

site
material
the object project



Introduction

The Object Project (also known as *At Home with Art in Everton*) began in February 2013 with collaborating artists Lin Holland & Jane Poulton working with households from the West Everton Community Council (WECC) on a long-term participatory research project.

The aim of the project was to build a dialogue between artists and residents wherein they collectively explored how objects become meaningful in the lives of their owners and, concurrently, whether contemporary art objects might have a role in domestic spaces.

Central to the project was the understanding that, in order for this dialogue to be mutually meaningful, the artists would employ their usual methods of working within the critical discourses of contemporary art.

The project began with Holland & Poulton visiting each household where participants shared with them a significant object, revealing how and why it had accrued its meaning. The intimate setting of the home as the space for these conversations encouraged trusting relationships to be built from the beginning. This produced a distinctive aspect to the project and led to its deeper social impact upon all those involved.

In response to these conversations and treasured objects, the artists made a new artwork for each participant that responded to the domestic context and visual environment of the object, its history and lineage, and to the wider family and social relations associated with it. These site-specific works were made with materials and processes that included, amongst others, bronze, steel, stone, porcelain, film, photography, fabric and a sung performance. This rich diversity reflected the individuality of each participant and their distinctive object.

The installation of the artworks in participants' homes during March 2014 provided platforms for discussion around the concept, process, and resolution of each site-specific piece.

The project had many social moments with group gallery visits, sculpture workshops and several reflective and celebratory gatherings. A community within the community was formed that established new friendships and rekindled others through a collective and personally meaningful engagement with contemporary art.



Exchanges of Trust

On entering the gallery it is not clear, at first, what connects these seventeen carefully crafted artworks, which are made from a diversity of materials ranging from Lego to gold leaf. On closer examination it becomes evident through their size, form and subject that they all have a strong connection with the home and, moreover, that they are linked by an engagement with a particular group of people. These works also embody the relationships between the artists Lin Holland and Jane Poulton, who have collaborated in an apparently seamless practice, and the eighteen residents of West Everton with whom they have worked. It is hard to imagine the journey that has led to this point.

West Everton has been repeatedly regenerated over the last two hundred years. Everton Park is a vantage point that offers panoramic views of the area. Looking through traces of 1980's pastiche neoclassical architecture in concrete and wood, a patchwork of housing styles is revealed; influenced by past planning fads, all are squeezed into grids mapped out for a distant epoch. Within these architectural layers lives a strong community, *The Lost Tribes of Everton and Scottie Road*⁽¹⁾.

The population that has grown up in this area is not necessarily economically prosperous, but is socially and culturally rich, and one that has survived the cyclical redesign of its location. At its centre is the West Everton Community Council (WECC), which, since the mid-1960's, has been a conduit and gatekeeper between outside agencies and the people it supports and cares for. The geographer Doreen Massey states that "*places are spaces of social relations*" as she describes the relationship that her own family had with one housing estate over a fifty-year period⁽²⁾. It seems that people cannot be separated from their built environment.

The above ingredients provide the recipe for *The Object Project*, with the added element of the Creative Campus of Liverpool Hope University. This artist-initiated project was born out of existing relationships between the university and WECC, which led, in part, to shaping the project.

One aspect of *The Object Project* was to provide insight into the processes used by artists to make contemporary art. This began by Holland & Poulton responding to the participants' own cherished objects (complete with heartfelt provenance and

¹ Ken Rogers, *The Lost Tribe of Everton and Scottie Road* Trinity Mirror Sport Media 2010

² Doreen Massey, *Living in Wythenshawe in The Unknown City, Contesting Architecture and Social Space* The MIT Press 2002, p.459



personal meaning), and to the personalities of their owners and the décor of their domestic spaces. The exchange of trust was centred on the internal, semi-private public spaces into which we invite the visitor – the living room, front room and lounge – rooms that reflect our own aesthetic influences and become places for self-expression. The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard describes the house as “...our corner of the world. As has often been said, it is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word.”³ It was in this place that conversations were conducted between the artists and the occupant; dialogues that are central to the work but ones that a wider audience will never be party to, except through the mediated language of the resultant artwork.

