

# EPOISEN

## ARCHAEOLOGISTS WORKING WITH THE PUBLIC

COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY  
AND HERITAGE PROJECTS  
RUN BY MUSEUMS,  
UNIVERSITIES OR COMMERCIAL  
UNITS.

①

## ARCHAEOLOGY BY THE PUBLIC

LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SOCIETIES, METAL DETECTOR  
CLUBS, AMATEUR INTEREST  
GROUPS, INDEPENDENT  
SCHOLARS.

②

## PUBLIC SECTOR ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT WORK  
CARRIED OUT ON BEHALF  
OF NATIONAL, REGIONAL  
OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

③

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

FORMAL AND INFORMAL  
LEARNING ABOUT ARCHAEOLOGY  
AND THE ANCIENT WORLD  
IN SCHOOLS, MUSEUMS,  
ONLINE, AND OUT IN  
THE WORLD.

④

## SOME COMMON TYPES OF

## PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY

BY  
GABE MOSHENSKA

## OPEN ARCHAEOLOGY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK  
THAT IS MADE PUBLICLY  
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH  
VIEWING PLATFORMS, WEBCAMS,  
GUIDES OR INTERPRETATION  
MATERIALS.

⑤

## POPULAR ARCHAEOLOGY

TELEVISION SHOWS,  
MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS,  
BOOKS, MAGAZINES AND  
WEBSITES ABOUT  
ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE  
ANCIENT WORLD.

⑥

## ACADEMIC PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY

THE STUDY OF  
ARCHAEOLOGY IN ITS  
ECONOMIC, POLITICAL,  
SOCIAL, CULTURAL, LEGAL  
AND ETHICAL CONTEXTS.

⑦

## OTHER TYPES

THIS ISN'T SUPPOSED TO  
BE AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST,  
SO LET ME KNOW IF  
I'VE MISSED ANYTHING!

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A Journal for Creative Engagement  
in History and Archaeology

Volume One

E P O I E S E N

A Journal for  
Creative Engagment  
in History and  
Archaeology

Volume One



The Digital Press at the  
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# **On Making *Epoiesen: A Journal for Creative Engagement in History and Archaeology***

Shawn Graham



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On our 'About' page, you'll find the following:

ἐποίησεν (epoiesen)- made - is a journal for exploring creative engagement with the past, especially through digital means. It publishes primarily what might be thought of as 'paradata' or artist's statements that accompany playful and unfamiliar forms of singing the past into existence. These could be visualizations, art works, games, pop-up installations, poetry, hypertext fiction, procedurally generated works, or other forms yet to be devised. We seek to document and valorize the scholarly creativity that underpins our representations of the past. *Epoiesen* is therefore a kind of witness to the implied knowledge of archaeologists, historians, and other professionals, academics and artists as it intersects with the sources about the past. It encourages engagement with the past that reaches beyond our traditional audience (ourselves). We situate *Epoiesen* in dialogue with approaches to computational creativity or generative art.

I think that generative art should ideally retain two disparate levels of perception: the material and visual qualities of a piece of art, and then a creation story or script and the intellectual journey that led to the end result. It possibly should bear marks of that intense interaction with the spatial environment that the visible work manifests.

- Paavo Toivanen 'On Generative Art'

Michael Gove, the Conservative British politician, said in the run-up to the United Kingdom's 2016 referendum on European Union membership, "people in this country have had enough of experts." And perhaps, he was right. There is a perception that archaeology is for the archaeologists, history for the historians. On our side, there is perhaps a perception that speaking to non-expert audiences is a lesser calling, that people who write/create things that do not look like what we have always done, are not really 'serious.' In these vacuums of perception, we fail at communicating the complexities of the past, allowing the past to be used, abused, or ignored, especially for populist political ends. The 'know-nothings' are on the march. We must not stand by.

In such a vacuum, there is a need for critical creative engagement with the past (see for instance the work of Holtorf). On his *Succinct Research* blog, Bill White reminds us why society allows archaeologists to exist in the first place: 'it is to amplify the whispers of the past in our own unique way so they can still be heard today' (<https://web.archive.org/web/20171227182656/http://www.succinctresearch.com/archaeologists-please-remember-why-we-exist/>). We have been failing in this by limiting the ways we might accomplish that task.

*Epoiesen* is a place to amplify whispers, a place to shout. Remix the experience of the past. Do not be silent!

#### WHEN AND HOW DID THIS COME TO BE?

But that's perhaps not the most interesting story. Instead, let me explain how this all came to be, as best as I can remember it.

As I look through my notebooks and emails and miscellaneous files, I can't find the exact beginning (I know that I've been interested in new publishing models for a while though). I find in my inbox an email setting up a meeting with George Duimovich and Pat Moore from MacOdrum Library at Carleton University to talk about Open Journal Systems in March of 2015. I find scribbles of ideas in notebooks going back to about 2014 (not coincidentally, shortly after my tenure and promotion portfolio was shoehorned from its born-digital format into dead pdfs). In October 2015, I find a google doc that I shared with some folks for an idea of something called 'Paradata: A Journal of

Digital Scholarship in Archaeology and Ancient History'. The influence of the HeritageJam ([www.heritagejam.com](http://www.heritagejam.com)) I think is clear too.

Meetings seemed to stall; the time was not perhaps right. My notes go silent for a while. Then I find scribbles in my notebooks again from around the time of my participation in MSUDAI, the Digital Archaeology Institute at MSU, concomitant with the creation of @tinyarchae my Tracery-powered dysfunctional excavation bot. That was August 2016. Then, sometime in September of last year, I start to find various websites and templates littering my various webspaces, each one trying a different variation on the theme. At one point, I see I was thinking of calling it 'Smith's Archaeological Miscellaney.' Long conversations with Tom Brughmans and Iza Romanowska helped me see the glaring errors in that idea.

The actual email that led to *Epoiesen* seeing the light of day comes from October 16 2016:

"Hi Pat,

As I was saying to George – and I think you and I have talked about this too on occasion – I've been interested to explore creating an open access journal for digital archaeology. I've seen the open journals platform, and while it is very cool, it's not quite what I'm thinking of. I'm interested in something a bit more idiosyncratic that would be based on simple text files in the mark-down format, and building the site/journal from that with a static site generator.

The idea is to create what amounts to a kind of literary journal, but for creative engagement with the past. I would solicit everything from twitter bots (I've created one that tweets out what amounts to a procedurally-generated soap opera, scenes from an excavation) to music, to art, to creative writing, to data viz... I would solicit reviews, but these would also be published alongside the work under the reviewers' name. The Hypothesis web annotation architecture would also be built in [...] In a way, it would be a place to publish the 'paradata' of digital making in archaeology ... Does this sound feasible? Is it something we could do? Maybe I could drop by sometime to chat."



Pat said ‘Yes.’ Simple word, ‘yes.’ Strong word, ‘yes.’ Librarians are powerful.

From that initial meeting, many more meetings took place. Research. Emails. Phone calls. My first port of call was of course those folks who’ve done this kind of thing before. Martin Paul Eve published a series of posts on his blog that offered his advice on starting an open access journal, and I can’t recommend them enough. Indeed, if you’re one of the people who received an email from me about joining the editorial board, you’ll recognize that I adhered rather closely to Eve’s model. We also imagined a version for print, an annual collecting everything that was published in a given year, for those situations where a print version becomes necessary (thus, print-on-demand). Bill Caraher and the Digital Press at The University of North Dakota were on board from the start! ‘Yes.’ The most powerful word you’ve got, as an academic. Use it wisely.

And in due course, *Epoiesen* was born, going live on September 27, 2017. Neville Morley, whose response to Lucas Coyne’s ‘Destory History’ you can read in this volume, reflected shortly thereafter on his own blog about our experiment:

Describing itself as “a journal for creative engagement in history and archaeology”, this is exciting and original in at least two respects: firstly, its emphasis on new forms of engagement with the past, especially digital means – in other words, it’s pushing people to take full advantage of the fact that it’s an online publication – and secondly, the way that it replaces traditional blind, anonymous and hidden peer review with the publication of responses alongside the article, commenting and criticising it as appropriate but also using it as a springboard to further exploration. [...]

The problem with *Epoiesen* is that it makes a lot of the rest of what we do seem, well, rather stale and unexciting....Heaven only knows how such experimental pieces would be evaluated for monitoring and disciplinary purposes[...] It’s a bit of a paradox; on the one hand, if such outputs could stand a decent chance of ‘counting’ then we could feel less guilty about devoting time to them[...] but I guess they would then lose some of their charm as a daring alternative, a creative and intellectual space free from

the usual constraints and anxieties – as a form of play rather than work.

Maybe this is the future. It's certainly a future, and an incredibly inspiring one. Seriously, people, you need to check this out: a new space for unrestrained scholarly creativity.

What's the point of tenure if you can't set up some paradoxes, shake things up, and make space for something new? This is my dream for *Epoiesen*.

#### THANK YOU

One of the earliest folks on board was the wonderful Sara Perry at York University. We exchanged many emails, throwing ideas around about who to contact, who might be persuaded to submit, and so on. The wonderful folks of the editorial board as a group kept me grounded, found potential contributors, suggested Trello as a way of keeping track of who was doing what, and basically helped keep things on track when my enthusiasm threatened to derail things.

And so, thank you: thank you to all the members of our editorial board, Sara Perry, Megan Smith, Eric Kansa, Katrina Foxton, Sarah May, Sarah E. Bond, Gianpiero di Maida, and Gisli Palsson. The continuing enthusiastic support of Pat Moore, John McGillivray, and George Duimovich at MacOdrum Library makes all of this possible. To Tom Brughmans and Iza Romanowska for long conversations over coffee while the kids played: thank you! And for the willingness of this first round of contributors and respondents to put themselves out there, to take a risk on this experiment: I can't thank you enough. Finally, thank you to Bill Caraher and the Digital Press at the University of North Dakota for their enthusiasm, energy, and support in making this version of *Epoiesen* see the light of day.

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# Destory History

Lucas Coyne

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Masthead Image: "Image taken from page 57 of 'Steenwijk verdedigd door Johan van den Kornput 1580-81. Naar oorspronkelijke bronnen bewerkt. (Bijlagen.)'" British Library <https://www.flickr.com/photos/britishlibrary/11146352055>



*Destory History* is my first completed Twine project. The idea started as a way to introduce players to the discrepancies between common historical mythologization and the actual events that occurred, but the more that I thought through the ideas, the more complicated it got. Rather than asking a narrow “Did this happen?” I became interested in questions of “Is it important that we remember things this way?” Due to the practical simplicity of the mechanics, I allowed the player to operate solely through erasure, rather than more complex means of correcting or altering misconceptions. So naturally, the goal of the game became pushing the player to consider whether that erasure was ever justified. The final discussion aims to raise these kinds of question, even if it also doesn’t have the space to adequately answer them all.

