AERIAL LANDSCAPES

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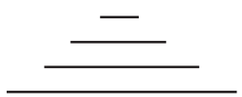
Dedication

The authors wish to dedicate this publication to Barbara Steveni's memory and to contribute to celebrating her legacy as a pioneer of conceptual art and her groundbreaking negotiating of the Artist Placement Group's many artist placements, including John Latham's placement with the Scottish Office discussed in this publication. We also wish to pay tribute to her generosity, friendship and spirit of collaboration.



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Introduction

Gareth Bell-Jones

This book complements an event ‘Aerial Landscapes’ that took place at Flat Time House on Saturday 19 October 2019, between 12 noon and 4pm. The event followed an earlier symposium at University College London, both the result of long gestation, the product of an in-depth research project by Onya McCausland. The event was also shaped by dialogues between two artists and two art historians, all working in the archive of Flat Time House. The four presentations that became the essays for this publication took place in the kitchen of Flat Time House; the room John Latham called the Body-Event, the bowels of the ‘living sculpture’. The essays presented here derive from those talks and expand on the discussions and conversations of that day.

At the heart of this publication is the concept that ‘context is half the work’; a philosophy that was the central axiom to Barbara Steveni and John Latham’s co-founding of the Artist Placement Group (APG) in 1966. Whether we refer to artwork, ideas, great people, movements or societies, nothing stands isolated from the environment that shaped and formed them. A broader perspective simply reveals the links and interrelationships that were always present and yet cannot be seen when one is too close. It was a central aim of APG to make this context visible. It would puncture the shell of its host and permeate its structure. The artist would create distance and reveal what we cannot see for ourselves.

Whilst on placement with the Scottish Development Agency,

Latham was invited to suggest solutions for the problem of derelict land outside Edinburgh. In his initial meeting, when asked 'from which perspective would he be looking at Scotland,' he apparently pointed to a map of the country and responded 'from this distance'. When told the timeframe of the project was to be five years, he countered that it 'needs to be at least twenty years'.[1] The aerial perspective allows contexts to be revealed, but so too the distance of time makes self-evident the interrelatedness of our endeavours. For perspective, so it is with space as it is with time.

Appropriately, the essays collated in this publication approach the subject of Aerial Landscapes from a range of positions. Katherine Jackson analyses how the political and theoretical concept of the 'Distant Observer' emerged from APG's methodology, framing the work within Latham's thinking. Onya McCausland uses her own immediate and first hand account of the industrial spoil heaps, known in Scotland as 'bings', to reveal an encounter which embodies the thinking of APG and incidental practice. Joy Sleeman suggests, through a study of gendered topography, that just as landscape itself changes over time, so too do our modes of understanding and considering the landscape. Nicky Bird takes us back into the archive. Her study inspects an aerial image that pre-dates the ones Latham originally used, photographs taken at the time of his working, contemporary imaging and mapping techniques, which reveals her own artistic process. Together the texts convey four distinct perspectives on a single subject that combine the investigative and first hand with the archival and historical.

When the symposium took place, I was sat at the rear of the room, my

viewing occasionally interrupted by the need to let in latecomers and quietly find them a seat. Simultaneously, the UK Parliament just sat on a Saturday for the first time in 37 years to try and get Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Brexit deal agreed – we expected a Yes or No on leaving the EU – requiring me to read occasional updates for the audience. The space was packed, with everyone crammed in and little space to move. There was an incongruity to that day, discussing open and wide landscapes within the darkened kitchen of John's inner city, Victorian terraced flat. The discussion was lively, with a knowledgeable and engaged audience.

Of particular significance that day, was the presence of Barbara Steveni. When John bought 210 Bellenden Road in 1985, it was shortly after his separation from Barbara, but she purchased a house just a couple streets over. They continued to work together closely until his death in 2006. From the opening of Flat Time House as a public art space in 2008, Barbara continued her visits, for regular chats and attending most talks and events. The importance of having Barbara at these events, and at 'Aerial Landscapes' in particular, cannot be overstated. Not only was Barbara present at the time of the Scottish Office Placement but she created it, she made it happen. It is as much her work as it is John's. As each speaker presented, here was an immediate crosscheck, a validation of the accuracy, of process and of thinking; a deep perspective formed from over five decades working with APG and its successor organisations. Barbara was on hand to clarify and add depth, aware, as ever, of her legacy and the importance of historical document.

Sadly, this was to be one of the final events Barbara attended at Flat Time House. She passed away just four months later, one year ago as I write. The intervening period has been strange; we have barely left our own homes as we deal with a global pandemic that hit us shortly after Barbara's death. The idea of gathering tightly in a small space seems alien and the experience of time has become warped, days with little routine, sliding by, subtly rolling into weeks and months. By the time this book is in print, this moment too will have passed into historical record, as with John's placement and the APG itself, but the travails of the time of my writing make even clearer the importance for a broad perspective. When reviewing the past, distance aids nuanced thinking and keen insight. From far above we can view our lives framed by environment, the complexity and entanglement suddenly clear. From meaninglessness we can see context and through this, meaning.

London, Thursday 25 February, 2021

1. John Latham, quoted by Barbara Steveni, 'Barbara Steveni in conversation with Gareth Bell-Jones', *Observer*, exhibition catalogue, June 2019, p.21.

The View from Above
Katherine Jackson

John Latham first encountered the bings through aerial photographs, during his artist placement with the Scottish Office's Development Agency (SDA) from 1975 to 1976.

Latham's placement with the SDA was one of many artist placements in industry and government negotiated by Barbara Steveni who conceptually created and co-founded the Artist Placement Group (APG) with Latham in 1966.[1] The role of the aerial perspective within the APG's practice, specifically during Latham's placement with the SDA, motivates this short text to examine his proposed role for the artist as a 'Distant Observer'.

The Distant Observer was a term that Latham adopted to describe the artist's capacity to view a specific context from above. I first encountered this term while working as an archivist for Flat Time House and my interest in the subject has been further enriched through my conversations with Barbara Steveni, Noa Latham, and fellow contributors Nicky Bird, Onya McCausland and Joy Sleeman. Keeping these conversations in mind, I will now consider this expanded role of the artist in relationship to the aerial perspective through two specific examples: Latham's declaration of the bings as works of art during his placement with the SDA (1975–76) and the APG's statement of condition report from their *inn7o Art and Economic* exhibition catalogue at the Hayward Gallery in 1972. Through my contextualisation of these works within the APG's and Latham's larger practice, I intend to pose

1.1
Aerial photo of Niddrie Bing with description,1976
Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation

questions in order to expand our association with the aerial perspective and artistic production to encompass not just the re-envisioning of the industrial landscape but economic policy.

When Latham began his placement with the SDA, he explored the different departments of the newly formed agency and became interested in their Derelict Land Unit. It was during his time with the Derelict Land Unit's Graphic Department that Latham first came across the aerial photographs of the bings in West Lothian county (Image 1.1). The bings are the accumulation of industrial debris from shale-oil extraction; an inefficient form of resource extraction that became largely obsolete by the mid 20th century in Scotland.[2] At the time of Latham's placement, the bings had been inactive for a number of years and their looming presence was unpopular in the surrounding communities. However, inspired by the aerial photographs, Latham found the forms of two specific groups of bings, Niddrie Castle (also referred to as Greendyke bing) and the Five Sisters bing compelling, and through subsequent site visits came to believe that these sites were of unique cultural importance.

In Latham's view, the bings made visible and material the many contexts and events involved in their making.[3] Their value in visually and metaphorically conveying these diverse histories compelled him to declare them works of art, and to write feasibility reports and letters that advocated for various approaches to protect them from removal when (the once thought of) industrial debris became profitable to fill roads. These included a proposal for the bings to be made into a tourist sculpture park featuring his own book sculptures, an oil industry

heritage site and a monument to industrial labour.[4] Latham's activism to preserve the bings became a central component to his work for the remainder of his career.

In order to better examine the relationship between the aerial perspective and Latham's proposals to the SDA, it is important to understand that they were rooted in an interest in time and medium that spanned Latham's entire practice. Beginning in the 1950s, Latham put forth a philosophy of art and time that hinged on the belief that works of art were composed of layers of events. This concept was later visually articulated by Latham's 1970s series *One Second Drawings* that capture the temporal dimension of the act of spraying paint on canvas. Art historian John Walker in *John Latham: The Incidental Person* (1994) helpfully summarizes this relationship between the temporal event and art making in Latham's work when he states, 'as opposed to the expansive large scale paintings of the abstract expressionists, for Latham, the temporal dimension of mark making and the accumulation of events would allow him to propose the potential for indeterminate amounts of depth.'[5] In other words, in Latham's view, the act of mark making should be recognized as one of many events that compose the experiencing of making and viewing a work of art.

Around the same time as the *One Second Drawings*, Latham began developing his philosophy of time in writing, incorporating into his practice an evolving glossary of descriptive terms such as Event Structure and Flat Time.[6] However, despite the many texts written by Latham outlining the Time-Based Spectrum or Flat Time, they are often confusing without visual aid. Latham's son, philosopher Noa Latham

elaborates on this contradiction when he states, 'within Latham's work there is often a contradictory almost begrudging relationship to language, for it is necessary to use language to convey time-based thinking. However, at the same time, Latham is critical of language as failing to have the capacity to articulate time-based ideas.'[7] Language, within Latham's and the APG's practice, is subsequently viewed as a problematic vehicle to communicate a time-based perspective.

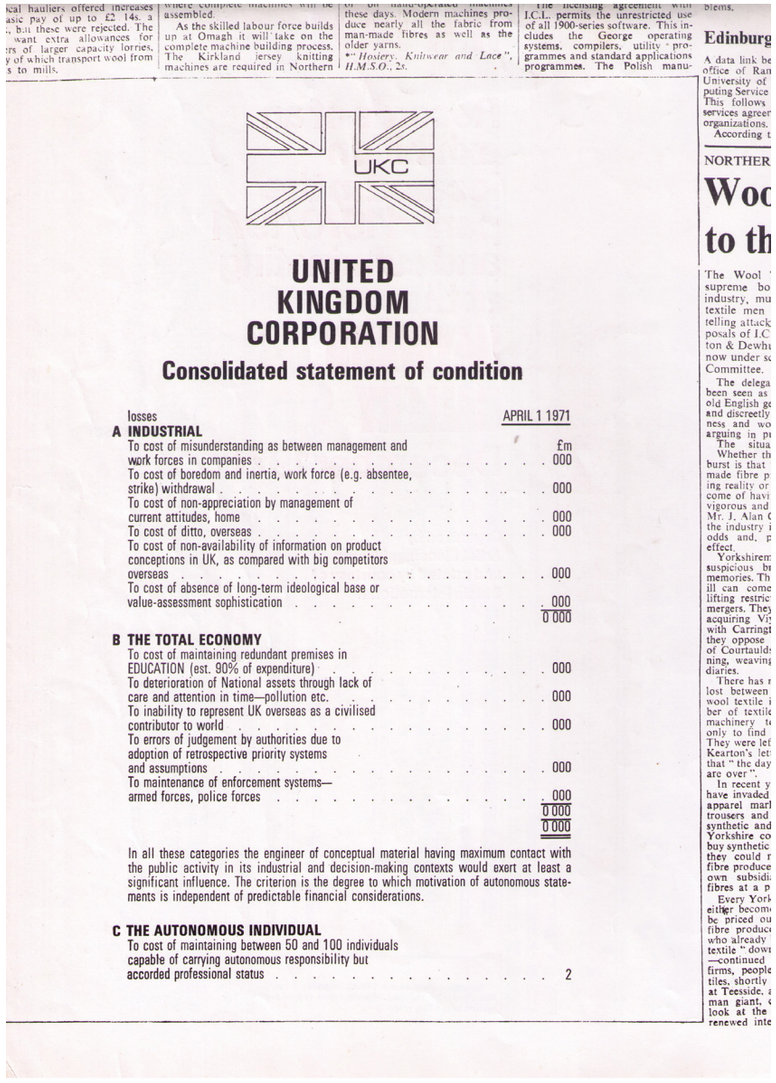
As a result, language is used, but often manipulated and combined with the visual form to expose alternative points of view: views that could challenge what Latham and the APG perceived as short-sighted policy. In 1970, art critic Rosetta Brooks similarly described Latham's practice when she states, 'By treating forms of painting (or language as he does in his later work) in such a way as to reveal their inert valuelessness. Latham's works are tools but not ordinary tools because they operate through their own self-destruction.'[8] Brooks's reference to destruction can be viewed as an homage to the important influence of Gustav Metzger's destructive art on Latham's earlier works, such as *Skoob Towers* (1964–8).[9] Through the lens of Brooks' insight, we can begin to discern the relationship between destruction and Latham's proposals to the SDA as a combination of Latham's interest in material destruction with the conceptual deconstruction of the language used in government and industrial policy.