In *The Object Project*, the domestic space eventually becomes the site for a piece of contemporary art that can also exist within the canon of the contemporary art gallery. Videos, sound pieces and stand-alone sculptures were all carefully installed in the participants’ homes for a short while before having another, more public, presentation in the gallery.



It is the premise of the works that makes them stand out from other socially engaged projects; these were not commissions designed to appease the commissioner but artists’ considered responses to the archive of information, diligently collected and researched about each person, their object, and their environment.

This hugely ambitious project has many layers: an artists’ collaboration, using the processes of participatory art to work with eighteen people, underpinned by a pedagogical programme that worked with not one, but three galleries, a university and a community council. It has had many positive impacts. Firstly upon the artists, who have now developed a completely different approach to their practice and have witnessed how this method creates artworks that not only speak of place but also of people. Secondly upon the participants who have been rewarded for their trust and full-hearted engagement by being given the great gift of having an artwork made specifically for them and the spaces they inhabit. And, finally, upon WECC which now has a new template of community engagement that will undoubtedly affect the way they work with artists in the future.



The Object Project is set against a background of high-profile socially engaged practices in the city that have taken on a life of their own. *TenantSpin*, a project supported by FACT, which originally engaged with the occupants of the since demolished Coronation Court tower block, was instigated as a pilot project by Danish artists Superflex and has now been running for ten years⁴. More recently, in a project commissioned by Liverpool Biennial, Dutch artist Jeanne van Heeswijk worked with people in North Liverpool on the *2Up 2Down* project to transform a condemned building into a community bakery⁵.

Art historian Claire Bishop observes that, “At a certain point art has to hand over to other institutions if social change is to be achieved; it is not enough to keep producing activist art.”⁶ This was the decision that Superflex and Jeanne van Heeswijk and their respective communities had to make once the initial success of the projects had been established. Both involved community dialogues, architectural spaces, and pedagogical programmes, not unlike *The Object Project*. What makes this project so unique and successful is that it originated with artists who already had



a deep commitment and long-term connection to the city. Holland & Poulton have managed to create this extraordinary work without the agendas or curatorial support of large arts organisations, but by forming lasting partnerships directly with the institutions of the community and, maybe more importantly, by forming lasting friendships with the participants who provided the essential core and inspiration for the work.

Charles Quick, 2014

Artist and Professor of Public Art Practice
University of Central Lancashire

4 www.tenantspin.org/what-we-do/history/
In 1999 the Foundation for Art & Creative Technology (FACT) piloted an Internet TV project with city-wide high-rise tenants and the Government agency Liverpool Housing Action Trust (HAT). Danish artists’ collective Superflex provided the technical infrastructure and theoretical possibilities for this new DIY broadcasting technology.

5 www.2up2down.org.uk
Over the last two and a half years, artist Jeanne van Heeswijk, commissioned by the Liverpool Biennial, has been working with people from Anfield and Breckfield to rethink the future of their neighbourhood. *2Up 2Down* provides a way for local people to make real social and physical changes to their environment.

6 Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells*
Verso 2012, p.283

3 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*
Beacon Press 1994, p.4



Janis Anderson

The treasured object chosen by Janis was a palette-shaped mirror originally belonging to her grandmother. As a practitioner in holistic therapies, Janis has an interest in the effects that colour and art can have on the body, mind and spirit. The dog on the column is a model of Janis' beloved Bruce, an English Bull Terrier, which she made in clay during one of the project's sculpture workshops at Liverpool Hope University. It was her first hands-on encounter with sculpture and it was significant that she chose to portray her dog. The clay model was cast in bronze and placed on a pedestal of Italian Carrara marble. The use of classical materials and form alludes to public statues where the larger-than-life victor or hero, often caught in freeze-frame action, is placed on a tall pedestal, elevating them above the mortals down below. The artwork references the hero/warrior characteristics of the English Bull Terrier breed.



