

ARCHAEOLOGY WITH ART

Edited by

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Contents

Archaeology with Art: A short introduction to this book.....	v
<i>Helen Chittock and Joana Valdez-Tullett</i>	
Art practice and Archaeology: a mutually beneficial relationship.....	vi
The content of this book.....	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
References	vii
Preface: The paragone has gone	ix
<i>Andrew Cochrane</i>	
Making a moment.....	x
The reformation of the image.....	xi
We are all now	xii
Élan vital	xiii
References	xiii
Chapter 1: Making carved stone balls: art, experimental practice and archaeological research	1
<i>Andrew Meirion Jones</i>	
Introduction.....	1
Carved stone balls: curiosities and curious interpretations.....	1
The Winchester School of Art workshop	5
Outcomes of the workshop	8
‘Their use is wholly unknown’	10
References	11
Chapter 2: The fate of a thinking animal: the role of Upper Palaeolithic rock-art in mediating the relationship between humans and their surroundings	13
<i>António Batarida Fernandes</i>	
Introduction.....	13
Conscious/Unconscious (and everything in between).....	15
Rock-art and landscape.....	16
Rock-art as a by-product.....	18
Rock-art and religion	20
The role of rock-art in mediating the relationship between humans and their surroundings	23
Conclusion	27
Acknowledgements	28
References	28

Chapter 3: The rock ‘artist’: exploring processes of interaction in the rock art landscapes of the north of Ireland 33

Rebecca Enlander

Introduction.....	33
Geological Landscapes.....	34
Doagh Island, Inishowen - Dalradian Argyll and Appin Groups.....	34
Mevagh.....	38
Cuilcagh - Marine shelf facies	40
Regional Expressions.....	42
Archaeologies of Art	43
Objects with History.....	45
Stone Places.....	45
Processes of Interaction	46
Reference, Repetition and Re-use	48
Conclusions.....	49
References	50

Chapter 4: Art, Materiality and Creativity: understanding Atlantic Rock Art 53

Joana Valdez-Tullett

Introducing the Case-Study: Atlantic Rock Art.....	53
The nature of Rock Art: Initial remarks.....	56
A Work of Art: the metaphor.....	57
The <i>making</i> of Rock Art: a process	58
The Material Medium.....	60
The Setting.....	62
Creating Rock Art: the gesture and the performance.....	65
The Audience and the Audience’s Experience.....	68
Interpreting rock art: the reflection of thought.....	72
Summing Up	73
References	75

Chapter 5: Images and materials: The making of narrative imagery in rock art and on metalwork 79

Peter Skoglund

Introduction.....	79
Rock art in south-east Scania – a short introduction	80
Figurative art and narratives.....	83
Narratives in rock art	83
Narratives on the razors.....	88
The making of images in rock art and on metalwork	89
Discussion and conclusions.....	90
Acknowledgement.....	93
References	93

Chapter 6: Categorising the Iron Age: Similarity and Difference in an East Yorkshire Assemblage.....	97
<i>Helen Chittock</i>	
Art Practice and Archaeology	97
Categorising Archaeology	98
Dealing with ‘Mess’ in Archaeology.....	101
Remaking: Copying and Reconstruction in Art and Archaeology.....	103
Shapeless Jars as a Category.....	108
Concluding Points	109
References	110
Chapter 7: Imagining and Illustrating the Archaeological Record: The Power of Evocation and Augmentation of Linear Drawing	113
<i>Dragoş Gheorghiu</i>	
Introduction: The Imagination and Visual Representation of the Past.....	113
Art and Archaeology	114
Linear Drawing as a Technique for Representation and Evocation.....	115
Our Artworks with Lines	115
Time Maps Project.....	116
Land Art as Linear Drawing [Dragoş Gheorghiu’s Art Work]	117
Experience and Linear Drawings [Georgina Jones’ Artwork].....	117
Conclusions.....	120
Acknowledgements	122
References	122
Chapter 8: Moving, changing, becoming: applying Aristotle’s kinesis paradigm to rock art	127
<i>Andy Valdez-Tullett</i>	
Kinesis.....	127
The four causes of kinesis.....	129
Movers and the moved.....	131
Rest.....	131
Pre-sightedness and rock art	133
José Alcino Tomé - last of the rock artists.....	135
Conclusions.....	137
Acknowledgements	138
References	138
Chapter 9: Experiential Art and Archaeology: Vital Material Engagements.....	141
<i>Eloise Govier</i>	
Introduction.....	141
Lively Matter.....	141
Experimental Art.....	142

