalised. Since *The N-Exlace* has never been worn, it retains the absence of the body. In *Talking through their hats*, the textile historian Mary Schoeser

described trying on her dead fathers' suit while clearing out his belongings. She recalls: "I felt him around me…in that suit I found my past" (Andrassy, 2000). After her initial trying-on of the suit, she later wore it again as a support blanket for difficult meetings and other occasions in which she felt she needed to be supported. This suggests that objects once belonging to other people, can be used in different ways by different individuals to keep memory alive, and through engagement with these objects to feel a sense of presence of the original owner.

The pilot study helped me develop a framework for the production of artefacts, including using a narrative to inspire the making process and inform the choice of materials in the production process. In the following section I discuss how I developed a system of making, give an overview of the techniques used, and offer an explanation of how I established the methods that allowed for the embedding of narrative through the process.

### 4.4.7   Batch Production

The making process took place between May 2017 and May 2018. It was initially chaotic as I was unsure which piece to start with and how I would organise it all. Having been told the stories by each participant, I was entrusted with a number of emotionally-charged narratives. Originally, I had planned to collect all the narratives at the beginning of the process, analyse them, and then make objects based on them, however, due to the intimate content, it was overwhelming and the stories became a burden as I was constantly thinking about them and how I would use them within the making process. Trying to process too many narratives at the same time also began to get confusing and I was conscious that the outcome might become diluted. Although I felt more connected to some stories than others, what I wanted to produce was complex and so needed more consideration. This led to the development of a batch

production method which allowed me to begin processing some of the stories through experimentation with materials, while parking others until I was ready to work through them with integrity.



*Figure 24 – Batch production method timeline overview. (2018).*

The batch production method consisted of working on approximately three pieces simultaneously, which created space for more technical techniques to be developed (fig. 24).
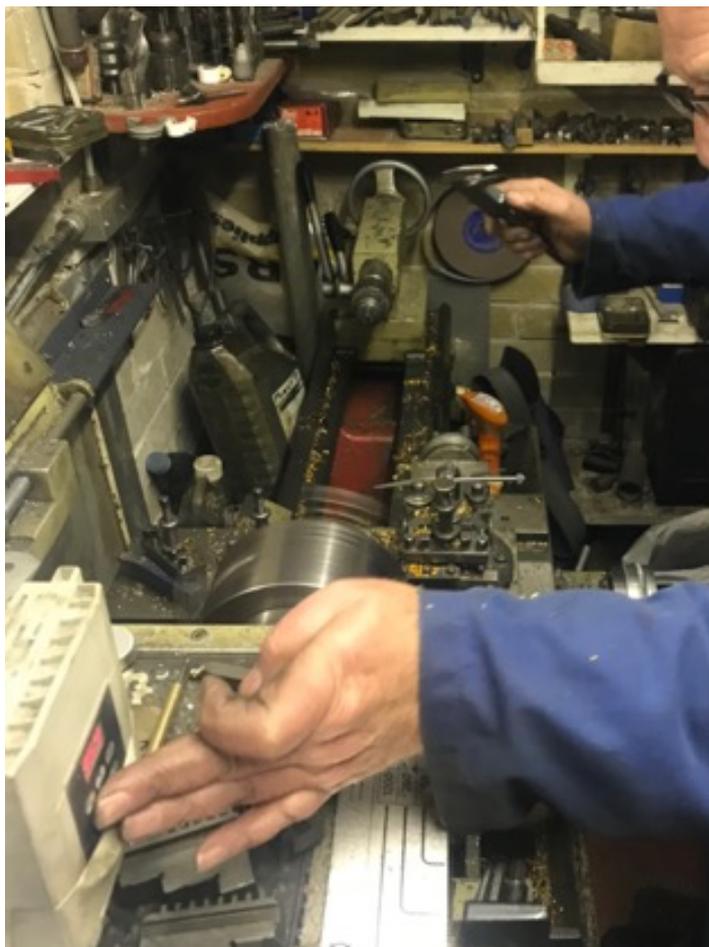


*Figure 25 – Roy using the metal lathe to craft the brass frames. (2018).*

The first batch of artefacts allowed comfortable advancements of techniques and methods I had previously used. The second and third batches built on these initial advancements, allowing me to develop more complex casting and leather-work skills with confidence. It also led to me working alongside craftspeople to gain further skills. This culminated in large-scale pieces that pushed the boundaries of my practice and incorporated new techniques that I had learned in the making period.

### 4.4.8 Learning from others

Where I did not have the skills initially to create what I had envisaged, I connected with craftspeople through professional connections at university and within the craft network I'd personally developed . It was important for me to acquire skills in a variety of different crafts, including crochet, forging, brass turning and some elements of casting. These new skills were taught to me by craftspeople in what was a collaborative relationship and sharing experience where I also shared my own skills; this joint endeavour strengthened my practice (07.5).[19]

I found I required the help of several different skilled craftspeople in order to fulfil all the additional elements that the individual artefacts needed, and therefore worked with and alongside two blacksmiths, a seamstress, two engineers, a wood turner, a graphic designer and three CAD technicians (fig. 25). It was important that the relationship between the craftspeople and myself was a collaborative one, not dictatorial on either side so the craft provided an open

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[19] To note, this is not a study that wanted to perfect skills, but to use craft as a medium to create artefacts in order to re-articulate personal narratives. The craftsperson's presence was important to discuss, negotiate, demonstrate and work with me to create or teach skills for making components or teaching skills that could be integrated within the finished artefacts.

dialogue and feedback loop, one that mirrored my internal monologue when independently making. Learning must not be confused with assistance. There may have been elements of knowledge transfer in terms of assistance given by individuals to help facilitate a process, but these were unplanned and in the most part comprised of tasks such as helping to pour large amounts of silicone or remove objects from a mould, nothing integral in the creation of new artefacts.

According to Sennett (2008, p. 53), "The workshop is the craftsman's home" and I was privileged to be invited into a number of them when skills could not be taught elsewhere due to restrictions with tools or machinery. Establishing relationships with craftspeople from whom I would learn skills was reminiscent of the traditional hierarchical connection between the craftsperson as the master and myself the apprentice. Sennett proposes that "in a workshop, the skills of the master can earn him or her the right to command" (2008, p. 54), and this was somewhat true of my experience whilst working with craftspeople as it allowed me as the apprentice to acquire the basic skills needed in a number of different craft contexts.

However, as I was the one who had to transfigure the participants' narratives, I had to decide how the crafts people's skills were used and adapted to craft the artefacts. Learning and making then became less of a master-apprentice dynamic and more of an equal collaborative practice. With an established reciprocity between us. Combining the craftsperson's skills with my own, we were able to establish new methods of making and thereby further our own individual skillsets.[20]

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[20] This is demonstrated in the portfolio *The Artefacts* – 07 *Brass Shoes*.

Through these interactions, I learned techniques that may not be documented in craft literature, such as the use of wood shavings from lathe work to polish the wood. These skills were a joy to learn and the feeling that I had been inducted into a craft by a craftsperson, made me appreciate the value of the skills that – like the collected narratives – may become lost without being learned and passed on.[21] The idea of also experiencing stories told by craftspeople that they shared whilst I learned from their skills created a further link between the artefacts and the crafts used in their production. This strengthens the idea that the craftsperson is a powerful storyteller within and through the processes that they use and the knowledge they impart (2.6).

## 4.5   Reflection and Analysis

It is through reflection on the making process, and then subsequent analysis of the finished artefacts that the research question – How can narrative be embedded through studio practice into a newly-crafted artefact? – can begin to be answered. My own personal reflections were collected and documented throughout the research process; both in terms of the process itself – through stories, interviews, narratives, and crafts – and in terms of the resulting artefacts – the physical embodiment of the whole. These artefacts were then reassessed using Prown's material culture methodology to take the analysis beyond the parameters of my own understanding. As the narratives were created through a shared authority, I returned the

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[21] The Red List of Endangered Crafts (2021), argues that particular crafts and sills are becoming extinct due to lack of uptake and training. It states how many people are still working/apprentices or novices within a particualr craft genre and the likelyhood of extinction in the near future. Similarly in 2011, the Scottish Sculpture Workshop (SSW) organised *The Lost Hand* exhibition which connected craftspeople to artists and the public, allowing them to demonstrate the skills they used in their particilar crafts (Sacramento, 2013, p. 56).

finished artefacts to the participants to gauge their reaction and to discover to what extent they felt their stories had been materialised.[22] Finally, I displayed artefacts in a curated exhibition and offered them to the scrutiny of public audiences, so as to ascertain whether the narrative – in their view – had in fact been re-articulated through the crafted artefact.