palette-shaped mirror on easel



Lin Holland & Jane Poulton *bronze dog on marble column*



Carol Burke

Carol's chosen object was a casket containing the ashes of her son, Carl. The casket is prominently displayed in her living room beneath a large photo-portrait of Carl; the physical proximity of her son's remains is a comfort to Carol. The mirrored text of the artwork can be interpreted as a voice – either that of oneself speaking into a mirror, or that of another person speaking from another place. The ambiguity of the words and the light-filled void beyond the glass simultaneously blur the distinction between distance and proximity.



casket of ashes





Mary Burke

Mary's chosen object was a large dolls' house for which she has made several domestic objects. The house is a parallel world inhabited by characters, real and imaginary, who all have back-stories and who move around the house from time to time. Mary is also a prolific painter and her home is filled with her work. A box of oil paints and eighteen canvases were given to Mary for her to make new work in the future. The box contains an engraved plaque, which, in referring to the sub-title of the project, *At Home with Art in Everton*, describes the confidence with which she approaches her painting and the joy it brings her. The second phrase on the plaque, *Eighteen Ways of Seeing*, references the title of the seminal work by John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*. Here it alludes to the project's eighteen participants and acknowledges the diverse ways in which we respond to, and interpret, art and the world around us.



dolls' house





Adam Byrne

Some years ago Adam spent time in Tyumen in Siberia, which, like Liverpool, is a city built on a river. He recalled the hospitality of the people, the elegance of the buildings and the particular quality of the daylight as it shone on them. The rose motif used in the artwork, which repeats across the two Georgian windows of Adam's flat, is taken directly from the painted costume of his chosen object, a set of nesting Russian dolls. This stylised rose also appears in the tufted carpets made in the Tyumen region. The six texts on the lower window panes collectively identify, without naming, the city of Tyumen.



Russian dolls



**a blue light shines
tall town houses
red brick and stone
bounce back the light**



Anita Crewe

Anita is a qualified chef who chose a cardigan belonging to her Nin, to whom she was very close, as her object. She recalled a special day out they had shared some time ago, during which she had lavished on her grandmother delicious food and other treats. The patterns on the kitchen utensils replicate the patterns on the cardigan, suggesting that, even as Anita was working, her grandmother was present in her thoughts.



cardigan





Sonia Cooke

Sim Street was once the site of the old 'bag-wash' (launderette) where, as teenagers, Sonia and her friends would huddle in the doorway. This same geographical location is now the site of Sonia's home. Her chosen object, a pink dressing gown belonging to her late Nanny, has a stain on it that Sonia will never wash away. The film, *Number Eleven*, refers simultaneously to the bag-wash and to the role Sonia fulfils locally as the person who, with swathes of voile and net, dresses the rooms to which the deceased are brought home to rest before burial or cremation.



dressing gown





Maureen Evans

Maureen's treasured object was a set of rosary beads given to her by her daughter. Everton is a place where generations of families, for various reasons, often choose to stay. In these traditional family units the grandmother is a significant matriarchal figure; Maureen is part of this tradition and her house is a focal point for her family. One of her grandchildren has ambitions to become an architect and the white house is an accurate architectural scale model of Maureen's home. The column of Lego bricks upon which the house stands, Acropolis-like, reminds us of our earliest childhood attempts at building, while the anonymous white house reflects a style of social housing of which there are many examples in the area. Lego, like the reciting of the rosary, involves the accretion of many small units that combine to make a larger whole.