Çatalhöyük: a Neolithic town.....	143
Experimental Art and Archaeology.....	143
Vital Material Engagements.....	146
Seeing in the Dark.....	149
Sensory Engagement	150
Conclusion	152
References	153
Chapter 10: Living Symbols of Kilmartin Glen.....	157
<i>John Was & Aaron Watson</i>	
Introduction	157
Background.....	157
The Project.....	161
The Dark Room	169
Discussion	170
Acknowledgements	174
References	175

List of Figures and Tables

Making carved stone balls: art, experimental practice and archaeological research

Figure 1. The variety of interpretations of carved stone balls. Image by Hannah Sackett	2
Figure 2. The first stage in the carved stone ball <i>chaîne opératoire</i> : shaping a sphere. Photograph by Andrew Cochrane	5
Figure 3. The second stage in the carved stone ball <i>chaîne opératoire</i> : marking out the sphere. Photograph by Andrew Cochrane	6
Figure 4. The third stage in the carved stone ball <i>chaîne opératoire</i> : carving out the knobs. Photograph by Andrew Cochrane	6
Figure 5. Working with pre-prepared plaster moulds at the Winchester school of Art. Photograph by Andrew Meirion Jones	7
Figure 6. A clay ‘carved stone ball’ of Marshall type 4a Photograph by Andrew Meirion Jones	8
Figure 7. ‘Carved stone balls’ in plaster at the end of the WSA workshop. Photograph by Andrew Meirion Jones	9

The fate of a thinking animal: the role of Upper Palaeolithic rock-art in mediating the relationship between humans and their surroundings

Figure 1. Upper Paleolithic representation of a wagging tail aurochs (Côa Valley, Portugal). Drawing of the aurochs by Fernando Barbosa.....	24
Figure 2. Côa Valley (Portugal) Upper Paleolithic quadruped motif (probably an aurochs) depicted in a fashion that suggests the animal is in the act of defecating or urinating. This image, as similar ones existent in Western Europe Pleistocene art (Joseph 2003, 322), hints that humans were aware of how different animal species demarcated their territory. Drawing by CNART.	26

The rock ‘artist’: exploring processes of interaction in the rock art landscapes of the north of Ireland

Table 1. Regional preferences for surfaces and motifs in the survey area. Note: ¹ Indicates the lithology of the actual carved surfaces, as opposed to the character geology of the area. ² Burren natural carvings - an additional set of modifications include, but are not exclusive to: splitting and repositioning boulders, the definition of a rim or lip around the boulder’s edge, and the elongation of natural cracks and hollows to create anthropomorphic forms. ³ Data compiled from field observations where possible and van Hoek (1986, 1988, and 1993).	35
Figure 1. Ireland geo map Distribution map demonstrating site location of all Irish rock art and passage grave art sites in relation to the solid geology of Ireland: note the apparent avoidance of the Central lowlands which are principally underlain by Carboniferous limestones. Sites discussed in text include: the Argyll Group in the Inishowen area (and Doagh Island) and the sandstone erratics on Carboniferous limestone in Cavan and Fermanagh (Burren, Marlbank, Reyfad). Solid geology 1:500,000© gsi.ie; data compiled by the present author using ArcMap 10.	36