### 4.5.1   Personal analysis

This personal analysis is split into two parts: analysis of the process and analysis of the finished artefacts. My personal analysis of the process has proved the most significant as I have been able to see and feel the shift and development of my practice. On reflection, this has led to self-discovery in the way I allowed thinking-through-making and choice of material and technique to be led by an initial narrative starting point. I understood that my practice would develop, but I thought this would only be in terms of it becoming more advanced within my making knowledge. However, as suggested above, whilst trying to formulate a plan of making, I began to recognise the emotional connections between myself, the narratives and the materials, which in turn led to the process of transfiguring and then embedding the narrative – through these connections – into a newly-crafted artefact. It was also apparent that different narratives provided different impacts on myself as a maker, creating varying levels of engagement which was contingent on several factors including my personal connection with the participant, the initial object discussed, the type of lost love relationship, and the structure of the narrative.

As each artefact was made, I developed different connections with both the narratives, the processes and the artefacts that materialised. Some of the artefacts became cumbersome and heavy due to the size of the original memory object and then the materials chosen to work with

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[22] I had been in contact throughout the process with most of the participants and exchanged correspondence, updating them by sharing imagery via email, or meeting for a coffee to discuss the progress of the artefacts.

and how the artefacts were executed. Artefacts such as *Running Shoes* (05.7)*, Watch* (08.7) and to an extent *Toilet Dolly* translated into quite boxy pieces, they lost tactility and therefore connection with myself and the participants. In the batch production timeline (fig. 24), these pieces were completed towards the end of the making process where I had begun to experiment with larger castings and pieces, however, I did not fully consider size and shape in the way I had with smaller artefacts, rendering them less tactile due to weight and shape.

Personal analysis of the finished artefacts was conducted by working through Prown's method for the analysis of material culture. Within the portfolio each of the artefacts is defined by four steps of analysis: i. personal analysis, which draws on the initial interview and transcription process; ii. analysis of the making process, its materials and techniques; iii. analysis of the social and historical context; iv. finally, analysis of the participants' responses to the finished artefacts. Following these steps offered a more complex and comprehensive analysis of the work and its conclusions thus reinforcing the central argument of this research – that narrative may be embedded within objects.

Prown (1982, p.14) suggests that from his process of analysis, artefacts can be categorised into one of six areas: arts (paintings, drawings, sculpture), diversions (books, toys, games), adornment (links to the body), modifications of the landscape (architecture), applied arts (furniture, receptacles), devices (tools, implements), However, the artefacts I have produced challenge Prown's categorisations as they could be considered to be located in more than one area.

The artefacts produced for this research – although they may resemble functional objects – are categorised here as decorative objects (arts). Technically, they could still be used in some cases

for function, for example, *Rolling Pin* is not intended to flatten dough, but it could if called upon to do so (devices). The finished artefacts are not intended to fulfil a practical function; they are intended as memory objects. This echoes Appadurai's (2006) argument that objects can transition through classification and change status depending on owner and cultural position (2.2).

Prown defines art as a category of objects "possessing considerable underlying theoretical complexity (as opposed to technical or mechanical complexity)" (Prown, 1982, p. 12). I agree, to an extent, but – certainly in the context of this research and these objects – that they do also contain technical complexity because they have been *made by hand.*[23]

As a maker I have an insight into the technicalities and mechanical complexities of making, whereas Prown as a non-practice-based researcher (or, indeed, the wider audience) may not have this experience. Since Prown's original study and his introduction of a classification framework, there has been a move towards an appreciation of skill which thus provides a novel way of understanding craft with many thinkers such as Adamson (Gibson, 2019a), observing craftspeople to understand the process and therefore be able to write about it.

### 4.5.2   Participant Reflection

To supplement my own personal analysis, I also conducted participant reflection interviews to gauge how participants had reacted to and understood the finished artefacts. These interviews were guided by Prown's material culture analysis methodology (3.3.4.3) with each participant

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[23] *Made by hand* meaning using the making processes I have established.

observing, holding and commenting on their artefact. Participants – like myself – were connected to the artefacts through their own stories and the objects they had shown me when creating the narrative; therefore, the finished artefacts already had some personal value and familiarity embedded within them. Their prior understanding of what the artefacts represented was considered and has been recorded in (Appendix 2). However, the emotional response from participants was unprompted and, in some cases, non-verbal gestures and facial expressions were also collected as responses within the data collection.

The reflective interviews showed that most participants felt connected to their artefacts; when offered the opportunity, most people wanted to hold them to experience the tactile nature of what had been created. Visual artist, Rosalyn Driscoll argues that "sight and touch are different ways of knowing. We say *I see* to mean *I understand.* We say something is *touching* to mean *I am emotionally affected.* We link sight to comprehension and touch to emotion" (Driscoll, 2020, p. 13). In this way the participants used sensory modes of enquiry that allowed them to engage fully in the experience of understanding the artefact and what it represented both symbolically and emotionally.

All but one artefact was held by the participant; the *Running Shoes* proved too heavy and cumbersome; instead, it was prodded and poked and did not receive the favourable tactile reaction as the others. The lack of connection between the artefact and myself is discussed further in (05.6)

### 4.5.3 Exhibition

As outlined within the introduction (1.5.1) I suggested how my current research began with the curated display of *Absence* in 2015 in the Galleria dei Monumenti Sepolcrali (Monument Gallery, Santa Croce), Florence which established the new direction of my practice. Through the curation techniques used, whereby an artefact was placed with a person within the Galleria dei Monumenti Sepolcrali and a narrative was established – such as *The Brogues* (1.5.1), it gave me the opportunity to consider how the artefacts would have differed had they been made with these specific people's narratives in mind. Although the space was long and narrow (fig. 26), each *Absence* artefact was placed in a vitrine in front of one person's monument which established a sense of heightened importance, as an important relic. The artefact became a reliquary of meaning, almost shrine-like and this became a key factor when curating the 2018 and 2019 exhibitions.
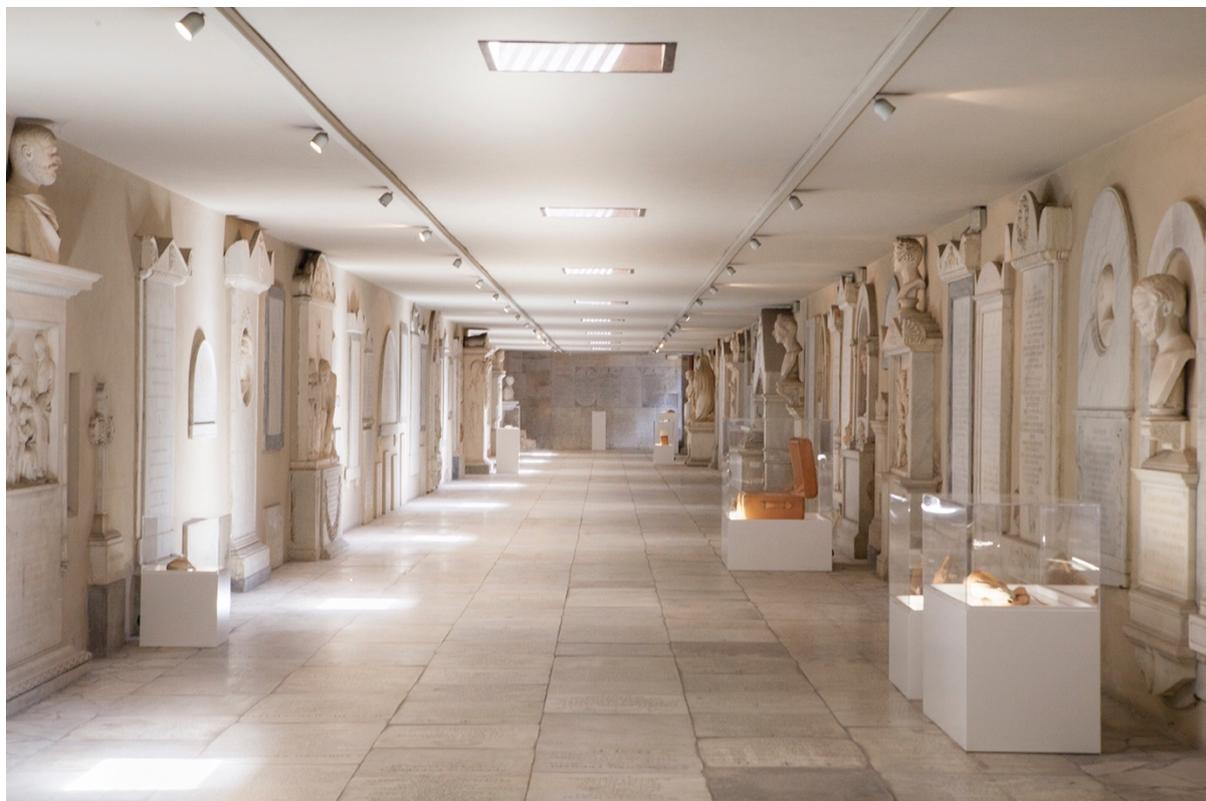


*Figure 26 – Curated display of Absence in the Galleria dei Monumenti Sepolcrali. Di Giovanni. F. (2015).*

Initially I assumed the exhibiting of the artefacts was secondary to the making, however, the curatorial process allowed me to understand how reflection and exhibition are both crucial parts of the practice. Being able to exhibit the works facilitated participants' and the wider audience's understanding of the artefacts.