But if I were creating this game today, only months after its initial development, I think I would be challenged to develop these arguments with much more depth and nuance. Recent events such as Charlottesville highlight the fact that historical myths are not neutral, passive ideas that we can safely analyze from a distance. They remain powerful and influential forces within culture, reinforcing specific narratives. One can debate whether the way that George Washington and the cherry tree reinforces American exceptionalism is problematic, but historical evidence abundantly demonstrates how, for instance, the celebratory memorialization of Confederate leaders was a deliberate project to propagate white supremacy in the American South. These are the subjects that are challenging and relevant—though, too often, a binary is drawn that only posits erasure or continued existence, and

I think entering into that discussion would require substantial rework of the entire project to meaningfully engage with it.

Nonetheless, this was a tremendous learning opportunity, and I hope that players will find the game to be an entertaining experience that leaves them with lingering questions about their own conceptions of the past and the ways in which they may or may not want to change our shared understanding of history.

Explore *Destory History*

[http://smgjournal.github.io/artefacts/DESTORY\\_HISTORY.html](http://smgjournal.github.io/artefacts/DESTORY_HISTORY.html)

# First Response: Destory History

Neville Morley

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Masthead Image: "Image taken from page 57 of 'Steenwijk verdedigd door Johan van den Kornput 1580-81. Naar oorspronkelijke bronnen bewerkt. (Bijlagen.)' British Library <https://www.flickr.com/photos/britishlibrary/11146352055>





Morley's response is, in the spirit of Coyne's offering, a playable work of interactive fiction. In the image, one can see Morley's argument-in-code, a mostly impossible-to-affect path. As the narrator relates,

"History is not what happened, it's what people think happened, and what they think that means.

Here's the thing: you can have all the facts, and still turn history to your advantage. As Lucas Coyne recognises in his contextualisation of the Destory History game, it's all about which facts are emphasised, and how they're interpreted; not 'what the past was like', but 'what stories do we tell about the past, and what do they mean to us?'

You don't need to erase slavery from the history of the Civil War, let alone try to erase Lincoln, you just need to shift emphasis towards states' rights and other constitutional issues – and put up a lot of statues to honour those who fought for them. You can't report everything - but what you do decide to report, and how you present it, changes people's understanding.

I tell it how it is. You've been misled by the distorted reporting of the mainstream media. He's twisting facts to suit his political agenda.

That's what's alarming: Dr Malevolus doesn't have to erase the past at all, or rewrite history, just shift the debate a little way in the right direction. Because, while no one actually has a history rewinder or a ZAPP gun, we \*all\* have a POW! - even professional historians, though we impose much stricter rules on ourselves when it comes to using it.

We're also more skilled than the average citizen in recognising when someone else may have used a POW! to manipulate history for their own ends. As Lucas shows, that doesn't necessarily help; we can

deal with obvious anachronisms, like a MAGA hat at Charlemagne's coronation, but our attempts at tackling more complex distortions - including cases, like Washington and the cherry tree, where the issue is not the historicity of the event but the way it works as a foundational myth of American identity - are more problematic and generally less successful.

To take a recent, largely UK-based controversy: is it historically acceptable to show a 'black' Roman officer as the head of an implicitly 'typical' family in Roman Britain in a BBC video? The current historical consensus is that there is clear evidence for there being a multitude of ethnicities present, and it's easy to see how previous generations have (mostly unconsciously) ignored or downplayed this evidence in favour of an image of natives and Romans alike as 'just like us' - to say nothing of the now deliberate use of ZAPP and POW! by alt-right figures to construct Romans as 'our' pure white ancestors.

But the claim from those figures is that it's the historians, and the BBC, who've used their POW! to magnify the presence of a few Romans of different ethnic backgrounds so that they're presented as 'typical' or 'representative', in the service of relentless political correctness.

Our problem, compared with Lucas' game, is that we lack any objective index of 'historical instability' against which to calibrate the effects of either their distortions or our own. Out here in the real world, there are far more choices, and far fewer ruled..."

Explore Neville Morley's Response to *Destory History*

<https://smgjournal.github.io/artefacts/Morley-Destory-History-Response1.html>

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. He who controls the past controls the future. And, now that your gormless assistant has demonstrated that the history-rewinder works safely, it's time for you, Dr Malevolus, to put your dastardly plan into full effect.

Rewriting the past so that you're the most important person who ever existed? Nonsense; that's the sort of crazy, over the top idea that only a deluded megalomaniac would devise, and only a simpleton would believe. No, the real aim is to rewrite history just enough so that your dictatorial rule in the present feels inevitable and right.

Let's rewrite some history. Mwahahahahaha!!!!

# Second Response: Destory History

Christopher Sawula

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British Library <https://www.flickr.com/photos/britishlibrary/11146352055>



Merging games and history is never an easy task. Over the last several years, I've written periodically about what games integrate history well and what games fall short. The games that succeed usually find a compelling compromise between entertainment and education in a way that keeps the player interested without overloading them with information. The bulk of these games, however, use historical settings, figures, and events as window dressing for a larger fictional story. In order to place players in recognizable scenes, developers often depict events based on historical memory, rather than historical accuracy.

In *Assassin's Creed III*, for instance, the protagonist, Connor, witnesses the Boston Massacre. Despite decades of historical writing that have provided a nuanced chronology of the night's events, Connor witnesses the Boston Massacre almost exactly like it was portrayed in Paul Revere's 1770 engraving. The crowd arrives at the Boston Customs House to find that a British officer has arranged his soldiers in a line to defend the building. A mysterious man fires upon the crowd from a nearby building, encouraging the officer to order his men to fire. Like Revere's engraving, the crowd is largely anonymous and does not include Crispus Attucks or any other people of color. The scene is historically inaccurate, but what can be done if our collective memory pictures it this way?

In *Destiny History*, Lucas Coyne explores this question through the idea of "historical instability." The protagonist is able to travel back in time to "fix" errors in historical memory. Despite your best efforts to eliminate persistent myths and outright errors, the player cannot eliminate the instability entirely. As Coyne argues, erasing

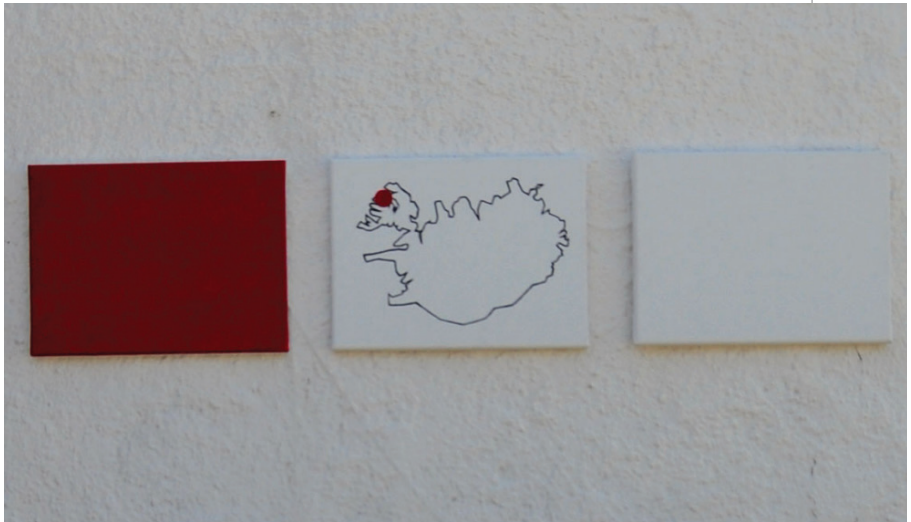
problematic history is fundamentally easier than “providing more context or correcting mistaken impressions,” but that doesn’t mean either strategy will change how the public remembers the past. Historical memory is stubborn, and historians expend an enormous amount of time and energy in the hopes that their interventions can influence it in any way. Although historians will continue to hone and improve our understanding of the past, individuals and groups will continue to repurpose history to justify their views and actions. Myths and legends were traditionally used to explain social, cultural, and natural phenomenon. Their power lies not in their accuracy, but in how they can be used to reinforce beliefs.

By addressing historical memory in his game, Coyne has devised an entertaining method to address real issues in education and in public dialogue. Games will continue to use historical settings as window dressing, but they’ve continued to improve as historians and other scholars have weighed in on their impact. As one of the most popular forms of modern media, games hold the potential to help influence public memory. History will always be volatile and unstable, but correcting mistaken impressions through popular entertainment and academic scholarship can ultimately help steer the conversation and subsequently, how our past is remembered.

# en-counter-maps

Gísli Pálsson and Oscar Aldred

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The red painting is at the scale  $\infty:1$ , the white painting is at the scale  $1:\infty$ . Iceland in its cartographic form exists on a thin strip of scale somewhere in the middle.





In the *en-counter-maps* project we looked at the relationships between art and archaeology through several different media. We found a common theme that was related to examining maps and their representations, and through the map we mediated our critical relationship on the processes of making and doing art and archaeology.





In total we devised 4 pieces. The pieces were called *Inferstructures*, *Maps of places called Bolungarvík*, *Threads*, and *A 1913 Map of 2011 Bolungarvík*.

The map is in many ways a simplification of the landscape. The multiplicity of landscape is reduced to one dimension of its visual qualities – the god's eye view from above – which is a highly subjective, disembodied representation. The intention with *Infer-structures* was to extend this trajectory of god's eye mapping to one of its consequences by reducing the map to one of its dimensions – the road system. Furthermore we wanted to attempt to represent the experience of place when travelling through it by car, which is a representation we considered quite relevant to Bolungarvík as there is such a clearly defined road system through it. The piece effectively focuses on one line – the road – while every other lines and trajectories fade into the background. This is the experience of a town as a 'path of least involvement', where the only definable elements are its escape routes. The painting is naturally placed by the side of a road. pic7 We chose to use archaeological trowels to sculpt the blue background, while painting the lines with a brush. This creates a tension in the painting. We as archaeologists thought it might be appropriate to see the chaotic background as representing the material affordances of the landscape – its archaeology – and the lines as its histories. The lines are simple, clear, structured, but if they are not maintained and reiterated they quickly dissolve into the background.







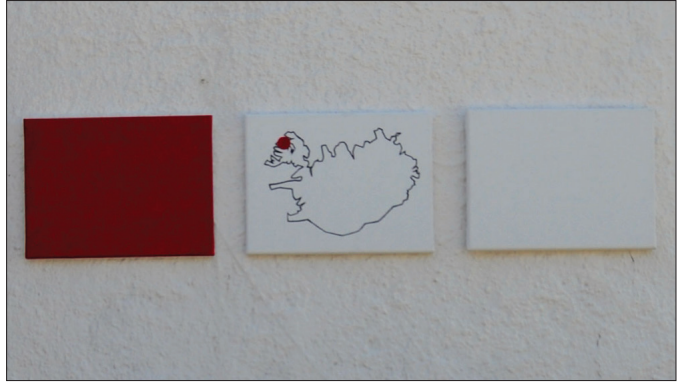
The painting later fell down into the grass, and we felt that this fit well with its wayward message.