For example, we can see this approach in Latham's other text works from the period, such as the didactic paragraphs of *Offer for Sale* (1971) and the later booklet of *Report of a Surveyor* (1984). Within these

works, Latham simultaneously objectifies and reconstructs language in his advancement for time-based thinking. Latham specifically alludes to one particular element of time-based thinking – the need to redirect people's view of the world through redistributing, what he describes as their 'units of attention'. The redistribution of units of attention, according to Latham, allows for the ability to critically view everyday policy and ultimately advance the case for prioritizing long-term solutions. By being able to evaluate a context from a critical distance, Latham argued, the very definition of value in our society could be transformed. Namely, short-term solutions for financial gain could be replaced by long-term strategies that could better benefit all of society.

Key to achieving long-term solutions was the role of the artist as a 'Distant Observer.' The Distant Observer is a phrase coined by Latham to better articulate the role of the individual in carrying out more pragmatic aspects of Latham's time-based perspective. The Distant Observer is defined as a person who has the ability 'from a distance' to critically question and reveal long-term solutions to organizations that individuals, immersed in their everyday routine, might not always recognize. To critically question was also inextricably linked to being non-sectional, an understanding that to observe from a distance was not to align with sectional interests.[10]

The Distant Observer's ability to view from above therefore not only meant a literal aerial perspective but a metaphorical critical distance; an approach that Latham adopted within the APG in order to utilize their art making to reveal policy changes that favoured long-term



UKC

UNITED KINGDOM CORPORATION

Consolidated statement of condition

losses	APRIL 1 1971
A INDUSTRIAL	£m
To cost of misunderstanding as between management and work forces in companies	000
To cost of boredom and inertia, work force (e.g. absentee, strike) withdrawal	000
To cost of non-appreciation by management of current attitudes, home	000
To cost of ditto, overseas	000
To cost of non-availability of information on product conceptions in UK, as compared with big competitors overseas	000
To cost of absence of long-term ideological base or value-assessment sophistication	000
	0 000
B THE TOTAL ECONOMY	
To cost of maintaining redundant premises in EDUCATION (est. 90% of expenditure)	000
To deterioration of National assets through lack of care and attention in time—pollution etc.	000
To inability to represent UK overseas as a civilised contributor to world	000
To errors of judgement by authorities due to adoption of retrospective priority systems and assumptions	000
To maintenance of enforcement systems—armed forces, police forces	000
	0 000
	0 000

In all these categories the engineer of conceptual material having maximum contact with the public activity in its industrial and decision-making contexts would exert at least a significant influence. The criterion is the degree to which motivation of autonomous statements is independent of predictable financial considerations.

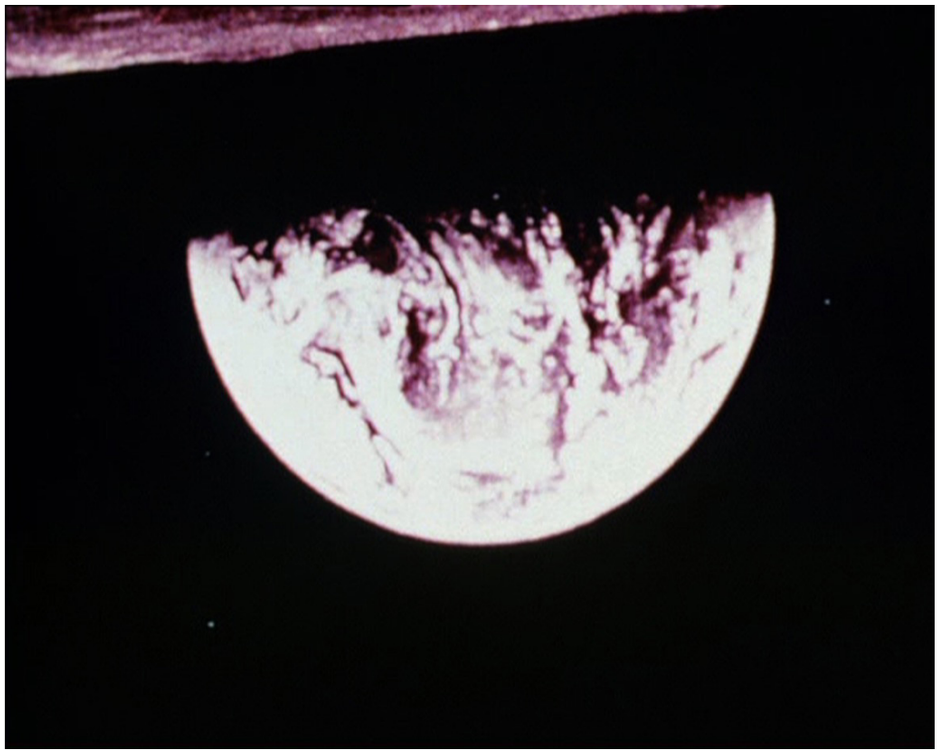
C THE AUTONOMOUS INDIVIDUAL	
To cost of maintaining between 50 and 100 individuals capable of carrying autonomous responsibility but accorded professional status	2

1.2
Artist Placement Group, 'United Kingdom Corporation Consolidated Statement of Condition' in *inn7o: Art and Economics* (Catalogue), London: Hayward Gallery Press, 1971, 23. Flat Time House, London UK © Barbara Steveni Archive

solutions. For example, the page titled, 'United Kingdom Corporation Consolidated Statement of Condition', April 1, 1971', in the APG's inn7o Art and Economics exhibition catalogue for the Hayward Gallery in 1972, is a fictional consolidation of financial statements of the UK government's industrial policy (Image 1.2). Printed on the page are the title, date and two columns. In the left column is a list of what the APG argue is the total economic losses currently unacknowledged by the UK government's policy. These losses include the cost of 'misunderstanding between management and work forces in companies,' the cost of 'boredom and inertia, work force (e.g. absentee strike) withdrawal' and the cost of 'errors of judgment by authorities due to adoption of retrospective priority systems.' The immaterial factors the APG points to are largely long-term social problems that are usually not accounted for in a monetary industrial budget. The adjacent column lists the amount of pounds lost by each of these factors. The monetary amount for each identified 'loss' is consistently zero £.[11]

The APG's mock 'Statement of Condition' suggests that while the listed economic losses are typically not assigned a monetary value or even considered important by traditional economic policy, they nonetheless negatively impact and translate to long-term losses for the UK's economy.

In catalogue pages like 'Statement of Condition', the APG manipulate language and administrative format through a perspective from a 'distance'; adopting an outsider perspective that ultimately dismantles what is considered of value in current policy.



1.3
John Latham, *Erth*, film still, 1971. © John Latham Foundation

With the APG's and Latham's individual practice approach to language and policy in mind, we can now reconsider the relationship between the artist occupying a conceptual critical distance towards policy with an interest in the formal characteristics of the aerial perspective that came to define Latham's placement with the SDA.
This combination resonates with Latham's earlier films such as *Erth*

(1971) (Image 1.3) which collaged text with aerial imagery.[12] *Erth*, funded by the National Coal Board, features a composite of aerial images of the moon and earth that are interrupted by pages from the Encyclopedia Britannica and long periods of black screen. The aerial view and manipulation of planetary scale suggests long spans of time, while the gaps of 'nothing' play with the viewer's expectation of temporal progression. Through this juxtaposition of aerial imagery with text, Latham renders the familiar image of the earth and the popular reference material unfamiliar. And instead, the perspective of the Distant Observer presents an opportunity to deconstruct traditional modes of disseminating knowledge and assumptions of planetary scale.

However, it was only when Latham encountered the aerial photographs of the bings, through the SDA's Derelict Land Unit's Graphic Department, that he felt he had found an ideal artistic medium that combined the aerial perspective, his philosophy of time and the political importance of a critically distanced point of view.[13] As mentioned above, two bings in particular held formal resonance for Latham: the Five Sisters near the town of Linlithgow and Niddrie Castle bing (or Greendyke bing) near the town of Winchburgh (Image 1.4).[14]

1.4
Photograph by John Latham of Five Sisters bing, 1976
Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation

While the Five Sisters bing was in the process of being protected as an industrial heritage site (1979/1980), Niddrie Castle bing was still at risk of removal. The shale debris that made up its structure had become valuable as road fill.[15] The threat of Niddrie Castle bing being mined for profit compelled Latham to develop a more in-depth and poetic argument for why these bings should be preserved, as not just a heritage site, but recognized as a work of art.[16] In proposals and notes from his placement, Latham described the importance of Niddrie Castle bing's aerial form by referring to it as a fragmented body that included a head, torso and hand. Latham went so far as to re-name the bing Niddrie Woman, mythologizing and gendering the body onto the landscape.[17] This problematic association with gender is discussed by Joy in her essay.

I would now like to consider in-depth Latham's justification for Niddrie Woman to be considered a work of art. In letters and proposals, Latham describes the bings as a process sculpture, a found sculpture, and compares them to a time capsule. However, throughout this varying terminology, Latham consistently describes Niddrie Woman as a material accumulation of significant events that represented different historical contexts: capitalist resource extraction, industrial labour, the natural Scottish landscape and economic policy. The capacity to embody all these different events is what made Niddrie Woman a work of art. In an undated document from the 1970s titled 'Instant History and the Incidental Person', Latham similarly defines the work of art when he states, 'art is like any other manifestation, what went on to get it there, and what it is doing. We see in the object now a kind of instant history.'[18]

Significantly, during the same time period as Latham's placement, the writings and projects of other artists both locally and globally were similarly captivated by the aerial perspective. Robert Morris, who will be discussed further by Onya, famously described the lines of Nazca as a 'labyrinth', i.e. its complex natural, social and economic context could only begin to be understood through the holistic perspective of the aerial. In Morris' words, 'A labyrinth is comprehensible only when seen from above, in plain view, when it has been reduced to flatness and we are outside its spatial coil.'[19] In Scotland, Glen Onwin's 1975 exhibition *Saltmarsh* at the Scottish Arts Council Gallery in Edinburgh showed aerial representations of Scotland's natural resources specifically the large salt marsh near Dunbar that inspired his work *Recovery of Dissolved Substances* (1973). Also in the UK, the German photographers Bernd and Hilla Becher had been awarded a scholarship by the British Council in 1966 to photograph industrial relics, what they referred to as 'autonomous sculptures' such as water towers, gas tanks and factories throughout England and Wales.[20]

However, in terms of the relationship between policy and the aerial perspective, the most direct comparison is Robert Smithson's 1973 *Bingham Copper Mining Pit—Utah / Reclamation Project* that was proposed to Kennecott Copper Corporation only two years before Latham's placement with the SDA. Smithson's reclamation project proposed to preserve the inactive Bingham Mine as a sculpture park or an earthwork.[21] Within their proposals both Smithson and Latham prioritize the role of the aerial perspective in re-envisioning the long term potential of these unpopular industrial sites to become centers of

cultural engagement. Both also utilize the two dimensional surface of the aerial photograph to facilitate a holistic, almost phenomenological, approach to landscape that hinged greatly on the consideration of longer time spans and the assumption that memory was entangled with the physicality of site.