In 2018 and 2019, I held two exhibitions of the finished artefacts in West Yorkshire galleries. The first, in September 2018, was at the Dean Clough Bookshop Gallery in Halifax and the second was in May 2019 at the Market Gallery (*Temporary Contemporary)*, Huddersfield. To analyse the impact of the exhibitions on responses to the artefacts, I experimented with the technique Perry used whilst displaying *The Vanity of Small Differences (*2013): I invited participants and craftspeople along with the wider public to a private view at Dean Clough (Chapter 3). The exhibition was advertised on the Dean Clough website and in the Halifax Courier newspaper (2018, August 31) and therefore may have attracted the attention of those with an interest in art to view the work. I was present in the galleries during the exhibitions for a period of a week in order to understand how audiences connected with the artefacts. I spoke to a number of visitors and also documented their responses and reactions which also highlighted people connected with the artefacts that were familiar to them. Their responses and the comments were added to the Prown analysis table (Appendix 2) which allowed me to understand how the artefacts were interpreted in a gallery setting and as a collection of objects rather than as individual artefacts. In this formal and curated setting the artefacts were intended to be viewed, not just as a distillation of one person's story, but to open up other opportunities for them to be seen as memory objects that held other people's narratives. Of the objects in the Museum of Broken Relationships collection, Ivana Družetić (2.4) suggests they are "not so much the object of scrutiny, but rather a catalyst of reflection and a vehicle for memories,

fantasies, fears or presentiments" (Družetić, 2014, p. 75). My artefacts work in a similar way in that they allow visitors to the exhibition the opportunity to consider their own relationships to objects, and the ways in which they use objects to remember others, becoming "the author" of those objects' meaning (Družetić, 2014, p. 76).

In *Resonance and Wonder* Stephen Greenblatt discusses the differing curation methods used by museums and galleries that allow the audience to connect with art works. Devising the idea of 'resonance' to mean "the power of the displayed object to reach out beyond its formal boundaries" (1992, p. 42), Greenblatt poses a series of questions that may be considered by the audience, such as the meaning of their own relationship to a particular piece. To consider the word resonance, suggests that the artefacts contain a history that the audience can connect with. By displaying the artefacts in close proximity at the Dean Clough exhibition (fig. 27), in a small, enclosed space, gave the feeling of an intimate experience with the artefacts, allowing for connections to be made with the narratives that were displayed around them on the walls. The atmosphere of the space added to the heightened sense of resonance and relatability between audience and artefact.

The scale differed in terms of the space I had exhibited in previously at the Galleria dei Monumenti Sepolcrali in 2015, however being enclosed gave the feeling of intimacy and protectiveness, but also that of a tomb or shrine. By displaying each artefact in their own vitrine in this setting gave them a relic like status, that they could be seen, but not touched. The space felt like it was housing sacred memories and the artefacts became modern reliquaries of meaning (fig. 27).
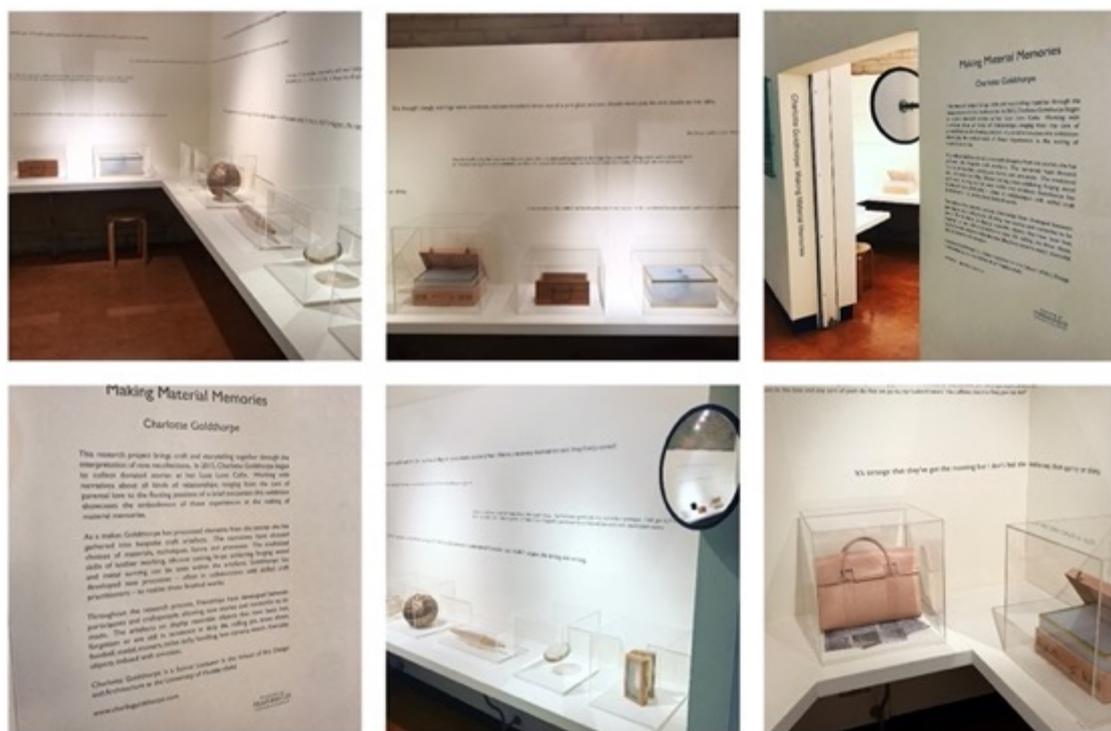


*Figure 27 – The exhibition space at the Dean Clough Gallery, Halifax. (2018).*

The idea of 'resonance' was also considered in terms of how the finished artefacts would be displayed to allow the audience to engage with the work. Greenblatt discusses how "explanatory texts in the catalogue, on the walls of the exhibition or on cassettes" are used to help the audience understand the work (Greenblatt, 1992, p. 44). I wanted to take away the traditional explanatory text within the space, opting instead to provide short explanations about the concepts behind the creation of the work on the outer gallery wall. This meant that before the audience entered the space, they understood the concept of the work and could become

fully immersed in the artefacts, in the space. As the artefacts have a social history that can be still seen within each piece, keeping the interior of the space minimal further emphasised the quotes and artefacts allowing the audience, as Greenblatt states, to question how they were originally used, how they were made, who held, cherished, collected and possessed them (p. 45). He describes 'wonder' as the displayed object "stops the viewer (audience) in his or her tracks, to convey and arresting sense of uniqueness" (1992, p. 42), and explains that this can be enhanced by the lighting and positioning of objects in a gallery space. For example, the Imperial War Museum's permanent Holocaust exhibition (which has been on display since 2000), is predominately led by the personal testimonies of Holocaust survivors.[24] It uses a combination of curatorial techniques, including sensitive lighting, sympathetic and comprehensive interpretations of object, as well as audio and visual material to tell the challenging and difficult (his)story of the Holocaust. The objects on display represent the surviving material culture of genocide both at micro and macro levels. There are personal objects such as photographs, passports, letters and diaries, and there are mountains of objects, such as shoes or spectacles. These are collective-memory objects, which is to say, they prompt us to consider the full human tragedy of the Holocaust using quotidian objects with which we are all familiar. As Bardgett (1998, p. 34) suggests, these objects on display help to bring the stories to life and stimulate visitors' thoughts and imaginations.

The role of my artefacts is to ignite personal emotion and memory within any individual – not only the project participants – therefore I did not want the curation to enforce the original narrative. I chose to display discrete quotes from each of the oral histories in non-specific

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[24] These testimonies have been published in full in *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust* (Lyn Smith, 2005).

locations on the walls, allowing audiences to relate both quotes and artefacts to their own lives. Using vinyl lettering meant the text flowed around the walls allowing the eye to travel from wall to artefact seamlessly. The size and colour were carefully considered to make them easy to read, but not to impose on the reader or the artefacts. A dark grey was chosen to create a less stark contrast between the cream walls so they became part of the display rather than a focal point. This was important, as keeping the display minimal meant all the focus was on the artefacts and the emotions they triggered. Comments about this choice of curation technique suggested that the display created the opportunity for the audience to engage with the artefacts. As one respondent commented: "the quotes and objects contained all sorts of stories which I'd love to know more about, but which also in turn reminded me of my own family stories attached to similar objects – especially the *Rolling Pin*." (Anonymous, Personal communication, July 23, 2018).