Robert Smithson once wrote that “you cannot visit Gondwanaland, but you can visit a map of it.” This remark was the starting point for *Maps of places called Bolungarvík*. Iceland as a place only exists on a map and its existence is entirely based on the scale which is used in making the map. That is, experiencing Iceland in its wellknown cartographic form requires the map (unless one is able to travel to outer space). All three paintings are simple representations of places called Bolungarvík, but so far we’ve only discovered one place by this name. The red painting is at the scale  $\infty:1$ , the white painting is at the scale  $1:\infty$ .

Iceland in its cartographic form exists on a thin strip of scale somewhere in the middle.



This work proved to be similarly mobile.







*Threads* mediates the underlying tensions in our collective pieces. In this interstitial position it connects the representational pieces (*Infer-structures* and *Maps of places called Bolungavík*) with the fourth (*1913 Map of 2011 Bolungarvík*). As it moves back and forth being pulled but also pulling the threads that connect them, this mediation is in constant process – in a state of becoming. Personal histories, stories about places, the rational scientific gaze and authoritative histories all intersect that set in motion new translations.



A 1913 Map of 2011 Bolungarvík was a piece in four parts – the construction/installation of the site/lab, a performance of the archaeological process of excavation, and the interpretation and production of archaeological artefacts and bodies of knowledge after the excavation had been completed. The last part occurred on the day after the excavation when we performed the ‘closing’ of the site, by incavating into the trenches many of the objects we had found and used during the process. However, a further part became apparent as we closed the trenches, as the pale grass emphasised the location of this ‘happening’. Furthermore, the trenches were still visible long after the performance had ended. The incavated objects continue to change under the surface, and may perhaps one day be excavated by a group of bored archaeologists, curious artists or perhaps a mixture of both.





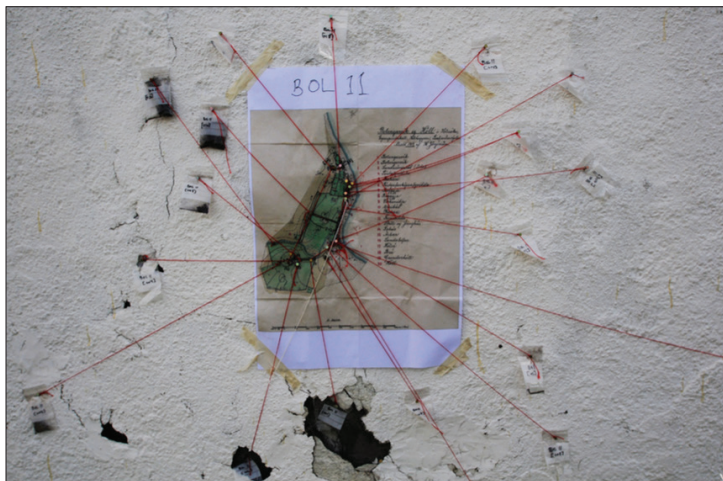
Central to this piece were two maps: 1913 and present-day. The residual features in the present-day map of the 1913 map provided the archaeological spatial dimension for our performed interventions: the trench locations, the act of digging, creating an archive of the excavation, and the then the incavation and closing of the site. The process resulted in a radical transformation of the area in front of the exhibition house – and partially extended into the exhibition space - From an area of land, to the site of an excavation, to its textured interpretation on the surface – as land art – and finally back again to an area of land. Through the archaeological process as a performance we draw attention to our practice and the spectral absence that we bring presence to and what we have put back into the land through our spatial and temporal transformations.

A 1913 map of 2011 Bolungarvík reflects on the critical relationship that the other pieces the pieces were suggesting about the relationship between representation and the nature of intervention, whether artistic or archaeological. In fact, what we hoped to achieve was a performance that was both neither of these things - simply a process of doing something - but at the same time could be called both art and archaeology. In the both respects we were quite successful. The process orientation was used to examine the trope of repetitive action and performance, and the representation/intervention examination achieved a conversation or dialogue between art and archaeology by blurring the boundaries between them and creating something that was unique.





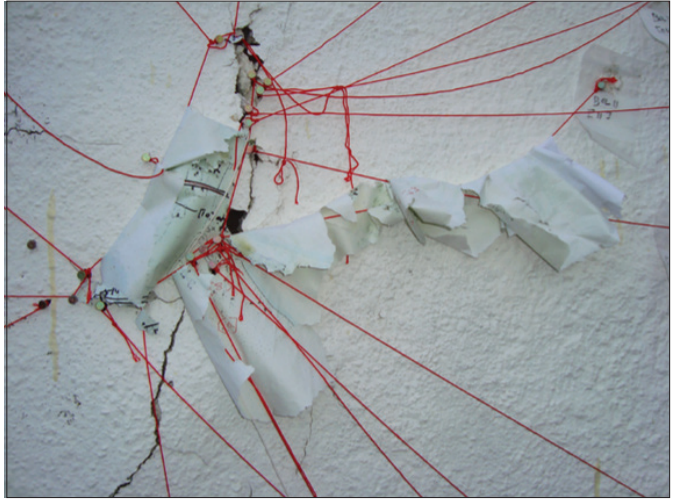
On the opening day of Æringur.



One month later.



Two months later.



We were delighted that we could display all of our pieces outside the gallery, both on the outer walls of the house as well as on the lawn next to it, since it gave us the opportunity to further reflect on the archaeological nature of our pieces. Left exposed, the taphonomic degradation of the pieces – both the visible and those we had incavated – became an integral part of *en-counter-maps*. As the house used for *Æringur* 2011 was an abandoned and condemned house, we also wanted to point out the irony between an old house that was being torn

down and the excavation and decay of archaeology/art by showing how the impression of objects are not limited to the surface but is also much deeper, below the skin of the object, in its history and personal connections or threads.



The pieces continue to be transformed by taphonomic processes. During a recent visit we discovered that many of the objects we had used during the excavation had become mobile, exploring the territories outside the excavation area.

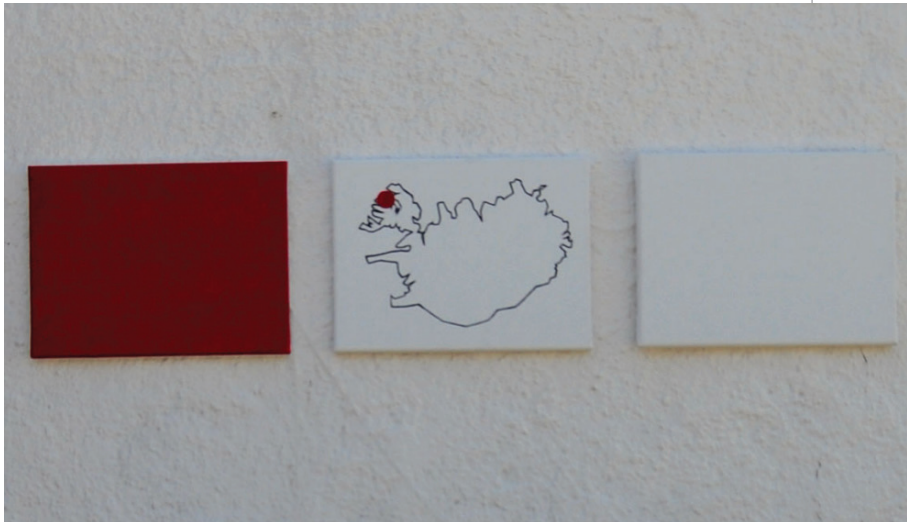




# First Response: en-counter-maps

Alison Langmead

<http://dx.doi.org/10.22215/epoiesen/2017.2>



Received 2017-07-25

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Masthead Image: Pálsson and Aldred.





## Editorial Note

The response to this piece was done via the Hypothesis annotation layer for en-counter-maps; to see the annotations in context, which is the proper way to read this response, go to en-counter-maps and toggle the Hypothesis arrow. We have aggregated the links below for archival purposes. In the page below, you may click through the pound sign # to see the annotation in its original context.

---

adlangmead 7/25/2017 3:04:37 PM  
<https://hyp.is/eTFGXHE1EeeOscOms1W1xw>

en-counter-maps

I would like to annotate my experience of this piece by honing in on two themes: ambiguity and scale.

---

adlangmead 7/25/2017 3:08:16 PM  
<https://hyp.is/M5xL2HE5EeeHTTtok3wdTg>

processes of making and doing art and archaeology.

A neatly-dug trench enters like a sharp brown cut up through the grass from the bottom of the frame, its line moving the eye directly towards a white house-like structure that asks a question in a language foreign to me. The tilt of the hill and the framing of the photograph gives

the structure a sense of being a sloping funhouse, an environment in which your senses are made to trick themselves, to expect level ground where there is an incline, to see solid walls dissolve unexpectedly. An experience of disorientation. Where am I?

Hvar erum við? Where are we, indeed? By these words, ambiguity slides from the text into the very makeup of the landscape represented by this photograph. A quick trip to Google Translate helps me find a bit of purchase on what I am seeing, and situates this piece textually in Iceland—something suggested, but not strictly disambiguated, by the header image.

Returning here, having finished the piece, I find that this image encapsulates for me the entirety of the story that is to come—the inverse of ambiguity.

adlangmead 7/25/2017 3:08:41 PM

<https://hyp.is/ZpLUdHFAEeeq7humVClQmQ>

In total we devised 4 pieces.

In the second image of this introductory sequence—the flow of the text has defined the images' sequentiality—we have clearly moved back in time. The trenches are gone, the walls of the white structure are emptier, the working clutter at right is neater. Entropy (?) has been reversed. I find myself wondering if clutter is always a sign of the ravages of time. In archaeology, does mess suggest progress?

It becomes clear to me through this step back that the canvas of the white structure's walls are in a state of becoming.

Instead of the brown gashes of the trenches, chalk scores the earth the way that old police dramas demarcated dead bodies.

See: <https://web.archive.org/web/20171222153355/http://www.ferdyonfilms.com/2009/this-man-must-die-que-la-bete-meure-1969/480/>

adlangmead 7/25/2017 4:03:05 PM  
<https://hyp.is/RCnUwnFLEeq9Fdw2zHncw>

*Inferstructures, Maps of places called Bolungarvík, Threads, and A 1913 Map of 2011 Bolungarvík*

In the first image of this second sequence, we move back in time yet again. Archaeological layers move from top to bottom, from the present to the past, as we are doing here.

The chalk lines are now just in a state of becoming. A human appears. The technology used to create the patterns we now expect become visible. The human appears almost as an interlper, as the objects have as yet taken center stage in this system.

In the second image of this sequence, the human becomes a mere shadow. A shadow whose originating object, for a while, eluded me. The shadow of the photographer that is made on the roof melds with the shadow of the white structure on the ground to create the impression a panoptic prison tower has been inserted into our narrative. Angles are seen, all jutting out, allowing for a sweeping view of the terrain.

See: Foulson Prison Museum: <https://www.bighouseprisonmuseum.org/>

It is a prison guard's point of view, but it is also a cartographer's. The question of scale both in the form of a silhouette and in the form of an inquirer's standpoint arises.

