THE THESIS

CAROLYN ALEXANDER

The Materiality, Authenticity and Aura of the Creative Replica:
Can the use of visual art and socially engaged practice facilitate deeper engagement with lost or vulnerable heritage?

The Materiality, Authenticity and Aura of the Creative Replica: Can the use of visual art and socially engaged practice facilitate deeper engagement with lost or vulnerable heritage?

CAROLYN ALEXANDER

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Abstract

This research project argues that embedding visual art and socially engaged practice into heritage interpretation strategies will enhance participant engagement with sites of lost or vulnerable material culture. Using the loss of The Glasgow School of Art's Mackintosh Building (the Mack) as an overarching case study, the primary research questions interrogate: if participants can have auratic experiences with contemporary replicas; how encounters with replicas compare to encounters with authentic artefacts; and by what means visual art and socially engaged practice can be harnessed to provide a new framework of engagement and interpretation.

Guided by the iterative cycles of action research, a practice-led sculptural enquiry into replication, and socially engaged live events in the field, I have developed and tested a new sub-genre of reproduction – the creative replica. These objects blur the lines between heritage replica and art object, by replicating selected debris fragments salvaged from the Mack, through the use of photogrammetry, 3D printing, and traditional moulding and casting in materials that challenge embedded expectations. Within the structure of the live events, the creative replicas were used as 'talking objects,' activating an immersive and social engagement with materiality and historical narratives. During these object handling sessions, critiquing activities and in generating discussion, the social value of the creative replicas was amplified, while also prompting a reconsideration of our relationships with materials, material culture and notions of authenticity

While there is a growing body of discourse surrounding interrogations of authenticity in the field of heritage studies, there is relatively little research into the use of visual art and socially engaged practice as an interpretative strategy in

heritage contexts. This research project seeks to fill this gap in the field of heritage management, proposing an ambitious new framework for immersive interpretation to enhance participant encounters with heritage beyond the workshop environment or case study site. This research has revealed that combining 'the material' and 'the social' in interpretative strategies can construct a new lens through which participants might engage with intangible cultural values and material heritage now and in the future - encouraging active participation, a reconnection with lost heritage, and a broader insight into heterogeneous cultural and social values.

Preface: How to navigate this submission

The submission of this practice-based research project comprises of four elements:

- **The Thesis** *(textual)*
- **Appendix I: The Catalogue** *(visual)*
- **Appendix II: A Collection** *(sensorial)*
- **Appendix III: Fieldwork documentation** *(evidential)*

In order to maximise the legibility of this projects' contribution to knowledge and the methodology employed, the reader is advised to consult with each part of the submission in the order and manner suggested below. The starting point is **The Thesis**, which is a textual account of the project, but also acts as a guide through the rest of the submission. Using intext references, it will prompt the reader when and where they can opt to review the supplementary visual, sensorial and evidential material contained in the appendices.

In **Chapters One to Four,** in text references to **Appendix I: The Catalogue** will be cited where appropriate as a visual aid to help the reader visualise the practical research undertaken. This appendix also contains biographical information on each of the creative replicas made during this study, including the materials and fabrication processes used, and related autoethnographic reflection on their creation. It is at the reader's discretion as to when they engage with the biographical information contained in **The Catalogue**, but it might be helpful to revisit **The Catalogue** for a second, more intensive review after, or while engaging with **Chapter Five** and **Appendix II: A Collection.**

The reader is advised to resist any urge to open the box containing **Appendix II: A Collection** until prompted in **Chapter Five** of the written thesis. **Chapter Five** has been designed as an experiential chapter to guide the reader through a workshop-like experience, much like the later live events of the fieldwork conducted. The proceeding chapters give context to the theoretical and practical objectives of the works created, in addition to the material and sensorial aspects of the fieldwork design. In the absence of the researcher as a facilitator, waiting till this point will optimise the reader's experience with the objects contained inside the box, and support critical engagement with the material presented.

Finally, **Chapter Six** will offer discussion and analysis of the participant feedback gained during fieldwork. In this chapter, in text references will again be used to refer the reader to supplementary evidential material contained in **Appendix III: Fieldwork documentation**. This includes sample materials used during live events such as questionnaires or activity guides, transcripts of audio recorded discussion groups, and thematic analysis of data recorded that was used to shape the discussion in **Chapter Six,** and conclusions in **Chapter Seven.**

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Glossary of Terms

A number of the terms on this list have been acknowledged as challenging to concretely define, and as such a core element of this research project has been to investigate these definitions through reviews of conflicting theory, socially engaged public events, and autoethnographic study. However, the following definitions are offered to the reader as a starting point, or an invitation, that will be built upon in the thesis discussion as it progresses.

Affect

An inexplicable pull to an object or space, a gut reaction or preference or feeling - but grounded in an emotive or bodily reaction.

Aura

An inexplicable pull to an object or space, a gut reaction or preference or feeling – which retains a connection to an 'original' artefact or space, or to a specific historical, cultural, or social narrative.

Authenticity

I will not define this term here, as I would argue that it is indefinable in any concrete, meaningful way. It will however be discussed at length in this research project with reference to theoretical discourse and in the reporting of this project's fieldwork.

Energy

An inexplicable pull to an object, a gut reaction or preference.

Autoethnographic study

As defined by Carolyn Ellis: an approach to research that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience.[1]

[1] Carolyn Ellis, *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography* (Altamira Press, 2004).

Creative replica

A sub-genre of reproduction, as proposed by this research project, which blurs the lines between art object and heritage replica. It is used as a learning tool or totem to instigate probing discussion on complex philosophical themes within a structured programme of public engagement. Unlike many conventional replicas, it is not constrained by heritage management conventions (such as using like for like materials or appropriate modes of fabrication), but instead uses artistic license to play with tensions between materiality, historical narrative and social value systems.

Epistemic object

As proposed and defined by Flemming Tvede Hanson: an object characterised by its sole purpose being that of a tool to develop theory by instigating reflection and discussion in the context of practice-based design research.[2]

Intangible cultural heritage

As defined by UNESCO: includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.[3]

Intangible cultural or social value

Social value, as proposed by Sian Jones and Steven Leech: social value may relate to people's sense of identity, distinctiveness, belonging, and place, as well as forms of memory and spiritual association. Particular attention is focused on the modes of experience, engagement and practice that inform people's relationships with the

[2] Flemming Tvede Hansen, 'Epistemic Artefacts: The Potential of Artifacts in Design Research' (Paper presented at Communicating (by) Design, Brussels, Sint-Lucas, School of Architecture, Belgium, 2009), 6.
[3] UNESCO, 'UNESCO - What Is Intangible Cultural Heritage?', accessed 18 April 2022, https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003.

historic environment.[4] *I would also argue the cultural element of this term as used in this research project, should be included to reflect the collective cultural narratives of 'meaning' that an artefact or space has come to represent.*

Material Culture

As defined by Linda M. Hurcombe: any thing made, or moved, by people.[5]

Material heritage

Tangible examples of the historic environment, i.e. artefacts, buildings, museum collections

Object

For simplicity, where creative replicas and original debris fragments are discussed collectively in this research project, they are referred to as objects.

Real Fake

Taking inspiration from Cornelius Holtorf's proposed 'authentic reproductions,'[6] *the term 'real fake' was used in this research project as a provocative title for a number of live events, remote workshops and assemblages of objects in order to playfully destabilise the binary opposition of a thing existing as exclusively real or fake. As is discussed in the thesis, 'real fake' was employed to challenge participants' preconceptions of an objects' social value, aura or authenticity, and to explore how language and naming conventions may affect encounters with materiality.*

[4] Siân Jones and Steven Leech, 'Valuing the Historic Environment: A Critical Review of Existing Approaches to Social Value', Report for the AHRC Cultural Value Project (Manchester: University of Manchester, 2015).
[5] L. M. Hurcombe, *Archaeological Artefacts as Material Culture* (London: Routledge, 2007).
[6] Cornelius Holtorf, 'On Pastness: A Reconsideration of Materiality in Archaeological Object Authenticity', *Anthropological Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (2013): 427–43.

Social or cultural biography

As proposed by Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff: this addresses the idea that objects and places have biographies much like people, that can be traced through time as they changed value and significance.[7]

Social reproduction

A proposed and defined in this research project: a communicative exchange between participants, which acts to strengthen the connection between the creative replicas and their original counterparts. This occurrence is often related to memory and reminiscence sharing but may also occur during the exchange of ideas.

Thing

As defined by Ian Woodward: 'things' have a concrete and real material existence, but the word 'thing' suggests an inanimate or inert quality, requiring that actors bring things to life through imagination or physical activity.[8]

[7] Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64–91.
[8] Ian Woodward, *Understanding Material Culture* (London: SAGE, 2007).

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I am deeply grateful to the Mackintosh Building Restoration Project and Glasgow School of Art Recovery Project teams for sharing their time and expertise in the early stages of this project, particular thanks go to Polly Christie, Hannah Patching and Thom Simmons for helping me access the salvaged material that made this project possible. Special thanks go to Dr Rachael Purse, my comrade in arms and fellow Mack PhD survivor for her support, empathy and much needed sense of humour during more challenging moments. Thanks also to my Rijksmuseum Summer School cohort for sharing their expert knowledge and friendship - especially Dr Siobhán Doyle and Dr Emma McAlister.

I am also enormously thankful to all my friends and family (especially Marian) who have supported me through the past four years with kindness and patience as I disappeared down a rabbit hole of aura and replicas. Thanks also to those who proofread my writing and gave feedback on my evolving replicas - Lauren Alexander, Stephanie Edwards, Amy Palmer, Rosie Foubister and Coll Hamilton among others, I owe you many pints.

Finally, I would like to thank Robert Patience (and Bronte) for keeping me fed and laughing, especially to Rob for being an expert technician who spent countless late nights in the studio with me when deadlines were tight. Without his support this PhD would not exist.

Declaration

I, Carolyn Alexander declare that the enclosed submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and consisting of a thesis, two soft bound appendices and one sculptural portfolio appendix, meets the regulations stated in the handbook for the mode of submission selected and approved by the Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

I declare that this submission is my own work, and has not been submitted for any other academic award.

Signed: [redacted] Date: 16/12/21

Student: Carolyn Alexander

Supervisor Support

Signed: [redacted] Date: 14/12/21
Supervisor: Professor Ross Sinclair

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This practice-based research project aims to interrogate perceptions of aura and authenticity in relation to contemporary replicas, and builds upon these findings to propose *a new framework of immersive engagement and interpretation at sites of lost or vulnerable heritage.* As a means to develop this new interpretative strategy, the project explores the potential for auratic encounters with replicated material culture, comparing these experiences to encounters with original artefacts. This research project also investigates whether the embedded use of visual art and socially engaged practice can enhance encounters with heritage spaces, including beyond that of the case study site.

The methodology for this project was guided by the principles of action research – requiring iterative cycles of action, testing and reflection. Drawing on the results of both a sculptural enquiry into replication processes in the studio, and the socially engaged public events in the field, I offer three contributions to knowledge in the field of heritage management. Firstly, the new framework for engagement as mentioned above, which combines 'the material' and 'the social' to prompt engagement with materiality and historical narratives, while investigating why we feel attractions to places or things, or are seduced by feelings of authenticity. The material aspect of this framework constitutes my second contribution to knowledge – a new sub-genre of reproduction, *the creative replica* which explores the crossovers between the authorised reproductions associated with heritage management, and the artistic replications seen at various moments in art history. These pieces are made with materials and processes that challenge our expectations in a museum or heritage context, and can hence be

used as 'epistemic artefacts'[9] (learning tools) to instigate probing discussion which explores complex philosophical themes with relative ease and enjoyment for the participants. The final contribution to knowledge, is the development and demonstrated use of the *remote workshop* as a practical model to facilitate the proposed framework for engagement in socially distanced settings.

1.2 My Practice

My studio practice as an artist is driven by a fascination with the relationships we form with objects and space, particularly historical artefacts in a museum or heritage setting. Primarily sculptural, it has a practical focus on photogrammetry, 3D printing, and casting that lends itself extremely well to an investigation into replication. However, I would argue that the objects I create only 'come to life' when they are activated by participants during social interactions. The material and the social are equal partners in forming the artwork. As such, handling sessions and activity led workshops have formed an important part of my practice. A critical progression in my work was undertaking an MSc specialising in Artefact and Material Culture, a decade after my formal art education. This presented the opportunity to pursue my interests in an academic setting, investigating themes of authenticity, agency, conservation and materiality. This valuable research experience, including producing exhaustive archaeological case studies, artefact reports and critical enquiries, was extremely influential to my artistic practice – in exploring the creative application of theoretical frameworks to aid experimentation and discovery.

[9] Hansen, 'Epistemic Artefacts: The Potential of Artifacts in Design Research'.

1.3 Research Questions

RQ1: Can participants at sites of lost or vulnerable heritage have meaningful auratic experiences with contemporary reproductions of material culture, and how does this experience compare to encounters with authentic artefacts?

RQ2: How can visual art and socially engaged practice be harnessed to provide a methodology for a new framework of engagement and interpretation at heritage sites?

The evolution of the primary research questions (RQ) was led by the iterative nature of action research and a practice-based methodology, which guided the autoethnographic sculptural enquiry and the socially engaged fieldwork that followed. The scope of this research was also affected by unforeseen and significant events that were outside my control, including a second catastrophic fire at the case study site (described in more depth below) and a global pandemic. However while substantial effort and agility were required to respond to these events, I would argue the resulting research methodology and focus was enriched despite the challenging conditions.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

In order to answer the research questions identified above, the main aims and objectives of this study were as follows:

Aim I: Reveal participants' perceptions of aura, authenticity and value in relation to the replica, exploring how they differ to encounters with 'real' objects.

Objective I: Employ the reflexive practice of action research to produce iterative prototypes (creative replicas) that are designed to act as epistemic artefacts (learning tools) in live events.

Aim II: Establish a new form of sensorial engagement and interpretation that acts as a surrogate and provocation, activating an immersive and social experience that prompts engagement with materiality and historical narratives, while questioning why we feel attractions to places, things or feelings of authenticity.

Objective II: Adopt principles of conduct from socially engaged practice to develop and test a framework of engagement and interpretation that uses encounters with creative replicas as a catalyst to group interrogations and critiques.

1.5 The Mack as a case study

The Glasgow School of Art Mackintosh Building Restoration Project (MBRP), initially formed the overarching case study for this PhD. However, a year after my project began, a second major fire struck the Mackintosh Building (the Mack), with even more devastating results. While aspects of my original methodology inevitably had to change, the underlying need and focus for this study became even more urgent than before. When my project began, it was assumed that the newly restored Mack building would be complete and open to the public by now, which is significant as my research was initially focused on constructing a sensorial interpretation strategy to complement and deepen engagement with the restoration. This aim responded to a key concern identified in the aspirations of Glasgow School of Art (GSA) to restore the Mack to its original configuration, vastly different to how many would have known it in recent decades, potentially severing the auratic and social connections many had felt with the building – risking losing its *aura.* Before the second fire, the MBRP was constrained,

understandably, by conservation principles and a commitment to celebrating the original designs. While much of the in-progress restoration work has now been lost, where the fixtures and fittings *had* been remade prior to the second fire, they were meticulously researched so as to be constructed in exactly the same way as the original, using like for like materials and fabrication processes.

Figure 1. Studio doors of the Mack, left ajar, paint peeling from fire damage. Post fire 1, pre fire 2, February 2018.

However, as *things*, they were also discreet and careful not to be confused as original or pastiche. With the accretions of the post-war years stripped away and no patina of age, the newly restored Mack might have been an authentic and beautifully crafted restoration – but it might also have looked 'wrong' or too new, to those who had worked or studied there in the past 50 years. Conversely, as will be discussed and evidenced in this thesis, visual art, or the *creative replica*,

may have more freedom to play with tensions between materiality, historical narrative and social value systems.

This project now uses *the loss of the Mack* as an overarching case study. Using selected debris salvaged from the Mack after the 2014 fire, this project uses photogrammetry, 3D printing and traditional moulding and casting processes to fabricate creative replicas that might act as surrogates, or provocations for engagement with material culture that has been lost. Essentially, this investigation focuses on the form that replicas can take, while also considering our culturally engrained understandings or preconceptions of value, and how they affect our encounters with 'Rieglian monuments'[10] to heritage.

1.6 Theoretical context for this study

The foundational theoretical context of this enquiry refers to distinguished contributors to the field of material culture and heritage studies. It investigates our relationships with materials, objects, spaces, and perceptions of aura and authenticity. Historical contributions to these themes are explored in **Chapter Two**, with reference to seminal texts which have influenced continuing debates on authenticity and heritage management practice, alongside guidance and principles of conservation and restoration such as the Burra Charter.[11] In addition, it reviews more contemporary contributions to the field of heritage studies, with reference to texts which continue to challenge previous materialist

[10] Sebastiano Barassi, 'The Modern Cult of Replicas: A Rieglian Analysis of Values in Replication', *Tate Papers* 8 (Autumn 2007); Alois Riegl, 'The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development', in *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*, ed. Nicholas. Stanley-Price, Mansfield Kirby. Talley, and Alessandra. Melucco Vaccaro, Readings in Conservation (Getty Conservation Institute, 1996), 69–83. See also Chapter 2.2 of this thesis for discussion of Rieglian Monuments.
[11] ICOMOS, 'Burra Charter The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1999 International Council on Monuments and Sites', 1999; ICOMOS, 'The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013', 2013.

thinking, to uncover a balance between the material, cultural and social aspects of replicas that might contribute to an affectual encounter with replicated material culture.

The range of research projects that focus on the value of replicas, reproductions and restorations, in both material and digital forms, has been rapidly increasing for over a decade. For example, in 2017 the V&A led *Reproduction Of Art And Cultural Heritage* (ReACH) project launched new guidelines that reconsider approaches, *'to reproducing, storing and sharing works of art and cultural heritage,'* shortly after which, the V&A reopened their renovated Cast Courts with a new gallery space dedicated to contemporary processes of replication.[12] More recently, the University of Stirling launched *New Futures for Replicas: Principles and Guidance for Museums and Heritage* and a broader research network, led by Sally Foster and Sian Jones after a decade of research and prominent contributions to the field.[13] This is in addition to a flurry of critical contributions in the past two years alone which progress discussions on the potential authenticity (or not) of reproductions in heritage contexts.[14]

Conversely, when I began this study, it was frequently noted in academic literature that the use of contemporary art as intervention or interpretation at heritage sites was a common occurrence but woefully underreported. However,

[12] ReACH, *Copy Culture, Sharing in the Age of Digital Reproduction*, ed. Brendan Cormier (London: V&A Publishing, 2018).
[13] Sally Foster and Siân Jones, 'New Futures for Replicas: Principles and Guidance for Museums and Heritage' (Stirling: University of Stirling, 2020).
[14] Sally Foster and Siân Jones, *My Life as a Replica: St John's Cross, Iona* (Oxford: Windgather Press, 2020); Barbara Wood, 'A Review of the Concept of Authenticity in Heritage, with Particular Reference to Historic Houses', *Collections* 16, no. 1 (2020): 8–33; Paola Di Giuseppantonio Di Franco, Fabrizio Galeazzi, and Valentina Vassallo, *Authenticity and Cultural Heritage in the Age of 3D Digital Reproductions* (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2018); John Darlington, *Fake Heritage* (London: Yale University Press, 2020).

AHRC funded project *Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience* (MACHE)[15] recently completed an in-depth mapping project to begin to remedy this gap. While in attendance as a speaker at the associated national conference, it was extremely encouraging to see the breadth and quality of contemporary art projects commissioned at heritage sites, but also disappointing to realise they were individual highlights, rather than fully supported and embedded into regular engagement and interpretation programming. This is the gap in knowledge this research project will fill, in its examination of visual art and socially engaged practice as an interpretative strategy, and as a means to positively alter and enhance engagement with both replicas and lost material heritage.

1.6 Overview of fieldwork

Public engagement within a framework of socially engaged practice has been a key element of this fieldwork methodology. Firstly to reflexively guide the direction of the research and practice. Secondly to act as a proof-of-concept model, to develop and test an immersive experience that could enhance engagement with the case study site, while encouraging participants to collaboratively interrogate subjective material attractions, perceptions of aura and authenticity, and social value of material culture in the context of replicas. This was achieved through a programme of live events and latterly, remote workshops, which took place over three distinct phases, and included a display of creative replicas, handling sessions, selecting and critiquing activities, and group discussion – as is described in depth in **Chapter Three** and **Chapter Four**.

[15] Newcastle University, 'Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience (MCAHE)' (Newcastle University), accessed 10 December 2021, https://research.ncl.ac.uk/mcahe/.

1.7 Thesis Structure

As noted above, **Chapter Two** contextualises this research by exploring aura, authenticity and materiality, alongside interpretative strategies in museums and heritage, in addition to comparing the reception of replication in heritage and visual art contexts. **Chapter Three** outlines the research methods used and highlights the role of socially engaged art practice in this study. It also gives an overview of the three collections of creative replicas created, and the processes and materials that were tested as the replica collections were developed. A more detailed examination of this practical aspect of the research can be accessed in **Appendix I: The Catalogue**. **Chapter Four** gives a breakdown of each of the three phases of fieldwork, including critical insights gathered, and **Chapter Six** then discuss these insights in more depth, with reference to the main research questions that have guided the project.

Chapter Five will guide the reader through the contents of the **Appendix II: A Collection** box. This is intended to give the reader critical insight into the practice-based elements of this research in addition to insight into the fieldwork phase, by engaging the reader in a remote workshop experience. **Chapter Seven** reflects on the project as a whole, setting out the established framework of engagement and proposing how the three contributions to knowledge could be employed in the future at alternative heritage sites.

Chapter Two: Literature & Practical Review: Auratic experiences and authentic reproductions

2.1 Introduction

'The interpreter must use art, and at best he will be somewhat of a poet.'[16]

This chapter provides a theoretical and practical context to this research project, reviewing the work of distinguished contributors to the fields of heritage studies, material culture and fine art practice. It should be noted however, that while socially engaged art practice formed a critical element of the practical research conducted, this aspect is discussed in the context of the project methodology in **Chapter Three**. In order to develop a new framework for engagement and interpretation at heritage sites that uses creative replicas as a catalyst to auratic encounters, an understanding of the theoretical landscape surrounding aura, authenticity and the value of the replica in heritage contexts is essential.

This review begins by examining the fluctuating definitions of aura and authenticity by tracing the influences of seminal texts by authors such as Walter Benjamin and Alois Riegl, alongside ICOMOS guidance documents such as the *Burra Charter* that have shaped heritage management conservation and restoration principles. It then examines how conflicting definitions of materialist and constructivist debates surrounding aura and authenticity in heritage studies discourse have influenced an ideological shift away from the object focused norms, to a growing appreciation of the intangible and social values of objects and spaces.

[16] Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 4th ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 54.

In addition, this review evaluates the potential for authentic reproductions and creative acts of replication. In order to investigate cross-disciplinary links between heritage and visual art practice, it will consider artists dealing with aspects of replication in their work in order to explore the differing connotations of replication in heritage and fine art. Finally, this chapter will establish definitions and changing practices in the field of heritage interpretation and progressive interpretive approaches in museums, also referencing a number of creative outputs directly related to the Mack fires. It will compare established models with emergent approaches, evaluating the potential for artists' interventions and contemporary art practice to heighten aura or affect, and deepen engagement with lost or vulnerable heritage.

As noted in **Chapter One**, while this research project has undoubtably changed after the Mack's second devastating fire, the theoretical context remains the same. At its core, this project interrogates the application of novel approaches to interpretation and engagement strategies at heritage sites. To support this project's aim to the design and test a framework for impactful, affectual interpretation of lost heritage, this contextual review will survey discourse surrounding current interpretative practices while establishing theoretical justification for the approach taken to fill an identified gap in knowledge.

2.2 Aura and Authenticity

'The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced.'[17]

[17] Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in The Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 4.

When attempting to define the term aura in the context of heritage management, Walter Benjamin's influential essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*[18] is regularly cited and debated. While his text refers more specifically to the use of photography and cinema as modes of reproduction in a post-modern cultural sphere, it has become the go-to start point when unravelling the complexities of the term aura – with Benjamin often credited with first using it within cultural discourse in relation to ideas of authenticity and reproduction.[19] Benjamin argued that aura and authenticity could only exist in the presence of an original artefact, monument or building, and that a reproduction serves only to dilute or diminish the aura of the original. Under these conditions, aura is embodied by the material nature of a thing, and the passage of time it has experienced. In his essay, aura and authenticity are alluded to as inherent attributes of a thing's materiality, a concept that has since been disputed by a number of academics, and which will be more fully discussed in due course.[20] However, in Benjamin's pursuit to define aura, it seems the primary concerns were not only a philosophical sense of closeness to the original object

[18] Benjamin, 4.

[19] Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in The Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969); Siân Jones and Thomas Yarrow, 'Crafting Authenticity: An Ethnography of Conservation Practice', *Journal of Material Culture* 18, no. 1 (2013): 3–26; Siân Jones, 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves', *Journal of Material Culture* 15, no. 2 (2010): 181–203; Siân Jones, 'Experiencing Authenticity at Heritage Sites: Some Implications for Heritage Management and Conservation', *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 11, no. 2 (2009): 133–47; Stuart Jeffrey, 'Challenging Heritage Visualisation: Beauty, Aura and Democratisation', *Open Archaeology* 1, no. 1 (2015); Bruno Latour; Adam Lowe, 'The Migration of the Aura or How to Explore the Original through Its Facsimiles', in *Switching Codes*, ed. Thomas Bartscherer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Cornelius Holtorf, 'On Pastness: A Reconsideration of Materiality in Archaeological Object Authenticity', *Anthropological Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (2013): 427–43; Cornelius Holtorf and Tim Schadla-Hall, 'Age as Artefact: On Archaeological Authenticity', *European Journal of Archaeology* 2, no. 2 (1999): 229–49.

[20] C. Holtorf and Tim Schadla-Hall, 'Age as Artefact: On Archaeological Authenticity', *European Journal of Archaeology* 2, no. 2 (1 August 1999): 229–47; Holtorf, 'On Pastness: A Reconsideration of Materiality in Archaeological Object Authenticity', 2013; Michael. Shanks, *Experiencing the Past : On the Character of Archaeology*. (London: Routledge, 2011); Riegl, 'The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development'.

and its maker, but also a simultaneous physical distance between object and subject.[21] This distance could perhaps symbolise the sense of the unattainable, or the pilgrimage required to confront a historical object or artwork. Benjamin proposed that this lack of accessibility, which he deemed to be vital for an appreciation of aura, could be shattered by the accessible nature of a reproduction. Not only could a reproduction be encountered by virtually anyone at any time, disrupting its unique position in time and space, but the reproduction also removed the proximity to its maker, and in Benjamin's view, its aura.[22]

The concept of authenticity is often used in conjunction with that of aura, following Benjamin's argument that aura is perceived only in the presence of the authentic original. Indeed, at times, the terms can be used almost interchangeably, or can be combined to have singular meaning, becoming 'aura of authenticity.'[23] At the very least, in the context of cultural heritage, they are used as closely related conceptual attributes, indicating a rareness or cultural significance.[24] While Benjamin may be credited with introducing the notion of aura in this context, authenticity has been long debated by archaeologists and heritage professionals. Lionel Trilling's *Sincerity and Authenticity* is often cited as first discussing our preoccupation with authenticity, proposing that it is a way of reinforcing our sense of identity and individuality.[25] In this text, he equates

[21] Stuart Jeffrey, 'Challenging Heritage Visualisation: Beauty, Aura and Democratisation', *Open Archaeology* 1, no. 1 (2015); Jones, 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves', 2010, 189.
[22] Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in The Age of Mechanical Reproduction', 1969, 5.
[23] Siân Jones, 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves', *Journal of Material Culture* 15, no. 2 (2010): 181; Sally M. Foster and Neil G.W. Curtis, 'The Thing about Replicas—Why Historic Replicas Matter', *European Journal of Archaeology* 19, no. 1 (2016): 140.
[24] Holtorf, 'On Pastness: A Reconsideration of Materiality in Archaeological Object Authenticity', 2013.
[25] Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Harvard University Press, 1971), 92.

authenticity with sincerity, which he defines as 'the absence of dissimulation or feigning or pretence.'[26] Umberto Eco later mirrored this sentiment, suggesting a fake is not recognised as such until it claims to be an original.[27]

Another important historical contributor to this discussion is Alois Riegl, who proposed a framework for understanding authenticity that he termed '*Commemorative Values*,' which he used to analyse our perception of authenticity and its influence on heritage management.[28] Riegl uses the term monument to describe 'artistic and historical monuments,' i.e. artworks, buildings or structures that had become 'monuments' to the past, rather than the more common contemporary understanding of a monument which has been produced as a commemoration of something or someone. To avoid confusion, for the purposes of the following discussion I will employ the term monuments as used by Riegl.

Of the three defined commemorative values, historical value, age value and use value, the two former have particularly significant relevance to this study. Historical value reflects 'the very specific yet individual stage the monument represents in the development of human creation in a particular field,'[29] taking a point in the monument's lifetime, typically its original configuration, and framing it for present day consumption. The historical value will increase the longer a monument remains in its original state.[30] It communicates the makers original intentions and gives us insight into the context in which it was made. However, for Riegl, age value differs in that it requires no fidelity to the monument's

[26] Trilling, 13.
[27] Umberto. Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, Advances in Semiotics (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 177.
[28] Riegl, 'The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development' [1928].
[29] Riegl, 45.
[30] Riegl, 77.

original appearance, and is 'revealed in the imperfection, a lack of completeness, a tendency to dissolve shape and colour, characteristics that are in complete contrast with those of modern.'[31] The age value increases as the monument decays, a visual testament to the monuments passage through time that requires minimal historical knowledge of the site in question.

To choose to maintain historical value is not without its philosophical challenges. A focus on historical value may result in either the erasure of part of a monuments cultural biography - by restoring it to its original physical manifestation (as per the original intentions of the Mackintosh Building Restoration Project), or suspending the monument at a point in time where it was deemed important enough to preserve by employing preventative conservation.[32]

Much like Riegl's age value, Ernst van de Wetering, proposes that we decipher the surface of objects using a 'visual memory bank' of materials, accrued from birth.[33] This memory bank allows us to instinctively recognise the patina of age, and thus, according to van de Wetering, increased value. These encounters are subjective, informed by previous social interactions with objects and spaces, but catalysed by the material evidence on the object's surface. Similarly, in a comparable context of investigation into the interpretative power of age value brought forth by our learned experiences of aging or decaying objects, Caitlin

[31] Riegl, 73.

[32] Riegl, 43.

[33] Ernst van de Wetering, 'The Surface of Objects and Museum Style', in *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*, ed. Nicholas. Stanley-Price, Mansfield Kirby. Talley, and Alessandra. Melucco Vaccaro (Santa Monica: Getty Conservation Institute, 1996), 416.