Figure 2. Above: Graph demonstrating distribution of rock art and passage grave art in the survey area by solid geology. Site type totals are: Passage grave art (36 including 3 ‘standing stones’ thought to be reused kerb stones), Cup-and-ring art (174), and Cupmarked (126). Below: Graph demonstrating distribution of outcrop, erratic and cultural stone by solid geology. Site type total are: Outcrop (179), erratic boulders (77), and cultural stone (99 including 33 passage tombs, 11 cist slabs, 13 capstones and 18 standing stones). Geological unit classification is based on the 1:500,000 solid geology series, available digitally from © gsi.ie; point data compiled by the present author using ArcMap 10.37

Figure 3. Detail of cupmarks at Carrowreagh and cartouche motif at Magheranaul. The Carrowreagh rock art is typically characterised by isolated and group cup and disc marks, with the decorated surfaces characterised by ice-smoothed outcrops of the Termon Pelite Formation. This contrasts with nearby Magheranaul, where rock art frequently occurs on flat, heavily fissured outcrops of pelite and schistose pelite, with fissured surfaces often favoured for composing rock art. The rock art is also different in character, with natural features often used including the elaborate cartouch and tailed disc design which incorporates natural grooves.....39

Figure 4. Detail of the main decorated slab at Reyfad which is heavily decorated with an array of cup, cup-and-ring and penannular motifs. The rock art does not appear to conform to an overall design and suggests that the motifs accumulated through successive ‘carving events’41

Table 2. The rock surface is mediated and transformed with each stage of use and reuse in the production of rock art. Likened to the symbolic process of Gawan canoe production, meaning is applied to the surface with each stage of interaction, transforming the natural to the animate (after Munn 1976, figure 4 and Nash 2002, figure 9.7).....44

Table 3. simplified diagrams demonstrating (left) the dual importance of physical and cultural acts in the production of material culture, whereby processes are bound by material qualities, personal ability, cultural norms and social identity, and (right) the stages involved in socialising the landscape, whereby natural features become places over time through visual, physical or verbal interaction, and natural places become socialised through engagement.48

Art, Materiality and Creativity: understanding Atlantic Rock Art

Figure 1. General view of Penedo dos Sinais, located in the outskirts of Citânia de Briteiros (Guimarães, Portugal). This example can be considered a ‘classic’ Atlantic Art composition. Photograph by Centro Nacional de Arte Rupestre (CNART).....54

Figures 2a and 2b. Example of an animal depiction on Laje das Fogaças (Lanhelas, Portugal). Photograph by Joana Valdez-Tullett55

Figure 3. A large cup-and-ring motif embraces a granite boulder at Monte dos Fortes (Valença, Portugal). Photograph by Joana Valdez-Tullett63

Figure 4. Landscape setting of Monte dos Fortes I (Valença, Portugal). Photograph by Joana Valdez-Tullett67

Figure 5. Location of the shelter in the mouth of the river Tua. Photograph by Joana Valdez-Tullett.68

Figure 6. Drawing of the Panel 31 in the Tua shelter. Palaeolithic depiction of three different species sharing the same body. Drawing by Joana Valdez-Tullett and Joana Castro Teixeira. 69

Figure 7. Moment of discovery and first examination of the panel with Palaeolithic rock art at the Tua shelter. The motifs are depicted on the top of the rocky surface demanding specific body positions for its observation. Photograph by Alexandre Lima 70

Images and materials: The making of narrative imagery in rock art and on metalwork

Figure 1. Map of Scandinavia with the studied area indicated by a black dot. Image: Tony Axelsson. 80

Figure 2a-d. The spatial distribution of those sites in south-east Scania which can be attributed to a specific phase. a) Spatial distribution of images during phase 1, 1700-1400 BC b) Spatial distribution of images during phase 2, 1400-1100 BC c) Spatial distribution of images during phase 3, 1100-800 BC d) Spatial distribution of images during phase 4, 800-200 BC. Images by Peter Skoglund. 82

Figure 3a–b. Slabs No. 7 and 8 from the Kivik grave, Scania. Photo: Catarina Bertilsson, 2002. Source: Swedish Rock Art Research Archives id: 1368 and 1369. 84