However, an important distinction between Latham and Smithson needs to be made. While Smithson's Bingham mine is an industrial ruin made from the penetrative descent of capitalist extraction, Niddrie Woman was made from the accumulation of industrial waste. The difference between extraction and accumulation is crucial. For while the Bingham mine for Smithson was an entropic descent into geological time, for Latham, following the trajectory of his earlier time-based spectrum, the piles of shale debris were considered additive. As a result, Latham referred to the bings not as entropic but as referred to above, 'a manifestation of instant history' or a composition of disparate events. Also indicated earlier, Latham further equated the composing or building of these events to the process of making a sculpture. Niddrie Woman, according to Latham, was an 'Objet Trouve'. Its formal and temporal importance warranted its status as a work of art.[22] From this perspective, the bings can be considered a process sculpture that acquired time almost as material depth by combining industrial residue with geologic and cultural time. Therefore, by re-framing our perspective through the eyes of Latham's Distant Observer, from the spatial to the temporal, there is subsequently a breakdown of mediation. Materials, people and the landscape are interwoven in the language of events.[23]

At the time of Latham's placement with the SDA, offshore drilling in Scotland had just begun, signaling a rebirth of the Scottish oil industry (Argyll and Duncan oil fields, 1975). The renewed interest in Scottish oil had come at an opportune time. The Opec Oil crisis (1973) made the discovery economically and politically urgent. However, the battle over who would profit over Scotland's oil, Scotland or the U.K. government, would be compounded with a host of changes to the geography of Scotland's labour force. For example, the gentrification of Glasgow and redistribution of the working class into newly created towns actively re-defined the demographics of the region and its politics.[24] Latham arguably personified this state in his description of Niddrie Woman, when he described the bing as a 'dismembered body representing the current fractured state of humanity.'[25]

However, Latham did not simply project Scotland's politics onto the bings. Rather through combining the aerial perspective with a long term vision for progressive policy, he saw the potential to re-define what constitutes a sculpture. Niddrie Woman was not a monument in the shape of conceptual art, but a sculpture in the shape of shared subjectivity. The author George Kubler in *The Shape of Time* (1962) similarly described the political potential of works of art, as largely based on a matter of perspective. A sentiment re-iterated by Latham, when he states, artistic medium was only dependent on 'difference': a difference of perspective, a perspective from a distance, a perspective from above.[26]

1. See Antony Hudek, ‘Artist Placement Group Chronology’, in the exhibition, *The Individual and the Organisation: Artist Placement Group 1966–79,* London: Raven Row Gallery, 2012, http://www.ravenrow.org/texts/43/ [accessed 11 June 2021].

2. H.M. Cadell, Grant Wilson, J.S. Caldwell, and D.R. Stuart, *The Oil Shales of the Lothians*, Glasgow: James Hedderwick & Sons, 1906.

3. John Latham, ‘Niddrie Woman as Process Sculpture’, 1975/76. Research as part of *Scottish Office Placement 1975/76*, Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation.

4. John Latham, ‘Bings as Sculpture/Monuments’, 1975, Latham, ‘Oil Industry’s Greatest Monuments’, 1975/6, and Latham, ‘Particular Importance of the NIDDRIE WOMAN as a monument’, 1980. Research as part of *Scottish Office Placement 1975/76*, Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation.

5. John Walker, *John Latham, The Incidental Person: His Art and Ideas*, London: Middlesex University Press,1995, p.53.

6. It is important to note that what is often referred to in Latham’s practice as Flat Time Theory was not actually regarded as a theory, but rather a set of often contradictory assertions that he considered part of his art practice. Noa Latham, has alternatively described his father’s artworks and writing as coming together to create a picture, what has been referred to by art historian and curator Jurgen Harten as Latham’s ‘World View’. The phrase ‘World View’ was used as the title of the Serpentine’s exhibition, *John Latham: A World View* (March–May 2017), and the exhibition catalogue, published by Serpentine Galleries, London, and Koenig Books, London, in 2017. In a personal interview with Barbara Steveni by the author in March 2017, Steveni credits Harten with the phrase.

7. Noa Latham, ‘Reflections’, in *Noit 4*, London: Flat Time House Publishing, 2018, p.67.

8. Rosetta Brooks, *Structure and Function in Time: John Latham, John Stezaker, John Blake, Peter Dial, John Hilliard*, Sunderland: Sunderland Arts Centre, 1975, p.11.

9. See Craig Richardson, ‘Waste to Monument: John Latham’s Niddrie Woman’, *Tate Papers* 17, Spring 2012, https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/17/waste-to-monument-john-lathams-niddrie-woman [accessed 11 June 2021].

10. John Latham, ‘Instant History and the Incidental Person’, from *Programme for Four Lectures,* undated 1970s, Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation. This is also discussed by Noa Latham in ‘Reflections’, p.72.

11. Artist Placement Group, ‘United Kingdom Corporation Consolidated Statement of Condition’, I*nn7o: Art and Economics*, London: Hayward Gallery Press, 1971, p.23.

12. See Joy Sleeman (2009), ‘Land Art and the Moon Landing’, *Journal of Visual Culture*, 8(3), pp.299–328, DOI:10.1177/1470412909347669.

13. John Latham and Artist Placement Group, ‘Summary of Feasibility Study for Scottish Office’, 1975/6. Research as part of *Scottish Office Placement 1975/76*, Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation.

14. Also see *Five Sisters Bing, 1976, and Derelict Land Art: Five Sisters, 1976*. These two works were purchased by the Tate in 1976. Descriptions of these works can be found in the John Latham Archive at Flat Time House. Alternatively, for full descriptions of these and other Latham works please see John Walker, 1995.

15. Latham, ‘Particular Importance of the NIDDRIE WOMAN as a monument’, 1980. Research as part of *Scottish Office Placement 1975/76*, Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation.

16. Latham and Artist Placement Group, ‘Summary of Feasibility Study for Scottish Office,’ 1975/6. Research as part of *Scottish Office Placement 1975/76*, Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation.

17. Latham, ‘Niddrie Woman as Process Sculpture’, 1975/6. Research as part of *Scottish Office Placement 1975/76*, Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation.

18. Latham, ‘Instant History and the Incidental Person’, from Programme for Four Lectures, undated 1970s.

19. Robert Morris, ‘Aligned with Nazca’, in *Artforum* (October 1975), p.31.

20. Blake Stimson, ‘The Photographic Comportment of Bernd and Hilla Becher’, *Tate Papers* 1, Spring 2004, https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/01/photographic-comportment-of-bernd-and-hilla-becher, [accessed 11 June 2021].

21. Robert Graziani, *Robert Smithson and the American Landscape*, Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p.156. And see Robert Smithson, *Bingham Copper Mine Plan*, 1973 © Holt/Smithson Foundation.

22. Latham, ‘Bings as Sculpture/Monuments’, 1975.

23. Latham, ‘Niddrie Woman as Process Sculpture’, 1975/76.

24. Ian Fulton (1974), ‘Economic Future of Britain lies off the Ocean Beds of the World’, *Political Quarterly*, 45/3 July-September. It is important to mention that the same year, due to tariffs for British agricultural farming, the UK government had called the EEC referendum of 1975. The vote resulted in an overwhelming 67% remain, signaling an economic unity with Europe but not necessarily within the UK itself.

25. Latham, ‘Niddrie Woman as Process Sculpture’, 1975/76.

26. Latham, ‘Structure in Events: In the Context of the ART Tradition’, April 1972, Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation.

Cuthill and the Five Sisters Bing
Onya McCausland

I am sent the coordinates and maps in an email from the Coal Authority office for Cuthill Mine Water Treatment Scheme 55°50 59.82 N 3°36 34.65 W. I print these out and type the address into Google Maps. I then scan the satellite image on my screen searching for clues interrupting the pale and dark green patchwork surface.

The networks of geometric and curving lines, small blocks and clusters of rectangles, crosses and lozenges are interrupted by a tiny bright yellow coloured rectilinear strip standing out against the green. I zoom in and scan the flattened surroundings, a dark green block (of woods…). Lighter green rectangles (…fields), some odd 'X' shaped structures and further away the nearest town.

Later, I begin the drive across this landscape. Slowly following the A68 north through the Scottish borders via Jedburgh and Peebles curving upwards through the Lammermuir Hills. The gently contouring hills gradually change into moorland and grasslands which are interspersed with heather and scattered with sheep. I drive through shady passages of trees and under dense dark green conifers.

My course is tracked in the thin blue line on the screen beside me.

The appearance of this landscape is deceptive – the soft green covering is concealing the barely buried mechanisms of industries. There is scant evidence of the recent past on this first viewing through the landscape.

But then as I approach the brow of a slight ridge a huge conical structure rises up ahead of me in weird contrast to the relatively low lying, gently curving surroundings.

It is impossible to judge scale and distance – if it is really close to me then it is smaller than it appears, even though it looks huge, but if it is far away then it is massive… I can't work it out – space and time have been distorted by this strange imposing structure.

The road dips and it disappears for a while. I pull over to consult Google Earth. It takes some time before I orientate myself, scanning the screen/earth's surface and realise I am closer to my destination than I thought and, even more unexpectedly, the looming conical structure was the steep south west face of the Five Sisters bing.

The Mine Water Treatment Schemes that I have actually come to find are completely hidden from view – barricaded behind fences or down rough tracks on relatively inaccessible stretches of land. But from above, from this view through the lens of Google Earth they are highly visible; clearly discernible, sometimes from many kilometres up, distinct fields of colour.

The position of hovering, vertically scanning the land while simultaneously sitting in the van following the signs and directions of the horizontally contouring landscape, is a mental and visual flipping between of close-up and distance – surface and space. I stop, zoom in, park. Walk on the warm tarmac and feel the sudden stillness.

2.1

Grid Reference 55°50 59.82 N 3°36 34.65W Cuthill Mine Water Treatment Scheme far bottom left and Five Sisters bing top right.

Screen Shot taken from Google Maps, 2017. Map data: Google, Maxar Technologies

2.2
Five Sisters bing, West Lothian, Scotland
iPhone photograph, Onya McCausland, May 2016

This oscillation between a ground view and aerial position causes a rapid, almost unconscious shift in perception between the flat screen and the spacial landscape in front of me. The gaps are constantly being filled in by intuitive and learned understanding of how to visually read and physically move through space.

These kinds of assumptions about experience of space were examined in Robert Morris's 1975 account of visiting the Nazca lines in the Pampa

Colorado, Peru.[1] Morris uses his experiences of reading the lines from the ground as an example of how conventional contemporary separations between vertical and horizontal space – which he describes as delineating differences between the *notation* of meaning in the symbolic sense (like a flat drawing) and its concrete existent in the world (like a sculpture) – perhaps don't or didn't exist in the minds of those that made the Nazca lines. To them, it is possible that the line and the mountain they point towards, or the flat and the spacial appear simultaneously, and are the same thing.