DeSilvey has contributed important thinking on 'curated decay.'[34] In an exploration of curatorial practice and archaeological excavation which she describes as 'entropic heritage practice,'[35] DeSilvey proposes provocative and affectual methods of salvage, interpretation and display, which celebrate ecology and entropy by seeking to 'collaborate – rather than defend against,' the natural processes of decay.[36] Noting that museums and heritage tend to favour the 'stasis and preservation'[37] of material heritage as a rule, she asks, 'what happens if we choose not to intervene? Can we uncouple the work of memory from the burden of material stasis.'[38] Rather than regarding these processes as solely destructive to the historical narrative, she asks what they can tell us about the past the object or space has witnessed, and the wider context it is has been situated within. The sense of risk or precarity in this approach could arguably make an object even more powerful and alive, rather than 'pickling it'[39] in place at a moment that has been judged as important. However, while the visible patina and decay associated with age value is arguably more visceral than historical value as defined by Riegl, intensifying as the monument degrades, the monument's descent into ruin will eventually erase any value entirely as 'a pile of stones represents nothing more than a dead, formless fragment of the immensity of nature's force.'[40] It has been acknowledged that patina has a significant influence on the experience of aura and authenticity, but we are unable to recognise this

[34] Caitlin DeSilvey, *Curated Decay: Heritage beyond Saving* (Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 2017).
[35] DeSilvey.
[36] DeSilvey.
[37] Caitlin DeSilvey, 'Observed Decay: Telling Stories with Mutable Things', *Journal of Material Culture* 11, no. 3 (2006): 335.
[38] DeSilvey, 4.
[39] DeSilvey, *Curated Decay: Heritage beyond Saving*, 188.
[40] Riegl, 73.

instinctively where there is no context or interpretation to guide us.[41] In many cases, facilitating an experience of aura and authenticity is contingent on a delicate balance between these values, in addition to careful display, contextualisation and interpretation of its narrative.

2.3. Materiality and the value of the immaterial

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to offer a concrete definition of materiality, which is recognised as a notoriously difficult term to pin down.[42] However, for the purposes of this review, I will offer a selection of theories that may be used to explain my approach to this research project. In the introduction to *The Handbook of Material Culture*, Christopher Tilley writes,

'According to various dictionary definitions materiality can mean substance, something comprised of elements or constituents, of variously composed matter: the tangible, the existing or concrete, the substantial, the worldly and real as opposed to the imaginary, ideal and value laden aspects of human existence' [43]

Tilley proposes that materiality is therefore the, 'fleshy, corporeal and physical,'[44] the opposite of the ephemeral, conceptual or intangible. However, he is careful to acknowledge the wide range of conflicting ideas the word has been taken to represent. Materiality can also be used as a term encompassing our relationships

[41] see van de Wetering, 'The Surface of Objects and Museum Style'; Holtorf and Schadla-Hall, 'Age as Artefact: On Archaeological Authenticity', 1999; Holtorf, 'On Pastness: A Reconsideration of Materiality in Archaeological Object Authenticity', 2013; Tim Ingold, *Being Alive : Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (London: Routledge, 2011).

[42] Daniel Miller, *Materiality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Christopher Y. Tilley, *Handbook of Material Culture* (London: SAGE, 2006); Ingold, *Being Alive : Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*.

[43] Tilley, *Handbook of Material Culture*, 3.

[44] Tilley, 3.

with things, and how we use them to define our own realities.[45] Both of these definitions are important to this study, focused on both the loss and reconstruction of material fabric (the physical), but also rebuilding the connection between a community and a lost heritage space (the social or intangible).

Tim Ingold suggests the term materiality is more often used to describe the cognitive perception of our relationship with materials, rather than our understanding of material properties. He argues that the attributes of materials are frequently neglected when discussing a thing's materiality, which more often concentrates on how something is defined in relation to human interaction or entanglement.[46] When materials are brought together to form an object, the raw materials can seem to disappear, with our attention focused on the thing that has replaced them. Often, they become constituent parts of a bigger whole with the material properties devalued.[47] Similarly, DeSilvey proposes that decay leads 'the whole' to become 'less legible' and as the natural processes of decay, ecology or entropy take root it may lead the onlooker to think on the materials and their origins, or how its absence affects the cultural context it was a part of, overwriting the thing's original essence of meaning.[48] This links back to previous discussions on the perception of age value, particularly if material properties are able to re-emerge through decay and the inevitable destruction of objects.[49] If perception of age value reinforces perception of aura, could the recognition of material properties, and the cultural biography of these materials, ever be a contributing factor to the auratic experience?

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[45] Miller, *Materiality*.
[46] Ingold, *Being Alive : Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*, 20.
[47] Ingold, 24.
[48] DeSilvey, 'Observed Decay: Telling Stories with Mutable Things', 3.
[49] Ingold, *Being Alive : Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*, 27.

A materialist approach to authenticity, utilising Ruskinan conservation principles (i.e. minimum intervention, conserve and preserve as found, do not attempt to restore) and exemplified by the *Burra Charter* have been normalized to an extent as to be accepted as best practice.[50] Originally adopted in 1979, it is defined as 'a standard of practice for those who provide advice, make decisions about, or undertake works to places of cultural significance.'[51] The introduction of the *Burra Charter*, in addition to the slightly earlier *Convention Concerning the Protection of World Culture, National Heritage* in 1972, and their materialist focus in terms of preserving or protecting cultural and natural heritage, were both extremely influential in 'the development of national and international cultural heritage policies and practices.'[52] However, a constructivist perspective, which argues heritage is 'culturally constructed,'[53] rather than inherent in its material properties, is becoming more widely recognised, in theory if not yet in practice.[54] Laurajane Smith is an influential contributor to this debate, particularly in her arguments surrounding intangible heritage, though it is important to note that she identifies as a practitioner of critical realism, rather that social constructivism. She defines critical realism as demonstrating an 'understanding [of] the way the social constructs knowledge and discourses, [without forgetting] the material or

[50] Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006), 23; ICOMOS, 'International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter 1964)', 1964; ICOMOS, 'Burra Charter The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1999 International Council on Monuments and Sites', 1999; Historic Scotland, 'Scottish Historic Environment Policy.' (Edinburgh, 2009).
[51] ICOMOS, 'Burra Charter The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1999 International Council on Monuments and Sites', 1999.
[52] Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa, eds., *Intangible Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2008), 1.
[53] Jones, 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves', 2010, 182.
[54] Jones, 'Experiencing Authenticity at Heritage Sites: Some Implications for Heritage Management and Conservation'; Jones, 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves', 2010; Foster and Curtis, 'The Thing about Replicas—Why Historic Replicas Matter', 2016; Holtorf and Schadla-Hall, 'Age as Artefact: On Archaeological Authenticity', 1999.

concrete; it understands that human agency has consequences.'[55] In reaction to the observed focus on materiality within heritage practices, she introduces a new term, 'authorized heritage discourse', which she defines as,

'(an) attention on aesthetically pleasing material objects, sites, places and/or landscapes that current generations 'must' care for, protect and revere so that they may be passed to nebulous future generations for their 'education', and to forge a sense of common identity based on the past.'[56]

Smith argues that in assuming the role of caretaker of the past to safeguard heritage for the future, we are stripping the agency from potential actors in the present, prohibiting the inclusion of a contemporary cultural stamp on heritage narratives and skipping generations for some unknown future consumer.[57] The conventional materialist interpretation of heritage will represent the past, for the future; but where is the present represented? Smith argues for better recognition of the subjective nature of heritage, which involves questioning 'assumed objectivity' in terms of the authored narratives surrounding it, while also shifting focus away from established 'obsessions with physicality,'[58] which is especially relevant to this study.

Dawson Munjeri makes a similar point, highlighting the bias shown towards material manifestations of heritage in the *Burra* and *Venice Charters*, noting 'highly symbolic objects take centre stage at the expense of popular forms of

[55] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 2006, 3.
[56] Smith, 29.
[57] Smith, 29.
[58] Smith, 53–54.

cultural expression or of historical truth.'[59] To exemplify this line of thought, Smith draws on field experience in Northern Queensland, where women from the Waanyi community found the process of retelling stories through recorded oral testimony more powerful than the designated heritage sites Smith and her colleagues were there to research.[60] Similarly, Kenji Yoshida uses the traditional Shinto shrine *Ise Jingu* as an example of the problematic nature of a reliance exclusively on objects and materiality to embody heritage. The shrine is completely renewed every 20 years, with traditional techniques passed down through the generations so it may be re-erected in the exact same form each time.[61] While a binary division of eastern and western approaches to heritage is contentious, Munjeri makes an extremely salient point, noting that in a case such as this, the material monument would exhibit, 'zero per cent originality in terms of material although again having 100 per cent originality in setting because the site has remained the same for over 1,000 years.'[62] These challenges were partially addressed at the 1994 Nara Conference and subsequent *Document on Authenticity*, in addition to the *UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*, which recognised, 'practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, […] that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage' as a form of heritage which must be saved.[63] Still, Smith challenges the idea that there should be any distinction made between intangible and tangible heritage, arguing that

[59] Dawson Munjeri, 'Tangible and Intangible Heritage: From Difference to Convergence', *Museum International* 56, no. 1–2 (2004): 13.
[60] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 2006, 45.
[61] Kenji Yoshida, 'The Museum and the Intangible Cultural Heritage', *Museum International* 56, no. 1–2 (2004): 108.
[62] Munjeri, 'Tangible and Intangible Heritage: From Difference to Convergence', 15.
[63] UNESCO, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (Paris, 2003), Article 2.1.

'all heritage is intangible.'[64] She proposes that authenticity is not to be found in an embodied object but in the *process of heritage*, which is a social and performative exercise in meaning making.[65]

The social and cultural biography of things also comes into play when we are considering the intangible value of artefacts *and* replicas.[66] Introduced by Arjun Appadurai's seminal collection of essays, *The Social Life of Things,* this proposes that objects and places have biographies much like people, that can be traced through time as they changed value and significance. [67] Within this collection, Igor Kopytoff explores the life cycle of things, and how this affects our relationships with them.[68] He reasons that things represent the 'natural universe of commodities' while people represent its polar opposite, individualism.[69] During its life cycle, a things status can change from that of commodity, i.e. the common or exchangeable, to that of the singularized, priceless and immutable thing, upon which we have subjectively bestowed a sense of individuality. In considering how the biography of things affect the value we place upon them, Webb Keane notes that 'the qualities bundled together in any object will shift in

[64] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 2006; Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa, *Intangible Heritage*. (London: Routledge, 2009), 6, 291.
[65] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 2006, 45; David. Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 410; Bella Dicks, 'Encoding and Decoding the People', *European Journal of Communication* 15, no. 1 (2000): 61.
[66] Foster and Jones, *My Life as a Replica: St John's Cross, Iona*.
[67] Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things : Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
[68] Appadurai; Beverley Butler, 'Heritage and the Present Past', in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. Patricia Tilley, Chris; Keane, Webb; Kuchler, Susanne; Rowlands, Mike; Spyer (London: SAGE, 2006), 461–79.
[69] Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in *The Social Life of Things : Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64.

their relative salience, value, utility, and relevance across contexts.'[70] In speaking of bundles, or biographies, Keane notes that a single quality cannot be disembodied from an object, as the qualities are integrated within our understanding of that particular object whilst also intermingling with our material memory bank of all the other objects we have encountered. With this in mind, it could be challenged that an obsession with the quality of being original or authentic *in isolation* can be detrimental to an understanding of an objects social and cultural biography. Moreover, as argued by Sian Jones, 'authenticity is not inherent in the object. Rather, it is a quality that is culturally constructed and varies according to who is observing the object and in what context.'[71]

Most notably, Jones proposes that it is important to redefine encounters with historical objects and monuments as a negotiation, active rather than passive, which is driven by our social and subjective relationships, interests, knowledge and experiences within a material realm:

'When we look at how people experience and negotiate authenticity through objects, it is the networks of relationships between people, places and things that appear to be central, not the things in themselves.'[72]

The active negotiation as proposed by Jones could be compared to the work of socially engaged art practice, particularly the dialogical exchange encompassed by both approaches. As such this method of engaging with material culture felt like a very familiar methodology to me that was empathetic with my artistic practice, and is thus especially relevant to this research project. In a case study of

[70] Webb Keane, 'Signs Are Not the Garb of Meaning: On the Social Analysis of Material Things', in *Materiality*, ed. Daniel Miller (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 188.
[71] Jones, 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves', 2010, 189.
[72] Jones, 181.

the *Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab*, Jones illustrates the varying ways in which visitors were affected by their encounter with a newly discovered portion of a cross-slab, a previously excavated section of which was accessioned and displayed in the Museum of Scotland.[73] To complicate matters, in the years between the two discoveries, a reproduction of the previously excavated cross-slab had been commissioned, and was erected in close proximity to the second excavation site.[74] The experiences of local residents described in this case study, illustrate Jones' theories on 'the inalienable relationships between objects, people and places.'[75] Local residents felt a more visceral connection to the second section, still partially in the ground, than the upper section displayed in the museum.[76] The reconstruction was felt to be 'soulless' by visiting tourists, but the local residents of the town who had witnessed its fabrication, felt it still exhibited authentic qualities, though different in essence and less so than the excavated original.[77] These subjective experiences reflect structuralist theories adapted for material culture studies that note the capacity for objects and places to become 'signs.'[78] Each group found the original cross slab symbolised or embodied a slightly different story, with their own cultural and social backgrounds guiding the perceptions drawn.[79] The theory that all heritage is intangible heritage, led by Smith, is a compelling one. However, in light of the case study at *Hilton of*

[73] For an in-depth case study of this site see Jones, 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves', 2010; Jones, 'Experiencing Authenticity at Heritage Sites: Some Implications for Heritage Management and Conservation'.
[74] Jones, 'Experiencing Authenticity at Heritage Sites: Some Implications for Heritage Management and Conservation'; Jones, 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves', 2010.
[75] Jones, 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves', 2010, 190.
[76] Jones, 193.
[77] Jones, 197.
[78] Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting : An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1995); Miller, *Materiality*.
[79] Jones, 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves', 2010, 197.

Cadboll, and in addition to the writing of DeSilvey, Van de Wetering, and Riegl, it could be argued that encounters with physical objects and monuments can act as a catalyst for powerful sensory experiences. It remains to be proven whether the materiality of these objects and monuments must be authentic in the traditional sense, to be perceived as auratic.

2.4 Real Fakes: authentic reproduction and creative replication

'Is it morally defensible to make replicas, or should the work be allowed to die gracefully?'[80]

In their influential account of the history of replicas and their use, Sally Foster and Neil Curtis illustrate the conditions in which the perception of replicas and reproductions have evolved. This comprehensive survey of their use, which pays particular attention to copies of Classical and Renaissance sculpture, calls attention to the cultural biography of replicas as a means to appreciate their value. Once seen as a valuable teaching aid, the use of the classical replica in museums fell out of favour in the late 19th century, with the main concern being that they could become misleading in terms of their authenticity.[81] However, as they aged, these copies tended to gain more value as discrete objects of cultural importance – with both age and historical value increasing as they evolved into legitimate artefacts in their own right.[82] Foster and Curtis propose that the replica is able to communicate the cultural context of the original in the time the copies were made, emphasising the social importance of the original in addition to revealing advancing fabrication techniques through the ages.[83] Mark Jones also

[80] Mather Gale, 'Amazement and Uneasiness: Early Thoughts', *Tate Papers* Autumn (2007).
[81] Foster and Curtis, 'The Thing about Replicas—Why Historic Replicas Matter', 2016, 123.
[82] Foster and Curtis, 2016.
[83] Foster and Curtis, 'The Thing about Replicas—Why Historic Replicas Matter', 2016, 128.

has similar views in his essay '*Why fakes?,*' noting that changing attitudes to restoration practices had also altered the perception of restored originals to forgeries. In the late 18th century it was seen by some as desirable to return damaged works of art to their original state, so they could be appreciated 'in as near as possible the form that they had had in classical times.' By the early 19th century this practice had already fallen out of favour, with some museums removing repairs and additions so they could be viewed in their most 'authentic' state, with the material consequences of aging seen as vital to their integrity.[84] In Foster and Curtis's examination of the replica as a powerful tool to explore evolving systems of value in museums and heritage practice, a significant contribution to the discourse is that of the 'composite biography.'[85] This approach to tracing the provenance and cultural biography of an original thing, referencing the work of Latour and Lowe which is discussed below, also incorporates the related replica biographies to give a richer understanding of the changing social and historical value of the original.[86] They note,

'the examination and comparison of individual biographies to identify when trends in use, or non-use, of replicas become visible, which in turn provides a broader context for assessing and appreciating the significance and meaning of individual objects and their trajectories.[87]*'*

Similarly, building on years of both individual and collaborative research on St John's Cross and its replica equivalent, Foster and Jones provide an extensive and

[84] Mark Jones, 'Why Fakes?', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan Pearce (London: Routledge, 2012), 95.
[85] Foster and Curtis.
[86] Bruno Latour; Adam Lowe, 'The Migration of the Aura or How to Explore the Original through Its Facsimiles'.
[87] Foster and Curtis, 131.

detailed account of its 'composite biographies' in, *My Life as a Replica: St John's Cross, Iona.*[88] Using St John's Cross replica as a case study, this important work traces the changing perceptions of replicas in relation to aura, authenticity and social value in the context of museums and heritage, and proposes that 'replicas acquire aura and authenticity when they are recognised as things in their own right, socially embedded and inextricably linked to the expectations and experience of their materiality, setting and place.'[89] This argument is particularly influential to this study, and foundational to the development and testing of creative replicas in the field. While Foster and Jones establish a strong case for replicas accruing value as they age, and as capable of gaining social significance for those who witnessed their creation, it must also be determined if the status of replicas made in our own time can be employed as interpretative tools which may facilitate affectual engagement with the historical and social narratives of lost monuments.

Perhaps the biggest consideration in the creation of an auratic or authentic replica is the problematic use of deception. In his essay, *On Pastness: A Reconsideration of Materiality in Archaeological Object Authenticity*, Cornelius Holtorf offers a convincing but provocative set of guidelines, using a method combining materialist and constructivist approaches.[90] While agreeing with Jones that neither approach is independently suitable, he suggests that the crucial aspects contributing to our appreciation of authenticity are guided by the material qualities of decay, visitor preconceptions, and the quality of the narrative which surrounds them.[91] These three components combined produce a state of

[88] Foster and Curtis, 17; Foster and Jones, *My Life as a Replica: St John's Cross, Iona*, 29.
[89] Foster and Jones, *My Life as a Replica: St John's Cross, Iona*, 225.
[90] Holtorf, 'On Pastness: A Reconsideration of Materiality in Archaeological Object Authenticity', 2013; Jones, 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves', 2010.
[91] Holtorf, 2013.

'pastness,' a term introduced by Holtorf to encapsulate 'being of the past'. He argues 'pastness' is a crucial attribute in the experience of authenticity, and indeed the production of authentic reproductions.

Aligned in part with the work of Riegl and Van de Wetering, Holtorf suggests that patina and surface deterioration are the most important contributing factors to experiencing age value or 'pastness.'[92] Arguing that 'pastness' transcends historical value, he proposes that by employing a falsified patina, alongside a good narrative, auratic experiences can be facilitated through encounters with reproductions.

'it can be easily observed that visitors to archaeological sites or museums experience authenticity and aura in front of ancient originals to exactly the same extent as in front of very good reproductions or copies – as long as they do not know them as reproductions or copies.' [93]

However, this problematic use of deception creates an impasse in the context of interpretation and engagement strategies. Once the deception has been revealed, any sense of connection to the original is severed and the auratic experience or perception of authenticity destroyed. Essentially, as a result of the deception, the replica passes into the realm of the fake, and thus its interpretative powers or engaging potential are lost.[94] Similarly, while David Lowenthal writes, 'most people not only cannot tell originals from replicas, they are just as pleased with the latter. The copy reflects 'the past' no less that the original,'[95] he also reflects,

[92] Riegl, 'The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development'; van de Wetering, 'The Surface of Objects and Museum Style'.
[93] Holtorf and Schadla-Hall, 'Age as Artefact: On Archaeological Authenticity', 1999.
[94] Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*.
[95] David. Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 295.

in reference to Reid Bishop, that where 'genuine bits of the past' are missing, our ability to identify what is real and what is fake will suffer, as will 'our sense of values.'[96]

A study by Bruno Latour and Adam Lowe also supports the possibility of the authentic reproduction, though they define the key element to be the *quality* of the reproduction:

'A badly reproduced original… risks disappearing, while a well-copied original may enhance its originality and continue to trigger new copies. Facsimiles, especially those relying on complex (digital) techniques, are thus the most fruitful way to explore the original and even to redefine what originality is.' [97]

They use a reproduction of *Veronese's Le Nozze di Cana* created with advanced digital scanning and bespoke fabrication methods by *Factum Arte*, as a case study to demonstrate the auratic possibilities of exceptionally high-quality facsimiles.[98] In a direct contradiction of Benjamin's initial theory of aura and authenticity, Latour and Lowe suggest that the availability and accessibility of reproductions may be a significant factor driving our desire to encounter the real thing. Expanding on Kopytoff's theory of the cultural biography, to include the relationships between originals and reproductions, they propose that by examining an original and its reproduction(s) collectively, a superior and more inclusive cultural biography can be understood. They term this a cultural

[96] Reid Bishop, 'The Perception and Importance of Time in Architecture.' (University of Surrey, 1982); Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, 1985, 294., as cited in Lowenthal, 1985.
[97] Bruno Latour and Adam Lowe, 'The Migration of the Aura or How to Explore the Original through Its Facsimiles', in *Switching Codes. Thinking Through Digital Technology in the Humanities and the Arts*, ed. T Bartscherer and R Coover (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 278.
[98] For an in depth account of this process see Latour and Lowe, 288–97.

'trajectory.'[99] Depending on the condition and context of display, Latour and Lowe propose that a copy cannot only foster an auratic experience, but facilitate a stronger response than an encounter with the original in certain contexts.[100] Overzealous conservation and security measures, combined with overcrowded museums, can inhibit the rare transformative experience promised by an encounter with an original artwork or artefact.[101] In re-evaluating the dependence of aura upon authenticity, Latour and Lowe propose that a reproduction unburdened by unavoidable conservation practices, may permit more of a meaningful encounter, while continuing to protect the treasured original.

To formally define the act of replication in fine art discourse is arguably more complex, yet the connotations attached are perhaps less ambivalent than in heritage contexts. The terms replica, reproduction, variant, copy, repetition and multiple can all be used in slightly different, or at times overlapping conditions.[102] This study's interest in classical and modern sculpture and the process of casting further complicates matters, with replicated forms able to be used to produce series of connected objects, original artworks and assemblages, in addition to having the potential to be reworked into new forms; adding the terms: editions, substitutes, realisations, installations and versions.[103] In the published papers generated by *Inherent Vice: The Replica and its Implications in Modern Sculpture Workshop*, held at Tate Modern in 2007, Penelope Curtis notes that while 'we accept earlier replicas as museum works, we doubt whether we

[99] Foster and Curtis, 'The Thing about Replicas—Why Historic Replicas Matter', 2016, 227.
[100] Latour and Lowe, 277–78.
[101] Latour and Lowe, 277–78.
[102] Walter Cupperi, *Multiples in Pre-Modern Art* (Zurich-Berlin: Diaphanes, 2014), 14–15.
[103] Penelope Curtis, 'Replication: Then and Now', *Tate Papers* Autumn (2007).

should do the same thing again.'[104] Though we permit the use of replicas to tell a story of the past, including artistic processes, trends and cultural contexts, the use of contemporarily replicated artworks in many contexts is still contentious. However, in contemplating the work of three artists using casting processes – Auguste Rodin, Marcel Duchamp and Rachel Whiteread – this section maps a number of replication processes that demonstrate the affectual potential of a copy, and thus are significant to this research project.

Rosalind Kraus, notable for her contribution to debates surrounding authenticity and authorship in fine art in the 1980s, notes that 'authenticity empties out as a notion as one approaches mediums which are inherently multiple.'[105] When examining the working process of Auguste Rodin, this notion seems even more apparent, particularly in relation to Benjamin's theory of aura. Rodin's relationship with casting was remote. While he was exceptionally skilled in producing the meticulously sculpted clay models, used to make investment moulds, and evidently adept at mould making and plaster casting, his celebrated bronzes were often finished at a foundry where he took no interest in retouching or refinishing the final wax master.[106] Similarly, he employed assistants to aid in the translation of his work into marble, and in rescaling older works for reuse. This manner of working was not unusual for 19th century sculptors, but the many hands involved in their fabrication arguably blur lines of authorship, when placed in the context of Benjamin's authenticity. Complicating matters of authenticity further, is the posthumous use of Rodin's moulds, authorised before the artist's death.[107] In giving the French State power to reproduce his work from

[104] Curtis.
[105] Rosalind Krauss, 'The Originality of the Avant-Garde: A Postmodernist Repetition', *October* 18 (1981): 48.
[106] Krauss, 49.
[107] Krauss, 47.

surviving moulds or models, including those that were never cast in his lifetime such as *The Gates of Hell*, the authenticity of the reproductions made were hotly debated.[108]

Figure 2. Auguste Rodin, The Walking Man (L'homme qui marche) modelled before 1900, cast before 1914, front, back and detail [image credit: courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, OA Public Domain]

In addition, Rodin was marked as innovative in his reuse of models and moulds to create modular variants, sometimes repeated in one single piece.[109] Where the 'original' ends and the replica begins is hard to distinguish, and in the context of this mode of working, the question is quite possibly moot.[110] Rodin's fascination with damaged and patinated classical sculpture, and his reuse of models, moulds

[108] See more on the debate following the *Rodin Rediscovered exhibition at the National Gallery of Art in Washington*, 1981 Krauss, 'The Originality of the Avant-Garde: A Postmodernist Repetition'; Albert E. Elson, 'On the Question of Originality: A Letter', *October* Spring, no. 20 (1982).
[109] Rodin Museum, 'Multiples, Fragments, Assemblages | Rodin Museum', accessed 31 May 2018, http://www.musee-rodin.fr/en/resources/educational-files/multiples-fragments-assemblages.
[110] Foster and Curtis, 'The Thing about Replicas—Why Historic Replicas Matter', 2016.

and finished works, is particularly interesting. When I visited the 2018 British Museum exhibition, *Rodin and the art of ancient Greece*, the exhibition interpretation text noted that Rodin saw the damaged and fragmented sculptures as attributes to be celebrated, inspiring him to become the first recorded sculptor to make a genre out of the headless, limbless torso. His mimicry of damaged classical sculpture creates an interesting theoretical juxtaposition in the context of the literature reviewed earlier in this section. Taking *The Walking Man* (Figure 2) as an example, the surface of the bronze cast in 1913 does not appear to be patinated in terms of age or material degradation. Rather, it is the form itself that gives homage to the violent material destruction of the sculptures Rodin admired. While those sculptures had been materially marked by their passage through time, the material attributes of *The Walking Man* remain unscathed, being relatively modern at only just over 100 years old. It is clear that Rodin does not mean to deceive, but rather to celebrate the passage of time with artistic license. While the fetishization of destruction is ethically problematic in the context of heritage, in the context of fine art, it is undeniably seductive. During my visit I felt drawn to these violent blemishes and their visceral materiality. In my admittedly subjective experience, even though the physical degradation was unapologetically forced, my fascination with its physicality, technique, and the processes of fabrication, still induced a strong sensory experience.

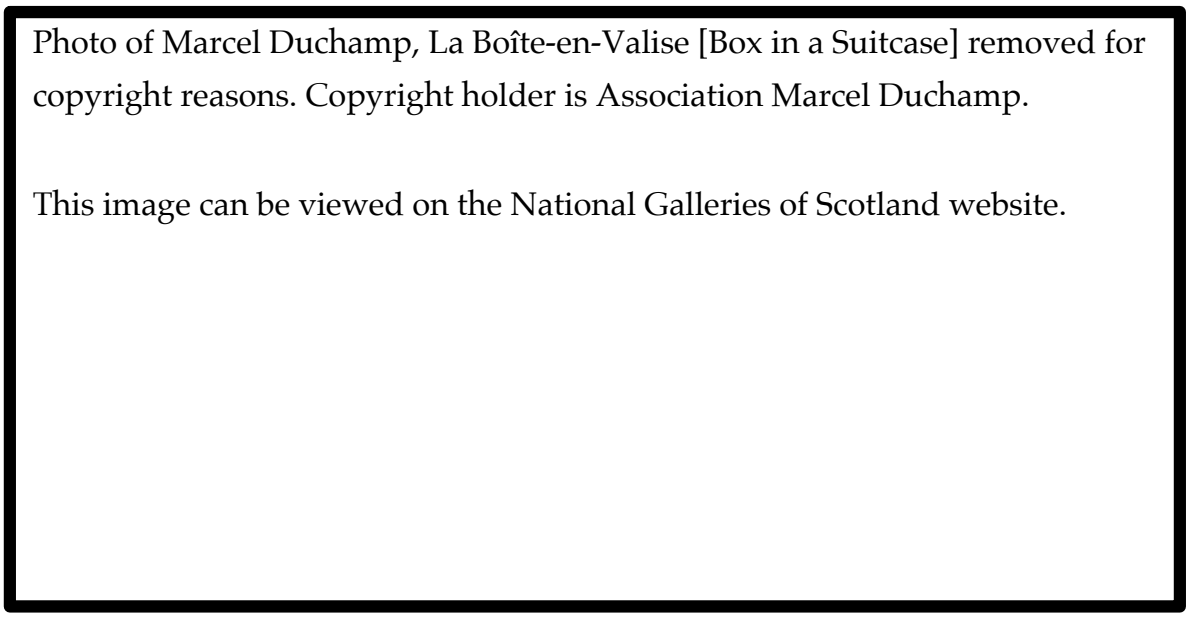

Figure 3. Marcel Duchamp, La Boîte-en-Valise [Box in a Suitcase], 1935 – 1941 [image credit: National Galleries of Scotland, © Association Marcel Duchamp, All Rights Reserved. ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2021

Duchamp also arguably contradicts Benjamin's 'withered aura' of reproduction, with his *La Boîte-en-Valise [Box in a Suitcase]* (Figure 3) by assembling miniaturised replicas of his most famous works and hand-coloured black and white two dimensional reproductions – which arguably lent an auratic quality – but also with his provocative use of the *Readymade*.[111] Coincidently, Duchamp was first experimenting with the process of reproduction around the same time the publication of *The Work of Art in The Age of Mechanical Reproduction*.[112] While it is unlikely Benjamin had in-depth knowledge of Duchamp's work at that time, it has been noted in correspondence that after meeting with Duchamp, he later described one of his early hand-coloured reproduction prints to be 'breathtakingly beautiful.'[113] It would be logical to guess that the evident traces

[111] Rosalind Krauss, 'OBJET (PETIT) a', in *Part Object Part Sculpture* (The Ohio State University, 2005), 88.
[112] Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in The Age of Mechanical Reproduction', 1969.
[113] Francis M. Naumann *Marcel Duchamp : The Art of Making Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1999), 17–18.

of 'the hand of the artist' would lend the replicas legitimacy in addition to its beauty, illustrating the power of authorised reproduction. Similarly, the replica *Readymades* created between 1913 and 1958, contribute an interesting perspective to the debate on authenticity and replication, particularly in that many of these artworks can now only be experienced as replicas. Adina Kamien-Kazhdan notes that due to the loss of the original artworks, an emphasis was placed on the 'creative act' of the works rather than the material fabric of the original objects.[114] Duchamp's introduction of the original *Readymades* toyed with the significance traditionally placed on the 'original', and distorted the notion of authenticity with their paradoxical origin as production line objects. Unoriginal due to their status as multiples, 'the revolutionary value of the readymade was precisely in dismantling the concept of the original.'[115] These works suggested authenticity might rely on embodiment rather than exclusively in the hand of the artist. Similarly, a musical manuscript when played evokes the artist's original intentions but is not in itself original, perhaps replicas can act in a similar manner.