In the *Making Material Memories* exhibition at the Market Gallery (*Temporary Contemporary*) (2019), each artefact was displayed individually on its own plinth with focused lighting. As Greenblatt (p. 51) suggests, techniques such as this heighten the intensity of the artefacts and their uniqueness and authenticity. This form of display still allowed the audience to connect with the artefacts but emphasised the individuality of the pieces above their collective nature (fig. 28).

*Figure 28 – The exhibition space at the Market Gallery Temporary Contemporary, Huddersfield. (2019).*



*Figure 29 – Stills from exhibition making video. (2018).*

Within this exhibition I showed a short video of different making processes I had filmed whilst making some of the artefacts (fig. 29). As discussed in the methodology, I had planned on creating short videos of each process, however filming was distracting and so I only captured a few of the stages of making throughout the research journey. Within the Market Gallery I chose

to display a selection of the making videos to give the audience a behind the scenes glimpse of the making process and the different processes that were used in a single artefact. In this way the making processes became transparent and gave the audience an opportunity to connect with the artefacts through a sense of being there in the production stages and seeing my point of view (Jewitt, 2012, p. 5). This provided a deeper connection whilst viewing the finished pieces.

One visitor saw both exhibitions and shared her thoughts about the two spaces and methods of curation during a conversation. The Dean Clough Bookshop Gallery she felt was a more intimate space which meant you were immersed in the artefacts when entering the space. The artefacts were positioned at waist height making them accessible, with the ability to view each piece from the front or above. The artefacts displayed at the Market Gallery (*Temporary Contemporary*) were situated on plinths and they could be walked round and viewed from all angles. The height and solitude of each plinth gave the artefacts a heightened sense of value, even though they are (representative of) domestic objects. In this space, the artefacts become powerful, individual pieces. Other comments from the wider audience perceived the artefacts as a cross over between the museum and art gallery, the artefact and art; the audience viewed the artefacts not as representations of objects but *as* object relics.

The exhibitions allowed me to observe how people responded to the artefacts and to draw conclusions about how they made them feel. Both exhibition sites created the opportunity for further conversation and gathering of reflections which has helped me to understand the success of the artefacts as a collection as well as on an individual basis. Returning to Young's idea (2.8.1)

that a memorial should never be finished, so the process of exhibition will continue, though talks and conferences, publications, future research projects (5.7) and other means of display. Overall, the exhibitions showed that the artefacts as a collection communicated the feeling of absence (lost love). They also allowed for transferral of emotion through observation, in terms of the wider audience being able to connect with familiar objects and stories. Reflecting on my own ongoing role in relation to these objects I understand that all the artefacts are joined together through me; they are connected through the use of shared authority narratives, the familiarity of materials and the making process.

## 4.6 Value

Value has been explored within the contextual review in terms of exchange of objects allowing for them to be imbued with emotion (2.2). Here I consider the different types of value of different elements within the practice.

Prown considers the different types of value that exist within objects: there is material value, which is to say, how much the object is worth in capital terms; then transient and variable values attributed to makers or users; and utilitarian value becomes effective when an object is useful. Finally, Prown acknowledges more intangible values such as that of aesthetic value (art), spiritual value (icons and cult objects), and world value (materials used in their natural condition instead of reshaping them) (Prown, 1982, p. 3).

The different stages of value as the stories transfigured from narrative to newly crafted artefact through the hands of the participants, craftspeople and myself are discussed below. I note the changes of value, not through capital, but the investment of time, meaning and emotion.

The value of the narratives and what they contained was important for the production of the physical artefacts. Any source objects that were still in existence that participants may have shown were examined and documented, but not used in the making process due to their sentimental value status. Where substitutes needed to be used these were convincing replicas that allowed the finished artefact to be valued in the same way and emit the aura of the original (4.4.6).

Within this study costs of materials were not considered as this had no relation to the feelings and emotions portrayed by the finished artefact. Materials were purchased, exchanged, and reclaimed for the making process and so the value lay in the suitability of what was used (i.e., the utilitarian value) and its ability to provide the right look and feel for what I wanted to create.

Exploring Marxist commodity fetishism in relation to me as the maker, it could be argued that the time I invest in making adds new value to the artefact and becomes preserved in the finished artefact (Marx, 2018, p. 143) and therefore as the maker or "owner of the means of production" (Marx, 2018, p. 120) I have a claim to it. Even though I make the object using time consuming and intimate hand making processes, where I become close to both the story and the artefact, it never belongs to me. The link between the artefact and the participant is always retained due to the story and relationship it is based on.

The finished artefacts have transient and variable value through the time invested by me, the maker, in terms of the processes I chose to use to make each piece, and therefore only I can analyse the value of the artefacts from this perspective. In the same vein, the participants'

responses also demonstrate these transient and variable values through how their artefacts enable them to recognise their own story. These reactions exemplify Prown's aesthetic, spiritual, and world values because they are unique to each artefact, each story, and each participant.

## 4.7  Summary

The objective for this chapter was to explore new methods of making that inform material choice, process, technique and establish how emotion is felt and transmitted through my own craft practice. Throughout the elements of this chapter, I have demonstrated the following:

- How artefacts both embody and become containers of the narrative for the participants and the meaning within it (the past and the relationship with a specific individual), but also hold the experience of retelling and the reformation of the original memory.

The finished artefacts also hold my experience of the narrative, both its collection in initial interviews, and also my own perception of the relationship between the participant and their lost love. The idea of the body has been explored through making techniques from replicating body parts to the impression of the body through the type of artefact created. All the artefacts I produce connect to the body in some way, be it through being held, worn, looked through or used, however the emphasis on the absence of the body in the finished artefacts gives way to the notion that they are a material memory.

- For both myself and the participants, the artefacts are the material manifestation of the experience of artefact production, either the experience of actually making (myself), or the experience of intellectual and emotional engagement (participants).

- For the craftspeople, the artefacts represent a collaborative endeavour. For some, a challenge in their own making skills, pushing the boundaries of their craft and challenging their parameters, all of which can be identified by them when looking at the finished crafted artefacts.

- The external audience can never understand the artefacts in the way that the maker or the participants can. However, through the sacred context (4.5.3) that the gallery provides for the artefacts on display, viewers are able to project their own narratives onto an artefact and interpret personal meaning from those they visually connect with.[25]

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[25] This connection with an artefact could be through a familiarity or nostalgia with the original object used within the participants narrative or the text used as part of the curation.

# 5   Conclusion

## 5.1   Introduction

This thesis comes to fruition at an interesting time culturally for the object as a site of study, memory, identity and analysis. Senior Fashion Curator at the V&A, Claire Wilcox has recently released her memoir, which frames her life experience through clothes and the secrets they hold (Cooke, 2020). In the same way, exhibitions featuring objects that tell a story, rather than objects that are a reference point are becoming more commonplace, with the latest exhibition at the V&A being *Bags: Inside and Out* (09.3).

My initial interest in this research arose from my passion for making (1.6) and gathering stories (1.4.1). At the beginning of this study, as a crafts-based practitioner, I understood *how* to make, however, I was not cognisant of *why* I made. Thus, this research has afforded me the opportunity to explore my own practice in-depth and to understand how it relates to and furthers crafts and arts-based research. It has provided the opportunity for me trust in and explore my own studio practice, to gain an understanding of how it has developed to consider more than just the physical outcome, but also how the metaphorical embedding of narrative takes place through processes of making (4.4). This chapter explores my journey through the study and reflects on each stage of research from the contextual review to the final analysis of the artefacts.

The study has resulted in a portfolio of work; the nine artefacts including nine individual artefact commentaries (portfolio − *The Artefacts*) comprising of their production from collection of the story to the analysis of the finished piece and the written thesis that examines the research approach, contextual study and theory behind the project.

The research aimed to understand how personal narratives can be re-articulated through the crafted artefact and the following four research questions were proposed to understand how the research aim would be realised:

- What role do objects play in memory and storytelling?

- How can narrative be embedded through studio practice into a newly-crafted artefact?

- Can a new methodological framework be created to understand the making of material memories?

- How is collaboration used as a tool to share experiences?

These questions addressed the different themes that arose throughout the research and have been answered throughout each chapter using four interlinked objectives (see $1.3 - 1.4$).

The conclusion explores how I have addressed the overall aim using the objectives set out in Chapter 1. They consider the contextualisation of the research within the current field (objective 1), the validity of the methodology (objective 2) and shifts within my practice (objective 3) which also enable me to consider the development of working collaboratively with participants and craftspeople (objective 4). This articulation of my journey through the research has allowed me to reflect on the developments within myself as a craft practitioner and researcher as well as produce an original body of work as seen in *The Artefacts*. I then present my contribution to knowledge, the scope of the research and suggested further research.