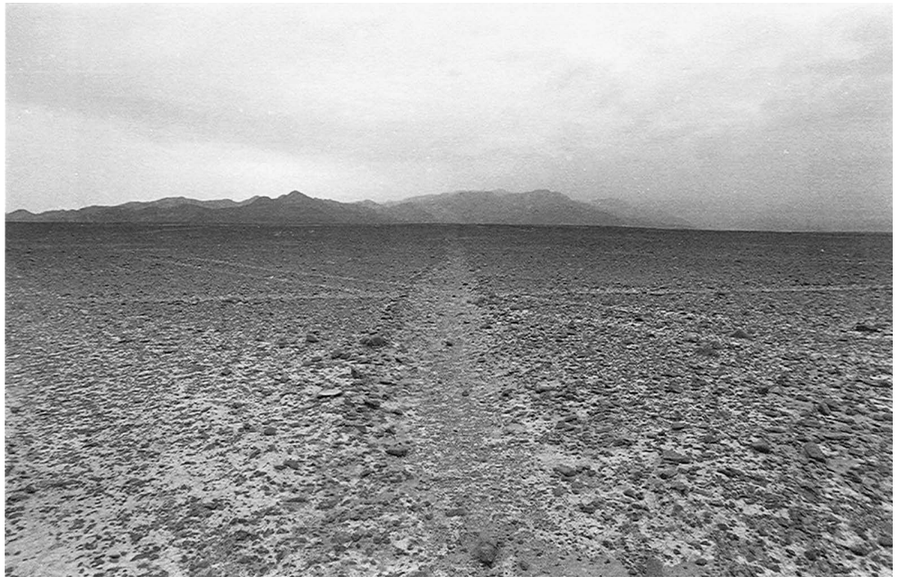
He goes on to describe how, as the eye meets the horizon line without interruption, the view is divided equally in half between

the top half *sky*

and

the bottom half *ground.*

In his example, the ground/horizontal space is tipped up and becomes simultaneously vertical. His realignment describes a phenomenological re-reading of conventional spacial relationships, one that acknowledges the perceptual embodiment *within* and *as-part* of the perceived whole. Where line and mountain – flat and spacial – *notational abstraction* and *concrete existent* are simultaneously present. In this sense the *surface* (and its markings in the case of the Nazca lines) become not a 'notational' device aimed at *reducing* complex spacial reality, but for *joining up* the complexity of space with the phenomenological



2.3
Robert Morris, Looking down on a Nazca Line Drawing
Published in 'Aligned with Nazca', *Artforum* (October 1975), p.28

experience of living – between earth and body, water and life, line and mountain. The lines both point towards and embody life; the source of water found in the mountain – the lines are both signifier and signified. Morris reached these conclusions, he suggests, because he had refused to take a plane up to see the lines from above – a view they have become familiarised by – instead he chose to view the lines from the position in which they were made, from the ground.

The disorientation I experienced in the landscape of West Lothian,

oscillating between the ground and the satellite view, near and far, in which the confused sense of scale and space demanded a re-view, things were not as I thought. I vaguely knew about the bings and I had planned to try and find them in the following days. But poking up between the tips of the trees, and a couple of fields, from Cuthill Mine Water Treatment Scheme, were those five distinct nipples, much closer than I had expected.

Material exchange and exploitation is evident all around here. Land is re-appropriated in a cycle of use, waste, reuse, redundancy, change; shale heaps become parklands and viewing points across a landscape of lakes that were once quarries, captured wind that was once forest, divisions that were once railways and depressions that were once hills, in a place where shepherds' huts become holiday cottages, and old 'waste' heaps become artworks.

As Katherine discussed in the previous chapter, John Latham – when invited to come up with proposals to the problem of waste shale heaps as part of his placement with the Scottish Development Office – takes on the role of a 'Distant Observer'. We understand that he pointed to a map of Scotland and suggested that it was from this distant perspective which he intended to look at the country and the waste heaps.

By seeing the land from above in this way Latham wanted to take in a wider view: a temporal (and visual) distancing beyond any one individual's field of vision; a collective view that acknowledged the many hands that formed and shaped the bings.

2.4
Five Sisters bing from Cuthill, West Lothian, Scotland
Phone photograph, Onya McCausland, May 2016

The Five Sisters bing may not have survived removal without his gesture to 'do nothing', to *leave them as they were* [my emphasis].[2] Latham's subsequent designation of the bings as 'monuments' was to align their cultural value and significance to that of the pyramids, as referred to in Joy's and Nicky's texts.[3]

Walking slowly round the base of the Five Sisters looking up, the 'face' of each of the five slopes can be seen together running at exactly the same angle. Known as the 'angle of repose', this is the optimum slope a material will form as it falls, given the shape of its individual particle size. Roundish granular materials like sand will slump at a faster rate

and form a lower angle than angular shaped aggregates which can stack up more steeply. This waste shale is formed of small flat discs of fired brittle rock that sometimes seem almost melted together. They form *exactly* the right shape to fall at a very steep angle.

I walk around the 'back', ascending the more gentle slope of the bings – the route the manually-pushed tipper trucks took to dump the waste shale – and follow the ridge to the top of the 'face'. The view is spectacular. I count the fields and recognise the block of dark conifers and a bend in the river that marks the site of Cuthill, and behind this is the rectangular strip of bright yellow ocherous mine water lying in the ground like a monochrome painting.

2.5
Onya McCausland walking around the base of Five Sisters bing,
Photograph, Brendan McConville, 2016

Following this same gravitational drift of material the mine water lake also performs a gradual continuous accumulation. The human hands have long since departed (these coal mines closed in the 1960s) but a mechanised process now controls the water levels in the abandoned mines to contain the pollution flowing through them. Mine water loaded with iron minerals is pumped up to the surface and as it combines with oxygen in the atmosphere the minerals start to oxidise changing from soluble invisible, to physical visible particles with weight, volume

2.6
Burnt Shale Waste, West Lothian, Scotland
Photograph Onya McCausland, May 2016

and colour, fallible to the effects of gravity. The transition separates heavy iron from not so heavy water in these huge settling ponds (that we can only see from above). This separation of water and iron can be measured using something called ‘Stokes Law’ – this is the equation for measuring a particle’s size and weight by the distance it falls in water over a given time span.

density p	density f	r	viscosity f					density	
3800000	1000000	0.00000033	9.00E-04					goethite	ferrihydrit
	millimeter	0.00033						3800000	
	microns	0.33		V	7.39E-04				
tank length		0.1							
time	s	1.35E+02							
	86400								

The sedimenting pool of iron is the only leftover visible sign marking the vast subterranean architecture beneath the ground.

Cuthill colliery covered an area of 80,000 sq ft. 2000ft north of Addiewell village and 10,000ft back towards the south with seams between 1500ft and 1800ft deep.[4] The bings have been forming since the 1850s, growing and changing – transforming from waste heaps into monuments. The water treatment from the hidden coal mines (coal that was once used to fuel the oil shale furnaces) have only been operating since 2003, around the time Google Earth was launched.

The pumps that once kept the coal mines from flooding so they could be worked are reactivated now to pump out and treat this polluting mine water preventing it from leaching into ground water and drinking

2.7
Settling Lagoon, Cuthill Mine Water Treatment Scheme, West Lothian Scotland
Photograph Onya McCausland 2016

water supplies. The water will flow continuously through the mines, water levels will rise and fall with weather conditions and climate variations, but the water will keep flushing through the miles and miles of hand cut tunnels collecting mineral residue along the way in an environmental remediation programme without end.

In 2014, 4000 tones of iron ochre waste sludge was being dredged from 75 schemes around the UK and sent to landfill sites every year because an economically viable use could not be found and landfill at the time was the cheapest option.[5]

2.8
Cuthill Colliery Mine Abandonment Plan, Cat no. S411 Sheet info 1 of 2 15 08 16
Scale I to 5000 ©The Coal Authority All rights reserved

The simple, yet complex industrialised physics separating iron from water is part of the changing landscape of waste heaps and other remnants of industry. This bright yellow strip in the ground visible from Google Earth; Cuthill Mine Water Treatment Scheme, with a shift of perspective, is a performance of colour. The necessary treatment of mine water pollution has inadvertently caused a (sustainable) source of ochre pigment… an incidental pigment factory.

2.9
Settling Lagoon, Cuthill Mine Water Treatment Scheme, West Lothian, Scotland
Photograph Onya McCausland June 2015

The lozenged-shaped lagoons, designed by engineers, driven by the pragmatics of environmental land management signify the processes of historic extraction. Drawn up from the darkness below, the ochre lakes simultaneously exist *and* signify, or, to go back to Morris, are a 'notational' device aimed at *joining up* complex spacial reality with the phenomenological experience of living – between surface presence and the temporal span of history. From this perspective the mine water treatment sites are places where transitional material processes register the effects of past human interactions with landscape.

Ochre is the oldest of cultural materials, its use and value stretches to the beginning of human history. Ochre is found sprinkled on cave floors, caked onto the buried bones of ancient humans. It has been mixed with binder and turned into paint on cave walls 30,000 years ago, and it has been found coating the built walls of the earliest human settlements at Djade al-Mughara, Aleppo, Syria 11,000 years ago. It re-forms here as an historically unique contemporary cultural signifier.

The material processes these sites perform – as seen from above – and the unique historical and environmental conditions shaping their formation enact alternative perspectives of landscape and of perception of waste in general. The satellite images of the earth that have helped construct/direct my journeys have become integrated into a new visual and spacial experience of landscape. Paradoxically, the ultimate commodifier of the Earth, Google Earth, was the only means to *publicly* 'access' these otherwise inaccessible and barricaded sites.

2.10
Grid Reference 55° 51 29.94 N 3° 35 10.56 W 2046m Cuthill Mine Water Treatment Scheme. Screen shot taken from Google Earth, 2017. Map data: Google, Maxar Technologies

The discovery of these materials in this way, and the experience of using them to paint with has revealed colours that are distinct – each ochre from each landscape is formed of specific environmental, geologic, geographic idiosyncrasies found only there. This change in their status from waste material as their *usefulness* is revealed also exposes the significant cultural, social and economic cycles through which they evolve and form. As pigment for paint this presents an unusual potency… a colour that expresses landscape and articulates its histories.

The sudden and unexpected encounter with the bings from the ground, and then later, after reading John Latham, brought into view a temporal expansion of this landscape, one that brought to life the social dimension of hands cutting and shaping the ground.

The all consumptive hyper-capitalism knows no bounds and risks dumbly re-commodifying the landscape through this colour *without* acknowledging the many hands that have been a part of its formation. They give it potency as a signifier that points towards human/geological extractive practices, which occurred in a particular place in the world at a particular time in history. Only by reorienting the view completely, changing the way the land is perceived and experienced, can the significance of this material, this landscape, be acknowledged and its value integrated with our connection to the place we inhabit.

1. Robert Morris, ‘Aligned with Nazca’, *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993, p.170.

2. ‘Derelict Land’ conversion of status of five Lothian sites, letter designating the bings as artworks, 2 March 1976, Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation.

3. Handwritten note on the margin of a newspaper article. John Latham and Artist Placement Group, ‘Is this a new art form?’, *Edinburgh Evening News*, Edinburgh, 14 November 1979, in Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation.

4. ‘Cuthill No.24 Coal Mine’, *Shale Oil, A History of Scotland’s Shale Oil Industry*, June 2016, https://www.scottishshale.co.uk/places/shale-mines/cuthill-no24–coal-mine/ [accessed 16 July 2021]. Also paper map provided by the Coal Authority.

5. The Coal Authority is now engaged in seeking and encouraging research into finding new uses for the waste ochre. There are pilot projects and innovations in sewage treatment, fertiliser, possible use in plastics. The Coal Authority have willingly supported this art project, providing access to a number of sites, facilitating material sample collection and are continuing to support ongoing work.

Overlay and Overview
Joy Sleeman

Two aerial views of landscape - images of the same location seven decades apart - both reveal and conceal aspects of a history. We need to look back and forth in time, and through the pages of this book, to locate these views. The first aerial image is from Google Earth showing the Five Sisters bing in 2017, a view used by Onya to locate the mine water treatment site nearby (Image 2.1 on pp.34-35); the other is a black and white aerial photograph, found by Nicky, of the Five Sisters site and its environs in West Calder from an aeroplane in 1950 (Image 4.1, on pp.74-75).