By the end of this sequence, distant crowds gather and time speeds on (backwards or forwards, we do not know) in a time-lapse photograph taken—we assume—within the white structure?

Later, I return to this time-lapse image, thinking..."The white structure is condemned."

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adlangmead 7/25/2017 4:09:42 PM  
<https://hyp.is/HiobUnCTEecDudGALihhA>

the road system

Roads? There are roads? Where are the roads? Hvar erum við?

I am lost in the images. The text moves me to another interpretive paradigm. I do not like it. I was content, lost in my own self-centered reflections. Ambiguity is uncomfortable to me, it would appear, only until I start my own sense-making.

adlangmead 7/25/2017 4:13:01 PM  
[https://hyp.is/3QyHanCTEee4th\\_OZx5OzA](https://hyp.is/3QyHanCTEee4th_OZx5OzA)

archaeological trowels to sculpt the blue background

Upon finding myself here, oh, how I wish I could see the surface of this painting. It is on display in the image as if on a wall in a museum, out of touch, out of reach...and yet here are clues to its material expression.

Later, I return, having been able to see the surface better, re-struck by its formal similarities to old-fashioned architectural blueprints at a distance. It is, among other things, a question of scale and expectations.

adlangmead 7/25/2017 4:18:03 PM  
<https://hyp.is/PyG3OnCVEeeEVLmf1Pi4og>

The

THERE. The texture. Like the marks of a painter's trowel.

See Bob Ross: <https://web.archive.org/web/20180119145233/https://i.pinimg.com/736x/51/2f/62/512f62fcfbco8e1f65dfo4e58e0029do--the-joy-of-painting-bob-ross-paintings.jpg>

Does the original purpose of the trowel change things materially? I feel that it does in this instance for the humans involved. The repurposing of tools from their profession within the context of this artistic expression is meaningful. From the point of view of the trowel, maybe not as much.

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adlangmead 7/25/2017 4:21:53 PM  
<https://hyp.is/cExRbHCVeeEVsdM36CORg>

The red painting is at the scale  $\infty:1$ , the white painting is at the scale  $1:\infty$

The map has scale. The colors too are given scale. The scales are all relative to what you want to represent. Compared to digging a trench, the act of representation here seems somehow impotent.

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adlangmead 7/25/2017 4:26:41 PM  
<https://hyp.is/tnifQHFVEee5Pk9WovNF9A>

Threads

I know this white structure. I know those frames. I know them from the past of this piece, and I know that they are to come. Now that they are represented at this scale, I remember them from the time-lapse. Networks of string, framed as a representation, seen only in part and obliquely. Again, is this archaeology? Seems plausible from where I sit.

I suddenly wish these annotations were a real conversation.  
 My experience with this formal construction is different.

See Dreamcatcher Wallpaper: <https://web.archive.org/web/20180119145857/https://wallpapercave.com/wp/vPL25q8.jpg>

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adlangmead 7/25/2017 4:30:51 PM  
<https://hyp.is/nzl8hnFWEeek67dnzFLKGw>

incavating

I hereby promise that I will try and use this word in my work.

---

adlangmead 7/25/2017 4:46:35 PM  
<https://hyp.is/6kdYYnCWEeek4t2vjRKhZVA>

transformations

This image appears again. This time transformed. I know exactly where I am. I wonder if the white square is still on the ground (the blueprint image is not). I even know the future. I know the trenches will be filled in and they will leave traces of what has happened.

I am oriented, as if using a map. I know my scale. I am comfortable with my ambiguity.

---

adlangmead 7/25/2017 4:48:15 PM  
<https://hyp.is/ShKOCHFYEeekDrbNWA6kYbQ>

During a recent visit we discovered that many of the objects we had used during the excavation had become mobile, exploring the territories outside the excavation area.

Perhaps the archaeology of objects, meaning an archaeology produced by objects, is at hand. What ambiguities might they experience? What is their experience of scale?

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adlangmead 7/25/2017 5:40:39 PM  
[https://hyp.is/X\\_lTrHFgEeek\\_Id5NSDF6w](https://hyp.is/X_lTrHFgEeek_Id5NSDF6w)

This work proved to be similarly mobile.

...but decidedly less criminological.

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adlangmead 7/25/2017 5:41:11 PM  
<https://hyp.is/uolafnCPEeekWfMd2ohJNA>

through several different media

Just here, already in the first sentence, a relentless ambiguity collides with the presentation of evidence. The authors allow their chosen media of response lie (as yet) unexplored and unrevealed, while the image below provokes guesses and anticipation of the context.

Not being an archaeologist myself –I am an art historian by training–I choose to combine the (for me) uncomfortable, insistent not-knowing of the piece as it unfolds with the authors' assertion that their artistic interventions are about the nature of archaeology—together, this suggests an archaeology that does not, or cannot, ever see the “whole picture.” While a map might constitute seeing this putative “whole,” a counter-map would be the inverse.

This makes a satisfying sort of empathetic sense. I could imagine finding something in an excavation that is clearly true and present, but whose crucial context is engulfed by the expanses of unexcavated land nearby.

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adlangmead 7/25/2017 7:28:52 PM  
<https://hyp.is/tolW6nCTEeeB5TPP65BITA>

This is the experience of a town as a 'path of least involvement', where the only definable elements are its escape routes.

The path of least involvement. Escape routes. I am lost. Cars? What cars? Escape how? The painting itself invokes an old architectural blueprint with its chemical odors and inherent preservation vice.

See Saxman No. 2 Mine <https://web.archive.org/web/20180119151231/http://pittarchives.tumblr.com/post/95365464433/record-25-quecreek-mine-map>



The door to our dear white structure also appears in a state of decay. Why are we suddenly stopped at the side of the road? In this piece about maps, I feel decidedly unmoored.

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adlangmead 7/25/2017 7:29:32 PM  
<https://hyp.is/GLATqHFTeeKzBtpQfWOhw>

The painting is naturally placed by the side of a road

This sentence is amazing. Naturally, a painting of roads is placed by the road. No ambiguity, and yet, why would this symbiosis be meaningful? In mapping, do things sit next to the things they represent? Or do they, instead, suggest a rupture with the lived experience?

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adlangmead 7/25/2017 7:30:17 PM  
<https://hyp.is/NeRfIHCUEeegHAe8FGROKw>

background

Crimes and criminality. Is it just me? Here, a bright spotlight as if, yet again, we are at a crime scene marked by harsh tones, chalk lines, and the inevitable surveillance of a prison guard.

And yet, in the corner of my eye, red. Red and the shape of Iceland. Iceland with a red dot. This is where we are.

All of these reflections could be “just me.” It could all also be a question of scale.

---

adlangmead 7/25/2017 7:30:55 PM  
[https://hyp.is/fgKFEnFWeeY\\_WOZvNGbIw](https://hyp.is/fgKFEnFWeeY_WOZvNGbIw)

A 1913 Map of 2011 Bolungarvík was a piece in four parts – the construction/installation of the site/lab, a performance of the archaeological process of excavation, and the interpretation and production of archaeological artefacts and bodies of knowledge after the excavation had been completed.

The text makes the chalk-prison-trenches process clearer, and yet, as before, I am brought back from my own ambiguous musings to the process of creating these artifacts. This phrase here, though...How are archaeological artifacts produced? Are they actually produced as archaeological artifacts in their interpretation? Is a landscape interpreted and produced only in the creation of a map?

In retrospect, I realize that the artists were being literal in their production of archaeological artifacts. Not ambiguous in the least. I find myself, again, caught up in my own story.

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adlangmead 7/25/2017 7:53:47 PM  
<https://hyp.is/otIMtnCWEeeClxPW-QD6gw>

perhaps one day be excavated by a group of bored archaeologists

One day. One day at some time. What do maps have to tell us about the future? Can they disambiguate time as well as give scale to space? To archaeologists, is the action of burying—of incavating—objects predictive of future actions? Is excavation a likely foregone conclusion?

The image below shows the “mess” of the work involved in the original happening. The threads, the piles, the maps. I now also see this as progress, as moving towards a conclusion.

The map now posted on the shady side of the white structure, ambiguously part of the 1913 Map of 2011 Bolungarvík work, shows a region shattered by lines of red thread, each drawing attention to particular details of the landscape, a bit like drawing out blood. Pins, details, threads. Somewhere between an old-fashioned collection of butterflies, each impaled with a pin and a “crazy wall” of a contemporary (here comes the crime again) CSI drama, lies this diagram of exploding details.

See Oxford Museum of Natural History: <https://web.archive.org/web/20180119152406/http://www.oum.ox.ac.uk/visiting/presenting6.htm>

See Esquire (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180119152532/http://www.esquire.com/uk/culture/film/news/a7703/detective-show-crazy-walls/>).

Also, please feel free to visit the Crazy Walls Tumblr (<https://crazy-walls.tumblr.com/>).

The crispness of the shadow on the side wall caused by the paper hanging in the air is notable. I find myself assuming this is late in the day. The power of the low sun in Iceland must be intense.

adlangmead 7/25/2017 7:54:49 PM  
<https://hyp.is/-xJfmHCWEeeB5vtexEwWVg>

simply a process of doing something

...delightfully, and possibly even presciently, by “a set of bored archaeologists, or artists, or both.”

The artists’ plan for a future excavation is presaged by past actions. The scale of time inherent in this piece—and perhaps by extension, archaeology—arises.

adlangmead 7/25/2017 8:00:34 PM  
[https://hyp.is/F\\_\\_2LnCXEeeXt5On\\_Q2jyg](https://hyp.is/F__2LnCXEeeXt5On_Q2jyg)

later

The scale of time. It proceeds relentlessly. It has no clear cartographic (temporographic?) tradition. Timelines might be considered a map of time, but I don’t buy it. Timelines are a map of the human experience of time. Demarcated by what we do or do not wish to remember about the past.

Cartographic maps are like that too, though. I suppose I might be wrong.

Everyone’s ur-visualization comes to mind.

See Charles Minard's map of Napoleon's Russian campaign of 1812:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Joseph\\_Minard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Joseph_Minard)

Showing both space and time together as abstractions, Minard also conflates these two properties, compromising perfect data clarity on either.

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adlangmead 7/25/2017 8:01:03 PM  
[https://hyp.is/LBW3FnCXEeeOxsM5\\_B5ItQ](https://hyp.is/LBW3FnCXEeeOxsM5_B5ItQ)

We

The scale of space. We have a tradition for representing this, of course. It has been up for debate since the beginning of this webpage. And yet...how big are those holes? How big are the objects? Where are we?

The excavation is made clear by the slashes in the ground. The incavation is less obviously represented.

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adlangmead  
 7/25/2017 8:01:48 PM  
<https://hyp.is/U3e7QnCXEeeG8yN7YZuhHQ>

abandoned and condemned house

For a while I thought we were collaborating with these objects. That white structure means a lot to me. But if it is going to turn on you...Get out, my friends, get out! You are in danger.

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7/25/2017 8:07:25 PM  
<https://hyp.is/hoWeKHCEeeKGtMTI2dkGw>

impression of objects are not limited to the surface but is also much deeper, below the skin of the object, in its history and personal connections or threads.