rosary beads



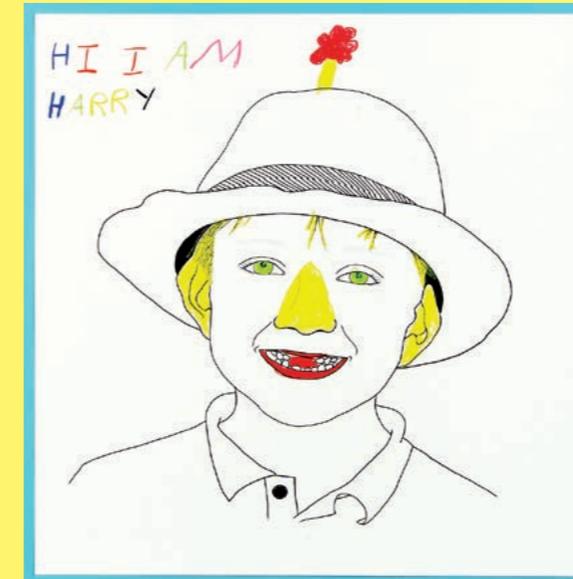


Harry Dwyer

At the beginning of the project Harry was six years old and was accompanied throughout the group activities by his chosen object, a soft toy called Chuckles. Chuckles' expression says much about his personality, and so it is with Harry – the open smile and undaunted gaze project a confident attitude to the world. Four identical line drawings, digitally created from a photographic portrait of Harry, were given to him, along with a set of coloured crayons, but with no specific guidance or instructions, to complete in his own style. We waited to see if the completed drawings would reveal more about the 'inner Harry'...



soft toy



The Object Project was a success because it centred on people. Lin and Jane had a unique and caring way of 'fitting in' with our community, and sensitively encouraged us to try things we hadn't done before. Its legacy has been an increase in confidence, new friendships being made, and a shared appreciation of contemporary art. The project was not just about art; it has been a transformative experience for everyone involved. *Ann Roach, Community Development Manager and Family Worker, West Everton Community Council*

I really enjoyed sharing my object at home

I do go to galleries but going with the group was a different experience.

Every single part of this project has been done professionally.

I don't really know many people round here the project has helped with that.

I felt so safe in the group – I could appreciate everything – loads of strong women. I felt like the person I wanted to be – I felt dead safe and comfortable.

People say that art is not part of reality but it is – it's shut out, but it is part of your life.

Things make people, just as much as people make things.
Anon

I loved showing my object – it's just in my room and nobody sees it, so it was nice to show someone else.

I've looked forward to it, it's really helped me. I usually dread things. It's really been the best thing I've done for, I couldn't tell you how long. This has brought me back to a time when I felt free.

I totally enjoyed the gallery visits and I've been back since. I'm taking my granddaughter with me next week.

On the sculpture workshops my mind was blank for quite a while and it was a challenge at first, but once you got in your mind what you were doing I loved it – an enjoyable challenge.

I really enjoyed it, I've never been in there before (The Tate)

The fact remains that the transaction between people and things constitutes a central aspect of the human condition. Past memories, present experiences and future dreams of each person are inextricably linked to the objects that comprise his or her environment.
from The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochbert-Halton

I was a bit nervous about sharing my object at first – I was wondering if I'd disappoint people – I wondered what the other people would be sharing – but I became more confident as I was talking about it because other stuff started coming out.

The workshop experience was wonderful. It made me realise I can do things if I put my mind to it. I'd never made anything like that before.

I didn't know the workshops would bring out ideas the way it did and it was lovely to touch the materials.

The gallery visits were eye-opening. They're not places I would normally visit and I found it a very interesting experience.

Completely different to what I thought it would be like. I had the chance to express my own thoughts without feeling stupid or daft. You didn't have to be an artist to have an opinion. The experience was being able to have our say. No one has given us that opportunity before.

My object was something I didn't realise meant so much to me until the project.

It's brought a lot of the community together.

We know that objects, whether built environment or small personal effects, are symbolic memory devices; that is, they stimulate remembering. As public historians we understand that memory is an ongoing process through which we create usable narratives that explain the world in which we live, stories that inevitably connect us to each other, history that builds community. The community we create is founded in shared remembrance and grounded in place, especially those places that are conducive to the casual associations necessary for the emergence of shared memory, common ground, and commitment to the common good. Places, memories and stories are inextricably connected, and we cannot create a real community without those elements.
from 'A Place to Remember: using history to build community' by Robert A. Archibald

I've always been scared of making stuff with my hands – I've always shied away from sculpture – but it was a great group and when I watched other people working I just got into it, focussed, and it was probably my favourite day – making things with my hands, with the metal and the clay.