Figure 4a-c. Documentation of the Gladsax 8 panel. a) The original documentation; b) The axes highlighted by red color; c) the horse, the larger cup-mark and the cross in circle highlighted by red color. Documentation by Broström and Ihrestam. From Broström and Ihrestam 2013. Figures 4b and 4c revised by Richard Potter. (1) 85

Figure 4a-c. Documentation of the Gladsax 8 panel. a) The original documentation; b) The axes highlighted by red color; c) the horse, the larger cup-mark and the cross in circle highlighted by red color. Documentation by Broström and Ihrestam. From Broström and Ihrestam 2013. Figures 4b and 4c revised by Richard Potter. (2) 86

Figure 5. Razor decorated with a ship and a horse pulling a sun-symbol. From Kaul 1998: 99. 87

Categorising the Iron Age: Similarity and Difference in an East Yorkshire Assemblage

Figure 1. A Shapeless Jar from Hanging Cliff, Kilham (Pit HA29), the author after Rigby (2004), graphical scale added by author. 105

Imagining and Illustrating the Archaeological Record: The Power of Evocation and Augmentation of Linear Drawing

Figure 1. Dragoş Gheorghiu, Land art: The visualization of the watch guard’s path, Abrantes Castle, Time Maps Project, 30 June 2014. Photograph by Dragoş Gheorghiu 118

Figure 2. Dragoş Gheorghiu, Land art: The drawing on a rock inside the funerary chamber drawn on the surface of the chambered tomb, Barclodiyad Y Gawres, GestART Project, 21st May 2014. Photograph with drone by Andy Beardsley. 118

Figure 3. Georgina Jones, Drawing of Vădastra landscape, Time Maps Project, June 2013. Photograph by Georgina Jones. 119

Figures 4 and 5. Top, The hands of the artist modelling clay, Georgina Jones. Bottom, Modelled clay transformed into a pot, Georgina Jones. Time Maps Project, June 2013. Photographs by Georgina Jones.121

Moving, changing, becoming: applying Aristotle’s kinesis paradigm to rock art

Figure 1. Rock 1n - Stoupe Brow West, Flyindales Moor, North Yorkshire, England (adapted and redrawn from Brown and Chappell 2005, 39).132

Figure 2. Pedra das Procesi3ns, Galicia (adapted and redrawn from Bradley and Fabregas Valcarce 1998, 56).133

Figure 3. A selection of the rock art of Jos3 Alcin3 Tom3 at Rego da Vide. Top left rock 2, top right rock 3 and bottom rock 5 (adapted and redrawn from Zilh3o 1997).136

Living Symbols of Kilmartin Glen

Figure 1. Examples of rock art in Scotland. A: Achnabreck. B: Ormaig. C: Cairnbaan. D: Ben Lawers. Photographs by Aaron Watson158

Figure 2. A: Excavation at Torbhlaren. B: Excavation at Ormaig. C: Excavation on Ben Lawers. D: A broken hammerstone from Torbhlaren. E: A worn quartz pebble from Torbhlaren, perhaps used to shape motifs. F: The ‘peck’ marks that result from hammering are visible at Ormaig. G: Quartz debris from Torbhlaren. Photographs by Aaron Watson.....159

Figure 3. A: Rock art extends along the crest of an outcrop at Torbhlaren, while a natural ledge offers a viewpoint alongside. B: Excavation at Torbhlaren. C: The cluster of cobbles in the foreground marks consolidated ground alongside a large carved boulder on Ben Lawers. D: A cup with several rings framed by the view beyond. Photographs by Aaron Watson.....160

Figure 4. The sparkling surfaces of carved schist boulders upon Ben Lawers share qualities with the shimmering loch below. Photographs by Aaron Watson161

Figure 5. The Living Symbols sculpting workshops. Photographs by Aaron Watson.....162

Figure 6. Still frames from Act 1 of the audiovisual installation.169

Figure 7. Still frames from Act 2 of the audiovisual installation.170

Figure 8. Moonlight reflecting upon the surface of Loch Tay, viewed from a carved rock high on the slopes of Ben Lawers. Photographs by Aaron Watson171