In an interesting subversion of the assumed fabrication methods of originals versus replicas, Duchamp commissioned craftsmen to remake his replica *Readymades* series with rigorous and meticulous direction.[116] Contrary to the production line originals, in-depth and detailed research was involved in the fabrication of these replicas.[117] This process is comparable to restorations or reproductions made in a heritage context, such as the MBRP, in that more care and precision is arguably required in the remaking and copying, than the original

[114] Adina Kamien-Kazhdan, *Remaking the Readymade : Duchamp, Man Ray, and the Conundrum of the Replica*, 2018., 2.
[115] Kamien-Kazhdan, 3.
[116] Helen Anne. Molesworth *Part Object Part Sculpture* (The Ohio State University, 2005), 185–88.
[117] Kamien-Kazhdan, *Remaking the Readymade : Duchamp, Man Ray, and the Conundrum of the Replica*, 5.

construction in the first instance. The significant point of note that separates Duchamp's replica *Readymades* from a contentious, inauthentic replica, is the unbroken connection to artist.[118] Determining a deceased artist's intentions through historical research is the challenge underpinning much of the difficulties encountered during restoration efforts, and much of the philosophical debates.

Photos of Rachel Whiteread, 'Untitled (Book Corridors),' and 'House, at 193 Grove Road, London E3,' removed for copyright reasons. Copyright holder is Rachel Whiteread.

These images can be viewed on the Tate and Art Angel websites, respectively.

Figure 4. Left: Rachel Whiteread, 'Untitled (Book Corridors),' 1998 [image credit: © Rachel Whiteread]; Right: Rachel Whiteread, 'House, at 193 Grove Road, London E3,' 1993. [image credit: © Rachel Whiteread]

Rachel Whiteread's sculpture, although different to those previously discussed in that it is not typically described as replication, deals with memory and loss in a way that resonates significantly with this project. The casting process has been a continual presence in Whiteread's work throughout her career, using industrial materials to expose the negative spaces of the everyday and change our perspective of both the material and immaterial realm. Leah Roberts likens Whiteread's casting process to that of archaeological excavations 'capturing

[118] Kamien-Kazhdan, 5.

positive impressions of excavation trenches or historic building interiors that would other-wise be lost', noting that her work asks viewers to explore it as if archaeologists, interpreting the material traces.[119] Similarly, Joanna Malt suggests that 'time and entropy are emphasised by the mapping […] of the disintegration and wear' of these object's past lives.[120] Whiteread's work captures traces of patina from other objects, and embeds them in stark new forms, alluding to a pastness that is emotionally charged and evocative.

In addition to the Freudian uncanny of the transforming of positive to negative space, the manipulation of materiality in Whiteread's sculptures is intriguingly *other*. Soft objects such as mattresses or hot water bottles become hard – hollow spaces appear solid and impenetrable. Our material and spatial memory bank is manipulated to tease us into to giving our everyday experiences of materials and space a second look.[121] Helen Molesworth suggests that through the use of casting, the works become 'liminal' in that they are always part object, part sculpture, and never wholly one or the other.[122] While Whiteread's work is something other than a replica, it is able to materially evoke a perception of an 'original' thing or idea in a similar way. In addition, it demonstrates the powerful affectual potential of the replication process that subverts traditional connotations. An observable absence is potentially as auratic as an obvious presence.[123] Arguably, we are able to embody the missing pieces thorough their lack, made all the more apparent by the unyielding manifestation of the

[119] Leah Acheson Roberts, 'The Role of Sculpture in Communicating Archaeology in Museums', *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* 23, no. 1 (2013): 9.
[120] Johanna Malt, 'Impossible Contact: The Thing in Lacan and Rachel Whiteread', *L'Esprit Créateur* 47, no. 3 (2007): 56.
[121] Malt, 57.
[122] Helen Anne Molesworth, *Part Object Part Sculpture* (The Ohio State University, 2005), 26.
[123] Khadija Carroll La, 'Object to Project: Artists' Interventions in Museum Collections', in *Sculpture in the Museum*, ed. Christopher Marshall (London: Routledge, 2011), 217–34.

previously immaterial negative space. The following group of art works were made in direct response to the Mackintosh fires. While they are not replicas in the conventional sense, some of the pieces do offer an interesting example of art as a means to re-interpret the aura, authenticity and social values of a lost or vulnerable heritage space.

Photos of Grayson Perry, 'Art is dead Long live Art,' Tacita Dean, 'Made on January 20th 2017,' and Simon Starling, 'Layers of Darkness (Charred, Lacquered)' removed for copyright reasons. Copyright holders are Grayson Perry, Tacita Dean and Simon Starling.

These images can be viewed on the Ash to Art project website.

'Figure 5. Clockwise from top left: Grayson Perry, 'Art is dead Long live Art'; Tacita Dean, 'Made on January 20th 2017'; Simon Starling, 'Layers of Darkness (Charred, Lacquered).' [image credit Ash to Art project, J. Walter Thompson/GSA/Christie's]

The first grouping (Figure 5) was made by artists who had been invited to re-interpret 'the charred by-products of the fire as media for drawings, painting, printmaking, photography and sculpture.'[124] The artists were each sent a piece of library debris and the resulting artworks were sold at auction to support The Mackintosh Campus Appeal, 2016-17. These evocative artworks brought new life to the fractured remains of an authentic original, and I would argue that the most successful pieces were able to explore aura and loss in a more powerful way to traditional textual interpretation, by communicating the artists' dialogical engagement with the event of the fire. Though many of these art works used similar salvaged materials to those used in this research project, the resulting works were not creative replicas, but more like a re-birth or reincarnation.

Photos of a film still from 'A Beautiful Living Thing' (2015) Ross Birrell and Tony Bortheridge & Ruth Switalski, 'Standing Discobolus, Innit,' removed for copyright reasons. Copyright holders are Ross Birrell, Tony Bortheridge & Ruth Switalski.

These image can be viewed on the GSA Press and GSA Archives & Collections websites, respectively.

Figure 6. Left: Film still from 'A Beautiful Living Thing' (2015) Ross Birrell (director) in the remains of the Mackintosh Library [image credit Ross Birrell]. Right: Tony Bortheridge & Ruth Switalski, 'Standing Discobolus, Innit,' Glasgow International, 2016.

[124] 'Ash to Art', Ash to Art, 2017, http://ashtoart.org/.

The film, *A Beautiful Living Thing* (Figure 6), directed by Ross Birrell and produced by Joanna Crotch, takes the form of a 'filmic artefact,'[125] which documented a composition by Birrell, inspired by the Mackintosh quote in the title, and performed by Bill Chandler.[126] This film is part of a wider research project (of three planned performances) which act as both an affectual tribute to the building while asking '[h]ow might music / movement register the emotional impact of the event of the fire and follow the paths of its reclamation and reconstruction?'[127] Again, these works would perhaps not be described as an interpretative engagement strategy, as that would do them a disservice. Rather, these films powerfully communicate the sense of loss and hope which was entangled with the building in the period shortly after the first fire, conveying the emotion embodied within it, and reinforcing the social value of the Mack.

Finally, in *Material Objects* (Figure 6) exhibited as part of the 2018 Glasgow International Festival, Tony Bortheridge and Ruth Switalski recontextualise the plaster casts *Discobolus*, *Venus de' Medici*, and the *Borghese Warrior*, which had formerly been housed in the Mack before the fires, to create a new distinct narrative, 'assessing our continual obsession with classical antiquity while questioning its binary gender stereotypes.'[128] This installation demonstrates a striking reinterpretation of antiquity that utilizes clever juxtapositions of new and old materialities to create a contemporary cultural commentary.

[125] Ross Birrell, 'A Beautiful Living Thing', 2017, http://radar.gsa.ac.uk/4340/3/A%20Beautiful%20Living%20Thing.pdf.
[126] Ross Birrell, 'A Beautiful Living Thing', *Performance Research* 22, no. 1 (2017): 115–19.
[127] Birrell, 'A Beautiful Living Thing', 2017.
[128] 'Ruth Switalski and Anthony Brotheridge', Glasgow international, accessed 2 July 2021, https://glasgowinternational.org/events/ruth-switalski-anthony-brotheridge/.

2.5 Heritage Interpretation & artists' interventions

'Heritage is not a passive process of simply preserving things from the past that remain, but an active process of assembling a series of objects, places and practices that we choose to hold up as a mirror to the present'[129]

Heritage interpretation is a complex practice with a multitude of definitions, which continue to be debated. It can used be to describe a number of things: from the use of physical artefacts or monuments to portray an embodied heritage narrative, to the more literal language-based signposting that textually delivers these histories or cultural identities.[130] Furthermore, the term heritage interpretation can be used to denote reproductions of lost artefacts or monuments, where the original is either too vulnerable for display or lost entirely, or artists' interventions, which have been gaining popularity over the past 30 years.[131] However, conventional heritage interpretation is a language-based practice predominantly, with a focus on educational end results.[132] Much of the discourse surrounding heritage interpretation frequently cites the work of Freeman Tilden as a starting point, with his seminal text *Interpreting Our Heritage*, first published in 1957, seen by many as the first formal guidelines contributed to the field.[133] His *Six principles for Heritage Interpretation*, including the proposal that 'the chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but

[129] Rodney Harrison, *Heritage : Critical Approaches* (London: Routledge, 2013), 3.
[130] Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006); Laurajane Smith, *Emotional Heritage | Visitor Engagement at Museums and Heritage Sites* (London: Routledge, 2020); Russell Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation : Enchanting the Past-Future* (London: Routledge, 2014).
[131] Paul Eggert, *Securing the Past : Conservation in Art, Architecture and Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); Claire. Robins, *Curious Lessons in the Museum : The Pedagogic Potential of Artists' Interventions* (Ashgate, 2013).
[132] Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation : Enchanting the Past-Future,* 25.
[133] Paul C. Thistle, 'Interpreting Our Heritage', *Material Culture* 43, no. No. 2 (2011): 88–91; Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation : Enchanting the Past-Future*.

provocation,'[134] have been recognized as a foundational strategy for much of language-based interpretation practice in the latter half of the 20th century.[135]

While widely accepted and endorsed, this emphasis on a 'pervasive education paradigm,' has been noted as potentially 'stifling' to practitioners attempting to facilitate an auratic experience.[136] Russell Staiff dedicates a chapter in his book *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation: Enchanting the Past-Future*, to critiquing Freeman's focus on pedagogic methods of interpretation. This more recent contribution (2013) to the evolving discourse of heritage interpretation, is a compelling and in-depth critique of current practices, drawing on a diverse range of disciplines to support an ideological shift towards a more progressive approach. Aligned with Smith and Akagawa's commentary on intangible heritage and authorised heritage discourse, he takes a constructivist or critical realist stance on the representation of heritage through embodied material culture.[137] While Staiff subscribes to the belief that we can have powerful experiences triggered by encounters with materiality, he takes issue with the argument that there is an inherent truth in historical objects or places to be revealed through an objectively authored educational activity.[138] In line with Smith, he argues that heritage interpretation is an exercise in meaning making by interpreter and visitor, which results in artefacts or monuments exhibiting multiple culturally subjective and changeable identities, dependent on the viewers lived experience.[139] Reviewed in this context, heritage interpretation is

[134] Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 34.
[135] Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation : Enchanting the Past-Future*, 9.
[136] Staiff, 9.
[137] Smith and Akagawa, *Intangible Heritage*, 2009; Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 2006.
[138] Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 33.
[139] Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, 34–35.

not an objective mode of translating the past, as indicated by Tilden, but a subjective representation of the past, through the lens of the present.

Of Staiff's arguments for a more progressive approach to heritage interpretation, perhaps the most valuable to this research project is the argument that language-based interpretation is detrimental to sensory and affectual experiences. Drawing the work of Brian Massumi, Staiff contends that the cognitive faculties exercised when trying to assimilate abstract ideas will interrupt the sensory and emotive experience of affect, which he equates with the experience of aura.[140] Similarly, Chakrabarty notes that the smell, patina, fragility, and dust of historical objects is what makes it 'part of the lived present.'[141] These sensory cues allow us to understand the object is of the past immediately and intuitively. Similarly, the embodied or bodily experience of learning, linked to the field of phenomenology and its use in the interpretation of archaeology, has been thoroughly explored by authors such as Tilley.[142] In line with this way of thinking, Chakrabarty questions why we place less importance on sensory experiences when they tell us so much about an object, reasoning that the prioritisation of analytical and 'objective' inquiry has been driven by a belief it could achieve a more profound quality of thought which is able to reach 'deeper, general and invisible 'truths.''[143]

Descriptions of affect or sensory experiences are similar to that of the auratic or authentic variety, in that they are difficult to explain in words, often associated

[140] Brian Massumi, 'The Autonomy of Affect', *Cultural Critique*, no. 31 (1995): 83–109; Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, 54.
[141] Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Museums in Late Democracies', *Humanities Research* IX, no. No.1 (2002): 8.
[142] Christopher Y. Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape : Places, Paths, and Monuments*, Explorations in Anthropology. (Oxford: Berg, 1994).
[143] Chakrabarty, 'Museums in Late Democracies', 8.

with ineffable or overwhelming qualities. Ross Gibson takes the analysis of affect and what he terms a 'somatic' experience further, describing the encounter as,

'a palpable sense of being absorbed and altered by everything on offer when you are engaged as much by the textures, heft and scale of the materials as by their curatorially determined significance.'[144]

He argues that if an exhibit is unable to provide an emotive, sensory, or somatic experience in a museum or gallery, the exhibit cannot be deemed a complete success. However, while Staiff appears to imply that it is not possible for cognitive understanding and sensory experiences to occur simultaneously, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill argues that in the context of learning, the mind, body and our emotional responses are relational. Hooper-Greenhill is better known for her vast contribution to museum studies, with a focus on learning in museums. Her work is a vital source for examining the way we interact with the embodied symbolism and materiality of objects, with these interpretive values readily applicable to the design of heritage interpretation. She proposes that we engage with 'tacit, felt knowledge'[145] in addition to traditionally accepted language-based knowledge when interpreting historical objects. If, as she suggests, the material properties and characteristics of objects or places, 'demand embodied responses, which may be intuitive and immediate,'[146] it could be proposed that powerfully auratic encounters with objects or spaces are a sensory reaction rather than a reasoned cognitive response. However, it is not clear, in the context of heritage or museum interpretation, at which point these behaviours are able to overlap, and how they

[144] Ross Gibson, 'Spirit House', in *South Pacific Museums: Experiments in Culture*, ed. Chris Healy and Andrea Witcomb (Clayton: Monash University ePress, 2006).
[145] Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, Museum Meanings. (London: Routledge, 2000), 113.
[146] Hooper-Greenhill, 112.

can be harnessed collectively to facilitate auratic, somatic or affect-driven experiences.

Fellow material culture and museum studies specialist Sandra Dudley adds to this discussion, in line with Staiff's views that a sensory encounter can feel more powerful than one that is led by language driven interpretation. However, she points out that the subjective auratic experience is unlikely to elucidate the specific history that curators wish objects to signal. Sensory or auratic experiences are highly personal and emotive, driven by our lived cultural and social experience in addition to our subconscious library of material experiences, and the associated memories amassed through our existence in a material world. It is interesting to note however, that Dudley describes her engagement with bronze ritual vessels as heightened by the sensory experience, then expanded by the text of an interpretative guidebook.[147] This suggests that sensory, auratic experiences can act as a catalyst to induce an enhanced state of receptiveness, that can then be harnessed to convey a historical narrative. While this account deals with an encounter with an 'authentic' artefact, examples such as this are critically important to this study, as they illustrate the potential that a materially activated sensory experience can have.

Kate Gregory and Andrea Witcomb establish a strong argument for non-language-based interpretation using both authentic historical objects and evocative installations of contemporary objects.[148] Aligning with Chakrabarty and Kwint, they propose that material objects have the power to stimulate

[147] Sandra H. Dudley, *Museum Objects : Experiencing the Properties of Things*, Leicester Readers in Museum Studies. (London: Routledge, 2012), 1.
[148] Kate Gregory and Andrea Witcomb, 'Beyond Nostalgia: The Role of Affect in Generating Historical Understanding at Heritage Sites', in *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*, ed. S Watson, S MacLeod, and S Knell (London: Routledge, 2007), 263–75.

memories and emotive responses to facilitate 'embodied forms of knowledge production.'[149] In an account illustrated with revealing case studies, they confirm the benefits of both materiality and non-linguistic interpretation. The interpretative approach described in their main case study, uses the shell of a restored historic building, formerly the original store for a settlement abandoned in the 1950's after a flood. The building is used as a repository for an installation of large-scale visual interpretations and a small collection of interpretive objects that were specifically designed for the site in a subversive manner. These objects are used as a means to combat revisionist narratives, and examine themes of invasive colonialism and the erasure of indigenous peoples and histories. The commissioned objects are situated in a stripped back, white space, and use an interactive strategy that invites the visitor to engage with the wider context that had enveloped the building. To do this the installation uses provocative tongue-in-cheek props and short explanatory texts, and by using an antagonistic tone, the interpretive space arguably triggers a more visceral response that encourages the viewer to actively engage. This interventionist approach challenges the visitor to interrogate an unsavoury past, confronting the emotion and affect that can be triggered by engaging with 'dark histories,'[150] rather than fetishizing historic objects in a mission to evoke a sense of nostalgia. As such, Gregory and Witcomb's case study emerges as more akin to an artists' intervention than to conventional heritage interpretation to achieve an affective, emotive and sensory response.

[149] Marius. Kwint, Christopher Breward, and Jeremy. Aynsley, eds., *Material Memories*, Materializing Culture (Oxford: Berg, 1999); Kate Gregory and Andrea Witcomb), 263.
[150] Andrea Witcomb, 'Understanding the Role of Affect in Producing a Critical Pedagogy for History Museums', *Museum Management and Curatorship* 28, no. 3 (2013): 256.

Artists' interventions at sites of heritage are becoming more and more common, with integrated programmes such as the National Trust's *Trust New Art,*[151] and the National Trust for Scotland's collaboration with contemporary artists for Glasgow International[152] signalling that the benefits are more widely acknowledged as a valuable interpretative process. Echoing this trend, *Art & Heritage*,[153] established in 2008 in the north of England as an agency, was recently been recognised as an *Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation*. However, the critical analysis and discourse surrounding it is still relatively undeveloped. AHRC and Arts Council England funded research project, *Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience* (2017-2019), notes that the impact of these interventions on both the audiences and artists involved is not fully understood, proposing that 'there is little collective academic and professional understanding of the broader character of the contemporary arts in heritage field.'[154] In 2013, Claire Robins reported a similar trend on the commentary and analysis of artists interventions in museums, which although significantly more established in terms of practice, is also arguably an emergent field in terms of discourse. Previously, critics such as Peter Vergo and Arnd Schneider raised concerns that the use of contemporary art as abstract visual communication for existing collections risked alienating visitors. However as noted by Robins, as the instances of artist/institution collaborations have increased, spiking in the 1990's, the artists' intervention has proven to be a particularly engaging mode of interpretation.[155]

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[151] National Trust, 'Trust New Art: Contemporary Arts Inspired by Our Places', 2018, https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/trust-new-art-contemporary-arts-inspired-by-our-places.
[152] National Trust for Scotland, 'Cabinet Interventions', 2018, https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/cabinet-interventions-an-exhibition-at-pollok-house.
[153] Arts and Heritage, 'Art and Heritage', 2018, https://www.artsandheritage.org.uk/news/.
[154] Newcastle University, 'Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience' (Newcastle University, 2018), https://research.ncl.ac.uk/mcahe/about/.
[155] Robins, *Curious Lessons in the Museum : The Pedagogic Potential of Artists' Interventions*, 1, 197.

Similarly, Craig Richardson has reported on the trend of acknowledged collaborations, where artists are invited to uncover a fresh perspective, and knowingly encouraged to disrupt museological conventions. Artists interventions in museums have become less analogous with strong political statements in critique of an institution, sometimes straying into the realm of the institutionalised. This is not necessarily a negative shift, but relies on a working relationship where the balance of power is not weighted to the commissioning organisation in a way that can be detrimental to the resulting creative practice, or used as a form of 'art washing.' The institutionalised artist intervention could be argued to place a burden on the artist to conduct robust research and creative practice which engages with potentially problematic collections or histories without 'biting the hand that feeds them.' To reflect these changes, from institutional critique to institutionalised critique, Richardson proposes the term 'embedded reinterpretation'[156] as a substitute for artists intervention, acknowledging the contemporary collaborative relationships and highlighting the sensitivities surrounding communicative powers of these juxtapositions.

Conversely, while largely in favour of the increased use of interventions in museums, Khadija Carroll La warns of thinly veiled attempts to introduce contemporary collecting in ethnographic museums, or cynical one-dimensional exhibitions that appear to capitalise on a current trend to attract a new younger art-savvy demographic. She argues it is too simplistic to place artistic objects in juxtaposition with ethnographic artefacts without fully considering their cultural contexts.[157] Discussing instances where artists' interventions have appeared superficial, such as a critique of the British Museum's *Statuephilia* exhibition (2008), she warns against interventions that rely on a similarity of

[156] Craig Richardson, 'Artists' ' Embedded Reinterpretation ' in Museums and Sites of Heritage', *Journal of Visual Art Practice* 17, no. 1 (2017): 22.
[157] Carroll La, 'Object to Project: Artists' Interventions in Museum Collections', 232.

'form,' noting the use of 'insertion' rather than intervention.[158] Carroll La makes a noteworthy argument that juxtaposition of old and new alone is unlikely to elicit a powerful sensory or transformative response. Successful interventions or re-interpretations should subvert museological conventions, to ask the viewer to re-evaluate the collection or site they are encountering.[159] Similarly, Robins maintains that, 'interventionist artworks occupy an interpretative position between the visitor and the pre-existing gallery or museum discourse.'[160] The intervention or 'embedded reinterpretation', should not only ask viewers to revaluate the collection exhibited, but the entrenched conventions surrounding collecting, conservation, and display. I would argue this strategy has already proven successful in museums, and while underreported has also been implemented at a selection of heritage sites. This research project seeks to demonstrate its effectiveness as part of a socially engaged framework for interpretation, so that heritage organisations may have more confidence to systematically embed these practices in public programming.

2.7 Summary: Outlining the Gaps in knowledge

This study began as an investigation into perceptions of aura and authenticity in the context of replicated material culture, in order to explore whether visual art and socially engaged practice could be employed in interpretative strategies to deepen engagement with lost or vulnerable site of heritage. As such, this review outlines essential interdisciplinary perspectives surrounding the disputed conditions set forth for the designation of authenticity and auratic experiences

[158] Carroll La, 233.
[159] Carroll La, 232; Gregory and Witcomb, 'Beyond Nostalgia: The Role of Affect in Generating Historical Understanding at Heritage Sites', 2007, 272; Robins, *Curious Lessons in the Museum : The Pedagogic Potential of Artists' Interventions*, 207.
[160] Claire. Robins, 'How Did the Reticent Object Become so Obliging? Artists' Interventions as Interpretative Strategies', *Engage*, no. 20 (2007): 27.

with both *real artefacts* and replicas. This has been presented to build an appropriate theoretical context within which the interdisciplinary practical research could sit.

As positioned in the review, there are a welcome plethora of publications and research projects exploring the materiality, aura and authenticity of material heritage with reference to restoration and preservation. Similarly there have been a number of critical contributions to heritage studies on the potential aura, authenticity and social value of the material and digital replica, led by researchers Foster and Jones, Foster and Curtis, Jones and Yarrow, Jeffrey, Gibson, Latour and Lowe, Holtorf, and more recently, Ellis.[161]

The gap where this research project aims to contribute new knowledge, sits on the interstice between contested areas of these discussions, at a point where heritage studies overlaps with museum studies discourse surrounding the use of art as interpretation in museums, and within a practical context of artistic replication. In the process of this review I have encountered two similar studies, both of which explore the potential of contemporary art as a form of

[161] Foster and Curtis, 'The Thing about Replicas—Why Historic Replicas Matter', 2016; Foster and Jones, *My Life as a Replica: St John's Cross, Iona, 2020*; Sally Foster and Siân Jones, 'Principles and Guidance | New Futures for Replicas', accessed 31 May 2021, https://replicas.stir.ac.uk/principles-and-guidance/; Sally Foster and Siân Jones, 'Concrete and Non-Concrete: Exploring the Contemporary Authenticity of Historic Replicas through an Ethnographic Study of the St John's Cross Replica, Iona', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25, no. 11 (2019): 1169–88; Jones, 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves', 2010; Jones, 'Experiencing Authenticity at Heritage Sites: Some Implications for Heritage Management and Conservation'; Jones and Yarrow, 'Crafting Authenticity: An Ethnography of Conservation Practice', 2009; Jeffrey, 'Challenging Heritage Visualisation: Beauty, Aura and Democratisation', 2015; Gibson, 'Spirit House', 2006; Latour and Lowe, 'The Migration of the Aura or How to Explore the Original through Its Facsimiles', 2011; Holtorf, 'On Pastness: A Reconsideration of Materiality in Archaeological Object Authenticity', 2013; Holtorf and Schadla-Hall, 'Age as Artefact: On Archaeological Authenticity', 1999; Abbey Ellis, '"The Castness of Things": A Visitor's Eye View of Value at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford' (University of Leicester, 2021).

interpretation in the Museum.[162] This is similarly reflected by the literature discussed in **Chapter 2.5,** with notable contributors to the discourse surrounding artists' intervention such as Claire Robins, Khadija Carroll La, Kate Gregory and Andrea Witcomb. The use of contemporary art practice in museums, and indeed to a lesser (reported) extent, sites of heritage as a mode of interpretation, or *re-interpretation,* is not a novel concept, as has been established in this literature and contextual review. However, this research project seeks to explore more specifically the combined use of visual art in socially engaged practice as an impactful and affectual strategy for engagement and interpretation. The proposed framework firstly seeks to engage participants with the social value of lost or vulnerable monuments, but the wider aim is to hold a mirror to the individual and collective cultural value systems that guide how we use both replicas and originals as a means to communicate the past. Using practices similar to that of artists' intervention, this work is ingrained in a framework of socially engaged practice that encourages participants to explore their relationships with materiality and perceptions of aura, authenticity and social value. In essence this research establishes a model that uses replicated materiality as a catalyst to engagement within a dialogical space, to explore and disentangle our idiosyncratic relationships with material heritage and intangible cultural narratives.

[162] Roberts, 'The Role of Sculpture in Communicating Archaeology in Museums' 2013; Nicholas Cass, 'Contemporary Art and Heritage: Interventions at the Brontë Parsonage Museum' (University of Leeds, 2015).

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology for this practice-based research adopts principles of conduct from socially engaged art combined with the reflexive practice of action research. These practices were used as a structural framework to guide my approach to both the sculptural inquiry within the studio, and the participatory engagement events outside it. Both aspects of the research – material and social – were designed as iterative prototypes that evolved in response to my own autoethnographic study while thinking through making, but also in response to the participant engagement and feedback recorded during live events.

Practically speaking, this methodology involved iterative cycles of setting a question, fabricating objects that could be used as learning tools to facilitate dialogue with participants to answer said question, recording feedback and reflecting on the outcomes. In the latter stages of research, this cycle of questioning, making, and instigating dialogical exchange often-included reflecting on a number of aspects such as, had the original question been answered, could the question be asked more effectively, and what other important questions have been revealed by the process? The reflexive nature of this methodology meant that both my own experiences and those of participants were fed back into the research outputs as they evolved, using reflexive journaling, participant observation, questionnaires, and recorded discussion sessions to guide each cycle of activity.

This chapter introduces each of the methods used in turn, outlines how they were integrated into an interdisciplinary research methodology, and illustrates the practicalities and ethical considerations involved for each element.

3.2 Practice-based research

'the process of art manifests divergent and convergent questions, confounds and organises linear thought, stimulates the imagination and unifies disparate conceptual parts into aesthetic gestalts.'[163]

Practice-based research differs from pure practice in that it aims to give a platform, 'to new concepts and methods in the generation of original knowledge,'[164] or produces 'culturally novel apprehensions,'[165] to fields of research and practice that extend further than the practitioner them self. In the past this mode of research was viewed sceptically by the academy,[166] primarily for the lack of 'set methods of enquiry.'[167] In addition to concerns surrounding a perceived absence of measurable research methods, was a debate surrounding where the contribution to knowledge lies: in the resulting artefact, in the mind of the viewer, or in the methodology developed to answer the question.[168] Michael Franklin addresses this academic scepticism, suggesting it could stem from, in part, a feeling of intimidation of art, practically (how it is made), conceptually (what it can be used to convey), and as a research methodology (how practitioners think through making). He notes that this intimidation may stem from seeing art as 'other,' a creation by someone else or a foreign movement they

[163] Michael A. Franklin, 'Know Thyself: Awakening Self-Referential Awareness through Art-Based Research', *Journal of Applied Arts & Health* 3, no. 1 (2012): 93.
[164] Linda Candy, 'Practice Based Research: A Guide', *Creativity and Cognition Studios Report* 1 (2006): 2.
[165] Candy, 2; Stephen Scrivener, 'The Art Object Does Not Embody a Form of Knowledge', *Working Papers in Art and Design* 2 (2002).
[166] Graeme Sullivan, 'Making Space: The Purpose and Place of Practice-Led Research', in *Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts*, ed. Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 43–44.
[167] Shaun McNiff, ed., *Art as Research : Opportunities and Challenges* (Bristol: Intellect, 2013), 110.
[168] Katy Macleod and Lin Holdridge, *Thinking through Art : Reflections on Art as Research* (London: Routledge, 2006), 233; Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research : Inquiry in Visual Arts* (London: SAGE, 2010), 95; Christopher Frayling, 'Research in Art and Design', *Royal College of Art Research Papers*, vol. 1 (London, 1993), 1; Sullivan, 'Making Space: The Purpose and Place of Practice-Led Research', 47.

do not feel confident enough to decipher, and with processes and theories that they see as opaque.[169]

However, Graeme Sullivan, Nigel Cross and Christopher Frayling suggest that to find meaning in practice as research, we must look not only to the artwork or output but the process of making.[170] As opposed to traditional research practices, he notes that 'making is conceived to be the driving force behind the research and in certain modes of practice also the creator of ideas.'[171] This, and the way the work is presented are important contextual frameworks that should be recorded and reflected upon. Part of the process of thinking through making is the ability of the artist or researcher to reflect on empirical data (discovered through practice) to find new strategies in their field of research. Due to practical experience in their particular field, they are able to understand and see through the data to find new solutions.[172] This means that research-based arts practice is a flexible and self-reflexive model which lends itself to collaboration and consultation with others. In addition it encourages interrogations of established knowledge, and when done successfully, is able to institute new modes of thinking in a particular subject area.[173]

[169] Franklin, 'Know Thyself: Awakening Self-Referential Awareness through Art-Based Research', 68.
[170] Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research : Inquiry in Visual Arts* (London: SAGE, 2010), 151; Nigel Cross, 'Design Research : A Disciplined Conversation', *Design Issues* 15, no. 2 (1999): 6; Christopher Frayling, 'Research in Art and Design' (London: Royal College of Art, 1993).
[171] Maarit. Mäkelä, *The Art of Research : Research Practices in Art and Design* (University of Art and Design Helsinki, 2006), 48.
[172] Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research : Inquiry in Visual Arts*, 2010, 110.
[173] Sullivan, 'Making Space: The Purpose and Place of Practice-Led Research', 111.

3.3 Socially engaged practice

Socially engaged art is one of a number of terms (participatory arts, relational aesthetics, dialogical art, community arts) that come under the same umbrella of principles. Namely, that the work places an emphasis on the role of the participant or community involved in its creation, and the potential for societal change or collaboration. There are varying degrees to which control is given to the participants to drive forward the artwork, but broadly speaking, contributors to the field such as Grant Kester and Nicholas Bourriaud believe that it 'requires that we understand the work of art as a process of communicative exchange rather than a physical object.'[174] In this mode of working, artists are not aiming to articulate a preformed vision, they are there to listen, and facilitate an exchange of ideas that becomes a catalyst for engagement and action.