I feel I can walk in there – you can be educated, uneducated, rich or poor. I feel confident and positive about the future because of this.

The experience (of sharing my object) was very emotional. It was nice to share the objects and nice to express the emotional connection with them as I don't normally talk about them.

I've never really thought about the paintings on the wall the way we did when we were together.

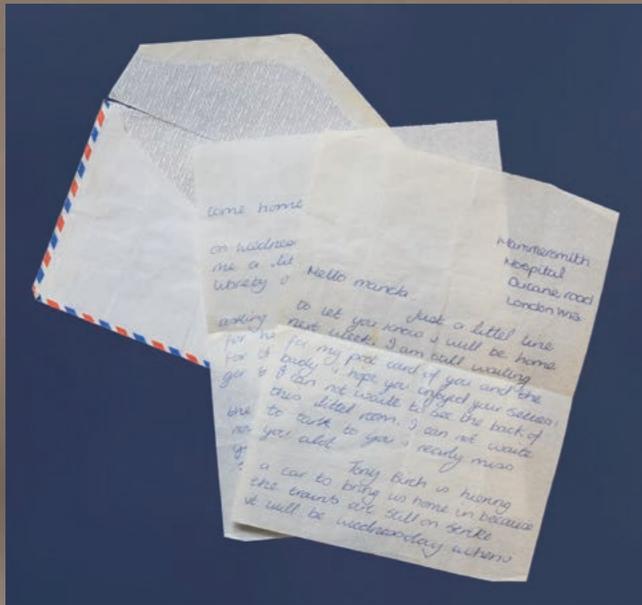
I thought I was going to be bored, but I really wasn't. It was the total opposite to what I thought. I loved it actually.

One knows who one is by the objects one owns and by how one uses them. *Georges Gusdorf, Philosopher*



Amanda Jamieson

Bubbles, or 'airy globes', feature in Amanda's favourite painting, *The Triumph of the Innocents* by William Holman Hunt. In this Pre-Raphaelite narrative painting (1876–1887), bubbles signify the salvation of the souls of lost children. By his symbolic use of bubbles, the artist intended to convey a sense of the waves of 'the streams of eternal life'. The three handmade globes made for Amanda were formed by the action of breath expanding the molten glass – capturing a vital life-force within the work – while the hand-engraved words, which exactly replicate her handwriting, are taken from Amanda's treasured letters from her sister who had died at a young age.



collection of letters





Maria Jamieson

Maria's chosen object was a medal; a last gift bought for her in Lourdes by one of her daughters. The multiplicity of twigs in the artwork reference the collecting habits of her granddaughter. Their circular arrangement reflects the shape of the medal, and the blue linen cloth echoes its enamelled colour. The white 'twigs', which resemble cuttings ready to be planted, suggest new growth, while their circular configuration references the cycle of life – if however, the work is interpreted through Christian iconography, it may also imply pain and suffering. Both elements of the work can be rearranged to express a diversity of meanings and interpretations.



Lourdes medal





Rachel Jamieson

Rachel's treasured object was her son Reece's first boxing trophy, which is on display in his room. Rachel has a strong sense of interior design; the colour red and reflective surfaces dominate the decor in her living room. The two green cubes, with their featureless matt finish, were intended as an equally striking counterpoint, challenging the harmony of the carefully constructed interior. The cubes, which reference modern art movements including Minimalism, were made to be interactive for Rachel to position in her home according to her sense of design, which she did, displaying them prominently alongside her own decorative objects. An unexpected outcome of this process was that Reece took one of the cubes to display in his own room thus uniting the boxing trophy and the cube.