## 5.2 Reflections on Contextual Review (Objective 1)

The contextual review (Chapter 2), explored both literature and practice surrounding five overarching themes of the research; objects, love and loss, archival and remembering, narrative, making and embedding. The review considered how objects played a central role within this study and were used for different purposes such as remembering and storytelling. It explored different ideas of how people imbue objects with memories which interlink through the other themes listed above. This presented a gap in existing object relations and craft knowledge which provided the opportunity to explore if newly-crafted artefacts could also become imbued with memory through studio practice. Practitioners have conveyed emotions of love and loss using found objects, photographs and substitute objects (*The Lost Workers* (2.8.2), *Museum of Broken Relationships* (2.4), *Important artifacts and personal property from the collection of Lenore Doolan and Harold Morris: Including books, street fashion and jewelry* (2.4), which already have meaning attached or created artefacts (Perry, 2.8.3) where the narrative is collected and then applied literally through surface decoration using hands on or hands-off making processes. Others (Hoheisel, 2.8.1 and Whiteread, 2.8.4) symbolise people or the absence of the body through the inverse use of negative space. Current research in the area of material culture focusses on how the readymade object is imbued with emotion and memory (a narrative) or has a value to the user (2.2 and 4.6). The contextual review identified gaps within existing knowledge in terms of how artists approach memory and materialisation. Where others have worked with a specific event or situation and based artworks on archived or historical material, I have worked in collaboration with a participant − a direct source − throughout the study. This is discussed further in 5.4 and 5.5.

Approaching the contextual review, with a focus on theorists and practitioners alike was beneficial to the creation of a hybrid methodology (objective 2). Investigating the role of objects within storytelling in this study was imperative as it showed that pre-existing objects provided a reference point on which the finished artefacts could be considered in understanding the extent to which memory may be embedded into something new through the processes of craft making.

## 5.3   Evaluation of methodology (Objective 2)

I initially posed the question 'can a new methodological framework be created to understand the making of material memories?' to which I responded by developing a hybrid qualitative, craft and arts-based research approach which I have named 'narrative-led making' with a focus on oral history, collaboration, practice, documentation and analysis (3.2). The reason for designing a new methodology was that to fulfil the overarching aim of the study, a single methodological approach would not suffice, as it was not able to encompass both the theoretical and the practice-based elements of the research, as discussed in Chapter 3. Prior to the study when I made aesthetically similar artefacts such as *Absence* (2010) displayed at the Galleria dei Monumenti Sepolcrali they were approached through a different methodology. The finished *Absence* artefacts were evaluated by a curator and then linked to a narrative using their physical form as a guide, whereas in this study, using a narrative as a starting point for making the artefacts meant that it flipped the approach to practice I had previously used. The narrative-led making methodology offers a more comprehensive way of looking at the whole journey of research, from its conception through to creating the source material to producing and exhibiting a completed artefact. As arts-based research tends to comprise of entwined strands of enquiry, so a methodology for this type of study needs to be multifaceted and recognise the

input from a hybrid of theory and practice approaches. Narrative-led making enabled me to connect making and artefacts with individuals in a much more intimate way and without creating a new framework, it would not have been possible for me to thoroughly address the idea of articulating narrative through craft in the same way due to limitations of other methodologies. The use of oral history, as opposed to other methods of personal inquiry, provided a structure for a fully immersive experience with each participant – a shared authority in the production of narratives – and then through the process of personally transcribing each interview I was able to connect at a deeper level with the narratives in order to use them as part of the making process.

The use of Abrams' four forms of oral history was a successful way of collecting and processing narratives that provided a strong foundation for the physical making part of the study. Initially I had assumed I could collect anonymous stories and use these to create newly-crafted artefacts, however, the lack of interaction with participants meant that I would be unable to analyse the success of articulating narrative. Therefore, the use of collaboration became integral to the study as participants created a feedback loop to guide the progress of the finished artefacts. The qualitative approach allowed for collaboration with participants (4.2.2) and encouraged me to work and build relationships – and in some cases, friendships – with the participants which strengthened the outcomes within the analysis process (3.3.4.5). Without the participants input – firstly in terms of the stories of lost love – the study would have lacked the richness of real-life memories to make artefacts from. Had I just used the initial collected written narratives, although original source material, they lacked my own input and questioning where we teased out other details that would not have been thought of as important (See the detail in 01.1 – *Toilet Dolly)*. There would have been no gauge to understand to what extent the finished

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artefacts represented a lost love. In this way I felt accountable and therefore having the responsibility that I was making the artefacts for real people and their validation was hugely important in the making process. I would have given up learning how to crochet (01.5) had I not had a participant and their expectations as my driver to continue. Being able to present a completed artefact to them at the end of the process, firstly gave me great pleasure to see their reaction, which in the most part was joy, and a reiteration of their story whilst holding the object, but it also validated what I was trying to achieve. This experience has made me realise the importance of capturing and working with oral histories as a tool to both share experience and record stories for posterity.

The development of collaborative relationships with craftspeople is discussed further in 5.4. Documentation took several different guises, from photography, videography, studio blog and timelines, however, this changed throughout the study as I became more aware of what techniques helped and hindered my practice. As discussed in 3.3.4.2, videography was not conducive to the process of documentation as being filmed changed the way I made as I focused on the camera rather than the work. It was interesting to eventually understand why this was an issue as I initially thought the video documentation would form a part of the finished artefacts portfolio, however I realised that I needed to focus on the story and the making to feel as if I had embedded memory rather than be conscious of making-for-the-camera. Other time-consuming processes such as creating reflective timelines (fig. 7) proved unnecessary and after contemplation were seen for aesthetic purposes rather than practical, as they did not enhance or further the actual research. The use of a studio blog, combined with photography allowed me to easily capture progress, unburden myself by 'off-loading' (McAleese, 2000, p. 8) and reflect on it at a later date (3.3.4.1) which proved an important element of documenting the

process. I have since gone back and used the studio blog notes and imagery whilst writing the thesis, referred to these to understand how I was feeling at different stages of the making and to see how my thinking changed from the start to the end of the study.

Analysis of artefacts was another area that developed through the practice. Earlier I had considered alternative methods of analysis, such as Grace Cochrane's theory of how to read objects which posed specific questions to ask of the artefact (Cochrane, 1997, p. 57), however, Jules David Prown's tried and tested material culture methodology allowed for a comprehensive analysis "*description,* recording the internal evidence of the object itself; to *deduction,* interpreting the interaction between the object and the perceiver; to *speculation,* framing hypotheses and questions which lead out from the object to external evidence for testing and resolution." (Prown, 1982, p. 7). However, since Prown presented this framework, advancements towards appreciation of craft understanding have developed, and so as a maker, I challenged elements of Prown's classification of 'art' objects (4.5.1) to consider elements of technical and mechanical complexity, alongside that of theoretical complexity. To ensure consistency of the analysis, Prown's material culture methodology was applied to my own analysis of each artefact and the reflective interviews with participants to deduce if participants felt their narratives had been re-articulated through the newly-crafted artefacts (Appendix 2).

The methodology has been investigated and examined through exhibitions, at conferences and within written publications which helped me to engage with the wider academic community and general public throughout the study's duration to make sure it was fit for purpose. As a result, I feel the framework could now be used by other practitioners to develop their own intuitive way of working, whereby the making process is informed by the suitability and feel of

materials and processes in order to transfigure narrative and embed emotion and memory into a finished piece of work.

## 5.4   Shifts within my practice (Objective 3 and 4)

Objectives 3 and 4 are explored through the two research questions: 'how can narrative be embedded through studio practice into a newly-crafted artefact?' and 'how is collaboration used as a tool to share experiences?' as they interlink throughout Chapter 4 and *The Artefacts* which focusses on the making process and finished artefact analysis.

My previous experience of making was rooted in traditional practice, which is to say, I worked to create objects with a focus around fashion or functionality. Through this study I have been on a journey of self-discovery-through-making and explored how craft practice can be guided by memory and investigated how narrative could direct the choice of technique and material in making using a hybrid of approaches.

As the study was driven by personal narratives, rather than a commercial brief, I was able to develop a deeper connection with materials and processes and understand how these can be selected through a process of thinking-through-making (3.3.3). Through this study my practice has developed to accommodate the idea that haptic and tacit knowledge, combined with the choice of materials and process are significant in defining the finished outcome – an embodied artefact. As my hands worked in conjunction with the thought process through haptic interactions, for me memories were transfigured through the joining and manipulation of materials. To further explain, these labour and time intensive processes allowed for each story to be relived and translated from memory to material. The haptic knowledge acquired becomes

part of the memory that is embedded into the artefact. For example, the haptic knowledge and experience I have of making an origami bird with my Grandpa (1.4.1) is now embedded into every origami bird I make. The artefacts in the same way are material memories of each participant's story and my haptic encounter with them.