Figure 9. Still frames from Act 3 of the audiovisual installation.172

Archaeology *with* Art: A short introduction to this book

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Archaeology and art history have a long-standing relationship. This relationship has been fostered partly by common academic origins, both disciplines sharing their roots in antiquarianism and diverging gradually during the 18th century (e.g. Cochrane and Russell 2007; Ingold 2011; Renfrew *et al.* 2004; Shanks 1991). Historically, the two disciplines have also shared an interest in the study of ‘things’ (Thomas 2015: 1288) and both have, over the course of the past centuries, developed formal modes of analysing them through the study of style, aesthetics, iconography, etc. (Olsen 2012: 24; Thomas 2015: 1288).

Recent years have, however, seen increasing emphasis on the shared values of archaeology and art practice, rather than art history. This is, perhaps, a result of the material-cultural turn (see Hicks 2010) and the growing desires of archaeologists to explore the properties and capacities of materials themselves (e.g. Conneller 2011; Jones 2012), something that art practitioners do regularly. This book is about the complex material interactions that result in ‘art’, and our focus on art practice is derived from the desire to move beyond the typological study of past art to examine the processes involved in art, rather than the end result. It is a contribution to the exploration of what archaeologists can learn about the making of past art from collaboration and discussion with present day practitioners. The ten papers all employ novel methods of approaching different archaeological records, things and materials from prehistoric Europe, with the aim of provoking thought and discussion.

It is important to specify that this book does not aim to offer a solid definition of what we see as ‘art’. To do so is difficult enough with regards to present day cultures but when discussing images and objects from the distant past it becomes very problematic. As we have written elsewhere (Valdez-Tullett and Chittock 2015) we take cues from both artists and archaeologists in viewing art as an extremely fluid category; the production, modification, placement or destruction of things and images; the working of materials. Art can be a performance with a

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specific meaning, or it can occur as a result of everyday life (Mithen 2004: 155). To highlight the fluid and contingent nature of what we call art, some of the papers in this volume discuss archaeological material traditionally referred to as ‘art’, while others discuss performances and objects that are seemingly more mundane.

Art practice and Archaeology: a mutually beneficial relationship

The idea of a working relationship between archaeology and art practice is not new. Over several decades, archaeologists have experimented with art practice in their investigations of the past, drawing analogous comparisons between the activities of the two disciplines (e.g. Cochrane and Russell 2007; Refrew 2003) and sometimes producing artworks of their own to enhance their archaeological understandings (e.g. Cochrane and Russell 2007; Tilley *et al.* 2000, also see Gheorghiu, this volume, and Jones, this volume).

This volume will also touch on the fact that the relationship between archaeology and art practice is not one-sided. Archaeology has, similarly, provided inspiration for art practitioners as part of what Dieter Roelstraete has termed the ‘Historical Turn’ (2009). The ‘Les Dejeuner sous L’herbe’ project by Swiss artist Daniel Spoerri is a good example of this reciprocity. In 1983 the artist offered an outdoor meal to 120 people, after which the tables, along with the crockery and leftover food, were buried and the memory of their location lost. With the collaboration of archaeologist Jean-Paul Demoule, an archaeological investigation process was initiated in order to locate and excavate the tables. Spoerri was interested in the application of the archaeological method, rather than the final result of the experiment, and therefore all the remains of the meal were excavated, labelled and packed according to archaeological standards (Demoule 2011).

The papers of this volume will, at several points, explore the reciprocity between archaeologists and art practitioners, and will use the existing crossover between the two disciplines as a starting point for their own considerations of the processes involved in making past art.