I cannot speak to how I may have interpreted these happenings at Æringur 2011.

But from my point of view in this space and at this time, these objects, actions, and transformations are clearly in conversation with time and space themselves, both in their original forms as well as in their representations here.

In their original forms, the impressions and marks exist above and below ground, in memories and in forgetfulness, and in the past, present, and future.

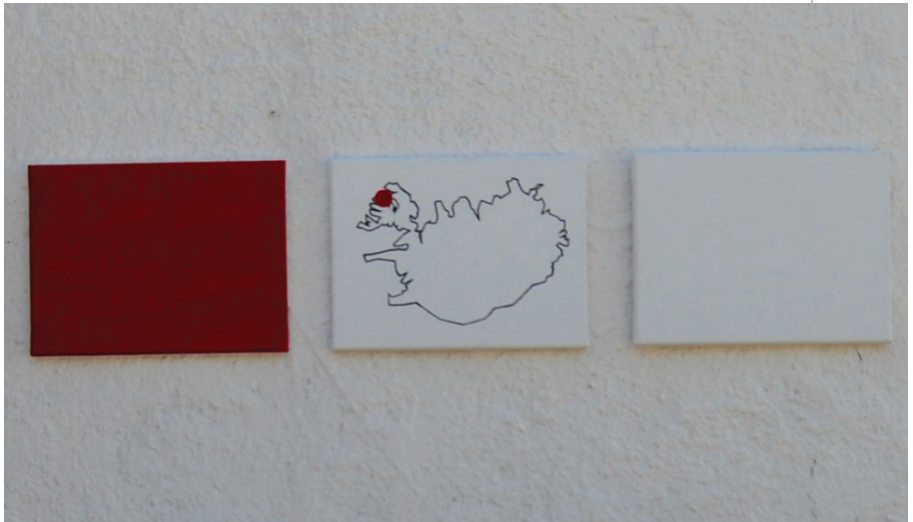
In their web-based forms, they are in photographs, they are encoded. They are in our lived experience both in 2011 and 2017, and they have marked the planet as well as the mind and memory of this reader.

My workspace. Right now.

# Second Response: en-counter-maps

Sarah Bond

<http://dx.doi.org/10.22215/epoiesen/2017.3>



Received 2017-07-25

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Masthead Image: Pálsson and Aldred.



The map is a lens through which to distill, to view, and often to isolate. Through maps, we can insulate aspects of a tangible landscape, visualize a fictional realm, or underscore connections. In Gísli Pálsson's and Oscar Aldred's article, "EN-COUNTER-MAPS," the relationship between art and archaeology is explored in a new and exciting way by applying the simplified filter of the map. What was at first striking to me about the article is the focus on the viewpoint of the audience. The planimetric map allows the viewer to inhabit the position of a deity from above, while a more profiled map of a city or a site allows for the viewer to feel more embedded within the landscape already. By juxtaposing roads on both an aerial and profiled level within one photograph, you get simultaneous experiences of the same features from different angles; the abstract next to the organic. What I found most interesting about this article was the ways in which it made the reader confront how we abstract space and the ways in which these abstractions can decrease the humanity of a space. I felt more viscerally connected to the archaeological site when I viewed the buildings, roads, fences, and the direct, rather than the aerial maps placed upon them. That was, until I saw the abstracted features inscribed directly into the dirt, the grass, and the landscape itself. Being reminded of the ephemeral nature of these installations was also a point of reflection. In archaeology, we are often so focused on preservation that returning something to the earth in order to allow for decay is only rarely confronted.

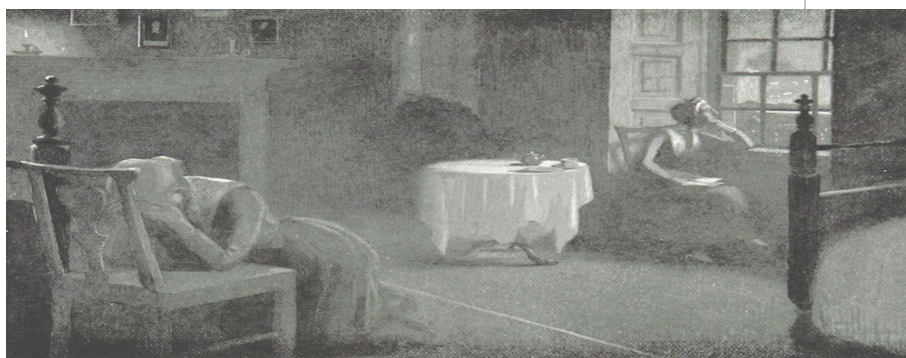




# Publish and Perish

Andrew Reinhard

<http://dx.doi.org/10.22215/epoiesen/2017.6>



Received 2017-05-04

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Masthead Image: Stevenson, Robert Louis. "Edinburgh. Picturesque Notes ... With etchings by A. Brunet-Debaines from drawings by S. Bough ... and W. E. Lockhart, etc." 1896. p109.  
British Library: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/britishlibrary/11235138213/>



My first Twine game is called *Publish and Perish*. As an academic/scholarly publisher for the American Numismatic Society (and before for the American School of Classical Studies at Athens), I frequently found myself explaining how the publishing process works (and doesn't) to new authors. These discussions inspired me to create a game about the peer-review and publishing process, specifically for academic non-fiction. The old "publish or perish" adage still stands, and professors and tenure-track hopefuls are often held to an unrealistic publishing standard of both quantity and quality.

I wanted the game (interactive fiction, really) to do a couple of things: 1) walk players through the publishing cycle, being as realistic as possible, and 2) make the player perish no matter what while having a fun (or frustrating) time doing it. That's life, isn't it? Published or not, we all die. We can choose to be either amused or frustrated by this eventuality of being forgotten whether or not we created anything. We publish for the work, but mostly we publish for ourselves. Academic publication is, at its core, fundamentally about enlightened self-interest. Sure the research gets out there more or less, but we're really doing this to promote ourselves, to advance our careers, and to consolidate a lifetime of work for future validation that what we did actually meant something.

At the 2017 TriBeCa Games Festival, Jonathan Morin of Ubisoft stated that games are really about validation. Many of us don't get the validation we need in the real world, but games are quite good about making a player feel accomplished. Perhaps *Publish and Perish* will give players some validation. Being published certainly does, and it's a great feeling when it happens.

Explore *Publish and Perish*

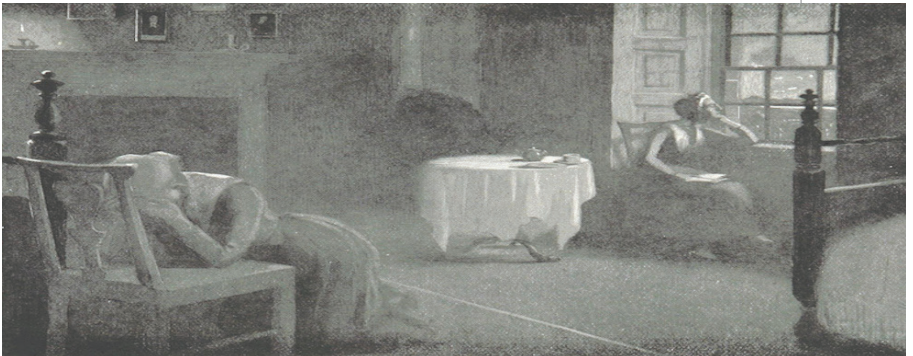
<http://smgjournal.github.io/artefacts/PublishandPerish.html>



# First Response: Publish and Perish

Jeremiah McCall

<http://dx.doi.org/10.22215/epoiesen/2017.7>



Received 2017-06-02

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Masthead Image: Stevenson, Robert Louis. "Edinburgh. Picturesque Notes ... With etchings by A. Brunet-Debaines from drawings by S. Bough ... and W. E. Lockhart, etc." 1896. p109.  
British Library: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/britishlibrary/11235138213/>



Academic publishing ... what can be said of it? Before opening the floodgates, let's just agree that the process of publishing an academic work involves many peculiarities that can mystify first time authors. Andrew Reinhard's *Publish and Perish* is a choice-based interactive texts designed to help newcomers to the academic publishing process, a constituency R. often finds himself explaining these concepts to. Sometimes a good topic elevates a game; sometimes a game elevates a topic. The latter should be the case here. The process of publishing involves choices, sometimes frustration, and ... .. a great deal of waiting. There is a worthy existentialist philosophical point here, too, encapsulated in R.'s overview. "Published or not, we all die" and when we publish academic works, "we're really doing this to promote ourselves, to advance our careers, and to consolidate a lifetime of work for future validation that what we did actually meant something."

In any event, R. sets out to offer an interactive experience of the process for new authors and chooses Twine, the best tool in the business for choice-based interactive. He notes that games "are really about validation" and that perhaps a player will gain a sense of that too. So, a realistic journey through the academic publishing process, with perhaps some validation, and a statement about the inevitability of our demise are R.'s main points – not for the weak of spirit. How does it play?

Full disclaimer: I have never worked in a publish-or-perish setting. I ultimately chose to teach high school history after my Ph.D. I have published a pair of academic books, the first from a dissertation, and I am onto my third trade press book. I have also published several peer



reviewed journal articles. But, happily for me, my job has never depended on my successful publishing. Still, where I lack the pit of panic in the stomach that I understand accompanies the publish-or-perish process, I know well the desire to be relevant, to have one's ideas be thought important and worthy of lasting, and I do have some experience in the academic publishing process.

On to my playthrough:

The game begins at an end that is also a beginning: I have finished the manuscript and now must decide how best to secure its future. Share it online? Keep the work to yourself? Send the text to a publisher? I thought of my dissertation-turned-book. I thought of my second book, the teacher's guide that I also wanted published by a reputable press. I thought of my journal articles. All of these suggested publish, publish, publish; get it in print, following how I had been raised on an academic farm (or, if you prefer, reared in an academic nursery; I meant no disparagement either way). I also thought of work that I had shared online and how easy and often satisfying that can be, though out in the digital wild like that it is often hard to tell what difference your work makes.

Well, this game is called *Publish and Perish* after all; let's give it a whirl. I send it off to a publisher. Ah, but what kind of publisher, an academic press or a pay-to-publish press? I wonder how the psychological boost of getting something printed on paper can be measured. But I'm committed. In real life I chose not to pursue the professional academic path. But this is a game; here I'm the master of my academic destiny. Bring it on, game! Yeah! I'm going to submit to an academic press! But the decisions don't end! They just don't end. Come on, I just want my book to get published and my lasting fame to begin. Choose large or small publishers, follow the house style guidelines or not. And the waiting ... all those choices add up to a significant delay experienced vicariously in-game. I chuckled at first, appreciating the game-mimics-life approach R. has adopted. But then I had to wait some more, and since it takes fractions of minutes, not minutes or hours to click through choices, the wait isn't that long. But it sure feels like it. And this is the power of a choice-based text for this type of work. No number of times being told, "expect delays in publishing" can generate the inner turmoil and impatience that a virtual publishing experience can make.