Some critics, such as Claire Bishop and Michael Fried, have voiced concerns surrounding socially engaged art, labelling it as a theatrical or social class of non-art, which can be difficult to critique or bewildering to the viewer.[175] When works are created within the context of socially engaged art projects, in collaboration with participants that have no formal art training, it is often seen as hard to evaluate the output fairly within traditional frameworks of art criticism. However, this argument places a focus on the resulting artefact or physical traces left by a programme of socially engaged art. In contrast, Bourriaud and Kester

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[174] Grant H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces : Community and Communication in Modern Art* (University of California Press, 2013), 90; Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Collection Documents Sur l'art. (Les Presses du réel, 2002).

[175] Claire Bishop, 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics', *October Magazine* Fall, no. 110 (2004): 51–79; Claire. Bishop, *Artificial Hells : Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012); Hal Foster, 'Arty Party', *London Review of Books* December (2003): 21–22; Michael Fried, *Art and Objecthood : Essays and Reviews* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1998). While Michael Fried's criticism was aimed at performance or installation, his argument that categories of 'quality,' 'value', and 'sheer-rightness' could only meaningful when applied 'within the individual arts,' and hence his argument that the presence of participation renders an art work unable to submit to critique as a type of non-art is relevant here.

argue that the end result or final output is not where the 'art' lies, but rather, it is in the dialogical exchange between the artist and participant which has been instigated by the artistic practice. While Fried described art which is activated by participation as an aggressive act 'extorting' a perverse 'complexity'[176] from viewer, this interpretation insinuates that creating a space for active participation is undesirable. However, like Bourriard and Kester, I see active participation, and the activation of participants, as a positive aim. Rather than a physical artwork being the 'thing' to be valued, and which has value as art practice, the value and quality are found in the potential for societal change, or a shifting of culturally systemic preconceptions. One concession I will make is to agree that it can be challenging to critique or assess socially engaged practice within a traditional art historical context, however to overcome this in this project, action research has been used as a means to evaluate the process, participation and outcomes, as is discussed below (**Chapter 3.4**).

Furthermore, in the context of this research project, the principles of this socially engaged mode of working play a critical role in enhancing engagement with lost or vulnerable monuments. Our relationships with these objects and spaces are inherently subjective, and only through creating a dialogue with participants can we begin to understand why a particular historic object, site or narrative is truly important to both the individual and the collective public. While this project cannot claim to be purely participatory or dialogical as outlined by Bourriaud in his seminal text Relational Aesthetics,[177] it hopes to take inspiration from artists such as Thomas Hirschhorn who are able to use their art works as a setting or stimuli for public dialogue and engagement. Like Hirschhorn, at times this

[176] Kester, *Conversation Pieces : Community and Communication in Modern Art*, 54. paraphrasing Michael Fried.
[177] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*.

project employs material catalysts (much like Hirschhorn's *Monuments, Alters and Kiosks, and Bijlmer Spinoza Festival*) and at others it creates a performative space that simply invites participation (as seen during his critical workshop, *"Energy: Yes! Quality: No!"*). For this PhD project, the physical works made should exist only as a catalyst rather than an end point. They were displayed to activate a dialogue centred around why we value material heritage and ideas surrounding authenticity, and aimed to give participants confidence to voice their own knowledge, experiences or opinions of the lost case study subject – the Mack after a second devastating fire – in order to keep it alive.

3.4 The role of Action Research in this study

'Reflection "in action" and reflection "on action" lead to "action research."'[178]

Public engagement guided by action research has been a key element of this methodology, firstly to reflexively guide the direction of the research and practice, and secondly to act as a proof-of-concept model in the design of an immersive experience that asks participants to reconsider our relationships with materials, material culture and notions of authenticity. Action research is regarded at times as synonymous with practice-based research as both require critical self-reflection of practice as a method to improve it.[179] While self-reflection is a natural part of artistic practice,[180] action research provides a framework to record this, evidencing, 'how you have carried out a systematic investigation into your own behaviour, and the reasons for that behaviour.'[181] As practice-based research prioritises the process of thinking through making, this

[178] Cal Swann, 'Action Research and the Practice of Design', *Design Issues* 18, no. 1 (2002): 50.
[179] Jean. McNiff, *Action Research : Principles and Practice*, 2013, 23.
[180] Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research : Inquiry in Visual Arts*, 2010, 3.
[181] Jean. McNiff, *Action Research for Professional Development Concise Advice for New Action Researchers*, 3rd Editon (Jean McNiff, 2002).

makes for an effective way to record where key developments lie, analyse how and why they have occurred, and what they mean in relation to the main question being asked.

As is outlined in more depth below (**Chapter 3.5.1**) and as illustrated in Figure 7, this frequent self-reflection and iterative prototyping was guided by McNiff's principles of action research that involve planning, monitoring action, gathering data, and conducting analysis and interpretation.[182]

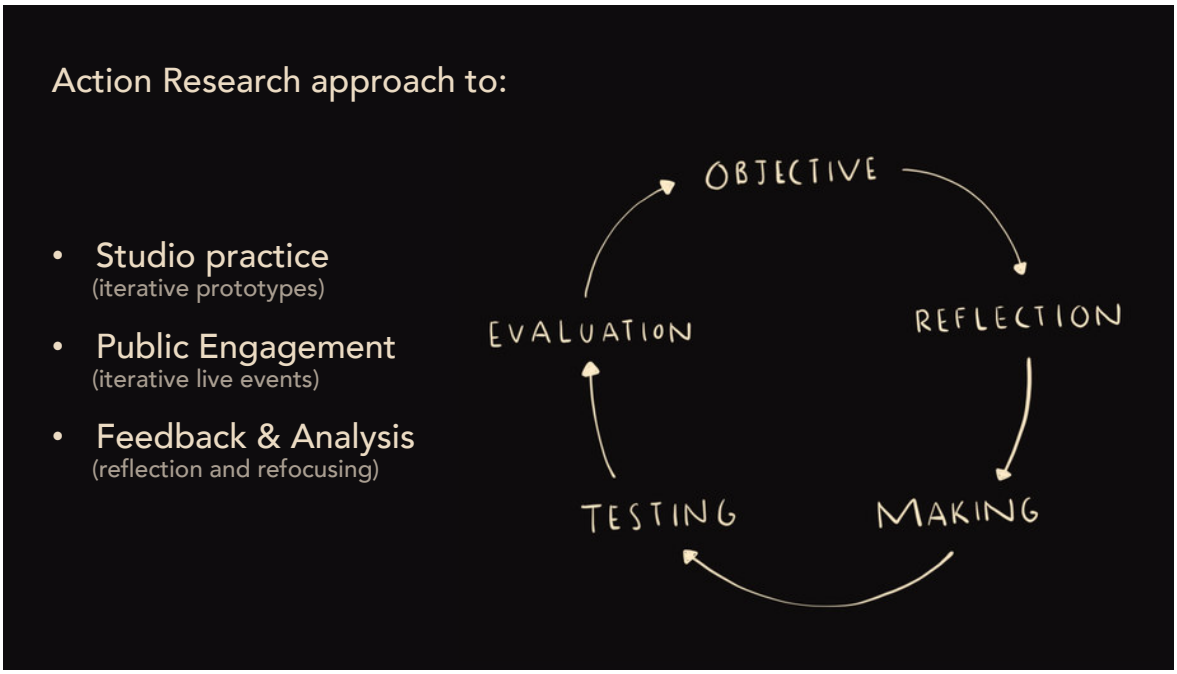

Figure 7. The cycle of action research in the context of this project.

Firstly, this involved setting an objective, reflecting on what was known thus far – both contextual theory and my own prior creative practice – and then making in the studio in response. The collections of objects made through this exploration

[182] McNiff, *Action Research : Principles and Practice*, 89–118.

of materials and materiality (as is discussed extensively in **Appendix I: The Catalogue**) were then tested with participants during live events using public installations, handling sessions, critiquing activities and discussion groups. Feedback gathered through questionnaires and recorded discussion groups were then analysed and supported by reflexive journaling before and after events. This cycle would then continue by re-focusing the objective, reflecting on successes, failures, or unexpected insights, re-making, re-testing, and again undertaking analysis and evaluation. The objects created in the studio were designed as 'epistemic artefacts'[183] with the sole purpose of acting as tools for learning or questioning our relationships with material heritage.[184] In the early stages of this project they helped me as an artist and researcher to question my own relationship with artefacts and replicas, and went on to act as catalysts for engagement during live events to test the opinions and beliefs of others.

3.5 Situating the practice: integrating the material and the social

"Heritage is not a passive process of simply preserving things from the past that remain, but an active process of assembling a series of objects, places and practices that we choose to hold up as a mirror to the present, associated with a particular set of values that we wish to take with us into the future. Thinking of heritage as a creative engagement with the past in the present focuses our attention on our ability to take an active and informed role in the production of our own 'tomorrow'." [185]

While the use of the term *'creative engagement'* in the quote above does not refer specifically to the arts as a way to mediate engagement with heritage, it does refer

[183] Hansen, 'Epistemic Artefacts: The Potential of Artifacts in Design Research'.
[184] Thomas Blinder and Eva Brandt, 'Design (Research) Practice', in *Practice-Based Design Research*, ed. Laurene Vaughan (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 103.
[185] Harrison, *Heritage : Critical Approaches*, 3.

to an active interaction with heritage that fits well into the ethos of socially engaged art practices pertinent to this project. The 'communitive exchange'[186] is key in these practices, but in the context of replicating auratic encounters, materiality also plays an important role. As noted in **Chapter 2**, this project explores how the two conflicting constructivist and materialist viewpoints and priorities can be balanced to create a new framework for immersive interpretation and engagement that is capable of facilitating affectual experiences where the original artefact is not present. As such, the practical component of this research involved interrogating the theory surrounding our preconceptions of reproductions by producing physical objects to be handled and tested. Using traditional casting methods alongside digital scanning (photogrammetry) and 3D printing, these works were designed and created for use as provocations during the socially engaged live events. The following sections outline my approach to designing creative replicas that would act as material provocations, exposing the making process through liminal artefacts, and creating live events in which they could be used to challenge traditional conventions surrounding the replica as an interpretative tool.

3.5.1 Creative replicas: using studio practice to explore the material properties of aura and authenticity

The practical element of this project used selected debris salvaged from the Mack as master patterns, digitally scanning the debris using photogrammetry, and fabricating creative replicas using 3D printing and traditional moulding and casting processes. As noted above, these objects were designed using myself as a test subject in preparation for wider fieldwork study with participants, firstly interrogating my own attraction to specific material properties and my fascination with the patina of age, in order to construct a live workshop

[186] Kester, *Conversation Pieces : Community and Communication in Modern Art*.

experience that could investigate how these elements effect perceptions of value. While undertaking this study, I have come to believe that the 'social value,'[187] 'life-stories',[188] and, 'cultural biography of things'[189] are as important as the material properties that initially attract us to things. But gaining an understanding of the role of materiality plays in instigating engagement with both real and replica objects, in addition to historical narratives, was a critical starting point in understanding cultural and social value systems.

The materiality of objects and spaces can play a fundamental role in our encounters with heritage. An encounter with their physical presence can give a sense of immediacy and heightened significance to the historical narrative that they represent, and which we consume. At times these encounters may allow us to feel a strengthened connection to the past, and move us considerably more than any written record might.[190] We can witness the passage of time on the surface of an object, we record history with objects, and at times we use objects to define ourselves and our self-proclaimed cultural values.[191]

Replicas are traditionally regarded as less potent in terms of heritage encounters, unless they have reached an age where they have accrued their own patina as evidence of their longevity and breadth of cultural biography.[192] As previously discussed, replicated patina is regarded as taboo in museums and heritage spaces

[187] Foster and Curtis, 'The Thing about Replicas—Why Historic Replicas Matter', 2016.
[188] Foster and Jones, 'Principles and Guidance | New Futures for Replicas'.
[189] Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', 1986.
[190] Ross Gibson, 'Spirit House', in *South Pacific Museums: Experiments in Culture*, ed. Chris Healy and Andrea Witcomb (Clayton: Monash University ePress, 2006); Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*.
[191] Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* (London: Verso Books, 2005); DeSilvey, *Curated Decay: Heritage beyond Saving*; Kwint, Breward, and Aynsley, *Material Memories*; Daniel Miller, 'Artefacts and the Meaning of Things', in *Companion Encyclopaedia of Anthropology*, ed. Tim. Ingold (London: Routledge, 2002), 369–419.
[192] Foster and Curtis, 'The Thing about Replicas—Why Historic Replicas Matter', 2016.

lest visitors mistake the replicas for real artefacts, risking resentment or disconnect if or when the deception is revealed. For this reason, whilst experimenting with modes of replication throughout my studio practice, honesty and transparency of the creative replica's origins was a key ethical concern.

The main replication processes used as part of my explorations into the materiality of aura and authenticity were both digital and analogue, with a combination of each often used in the production of a single piece. The digital methods were primarily Structure from Motion (SfM) photogrammetry and 3D printing, and the analogue methods involved conventional moulding and casting. A more detailed account of these processes can be found in **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p81-85.**

The materials used were primarily selected to create diverse range of texture, weight, malleability, tactility, translucency, and in some instances smell. A breakdown of the materials selected can also be found in **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p86-93,** but fall loosely into the following categories:

- **Traditional casting materials**. *[gypsum compounds including fine casting plaster, Jesmonite, Crystacast; but also bronze and casting wax.]*

Figure 8. Traditional casting materials: TS.s.007detail (bronze); TS.012 detail (plaster).

- **Transparent/translucent materials**. *[water clear polyester resin, theatrical glass wax and transparent 3D printing filament (PLA)]*

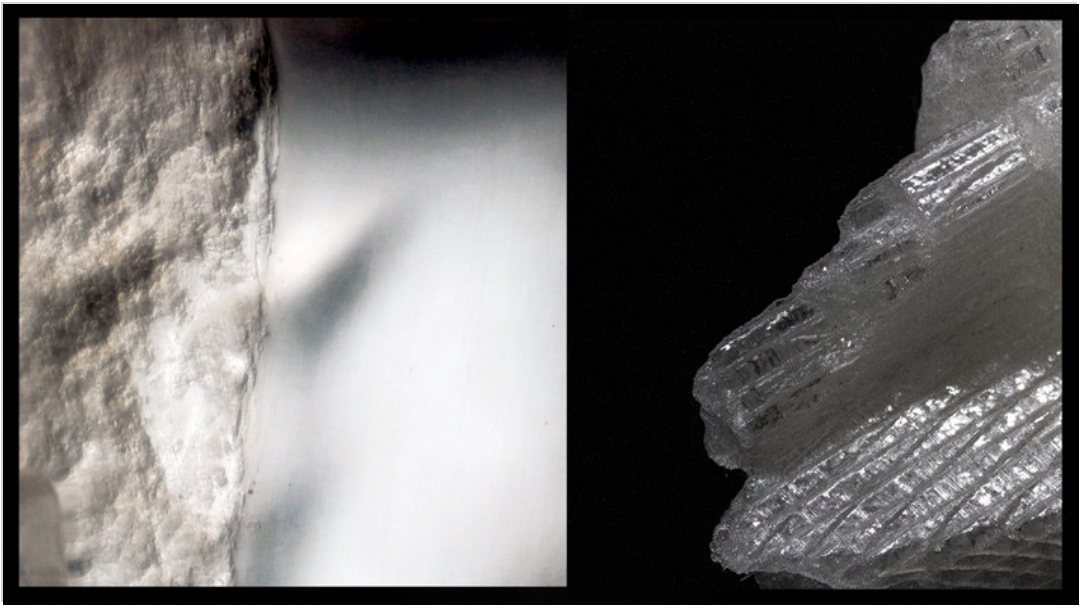

Figure 9. Transparent/translucent materials: TS.010 detail (resin); TW.007 detail (PLA filament)

- **Deceptive materials.** *[silicon rubber, jelly wax, metal filler composites and pigments]*

Figure 10. Deceptive materials: LL.ISO.007 detail (iron plaster composite); TS.006 detail (silicon).

- **Synthetic or untraditional materials.** *[plastic]*

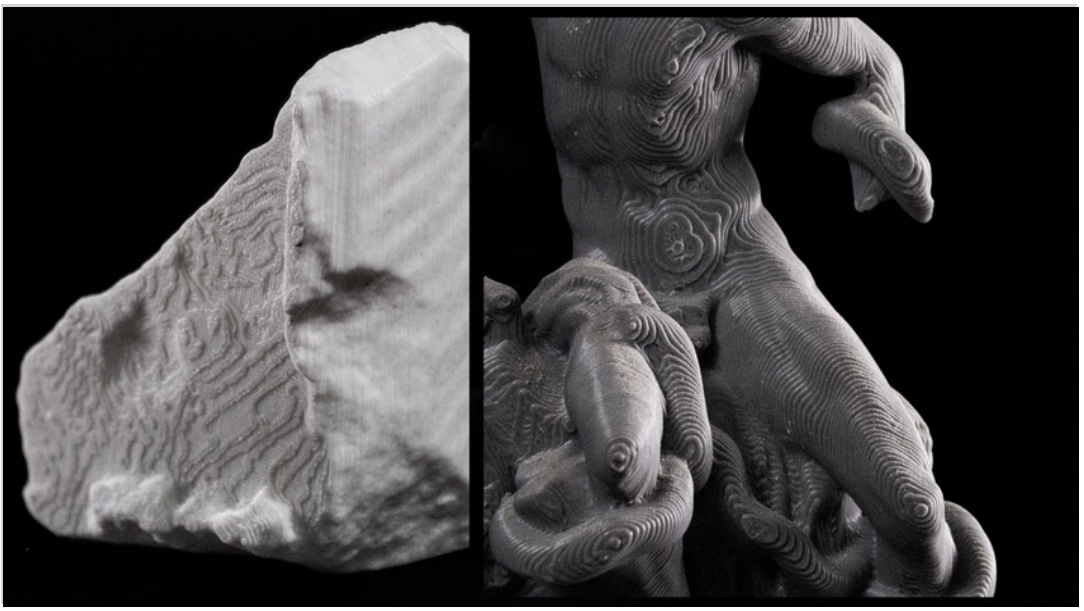

Figure 11. Synthetic or untraditional materials: TS.011 detail (resin); LL.s.001 detail (PLA filament).

The use of the above processes and materials trialled ways to retain a patina of age or echo of surface degradation, while amplifying the inauthentic qualities of the replicas so they would not be mistaken as original artefacts – making their *inauthenticity* obvious. Traces of fabrication, including casting seams, flashing and 3D print lines were left visible to add further visual clues to their material properties and fabrication, and spark curiosity through unexpected weights or surfaces. My experiments uncovered a multitude of personal material preferences that I recognised as subjective to my own experiences as a first line of interrogation, that I subsequently explored further with participants. For example, the following materials elicited certain associations that made them seem pleasing to me:

- *Resin: glass like, pure*
- *Jelly wax: delicate, at risk, fleeting, transparent*
- *Bronze: heavy, detailed, beautiful, visually ambiguous (the crisp 3D print lines that I'm accustomed to in lighter materials felt especially satisfying)*
- *Iron powder composite: heavy in comparison to other gypsum casts, strong satisfying metallic smell, accelerated visual patination, striking crystallising surface*

Many of these preferences stemmed directly from the theoretical research I had been conducting. They were intensified by my fascination with patination, traces of fabrication, and enjoyment of transparent surfaces that reveal the usually hidden depths behind a surface. I found that creative replicas made with these materials could provoke an affectual, emotional response in me, in addition to an aesthetic pleasure that I could not logically trace in my experiences or memories to rationally explain. In creating the initial collections of creative replicas, I was also confronted with my entanglement with the Mack; first as a GSA undergraduate and resident of Glasgow in the past, but also as a researcher and

artist in the present. Handling delicate fragments of fire damaged debris was again, a powerful and affectual experience, and knowing my copies were connected to relics of the Mack made them feel totemic of my experiences with the building. While I could logically explain this relationship, I struggled to underpin the specific elements that might contribute to *why* both the original debris material and my replicas felt so significant to me. Establishing these self-reflective connections early in my studio practice made it clear that study into the wider subjective relationships we each have with objects and materials was a crucial element of this research project. The resulting period of public engagement to interrogate this is outlined in more depth in **Chapter 3.5.4**.

3.5.2 Primary collections: Touchstone; Touch Wood; Laocoon, lost

Figure 12. Touchstone, debris '3335' (photogrammetry scan).

Figure 13. From left: Touch Wood, misc. debris fragment (photograph) replica fragments (photogrammetry scans); debris '66, 5 of 5'(photograph).

Figure 14. Laocoon, lost (digital model of GSA's 'Central Figure Laocoon').

As part of this exploration of replication, three main collections of creative replicas were created:

- **Touchstone**: based on masonry salvaged from the exterior library wall.
- **Touch Wood:** based on wood fragments salvaged from inside the library and furniture store.
- **Laocoon, lost:** based on a laser scanned point cloud model of a fire-damaged GSA plaster cast, since lost in the second fire**.**

Each collection took salvaged debris fragments or digital models as a starting point and focused on different areas of enquiry and types of artefact. Taxonomically they move conceptually from the exterior, to the interior, to the contents of the building, focusing on artefacts that embody that which was lost. The first two deal with fragments that have been transformed by the destructive force of the fire into almost unrecognizable states, arguably with no obvious aesthetic beauty which could be associated with Mackintosh. The third collection is perhaps more complex. While this is not an unrecognisable fragment of debris,

it exists only as point cloud data of a destroyed plaster cast. Full details on the originals used as master patterns and their creative replica counterparts can be found in **Appendix 1: Catalogue.**

This period of studio experimentation was primarily driven by an immersion in materials and fabrication processes, with the collections evolving instinctively as I grappled with my theoretical positioning and corporeal responses to the objects and materials. My practice is predominantly manual, with moulding and casting processes requiring long stretches of time and labour. However, as much as these periods of time demand concentration, they are repetitive enough that they can also verge on meditative, when things aren't going wrong. They leave space for deep reflection on both the theory behind the iterative pieces being made and my feelings towards the objects, their surfaces and the materials used to create them.

While the manual demands of this studio practice left little time to formally record my thoughts and internal debates as they occurred, I can read them on the surface of the objects created. I can trace the evolution of my thinking and approach through them like a physical timeline of my study. They also formed the main line of questioning I sought to explore in the live events, noting my own attractions and dislikes and attempting to uncover if others had similar reactions. I have become a spokesperson for these objects, an entanglement that I did not fully recognise until they were taken out of the studio and used in live events.

3.5.3 Live Events & Social Reproductions: The participant gives life to the replica

A natural progression from interrogating my own responses to the creative replicas, was to build a model that would allow me to study the responses of others, in order to assess the subjectivities or universal trends in response to objects, materials, surfaces, historical narratives and object biographies. Daniel

Miller notes that 'artefacts may relate {…} to a multiplicity of meanings and identities, and the relations between form and meaning may be complex and ambiguous.' With this in mind, while the creative replica collections presented in **Appendix I: Catalogue, p15-51** were shaped by autoethnographic exploration of materials and form, this exploration was framed by strategic intentions to develop groupings of objects that could ask participants specific questions. The initial studio research was a rehearsal phase that was used to build a suite of questions, possible discussions points and potential experiences that could be tested during the socially engaged practice. The participatory live events within that programme were then designed to build upon initial findings and contribute evidence to the main focus of this study:

- Can the use of visual art and socially engaged practice facilitate deeper engagement with lost or vulnerable heritage?
- Are we able to experience aura when encountering replicated material culture?
- How does this compare to encounters with 'real' objects?

In addition to the above, this project aimed to investigate ways to sustain the powerfully emotive connections some participants have with sites of lost or vulnerable heritage, which was exemplified by the public reaction to the fire damaged Mackintosh building and its proposed restoration.[193]

[193] Severin Carrell, Libby Brooks, and Kevin Rawlinson, '"Heartbreaking": Fire Guts Glasgow School of Art for Second Time', *The Guardian*, 16 June 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jun/16/firefighters-tackle-blaze-at-glasgow-school-of-art; Sandra Dick, 'New Film Explores the Scale of Loss Felt by Students of the Fire-Ravaged Glasgow School of Art', *Herald Scotland*, 8 August 2021, https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19498182.new-film-explores-scale-loss-felt-students-fire-ravaged-glasgow-school-art/; Martin Boyce et al., 'Can Glasgow School of Art Rise from the Ashes?', *Frieze*, 25 June 2018, https://www.frieze.com/article/can-glasgow-school-art-rise-ashes.

Before the 2018 fire, this project intended to build an oral history collection focused on the community that had grown to know the Mack intimately either through time as a student, staff or as a local resident. This element of research aimed to bridge the gap between intangible values and material heritage. However, the collection of these narratives was planned to take place in the summer of 2018, which became both ethically and logistically unfeasible in the immediate aftermath of the 2018 fire. With the building in a state of almost total destruction after this second fire, the supervisory team agreed that a prolonged period of oral history collection should not be undertaken as the emotional and political environment surrounding the building and GSA had become too raw. It was feared that the process could be harmful to the original aims of the project and to participants – GSA students, staff, alumni and local residents in particular. Similarly, it was not practical to wait until the rawness had eased if the project was to be completed in a timely fashion.

However, as this study progressed, it became clear that the cultural identities connected to memory, or *performed through* reminiscence, play a vital role in heritage experiences.[194] Gaining insights into the different ways participants felt connected to the building, and how these connections might be celebrated using a programme of engagement, was an important part of the live events. During the pilot study installation at the Victoria & Albert Museum in March 2019, I noticed that while participants were enthusiastically engaging with the collections of creative replicas, only those who initiated discussion with myself or the other facilitators present appeared to reach a state close to the auratic. The stories of my experiences and relationship with the Mack seemed to provide a crucial extra layer of engagement that transformed the objects on display from interactive

[194] David Crouch, 'The Perpetual Performance and Emergence of Heritage', in *Culture, Heritage and Representation: Perspectives on Visuality and the Past*, ed. Emma Waterton and Steve Watson (Ashgate, 2010), 65.

games to something of more value. Essentially the communicative exchange between facilitator and participant (or between participants) gave life to the object's story, and strengthened the connection between the creative replicas and their original counterparts. These early events indicated that even informal exchanges like the above were powerful. In this study this communicative exchange will be defined as a *social reproduction*. Over the course of my research I have found that the presence of a social reproduction can add value to a material replica, and that an interaction with a material replica can help create the exchange that leads to a social reproduction.

I worked reflexively throughout the remainder of the first phase of fieldwork (and into the second) to enhance the experiential live events, so that reminiscence and communicative exchanges or social reproductions were stimulated as part of the workshop experience. I began embedding the social element of the experience in conjunction with the material aspects by including focus groups and critical discussions instead of questionnaires. These discussions were held directly after participants encountered an installation of creative replicas where object handling was actively encouraged, and the live events made use of the receptive state of mindfulness that was instigated by interacting with physical art works. I observed that the physical interaction with objects helped establish an engaged intellectual space where participants were encouraged to question their entanglement with material heritage and intangible cultural values. This included evaluating lived experiences at heritage spaces, previous encounters with historical objects, and their existing feelings towards ideas surrounding materiality, authenticity, and aura alongside the replica. In many cases this also led to a degree of reminiscence or memory sharing about the Mack, again operating as a form of social reproduction. Patricia Leavy suggests that oral history as a practice is a collaborative process between interviewer and interviewee. The oral historian is not interested in a list of facts about a time or

place, but rather the narrative and meaning that a participant creates in the retelling of an experience.[195] Similarly, social reproductions cannot simply be extracted from the memory of the participant, they are made during the give-and-take of the discussion. The live events used this principle, employing dialogue as a collaborative process of meaning making between participants, which could also be used as a qualitative mode of data collection to fine tune a new framework for engagement and interpretation.

Using participant memories or opinions that have been formed through collective or individual cultural experiences as data for research purposes is challenging. As noted above, memories are not isolated data points in the mind of the individual. They are shaped and reformed by the re-telling of events in social situations with family, friends or peers, and can be influenced by overarching collective narratives or established cultural storylines of events, spaces or time periods. Similarly, our value judgements are based on environmental influences and past experiences, and hence are extremely subjective and may change over time. However, the subjective relationships or affections we hold in the context of heritage – and how they differ, or align – is precisely what this research project has made more visible through extensive documentation and data collected during the social exchanges provoked in the live events. With this in mind, the documentation, interpretation and analysis of the recorded focus groups and critical discussions was carefully constructed with reference to theoretical frameworks surrounding memory and qualitative interviewing.[196] However, it must be noted that the reminiscence shared during the course of fieldwork were primarily for the benefit of the participants present, as a form of social

[195] Patricia Leavy, *Oral History: Understanding Qualitative Research* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 5.
[196] Lynn. Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010); Leavy, *Oral History: Understanding Qualitative Research*; Paula Hamilton and Linda. Shopes, *Oral History and Public Memories* (Temple University Press, 2008); Tim May, *Qualitative Research in Action* (London: SAGE, 2002)

reproduction that might deepen engagement with the case study site rather than oral histories that could be used to represent the Mack in future interpretation or heritage narratives.

3.5.4 Ethical concerns regarding using 'original' debris fragments in artistic practice

The salvaged materials used as master patterns for the creative replicas were very kindly donated by various members of the restoration team, with the understanding that I could use them freely during this exploration process. These items were not suitable for restoration research nor preservation in collections and were therefore deemed unsuitable for retention by the Mackintosh Building Restoration Project (MBRP) or Glasgow School of Art Archives and Collections (GSAAC). Most of the fragments received for use in this project were simply too damaged to be recognisable as anything more than charred debris, and the few items that were identifiable in terms of their former function (e.g., furniture fragments, masonry) had many better-preserved counterparts which were retained by MBRP and GSAAC for salvage and research purposes.

However, I still found the gifted debris fragments to be conceptually and sensorially powerful. As a Glasgow resident, GSA alumni, and returning GSA student, they were a visceral trace of the destructive forces of the fire and still felt entangled with the essence of the Mack. As material representations of age, use, degradation and damage they were the perfect starting point for an investigation into aura, authenticity and replication. Fragments that were too fragile for direct contact moulding and casting were scanned using photogrammetry, modelled and printed, with the resulting 3D print being used as a master pattern to be moulded and then cast anew. Direct contact moulding was used, for the most part, where the original fragments were deemed robust enough to survive unscathed (e.g., sandstone fragments). In a very limited number of cases, the

testing variable of the resulting artwork was the intentional destruction of a fragment through moulding, and in these cases, only the most abstract and unidentifiable fragments were selected for use.

3.6 Identifying and recruiting participants (Live Events & Remote Workshops)

The initial recruitment of participants for public engagement activities was delayed by the second fire in 2018, with the topic becoming a much more sensitive issue than anticipated. As previously noted, it was decided that the brutality of the second fire, both abstractly (to the emotional connection many had with the building and restoration project) and practically (regarding the displaced local community and businesses) meant that delaying the public engagement aspect of this PhD was a critical ethical requirement and obligation. After a thorough ethics review by the GSA Ethics Committee, a **Phase 1** pilot study consisting of an installation and drop-in workshop was organised outside of Glasgow to alleviate the above concerns. This first event occurred at V&A London, and subsequently, when deemed appropriate, a further two drop-in workshops were held as part of larger academic events with invited guests at the Pitt Rivers Balfour Room, Oxford and the Lighthouse, Glasgow. This allowed the study to begin to collect data outside the studio in an ethical and controlled manner.

The recruitment process for **Phase 2** of fieldwork was undertaken in collaboration with the GSA Alumni and Events Office, targeting three groups; GSA staff, alumni, and students. Each group was approached via email and social media in close working with the alumni office or by personal invitation. Informed consent was obtained through a Project Information Sheet sent beforehand and participants were made aware that they had the option to remain

anonymous if preferred and that all personal details would remain confidential. It was also be made clear that participation could be stopped or retracted at any time during the process. The participant recruitment aims for the second phase of events was to engage with a demographic with a considerable prior relationship with the Mack, whereas the first phase engaged with a wider public with more geographical and emotional distance. The second phase sought individuals with a wide range of experiences to locate a fuller understanding of what the Mack meant to people, rather than its well-established historical narrative. However, it must be noted that contrary to initial intentions, the decision was taken not to actively seek participants from the local geographic community. This was due to the previously expressed atmosphere of tension surrounding GSA's perceived management of the restoration, which at the time of conducting this second phase had become increasingly fraught and political.