The content of this book

The observation of the exciting results of the study of archaeology through art practice summarised above prompted the two authors of this volume to organise a session for the Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) conference of 2013, in order to further explore the potential of new approaches. The session was entitled *Archaeology with Art: Space, Context, Fabrication and Gesture*, and borrowed part of its name from Tim Ingold, who had recently stated his wish to carry out ‘anthropology *with* art’ rather than anthropology *of* art (2013: 8). Ingold’s aim was to “link art and anthropology through the correspondence of their *practices*” (2013:

8), and we found this a fitting sentiment on which to base our session, inviting archaeologists, art practitioners, and those who view themselves as straddling both disciplines, to participate in discussion.

The content of the session centred on the idea of process, and the ways in which an understanding of the making of contemporary art might inform and enrich understandings of the material engagements involved in past artistic practice. Papers on a range of topics, from ceramics to rock art, were delivered and resulted in rich discussion, which spilled out into the corridor and beyond after the session itself was over.

It is the ideas first discussed during and since the TAG 2013 session that have culminated in the publication of this volume of ten papers, some of which were first presented as part of the session, while others are welcome subsequent additions. The papers of this volume cover a diverse range of topics, from Jones' practical investigation of making carved stone balls; to A. Valdez-Tullett's philosophical exploration of rock art's spatial characteristics. They are united by the fact that each one seeks to push the boundaries of our discipline and cover new ground. We hope that each one provokes thought and discussion, and that the fruitful cross-disciplinary collaborations described in these pages will continue to flourish.

Acknowledgements

This volume represents a milestone for both the authors, as the first edited volume either of us has produced. We would like to thank all the authors of the volume not only for contributing such a fascinating range of papers but also for bearing with us at times where we have perhaps been slightly less efficient than more experienced editors. The same goes for the diligent group of reviewers who have kindly read and commented on the papers of this volume. Our shared PhD supervisor, Professor Andrew M. Jones, also deserves special thanks for his invaluable advice, time and patience. Lastly, we thank all the speakers and delegates of the TAG2013 session, upon which this volume is based, for such a stimulating and interesting few hours. In alphabetical order: Ana C. Santos, Andrew M. Jones, Andy Valdez-Tullett, Damien Campbell-Bell, Georgina Jones, Gheorghiu Dragos, Ian Dawson, Lucy Shipley, Marta Díaz-Guardamino, Peter Sköglund and Rebecca Enlander. A special thanks to Eloise Govier for allowing us to use her beautiful art in the cover of this book.

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Preface: The paragone has gone

Andrew Cochrane

Every human being is an artist... All other definitions end up saying that there are artists and non-artists - people who can do something and people who can't do anything
Joseph Beuys

Leonardo da Vinci famously drew a paragone between painting and the other arts such as sculpture and architecture. The medium of painting was deemed to be both distinct and superior; in doing so, da Vinci developed boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, to the benefit of those who painted. Other paragoni have permeated through time and genders, with recent ones including painting by men versus photography by women (Danto 2013, 100). Again, such divisions were designed to reinforce disciplinary boundaries of interpretation, and control. Although long standing bed-fellows, art and archaeology have historically been subjected to a paragone. The artist Simon Callery succinctly illustrated this when he reported that ‘...archaeology is about limiting interpretations... about limiting connections, about proposing truth or a fact. Art seems to be actually richer when it works through misunderstandings...’ (Cameron 2004, 135). As with da Vinci’s paragone, and Michelangelo’s later retort, Callery evoked a paragone that gave preference to one approach over another. The separated disciplines have both benefited from collaboration, but are often seen to occupy their own domains.

Bailey (2014) has recently challenged such historical boundaries, and argued that provocative and radical work (i.e. non derivative) is only possible when moving beyond the horizons of one’s own discipline (see also McFadyen 2013). Bailey (2014) urged us to conceptually step out of our office windows (a leap of faith?) and into the world of creative practice; with this he echoed the antiquary and illustrator William Stukeley, working in the early eighteenth century. It is interesting how good ideas are often forgotten. Moving to the twentieth century, via Pieter Bruegel the Elder’s sixteenth century painting *The harvesters*, Ingold (1993) invited us to inhabit (via our senses) the world both creatively and performatively. Such taskscapes work through lines and meshworks of interconnectivity. Clarke (1968) depicted such activities as existing as nodal points in a network (see also Latour 1993); Ingold (2007) preferred uninterrupted process. For Ingold (2013), knowing, learning and discovering are experimental modes, stimulated by acts of doing. Practice and understanding are not observational, instead they develop via trial and error. You grow into knowledge. Such depictions are not necessarily new to archaeology, and in many ways formulated the basis for Leroi Gourhan’s