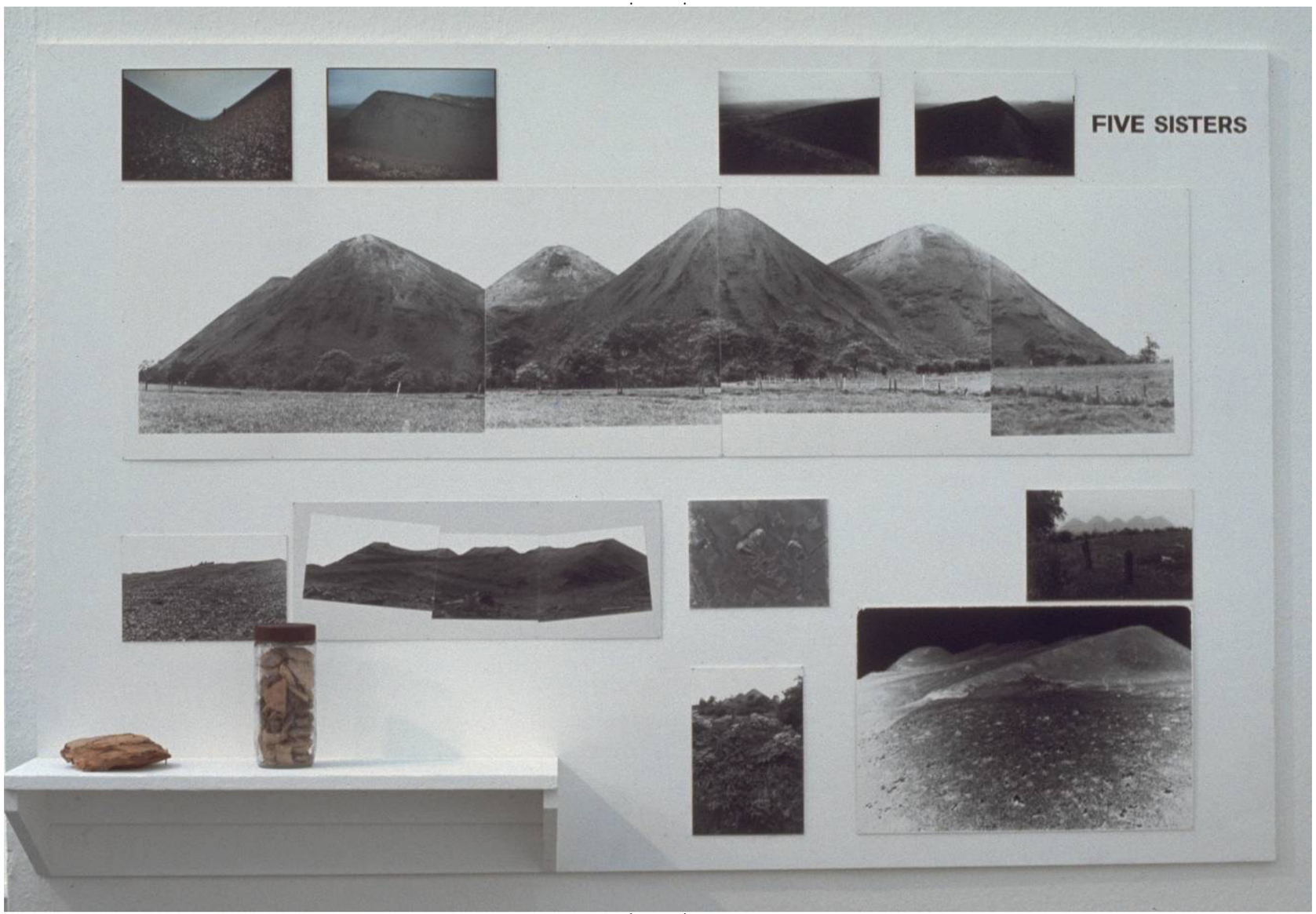
Looking closely at the photograph from 1950, not only are there other huge bings to the southwest (at Addiewell) no longer there today, but 'Five' Sisters is only four. Less a 'hand rising as 5 knuckles' as Latham described it in 1980, than resembling thighs and male genitalia (West Calder Man perhaps?). This rather flippant observation, made during one of my and Nicky's collaborative research meetings at Flat Time House, speaks nonetheless to themes of gender and vision in my text, and also in Nicky's.

In 1950 this was an active site. Mining and oil extraction still going on, the bings were being built. Today the bings are 'redundant', some are removed (re-used or re-purposed, for road building for example) others, such as the Five Sisters, preserved as both a protected industrial monument and site of special scientific interest.[1]

Nicky and I visited the archive at Flat Time House on a number of occasions to study the materials relating to Latham's placement with the Scottish Office in 1975–76, his interest in, and his campaigns over many years to 'save' the bings. Back then, in 2015, my recent encounter with Latham's work had been showing the 1976 work *Derelict Land Art: Five Sisters* (Tate collection) in an exhibition I co-curated in 2013-14.[2] (Image 3.1)

We are looking at a collaborative work in a number of senses. The photographs include colour, black and white, negative and composite images, also a 'found image': a 'from the air' photograph. Most of the photographs were taken by artist Rita Donagh, including the one top left (see Nicky's following contribution) showing Latham walking between the 'fingers' of the Five Sisters bing. The bings themselves were also made by the workers who extracted the shale oil, seen here in an illustration from a 1933 article about the Scottish shale oil industry, captioned 'Building a Mountain'.[3] (Image 3.2)

In Latham's words, from a text addressed 'To all mineworkers' written in 1980: 'the miners of West Lothian created, without realising it, a giant monument that could be established in the same league with the Sphynx and the Pyramids'. 'In this instance', continued Latham, 'the image is the image of dismembered woman. Some six separate sites, taken in from the air photographs showing the various part of the human anatomy, . . . The six features include a large Torso, which has 'given birth', a Brain where one would look for a head, a distant Hand, rising as 5 knuckles, and a giant Heart, separated from the body.'[4]



3.1
John Latham, *Derelict Land Art: Five Sisters*, 1976

In this text Latham was referring to a whole complex of bings in the West Lothian region which he named after the nearby 16th century Niddry Castle. In arguing for the importance of preserving the bings as monuments, he insisted on connecting the Five Sisters with the other body parts of Niddrie Woman some five miles distant, on the other side of the town of Livingston.

Others advised him against associating the Five Sisters with the Niddrie Woman concept, arguing that trying to save the whole complex, including sites already slated for removal, could prejudice the case for saving the Five Sisters.[5] But for Latham the total vision was paramount, over and above the claims for individual bings.

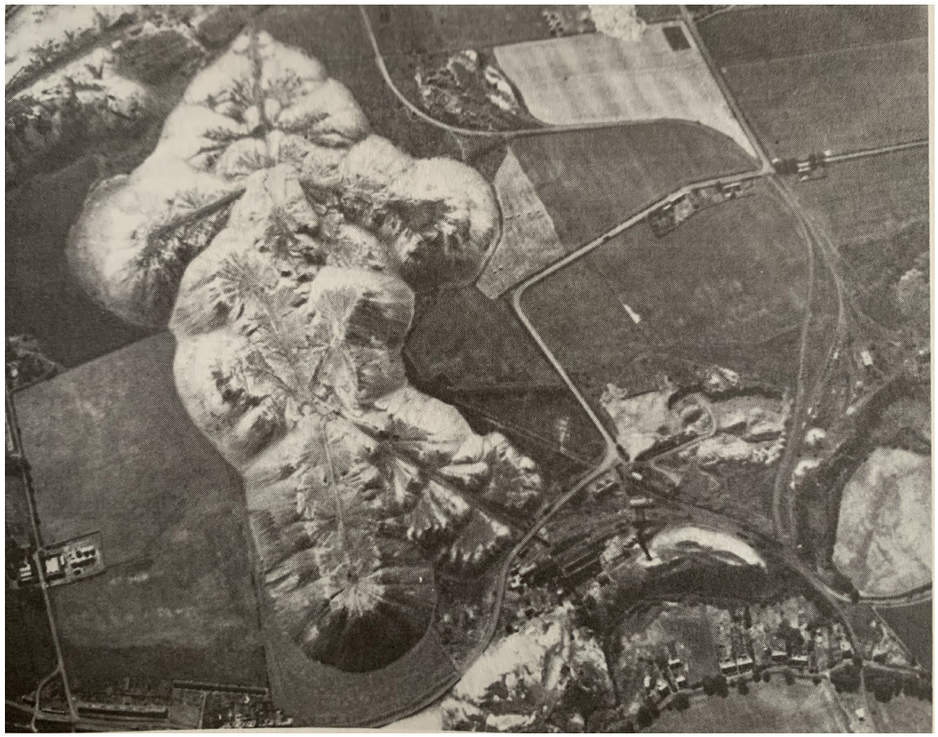
He offered different proposals for saving – and indeed for 'seeing' – his vision of Niddrie Woman as a monument. While in the case of Five Sisters the proposal to do nothing, to leave them as they were, was appropriate (as discussed by Onya), for 'seeing' Niddrie Woman's dismembered body parts – her torso, head, limb and heart – Latham proposed viewing platforms: 'two 80ft high book reliefs should be built, on the "heart" and "solar plexus".'[6]

When I first viewed documents in the Flat Time House archive I found Latham's imprecision as to which bings he was referring frustrating. As my conversations with Katherine, Onya and Nicky progressed and indeed as my presentation unfolded at the 2019 event, I became more compelled by the stories concealed by the bings: the 'story, told blindfold by the early oil industry', Latham's attempt to tell that story and the continuing relevance of Niddrie Woman.

3.2
Illustration from 'The Scottish Shale Oil Industry', from *Wonders of World Engineering*, IPC Magazines, 1933

Latham's may be a singular vision: a personal and idiosyncratic interpretation of a landscape marked by accumulation of industrial detritus, but it shares marked commonalities with other overviews inspired by aerial perspectives combined with intimate encounters with the materiality of earth's substance.

We encounter Latham's Niddrie Woman in the pages of an influential book by American writer, critic and curator, Lucy R. Lippard: *Overlay: Contemporary art and the art of prehistory* (1983).[7] This inclusion places Latham's work in a then emerging discourse around



3.3
Aerial photo of Niddrie bing, detail used as illustration in Lucy Lippard, *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory*, 1983, p.145. Photo © John Latham Foundation

contemporary Land art and, in Lippard's speculative connecting of images and ideas across time, in relation to wider societal issues, particularly feminism.

Overlay was published in 1983 but conceived in 1977 when Lippard spent a year living on Dartmoor in England. This is how she describes the book's genesis:

> Hiking on Dartmoor, with nothing further from my mind than modern sculpture, I tripped over a small upright stone. When I looked back over my shoulder, I realized it was one in a long row of such stones. They disappeared in a curve over the crest of the hill. It took me a moment to understand that these stones had been placed there almost 4,000 years ago, and another moment to recognize their ties to much contemporary art. I looked around that vast open space; the dog waited expectantly; I leaned down and touched the stone. Some connection was made that I still don't fully understand and that led to this book – an overlay of my concern with new art on my fascination with these very ancient sites.[8]

Lippard's idea for the book came to her as a vision, while touching stones placed thousands of years ago on the earth. Time contracts as she touches the rock. This intuitive and transhistorical approach to her subject typifies the methodology of her book.

This is her caption for Latham's work (Image 3.3):

> John Latham, "The Niddrie Woman." Found hill sculpture in West Lothian, Scotland. Latham might have been picking up on the idea that prehistoric peoples "saw" the earth's body in unaltered land forms when he perceived "The Niddrie Woman" in a Venus-of-Willendorf-like shape, formed accidentally of shale waste near a Scottish mine. "The Niddrie Woman" is part of an elaborate conceptual scheme for ecological consciousness-raising and

> reclamation, and the artist has used her as a pun on female earth, rebirth, modern society's treatment of women's bodies as castoffs, and so forth. She is the contemporary counterpart of Silbury Hill – and the comparison is as devastating as it should be. At present the artist is trying to save her from destruction.[9]

In the caption Lippard lends Latham's Niddrie Woman prehistoric resonance in her 'Venus-of-Willendorf-like shape' and as 'the contemporary counterpart of Silbury Hill'. True, the bings are much larger than Silbury Hill,[10] but the full significance of the allusion is only revealed by reading on in Lippard's text to the following chapter, entitled 'Ritual'. Here she recommends reading, and considering as complementary, two very different approaches to understanding the Avebury complex in South-West England: the research of the academic 'traditional field archaeologist' Aubrey Burl and the more speculative theories of geographer/archaeologist/art historian/visual artist Michael Dames. According to Dames, Silbury Hill is part of a wider ritual Avebury complex, in which the hill is 'the pregnant vegetation goddess giving birth at Lammas in early August (when the hill's construction began).'[11]

The 1970s was an era of visions, new overviews and aerial perspectives. From 1968 to 1972 (American) humans travelling into outer space sent back some of the most famous and spectacular aerial views of the Earth from space: from Apollo 10's Earth Rise of 1968 through to the blue marble image of Earth from the last Apollo mission (17) at the end of 1972.