If you should navigate the perils successfully and wait, and fight your inner demons and stay the course, you too can get published! If you don't, you can't. Either way, as R. promises, you will die. Like a dystopic-youth-novel-turned-movie, there are so many ways to die, and most are amusing. I'll only note that I did not expect the demirgorgon, but then who really does?

So after a number of playthroughs, I did a mental checklist to reflect on R.'s medium and the message.

- I understood R.'s point and learned some details I had not considered or since forgotten.
- It held true to the academic process as I understand it
- I was engaged in the process far more than I would have been in a straight text or talk about the process.
- The experience was entertaining, far more entertaining than the actual process. That could be a bad thing, I suppose, a break between game and reality, but R. is clearly trying to immerse and explain, not bludgeon the author-player. The tone is light and amusing and ultimately effective.

So really, R. has made an excellent choice of medium for this message, changing a potentially dry lecture topic into an interactive exploration, a more immersive experience, thereby increasing the recipient's stake in the process by putting them in the game. In doing so, he provides a useful little tool to introduce the process and, quite likely, spark debate and discussion among players about the veracity of the game experience and the problems of the academic publishing process. As a general rule from my experiences using games in classrooms, the discussion of how the game matches or does not match with reality is the supreme thinking and learning exercise for a game-based lesson. The real world practicality of the topic for its intended audience, encourages, begs for player questioning. And where players have questions they can readily engage in discussions, with R., with workshop-mates, should they play in a workshop, with each other online, and so on. These are all very good things that should help R. with his original problem of explanation.

Just a final thought. Choice-based text systems offer a great opportunity to leverage the interactivity inherent in so many human endeavors, creating more engaging, though still seriously intended,

didactic models. *Publish and Perish* is template for how a real-world process might effectively be modeled as an interactive experience using choice-based text and welcome for that.

I'd like to see more of these interactive text guides, and it's great that Reinhard has pointed the way. The more examples of this we create, the more we can, hopefully, move others to create. On with interactivity!

# Second Response: Publish and Perish

François Dominic Laramée

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Masthead Image: Stevenson, Robert Louis. "Edinburgh. Picturesque Notes ... With etchings by A. Brunet-Debaines from drawings by S. Bough ... and W. E. Lockhart, etc." 1896. p109.  
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Academia sometimes feels like a game. Not a very good game, mind you; the rules don't make much sense, and whatever ends up separating the winners from the losers (so many, many losers) seldom seems to correlate with the ways in which people play. Academic publishing is a particularly guilty culprit, with its endless parade of painful re-writes, arbitrary delays and assorted catastrophes on the road to, at best, dozens and dozens of readers. It is enough to drive anyone to despair — if they take the game too seriously. Better to cultivate a healthy detachment from the whole mess and to take solace in the only part of the game that one can really control: the process of writing itself.

At least, that is the message that I have read — or, possibly, that I have chosen to read — into *Publish and Perish*, Andrew Reinhard's whimsical but devilishly effective piece of interactive fiction published elsewhere in this issue. Sending this message may not have been the author's intention at all. But like all good works of art, *Publish and Perish* seeds thoughts and feelings of its own. And a good piece of interactive art, it most definitely is.

Structurally, *Publish and Perish* walks in the footsteps of the Ready-Soft classic *Dragon's Lair* and of its (much less classic) followup *Brain Dead 13*. A single, more or less random path through a complex network of choices leads to ultimate success. Any deviation from that path quickly results in the player's demise, either from the shame of failure or from laugh-out-loud encounters with such improbable threats as ironic runaway vegetation and homicidal reviewers. (Exactly how improbable is open for debate; we have all wondered about Reviewer 2 once or twice, haven't we?)

This simple architecture probably disqualifies *Publish and Perish* from being called a 'game' in the modern sense, at least if one follows the definition proposed by Sid Meier, of *Civilization* fame, of a game as a series of interesting choices. After all, a choice can hardly be called interesting if most options lead to absurd disasters through no clear chains of causality.

However, by advertising to the player ahead of time that death is inevitable in *Publish and Perish*, Reinhard achieves two worthy goals. First, he devalues success and therefore defuses any frustration born of frequent failure. Second, by removing the incentive to stop playing after finding the optimal path, he intentionally transforms the work into what *Dragon's Lair* ended up becoming by accident: an exercise in metagaming in which the goal is no longer to win but to explore as many fail states as possible. Thus detached from the outcome, the player is able to accept the academic publishing world as irretrievably chaotic and to let go of any desire for control because success and failure no longer seem to matter very much. The result is a feeling of comfortable doom not unlike the one produced by listening to a long Leonard Cohen playlist. Meanwhile, the rare quiescent and happy game states are those in which the player's avatar is in charge of their own creative process. Within *Publish and Perish*'s worldview, the need for external validation through publishing success, ostensibly the goal that the player is expected to achieve, is therefore subtly replaced by more attainable internal motivations. Clever, indeed.

Of course, in the real world, such a solipsistic, vaguely nihilistic, tending-one's-own-garden strategy is unlikely to lead to fame and glory. But, and that is the whole point of *Publish and Perish*, neither is playing by the rules. In the academy, there are no winning strategies. Doing one's best is a necessary, but by no means a sufficient, condition for victory. This trip's destination is unknowable. One might as well try to enjoy the journey.

# Remembering the Romans in the Middle East and North Africa: memories and reflections from a museum-based public engagement project

Zena Kamash

with Heba Abd el Gawad, Peter Banks, Antonia Bell, Felix Charteris,  
Sarah Ekdawi, Zoe Glen, Jayne Howe, Arthur Laidlaw, Muna Mitchell, Aditi Nafde,  
Andrew Parkin, Florence Wilson, Louise Thandiwe Wilson and Amy Wood

<http://dx.doi.org/10.22215/epoiesen/2017.9>



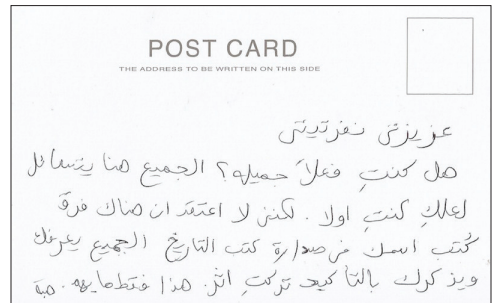
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Masthead Image: Zoe Glen







Dear Nefertiti, Were you really beautiful? Everybody here asks, maybe you were the first (to ask). But I do not think it makes a difference. Your name has been written at the forefront of history books. Everybody knows you and remembers you. Certainly, you left a trace. This is what matters. Heba

## INTRODUCTION

*Zena Kamash*

‘Remembering the Romans in the Middle East and North Africa’ (‘Ret-Ro’) was a public engagement project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Cultural Engagement Fund, that took place in spring 2016 and comprised four day-long workshops at the Petrie Museum, London and the Great North Museum, Newcastle. In addition, three days were spent gathering memories and responses to the recreated Triumphal Arch of Palmyra that was set up in Trafalgar

Square, London. The focus of this article is on the workshops strand; information about both elements, including a gallery of everything created in the workshops, can be found [here](#).



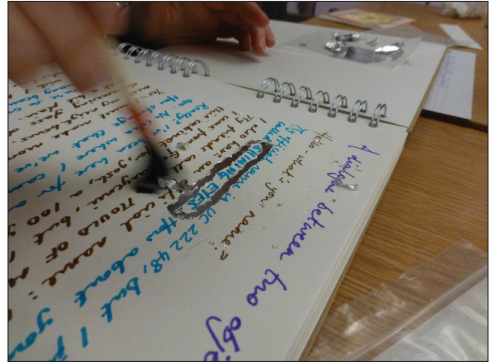
Display of creations during the Great North Museum workshops.

The workshops were a collaboration between Dr Zena Kamash (Principal Investigator), Dr Stephen Smith (AHRC Cultural Engagement Fellow), Dr Sarah Ekdawi (creative writing expert), Miranda Creswell (artist) and Rory Carnegie (photographer), ably supported by three MA students from the University of London: Felix Charteris, Zoe Glen and Amy Wood. For each set of workshops, specific Roman-period objects were chosen in advance that could be handled by the participants; participants were also free to make use of the wider collections on display and so were not restricted to our pre-selected objects, nor necessarily to objects from the Roman period. On each day participants were provided with an introduction to the collections from a curator and then were invited to choose one or more objects, which they felt ‘spoke’ to them in some way and to respond via creative writing, drawing and photography. These media were chosen as they reflect the three parts of the archaeological record: written, drawn and photographed.

The creative mentors – Sarah, Miranda and Rory – were on hand to guide participants in their specialist field. In this, we built on a technique of ‘gentle engagement’ – not imposing our views or approaches, but instead chatting to people involved and providing soft nudges when requested to promote an informal and relaxed environment – that Miranda and I had developed in a former collaboration; nibbling on baklava helped here too. In addition, everyone – curators,

MA students, me – was free to engage in the creative writing, drawing and photography, and in so doing was also pushed beyond our usual practice. As part of this ‘gentle engagement’, we felt that a formal and intimidating feedback form to fill in at the end of each workshop would be a mistake and instead invited people to contribute to a guestbook. As well as writing thanks and thoughts about the day, some people chose to put their creations into the guestbook too.

Writing in the guestbook at the Petrie Museum.



The inspiration for the project came from a wish to promote a more positive narrative around archaeology and heritage in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, in the face of conflict and destruction. As someone of Middle Eastern origin, whose heart has been broken many times over by various news reports, this was keenly felt. In particular, I wanted to encourage the creation of new memories of the past in order to help people reclaim a part of their heritage and identity that was, and still is, being stripped away. Furthermore, I felt that this represented an alternative, more creative approach to the numerous projects that focus on reconstructions of sites in the MENA region, including, but not limited to the Institute of Digital Archaeology's Arch of Palmyra, Iconem and Factum Arte. Instead, it was hoped that a more creative approach would help to bring people, as well as sites and objects, back into the picture.

Workshop in progress at the Great North Museum



Following on from the collaborative nature of the workshops, this article comprises the reflections and memories, one year on, of people who participated in the workshops, in whatever capacity. Everyone was invited to contribute, if they wished and to discuss one, or more, of their creations in any media from the workshops; the images are of those creations, accompanied by brief descriptions of the museum objects. My approach to the editing has been deliberately ‘light-touch’ as a key wish for this project was for people to find their own voices in a museum setting. Several themes emerge from these varied voices, reflecting engagements with the objects at a variety of levels: from the individual object, to the nature of the museum collection, to the role of people and communities. This multivocality, however, also brings out numerous subtle differences in experience, even in responses to the same object, for example the African red-slip ware flagon from the Great North Museum collections, reminding us that no two encounters with an object or a museum are ever the same.