In a project that had already changed substantially due to unforeseen distressing events, a final concession was made in the final planning of **Phase 3** fieldwork. The Covid-19 pandemic and governmental lockdown restrictions necessitated the cancellation of planned drop-in workshops, pop up exhibitions and installations on the GSA campus and at Historic Environment Scotland Properties in Care. As a substitute, a mode of delivery for a programme of *Remote Workshops* was developed. This involved creating handling collections of miniature creative replicas which were then delivered to participants households, and a companion virtual, object led activity via zoom, alongside other immersive elements. Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, participants were recruited from the local Glasgow area by open call on social media. During the **Phase 3** recruitment process, those with a previous connection to the Mack were given priority to fill the very limited places that were quickly outstripped by demand. This was due to noting how impactful the participation of GSA staff, alumni and students had been in **Phase**

2, which seemed to be both beneficial to the workshop dynamic and cathartic for those in attendance.

3.7 Fieldwork structure and methods

The socially engaged fieldwork for this study took place over three distinct phases, using the principles of action research, as outlined previously, to adjust each event in relation to previous observations taken and data gathered. With this reflexive approach, each event evolved slightly from the last - shifting the focus in terms of the objects displayed, the principal questions put to participants, and the design and delivery of data capture.

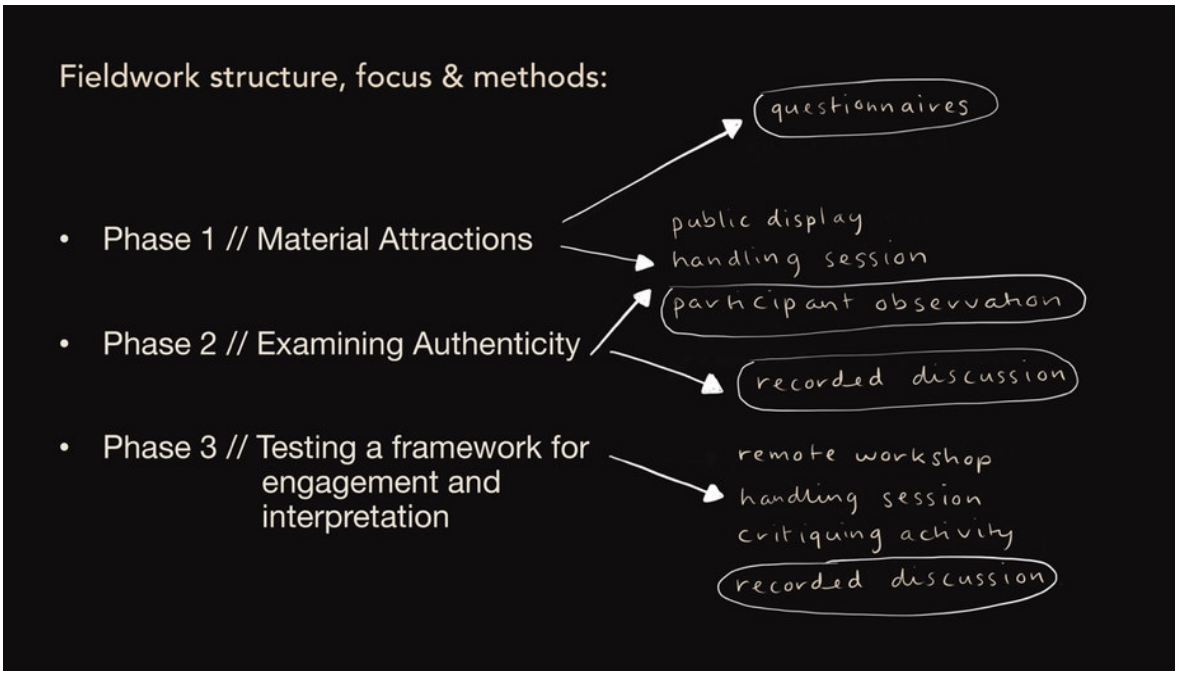

Figure 15. Fieldwork structure, focus & methods

Phase 1 concentrated on uncovering potential trends with regards to material attractions, exploring if the materials used to create replicas could influence whether they could be recognised as authentic or auratic.

Phase 2 focused on examining authenticity, attempting to uncover what our subjective understandings of the term authenticity are, are how these understandings effect the way we consume material heritage. The second phase also aimed to facilitate social interaction between participants, exploring contradictory understandings of authenticity by using object handling as a stimulus to discussion and shared reminiscence. It also explored if shared reminiscence, brought forth by object handling and discussion, might impart a feeling of connection to the lost material heritage.

Phase 3 built upon the previous findings, acknowledging that our attractions to materials and perspectives on authenticity are influenced by both collective cultural narratives and subjective personal experiences. The methods of data collection used in this last phase were similar to the previous, save adaptations made in response to Covid-19 restrictions, which will be detailed in full in **Chapter Four & Five**. However, the main aims of these workshops shifted from simply recording participant responses to the themes presented to them. Instead, it aimed to discover if the material and social interactions might change the way participants regarded replicas, originals, and the heritage experience, during the event and in the future – to test a new framework for engagement.

3.8 Framework for participant feedback and analysis of data

With regards to recording feedback, as noted above, participant observation, questionnaires, and audio recordings were the primary methods used to record feedback during live events. Post event surveys were also used in **Phase 3** to assess the performance of the proposed framework for engagement.

Participant observation was informal throughout all stages of fieldwork. This method of feedback gathering was used, where possible, to record the

atmosphere and mood, participant's physical interaction with the objects, verbal commentary and body language. As I was often drawn into one-on-one conversation with participants – particularly in **Phase 1 & 2** – this observation was far from comprehensive, but reflexive journaling helped capture successes and failures in the delivery of each event. This process was especially valuable in **Phase 1** to aid the planning of future events while also helping make sense of the initial data gathered in questionnaires. Being wary of the Hawthorne effect - where a participant may change their behaviour when aware their reactions and opinions are being studied - attempts were made to put participants at ease by establishing an informal and open dialogue. Participants were made aware that in the workshop space there were no right or wrong opinions. Much like William Isaacs' strategies for impactful dialogue, these workshops aimed to encourage, 'a discussion with a centre, not sides.'[197]

Questionnaires were used early on during the fieldwork to gather quantitative data on material attractions as noted above (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork Documentation p4-6** for samples), in addition to qualitative answers supporting their choices in relation to their experience with the collections. In the first phase, the questionnaires also acted as an activity guide, steering participants round the installation to give each assemblage attention in turn. Recognising the limits of the largely quantitative data set captured through questionnaires in **Phase 1**, the primary method of feedback gathering was switched to audio recordings in **Phase 2**. This change was made in order to gather a richer, more qualitative data set that captured both individual and collective connections to, and opinions on, materiality, authenticity and aura that were being expressed by participants. While activity prompt sheets were still used as a guide during the object handling

[197] William Isaacs, *Dialogue: The Art Of Thinking Together*, Illustrated edition (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1999), 19.

session (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork Documentation p39-41)** they had a lighter touch, to encourage participants to enter into dialogue with each other during the session and interact with the collections more independently.

In **Phase 3**, feedback was gathered through audio recordings once more. In addition to testing the success of the proposed framework for interpretation and engagement, these recordings and transcripts were used to note moments of transference, where one participant might influence the social value of an object for others, either positively or negatively. It also sought to record instances where the background experiences, interests or expertise could be seen to have direct correlation to why participants were drawn to certain objects and how they approached critique of them, to evidence the subjective nature of the social values that objects are held to.

In terms of analysis of data, two main methods were used for the quantitative data and qualitative data collected – engagement mapping and interpretative thematic coding. The analysis of questionnaires was made by firstly familiarising myself with the data through repeat reading, compiling responses into spreadsheets and searching for themes.[198] The questionnaire responses were first mapped to gage which materials elicited the most positive, negative, neutral, consistent, or contradictory responses (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork Documentation p8-25)**. They were then attached to open codes (recurring key words and motivations) and finally assigned into thematic categories (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork Documentation p8-25; 26-35**). These categories helped make sense of the diverse and subjective responses in order to more efficiently understand how participants were responding each creative replica, and how the data collected

[198] Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, 'Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77–101.

contributed to the main research questions in this study. The categories used were as follows:

Affectual: where the material or object encounter could be inferred to have triggered an emotional response or unconscious gut reaction.
Sensory: where participant responses centred on visual, tactual or olfactory stimuli.
Mnemonic: where the encounter elicited memories of experiences, materials, objects or the case study site.
Conceptual: where the encounter seemed to generate ideas, cause the participant to reflect upon established theory or instigate the personification of inanimate objects.
Cultural: where the participants stated value judgements (incl. assertions regarding authenticity) but where affectual or sensory descriptions were not included.

Similarly, in order to analyse discussion in **Phase 2 & 3**, relevant segments of dialogue captured in audio recordings were transcribed to aid further thematic coding with the same categories, to identify possible trends in participant's responses. Moments of reminiscence triggered by encounters with the creative replicas were also transcribed to analyse if the objects helped to establish connections to related material heritage or intangible values. These transcriptions were used to investigate how the shared reminiscence affected the group in terms of their fluctuating relationships with the objects displayed.

3.9 Summary

In summary, both the sculptural enquiry used in the making of the creative replica collections and the public engagement involved in testing the creative

replica collections were guided by iterative cycles of action research. These methods were used to create a rich data set of participant interactions and responses that could then be analysed, and further tested, to establish a new framework of engagement and interpretation centred around visual art and socially engaged practice. The heritage experience is naturally idiosyncratic, and this research methodology aimed to highlight the subjectivity of the heritage experience in order to establish positive and empowering encounters.

Chapter Four: Fieldwork - Activating aura, questioning authenticity

4.1 Introduction: Using reproductions as a catalyst in a socially engaged art practice

As noted in **Chapter Three**, the fieldwork for this research project took place over three stages, guided by action research principles in order to refine each iteration in relation to the analysis of results produced by each previous event. This chapter gives an overview of the design and predetermined focus of each phase, and how this focus shaped the events to explore the range theoretical factors that affect participants' value judgements of, and engagement with replicas. It also outlines key findings that contributed to the final model of live events – the remote workshop, which in turn contributed to the development of the main contribution to knowledge – a framework for engagement at sites of lost or vulnerable heritage.

This chapter refers to both research questions (RQ) and fieldwork questions, which will be defined here for clarity. The research questions refer to the main research questions guiding this study, as outlined in **Chapter 1.** However, to develop structured live events involving participants, the research questions had to be broken down into thematic elements to be approached effectively with room for structured exploration. For this reason, and using the cycle of action research as described in **Chapter Three**, a series of iterative fieldwork questions were composed to systematically manage the constituent parts of the research aims and objectives. The development and use of the fieldwork questions, in addition to how they fed into the overarching study are discussed below.

4.2 Phase 1 of Fieldwork: Material Attractions

4.2.1 Summary of live events: The V&A, The Lighthouse & The Balfour Room

Phase 1 of fieldwork used materiality as a lens through which to interrogate this study's first research question and related aim:

> RQ1a: Can participants have meaningful auratic experience with contemporary reproductions of material culture?
> RQ1b: How does this experience compare to encounters with authentic artefacts?

In order to examine the role that materiality plays in positively or negatively influencing our encounters with objects, groupings of creative replicas were exhibited in a drop-in workshop environment. Each of the live events in this phase were part of wider events in museum and gallery settings. They included an installation or display of creative replicas from the collections described in **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p15-51,** and a drop-in, activity-led handling session. Practically, these events were designed to encourage participants to handle and actively engage with the works on show in the main display, while answering the activity guide questionnaires that directed the participant's attention to specific material properties of the creative replicas and debris fragments. These activity guide questionnaires were constructed to gather data on participants' material preferences and attitudes towards the replica in a gallery space, in order to track common trends or idiosyncrasies.

Live Event One was part of V&A London's *Copy/Paste Friday Late*, a well-established monthly event on rolling themes, with the audience described as predominantly young, art curious and tech savvy. **Live Event Two and Three**

were used to tweak the format trialled at the V&A, testing content, display, and feedback methods. These latter two events differed from the first in that they were presented in an academic context – at a *Doctoral Research Impact Showcase* at The Lighthouse, and a student led *Symposium and Study day* at the Balfour Room, Pitt Rivers. These two events primarily targeted local and national research communities respectively. The audience at the third live event was particularly niche, attracting attendees actively interested in or researching the materiality of replicas in museums and heritage. Despite the differing contexts, the atmosphere at all three events was energetic, playful and attentive.

These initial three live events were successful in testing and developing the fieldwork format, but perhaps raised as many questions as they partially answered. Questionnaire feedback from these first events made it clear that material attractions and object preferences are almost entirely subjective. In terms of participant reception, the creative replicas that were particularly well received were those fabricated in traditional or surprising materials (see **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p87-93**). However, where replicas were compared directly to 'real' objects, they performed poorly more often than not. While the events succeeded in facilitating enthusiastic engagement with the materiality of the replicas and the salvaged material, the manner in which these engagements were achieved was much more nuanced than expected.

4.2.2 Objects displayed

Figure 16. Live Event One installation at V&A Late Copy/Paste, London, 2019.

Three groupings of original Mack debris and creative replicas were exhibited at the V&A, displayed on gallery plinths grouped together in a central formation, arranged to encourage participants to circulate around the objects and maximise access. These were:

- **Touchstone Debris '3555,'** displayed with **Touchstone, Material Library** (see **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p25-27**)
- **Touch Wood, Real | Fake Debris '66, 5 of 5'** with 3D printed counterpart (see **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p31-33**)
- **Laocoon, Lost, Fragmented Head** in resin (see **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p49**)

Figure 17. Displays at Live Event Two: The Lighthouse, Glasgow (left) and Live Event Three: The Balfour Room, Pitt rivers, Oxford (right), 2019.

In addition to the creative replicas shown at the V&A, the following object groupings were tested during the second two events:

- **Touchstone, life size castings in resin & silicon** (see **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p21**)
- **Touch Wood, Specimen Tray** (see **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p29**)
- **Laocoon, Lost, miniatures** (**Appendix I: The Catalogue, p37-47**)
- **Laocoon, Lost, Fragmented head** in fine casting plaster and iron powder composite (see **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p51**)

At the Lighthouse and The Balfour Room events, the mode of display was markedly less dynamic due to the organisational constraints of the academic events they were situated within, which hindered access to a degree and made participant observation and interaction challenging. At these events, the object groupings were displayed on low, cloth-covered tables in the corner of the

gallery space / function room, and the loss of gallery standard exhibition furniture made the objects more difficult to view and handle. This made a significant impact on how participants engaged with both the objects, and with each other. At The V&A, the arrangement of plinths allowed a greater number of participants to congregate around all three groupings of objects, which facilitated more social interaction, discussion and comparison of object. Similarly, if we envisage *the exhibition* as a 'medium' or 'production,' the visual and cultural cues we take from the context of display – i.e. traditional gallery display conventions versus makeshift pop up displays – may also affect the way the social value of the objects is perceived, which is discussed in more depth in **Chapter Six.**[199]

4.2.3 Event format & Feedback Collection

As noted above, these first events used questionnaires that doubled as activity prompts to guide participants round the installation (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork Documentation, p4-6** for sample). Recognising that the research questions in this study were too broad and complex to challenge participants with directly, the aims of the questionnaire were simplified to three pages, with each page aiming to pose 1-2 overall fieldwork questions:

- What materials are you drawn to?
- What terms do you use to describe replicas?
  [both in relation **Touchstone, Material Library**]
- How do encounters with 'real' artefacts and 'fake' replicas compare?
  [in relation to **Touch Wood, Real | Fake, debris '66, 5 of 5'**]
- Which objects do you find most engaging?
  [in relation to all of the objects on display]

[199] Susan Pearce, 'Structuring the Past: Exhibiting Archaeology', *Museum International* 47, no. 1 (1995): 10.

These questions were used to begin to gather evidence on what conditions or attributes (e.g., material, surface patina, attached narrative, display) might contribute to an object having the power to move or affect us. They also prompted participants to analyse the objects and their feelings towards them in a more critical and probing way. The principal aims and feedback methods were unchanged in the latter two events, but efforts were made to make the questionnaire aspect more intuitive and efficient. A balance was sought between social engagement, interaction with the works, and collecting feedback that would not interrupt the experience or burden the participant.

4.2.4 Critical observations and insights gathered

In terms of engagement in this phase, participants were observed to be active, enthusiastic and engaged – often initiating discussion to ask questions that ranged from the light-hearted and superficial, to complex and philosophical, without any apparent self-consciousness. The hands-on aspect of the installation was a marked success in freeing participants to explore the complex themes through the objects, encouraging curiosity and embodied learning. However, the high energy interactions seemed to lack any feeling of an auratic or affectual experience. The material properties and unexpected weights, textures, surfaces, and traces of fabrication were a marked discussion point between participants – but the installation promoted an atmosphere of play rather than reflection. The works on show acted as sensorial provocation for debate surrounding materiality and authenticity, but did not necessarily facilitate a deeper connection to the Mack or any associated historical narrative.

However, I observed that those who initiated discussion with myself before, during or after engaging with the objects appeared to reach a more contemplative state that could be described as auratic or affectual. Namely, they seemed to be engaging with the intangible social identity of the Mack, as it existed both before

and after the fires. They seemed more able to form some kind of emotional or conceptual connection with building.

The stories of my experiences and relationship with the Mack seemed to provide a crucial extra layer of engagement that transformed the objects on display from interactive games to something of more social value. The biographical 'trajectory' of the objects was activated.[200] This shift was perceptible in the change of body language while in conversation with participants, and also observed as they interacted with the objects, appearing to handle them with more care and purposefulness. In these moments, I would argue I acted as a 'social reproduction' that facilitated the emotional or conceptual connection between the participants and the Mack that had been missing when they interacted with the objects without this extra layer of context. The most important insight garnered at these initial events was that the social aspect should be a deliberately planned component to work in tandem with the material installations of creative replicas.

[200] Bruno Latour; Adam Lowe, 'The Migration of the Aura or How to Explore the Original through Its Facsimiles', 4.

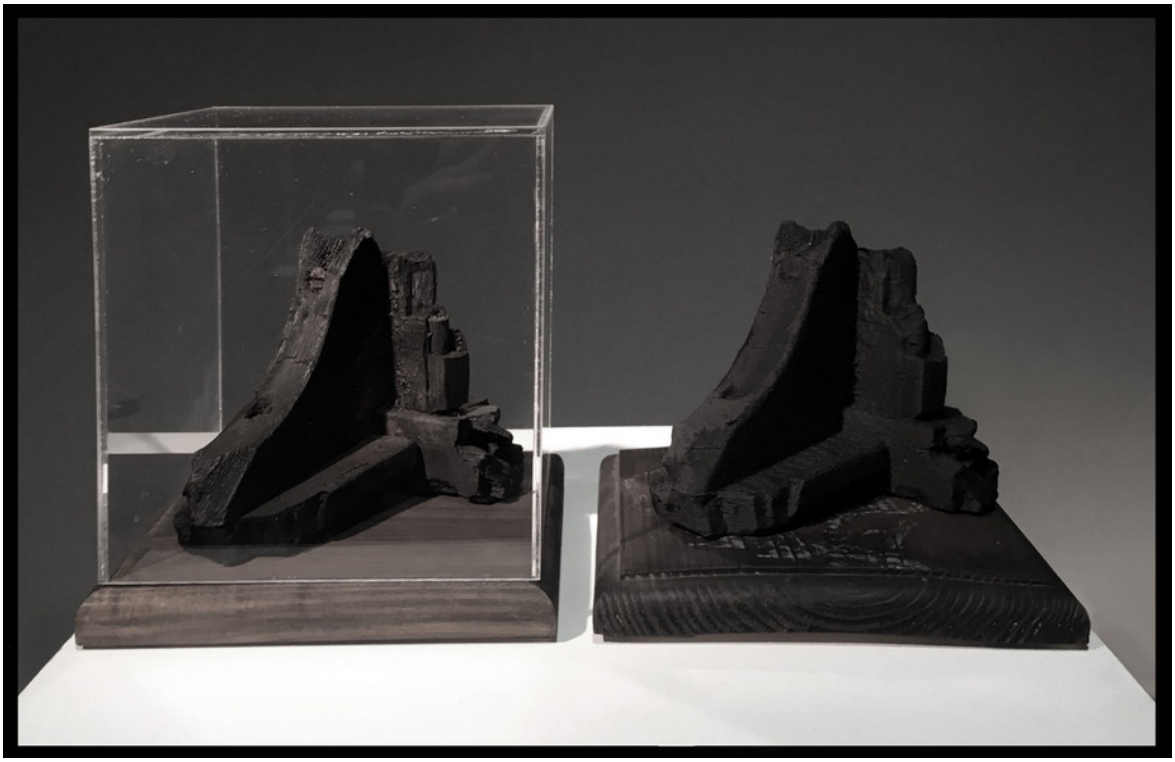

Figure 18. Touch Wood, Real | Fake Debris '66, 5 of 5' with life size casting counterpart in charcoal grey, 2019.

The reception of the objects and materials is discussed in more depth in **Chapter Six** to allow for direct comparison across all stages of fieldwork. However, one of the most notable insights gained during thematic analysis of this first phase, which then shaped planning for subsequent stages, was how idiosyncratic the responses to the objects and materials could be. For example, the majority of materials were polarising in terms of reception. While some trends in material preferences or views of authenticity were evident, they were never across-the-board, and were often contradictory. Similarly, it became clear that the display, and context of display, had a major influence on perceptions of authenticity. Contrary to my expectations, the permission to touch objects in a museum context decreased rather than amplified their value for some. But for others, it was the act of touching the replica that defined the experience, and invited them

to consider replicas in a different, more positive light. In addition, in a more practical sense, it was obvious that the display of the objects was as important as the objects themselves in terms of visual language and cultural subtexts that could potentially increase the social value of the creative replicas. The first box of miniatures trialled (**Touchstone, Material Library**) was universally popular as a vehicle to display a number of objects together, encouraging comparison, but many participants also commented on enjoying the box itself. Similarly, the simple act of protecting the 'real' version of **Touchwood, debris '66, 5 of 5'** (see Figure 18) with a Perspex case while the replica counterpart was invited to be touched caused an extreme reaction in participants, as is discussed in **Chapter Six**. These display choices could raise an object's cultural capital by mimicking the way 'real' artefacts might be presented, but also provoked the participants to engage with the material philosophically when established display conventions were subtly subverted.

Similarly, after **Live Event One** at the V&A it became clear that the language used to introduce and contextualise the creative replicas could influence the manner they were received by the public. These first events and a specific grouping of objects were titled 'Real Fakes,' taking inspiration from Cornelius Holtorf's proposed 'authentic reproductions.' This title was employed for a number of reasons. Firstly, to reiterate the inauthentic nature of the objects on display so the creative replicas would not be mistaken for original artefacts, and secondly, to explore how language and naming conventions may affect encounters with materiality. The provocative use of both real and fake in the event and artwork titles attempted to playfully destabilise the idea of a thing existing as exclusively real or fake. In addition, in the case of **Touch Wood, Real | Fake Debris** (see Figure 18 and **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p31-33**), this term was used to highlight the direct comparison between original artefact and creative replica being presented to participants. In conjunction with a specific fieldwork

question which asked participants to choose which object they found most engaging (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork Documentation, p6**), this tactic was used as a starting point to explore how preconceived notions of cultural value and naming conventions affected encounters with objects. In these early live events, employing the word 'fake' did not always lead the participants to fully question the cultural connotations of the term as intended. In some instances, using the term fake while encouraging tactual exploration was observed to do the opposite. Without adequate context, a number of participants seemed to (understandably) accept the term in its conventional sense, simply reinforcing the idea that a replica is inferior to an original. However, in other instances, particularly in **Phase 3** within an extensively tested and refined framework for engagement that made space for dialogical engagement with the themes, introducing the contradiction of a 'real fake' early on in the encounter was observed to contribute a sense of curiosity, encouraging participants to question what the objects on display were, both materially and philosophically.

One of the most unexpected insights in this phase was recognising my own entanglement with the creative replicas. While the objects had been developed and tested in the studio as functioning epistemic artefacts that could be used to ask questions through material interaction, by the time they reached the point of display my relationship with these objects was already very different to the way participants might perceive them. I was heavily involved and invested in their creation, which undoubtedly bestowed a higher social value upon them and the process of thinking through making had changed my perception of what replicas can represent or evoke. However, during these initial events, I was reminded that most participants have not had cause or time to reconsider replicas out of their traditional function. In addition, they did not have a prior embedded relationship to these objects, or insight into the process of their making. The first event was a challenging experience, where I was both delighted to see participants excitedly

engaging with the objects, and simultaneously horrified to see the objects being handled with such a brutal enthusiasm that damaged them in the process. I recognised that I must balance the protective bond I felt to the art works I had created with an understanding of the current cultural status of replicas. When using them as a means to explore how they could be used to deepen engagement with lost or vulnerable material culture I had to ensure the extra context of my theoretical study was also available to participants to observe. But more importantly, it again reinforced the importance of creating space for a dialogical exchange where participants had sufficient priming and space to explore the social value of artefacts and replicas in more depth.

4.2.5 Evaluation: Questions moving forward to Phase 2

The initial workshops demonstrated that public displays of creative replicas, alongside social interaction, could return valuable insights that examined the role of materiality in the context of the main research questions. However, participant feedback regarding definitions, opinions and understandings of authenticity in cultural spaces was ambiguous, warranting further study. Moving forward, the following fieldwork questions were folded into to my approach to the next phase of fieldwork:

- How do participants define authenticity?
- What effects the value systems surrounding replicas in the context of authenticity?

In addition, **Phase 1** events illustrated the importance of creating space for participants to question their own inherited cultural value systems and how they have developed over time. After establishing the critical role social interaction had played in creating a more nuanced communicative space to untangle public

perceptions of social value, the following fieldwork question was also identified as a priority for planning **Phase 2**:

- How can the social element be formally programmed into the workshop?

4.3 Fieldwork Phase 2: Examining Authenticity

4.3.1 Summary of live events: The GSA Project Space

Building on **Phase 1** findings, **Phase 2** shifted emphasis from examining materiality to exploring how our perceptions and understandings of authenticity can positively or negatively influence our encounters with objects, and once again, influence how we value replicas. This phase continued to use RQ1 (see **Chapter 4.2.1**) to guide the research, but also used RQ2 and the related aims and objectives of this study (see below) to begin to hone the workshop format, in order to produce a refined best practice model for a new framework for engagement and interpretation:

> RQ2: How can visual art and socially engaged practice be harnessed to provide a methodology for a new framework of engagement and interpretation at heritage sites?

These four events took place on a single day in one-hour blocks at GSA's Project Space. They consisted of a central exhibition of creative replicas and selected debris fragments displayed in a manner similar to the first **Phase 1** event at the V&A, as this mode of display had been identified as particularly successful, both in encouraging greater engagement with the objects and encouraging interaction between participants. As is outlined in more depth below, the format of the workshop was structured with a handling session to begin the workshop,

followed by a longer period of audio recorded discussion led by a workshop facilitator.

Rather than the drop-in workshop format of the first phase, these events were pre-booked by participants for specific time slots, to allow for a more immersive experience. As previously noted, **Phase 1** events were programmed with deliberate geographical distance to GSA campus in response to emotional and political tensions surrounding the 2018 fire. However, with the second phase taking place 14 months after the second fire when political tensions had begun to ease, it was deemed appropriate and necessary to invite GSA Staff, Students and Alumni, in addition to staff who had worked directly with the Mackintosh Building Restoration Project to take part in the study. Including participants with direct links to the Mack noticeably changed the atmosphere from energetic to contemplative in three of the four sessions.

While exploring the installation in pairs, discussions were often whispered and serious. This change in atmosphere could be argued to be a direct result of these participants having had closer relationships the building pre-fire than **Phase 1** participants. These established relationships were combined with the workshop location being in close proximity to the Mack, still in a ruined and scaffold clad state, which participants walked past to enter the workshop venue. The only exception to this observably intensified, almost reverential atmosphere, was the first session of the day which was just as energetic as the **Phase 1** workshops. This session was composed of staff who had worked with the Mackintosh Building Restoration Project, either directly, or as academic or subject specialist consultancy support. It could be argued that this group of participants were at least partially desensitised to viewing the fire damaged material compared to other alumni, staff and students who were confronting authentic and replicated debris related to the Mack fires for the first time.

4.3.2 Objects displayed

Figure 19. 'Mack Reproductions' displays at The Project Space, GSA, Glasgow, 2019.

As display had been recognised as an important factor influencing the reception of the replica collections, the following objects were displayed in a small darkened gallery space on three spot lit plinths:

- **Touchstone: Material Library** and **Touchstone, life size casting in resin** see **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p25-27, & p21**)
- **Touch Wood, Real | Fake Debris '66, 5 of 5'** with life size casting counterpart in charcoal grey fine casting plaster (see **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p31-33**)
- **Lost Laocoon, Fragmented Head** in resin (see **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p49**)
- **Lost Laocoon, miniatures** (see **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p37-47**)

4.3.3 Event format & Feedback Collection

As noted above, these events included a small exhibition, object handling session and audio recorded focus group contained in a one-hour session, with the format

change responding to the observed need to provide time and space for richer discussion. Noting the social element of the engagement was as important as the materiality of the objects, the target for data collection shifted to ask participants to use the object handling session as a starting point to reflect on their perceptions of authenticity in relation to the creative replicas on display. By asking participants to interrogate how the objects made them feel within this context, it created space for participants to unpick why some things seemed more authentic than others, what the term authenticity meant to them, and if a sense of authenticity was required to engage with a replica and the original that it was used to interpret. In addition, the discussion group format allowed the increasingly evident conflicting viewpoints to be voiced and further disentangled.

The primary feedback collection methods relied on the audio recorded discussion, but as the questionnaires had proven so successful in guiding participants' engagement with each of the object groupings, this element was adjusted to act as an activity prompt (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork documentation, p38-41** for sample). Rather than demanding written answers, which discouraged social interaction, these prompts gave an indication of the themes that would be discussed in the focus group and encouraged mindful reflection while they handled the objects.
During the focus group, natural progression of discussion was encouraged. However, the following fieldwork discussion prompts were used:

- Which objects are you most drawn to and why?
- Can replicas ever be authentic?
- How do you define authenticity?

The prompts progressed from straightforward to more philosophical and complex. However, as the questions were directly related to the participants' opinions of the creative replicas they had handled, participants were, for the most part, eager to critique the objects, which in turn revealed their differing opinions on material attractions and definitions of authenticity. It was observed that the participants who focused on critiquing the objects, rather than trying to articulate their own standpoint of the value of authenticity 'cold,' were less self-conscious when responding to the discussion prompts, but still expressed their opinions and experiences in a way that could contribute to the research questions being examined. This observation was a critical turning point that would heavily influence the development of the next phase of fieldwork, as is discussed below.