Latham's *Erth* – a bright earth set against a background of blackness, with a faint overlay of an image of the craters and mountains of the moon, evokes Apollo imagery, juxtaposes and superimposes images of earth and moon, and was used for the film *Erth*, made in 1971 with funding from the National Coal Board (the outcome of an earlier APG placement). The collage and film show a view of earth from space, but the single figure that inhabits this space is not a heroic astronaut, but a miner. Not in outer space, but on the earth. (Image 3.4)

The 1970s also saw a revival of older ways of seeing the landscape involving aerial – or at least elevated – viewpoints as well as direct physical encounters such as that experienced by Lippard on Dartmoor. Her book *Overlay* also features a total vision of the landscape originating in the 1920s in the 'ley lines' theory of Alfred Watkins, a 'miller, brewer, archaeologist, photographic innovator and inventor' from Hereford.[12] This is how Lippard tells the story:

> At the age of 65, while riding across a familiar landscape, he had a sudden vision of a glowing network of lines across the country, intersecting at traditionally "holy" places like prehistoric mounds, churches, wells, stones, mountains and so forth. He named these networks of sighted tracks the "ley system" (after an old word for clearing in the woods) and devoted the rest of his life to proving his vision.[13]

3.4
John Latham, archival photo collage, photographed for use in the film *Erth*, 1971, Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation

Watkins is something of an anomalous figure in her book: neither a contemporary artist nor part of prehistory. His vision serves to link these twin concerns of Lippard's and enmesh them in a network of intersecting lines, stones, distant views, reflecting ponds and trackways. (Image 3.5) 'If the leys don't exist,' wrote Lippard, 'then Alfred Watkins was a very good conceptual artist.'[14] Lippard is here creating connections, producing the 'overlay' of meanings between the prehistoric and the present. Her book's title may even have been inspired by Watkins' book, in the introduction to which he enumerates

sources of evidence for gleaning knowledge of prehistory in the landscape, including 'lingering fragments of fact disguised by an overlay of generations of imaginings'.[15]

Later followers took the old straight track into more esoteric territory, where it became highways for UFOs and lines of mystical power.[16] Given Lippard's penchant for taking such popular literature (at least partially) seriously, we might speculate that this is how she came to Watkins. There are several books by John Michell, populariser of Watkin's theories from the late 1960s, in Lippard's bibliography.[17]

Michell's approach accords with Lippard's, reading scientific/academic and more speculative literature without conflict, indeed as complementary and equally 'true'. Although she expresses some critical hesitation. Citing Dames' *The Avebury Cycle* (1977), Lippard writes: 'Dames' is a visual theory, which is probably why I am so taken by it. He ends with a triumphal 33–mile aerially perceptible image of the "composite goddess" as a micro/macrocosmic life symbol, at which point I suspect his insights finally run away with him.'[18]

Nonetheless, Dames, like Latham, recognised in these vast earthen forms that things made inadvertently, blindly, could be equally as revelatory as those made deliberately or intentionally. Indeed, the revelatory quality of Niddrie Woman is, as Latham asserts, that 'no sculpture before it is so intimately bound up with Earth, – to its geology and physics on the one hand, and on the other to the historic body-and-soul here so exposed'. 'It is the singularity of the process' wrote Latham, 'that went on between the moment of conception and the last truckload'.[19]

3.5

Radnor Vale, eastern end (Folding Map). Diagram by W.H. McKaig, based upon the Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. Illustration from Alfred Watkins, *The Old Straight Track*, 1925

Finally, another elevated overview of the bings – a photograph from around 1988 taken by Murdo Macdonald of John Latham photographing the site/bing that Latham called The Heart. (Image 3.6)

The day after I first visited the bings in 2008 I ran into Murdo in Dundee and he told me the story of scattering John Latham's ashes on this bing. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

Another layer overlaid onto the bings and to their history . . .

Between the impregnation of Niddrie Woman (perhaps by West Calder Man?), the inundation of Westwood House, West Calder (which Nicky will discuss), the process of oil extraction and shale accumulation and recycling, and the scattering of Latham's ashes on the Heart, the bings recount 'A story told blindfold, but also collaboratively and collectively, by a 'multiplicity of cultures each with a different story'.[20]

Towards the end of my original presentation at Flat Time House I speculated on affinities between Latham's vision of Niddrie Woman and another overview vision that also originated in the 1970s, 'Gaia'. Gaia was first mooted by scientist, environmentalist and futurist, James Lovelock and microbiologist Lynn Margulis, in 1974, and popularised through Lovelock's 1979 book, *Gaia: A new Look at Life on Earth*.

Gaia is described by James Lovelock as a 'top-down view' of earth and life sciences, 'a look at the earth from space as a whole entity. The kind of view the astronauts first saw as they swam in space above the earth. It is the kind of approach that physiologists use for living systems and

3.6
Murdo Macdonald, John Latham photographing The Heart (Niddrie Woman) bing in West Lothian Scotland, probably 1988

Photo: copyright and courtesy Murdo Macdonald

the approach that engineers use for computers and similar systems.'[21] Living organisms, according to Gaia, live in a world that is the breath and bones of their ancestors, a world that they are now sustaining.

The bings: fossil fuel, the bodies of ancient organisms extracted from shale rocks, dug from the earth and now the residue of those processes discarded in the forms of a dismembered body on its surface. Is Niddrie Woman a representation of Gaia – or what Gaia becomes in some dystopian (or quite likely) future?

Did Latham know of Lovelock and Margulis's theory? When I presented this text at Flat Time House, Barbara Steveni supported the likelihood of my hypothesis. I am still seeking definitive evidence of a connection. But whether directly connected or not, these visions 'so intimately bound up with the Earth' share a moment of conception and birth and similar intentions toward understanding human complicity and co-dependence with the Earth and the potential for enlarging our visual and conceptual vocabulary through deciphering and articulating those relations.

Watkins', Lippard's and Latham's visions of a world connected spatially and through deep time were inspired by aerial perspectives and views from above, but also by making direct and physical contact with the stuff of the earth. They are made visible through photography and other visualising technologies. The Niddrie Woman – whether or not she is Gaia – seems an apt goddess figure to invoke as a spiritual guide in this continuing enquiry.

1. The Five Sisters bing was given Scheduled Ancient Monument status in 1995, as was 'The Monument known as Greendykes, shale bing, Broxburn. Greendykes is the 'torso' of Latham's Niddrie Woman'. See *A World View: John Latham*, London: Serpentine Galleries and Koenig Books, 2017, pp.159–165.

2. Nicholas Alfrey, Joy Sleeman and Ben Tufnell, *Uncommon Ground: Land Art in Britain 1966–1979*, Arts Council Collection touring exhibition, 2013–2014.

3. 'The Scottish Shale Oil Industry', from *Wonders of World Engineering*, IPC Magazines, 1933, reprinted in 1992 by The Almond Valley Heritage Trust, Livingston, West Lothian, with the consent and kind support of The British Petroleum Company plc., n.p.

4. Notice and proposal 'To all mineworkers', attached to a letter to Lawrence Daly, National Union of Mineworkers, 30 August 1980, Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation.

5. George A. McNeill, Director of Physical Planning at West Lothian District Council, in a letter of 15 October 1980, Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation.

6. Chrissie Iles, 'The Nu Niddrie Heart', in *John Latham: The N-U Niddrie Heart*, London: United Untied, 1992, np. *The N-U Niddrie Heart* is a collaborative, 37–part multiple sculptural installation, consisting of forms akin to the glass and book towers proposed for the bings and using two books with titles significant to the Niddrie Woman concept and ecology: *The Pregnancy Survival Manual and Vanished Species*.

7. Lucy R. Lippard, Overlay: *Contemporary art and the art of prehistory*, New York: Praeger, 1983.

8. Lippard, p.1.

9. Lippard, *Overlay*, p.145 and see 'letter to and from Lucy Lippard' (1980) reproduced in *A World View: John Latham*, pp.171–173.

10. A point made by Craig Richardson, 'Waste to Monument: John Latham's Niddrie

Woman', *Tate Papers* 17, Spring 2012.

11. Lippard, p.184.

12. Ron Shoesmith, *Alfred Watkins: a Herefordshire Man*, Hereford: Logaston Press, 1990.

13. Lippard, pp.133–134.

14. Lippard, p.134.

15. Alfred Watkins, *The Old Straight Track*, London: Garnstone Press, 1970, p.xix.

16. John Michell, 'Centres and lines of the latent power in Britain', *International Times*, vol.1, no.19, October 1967, p.5; Michell, *The View over Atlantis*, 1969; Paul Screeton, *Quicksilver Heritage: The Mystic Leys – Their Legacy of Ancient Wisdom*, 1974.

17. Lippard's 'Further Reading' includes four books by Michell published in the 1970s. Lippard, p.255.

18. Lippard, p.185.

19. Latham, 'Particular importance of the NIDDRIE WOMAN as a monument', typed statement dated 12 April 1980. Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation.

20. As above and see Katherine Jackson, 'From Theory to Practice: John Latham's placement with the Scottish Office 1975–6' in *A World View: John Latham*, pp. 144–152.

21. James Lovelock, 'Gaia and the balance of nature', paper presented at the Sixth Economic Summit Conference on Bioethics, Brussels, 10–12 May 1989, in Ph. Bourdeau, P. M. Fasella and A. Teller, eds. *Environmental Ethics: Man's Relationship with Nature, Interactions with Science*, Luxembourg: Commission of the European Communities, 1990. pp.241–252, p.241.

Layered Over
Nicky Bird

> During the century of mining operations leading to the modern oil industry, the miners of West Lothian created, without realizing it, a giant monument that could be established as in the same league with the Sphynx and the Pyramids.[1]
>
> John Latham, 1980

Let's begin with by paying attention to some key details of an Ordnance Survey aerial view of West Lothian, photographed by the R.A.F. in February 1950 (Image 4.1).[2] The village of West Calder clusters around the A71, surrounded by a patchwork of fields with a huge industrial spoil heap to the west. Addiewell bing is almost the size of the village itself. Now look north to four distinct structures: not yet the Five Sisters, but in the process of becoming. Smoke can be detected from a chimney stack of Westwood Oil Works and other smaller shale bings can also be spotted in this aerial view of an active industrial and rural Scottish landscape.

However, twelve years later, oil shale mining would cease. By 1962, the four bings had become the 240 metres high Five Sisters. In 1976, the artist John Latham memorably declared these shale bings to be works of art, invoking the name of Marcel Duchamp and the ready-made. In 1995, the Five Sisters were given Scheduled Ancient Monument status, and have since been the subject of Geo-Science, and community-led town planning activities.[3] Once considered eyesores, the Five Sisters

have completed their transformation from utilitarian industrial structures to a nationally recognized heritage site. Contemporary artists, such as Onya and myself, have returned to the same West Lothian landscape in the on-going quests for 'new ways of looking,'[4] albeit for divergent reasons. If mine-water ochre is the draw for Onya, for me it is a locally told story of a house, buried within the Five Sisters.