boxing trophy



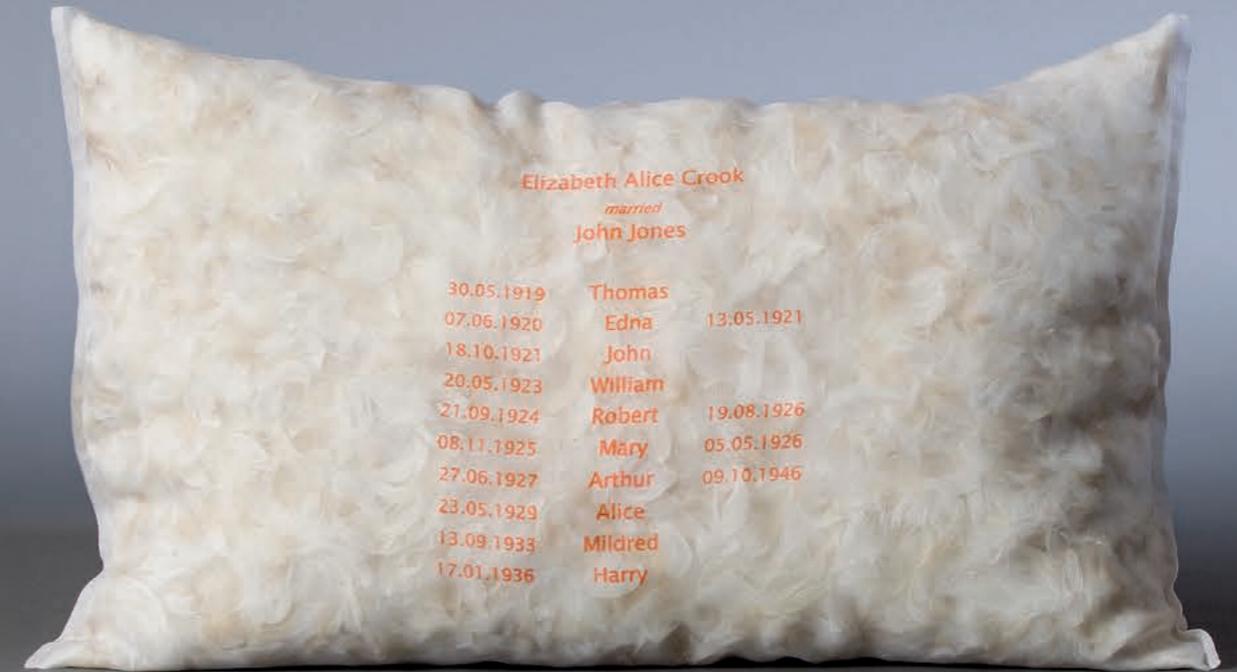


Mildred Jones

A family bible dating from the 19th century listing the births, deaths and marriages of her family, was Mildred's treasured object. It revealed, among other things, the early death of her 19 year old brother Arthur, who was killed in action in Germany, and the tragic loss of three other infant siblings aged just 23, 11 and 5 months. A translucent pillow, filled with white feathers, carries the names and dates of Mildred's parents and siblings as recorded in the bible. The pillow is a visual metaphor for sleep and the losing of consciousness, while the translucency of its silk and the whiteness of the feathers encased within it refer to its additional role as silent witness to the acts of intimacy, conception and death.



family bible





Marianne Kearns

Marianne's chosen object was a Henry Moore-like sculpture of a reclining woman that she calls *Mary Ann*; an exaggerated female form that she identifies with and which, she believes, epitomises the female form. Following her precedent of projecting her own identity onto the reclining figure, Marianne was directed to assume poses of the goddess Venus (generally considered in the canon of Western art to be the ideal female form) from a variety of historical paintings and sculptures. Unlike many historical relationships between artist and model, Marianne's aptitude for, and enjoyment of, interpreting the sometimes difficult poses made the photo-shoot a true collaboration.



reclining female figure





Lorraine & Paul Mangan

Paul and Lorraine are a married couple whose home had recently been subjected to a flood. For their chosen objects they selected a pair of black glass candle holders (Lorraine) and a carved wooden eagle from Sierra Leone (Paul) – distinctly different objects in their materials, form and function. The artwork made for Paul and Lorraine is an amalgam (or ‘marriage’) of two materials, wax and carbon, blended into a new composite and cast into a single form. The materials refer to the elemental qualities, inherent or suggested, in Paul and Lorraine’s chosen objects: earth, air and fire. The bowl form appears to move upwards from dark to light and is impervious to water.