(1993 [1967]) *chaîne opératoire*, in which gestures, marking and interactions with things generated possibilities (see also Benjamin 1996 [1917]). Conneller (2011) offers one of the most sophisticated versions of this line of thinking to date (see also Enlander, Jones, Skoglund, J. Valdez-Tullett, this volume). Here, we have opportunities for experimentation, assemblage, process and creative risk taking at any given moment.

Making a moment

Things happen in the present. We now exist in a *post-Gathering Time* world (Whittle *et al.* 2011). For years, approaches to understanding how things happen were hampered by a-historical essentialist universal narratives, that could be applied to any place at any time. Barrett (1994) requested we consider processes and performances that occur in and over time. McFadyen (e.g. 2006) has consistently challenged the idea that things, particularly monuments, were the result of pre-determined ideas. Instead, we have the relations of things - affected and affecting - determining overall process. Think less of a planned seventeenth century cathedral and more of an organically created medieval one. High Resolution dating techniques (e.g. Bayesian modeling), strontium isotope analysis, aDNA studies *inter alia*, are increasingly allowing us to notice specific changes and movements at different scales, e.g. lifetime, generational, settlement, environment (Bayliss and Whittle 2007; Hofmann 2015; Robb 2014). We can now better witness the actions we have previously speculated over as they are actually happening. Creative processes do work, on the ground, beyond theoretical modelling. Such specificity is revealed by Enlander (Chapter 3), in her systematic survey of the geology of rock art sites in the north of Ireland. These environmental data sets are illuminated with considerations of biographies and practices of repetition and reuse. Here, process and collaboration are key.

Archaeology in the later parts of the twentieth century was heavily influenced by literary criticism, deconstructionism and post structuralism; most predominantly through the writings of Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), Roland Barthes (1915-1980), Michel Foucault (1926-1984), Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) and Umberto Eco (1932-2016). Moving into the twentieth century, instead of following these literary traditions, many contributions in this volume, develop the work of others (e.g. Cochrane 2009; Bonaventura and Jones 2011), and seek out sculptural ways of thinking through things. Chittock (this volume), Jones (this volume) and Skoglund (this volume) go even further by working with contemporary artists and students. Jones was able to investigate more robust sequences (*chaîne opératoire*) for carved stone ball creation. Things happen in the present, and this volume brings us closer to that viewpoint, in our narratives of a past.

The reformation of the image

When Martin Luther nailed his theses to the door, he set a stage for the West's obsession with representation and meaning; this is often termed the Reformation. The reformation of the image was a contradiction, in that the image did not progress, rather it almost entered into oblivion. From 1500 to 1580, in northern Europe, the history of the image becomes a story of image extermination (Koerner 2008, 27). Such Lutheran annihilations have had a long legacy, for it is from the Reformation that images achieve clarity through symbolism, representation and interpretation. We carry those burdens of how to approach images today. For instance, for over 150 years, representational accounts of how to decode and decipher images carved into rock have dominated (see discussions in Cochrane 2013). In such models, materials are passive and inert, patiently waiting for meanings to be overlain onto them by thoughtful people (see also discussions by Skoglund this volume). The encoding and then decoding of things are deemed universal human activities - being as popular in the past as it is in archaeology today (Cochrane 2012). In such proposals, materials are separate from humans, and influence little in the process of representation (Russell and Cochrane 2014). Materials appear transparent here; they simply serve as the substrate upon which representations are overlaid (Cochrane and Jones 2012). The world becomes reduced merely to human cosmologies and representations of such beliefs (Barrett and Ko 2009).