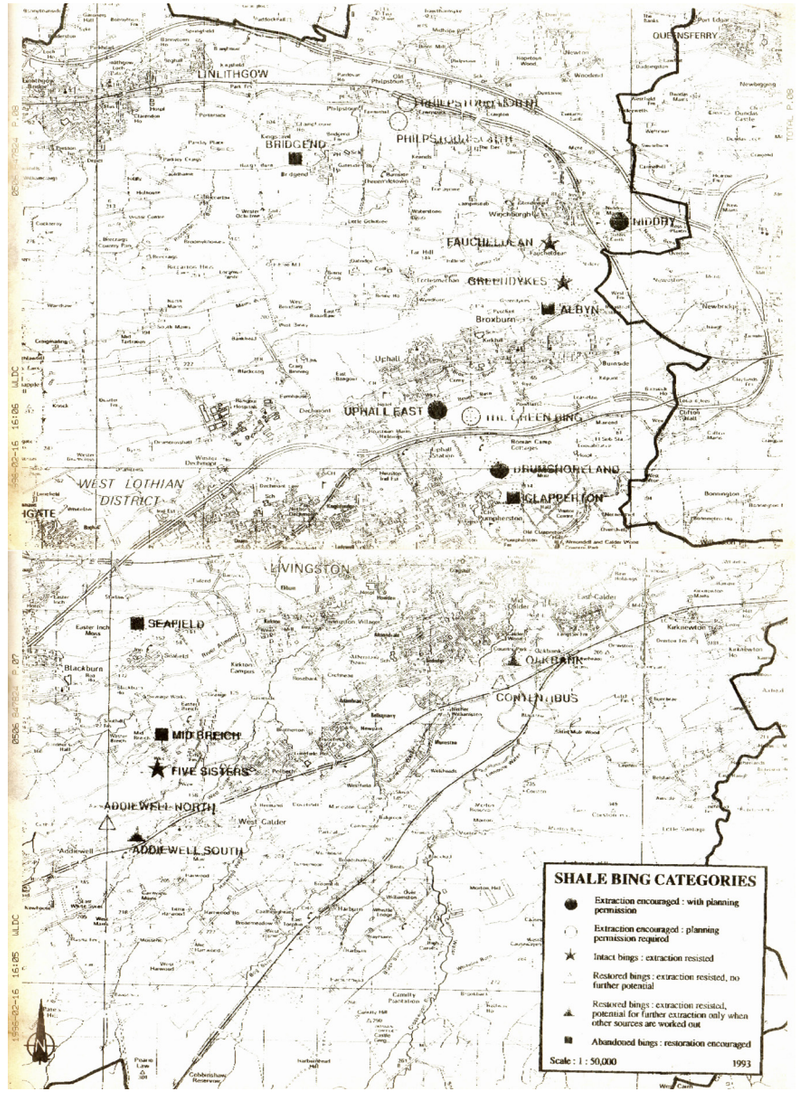
I will come back to this story later. First we need to keep looking at this aerial view and attend to Latham's address 'To all mineworkers', that was attached to his letter to Lawrence Daly, the National Secretary of National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).[5] Latham's words attribute a form of unconscious art production to the labours of miners, and in retrospect, bring another layer of meaning to the aerial photograph beyond a photographic surveying of land: it is also a visual document of *process*, in which industrial labour and its impact on the land, is given greater significance than being an accidental by-product.[6]

The letter is one of many Latham wrote to influential and powerful figures in his campaign to preserve the bing he named 'Niddrie Woman'. There was also a political dimension to Latham's letter; his attached notice included a proposal for a protest by miners to the Secretary of State. This was in response to governmental approval of 'vandalisation by commercial interests' of first 'the Heart of the Niddrie Woman, - and the distant Hand, better known as The Five Sisters.'[7] From the period of 1976–1996, as evidenced by a number of items in the Flat Time House archive, saving the Niddrie Woman from destruction would be the focus of the artist's campaign over a 20–year period. Joy has already elaborated on how Latham would continue

4.1
Aerial view (detail), OS Midlothian, taken by the R.A.F. February 1950
Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

to cite the example of the Five Sisters, their status as artworks and Scheduled Monument, in his campaign to preserve 'Niddrie Woman'.[8] Towards the end of this period, in February 1996, West Lothian District Council faxed a 'Shale Bing Categories' map to the artist. This form of aerial mapping, created in 1993, predates the scheduling of the Five Sisters but was received by Latham when the formalities had been completed. Examples of the categories include a star symbol for the Five Sisters ('Intact bing: extraction resisted'); a triangle outline for Addiewell North ('Restored bings: extraction resisted, no further potential'); and a solid black dot for Niddry ('Extraction encouraged: with planning permission').[9] A look back and forth between the illustrations from 1993 (Image 4.2, p.77), 1950 (Image 4.1, pp.74-75), and Google Earth 2017 (Image 2.1, pP.34-35) can track these visceral changes to the land: from the solidity of the Five Sisters to the re-landscaping of Addiewell North and South.

Other colour photographs in the Flat Time House archive take us to 1975–76, the time of his placement with the Scottish Development Agency (Image 4.3). Katherine has already ably mapped out the Scottish context of Artist Placement Group and the purpose of Latham's placement, so with her words in mind, let's turn to these photographs which situate the viewer firmly on West Lothian ground. One group is of the Five Sisters, photographed on a sunny day, devoid of any of the vegetation that will come to take root over the next 40 years; their other worldly appearance, perhaps exacerbated by drought, does indeed evoke the Pyramids.[10] A second group, most likely to be in and around Niddry, show vividly excavation work taking place in a gaseous landscape.[11]



4.2
Shale Bing Categories, 1993 West Lothian District Council Faxes, 16 February 1996
Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation

By following in Latham's footsteps within these eight photographs, the themes of labour and process make an uncanny return, with dormant and intact bings on one side, activity and extraction on the other.

As we follow Latham out of the archive, and into the location, we should remind ourselves that he was not alone. In a colour photograph in the top right hand corner of *Derelict Land Art: Five Sisters*, 1976, a figure resembling Latham is walking away from the camera in one of the bealachs of the Five Sisters[12] (Image 4.4).

The artist Rita Donagh is credited for the photographs and the collage assemblage, and the Flat Time House archive contains other fine monochrome prints by Donagh. There are interesting questions about authorship, collaboration and gender raised not only by such photographs, but also my own consciousness of the co-existing presences of Latham, Donagh and Steveni when I visited the same location from 2013 onwards. Only a year previously, Steveni had revisited the Five Sisters as part of *I Am An Archive*, 2002–2015, a performative work in which she inhabited the role of witness.[13]

4.3
Colour photographs in wallet-album c.1975–1976
Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation

4.4
Colour photograph (detail) from John Latham, *Derelict Land Art: Five Sisters*, 1976. © John Latham Estate. Courtesy Lisson Gallery, London
Photo © Tate

I want to shift now to another bealach, where in 2015, two small trees have taken root (Image 4.5). I am also not alone. Beside me is Dr. Stuart Jeffrey, Reader in Heritage Visualisation at the Glasgow School of Art. He is casting his Archaeologist's eye over these trees, as underneath them and tonnages of shale waste, is where Jeffrey thinks a house is. Any tangible traces of the house, and its surrounding grounds, have been completely obliterated. And we are both here because of a locally told story of Westwood House, buried in the bings.

This story was first told me to during a memory mapping workshop with

4.5
Nicky Bird with Stuart Jeffrey, *Two Trees*, July 2015. Smartphone photograph

a group of local people in 2013. In my panorama of the Five Sisters, the village of West Calder can be seen to the east of the bings (image 4.6). In common with many former mining villages, community members had a strong sense of identity and heritage rooted in an industrial and rural past.

They were also alert to questions of possible futures, shaped by their recent participation in community-led town planning activities.
One of the key themes identified in the resulting action plan was the importance of West Calder and Harburn's environment, in 'green, built and cultural' senses.[14]

Debates about potential fracking in West Lothian were pointed reminders of ongoing (and divided) scientific, commercial and political interests that surrounded shale, in areas that had seen industries come and go. In this context, what emerged from memory mapping was how to ‘show and tell’ a story of people and place that would bring with it, another layer of cultural significance to the Five Sisters.

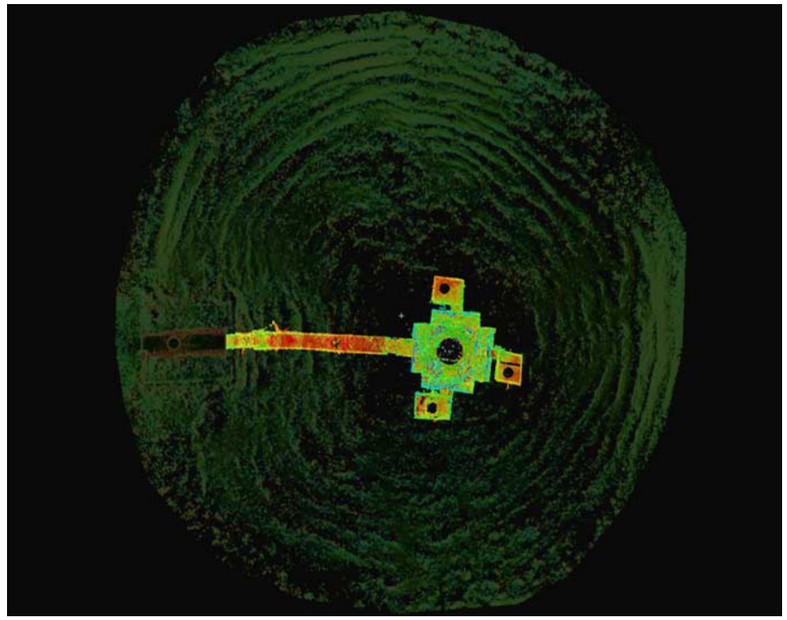
Davie Rennie, one of the group members, brought his collection of photographic postcards of West Calder. He put a postcard of a house

down on the table (Image 4.7). The postcard is of Westwood House, photographed around 1910, and he started talking about Bella, a woman who lived in the house as a girl in the 1930s. Once owned by a Captain, by the time Bella was living in the house, it was occupied by several families. There were a lot of children who played in the surrounding garden of roses and rhododendron flowers. Bella’s family lived in the kitchen area. Then Davie finished stating that the house is still there - it was not demolished, simply buried. Between a postcard and an industrial landmark, individual and community memories are embedded within the Five Sisters.

4.6
Nicky Bird, *Five Sisters*, March 2014. Digital composite panorama photograph © Nicky Bird

4.7
R Braid, Westwood House, West Calder, c.1910. Photographic postcard
Courtesy Davie Rennie

Latham's 1976 question of *What are you looking at?* returns, along with the artistic challenge to find a new way of looking for something that is layered over. This time, the looking is reframed through the local voice, and it is this voice I navigate with, in contrast to the governmental voices Latham so confidently worked with, and later challenged.[15] The implication of a buried house also suggests that art, archaeology and new media, could come together in some way.[16]



4.8
The Scottish Ten: Maeshowe Chambered Cairn, Orkney © Historic Environment Scotland. 3D assets created jointly by Historic Environment Scotland and The Glasgow School of Art

When I first spoke to Stuart Jeffrey in 2014, it was because of his work in heritage visualisation and interest in forms of intangible heritage, which are often unreachable physically but very prominent in local imagination.[17] For him, such stories were fairly common, local folklore normally not true. In terms of the Five Sisters, he also speculated how conventional archaeology would not be possible - or desirable - due to their scheduled monument status. The kinds of industrial waste materials from which the bings are made of, could also not be

4.9
Google Map, accessed 2014 / OS Map Linlithgowshire (Livingston) X11.4, 1856, overlay by Stuart Jeffrey. © 2020 Map data: Google, Maxar Technologies / Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

penetrated by today's aerial laser scanners, typically applied to, for example, world-class heritage Neolithic sites.[18]

However, by overlaying a Google Map detail with an OS Map from 1856 Jeffrey plots the exact location. We begin to talk about the 'what ifs'?