glass candle holders



carved wooden eagle





Margaret Miller

Margaret's chosen object was a ceramic pair of horses brought back by her seafaring father as a gift for her mother. It had originally been inlaid with a clock-face, but this has now been replaced by a picture of her parents. Margaret recalled how her mother would sing a popular lullaby to her and her siblings, and regrets the demise of this tradition down the later generations of her own family. The missing clock-face, coupled with the faded photograph of her parents, evokes the passing of time. A specially formed choir of Year 7 pupils from the North Liverpool Academy learned, recorded and performed the lullaby *Toora Loora* for Margaret, reviving the memory and tradition.



ceramic horse ornament



Verse 1

Over In Killarney,
Many years ago,
My Mother sang a song to me
In tones so sweet and low;
Just a simple little ditty,
In her good old Irish way,
And I'd give the world to hear her sing
That song of hers today.

Chorus

Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Too-ra-loo-ra-li,
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Hush now don't you cry!
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Too-ra-loo-ra-li,
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, That's an Irish lul-la-by

Verse 2

Oft, in dreams I wander
To that cot again.
I feel her arms a-hugging me
As when she held me then.
And I hear her voice a humming
To me as in days of yore,
When she used to rock me fast asleep
Outside the bedroom door.

Repeat chorus

Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Too-ra-loo-ra-li,
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Hush now don't you cry!
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Too-ra-loo-ra-li,
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, That's an Irish lul-la-by

Verse 3

Oh I can hear that music
I can hear that song
Filling me with memories
Of a mother's love so strong
Its melody still haunts me
These many years gone by
Too ra loo ra loo ral
Until the day I die





Ann Roach

Ann's chosen object was a figurative wooden carving brought back from Malawi by her son who had given his possessions in exchange for the sculpture. As well as being a mother, Ann is the Family Liaison Worker and a key figure at the West Everton Community Council. The materials and form of the sculpture made for her, which are steel, felt, porcelain and gold leaf, refer to resilience, fragility, community, protection and warmth. The mild steel sub-structure was made locally on Liverpool's Dock Road using materials and fabrication methods reflecting the traditional industries and employment of the area. Although the artwork made for Ann is not figurative, the eighteen vessel forms allude to the concept of 'community'.



wooden carving



Lin Holland & Jane Poulton *mixed media sculpture*

Artists in Conversation

How did this work differ from the work you have previously made?

LH: Jane and I have collaborated in the past but this project had a distinctively different dynamic in the sense that the eighteen people who took part were at the heart of our collaborative concerns. Each participant, their object and contexts, informed all of our decisions. In effect this meant there were eighteen people to respond to, as well as the collaborative process between the two of us.

The domestic environment also created a new situation and different focus, as it was both the site for and content of the work. In the past I've made work that references 'home' but this was the first time to install an entire body of three-dimensional work in domestic spaces.

The Object Project was also different with its emphasis on the participatory and dialogic processes being equally as important as the end product artwork. For many years I've been acutely aware of the gap that exists between those who produce contemporary art and the wider public. This project allowed us to make transparent some of the methodologies that artists use, demystifying the process of art-making. At the same time it offered insights into the way objects become meaningfully integrated with life on a daily basis and it was these two things happening simultaneously that created a genuine and mutually informative exchange.

JP: It was the people and the location that made the process so different.

West Everton is a place that many people who are born there choose to stay, and this has resulted in a deeply-rooted community with a shared history. It was important that we, as strangers entering into this close-knit environment, would be accepted; in fact, we were welcomed with unreserved warmth and generosity and we built real relationships with the participants.