All models are wrong, some models are useful (Box 1979, 202); domineering representational approaches increasingly seem less useful. Such approaches are after all symptomatic of modernity's crisis over purification and Great Divides (Latour 1993). The contributions to this volume offer stimulating alternatives to the traditional Symbolic / Semiotic perspectives. For instance, Andy Valdez-Tullett (Chapter 8) introduces the 1940s work of José Alcino Tomé in the Côa Valley, Portugal. The valley and the schist stone collaborated with José to produce carved images - remove one of these elements and the images stop being created. It is via collaborations in the world that things happen; they take work, but with persistence they will often occur. Gheorghiu (Chapter 7) builds on such positions, and re-imagines the archaeological imagination, to usurp the tyrannies of realism (see also Fernandes this volume). Here, neither alterity nor modernity are dependent on linearity, but rather immersion. Such entanglements with focus on materials, often appearing at first glance unconnected, reminds me of the work of Joseph Beuys (see discussions in Bonami 2005). Here, we have active re-compositions between doing, making, and being.

We are all now

Archaeology has engaged with creative practice since its beginnings (Russell and Cochrane 2014; see Chittock this volume for detailed discussion). Over the years, some have demonstrated their influences from the arts and visual culture, more so than others (e.g. Bailey 2013; Cochrane and Russell 2007; Evans 2004; Renfrew 1969; Russell 2013; Shanks 1991; Valdez-Tullett and Chittock 2015; Watson 2012). In this volume, Was and Watson (Chapter 10) created mixed media installations at the Kilmartin Museum, located in one of the richest rock art environments in north-west Europe. Key to this project, was the inclusion of works by local residents; here, people were invited to express themselves via carving materials / mark making. The circumstances of motif generation, differed from the rock art from deep history, in that Was and Watson could ask the makers what they were doing, feeling and thinking. The project successfully highlighted rhythms of repetition in image shape and the importance of the process of production. Creative practices are not an exception to other practices (Rancière 2004: 45); they can, however, re-configure the distribution of such activities.

In many ways, the themes from the Kilmartin Glen experiential practices resonated with Govier's account of Çatalhöyük, Turkey (Chapter 9). For instance, in Kilmartin, one of the participants carved an image that was deliberately hidden from view. The significance of the image lay in that she knew it was there; among other things, it helped remind her of herself (Was and Watson, this volume). At Çatalhöyük, Govier describes how some images (such as in Building 80), were placed so that they would not have been easy to see. It might be possible that making it, and knowing it was there, was more important than reading meanings from it at a later date. I enjoyed Govier's descriptions of images that were covered by plasterings. Two years ago, whilst at Çatalhöyük, I was lucky enough to be able to remove a red painted hand, layers of plaster, and find other red painted images further below. In this instance, the process of re-discovery was as exciting as re-creation. As Fernandes (Chapter 2) rightly notes, making and discovery, can be entertaining. The relationships of making with seeing are not simple ones.

Images are of course more than just expressions of ourselves; as Mitchell (2005) noticed, they often want things themselves. Following our Joseph Beuys quote at the start, we need to move beyond the simple distribution between things that act and things that are acted upon (Rancière 2004). In a sense, Beuys (inadvertently?) developed ideas from the aesthetician Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), who advocated that we break down perceived oppositions between those who think and those doomed to passivity; the greatest and maybe oldest paragon.

Élan vital

The desire for something more than what delights the eyes has been a constant feature for the study of the past (Renfrew 2008, 335). Combined, the chapters in this volume offer refreshing re-examinations of the ways in which we can think through the processes of creative practice. We have been challenged to step through the disciplinary window, to close it firmly behind us, and never return. Following the philosophies of the film *The Matrix* (1999) and Baudrillard (1994), it might be better to consider that there is in fact no window. There are no looking glasses, boundaries or horizons - all is open to inhabit. Has the paragone really gone? Time will tell, but for the moment this volume highlights that collaborative practices with mixtures of things, are the way forward.

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