## REFLECTIONS

*Heba Abd el Gawad*

*participant; creative writing*

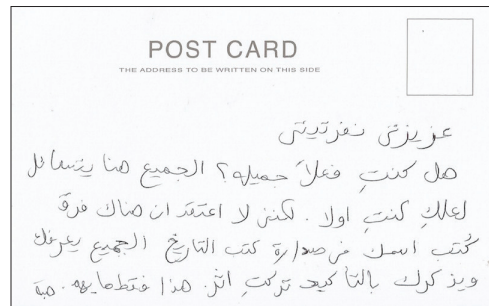
Ink drawing of Nefertiti on a limestone block, Petrie Museum, UCo11

Within the walls of the Petrie museum the multiple, difficult and contested stories of the emergence and the development of the field of Egyptian archaeology and its collections are entangled. As an Egyptian archaeologist, I wandered around its galleries guided by my professional knowledge of the objects and absorbed by my “native memories” of the sites, I could not help but question to what extent are we – the local communities – involved in the recollection and modern shaping of the memories of our ancient past?

In a limestone depiction of the head of Queen Nefertiti I found my answer. The Amarna period provided a distinctive analogy of the complicated relationship between the “community of place” and the “community of experts” within the field of Egyptian archaeology. In establishing his regime Akhenaton adopted an inward-looking exclusive strategy. He isolated himself geographically, philosophically, culturally, and politically from the population building a wall around his new capital. Similarly, Egyptology could be seen as an insular discipline with ancient Egypt presented as an exotic separate entity

disconnected from Egypt's modern realities and the rest of the ancient world. Local communities feel disenfranchised and are to a great extent regarded as a threat to heritage conservation. As in Akhenaton's case, marginalising communities can lead to regime fall.

To make up for the discipline's failure to recognise the resonance between Akhenaton's decisions and his fate and the current affairs of Egyptian archaeology, I have written a postcard to Nefertiti. I have apologised for our modern obsession with her suggested beauty over the contribution that the Amarna period can make to our modern understanding of engaging communities, the impact of marginalisation, and state failure. In approaching objects through the creative means of writing a postcard, I have instantly initiated a personal dialogue with the past. I felt more empowered to write my own story freely, regardless of any prescribed disciplinary measures or boundaries.



*Peter Banks*

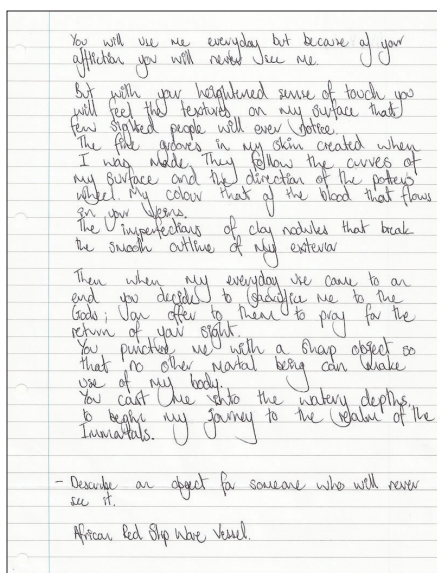
*participant; creative writing*

African red-slip ware flagon, Great North Museum, from Carthage  
(no accession number)

I really enjoyed taking part in the workshop at the Great North Museum. It was great to discover a museum I had previously not known. I think we often forget about local venues and the amazing collections they hold. The curator was enthusiastic and clearly loved the collections in his museum.

I think the project, and the ideas and motivations behind it, were excellent and very worthwhile. I have always enjoyed art and drawing since I was a child, but in recent years I haven't been able to do as much

as I would like. It was an excellent opportunity working with Miranda to reignite and refresh my old drawing skills. I found the photography with Rory very thought provoking. It made me consider the different ways of viewing objects; how something as simple as a shift of lighting angle can really change the way an object looks. Writing about the same object for someone who will never see it, makes you think about how people in the past and from other walks of life may also have different perspectives from myself.



You will use me everyday but because of your affliction you will never see me.

But with your heightened sense of touch you will feel the textures on my surface that few sighted people will ever notice. The fine grooves in my skin created when.

I was made. They follow the curves of my surface and the direction of the potter's wheel. My colour that of the blood that flows in your veins.

The imperfections of clay nodules that break the smooth line of my exterior.

Then when my everyday use came to an end you decide to sacrifice me to the Gods; an offer to them to pray for the return of your sight.

You puncture me with a sharp object so that no other mortal being can make use of my body.

You cast me into the watery depths to begin my journey to the realm of the Immortals.

Describe an object for someone who will never see it

African Red Slip Ware Vessel

*Antonia Bell*

*participant; photograph*

Ceramic lamps, Great North Museum, from the eastern Mediterranean, 2001.3

I chose these oil lamps because as well as being functional they are also decorative and beautiful. Observations of these objects raised many thought-provoking questions: were these lamps from a temple, commercial or residential building? Could they possibly represent different levels of Roman society? Were they home crafted or made in Roman workshops? What materials were used?

I decided to photograph the lamps as it would show their beauty and functionality to best effect. I positioned them to demonstrate their designs in the best light. The plain black lamp was positioned to show the long spout that would have held the wick; the grey lamp was placed forward and in the centre to show its shape and decoration; while the red lamp was placed to allow the design of olive leaves to be in relief.

Engaging with these objects consolidated my thoughts and perceptions of the artistic and technical sophistication found in Middle Eastern and North African archaeology. From the earliest Mesopotamian settlements through to the later Roman towns and cities, archaeological finds have shown that these cultures were awe inspiring, with beautiful structures and paintings. In addition, they extended that need for beauty to their more functional objects, such as these small but exquisite lamps.





Felix Charteris

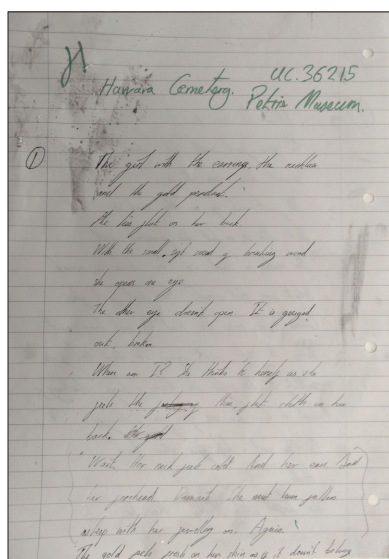
MA student helper and participant; creative writing

Mummy portrait, Petrie Museum UC36215

This painted portrait upon a broken wooden panel immediately caught my attention. In a row of about five mummy portraits this girl draws the eye. Her delicately painted face is mutilated by damage to the wood, abstracting her right eye to seem as though it was gouged out. This inhuman damage is completely at odds with the delicate blue of the other eye and the beautiful gold leaf pendant and necklace.

Imagining an object woke up in the Petrie Museum in 2016 far from home I was drawn to inhabiting her in the first-person and to pretend that instead of peering down I was, in fact, looking up from this clean, cloth-lined cabinet and through the freshly- and repeatedly-polished glass. Examining this mummy portrait and personifying her for even just one short page reminded me of the humanity behind each object. That this painted likeness still elicits both a voice, a story and a 'new memory' is remarkable considering the face, pendant and jewellery depicted in the painting are likely lost forever in all other forms. Engaging the perspective of this object helped reinforce my understanding of their role in museums. Objects are so often removed from their originally-designed intentions and now sit in safety, satisfying the gaze of current museum-goers.

Hawara Cemetery UC36215 Petrie Museum



The girl with the earrings, the necklace  
and the gold pendant.

She lies flat on her back

With the small, soft sound of breaking  
wood

She opens one eye

The other eye doesn't open. It is gauged  
out, broken

Where am I?

She thinks to herself as she feels the  
thin, flat cloth on her back.

Wait. Her neck feels cold. And her ears.  
And her forehead.

Dammit she must have fallen asleep  
with her jewellery on. Again.

The gold feels fresh on her skin as if it  
doesn't belong.

*Sarah Ekdawi*  
*collaborator; creative writing*

As my previous creative writing courses had been attended exclusively by aspiring writers, I had to re-adjust my practice to sit alongside photography and drawing. It was Zena who came up with the idea of focusing more on the physical creation of writing and using embossing foil as an alternative to the paper and papyrus we had originally provided. This worked well, helping to overcome participants' fear of the blank page by focusing on the act of writing and its decorative possibilities instead.

I include here my own take on epigraphy and text messaging because new forms of writing are part of my repertoire as an English teacher and also reflect my fascination, as a writer, with the ephemeral (here exemplified by websites, advertising and texting). The project also encouraged me to persist with and try to increase EFL (English as a Foreign Language) student engagement in UK cultural events; three of my students (from Sweden, Germany and Switzerland) attended the London workshops and absolutely loved them.

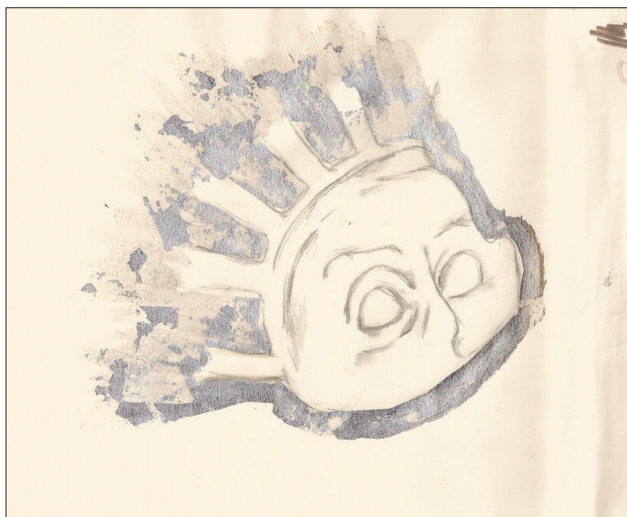


*Zoe Glen*

*MA student helper and participant; drawing*

Fragmentary relief of Sol, Great North Museum, from Vindolanda, 1960.21.A

This Sol hails from a period of Roman rule, but regards us through Hellenistic-influenced eyes from beneath a radiant halo of Eastern iconographic origin; he was found in the northernmost reaches of the Western Empire, but his cultic origins lie in the East. These many factors made this object fascinating to me, as it encapsulates the diversity, movement, and sheer multiculturalism that can be found in any outpost of the Roman Empire. A typical assumption is that the Romans belong wholly to the West, and moved inevitably towards Europe and, above all, Christianity. This project has highlighted for me the inadequacy of this tradition of thought, drawing attention to how the global breadth of Roman influence is still felt and still powerful, including in the Middle East and North Africa. Engaging with objects during this project has taught me to consider far more closely the people behind every artefact – their lives, origins and identities – and to think more critically about the accepted narrative surrounding them. The most invaluable lesson was the expansion and exploration of what ‘Roman’ means to many different people, and how the Roman legacy remains an important and vibrant part of lived identity across the world today.



*Jayne Howe*

*participant; photograph*

Glass flask, Great North Museum, from Syria, Israel or Jordan,  
1958.54.3

This glass vase caught my eye over other objects as it seemed so delicate. I was intrigued to see how I could use the light to bring out different elements of the texture of the glass, its shape and its colouring. To do this we (photographer, Rory Carnegie and I) experimented with the background, using black or white, which helped to bring out tones like the blue seen in the photograph.