Throughout the journey of the study and more so within the writing up process I have become more aware of the language I use to convey the idea of embedding memory. At first, I was interested in the possibility that an object or artefact could contain or store a memory. Throughout the making process I then began to consider how the materials and subsequent finished artefact could metaphorically be embedded or imbued with memory and through the analysis of the finished artefacts they have become representations or symbolisers of memory. The shift in terminology that has paralleled the shift in making the artefacts I refer to contain, store, embed, imbue, represent and symbolise meanings throughout the different stages of the thesis.

The study initially did not factor in the importance of collaboration for exchanging experience and skills, however, through the development of the research, collaborative partnerships became the backbone to the study (4.2.2). As discussed in 5.3 participants told me some of their most personal stories, through which they then became ingrained and irremovable from the research. An overwhelming responsibility to collaborate with them and their stories through the oral history process was established along with an intimate bond for the duration of the research journey and beyond (4.2.1). Through the involvement of participants, it allowed a metamorphosis of haptic knowledge to occur. Haptic knowledge moved from the participants' original memory object through the oral history and into me. It was then transfigured through

making into a newly-crafted artefact, that, when handled, the haptic knowledge was drawn back out by the participant. Without the ongoing involvement of participants, there would be a lack of understanding of whether the finished artefacts were successful in conveying narrative from an external perspective.

Comparably, through establishing a collaborative relationship with craftspeople, learning from others became an intrinsic part of the study. Working alongside skilled craftspeople encouraged further dialogue that could also be embedded within the finished artefacts and add to the experience of analysing. Learning new skills for the purpose of this study was not a process of becoming a master of a craft or understanding the technicalities or rules involved in applying a certain skill, but more about the experience of working collaboratively. Through collaboration and a shift within my practice, the aesthetic of the finished artefact was not as important as the meanings evoked through and after the making. I am not claiming that I am now able to use these learned skills in the ways in which they are meant in the wider context such as forging or wood turning, but they have formed a basis of understanding for making in the context of the artefacts I produced and offered the opportunity to exchange stories and experiences. I see the finished, newly-crafted artefacts as the provider of a richer and more complex embodiment of lost love memory owing to the constant presence of the haptic and the collaborative nature of the process.

Participants viewed the artefacts not as representations of an object, but as the material memory of the story they had told. The artefacts could even be more sentimental to the participants than the original object as they are a recollection and intervention of their personal memory. They embody all the conversations and experiences we had through their experience of a loved

one, and to add another layer the relationship I built with each participant through the making process. The artefacts take on a greater, but slightly different level of sentimentality (see *The Artefacts* – Reflective commentaries).

Exhibiting, as suggested in (4.5.3) also became a significant part of my practice as the curation and display of the artefacts became an extension of the process. It became apparent that exhibiting the work in an art gallery setting created the opportunity for participants to see their memory of a lost love embodied in an artefact. Being displayed in a vitrine or on a plinth relates back to Appignanesi's idea of lost or dead loves having "an aura of imaginary perfection" (2011, p. 36). Seeing the artefacts this way made some participants feel proud and flattered, but also have goosebumps (01.6 & 06.6). Exhibiting for me has become a key part of the process of making as it allows the crafted artefact to be viewed as an art object, but also a relic or museum piece. It poses further questions on the status of the artefact, how they function and their shifting identities and classifications (Prown, 2.2). For me the artefacts are embodiments of a person and representations of a collaborative journey in the form of domestic objects.

## 5.5   Contribution to knowledge / the field

This research has drawn on the traditions, practices and literatures of a variety of disciplinary fields and has made use of these conventions by intervening in, and contributing to original knowledge surrounding object relations, craft practice and methodological frameworks.

For the study of objects this thesis offers new insights into how memory and emotion can be re-articulated by a newly-crafted artefact through tacit and haptic encounters. It has explored how newly-crafted artefacts can be used to convey emotion in the same way as heirlooms or memory

objects already in existence through working collaboratively and with the constant presence of haptic knowledge. The idea of physically embedding something into an artefact remains a challenge to articulate and so this study has sought to understand how practice can appear to have transferred memory from the intangible to the tangible. I went through the process of working with narratives and choosing suitable materials and techniques to convey memories, but this feeling of narrative transferal was also expressed by participants. The practice of materialising memories in artefact form gives new insight and meaning to the relationship between memory, experience and object relations. In this way the study has posed an alternative way of reading objects and opened up a dialogue around the idea of embedding emotion through craft. It also contributes to a more sophisticated understanding of the emotional value, cultural value, and power of objects, and their capacity to enrich our lives. Through the changing status of artefact production, from narrative to materials, to completed works, value has been considered within the handling, analysis and display which has provided further insight into people's object relations and has shown how value changes in terms of stage, classification and connection. For me, value has been demonstrated through discussions with participants post exhibition regarding the artefacts, but also within the friendships that have been created.

This study contributes to knowledge around practice-led research by establishing a new and unique hybrid methodology; 'narrative-led making', which informs discussion and discourse around craft and making. The new methodology, or narrative-led making, provides a clear framework for the understanding of how narratives can be used to inform a process of collecting source material, analysing and making. It prioritises practice and emphasises the importance

of understanding why we craft as well as how we craft through the use of different research approaches such as oral history, documentation, collaboration and analysis.

To contribute to the field of craft practice I have developed a new technical approach to making that offers new practical interventions in areas that have traditionally been the preserve of theorists, for example, realising newly-crafted artefacts that can be seen, held and understood as material memories. I have explored how the finished artefacts further knowledge in craft and arts-based research in the field of collaboration and through haptic encounters have produced a series of artefacts that offer insight into the conveyance of memory and emotion (01-09), that could not have been produced without the contributions of original narratives from participants. I hope that the new narrative-led making methodological framework can be adopted by researchers with different skill sets and enable them to use narrative as a starting point to develop their own practice. It would be interesting to see how the framework is interpreted by different crafts people for example, in terms of materials they select or techniques they use to create their own material memory. Further to this, it would be fascinating to see how different types of narrative could be used to lead making and the outcomes that might be produced.

## 5.6   Scope of Research

The aim for this study was to understand how narrative could be re-articulated through the newly crafted artefact and within the research aim (1.1) I have explained that this would be investigated through a qualitative, empirical approach which would open up new discussions around, and approaches to investigating how emotion can be embedded within an artefact. It was never intended to be a quantitative or scientific study that could measure if or how much

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emotion could be physically embedded through a process of making, however this is an area I am hoping to explore in collaboration with a neurologist in future research (5.7).

The study did not limit the scope of the research in terms of participant location. In the initial stages there were submissions of stories from locations such as the United States, Oxford, Northampton, and London. As the research developed to include participants in the full process, the final nine stories chosen were from Yorkshire and Lancashire as this allowed for more face-to-face meetings with participants due to locality. This did not affect the quality or variety of the stories used within the study as they were chosen for their diverse array of content and objects (4.2.2), however, for future study, culturally diverse stories could be identified to explore material culture, beliefs and memories from wider reaching communities.

## 5.7   Suggested further research

The findings identified within this research have the opportunity to be developed in a number of different directions. Below I have suggested areas I hope to investigate further.

I would like to continue to explore ideas around material culture, and to explore the artefacts from a performative angle. I would like to give participants willing to continue with my research their corresponding artefact in order to understand how they would respond to the piece within their own home and if they would use it as a memory object, a tool (such as *Rolling Pin*, *Football* or *Handbag*) or decorative ornament. This would be particularly interesting in order to understand how each artefact then becomes part of their own ongoing life story. I would like to document these in short films which would be developed in a collaborative way with the participants and use footage of the making processes collected within the initial study. Within

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this I would like to recreate some of the elements of the stories I collected, such as Helen's trip to Innsbruck from London on a coach and record my thoughts and feelings as I retraced her steps that would add another layer to the narratives of the artefacts.

As part of a wider exploration of craft and heritage I have become a member of the Heritage Crafts Association and have ascertained from the HCA's 'Red List of Endangered Crafts' (2021), that cricket ball making in the UK is now extinct. From working with craftspeople during my research I have enjoyed the experience of learning new crafts from skilled people and so this new research would deal with the history and culture of cricket ball production as a lost craft, and draw on a range of archival, material, and oral testimony sources alongside more observational and haptic methods, with the aim to revive, reinvigorate, and reinstate the craft as a viable sector. So far, I established a network of craftspeople and materials suppliers, historically involved in cricket ball making who are willing to offer advice and help me revive the lost art of cricket ball stitching. The ultimate aim of this project is to re-establish, preserve, and promote these lost skills by passing them on to other British craftspeople and providing demonstrations of the craft in action to raise awareness of this vitally important cultural heritage skill.