Many of the histories we collected were loaded with emotional impact and we had to respond in an equally open-hearted way. We knew that, whilst our artworks would relate to the participants' chosen objects, they would be 'processed' outcomes, inevitably (and necessarily) distanced from their origins. As the project progressed, we began to test our ideas against how each piece might be received and whether the participant would recognise something of their story within it. It was an emotional response in us and not something we had anticipated; it felt as if we had to do justice to the narratives we had been given.

This makes the project sound very serious - it was, but it was balanced with joy, love and laughter, and that was, perhaps, what made this project so special and so different.

Could you say something about your collaborative process?

LH: Collaboration has been part of my practice since 2000, however working with Jane is unlike other collaborative relationships. Our friendship of thirty-two years has created strong foundations for us to be able to freely speak our minds, to make suggestions, express doubts, challenge opinions and genuinely present arguments to each other in order to make the best possible work. I hold a deep respect for Jane, as a person as well as an artist, and trust her implicitly. However, as individuals and artists we are inevitably different, thank goodness, and it is from these differences that the work is honed. There is no space for an artistic ego or singular authorship within our collaborations: we have willingly forfeited these in favour of a process that challenges and extends the work we make. Our collaborations stimulate and enrich my practice, even after more than three decades of art-making, and that is a remarkable and rejuvenating gift.

JP: We pool our skills and knowledge of materials; the resulting mix opens up creative possibilities. Our guiding principle is; "What is best for the work?" Sometimes this involves putting aside a strong personal idea or inclination if the other person comes up with a better one. I can't think of an instance where we haven't reached an agreement about how to resolve a piece of work; in most cases the outcome is better than either of us could have imagined and we stand by each piece as an equal collaboration.

Our temperaments complement each other and we have different approaches and responses. That's a good thing; people see us as a team.

The most important ingredients in a collaborative relationship are respect for the other person's ideas, and trust. We have those, with the addition of a solid, unwavering friendship; I think that comes through in the work we make.

And could you say something about the participatory aspect of the project?

LH: One of the greatest aspects of the work has been getting to know the people of West Everton, and particularly the eighteen participants who worked with us for the whole year. Every one of them was generous in welcoming us into their homes to share their treasured object, meet their families, drink tea and on many occasions, hear their powerfully moving histories. The strength of the West Everton community, and the genuine friendships we made, proved to be far greater than imagined. This generosity and warm community spirit meant that we felt a huge sense of responsibility to deliver our absolute best, ensuring that each individual artwork was conceptually relevant, visually resolved and manufactured to the best of our abilities.

JP: The project simply couldn't have happened without the goodwill of the participants; by sharing with us their treasured objects and wider lives, they provided the stimulus for the artworks. The group embraced the project with genuine enthusiasm; they had a spirit of adventure, a keenness to learn. Some people had more experience of contemporary art than others and taking part in the project was a challenge for some, but any inhibitions were shed with the mutual support and encouragement of the group. It was wonderful to see confidence blossoming, and to hear people relating art, contemporary and historical, to their own experience.

Has 'The Object Project' influenced the way you might approach work in the future?

LH: The project was the most intense, rewarding and exhausting experience and, after seeing the work installed in the houses, I felt it was the closest I was ever likely to come to making work with meaning for an audience beyond that offered by the gallery system; for that reason, for a while at least, I felt ready to hang up my creative boots ... but some of the pieces have already suggested new directions for future work. I'm not sure how that will manifest itself, but that's part of the reason to carry on.

The Object Project has changed the way I think about the role of contemporary art and how "it can be part of your life", to quote participant Adam Byrne.

JP: This was one of the most personally fulfilling projects I have ever undertaken. I particularly enjoyed talking with the participants about their chosen objects, drawing out the histories behind them; this was the point at which trust was first built and from which all else followed. It was an honour to be entrusted with these precious narratives; we sensed we were involved in something of real value. I know it would be impossible to recreate the magic again elsewhere, but *The Object Project* has encouraged me to develop further ideas for community-located work. Creating opportunities for people to express themselves and have their voices heard seems relevant for the times in which we live.



certificate presented to Lin Holland and Jane Poulton on completion of *The Object Project*

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