How might Westwood House be visualized within the Five Sisters? This provokes larger questions relating to heritage, such as decisions on what is preserved and what is not; and who decides what is worth excavating, visually or otherwise.[19] When I finally met Bella in May 2015, and recorded her talking about Westwood House, it was clear she was an adept storyteller.[20]

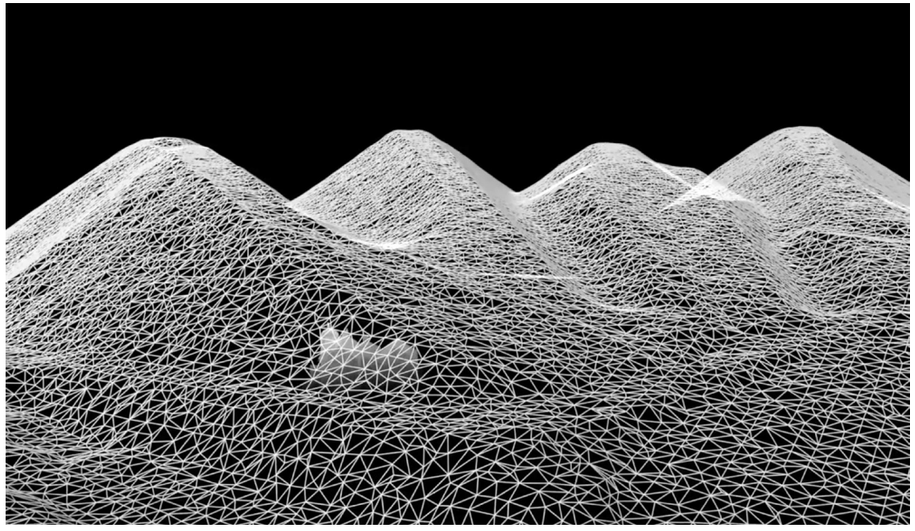
Her narrative recalled not only her own family, but several other families, numerous children, Gypsy/Travellers, and vivid vignettes in and around the house, including references to her own girlhood imagination and interior life, her love of books and art:

> An the people that lived in there, in aw these rooms, there'd be twelve families anyway wi their own families in it, in the laundry, in the kitchen, we were in the kitchen, which was huge, ma brother an I, an ma Mum an Dad, big scullery and the pantry, which ah claimed for mine. An a nice wee window, just one pane o glass, ye know the kind, wi the big windaes though, so ah could see whit wis gaun on, who was comin in through the back, the courtyard, an who wis havin a gossip ootside [*laughter*]. Aw the women, an the weans runnin up an doon an, oh, it was awfy interestin.

So, while the photographic record of the house is minimal, and the postcard not even showing the parts of the house that were significant to Bella, this did not prevent a compelling narrative of a girl's memory of a house. At her time of living there, the house was home to at least

12 families. Her recall of neighbours' names transpired to be accurate, when I looked at local evaluation roll records for Westwood House. These records showed mostly names of men, their occupations and amount of rent paid. Unsurprisingly all were connected to the shale mines in some way. The records also evidenced the house gradually becoming decanted alongside the rising profits of Westwood Oils Works.[21] Not long after interviewing Bella, I purchased LiDAR point cloud data of the Five Sisters. This 21st century way of aerial mapping was eventually processed into a digital animation projection, in which the location of the house was also plotted.[22]

Heritage Site, 2016, would become a multi-media installation, in which



4.10
Clare Graham, *Heritage Site*, 2016. Still from digital animation. © Nicky Bird

viewers walked around a 1:12 scale model of the house. Part factual, part imagination, it was displayed directly on the gallery floor. An interior light inside a ground-floor room at the back, signified where Bella and her family lived. The digital animation projection of Westwood House within the Five Sisters, was looped and projected onto one side of the model. Some viewers might have detected intermittent scents either of burning earth, or rhododendrons.[23] The postcard and the panoramic landscape of the Five Sisters were also part of the installation, along with sound: the voice of Isabella Mason Kirk.

Annette Kuhn has described how an approach to a particular photograph 'opens up readings that at least begin to unpack the

4.11
Nicky Bird, *Heritage Site*, 2016/2020. Monochrome photograph. © Nicky Bird

intersections and continuities between the personal, the familial and the social that lie embedded in the image's many layers of meaning.'[24] This describes well my attempt to uncover, map layered-over histories that belong to the domestic, familial, and working-class spheres. This has been in conversation with the Flat Time House archive, the APG and, of course, all the other contributors to *Aerial Landscapes.* Divergent art histories, writings and practices have converged along with shifting environmental politics, and debates about art and heritage. From the view above to the ground below, it is remarkable what the Five Sisters have come to embody.

My contribution began with the eloquent words of John Latham. These equated the Five Sisters, a product of the labours of West Calder miners, as a monument on a par with the Pyramids of Egypt. I now close with the evocative words of Isabella Mason Kirk. Perhaps these bear witness to the pre-history of the Five Sisters and their process of *becoming*.

> […] efter we went oot o it [the house] ah dinnae really ken what happened tae it, bar that ah knew the bings crept up because ah watched, ah used tae watch them at the retorts, getting it ready, an as ah say Ned wis in there ten years before he left, an it wid be beginnin tae creep up tae the hoose bi then.
>
> Isabella Mason Kirk, 2015

1. Notice and proposal 'To all mineworkers' attached to a letter to Lawrence Daly, National Union of Mineworkers, 30 August 1980, Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation.

2. This photograph shows West Lothian as part of Midlothian before boundary changes were made arising from the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973 and then 1994

3. *West Lothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan: Oil Shale Bings*, report by Dr. Barbra Harvie, School of GeoSciences, University of Edinburgh, 2004; *West Calder and Harburn Community Action Plan*, 2013–2018.

4. Derek Lyddon, Chief Planner of the Scottish Development Agency at the time of Latham's residency, '…Hence the product is not an art work, but a report by the artist on new ways of looking at the chosen work areas and on the action that might result.' In Craig Richardson, 'Waste to Monument: John Latham's Niddrie Woman,' *Tate Papers* 17, Spring 2012. https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/17/waste-to-monument-john-lathams-niddrie-woman [accessed 11 June 2021].

5. Born in Fife, Scotland, Lawrence Daly (1924–2009) had formidably steered the NUM through two national strikes, 1972 and 1974, which would bring down Edward Heath's Conservative Government.

6. For an account of how these by-products 'have created landscapes with their own distinctive flora and fauna,' see Harvie, p.6.

7. Letter to Daly, 30 August 1980, Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation.

8. Between 2015–2016, Joy and I viewed archive materials together at FTHo. We were struck by Latham's fearlessness and ability to re-shape his campaigning tone of his letters according to the addressee. Such letters, and press cuttings about the Five Sisters from the 1970s to the 1990s in the archive, underlined both Latham's and Steveni's continued '…shared civic responsibility for the bings' potential status as artworks.' In Craig Richardson, 'John Latham: Incidental Person,' *Map* magazine, Issue 11, Autumn, 2017, p.30.

9. For a 21st century update, see Harvie's report, pp.5–6, 2004. In 'Table 1 Bing Designations' Niddry is described as 'currently worked.' 'Niddry' is the correct spelling for the bing area: Niddrie is a housing estate in the Edinburgh area.

10. This reference to the UK's Great Drought of 1976, arose from conversation with Joy, and at the time of viewing the photographs at FTho.

11. 'Removal of bings' is handwritten on the back of one photograph. In 2013, anecdotes from local people in West Calder included memories of gas seeping out of the Five Sisters.

12. 'Bealach' is the Scots word for saddle.

13. See exhibition catalogue *The Individual and the Organisation: Artist Placement Group 1966–79*, Raven Row, London, 27 September to 16 December 2012. Steveni's video walks 'literally retracing APG's steps' and 'perform the challenge of any witness, which is to protect a legacy, while opening it up to new interpretations.' Antony Hudek and Alex Sainsbury, p.6. For the wider project, see https://barbarasteveni.org/Work-IAAA-I-Am-An-Archive [accessed 10 March 2021].

14. *West Calder and Harburn Community Action Plan, 2013–2018*, p.10. Alan Tuffs, of STAR Development, was instrumental in introducing me to the West Calder and Harburn community.

15. In the Flat Time House Archive, there was little evidence that Latham interacted with local people, directing his energies to those in local and national government positions.

16. Bringing these areas together became a reality with a Cycle 10 Alt-w Production Award, and through subsequent conceptual/curatorial discussions with Mark Daniels, New Media Scotland as the project *Heritage Site*, 2016, developed.

17. For further information on Stuart Jeffrey's work, see https://www.gsa.ac.uk/study/doctoral-degrees/supervisors-plus-students/phd-supervisors/j/jeffrey,-dr-stuart/ [accessed 10 March 2021].

18. For example, see Maeshowe Chambered Cairn, The Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site, and the project The Scottish Ten, https://www.engineshed.scot/about-us/the-scottish-ten/sites/neolithic-orkney-scotland/ [accessed 10 March 2021].

19. The term 'heritage' itself raises other questions, such as its relationship to land which becomes 'heritage-able property' and art. See Flat Time House Archive, London UK © John Latham Foundation; Richardson, 2017, p.31.

20. Isabella "Bella" Mason Kirk (1926–2017) was co-interviewed in May 2015 with Shelagh Steele, member of the Calder History Group. This group, Bella and her family were clearly important contributors to *Heritage Site*.

21. Evaluation roll records were viewed alongside photographs of Westwood Oil Works from the 1930s-40s at West Lothian Local History Library, Linlithgow.

22. The GSA's School of Simulation and Visualisation further supported *Heritage Site*, from initial model work by Mike Marriott to point cloud animations of house and bings by Clare Graham (produced on her MSc in International Heritage Visualisation). Mike's model work would also form the basis for the final 1:12 physical model, made by Kevin Thornton.

23. The artist Clara Ursitti has an olfactory practice http://www.claraursitti.com [accessed 10 March 2021]. She was commissioned to create two scents in response to Bella's oral accounts. For more about *Heritage Site*, 2016, https://www.nickybird.com/projects/heritage-site-2014–2016/ [accessed 10 March 2021].

24. Annette Kuhn (2007) 'Photography and cultural memory: a methodological exploration,' *Visual Studies*, 22:3, pp.283–292, DOI: 10.1080/14725860701657175, p.290.

Afterword
Joy Sleeman

On Saturday 19 October 2019, we were sitting in the kitchen of Flat Time House. Barbara was there, with Anne Bean, I was flattered she was there listening. Her message and approach seemed always to be about finding who to talk to, how and when. I could hear that assertion in her contributions to the discussion after our presentations when listening back to the recording made on the day and reading the transcript of it made the following year. She advised us to understand the changes taking place around you, hang on to your integrity while acknowledging the worlds you're having to exist in. Know the right way to talk to the right person. Never underestimate the challenge. Find someone on 'the other side' to work with. (Be there in the kitchen when it's happening). Her contributions began by saying something thought-provoking, as if continuing to talk while thinking it through, figuring it out. Then responding with something assertive and inspiring. 'So', she said to Onya, who was explaining the challenges of her ongoing project turning mine waste into paint, 'that makes another difficulty, but the way you're going about it is beautiful.' The audience laughed. Then she added 'I would say that! Sorry!'

She was right about that. Barbara Steveni always seemed to find beautiful ways of going about things.

London, July 2021

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John Latham Foundation

Flat Time House

Flat Time House (FTHo) was the studio home of John Latham (1921–2006), recognised as one of the most significant and influential British post-war artists. In 2003, Latham declared the house a living sculpture, naming it FTHo after his theory of time, ‘Flat Time’. Until his death, Latham opened his door to anyone interested in thinking about art. It is in this spirit that Flat Time House opened in 2008 as a gallery with a programme of exhibitions and events exploring the artist’s practice, his theoretical ideas and their continued relevance. It also provides a centre for alternative learning, which includes the John Latham Archive, and an artist’s residency space.