I have also begun to explore ideas around how objects, as well as having the capacity to remind us of people, can also become emotional baggage that we carry with us, and how this might form part of a post-doctoral research project. The first artefact of the series has already been exhibited at the Dean Clough *Showcase – An exhibition for difficult times* as part of a group show and I would like to progress this by working with participants to discover ways of unburdening ourselves of memories through craft making processes. I am currently exploring opportunities

in which I can develop an interdisciplinary approach to therapeutic making and work with scholars in the areas of cognition and neuroscience. This would still involve a qualitative approach within the making; however, it could also involve a more empirical direction which would forge an understanding of how craft can be used in a medical settings.

I have built connections with The Holocaust Exhibition and Learning Centre; a charity organisation based at the University of Huddersfield. Through their archive and exhibits they tell the stories of 16 local survivors and their families of the Holocaust. There are opportunities to create new outputs by working with existing collections and audience. This may lead to producing an educational resource and networking events for other researchers of different disciplines.

And finally, throughout this research the idea of collaboration with craftspeople has developed from being a small part of the process to becoming a strong underlying theme of the study. Without the craftspeople, the artefacts in their current form would not exist. The dialogues created meant I was continually learning from people and they were learning from me, we experienced not just each other's stories, but our rituals, beliefs, skills and knowledge; we became enmeshed through our craft practices. A postdoctoral research project based around the anthropology of making would potentially require researching into social processes involved in making objects and the role craft plays in people's lives. This of course will involve a hands-on approach and I look forward to carrying on my journey through making.

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# MEMORIES OF LOST LOVE

## RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

You are invited to take part in a staff/student project and/or research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others or a university representative if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

**Who will conduct the research?**

Charlotte Goldthorpe
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**Working title of the Project Research**

Can an artefact be created to store (the memory of) lost love?

**What is the aim of the project/research?**

I am aiming to collect memories of lost love in the form of recorded and written narratives from different people. These can be memories of family members, friends, partners, husbands, wives, girlfriends or boyfriends. These will then be used to inform my art practice where I will be creating objects to store these memories of lost love.

This is a studio-based PhD, producing a series of samples/artefacts/exhibition alongside a theoretical investigative thesis.

**What would I be asked to do if I took part?**

1. As a participant you will be interviewed regarding a lost love. This could be a family member, close friend or past relationship.

2. Recount a story of the person you have chosen to remember. It must be a story personal to you and the person you are remembering. There will be a series of questions you can answer to help you with your narration.
3. You will also be asked to talk about a physical object that reminds you of them or something that they gave to you; when you look at it or see one like it, the object instantly takes you back to a memory of your lost love.
4. As part of the ongoing process over the next 18-24 months there will be occasions where you may be asked to contribute your views and opinions on the work that is being produced in relation to your story.

It may be quite emotional recounting stories, so if you feel uncomfortable or want to pause or stop, please let me know at any time during the interview.

### What happens to the data collected?
- The data collected will be that of a recorded and written interview. This will be transcribed and then written as a narration to form part of a collection of short stories.
- Then the interview will be used to create an artefact to 'store lost love'. This will be an artwork based around the object we discussed in the interview.

### How is confidentiality maintained?
- A coding system is used for each participant. This will be used for each piece of information collected so your name is never associated with a file.
- Your identity will remain anonymous at all times.
- All physical personal data will be stored on a secure computer or locked storage at the University of Huddersfield or the researchers studio when not in use.

### What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

### Will I be paid for participating in the research?
You will not be paid for the research but the researcher will pay for any required subsistence or travel expenses. Please retain any receipts you may have as proof of purchase.

### What is the duration of the research?
The research is an on-going process over a period of 18-24 months.
Interviews will be as long as your story takes to narrate but no longer than 30-40mins. The main question is to tell your story of a 'lost love', maybe an experience that is memorable to you and to talk about an object you may have been given by this person or something physical that reminds you of them.

### Where will the research be conducted?
The interview can take place where you feel most comfortable. This will be arranged with the researcher. It could be at your home or friends, café or at the university. It will need to be fairly quiet to allow a recording of the interview to be made.

### Will the outcomes of the research be published?
The research will be published in the form of my PhD. This may also take the form of an exhibition in a public space of the artefacts along with parts of your narration. Your identity will remain anonymous at all times. It will also be compiled into a collection of short stories along

with photographs of studio artefacts as well as a written thesis. The body of work may also be used for other external conferences, exhibitions and research journals.

**Contact for further information**
c.m.goldthorpe@hud.ac.uk
**University of Huddersfield**
**Art, Design and Architecture**
**Research Ethics Review**

**TITLE OF PROJECT**  Can an artefact be created to store (the memory of) lost love?

**NAME OF RESEARCHER**    Charlotte Goldthorpe

<div align="center"><b>Participant consent form</b></div>

<div align="right"><b>Please tick</b></div>

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research by reading Form 3 and I consent to taking part in it.

□

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the project/research at any time without giving any reason, and a right to withdraw my data if I wish.

□

I give permission to be quoted by use of pseudonym.

□

I understand that any visual, audio documented material will be held in accordance with the University of Huddersfield's data protection policy.

□

I give permission for any audio documented material to be used within the project/research.

□

I give permission for any audio documented material to be used for further research after the 5-year holding period.

□

**Declaration**: I, the participant, confirm that I consent to take part in the project/research and hereby assign to the University all copyright in my contribution for use in all and any media. I understand that this will not affect my moral right to be identified as the "participant" in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

□

I understand I have the right to request that my identity be protected by the use of pseudonym in the project/research and that no information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research.

□

Name of participant

Signature

Date

Name of researcher (please delete as applicable)

Signature

Date

*Two copies of this consent from should be completed: One copy to be retained by the participant and one copy to be retained by the researcher*

**Appendix 2   Prown Analysis Table.**

| Description | | Rolling Pin | Camera | Football |
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| Substantial analysis | Physical dimensions, measurements used | 30cm x 8cm diameter | 20cm x 12cm x 20cm | 22cm diameter |
| Content analysis | What it represents. Signs/symbols | Represents narrative of Emily's mother who worked in a bakehouse. | Represents narrative of Helen's fleeting romance with a German courier and the camera she took a photo of him with. | Represents narratives of Harry's father who could have been a professional footballer but his career was hampered by WW2. |
| Formal analysis | Visual character / materials / colour / texture | Tapered rolling pin shape. Beech wood. Translucent, opaque (blue tinged) silicone sheath with ghost of handwritten gingerbread recipe. | Translucent, opaque (blue tinged) silicone container with a glossy finish to see the impression of the camera cast. Contains metal winding knob of original camera. Natural veg tan leather handle printed with patchy black pattern. Smooth grain leather. Pale skin tone. Brass angle edges 4mm width. | Natural veg tan leather football made of 12 tessellating panels. Each panel is printed with a black / grey patchy photograph. Smooth grain leather. Pale skin tone. Stitched with natural cotton thread. |
| **Deduction** | | | | |
| Sensory engagement | Handling the artefact | The rolling pin is smooth to the touch and can be turned through the hands. | Cumbersome, but can be held by the handle, making it easier to manoeuvre. Heavy-ish. Brass | Ball feels smooth to the touch and turns easily in the hands because of the spherical |

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| | | | edges make it less tactile as hard and straight. | shape. Has a good weight, that is pleasing to the touch. |
| Intellectual engagement | Consideration of what it does or how it does it. | It could be easily used as a rolling pin to roll pastry with the silicone sheath removed. Silicone sheath embodies personal handwriting and embedded family recipe. | The handle alludes to the artefact being that of a container that can be carried or held as the void of the camera can be used as a storage space. It evokes memories of a camera. | The artefact is physically sound to be used as a football, but the images suggest it is more for contemplating what is pictured. It evokes memories from the images featured in the photographs. |
| Emotional response | Reactions / joy / fright / awe / revulsion / indifference curiosity | The participant turned it in their hands reading the text and picked out specific words as they came into view, stroked it, mimicked actions. Curious / joy. | The participant held the artefact by the handle with me supporting the weight and turned it in the light. Joy and happiness were seen. Retelling of stories linked to the camera. | The participant turned the artefact in their hands looking at each image. Awe and joy were witnessed also that of a protective They took photographs of the artefact to show family. |
| **Speculation** | | | | |
| Theories and Hypotheses | Review of information gathered through description and deduction. Summing up | The artefact is interesting as a finished piece and could be used both practically and as a memory object. The connection between the personal handwriting kept the feeling of Emily's mother alive throughout the making process. The overall finished aesthetic is minimalist, but tactile. | The artefact is conducive to that of a container and so having a use meant the connection to the artefact was stronger than being purely decorative. Being able to handle the artefact also allowed for a stronger connection. Helen's narrative was extremely detailed and so the artefact picks up on the key elements of this | The artefact was made to also be able to be used practically rather than as just a decorative object, however Harry's connection to the artefact was instant and he became protective, showing that it symbolised more than just a football to play with. Creating the ball and seeing |