4.3.4 Critical observations and insights gathered

In terms of participant engagement during this phase of events, the dedicated time and space for discussion was beneficial to both the social and material focus of the research. It facilitated in-depth discussions surrounding materiality and authenticity that had not been possible in the drop-in workshops. At times, the objects were the focus of thoughtful critique – which I initially feared had deviated too far from the immediate research questions. But as participants critiqued the success or failure in each object materially and conceptually – they were also critiquing the terms 'aura' and 'authenticity' as they understood them, while trying to contextualise their understandings with past personal and professional interests and experiences. In these instances, the objects acted like totems, that allowed participants to debate and unpick complex philosophical ideas without self-consciousness. The objects became vessels into which they could pour their opinions without fear of sounding foolish, for it was the object that was being judged, not their opinions. Observing these moments where the objects could act as a stimulus or totem to impactful and memorable debates was an important critical insight that would shape the final phase of fieldwork.

The sharing of memories and reminiscence occurred more frequently in this phase, which enhanced the affectual capacity of the communicative space created in the workshop. These participants had a tangible relationship with the Mack prior to the fires, and as such, discussion could become emotionally charged at times. Participants in an alumni group confirmed that the framing of the experience as a whole – from recruitment invitations, to the display of the objects in a spot-lit gallery space, to the spatial proximity of the venue to the Mack – had a direct impact on their engagement with the objects and the tone of the discussion. With this framing, memories naturally rose to the surface for a number of participants, particularly the alumni, who then felt compelled to share their experiences. The act of sharing reminiscence thus added to the biography of the Mack for others in the room. While at some points the workshops felt similar to a wake, where participants responded with feelings of loss or upset, at others the shared reminiscence seemed to bring the building back to life for a brief time. As previously noted, the workshops did not intend to record these reminiscences for use in future events or study, but the powerful social impact they made to sessions was recognised as extremely important in intensifying affectual experiences, both for the participant sharing their memories, and the rest of the group.

The final insight observed confirmed that just as our relationships with materials are highly subjective, so too are our perspectives on the term authenticity in the context of the heritage sector. This is critical evidence at a time where heritage management discourse is challenging the use of authenticity as an objective benchmark in statements of cultural significance and interpretation strategies.[201] It also supports more recent and progressive discourse which promotes engaging

[201] Jones and Leech, 'Valuing the Historic Environment: A Critical Review of Existing Approaches to Social Value'.

with a multitude of definitions of the term authenticity, both academically speaking and in public understanding and use.[202] Upon immersive listening, reading and thematic coding of the recordings, it also became clear that in a number of cases it was possible to trace the reasoning behind a participant's viewpoint directly to their profession, interests and cultural experiences. More interesting in the context of this study, was observing participants being confronted with different points of view. At times, this seemed to encourage participants to look inwards and evaluate what material and intangible attributes they are drawn too, where in their past experience this might have stemmed from, and how these considerations effected the way they interacted with material heritage and the intangible values that objects and spaces might represent.

4.3.5 Evaluation: Questions moving forward to Phase 3

This second phase of workshops revealed that creative replicas could be used as catalysts to extensive discussion where participants questioned the roles that materiality and authenticity might play in their enjoyment of objects. In highlighting these considerations, it also encouraged participants to question the inherited cultural value systems, or personal interests and experiences that might shape their encounters with both replicas and authentic material heritage. Reflecting on the analysis of these workshops enabled me to circle back and concentrate the second research question at the heart of this study. That is to say, that the final focus for planning the last phase of field work was to determine how these findings could be utilised to produce a robust framework for

[202] Wood, 'A Review of the Concept of Authenticity in Heritage, with Particular Reference to Historic Houses'; Marzia Varutti, ''Authentic Reproductions': Museum Collection Practices as Authentication', *Museum Management and Curatorship* 33, no. 1 (2018).

engagement that can evidence the power of visual and socially engaged art in facilitating deeper engagement with lost or vulnerable heritage.

4.4 Fieldwork Phase 3: In search of 'energy' in a pandemic

4.4.1 Summary of live events: Remote workshops & the 'museum-at-home' experience

The final phase of fieldwork was originally planned to be a straightforward continuation of the previous phase, to test and demonstrate the engagement model as a means to increase engagement with museum and heritage spaces. The main change to these proposed events was an ambition to hold events at a number of Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Properties in Care, to test the limitations of the live event model across a wider sample of participants. However, this programme of events - due to take place in May 2020 - coincided with a national lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and was postponed indefinitely. Recognising that holding installation-based workshops that encouraged touch and the congregation of multiple households would be both unfeasible and unethical for an unknown period of time, I entered into a period of reflection and re-planning to complete the fieldwork.

While many cultural institutions and organisations experimented with virtual modes of public engagement during the early stages of the pandemic, it was clear that engagement with the material element of this fieldwork was as vital as the social interaction. In order to retain engagement with materiality while creating a COVID-compliant event, I responded to my findings from the previous phases of fieldwork, identifying the **Touchstone, Material Library** box as a particularly successful model. This mode of display encouraged engagement with, and comparison between a range of materials, in addition to being a convenient way to transport and display the collections. I returned to the studio to develop a new

iteration of the box format that could combine the most successful elements of the previous live events in one artefact. The new box, which would become **Appendix II: A Collection,** was an amplification of everything I had previously tested and rehearsed – a workshop exhibition in miniature. Four 'sets' of new creative replicas were developed and tested with reference to my previous results, and these were then housed in four near identical boxes, which had previously been vintage cutlery canteens. These 'new' old boxes were refurbished to display and protect the miniature replicas so that they could be delivered directly to participants homes and explored simultaneously but remotely. The social aspect of the live events was retained by using virtual discussion groups while participants handled their miniature replica collections. Thus, these final workshops aimed to unify the material, the virtual, and the social, creating a new immersive workshop that built on previous in-person live events. It was designed to create a similar experience that would challenge participants to reconsider our relationships with materials, material culture and notions of authenticity.

In addition to navigating fieldwork in pandemic conditions, the main aim of this final phase was to answer the second research question of this study – using prior findings as tools to implement a robust proof-of-concept model that could be tested and submitted as a best practice framework for engagement (see **Chapter 4.3.1**). The event format was constructed to reinforce the equal importance of material *and* socially engaged elements in the design of heritage engagement and interpretation.

Due to covid-19 lockdown travel restrictions, participant recruitment was limited to residents of the Glasgow City Council area. Participants were recruited via social media and personal invitation, with GSA alumni, students and staff prioritised, but any interested Glasgow residents welcome. Four workshops were conducted, with up to four participants in each, and lasting over 1.5 hours. Each

workshop took place one week apart, in order to give the boxes time to be cleaned and quarantined between each event. This included quarantine time in participants' homes as the boxes lay untouched for three days before their designated workshop.

Much like **Phase 2**, the workshops involved a handling session followed by audio recorded discussion. In this phase, building on previous findings, a critiquing activity was programmed into the structure of the workshop. This activity was more tightly regimented than the previous phases, and was carefully constructed to address the challenge of facilitating an immersive workshop experience where no-one was physically present in the same room as each other. However, this structure proved particularly successful, with participants readily engaging with both the physical material and theoretical concepts presented, while thoughtfully interacting with one another's differing viewpoints.

4.4.2 Objects displayed

Figure 20. Appendix II: A Collection – Remote Workshop box D, 2021.

As noted above, the remote workshop box was designed to transport, and display miniature creative replicas derived from larger versions that had proven either popular or divisive in past workshops. The reader will soon be invited to engage with the remote workshop box material in **Chapter Five**, and to take part in an enhanced workshop experience, to give the reader a fuller understanding of what was learned in **Phase 3**.

4.4.3 Event format & Feedback Collection

The workshop activity was formulated with reference to *'La Boîte-en-Valise' [Box in a Suitcase]*[203] replica series, and *Thomas Hirschhorn's 'ENERGY = YES! QUALITY = NO!'* workshops, using these two works to inform a conceptual framework for dissemination and engagement.[204] Duchamp's *'La Boîte-en-Valise'* series of miniatures was already a point of reference in the design of the **Touchstone, Material Library**, as mentioned in **Chapter 4.4.1.** Hirschhorn's workshops were identified as an insightful and accessible framework for critique that could be adapted for use in the remote workshops, to simplify the participants' entry point into the discussion. This was due to both the format and use of language – specifically Hirschhorn's use of the term *energy* – which was the influencing factor in my shift in language from *aura* to *energy* in **Phase 3**. This change was especially critical after a minority of **Phase 2** participants reported struggling with the term aura as it felt too ambiguous, confusing or academic. Clarifying the term aura by comparing it to *energy* in **Phase 3** worked extremely well, and the majority of participants engaged with the set task immediately.

I saw parallels in Hirschhorn's use of the term *energy* in his art practice, which he defines as the ineffable pull we have to select art works, and the way aura is often used in a heritage context. This *energy* as Hirschhorn describes it, is personal to us as individuals, but the subjectivity does not invalidate the reasons why we personally feel moved by a particular work of art. In addition, Hirschhorn places priority on *energy* over *quality*, which he defines as a critical or cultural construct

[203] Duchamp had twenty-four de-luxe versions of his La Boîte en Valise cases full of miniature replicas made, which acted much like a portable exhibition. Editions are held (and available to view online) at institutions such as National Galleries Scotland and The Museum of modern Art, New York.

[204] Thomas Hirschhorn, 'WORKSHOP "ENERGY = YES! QUALITY = NO!" - KOCHI BIENNALE DEBRIEFING (2019)', *Thomas Hirschhorn* (blog), 16 April 2019, http://www.thomashirschhorn.com/workshop-energy-yes-quality-no-kochi-biennale-2019-debriefing/.

that is learned rather than intuited.[205] I would argue that *authenticity* is a similar social and cultural construction.

In *Hirschhorn's workshops*, participants were asked to bring a work of art to be judged by the rest of the participants. Each participant was asked to make a case for why their chosen artwork had *energy*, before inviting fellow participants to judge as a group whether or not they agreed.

In *my remote workshops*, the participants were asked to undertake a similar exercise. They were first given time to explore the creative replicas in **Appendix II: A Collection**, then asked to select one creative replica that they found to have *energy*. Each remote workshop participant was then given the opportunity to make a case for why their chosen creative replica had *energy*. After a period of discussion, the participants were invited to deliberate as a group to judge as to whether or not they agreed. The outcome of the judgement was not important. The structured act of critique was a vehicle for dialogue which invited the participant to look inward to examine their own opinions, while simultaneously engaging with the opinions of others. Like the previous round of live events, the discussion session was recorded with participants' consent, primarily as a note taking aid, which was then partially transcribed. A short feedback questionnaire was used as a follow up to the workshops asking participant to reflect on their experience alongside their past and future engagements with museums and heritage spaces.

[205] Thomas Hirschhorn, 'Energy: Yes! Quality: No!', *Thomas Hirschhorn* (blog), 31 December 2012, http://www.thomashirschhorn.com/energy-yes-quality-no/.

4.4.4 Critical observations and insights gathered

Much like the preceding sessions, the mix of material and social interactions allowed for vibrant discussion, with participants challenging themselves and each other, quickly trying to make connections to past experiences or personal preferences that might have influenced their choices. However, the ritualistic aspect of receiving the box, opening it and lighting the candle as instructed, exploring it contents in tandem with other remote participants and handling the items that stood out to them, seemed to have a more powerful effect than the in-person events. Conversation flowed freely, with some citing how excited they had been to finally examine its contents. The majority seemed unselfconscious in their presentations, and those who were slightly quieter during open discussions seemed enthusiastic to present their case when called upon. Again, the analysis of this phase is discussed in more depth alongside findings from the earlier phases in **Chapter 6**, but the principal insights gathered are illustrated below.

Once more, a key observation was that each object could elicit entirely opposing responses from each participant, both in individual workshops, and across the **Phase 3** programme. Singular objects were selected as both the most engaging and least liked on multiple occasions. However, as hoped, the initial focus on choosing, sharing and critiquing an object was a marked success in quickly opening up discussion surrounding the potential of replicas to be powerful objects, which in some cases have the capacity to possess energy or aura. An unexpected but important insight was the apparent transference of value, bestowed on a selected object from one participant to another. This also occurred on multiple occasions, where participants noted that a previously overlooked object had gained social value after hearing another participant explain why they believed it to have energy. While this could be explained in some instances as an unwillingness to disagree with others for fear of causing offence, the transference

of value was frequently observed where a participant reported a change in estimation for one object, but not another.

4.5 Summary

This period of iterative socially engaged practice illustrates the methods and strategies taken to design a framework for engagement that I would argue has the power to facilitate deeper engagement with creative replicas. As will be discussed in **Chapter Six,** the participants were frequently drawn into in depth philosophical discussions and debates surrounding their opinions on authenticity, were often recorded trying to trace the reasoning behind their object choices to past experiences, and in every live event at least one participant would share their memories of the Mack with the group. In addition, as the immersive workshop format was tested and refined, it became clear this model could be applied as an interpretation strategy across other museum and heritage spaces. Most interestingly, the feedback collected indicated that interpretive models of engagement that encourage active rather than passive participation, can facilitate impactful and memorable experiences. The feedback gathered in the post event surveys suggest that the impact of these experiences is not limited to the workshop space, but may also influence engagement with museums and heritage spaces beyond the initial context it is used within.

Chapter Five: The Remote Workshop box (Appendix II: A Collection)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce **Appendix II: A Collection** and provide instructions that will allow the reader to activate its contents in a similar manner to past workshop participants. The box currently in your possession was made in response to lockdown travel restrictions which coincided with the last phase of field work for this study. It contains miniature versions of the most popular and divisive creative replicas that have previously been on public display as part of this research.

This box was designed to act as a material catalyst in a framework for engagement that establishes a communicative space, much like the larger collections of creative replicas discussed in **Chapter Three** and **Appendix I: The Catalogue**. However, as touched upon in **Chapter Four**, the remote workshop box was constructed as a 'COVID-safe' model that could continue to interrogate participants' relationships with objects and their understandings of materiality, aura and authenticity, but in the comfort and safety of their own homes. These workshops took place in March 2021 at a point where the Glasgow's residents were in the midst a second government mandated lockdown and reaching the one-year anniversary of life with social distancing measures of varying degrees. At this point in the pandemic, government advice continued to encourage home working, banned travel across local authority boundaries, and many, if not all cultural institutions remained closed. Within this context, the remote workshop experience was a curious novelty, as evidenced by the rapid oversubscription of the workshop places when advertised.

The boxes formed a vital part of the design of the remote workshop, as they facilitated physical engagement with artefacts and artworks at a time where such experiences were a rarity. A number of participants remarked on the excitement building from the time the box was delivered to their homes and placed under quarantine, to the point the workshop commenced, and they were instructed to open it. This aspect of the ritual was important. In the same manner that display was observed to be a critical factor in increasing the social value of replicas, participants reported that the growing anticipation enhanced the experience. The workshop itself combined a sensory experience with social, albeit virtual, interaction, to bring people together and provoke cultural stimulation at a time when they sorely needed it. While this mode of engagement was constructed as a plan b, I found the design of the box and remote workshop model to be especially valuable. These aspects of the delivery empowered participants to engage materially and philosophically with the complex ideas surrounding aura and authenticity, and supported the capture and analysis of the resulting dialogical engagement to begin to answer the main questions in this study.

Momentarily, I will ask the reader to undertake a similar exercise as the participants of **Phase 3**. Before opening the box, please read the full list of instructions below so you can fully engage with the materials. This guided experience reflects what **Phase 3** participants were asked to do, and thus will enhance your reading of the results in **Chapter Six.** As noted in **Chapter 4.4.3,** while handling the objects in your box, I would like you to choose one object that you feel has the most *energy* - the one you are most drawn to. Biographical information for each replica and the related original debris fragments can be found in **Section 3** and **Section 1** of **Appendix I: The Catalogue**, respectively. You may wish to consult these reference materials before, during or after engaging with the contents of the box. This choice is at the readers discretion.

5.2 Open the box

1. Place the box on a flat surface and open it.
2. Locate the 'Laocoon, lost' candle, and light it in a safe place within your line of sight. A metal tray has been provided to place the candle on which will collect the wax and protect your belongings. Keep it in your line of sight as it burns.
3. Explore the contents of the box, paying close attention to the objects you feel most drawn to. A magnifying loop has been included if you wish to inspect the objects more closely.
4. Choose the object you feel most drawn to and ask yourself why you believe it has energy. You might consider:
    a. Is it the material attributes of the replica that is pleasing?
        i. Or the weight?
        ii. The size?
        iii. The texture?
        iv. The colour?
        v. The smell?
    b. Does the replica remind you of something?
        i. Or someone?
        ii. Or some place?
    c. Is it the narrative that has been constructed around this replica in the catalogue or in this thesis?
    d. Is it the way the replica has been presented to you?
5. You may also wish to consider how your chosen replica contrasts to the objects you don't like. How are they different materially? What contrasting feelings do they stir? What elevates one over the other for you?
6. Finally, please ask yourself if any of the replicas could be described as authentic in your opinion. If so, does it change that particular object's status in the hierarchy of the collection? If not, does it feel like something is

missing? Does the presence of authenticity as you choose to define it, alter an experience with materiality?

5.3 Extinguish the flame

Once the handling session has come to a natural close, please extinguish the flame and place the objects back in the box. In the next chapter, critical analysis of participant's responses in all three phases of fieldwork will be presented and discussed. While the social element of these workshops is not available to the current reader, I hope that holding this recent material experience in your mind as you read the following discussion will help you commune with past participants abstractly – comparing and contrasting your thoughts and opinions with those who came before you.

Chapter Six: Challenging Aura and Authenticity – Analysis, Discussion and Findings

6.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the key findings of fieldwork and how they respond to the main research questions. The material used to focus this discussion includes:

- Analysis of the visual mapping and thematic coding of questionnaire responses collected in **Phase 1** (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork documentation, p8-35**)
- Analysis of thematically coded focus-group transcripts collected in **Phase 2** (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork documentation, p42-65**)
- Analysis of discussion session transcripts and follow up surveys collected in **Phase 3** (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork documentation, p77-114**)

This discussion is structured to develop and enhance the objective of each phase, as defined in **Chapter 3.7**. With this in mind, the analysis of **Phase 1** focuses on participant feedback regarding *material attractions*, including an examination of direct comparison between replicas and originals. Analysis of **Phase 2** places emphasis on *perceptions of authenticity* and the introduction of critique as a dialogical tool to decipher complex philosophical and conceptual themes.

The analysis of **Phase 3** highlights aspects of the immersive experience that were most impactful, to build a proof-of-concept model for the final framework for engagement. The critical discussion of this final phase also submits evidence that suggests this framework for engagement and interpretation has the power to alter or enhance future encounters with both replicated and *authentic* material heritage. Finally, this chapter demonstrates how the aims and objectives of this

study were applied to interrogate the main research questions, in addition to demonstrating the three new contributions to knowledge.

6.2 Theoretical positioning: structural designations of significance and cultural systems of value

The ICOMOS Burra Charter defines cultural significance as the 'aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. [It] is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.'[206] While this definition - often cited by heritage organisations in policy or planning documents - is seemingly broad, there is still a detectible imbalance of priorities towards materialist over social values. Public bodies such as Historic Environment Scotland have recently made efforts to incorporate a recognition of the importance of intangible cultural heritage in their corporate planning and policy. HES notes that the historic environment, 'can be valued for both its tangible and intangible aspects.'[207] Even so, while this effort to acknowledge and highlight the importance of intangible cultural heritage reflects the arguably more progressive academic discourse in acknowledging that, '[d]ifferent individuals and groups of people value places in different ways,'[208] this shift in ideology is occurring slowly in practice. As Foster and Jones report, 'in heritage studies […] a constructivist approach now prevails,' but the practice of many heritage organisations still lags behind, with a stubborn attachment to materialist sensibilities influencing the field that is seemingly hard

[206] ICOMOS, 'The Burra Charter'.
[207] Historic Environment Scotland, 'Historic Environment Policy for Scotland' (Edinburgh: Historic Environment Scotland, 2019), 3; Historic Environment Scotland, 'Heritage For All: Corporate Plan 2019 Onwards' (Edinburgh, 2019), https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=1f65f457-a602-4ddc-af61-aa2500933d61; Historic Environment Scotland, 'Intangible Cultural Heritage Policy Statement', Operational Policy (Edinburgh, 2020).
[208] Historic Environment Scotland, 13.

to shake off.[209] I would argue that in the context of this study, accelerating the conceptual reformation in heritage practices is critical, and indeed this research project embeds social interrogations of materiality, and identifies as a constructivist, or critical realist approach to heritage interpretation. This change is critical, for if the agenda for designating what is culturally significant is still largely focused on authentic material and materialist ideologies rather than social and cultural values, this focus will also dictate the allocation of resources within the heritage sector.

Reflecting on Smith's critique surrounding authorised heritage discourse, which relies on a top down approach to professionally authorise examples of (mainly) material heritage, 'the selectivity of heritage discourse can serve to bury or efface certain places at the same time as it reveals and celebrates certain others'.[210] Similarly, Dawson Munjeri notes that '[c]ultural heritage should speak through the values that people give it and not the other way around. Objects, collections, buildings, etc. become recognized as heritage when they express value of *society* and so the tangible can only be understood and interpreted through the intangible'.[211] If we refer back to Smith's proposition that tangible and intangible heritage are one and the same, and apply it here, it can be argued that more weight must be placed on the social values of heritage, for it is through that (subjective) lens that we interpret it.[212] If we consider the position of Rojek and Urry that even the most 'unambiguous' museums and heritage spaces may be 'read' in a variety of conflicting ways we must accept that we engage with

[209] Foster and Jones, *My Life as a Replica: St John's Cross, Iona*, 38.
[210] Denis Byrne, 'A Critique of Unfeeling Heritage', in *Intangible Heritage*, ed. Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa (London: Routledge, 2009), 230.
[211] Dawson Munjeri, 'Tangible and Intangible Heritage: From Difference to Convergence', *Museum International* 56, no. 1–2 (2004): 13.
[212] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 2006, 56.

heritage through the lens of our own differing social values, and one person's encounter with material heritage is extremely unlikely to ever be the same as another's. The discussion that follows proposes strategies that have the potential to give agency to participants, particularly those entangled with the material heritage or intangible values of a place, by highlighting subjective social values in a way that can increase engagement while broadening perspectives.

6.3 A note on terminology used

Before discussing the outcomes of the fieldwork undertaken, I would like to draw the reader's attention to the definitions of the terms energy, affect and aura, as they will be used in the following chapter. My fascination with dismantling the use of the term aura in the fields of museum studies and cultural heritage management was an instigating factor for this research project. As already outlined in **Chapter Two**, this is a term that is difficult to find concrete consensus on, as it is often used to describe personal idiosyncratic experiences with artworks, objects and spaces. My understanding of aura has evolved during the course of this study, as a direct result of my engagement with three phases of fieldwork participants, and as such, my use of the terms aura and authenticity will propose a more refined and specific paradigm than the historical taxonomic analysis of the terms as presented in **Chapter Two**. With this in mind, Figure 21 outlines definitions developed as a result of this research, though they may differ at times from the participants' use of language in the data collected.

ENERGY ***(or a thing having energy)***	• Where a participant noted feeling an (initially) inexplicable pull to a replica. • A gut reaction or preference. • A catalyst for deeper interaction.
AFFECT ***(or to be affectual)***	• Very similar to energy, but perhaps more noticeably bound to an emotive or bodily reaction to a replica. • At times, this followed socially led but introspective interrogations of why a specific object was identified as having energy to the participant.
AURA ***(or to be auratic)***	• Similar to affect but retaining a connection to the intangible values or material heritage of the 'original.' • Often used when a specific object was able to elicit a memory, reminiscence, or positive feeling of closeness to the original.

Figure 21. Definitions of Energy, Affect & Aura.

ENERGY - As previously noted in **Chapter 4.4.3,** the term energy was primarily used in **Phase 3** in response to participant feedback that the term aura was so imprecise that it could became a barrier to full participation. In every workshop, asking participants to locate an object that had energy was a successful catalyst for deeper discussion, whereas the term aura often became a stumbling block.

Energy was used during the fieldwork as an envelope or conduit for the activity prompts that would orientate the participants within the discussion. I defined energy in **Phase 3** in the same way I had defined aura in **Phases 1 and 2** – as a description for feeling drawn to a certain object, or a feeling of connection. But when using the term energy this seemed much more accessible to participants. The workshops revealed that *energy* had less baggage and ambiguity than *aura*. While energy was used by participants as a positive signifier of connection in most cases, some participants also choose to highlight 'negative energy,' where the object that caused the most powerful reaction in them was also an object that they found objectionable. However, energy was always used to describe a potent encounter with materiality, that when explored could often reveal subjective social or intangible networks of influence.

AFFECT - Much like Smith's definition of affect as an embodiment of thought and emotion,[213] affect is used to describe the moments where, in addition to feeling drawn to the materiality of specific replicas, the encounter was also underpinned by an emotive or 'gut' response that participants could not, at least initially, fully explain.

AURA - Finally, aura is used in this chapter to describe affectual encounters that seem to retain a positive connection to the original, in this case, the Mack, by proxy of debris fragments salvaged after the first fire. In these cases, the creative replica did not cause a disconnect or become a noticeable barrier to engagement with the intangible cultural narrative it was being used to evoke. During the first two phases of fieldwork, I was most interested in observing the facilitation of auratic experiences in the live events. However, as the research progressed, the importance of such a connection to the original began to give way to a potentially

[213] Smith, 56.

more impactful outcome, the dialogical exchange between participants and resulting broadening of perspectives and deeper engagement, which is discussed below.

6.4 Fieldwork: key findings

6.4.1 Subjective material attractions

Revealing the subjective nature of material attractions and perceptions of authenticity was not entirely unexpected at the start of this investigation, but the multiplicity of the responses gathered was surprising. As such, the sample findings presented in this chapter demonstrate that it is virtually impossible to guess how an individual will perceive, value, or take meaning from either replicated or authentic objects. However, it is important to illustrate how subjective our encounters with heritage are, in order to present a foundation-level best practice paradigm for impactful interpretation of material heritage. If it is accepted that we are all, as humans, driven by a multitude of subjective experiential factors as we interpret objects for our own consumption, we must also accept that museum and heritage bodies will find it virtually impossible to *objectively* interpret an artefact or space for the consumption of visitors or participants. With this in mind, we must assume that interpretation of material heritage, intangible cultural narratives or indeed replicas, must be guided by a nuanced approach that is transparent in its subjectivity.

The strategy behind my attempts to uncover potential trends and idiosyncratic attractions to materials was initially to cross reference these preferences with the creative replicas that participants highlighted as most personally engaging. This was pursued as a means to interrogate the materialist versus constructivist (or critical realist) debate in relation to the systems of value held by the participants. By examining material preferences as a baseline measure, it was possible to

interrogate if, at times, it is exclusively the material attributes of an object that we are drawn to and seduced by. Similarly, to confront the common proposition in materialist discourse that the authenticity is inherent in the object, this aspect of the study was designed to explore if any materials or making processes could be so seductive that they overrode the need for the presence of authenticity, while still facilitating an impactful encounter with the absent material heritage. This stage of research assessed if there are optimal materials that can increase the social value of a replica beyond the typically observed, inferior status of such objects in heritage settings.

The following reflections were used as a personal guide during the analysis of questionnaires, recording transcripts and participant observation notes.

Reflection	Observation
*i) Are material attributes a factor in facilitating **affectual** experiences?*	• Yes, frequently
*ii) Can a replica fabricated in a subjectively 'seductive material' facilitate an **affectual** experience?*	• Yes, frequently (where a particular participant finds a particular material seductive)
*iii) Can a creative replica fabricated in a seductive material facilitate an **auratic** experience that retains a connection to the replicated 'original'*	• Yes, in rare instances (but only where the participant has a pre-established connection to the original **OR** as a result of social interaction)

Figure 22. The role of seductive materials in facilitating affectual or auratic experiences, as observed in fieldwork Phases 1-3.

While these simplified observations suggest that seductive material attributes can increase the social value of a replica, in practice the participant encounters were

observed to be influenced by a number of different factors. In terms of material attractions, the bronze pieces were the only category of object to receive roundly positive attention in all three phases of fieldwork. While other categories of object were deemed highly attractive at times, bronze was the only material that did not have a polarising or contradictory reception. When replicas that were identical in form but made with a variety of materials were displayed together, such as was the case for **Touchstone, Material Library** (see **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p25-27**), it was selected as the most popular more than any other individual **Touchstone, miniature**.

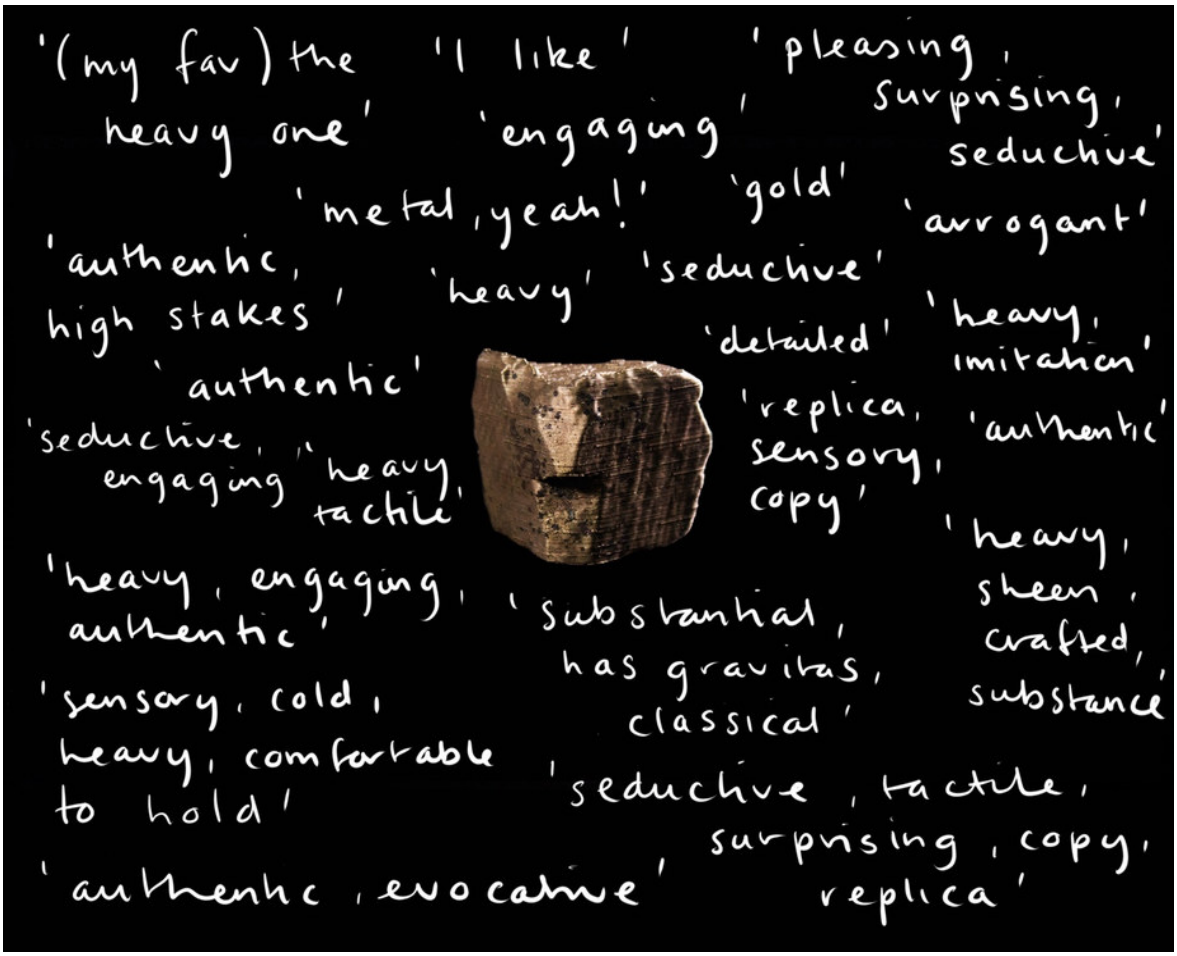

Figure 23. Phase 1 questionnaire feedback: every participant descriptions of Touchstone, miniature in bronze.