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| | | | and acted as a prompt for further storytelling to happen and a memory object for those memories. | the images whilst making it, made for a strong connection to both Harry's narrative and the physical memories within the pictures. |
| **Description** | | **Toilet Dolly** | **Brass Shoes** | **Handbag** |
| Substantial analysis | Physical dimensions, measurements used | 30cm x 24cm x 14cm | 14cm diameter 8cm height. | 30cm x 24cm x 14cm |
| Content analysis | What it represents. Signs/symbols | Represents narrative of Claire's Nana. The suitcase symbolises the one that travelled back and forth between Ireland and Manchester, the toilet dolly represents the crochet skills her Nana had and the toilet dolly Claire has to remember her by. | Represents the narrative of Jane's Grandmother. The cast of the brass shoes represent the object that Jane has to remind her of her grandmother. The brass frame represents the brass used to create the original memory object. | Representation of the bag Karen's mother used in her lifetime, like that of a Mulberry Bayswater. Inner lining represents patchwork upcycling and the pages of her WAAF workbook. |
| Formal analysis | Visual character / materials / colour / texture | Natural veg tan leather to form a smooth grained suitcase. Pale skin tone. Stitched with natural cotton thread. Toilet dolly impression cast in translucent, opaque (blue tinged) silicone sitting inside base of suitcase. Brass angle edges to the toilet dolly silicone 4mm width. | Brass handmade frame with brass bolt to allow for hanging of the artefact. Domed translucent, opaque (blue tinged) silicone with a glossy finish to see the impression of the brass shoe cast. | Natural veg tan leather bag like that of a Mulberry Bayswater. Smooth grain leather. Pale skin tone. Stitched with natural cotton thread. |
| **Deduction** | | | | |

| Sensory engagement | Handling the artefact | Cumbersome and heavy to be held. Can be lifted by the handle, so links with the body. Smooth to the touch. Can be interacted with by opening and closing the lid to reveal silicone. | Domed shape lends itself to sitting easily in the palm of the hand comfortably. Pleasing weight that can be transferred from hand to hand, held up to the light or turned over. Very tactile. | Can be held in the hand by the handles so links with the body. Can be opened to reveal the lining. Comfortable and smooth to the touch. |
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| Intellectual engagement | Consideration of what it does or how it does it. | The artefact could be used practically as a suitcase, but represents the connection between Ireland and England and Claire's family. The inner silicone cast of toilet dolly represents the remembrance of skill Claire's Nana had in crocheting. | The artefact can be hung to catch the light in a window where the original brass shoes now sit. Used as a memory object to represent Jane's Grandma's love of collecting brass and the presence Jane still feels of her in the house. | Could be used practically as a functioning bag, but is used as a memory object to evoke memories of Jane's mother including her handwriting, handbag, love of make do and mend. |
| Emotional response | Reactions / joy / fright / awe / revulsion / indifference curiosity | Claire felt proud of her Nana through interaction with the artefact. She was excited to see it before the unveiling and in shock (joy) when she saw it. She took several photographs of the artefact to show her mum and family. Although it is a heavy, bulky artefact Claire stroked the leather, opened and closed the | Jane was happy when she saw the artefact. She was curious at the qualities it had to refract the light. She turned the artefact in her hands and held it to the light. She stroked the surface. | Karen held the artefact in both hands and was in awe of it. She commented 'wow' and stroked the leather. She opened the bag and looked at the lining inside curiously. She became quickly attached the artefact. |

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| | | lid and removed the silicone to look closer at the detail. | | |
| **Speculation** | | | | |
| Theories and Hypotheses | Review of information gathered through description and deduction. Summing up | Although the artefact is larger and heavy, the familiarity of the suitcase form allowed the participant to engage with it through a tactile and emotional connection. | The artefact is of a good weight and size to be held in the palm of a hand and simple in its materials and structure. The minimalist shape fitted in with the participants ideology and the piece through the making process was enjoyable and reflective. | The artefact was recognisable as a practical object (handbag) and so was treated as such, with the participant recognising elements of the narrative within the artefact. My own connection with the hand stitching and closeness engaged me throughout the making as so a connection was quickly and firmly established. |
| **Description** | | **Medal** | **Watch** | **Running Shoes** |
| Substantial analysis | Physical dimensions, measurements used | 5cm x 12cm x 20cm | 28cm x 25cm x 15cm | 40cm x 30cm x 15cm |
| Content analysis | What it represents. Signs/symbols | Represents the medal Georgia's father won in WW2 and the cufflinks he was allegedly given by King George V, but also his life after the war as a Rosehip syrup salesman. | The artefact represents the watch Beth's father had taken apart and put back together whilst suffering with Alzheimer's. The translucent silicone represents his support for Water Aid/. It also captures the place she now safely stores the watch in her own dressing | The artefact represents Imogen's ex boyfriends running shoes that she kept in her car after the breakdown of the relationship. The impression of the shoes symbolise her boyfriend and personifies him as discussed in the interview. |

| | | | table drawer. It represents all the memories she has of him that he told her and that they created throughout their time together. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Formal analysis | Visual character / materials / colour / texture | Predominantly translucent, opaque (blue tinged) silicone cast in a two-part mould. Glossy surface. Vegetable tan leather frame/binding, wet moulded and box stitched on each corner. Brass edged frame with brass piano hinge. | The initial impression is that of a small, chunky, hardwood drawer in a mid-brown colour. It has small measurements written on it in pencil. The iron forged handle has an uneven twist but is smooth, yet dimpled. It is dark grey polished. Inside is a small 10cm diameter, translucent silicone glossy bubble with ghost (blue tinge) of a watch and with brass frame sat in and through the base of the drawer. | A large block of dense translucent silicone (blue tinge) that has the imprints of Nike trainers inside, with the laces and tongues still embedded within the silicone. Due to the mould being quite thick the trainers are less visible, unless closer to it. The block of silicone has a glossy finish and around the top and bottom edges are brass frames 1cm in thickness. |
| **Deduction** | | | | |
| Sensory engagement | Handling the artefact | The artefact fits in the hand and can be easily turned and seen. The weight is comfortable. Can be held up to the light. Leather edges make it comfortable to the touch. | The drawer is cumbersome and lacks tactility as is awkward in size and shape, however the handle makes it easier to maneuverer and feels ergonomically pleasing and cool to the touch. The silicone bubble fits in the palm of the hand in removed and is slightly squashy, | The artefact is heavy as it is a solid block of silicone. It is hard to lift and handle and so lacks sensory engagement in this way. The artefact can be touched and prodded as is slightly flexible due to its rubber quality, but this does |

| | | | but inside the drawer it looks protected and shielded from the outside, yet the light shines through it. | not evoke real connection with the material. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intellectual engagement | Consideration of what it does or how it does it. | It can open and close using the hinge to enable the cufflinks to be safely stored and then looked at. It is not a practical artefact, more decorative, but evokes memories. | The artefact is a none practical representation of a drawer, out of its usual casing. It is a decorative piece that can be used as a memory object. | The artefact is a decorative piece and has no physical function. It is a memory object to evoke memories of Imogen's boyfriend. |
| Emotional response | Reactions / joy / fright / awe / revulsion / indifference curiosity | Georgia's response to first seeing the artefact was one of joy and pride. She held it in her hands and opened it to feel the smooth negative impression of the medal. | Beth's first response was that of indifference as it was laid Infront of her on the table. She did handle it, but sitting down this was harder to handle and connect with. She became more connected to it as time went on and curiosity crept in with questions about the artefact which then evoked more stories. | Imogen was indifferent to the artefact. She prodded it and squeezed it. She couldn't comprehend the artefact and thought the trainers were inside, it was only with me turning it over that she understood the impression of the trainers and that they weren't inside the silicone. She tried to connect and was partially curious about the material, but it's lack of handling meant the connection lacked too. |
| **Speculation** | | | | |

| Theories and Hypotheses | Review of information gathered through description and deduction. Summing up | The finished artefact is a good weight and size to be held and the materials lend themselves to being tactile and sensory. The use of the hinge creates the idea that the artefact is a working object and can be opened and closed to store physical items or emotion. The connection with the participant and artefact demonstrated an understanding of the finished item. | The finished artefact is cumbersome, but it had elements that invite the viewer to look into and investigate further and become emotionally connected. The narrative provided interesting source material that was embedded through the use of 4 different materials, providing different tacit experiences. | The finished artefact is cumbersome and heavy making it less easy to handle and therefore gain attachment to. The lack of connection with the narrative meant less engagement through the making process and so the finished artefact lacked emotional response from myself and the participant. |
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