This could be down to a number of reasons. In some cases, participants appeared to be influenced by the historical prominence of bronze casting as a replication processes, its social value amplified by a correlation to fine art materials. In other cases, participants were drawn to the bronze pieces due to pleasure in its visual aesthetics, in addition to curiosity sparked by visual traces of fabrication that conflicted with common understandings of 3D printing processes. Both of these aspects were commented on by a notable number of participants. As noted in **Appendix I: The Catalogue**, the bronze pieces were cast directly from 3D prints, resulting in tell-tale print lines which participants familiar with 3D printed objects could easily recognise. However, many participants reported finding the heaviness of these objects surprising and contradictory to their expectations, as 3D prints are more commonly made in lightweight plastic. Therefore, the initial encounter as the object was lifted from the box was immediately attention-grabbing and provoked a questioning of the object's fabrication and composition.

Similarly, the extremely detailed and patinated surface, compared to map strata by multiple participants, was observed to be a positive and aesthetically pleasing facet of these creative replicas. In **Phase 1**, responses to the bronze replicas were categorised as sensory or affectual, with terms like *authentic*, *seductive*, *evocative* and *heavy* featuring multiple times in questionnaire responses (see Figure 23). In **Phase 3,** discussions surrounding the bronzes were of a similar nature, though more in depth (see Figure 24).

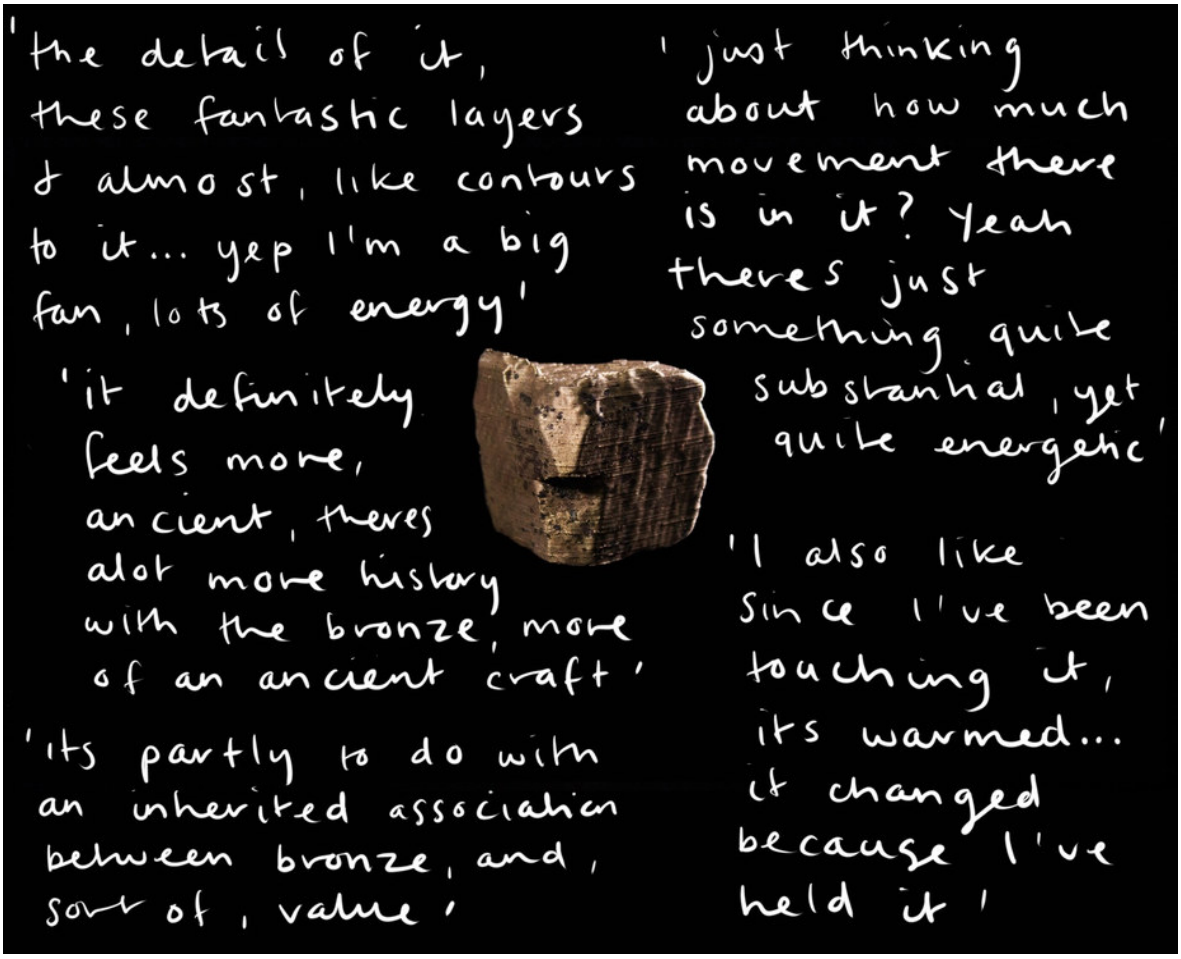

Figure 24. Phase 3 excerpts from discussion session transcripts: a selection of participant descriptions of bronze miniatures.

The physical weight of this material seemed to enhance its social value, with a number of participants in both **Phases 1** & **3** commenting on experiencing a satisfying feeling of heft or 'movement' in the hand (see Figure 24 & **Appendix III: Fieldwork documentation, p43; p107**). Discussion surrounding metaphorical or 'historical weight' was not uncommon in reaction to handling the bronze creative replicas, with some participants noting a heaviness was more appropriate for carrying the narrative of the loss of the Mack (**Appendix III: Fieldwork documentation, p43; p108**).

More broadly, weight in relation to a number of materials and objects was a common discussion point in all three phases of fieldwork, with a majority of participants noting that heaviness contributed to a feeling of intensified positive social value and sensory satisfaction.

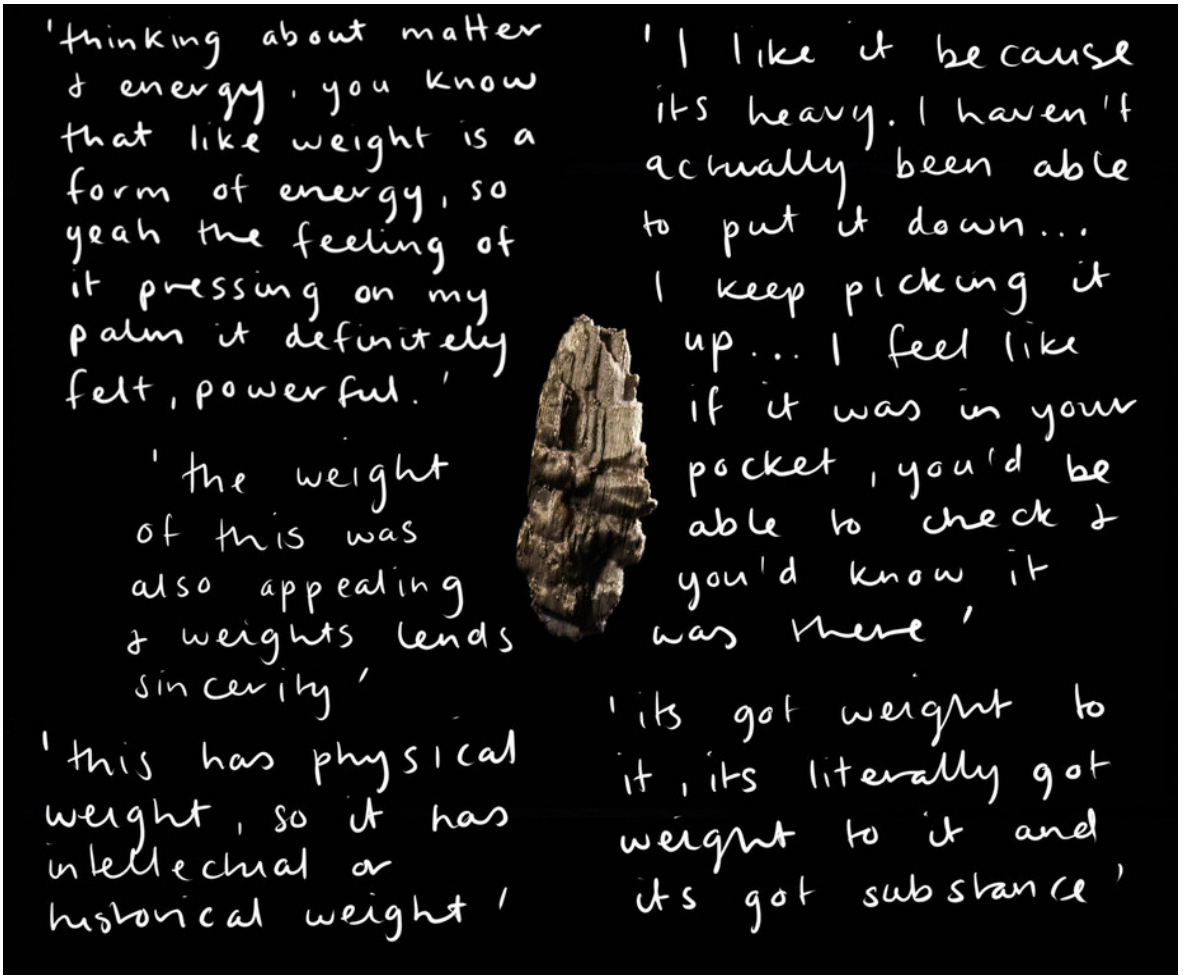

Figure 25. Phase 1, 2 & 3 questionnaire feedback & excerpts from discussion session transcripts: a selection of participant descriptions of bronze miniatures in relation to weight

However, as with most potential trends in the live events and workshops, contradictory opinions were also raised. Curiously, in a specific **Phase 3** workshop, all three participants were unanimous in reporting their fondness of

the lightweight **Touch Wood, misc. debris 3D printed replica in black** (see **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p65**). It was noted a favourite object in this workshop, although only one participant selected it as having the most energy. This judgement appeared to be directly related to their professional experience of working in museums, with one participant noting:

'sometimes the best objects are the light ones [laughs, others join in] you know like maybe the oldest objects or… and you need to take extra special care when you hold it, and you know like, I felt this for this one more than any of the other ones'

(Participant P3.RW3.11)

This statement, which was enthusiastically agreed upon by the other museum professionals in this group, was in complete opposition to a majority of other participants, particularly for this specific replica which was almost universally unpopular throughout the **Phase 3** workshops. Indeed, the other prominent 3D printed object displayed in the first two phases as a replica counterpart to **Touch Wood, debris '66, 5 of 5'** (see **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p33**) was also largely unpopular. In the instances where participants noted their dislike of this object, many responses described being put off by the *lightweight*, *cheap*, *throwaway* nature of plastics, perhaps also influenced by the material's cultural connotations of mass production.[214] At Live Event 1 (V&A drop-in workshop), a number of participants noted that the 3D printed replica felt too lightweight to be authentic, potentially unaware that the original fragment of charcoaled debris it replicated was similarly lightweight. Similarly, in **Phase 3** a participant found the lightness of **Touch Wood, misc. debris** 3D printed replica in black and resin to be almost insulting:

[214] Ruth Holliday and Tracey Potts, *Kitsch!: Cultural Politics and Taste* (Manchester University Press, 2012).

'thinking about bits of debris from the [Mackintosh] library, it almost feels like it should weigh heavier, emotionally as well, because it sort of like represents the tragedy of the library being gone, so I almost realised [gently laughing while speaking] I felt quite offended and insulted by how light it was. Like, it's still beautiful, it still retains all the textures of the building but it doesn't feel… it doesn't feel authentic'

(Participant P3.RW4.3)

The presence of the 3D print lines on the surface of some creative replicas – a result of being cast from a silicon mould that used a 3D printed replica as a master pattern – was divisive across the three phases. For a minority of participants, unconcealed 3D print lines were a distraction on any object. In a **Phase 2** focus group workshop, one participant noted that these surface disturbances caused by the 3D printed masters almost 'acts as a barrier to the way I interact with stuff' noting that they 'appreciated the integrity,' – the truthfulness of the object's unauthentic-ness highlighted by undisguised evidence of the making process – but believed it created too much of a disconnect from the original. Similarly, another **Phase 2** focus group participant disliked these particular traces of fabrication, acknowledging that the visible print lines were,

'a certain aesthetic [that] comes with that method of production that I'm just getting a wee bit tired of […] because I know how its produced but perhaps when every object has those lines I'm a bit distracted by that.'

(Participant P2.FG2.3)

Conversely, for a majority of participants, the print lines were only distracting or off putting when they were present on raw 3D printed objects. Materials such as bronze, water clear resin and to a lesser extent, silicon and fine casting plaster iron powder composite were often seductive enough to participants to override the echo of fabrication becoming a barrier to engagement. Traces of 3D printing

on the surface of creative replicas made with these materials were a source of intrigue, which seemed to positively influence the encounter in most cases. In these instances, the participants who recognised the print lines as evidence of 3D printing were perplexed by the weight, or malleability, or translucency, or surface texture – but the disorientation increased engagement with the objects as they tried to understand how they had been made. From analysis of the feedback gathered, it can be argued that without the tactual element of these live events, the deceptive objects would have failed to provoke the impactful engagement witnessed.

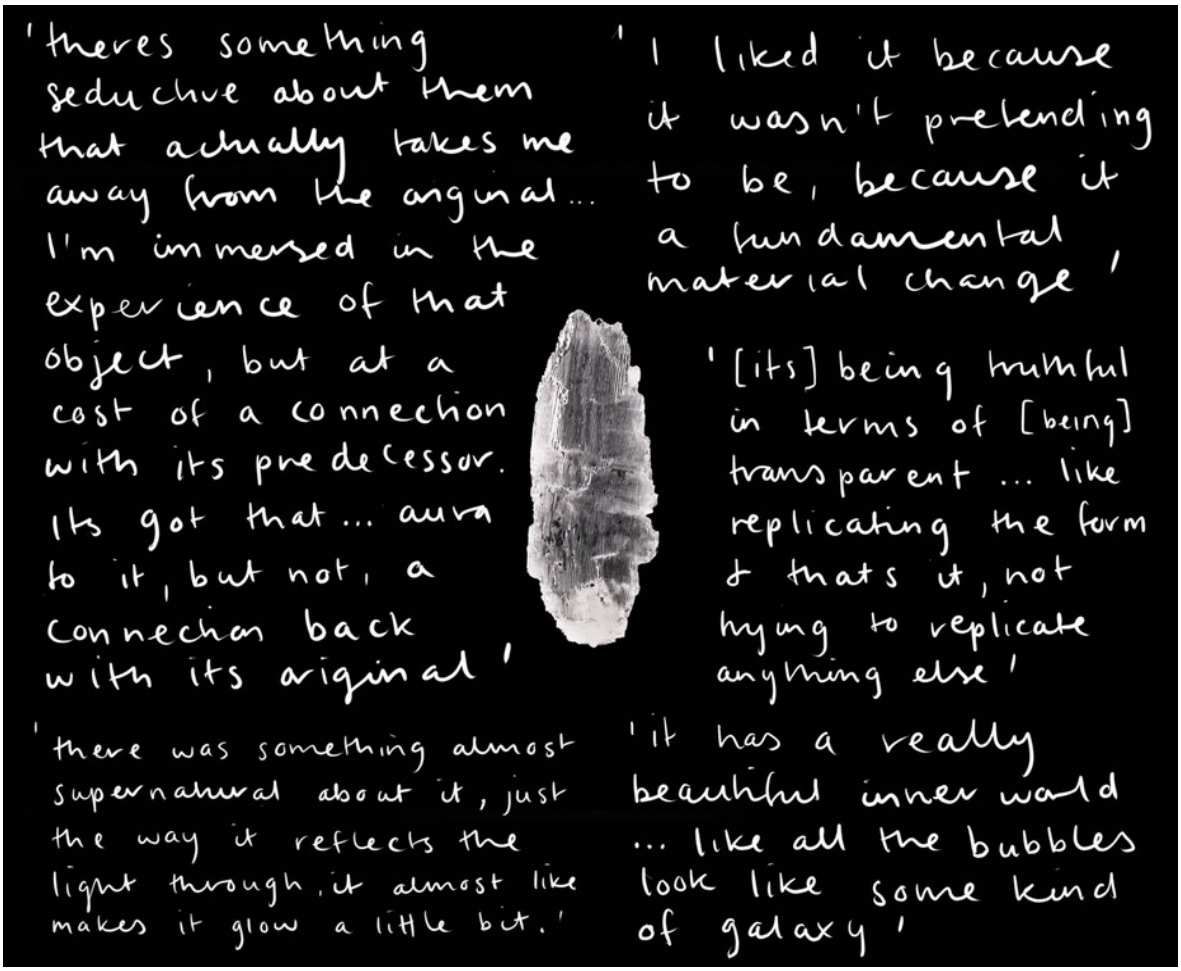

Figure 26. Phase 1, 2 & 3 questionnaire feedback & excerpts from discussion session transcripts: a selection of participant descriptions of resin objects in relation to transparency.

Transparency, both as a visual aesthetic and cultural concept could also override otherwise negatively received material attributes. Small resin pieces, particularly **Touch Wood, misc. debris** (see Figure 26) in water clear resin were received favourably when discussed in **Phase 3** workshops. This creative replica is almost identical to the black 3D print in terms of form, surface texture and weight, but is very different in appearance with an opaque face and water clear transparency on the reverse that allowed participants to see into the object. The positive responses to transparent resin objects captured in the workshop feedback were both sensory and conceptual, with terms such as *truthful*, *supernatural* and *seductive* used. In these cases, transparency, or translucency, conveyed a perceived quality of *honesty* that was identified as a positive and beautiful attribute. However, it was noted by some participants that these pieces felt like art objects in their own right. Not replicas, but conceptually and visually removed from the original. In these instances, if we examine the creative replica in isolation, it was not able retain a connection to the original it copied. But it cannot be ignored that when situated within the context of the socially engaged practice of the live events, and within the proposed framework for engagement and interpretation, the creative replica is *never* in isolation. The act of critiquing the object's aesthetic appeal, and its potential lack of visual connection to the original was positioned within a larger structured dialogue that actively engaged with the intangible cultural and social narrative of the case study site.

The transparent jelly wax replicas were perhaps the most polarising object of all. **Touchstone, miniature in jelly wax** was highlighted as the most surprising in **Phase 1** questionnaire responses, but appeared to both fascinate and repulse in equal measure. Interest seemed to rely on the disconnect between the visual and tactual senses with many **Phase 1** participants commenting that they had initially thought the jelly wax objects were glass, resin or crystal before picking them

outthe box. Again, the strong affectual reactions, both positive and negative, would not have occurred had the participants not been encouraged to touch. Sensory disconnect contributed favourably to the experience in the majority of cases but could also cause disapproval. One **Phase 1** participant reported a deep dislike of the grey **Touchstone, miniature in grey silicon**, while simultaneously enjoying the **Touchstone, miniature in jelly wax.** She reported this was because the grey silicon looked too similar to a real piece of stone, and after discovering its rubbery texture she felt she had been deceived by a fake. However, as the **Touchstone, miniature in jelly wax** was so obviously *not a stone*, it only surprised her by being soft instead of hard. The deception in this case was pleasurable, perhaps because it was a deception of materials rather than a deception of authenticity - further evidence that in the creation of deceptive objects a careful balance must be sought between visual, tactual and conceptual deception if participants are to be kept engaged.

In summary, with the exception of the bronzes, all of the materials and objects (real and replica) produced conflicting responses throughout all three phases. For any material that was seemingly universally unpopular, uninspiring or repulsive, a small number of participants would still find great enthusiasm for it, finding it had energy, was affectual or even auratic. Similarly, for any replica that one participant found to be especially emotive or powerful, others might loathe it for perceived deceptions or trickery, or as a result of negative 'gut feelings' related to the objects' material properties. At almost every turn these extreme responses could only be explained as being either led by past experiences or personal interests or by inherited cultural value systems, or a combination of all. However, it was observed that both positive and negative encounters instigated enthusiastic engagement with the themes presented, and the rare permittance of tactual encounters with objects presented in a context of museums and heritage was an often-remarked positive aspect of the experience.

6.4.2 Contemporary perceptions of authenticity and aura

'Analogously, the ideological value of authenticity rose in proportion to mass culture's inherent tendency toward reproduction and repetition.'[215]

When this period of fieldwork began, a key aim was to understand how authenticity is defined outside the academic and professional heritage sector. During the live events and remote workshops, the presence, or absence, of authenticity in the creative replicas presented was a frequent topic of debate that could not be easily resolved. As noted by Foster and Jones, 'Authenticity matters because, as a rule, people do not value things that in their eyes are not authentic,' and this judgement was often observed in live events, though in the context of these events this was by no means a universal opinion.[216] Whilst debating if replicas could ever be authentic in **Phase 2 & 3**, participants discussed at length their differing views and perceptions of authenticity, and these opinions could not be easily categorised into the materialist / constructivist paradigm discussed in **Chapter Two**. Of the 13 participants who returned the end of **Phase 3** surveys, 9 stated that they believed perceiving authenticity in a historical object or heritage space is important, with two disagreeing and two on the fence (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork documentation, p116-125**) While a small sample, it does give an indication that perception of authenticity is important to potential visitors to heritage sites, though it should be noted that the range of definitions of authenticity supplied by participants across all three phases was wide. In addition, a minority of participants were self-declared sceptics of the concept of authenticity in heritage all together.

[215] Andreas Huyssen, 'Authentic Ruins: Products of Modernity', in *Ruins of Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 20.
[216] Foster and Jones, *My Life as a Replica: St John's Cross, Iona*, 37.

While **Phase 1** offered only a straightforward comparison between *real* and *replica* to gauge preferences, in **Phase 2**, participants were asked as part of the open discussion what authenticity meant to them. The answers varied from academic or specialism specific to deeply personal, and often leant into discussions around the cultural and social value of objects rather than straightforward definitions of the term. While the authentic (or not) status of objects and spaces can be argued to be an important attribute in deciding which objects and spaces are used to represent our heritage at national institutions, these workshops demonstrated that how we understand authenticity in the context of heritage is deeply subjective. This period of fieldwork also suggests that the social value of an object or space is not contingent on it aligning with a conventional definition of authenticity.

Barbara Wood's recent far-reaching review of understandings of authenticity in heritage compiles a number of perspectives in addition to the materialist / constructivist viewpoints discussed in **Chapter Two**. These include,

- *existential authenticity [Wang]*[217]
- *emergent authenticity (Cohen)*[218]
- *and theoplasty (Belhassen et al.; Dueholm and Smed)*[219]

Reflecting on the expansive debate surrounding the term and its use in relation to heritage spaces, she expands on the materialist versus constructivist paradigm to include three more sub-genres that have been added to this debate over the

[217] Ning Wang, 'Rethinking Authenticity in Tourism Experience.', *Annals of Tourism Research* 26, no. 2 (1999): 349–70.
[218] Erik Cohen, 'Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research* 15, no. 3 (1988): 371–86.
[219] Yaniv Belhassen, Kellee Caton, and William P. Stewart, 'The Search for Authenticity in the Pilgrim Experience', *Annals of Tourism Research* 35, no. 3 (1 July 2008): 668–89; Johanne Dueholm and Karina M. Smed, 'Heritage Authenticities—A Case Study of Authenticity Perceptions at a Danish Heritage Site.', *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 9, no. 4 (2014): 285–98.

course of fifty years. While these sub-categories were proposed by their respective authors as new, definitive definitions that might chronologically supersede one another, Wood proposes that these evolving forms of authenticity might coexist, by means of the subjective and personal nature of experienced authenticity. In the context of this study, an appreciation of these subgenres is especially relevant. In acknowledging that perceptions of authenticity are subjective, we must also acknowledge that divergent or conflicting perceptions of authenticity are all valid to an individual's lived experience. These definitions collated side by side indicate how much perceptions of authenticity can be influenced by personal experience, but also the type of heritage setting they are encountered in. Wangs *existential authenticity* is 'self-made' and related to either 'self-identity' (interpersonal) or 'bodily feelings, the sensual and symbolic' (intrapersonal). While Cohen's *emergent authenticity* is 'negotiable' with objects and materials able to accrue authenticity over time.[220] The concept of theoplasty was originally proposed by Belhassen et al. in relation to the study of pilgrimage and authentic experiences driven by belief and religious ideology, but is carefully examined and repurposed in the context of digital heritage experiences by Dueholm and Smed. They propose that while our past experiences play a part in constructing the narrative of authenticity as we encounter objects and spaces, this narrative is also influenced by 'facts related to place or object and activity.'[221] Finally, Wood makes note of Dean MacCannell's proposed *staged authenticity*.[222] While MacCannell proposed this as a pejorative term, reflecting the contrived pastiche that caters to tourism in heritage spaces, I would argue this is not

[220] Wood, 'A Review of the Concept of Authenticity in Heritage, with Particular Reference to Historic Houses', 12.
[221] Wood, 12; Belhassen, Caton, and Stewart, 'The Search for Authenticity in the Pilgrim Experience'; Dueholm and Smed, 'Heritage Authenticities—A Case Study of Authenticity Perceptions at a Danish Heritage Site.'
[222] Dean MacCannell, 'Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings.', *American Journal of Sociology* 79, no. 3 (1973): 589–603.

altogether negative when treated transparently and without deception. As is revisited below, the display of objects and the context of their presentation during the fieldwork was observed as a key factor in increasing the social value of replicas through visual and contextual cues.
Used sensitively, display techniques that alluded to exhibition or conservation practices facilitated a deeper engagement with the objects, and on only one occasion did a participant find this deceptive or off-putting. (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork documentation, p45**). When the objects were presented openly in a context that occupied a space of both visual art and heritage, participants could suspend belief and enjoy these cues without them straying into the realm of pastiche or deception. It must be reiterated here that it was solely the display furniture that toyed with patinated surfaces and blurred the boundaries between contemporary art installation and conventional museum display. The creative replicas within remained as transparent as possible regarding their *inauthentic-ness*. The following illustrates some of the key observations made during participant encounters with the creative replicas, that give evidence to the highly subjective viewpoints held by these sample groups.

The presentation of **Touch Wood, Real | Fake, debris '66, 5 of 5'** in **Phase 1** workshops gave interesting and thought-provoking insights into the power of display, or staged authenticity. This piece was used to test direct comparison between creative replicas and real objects in the installation, with participants unsurprisingly reporting that the real artefact as most engaging in most cases, but the responses revealed that the way the objects were presented to them effected their reception (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork documentation, p77-114**).

Descriptors for why the creative replica on display was less engaging than the original artefact were often conceptual or cultural, such as '*novelty,*' '*modern,*' '*toy,*' '*jarring*', '*not in a box,*' '*just a copy,*' '*accessible,*' '*cheap,*' '*too dissimilar,*' '*too*

shiny,' '*too artificial,*' '*structural,*' '*smoother,*' and '*echo*'. Those who preferred the replica mostly responded positively to the ability to touch it, in comparison to the real fragment, which was protected by a Perspex box, and for the way they perceived it as part of the real fragment's narrative or object biography. For example, one participant noted,

'I find the fake more interesting as it only exists in contrast to the real. Without it I wouldn't give the real much consideration, so it complements it.'

(Participant P1.DW1.anon)

While another noted,

'more interesting [in the] ability to handle [it], but more for the knowledge of how it was produced and what that means. I think it has a bigger story to tell than the real object.'

(Participant P1.DW1.anon)

It is interesting that these responses seemed to reflect on the experience of the objects together, rather than as isolated objects, which is reminiscent of Foster and Curtis' 'composite biographies', or Latour and Lowe's 'trajectories', where the replica becomes linked to the original to enhance or enrichen its biography.[223] In contrast, responses for the original fragment of salvaged debris displayed more affectual and evocative language, for example, '*sad,*' '*history,*' '*sadness,*' '*holy,*' '*duress,*' '*time,*' '*engaging,*' '*vivid,*' '*fragile,*' '*extravagant,*' '*interesting,*' '*feelings,*' '*enigmatic,*' and '*precious*'. Interestingly, 8 of the 17 positive responses to the real fragment gave reference to display being a key reason why they found it

[223] Foster and Curtis, 'The Thing about Replicas—Why Historic Replicas Matter', 2016; Bruno Latour; Adam Lowe, 'The Migration of the Aura or How to Explore the Original through Its Facsimiles'.

more engaging. Previously, I had assumed that the potential for tactual interaction was a key advantage of reproductions. But in permitting touch, in more cases than not, it seemed that the reproduction was in fact devalued. The Perspex box acting as a barrier to the original fragment seemed to harmonise with the conventions we are used to in a museum context. Objects of value and worth cannot be touched. The protective barrier itself only heightens the value of the original, which visitors had no way of knowing was for sure was original, they just took my staging of it as real without question.

With this in mind, **Phase 3** took modes of display very seriously, particularly as these workshops would take place in participants homes without the spatial context of the gallery space to influence the experience. The curated boxes, as discussed in **Chapter Four & Five**, were therefore constructed to resemble old battered collection storage cases, perhaps the only point where my practice veered into the realm of the pastiche. Old 'vintage' cutlery trays were chosen specifically for their weathered and patinated exteriors before being stripped out and refurbished in lush dark green velvet. This was done to *elevate* the creative replicas held inside, and enhance their social value from the moment it was opened.

In this last phase, as an isolated experiment, I clandestinely tested the power of display and established narrative further, by including miniature versions of the **Touch Wood, Real | Fake, debris '66, 5 of 5'** in each **Appendix II:A Collection** remote workshop box. In two of the four remote workshop boxes, there contained a small nondescript fragment of charcoal debris salvaged from the Mack library, recessed in a small Perspex specimen box. Participants were advised that it was the only object in the collection that could not be touched. One original fragment was intact, the other destroyed in the casting process and thus, in a small heaped pile of shimmering charcoal dust. Alongside the real fragment in these two boxes, a counterpart exact creative replica was displayed, without the protective barrier

so that it could be handled. In the final two remote workshop boxes, there contained a similar piece of inaccessible charcoal and counterpart replica, but in this case the real charcoal was in fact *fake*, having been salvaged from an extinguished log burning stove, rather than the Mack. In each workshop, after the initial discussion surrounding the location of energy, I asked the participants if any singular object could be defined as exhibiting authenticity, inclusive or exclusive of energy. In a slight majority of cases, participants selected the inaccessible charcoal fragments, regardless of whether they were from the Mack or the stove. The inaccessibly certainly seemed to be an influence in many cases, with one participant stating:

'[I] desperately wanted to get at the one in the plastic. I was like... clawing at it, but I didn't want to break it so it just had to stay peacefully in its little... I don't know if it was meant to be like that and I'm not supposed to touch it, cause I was like... almost cracking it off, I was desperate I wanted it so badly, like, I wanted, I dunno, it was the classic cause I couldn't get it, I wanted it.'

(Participant P3.RW1.04)

And another noted that she was so intent on getting into the Perspex box she took cutlery out to try and free it the fragment without success:

'I was like, I don't wanna break this box but how can I get to it. Yeah I really wanted to get to... and then I was like I could take everything out this box and I could... yes, yeah...'

Participant (P3.RW2.05)

However, deceptive materiality also played a part, with one participant noting

'Everything else kind of communicated different aspects of the things that they were copying. [...] But the charcoal is the only one where I felt there was a presence there.'

Participant (P3.RW1.15)

Of course, had the deception been revealed for the parties who had encountered log burner fragments, the authenticity would have likely vanished. Which was why this isolated experiment was undertaken only in this phase to test Holtorf's theory of 'pastness.'[224] However, interestingly, on exceptional occasions, some other objects were cited as 'having an authenticity,' such as **Laocoön, lost (death Mask), Touchstone, fragmented, Touch Wood, misc. debris** in jesmonite, and **Touch Wood, misc. debris** 3D printed. In these cases, the creative replicas were selected for a mixture of mnemonic, conceptual or material reasons, again contradictory and personal. Each participant fully recognised that the creative replicas were not original artefacts, but after the immersive experience of the workshop and discussion, could give reasoning as to why the objects could *feel* authentic to them.

In **Phase 2** focus groups, definitions of authenticity and the almost heated debates surrounding them were central to the discussion. The following is a sample, for a full table of definitions discussed in **Phase 2** (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork documentation, p66**)

'it's about honesty to me, that almost pragmatic honesty, there's nothing hidden, what you see is what you get and its laid bare'

(Participant P2.FG2.3)

[224] Holtorf, 'On Pastness: A Reconsideration of Materiality in Archaeological Object Authenticity', 2013.

‘a construct […] just like culture’

(Participant P2.FG1.7)

‘I would say its levels of connectivity to people, places and ideas’

(Participant P2.FG2.2)

'authenticity equates to not being tampered with'

(Participant P2.FG1.1)

'it’s actually about people gaining an understanding of their culture through something […] intuitive understanding of the thing'

(Participant P2.FG1.5)

‘I'm not into it, I don't care […] I think the stories and the construction around objects, names, experiences, are for me more important than the idea of authenticity as a thing […] I think authenticity can be used to… suspend critical thought'

(Participant P2.FG3.5)

Using the **Phase 2** participants as a sample in **Appendix III: Fieldwork documentation, p66**, with the selected responses above, we can see that the perceptions of authenticity cited were diverse and could often be placed across multiple categories of authenticity at once. Almost all subgenres of constructivism were present in these discussions, as were a minority of steadfast materialist perspectives. In addition, it was observed that some participants displayed alignment with the materialist movement – i.e. authenticity inherent in materials or tangible connection to the artist or maker – but were flexible on whether this meant authenticity was only present in ‘the original’ and hence

could be applied to replicated objects in their own right. A number of participants across the three phases perceived the creative replicas as having their own authenticity or agency. This, however, could be a direct result of the workshop format, the led discussion, and my presence as *the artist* or *re-maker.* The remote workshop experience was aided by the screening of the **Liminal Artefacts** film while participants engaged with the creative replicas. This film, much like the final section of **Appendix I: The Catalogue, p95-136**, exposed the many processes involved in the creation of the objects. It also reiterated the fact that all replicas, creative or conventional, have been painstakingly crafted.

'Speaking with you, the maker/artist, definitely impacted the way I thought of the objects because they felt like they had the 'mark' or 'touch' of an artist/maker. I think that's the way I also approach 'authentic' objects in heritage spaces but not typically how I approach the replicas. But replicas also have been made and thought through by someone with a special and unique skillset, whether or not they have recognition in the way the 'artist' does.'

(Participant P3.RW1.04)

A critical point in these live events was creating a space which emphasised the intersection of opposing views on the meaning and application of definitions of authenticity in the curation and interpretation of heritage spaces, in addition to questioning if a specific ideology was required. Participants were encouraged to look introspectively at what cultural influences and experiences had formed their own positioning in reaction to the facilitated dialogue. Furthermore, the participants were empowered by their recent interaction with materiality, with the creative replicas becoming a tangible tool to compare and contrast objects, and attempt to rationalise why certain objects felt more powerful, in order to share their choices with the group.

The foundation of participants' value judgements were in most cases closely related to their constructed identity, and as such, many felt a need to defend them. In the majority of cases this act of justification was not confrontational or defensive, but rather a real time process of discovery where a participant would try to make sense of things in the communicative space that had been established. Participants often shared memories, either connected to the Mack or to nostalgic moments in their past, and the evocative authenticity of these recollections would periodically cause others to rethink their estimation of contentious objects. At other times, the shared reminiscence did not change another's position on a particular object, but it could facilitate a moment of connection with other participants as they listened to each other's perspectives. As discussed in **Chapter Two**, the terms aura and authenticity are often used interchangeably, and this was reflected in the **Phase 2** discussions. Where participants discussed aura specifically, their reasoning for or against its presence was often founded on definitions of authenticity. However, as previously discussed, many participants found 'aura' to be ambiguous and struggled to define it in the context of material culture. When the term *aura* was interchanged with *energy* in **Phase 3** and defined as a feeling of connection to an object that you can't superficially explain, very few participants struggled with the activity and latter discussion. Crucially, where *energy* was used, participants reported that objects could have energy without having authenticity. The objects could still be meaningful enough to instigate vibrant discussion and sometimes, emotive or observably auratic responses without the requirement of being *conventionally* authentic.

6.4.3 The social replica: combining the material and the social

'the object only exists if it is 'made meaningful' through somebody reacting with it; but, at the same time, that somebody only exists, as a social being, as he is in the process of interaction'[225]

Discovering the potential power of social interaction during the initial **Phase 1** workshops changed the course of the fieldwork entirely. At that early stage it was noted that while activity led interaction with materiality was important in terms of encouraging participants to explore objects and interrogate their feelings towards them, it could not be solely relied on to help participants find a connection with the wider historical and emotive narrative of the original. These epistemic objects were a closed-circuit that only facilitated limited learning opportunities for participants to question their personal relationships with materials, objects, and replicas on a superficial level, voicing their opinions and preferences without looking deeper at where these opinions had been inherited and developed.

However, these initial material interactions were crucial in setting a tone that encouraged curiosity and unselfconscious exploration. The most successful creative replica in the context of **Phase 1 & 2,** was **Touchstone, Material Library**, as the assemblage of replicas with identical forms but differing in materials and fabrication processes, encouraged comparison of materials (see Figure 27). Participants would handle the objects, draw their fingers across the surfaces and edges, weigh them in each hand, sometimes smell them or hold them to their cheek to check the temperature. Some even reported being tempted to taste them, though they did not. These material attractions brought forth memories of other material experiences, sometimes nostalgia for childhood, and many noted

[225] Susan Pearce, *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, 1 edition (London: Routledge, 1994), 27.

enjoying the novelty of being able to touch, which I would argue contributed to the playful, high energy atmosphere.

Figure 27. Left: Touchstone, Material Library box, created for use in Phase 1 & 2 live events, 2018-19. Right: Appendix II: A Collection, created for use in remote workshops, 2021.

As noted previously, this mode of display was extensively tested with participants in **Phases 1 & 2**, and when developing a new method to engage participants within lockdown restrictions, this was developed further to become a portable live event in miniature. Redeveloping this model of display, to create the four identical boxes that participants could engage with together while geographically apart, and which would become **Appendix II: A Collection** (see Figure 27) would see similar impactful results in terms of participant engagement. Varying the form of each miniature did not dampen the enthusiasm for comparison and exploration, it added another dimension. Once more, exploring the materials was conducive to reminiscence. In this case, much like in **Phase 2**, reminiscence shared was more often connected to the Mack, prompted

by the presence of GSA staff, students and alumni. The **Laocoön, lost** collection – the only figurative creative replicas presented – were especially successful in this respect. This often resulted in a note of sadness, wistfulness or loss as participants shared reminiscence of the building as they knew it before the fires. But in sharing their memories, this social interaction helped others who hadn't known the building as intimately to connect with the social and cultural heritage of the Mack.

Figure 28. Spent Laocoon, lost by candlelight candles, used my participants in remote workshops, 2021.

Moments of reminiscence were not only focused on the Mack or past material experiences. The **Laocoön, lost,** candle, imbued with essential oils that mimicked the scent of burning wood, proved to be a powerful mnemonic device. A majority of participants reported the scent to be the first thing they noticed, even before opening the box – triggering memories of campfires, country pubs and childhood homes for some. For one participant in particular the scent triggered a memory of

the first fire in 2014 at the Mack, with the same scent having lingered on her jacket for days after witnessing the incident. She noted feeling compelled to blow the candle out before the allotted time, even though she had been enjoying watching the Laocoön slowly melt, as she did not feel ready to part with him.

'to me it was the most GSA object in the box, and I then thought it was quite poetic that it just burned, while we were looking at it, and that it just, degraded, in front of you, because for me it was the most, like familiar bit. So I was like if this burns completely, whilst I'm doing this then the thing that's familiar to me, or that's GSA to me about this is, is gone.'

Participant P3.RW1.06

She asked to keep the Laocoön as a souvenir and noted she didn't feel she would be able to burn him again. The activity had taken her back to a visceral moment. But in the act of sharing her experience of the day of the fire, which then progressed into happier memories of walking the halls of the Mack past the plaster casts, she was able to take the other participants on a journey with her.

Nina Simon notes in *The Participatory Museum*, that social objects are 'the engines of socially networked experiences, the content around which conversation happens'.[226] The use of social objects can become 'talking points' which make 'interpersonal engagement more comfortable' by providing a third axis which discussion can be directed to. The creative replicas became just that, talking points, totems, or epistemic objects. The dedicated space for social interaction was as vital as the material that instigated the exchange, in creating a memorable, impactful experience that might linger with participants. Throughout **Phase 2 & 3** many reported having enjoyed thinking about the themes in more depth than

[226] Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum* (Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0, 2010.), 127.

they might usually, and out of the 15 participants that responded to the **Phase 3** summative questionnaire, 11 stated the experience might alter or enhance their future encounters with historical objects and heritage (see **Appendix III: Fieldwork documentation, p116-125** for full survey results, see below for a sample of responses).

Q7. Do you think taking part in this workshop might alter or enhance the way you interact with historical objects and heritage spaces in the future?

'These things are always on my mind, but it was so interesting to talk to others and see where we felt the same way or felt different. It really demonstrated how these judgements are not universal, but very personal but also how conversation can change our ideas and opinions.'

Remote Workshop, Group 1 (anonymously submitted)

'It would enhance my interactions - I think I will question my preferences more AND try to soften a bit on my hard-line Art Historian approach that "only originals are worthy and replicas are inferior"'

Remote Workshop, Group 3 (anonymously submitted)

'Yes, I think I will think much more about the intent and processes and workmanship and creativity than went into creating the objects and spaces. The Mackintosh Building may be the first piece of "history" - my own lived experience of the building and what it meant in my own life alongside knowing something of the history of the building - that has been lost to myself and to history during my lifetime. I have an emotional reaction to reproductions of parts of the building and the space so I think I would be more aware of the recreation and curation of other people's histories.'

Remote Workshop, Group 4 (anonymously submitted)

Curiously, the one participant who firmly disagreed, did so because they believed the experience was so atypical that they could not imagine it being reproduced in a museum environment,

'No. I found the workshop premise very unique. Museum's don't usually offer this kind of engagement with objects.'

Remote Workshop, Group 1 (anonymously submitted)

Of the same sample group, 11 participants also thought the experience would enhance or favourably alter their encounters with replicas in the future, with references to the totemic power of replicas, increased compassion or leniency, and considerations of the influence of spatial context and display mentioned,

'Yes, I think this experience has made me more aware of the power of replicas and reproductions as "totems". A replica or reproduction can hold or create the power of an emotional response due to memories of what has been recreated and kinship with those who also experience the originals.'

Remote Workshop, Group 4 (anonymously submitted)

'yes, definitely, [...] I will have more "compassion" towards replicas and reproductions :-) though I am STILL firmly in favour of "the real thing" as associations about who for example handled or made this specific object 1000s of years ago just evokes that special feeling.'

Remote Workshop, Group 3 (anonymously submitted)

'I think I will probably be a bit more lenient towards them!'

Remote Workshop, Group 1 (anonymously submitted)

While this survey was a small sample, it is indicative of a need to rethink how replicas are framed and presented, and indeed how material heritage is interpreted for optimal engagement. By including creative replicas in an immersive artist led experience, the social value of the objects and their potential to aid meaning making was strengthened, as was the participants receptiveness to actively engaging with material culture in the future.

6.5 Answering the question

6.5.1 Are participants able to experience a sense of aura or authenticity when encountering a creative replica?

One of the main aims of this study was to uncover participants' perceptions of aura, authenticity and value in relation to the replica, exploring how they differ to encounters with 'real' objects, which was then tested to determine if creative replicas could be experienced as authentic or auratic. As discussed above, the perceptions observed were varied and idiosyncratic. If taking a materialist perspective of aura and authenticity to frame this question, then in many cases the creative replicas could not achieve this status. However, in the course of social interaction, the definitions of aura and authenticity were often expanded by participants, at points questioning what value the aura / authenticity paradigm itself brought to encounters with objects.

In addition, in comparing these encounters with replicas to encounters with original objects, we have seen how many participants viewed the creative replicas as objects in their own right – as art objects with a connection to an artist or re-maker, but also with the original. This increased the social value and affectual power of the creative replicas, and also potentially altered the relationship these participants might have with replicas in the future, achieving the second aim of this study – to establish a new form of sensorial engagement and interpretation

that acts as a surrogate and provocation. The replicas activate an immersive and social experience that prompts engagement with materiality and historical narratives, while questioning why we feel attractions to places, things or feelings of authenticity.

The concept of aura is challenging to test, holding multiple meanings that have been scrutinised at length during this research. If we take the definition this study has assigned – i.e. a replica which elicits a bodily or emotive feeling of connection to the intangible narrative or material heritage of the *original*, then again – the responses are mixed. Of those participants who were observed as potentially having had a true auratic encounter with one or some of the creative replicas, they were very often GSA alumni, staff or students. Others without this established close connection to the lost material heritage of the Mack were less likely to report auratic experiences after encounters with the creative replicas. However, through analysis of questionnaires and recordings it is evident that affectual experiences were common, though they often broached a connection to other sites or experiences in their lifetimes. Where GSA alumni, staff or students were present, they often acted as *social reproductions* in sharing their experiences with others to verbally depict vibrant intangible cultural and social narratives. In these moments, participants were activated by the combination of material and social interactions to become conduits, actively partaking in the interpretation of a piece of lost material heritage, and helping to construct auratic experiences that grew from social interactions rather than individual material encounters.

Underpinning the search for both authentic and auratic (or affectual) encounters was the fact that each participant might gravitate to a different object. Even the few *real* objects presented in each phase varied in their popularity and perceived value. If anything, one of the more universally successful aspects of the objects presented was that there was something for everyone. The choice presented

allowed participants to connect with one or more of the objects, and use it as a tool to examine the construction of their personal value system. In most cases, where the comparison was offered between *real* and *replica*, the real object was selected as most authentic. However, when the activity was focused on selecting the object that had the most energy for participants in **Phase 3** – *the object they were most drawn to* – the real object wasn't selected by a single participant. For both extremes, either positive or negative, the reactions elicited were successful in instigating an in impactful communicative exchange. With this in mind, and particularly where we imagine a context where the original is no longer present or is too vulnerable to be on display, this research has provoked an additional critical enquiry – do objects need to be conventionally authentic or auratic at all to facilitate impactful and memorable engagement with lost or vulnerable heritage.

6.5.2 Can the use of visual art and socially engaged art practice be harnessed to provide a methodology that facilitates deeper engagement at sites of lost or vulnerable material heritage?

Across all phases, but particularly **Phase 3,** the feedback collected supports the proposal that a methodology that creates a materially, socially, and conceptually immersive experience can facilitate deeper engagement with a case study site. There were four main levels, or clusters, of engagement observed during the events and through subsequent post event data analysis. These were:

- *Sensory Engagement,* i.e. immediate engagement with a particular creative replica led by its material qualities. This category of engagement was an immersion in tactile exploration.
- *Mnemonic Engagement,* i.e. the sharing of memories in relation to the case study site or other past experiences.

- *Affectual Engagement,* i.e. an emotive or bodily response to the objects on display, or the reminiscence shared by others.
- *Conceptual Engagement,* i.e. self and group reflection on our relationships with material culture, and/or the provocation of engagement with theoretical or philosophical ideas.

Sensory, mnemonic and affectual engagement could sometimes relate directly to the case study site, or to seemingly unrelated past experiences. However, the crucial impact that led from these categories of engagement, was the increased potential for participants to enter into a state of mindfulness that was more receptive to *active* conceptual engagement. While it could be argued that conceptual engagement is often readily achieved by textual interpretation, in these cases the conceptual engagement is predominantly passive. The flow of information is one direction, from 'authorised heritage discourse'[227] to passive participant. However, the active conceptual engagement observed in the field by using an immersive framework for engagement meant that the interpretation of the case study site was participatory, impactful and memorable, which I would argue constitutes deeper engagement. It can complement 'authorised heritage discourse' while enhancing the reception of it. Or it can encourage a deeper engagement with the case study site by way of the shared reminiscence and heightened engagement with the materials on display. Furthermore, events that follow this framework for engagement have the potential to enhance or alter future encounters at sites other than the main case study site.

[227] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 2006; Smith and Akagawa, *Intangible Heritage*, 2008; Smith, *Emotional Heritage | Visitor Engagement at Museums and Heritage Sites*.

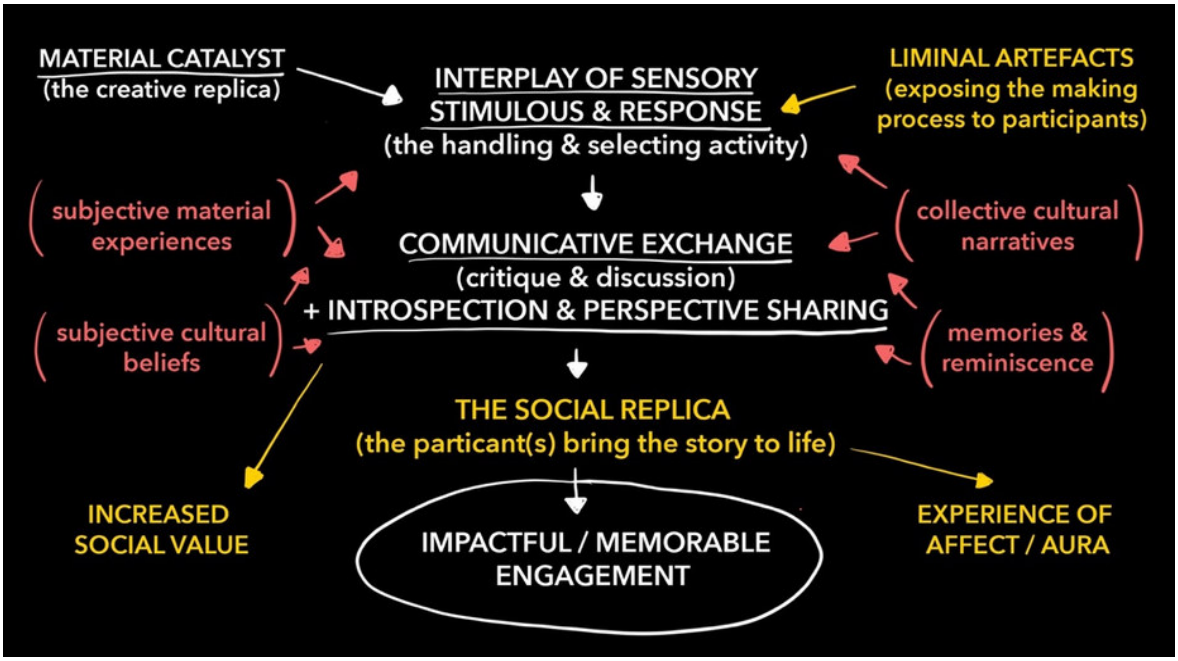

Figure 29. Framework for engagement and interpretation of sites of lost or vulnerable heritage.

To return to the main points of this methodology once more, and with reference to Figure 29 above, this study proposes that the following steps can be used to facilitate deeper engagement:

- *Material catalyst* (creative replicas)
- presented in the context of *interplay and stimulus* (handling and selecting activity)
- and the inclusion of *social interaction* (critique and discussion)
- will instigate a *communicative exchange*, in addition to *introspection and perspective sharing* (broader insight into differing cultural and social values)

These four main steps of engagement with materials, replicas and other perspectives have proven to increase engagement with creative replicas, original artefacts and lost spaces. In addition, as art objects, creative replicas can

contribute to the cultural biography of the lost or vulnerable objects and spaces. This methodology also gives participants a new framework for exploring replicated or original material heritage in the future, perhaps sharing with friends, family or colleagues and continuing the cycle of experience, learning and broadening of perspectives.

6.6 Situating the contribution to the field

As a result of this study, I propose a primary contributions to knowledge, and two supporting contributions.

Primary contribution to knowledge:

1. A framework for engagement that may be employed to deepen engagement with sites of lost or vulnerable heritage.

Supporting contributions to knowledge:

2. The development and demonstrated use of 'creative replicas' as a mode of sculptural enquiry into the cultural and social value systems surrounding reproductions in heritage settings, and valuable engagement tool.
3. The development and demonstrated use of the 'remote workshop' as a practical model to facilitate the proposed framework for engagement in a socially distanced setting.

In response to the primary research question, my **first contribution to knowledge** demonstrates the efficacy of immersive artist-led interpretation of lost or vulnerable material heritage. This framework presents a best practice model for ambitious engagement and interpretation that combines visual art and socially engaged practice in the context of heritage management. This study gives evidence of the impactful experiences that can be achieved where interdisciplinary collaboration is engrained in interpretation and engagement

programming – where specialist fields or institutional departments are no longer siloed from one another.

In large heritage organisations I have witnessed first-hand the problems arising from curatorial, interpretation and engagement spheres operating within a professional framework that separates them, without adequate infrastructure for collaborative working. While each department contains enthusiastic, dedicated and capable heritage professionals, opportunities are missed due to this separation. Similarly, while organisations such as HES are working to include vital creative practitioner collaborations into their engagement offerings, it is under reported and undercelebrated by the organisation publicly. These ambitious working practises can be hampered by inherited traditionalist practices with regard to retaining the authenticity of properties in care, which are exacerbated by minority fears that the inclusion of contemporary art as a mode of engagement and interpretation may damage these 'authentic' narratives. Rather than including artist commissions as infrequent secondary projects, or community engagement projects that must fly under the organisational radar, it should be recognised that the work of contemporary artists forms part of our future heritage. Furthermore, it can contribute to deeper engagement with established, emerging, or undiscovered historical narratives, and should be engrained into exhibition, interpretation and engagement programmes as a matter of course.

The creative replica, as a tool for engagement and its documented use in this study, is the first practical output of this study and **second contribution to knowledge**. While handling collections and epistemic artefacts as talking points are not conceptually new, the use of visual art as a means to instigate engagement with materiality and as a totemic catalyst to discussion is a gap in research and practice that I have identified and addressed. Similarly, as opposed to handling

collections of real objects or traditional replicas, these pieces are made with materials and processes that challenge our expectations in a museum or heritage context. The creative replica can hence be used to instigate probing discussion on complex philosophical themes with relative ease for the facilitator and enjoyment for the participants.

Finally, the remote workshop format devised as a result of lockdown restrictions was an unexpected but extremely successful mode of delivery of the framework for engagement, and **final contribution to knowledge**. Once again, mobile handling collections of museum objects are not a novel concept, but in the context of a pandemic, where many participants were starved of in person social interaction and encounters with material culture, this existing model was renewed by the integration of the proposed framework for engagement and interpretation. The museum-at-home format which incorporated virtual social interaction, and tactual exploration with creative replicas, became a critical mode of engagement with participants and received unanimously positive feedback. While we must hope that the pandemic-led need for remote workshops as a means to engage with material culture and social activity will not extend past this present moment, this mode of delivery can still have value for remote communities and to increase accessibility with lost or vulnerable collections. The ritualistic aspects of the process seemed to heighten engagement, from the recruitment phase, to first opening the box as a group with others across the city, to handling the objects and finally taking part in the social activity that gave space for each voice. Participants reported the experience to be impactful and memorable, and I would argue this mode of engagement has potential use value in a variety of contexts in the cultural and heritage sectors.

6.7 Summary

In summary, this discussion has analysed and evidenced the socially engaged practice employed to meet my aims and objectives and answer the main research question of this study. By using creative replicas in socially engaged settings to reveal the idiosyncratic material attractions, perceptions of aura and authenticity, led by collective and personal past experiences and interests, this project was able to demonstrate and test a framework for facilitating deeper engagement with lost or vulnerable heritage.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter sums up the main aims and objectives of the study, demonstrating what was achieved, and articulating a series of novel findings uncovered through the sculptural and socially engaged led modes of enquiry. It also illustrates an understanding of potential limitations in the collection of data, and proposes how the methodology presented can be adapted as a best practice proof-of-concept model to promote a more sophisticated understanding of aura, authenticity and value at other heritage spaces.

7.2 Visual art and socially engaged practice as a methodology for enhanced engagement with heritage spaces

'just coming into this space, the way the lights set up, and actually, the acoustic environment in here has a kind of museum-like controlled atmosphere, that kind of air con, so there's a kind of reverence to me coming to see these objects, that reminds me very much of going to see like, the Lindisfarne Gospels, or the Book of Kells, or something like that where you're in this like, spot lit, very calm, almost slightly religious feeling space. Emm, its weird how that, the memories are present when you're engaging with these objects, but that's about the way, I knew what I was coming to, the way you've framed it yourself.'

Participant P2.FG4.02

The primary aim of this study was to uncover participants perceptions of aura, authenticity and value in relation to the materiality of replicas, and to use these findings to establish a new form of affectual engagement and interpretation in the context of lost or vulnerable sites of heritage. As a result of intensive and explorative studio practice in combination with socially engaged fieldwork, this research project has been able to develop, test and evidence a strong case for a new framework of engagement and interpretation, which has been proven to

facilitate an immersive engagement with materiality, social values and historical narratives, while questioning why we feel an attraction to certain objects and spaces.

In addition, this project has demonstrated the impact of immersive live events that use a combination of material encounters and social exchanges to facilitate affectual and memorable experiences – evidencing how these events were able to encourage participants to examine their own relationships with materials, understandings of authenticity, and how we socially connect with heritage spaces. The documented dialogical exchanges have also been used to highlight social cultural biographies that may previously have been less visible in the official celebrated historical narrative, supporting emotive and conceptual connections to any given heritage space that has been lost. This research project does not propose that historical narratives or textual interpretation are not important, nor does it propose that this framework for engagement should replace established heritage interpretation strategies wholesale. But it does propose that embedding this form of ambitious and immersive artist led engagement will boost the potential visitor offering exponentially. This is achieved by adding layers of nuance to the heritage experience, that can help participants re-connect with lost material heritage while encouraging mindful consideration of the authored voice of existing heritage interpretation.

7.3 Potential limitations

The participants that were recruited via open calls and by invitation in **Phase 2 & 3**, were interested enough in the subject matter presented to them to volunteer their time, and as such this may have narrowed the data sample to those already engaged in this study's overarching themes. In addition, due to the creative and administerial labour involved in this research project, the sample size was

relatively small, with around 45 participants in **Phase 1**, 19 in **Phase 2**, and 15 in **Phase 3**. Across all phases, the age range is estimated to be between 18 – 60, and while **Phase 1** participants had relatively diverse backgrounds by nature of the wider events the workshops were situating within, in the latter two phases the majority of participants could be said to be involved in the creative arts or museums and heritage in some way, and were all current Glasgow residents. **Phase 3** was initially planned to be situated at a number of HES properties to broaden this sample, but covid-19 lockdown restrictions made this impossible. In this respect, the sample could be criticised as being relatively small and narrow. However, these restrictions prompted me to develop and enhance the fieldwork methodology in a novel way in the construction of the remote workshop format and **Appendix II: A Collection**, which ultimately enriched the research project as a whole.

Nevertheless, the data collected showed extremely diverse results, even within a partially homogenous sample. Those who were sceptical of the creative replicas as authentic or auratic objects still seemed wholeheartedly engaged the discussion sessions. In fact, their contributions were extremely valuable and conducive to a more vibrant debate. In short, despite this small sample, I believe this methodology is sound. The ultimate purpose is not to make a case for replicas having greater social value than conventionally acknowledged (though this was a helpful outcome for this thesis discussion), but rather to open up discussion into the ways we consume heritage, to broaden perspectives and keep the intangible values of lost or vulnerable heritage sites alive.

Perhaps the most practical and critical limitation of this model of engagement and interpretation – artist led and socially engaged – is the economic expense in terms of artistic and institutional labour. Though the results were rich, the effort

involved was substantial. However, increased links with the artistic community, and a prioritisation of transparency and community ownership of our shared heritage is a substantial gain.

7.3 How may this methodology be adapted for other sites that have suffered damage or severe degradation?

While the fieldwork presented used the loss of the Mack as its main case study - both materially in the use of selected debris used as master patterns for the creative replicas, and as an overarching conceptual context for the live events and workshops – I propose that this model could also be adapted for use in connection with a wider range of heritage sites. The majority of the objects replicated and presented were chosen due to their abstract forms, with a particular focus on damaged, patinated fragments that already bore little likeness to any material aspect participants might associate directly with the Mack. This decision was made for research purposes, so that the material created could have affectual material properties, and could be used to ask a number of fieldwork questions, but in practice the abstract and fragmented nature of the objects did not detract from the participant encounters. Rather than lifeless undecipherable debris fragments, they were observed as extremely evocative totems of a former heritage space that had been changed irrevocably.

With this in mind, if implemented within the proposed four-point framework for interpretation and engagement (**Chapter 6.5.2**, Figure 29) I envision that creative replicas could be adapted for use at practically any museum or heritage site, as long as they are appropriately re-contextualised for new case study locations. This could include:

- Spaces that have suffered material loss or damage and are undergoing restoration efforts.
- Ruinous properties in care that wish to engage local and wider communities with social, cultural, or historical narratives that are no longer physically present, materially communicable, or structurally sound enough to encourage visits.
- Intact collections held by institutions that wish to increase or revitalise community engagement and a sense of connection to, and collective ownership and enjoyment of, their shared cultural narratives and material heritage.

Moreover, the use of digital documentation (photogrammetry, laser scanning etc) is already routinely used at many heritage organisations, and increasingly, in museums. Heritage and museums professionals at organisations like The Engine Shed, Stirling, or institutions such as the V&A, London, have also shown great skill in employing these digital replicas as interpretative devices both digitally and materially, either in house or through commissioning, using 3D printing, CNC milling, or in some cases, professional casting. These forms of replications could be adapted and enhanced with reference to the *creative replica* model presented here, and utilized in the socially engaged *framework for engagement and interpretation*. Similarly, the proposed framework can also be used as a means to advocate for, and collaborate with local and international working artists, engraining contemporary art into standard interpretation practice for temporary and long-term programmes, and therefore recording our present cultural heritage for the future.

This research project has demonstrated a robust and focused structure to systematically interrogate, develop hypotheses and test each element of the main research questions, aims and objectives. Using a combination of sculptural

enquiry within autoethnographic study, action research and socially engaged practice, it has examined public relationships with material culture and lost or vulnerable heritage to propose a new best practice framework for engagement and interpretation. Within a cultural context that conventionally places a hierarchy on material culture with the assumption that real = high value and replica = low value, there will always be moments where a replica is not successful in offering a broader perspective to a hard materialist. However, I would argue that we must move away from engagement and interpretation strategies that focus solely on the material. The success of the model presented here was contingent on every aspect of the framework, both material and social, in order to revitalise and enhance engagement and interpretation strategies, and facilitate memorable and impactful experiences.

As previously noted, the number of critical research projects investigating the perceptions of aura and authenticity in replicated and original material culture has been steadily increasing over the past decade. This study benefits from a growing multiplicity of voices advocating for a reconsideration of interpretation and curation practices with regards to heritage spaces. I hope this study can add to this rapidly evolving movement, while contributing a new perspective from a sculptural and socially engaged mode of investigation.

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