The shape of the small vessel was also attractive to me as I thought it would allow us to catch some excellent shadows and reflections of light. I particularly like the way that the light has hit the vase and allowed us to see the hairline fractures in the glass. We can also see how the glass moves from transparent to opaque in different areas as the speckling on the glass changes, which also adds a beautiful texture. This vase is a charming creation that has stood the test of time and allows us to see the skillset of the contemporary society as well as the fashions that have played into the design of the glass.

Engaging with objects from the Middle East and North Africa has allowed me to view museums as much more interactive spaces. I now visit and think about why the curators have organised what is on display in the way that they did, or why they might have positioned objects a certain way, and used light and angles to accentuate particular aspects of them. It has also helped me to learn more about the objects themselves. Rather than simply reading the captions about the facts of the objects, I can now learn about them from viewing them. This applies to the coins that were brought to the workshop as well as the stonework and the glass. This workshop aided in my studies at University where I studied History. I think it helped me to approach primary sources with more confidence and with a keener eye for detail.



*Arthur Laidlaw*

*participant; drawing*

Limestone male head, Petrie Museum, UC16493

Looking around the Petrie Museum, I was struck by the superficial recognisability of so many of the objects in the collection. I wanted to investigate the idea that our 'modern' representatives in politics, law, and business are still chillingly similar to those of two thousand years ago. The white, male, aristocratic figure in my unidentified 'portrait bust' looks down his nose at the viewer in just the same way Jeremy Hunt or another member of Theresa May's cabinet might today. It seems as though nothing has changed since the tyrants of ancient Greece – and perhaps, looking at the slippery leadership politicking that followed the direct democracy of the Brexit referendum last year, nothing has.

Over the last eight years, drawings, photographs, and objects of the Middle East have fundamentally shaped my work as an artist. To prepare for my exhibition, *Razed: Syrian Ruins*, I first began by re-examining records of Syria and the surrounding countries that I made while travelling in the Middle East in 2009. However, as the work developed and following my day spent at this workshop, the influence of objects in publicly-accessible collections, and the way that those objects were curated, became increasingly important. The paintings were an attempt to reconcile these two worlds: the personal experience of a country, directly shaped by its landscape, culture, and people – and the public experience of a place, indirectly shaped by our retelling of events when we return home, media coverage, political rhetoric and, of course, appropriated objects in museums around the world, robbed of their original context.



*Muna Mitchell*  
*participant; photography*  
Jug, Petrie Museum, UC19402

Amazing, inspiring, engaging! A few words to describe my memories of the day I spent at this workshop at the Petrie Museum. As a non-archaeologist of Middle Eastern origin I was not going to pass up on the opportunity to roam around this stunning collection and create new memories built upon our shared past. I won't lie: the baklawa was also a pull!

It was such a privilege to spend the day surrounded by these objects that had made their way in many ways to London. The experts were so generous with their time and knowledge; their patience helped me to start to understand the objects in the museum. I did feel completely out of my depth and faintly terrified that others in the group seemed very artistic. What drew me to my object? I think I did what any human does when faced with uncertainty and clung to an object I was familiar with and at least I knew what it was used for! And that little jug was very beautiful! The idea of photographing my object appealed to me as it provided me with a stepping stone to creating a wonderful memory and it freed me up from the worry that my lack of creative ability would spoil my end product.

It is almost inevitable that non-expert visitors to any museum will stroll past displays with very little connection being made in spite of the fact that as a visitor you clearly had the intention of wanting to interact with the museum and its objects. Providing a relaxed and informal environment at the museum enabled us to respond to the objects; teasing out those connections through writing, drawing and photography ensured that we came away with a much deeper understanding and many happy memories.



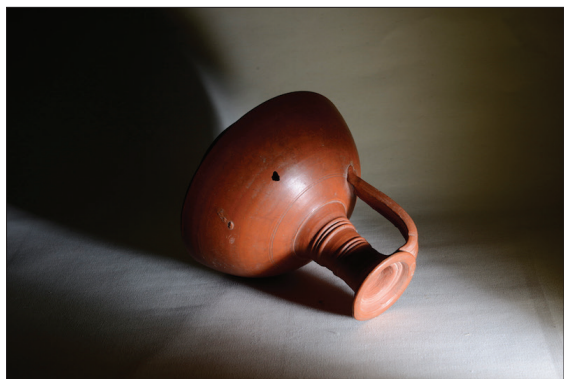


*Aditi Nafde*

*participant; photograph*

African red-slip ware flagon, Great North Museum, from Carthage  
(no accession number)

I was drawn to this object because of its beautiful, traditional shape and design which seemed instantly recognisable as something from Roman North Africa. I was intrigued, however, by its imperfections. In the process of examining these, I turned the pot around and upside down and its shape became increasingly less recognisable and less familiar. It turned from a pot to a goblet: from a North African Roman object to something that looked to me almost medieval (I am a medievalist). The process of casting deep shadows onto it in the photographs further de-familiarised the object. This prompted me to ask what an object is if it is incomplete or if it is viewed in different ways and how far the way we view an object affects the object itself. The project as a whole has encouraged me to challenge my usual desire to understand objects in their historical contexts and to think more about the effects of their present manifestations.



*Andrew Parkin*

Curator at the Great North Museum

Participating in the RetRo project was a positive and inspiring experience for both staff and visitors at the Great North Museum: Hancock. The workshops provided opportunities to approach Roman objects from the collection in a variety of different ways, some of which were new to those taking part. The project allowed for detailed examina-

tion of a range of artefacts from the collection, including pottery, glass vessels, coins and sculpture, and encouraged creative responses to them. It was gratifying to see those taking part challenged to produce written and visual work, such as photographs and drawings, based on this range of material. In addition the presence of experts from different disciplines – photography, visual arts, creative writing and Roman archaeology – inevitably enriched everyone’s understanding of the objects.

From a curatorial perspective the sheer range of responses to a relatively small range of artefacts was very interesting and encouraging. The project opened my eyes to the possibilities of using creative writing or working in different media such as embossing designs on tin foil or using silver leaf to pick out key features of an object in an illustration. The scope for reacting to the collection in diffuse ways has always been there. RetRo served to bring out some new responses and extend our knowledge.



*Florence and Louise Thandiwe Wilson*

*participants; drawing*

Ceramic flask from Meroe, Petrie Museum, UC44422

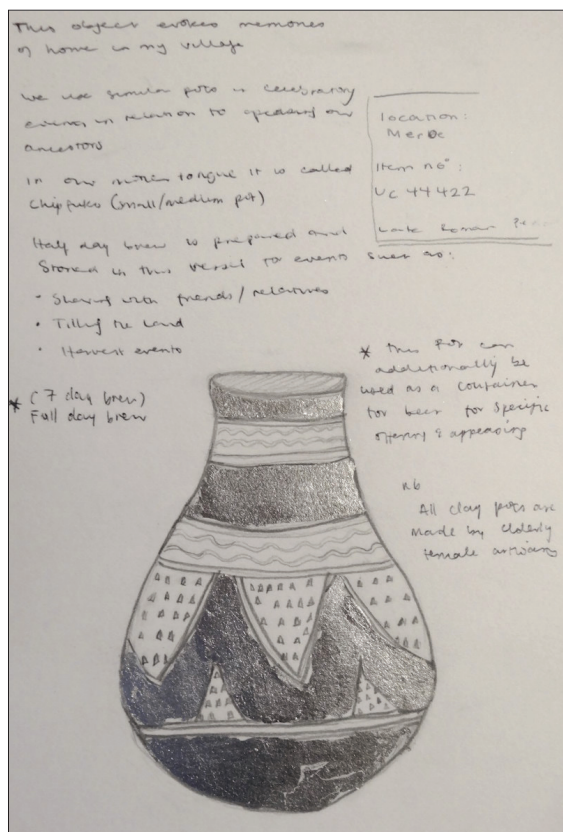
*Florence:* This object evoked memories of our village in Mazvihwa, Zimbabwe. Its appearance and decorative emblems are similar to pots we use. Such clay pots are made by elderly female artisans. In our mother tongue, these vessels are called ‘Chipfuko’. There are two occasions when a mildly fermented drink is stored in these pots. An overnight brew is prepared in these pots to be shared with friends and relatives, this is drunk casually but most often whilst tilling the land.



A seven-day brew is stored in these containers for offerings and appeasing our ancestors.

**Thandiwe:** This experience was an excellent example of reframing heritage. My mother's (Florence's) experience of object interaction was entirely different to my own; she had an intimate understanding of traditional knowledge that correlated strikingly with this pottery. By discussing the resemblances, she was able to relate to an ancient object from a different region of Africa through her memories and her cultural practices.

It is vital to facilitate community engagement. Conservation is not simply an aesthetic arrangement; it is a necessity for those who have a profound cultural, historical or emotional investment with collections. Museums and workshops that encourage sustainable relationships by using their exhibits as interactive repositories for communities who have such ties, are invaluable.



*Amy Wood*

*MA student helper; photograph*

*Key, Petrie Museum, UC7822*

During this project, I responded to many objects in different media, but my favourite was a photograph of a key. The key first interested me as it was so easily recognisable and, despite its history and the stories it holds, it is so comparable to modern day life. I wanted to highlight the texture of the key without it feeling heavy and photographing it kept it clean and minimal, showing the wear and the use on the object. Engaging in such a tactile way with objects from the Middle East and North Africa was amazing and experiencing a museum in such a hands-on way provided space to really explore them. Being able to touch and create around the objects made me invest in the objects; I found myself really stopping and examining objects I would have otherwise passed over. This experience did change how I viewed objects from the Middle East and North Africa as I was able to find connections to areas I had previously studied, as well as learning new information about the objects themselves.



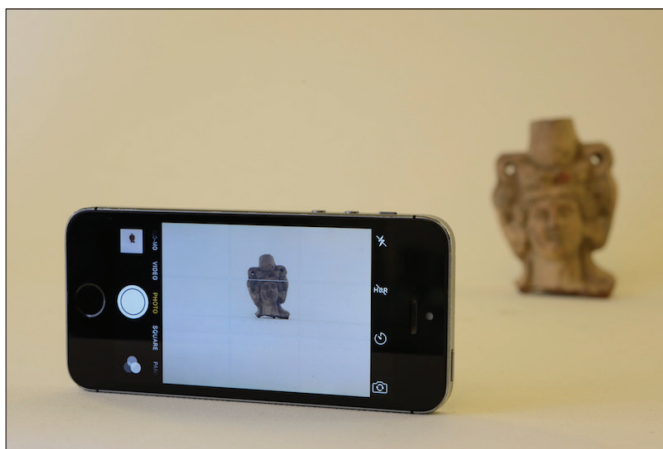
## CONCLUSION

*Zena Kamash*

Although people have responded in a variety of different ways, dependent on a whole range of factors, such as their background and previous knowledge, it is clear from the responses that each person who has written here came away from the workshops with new perspectives on the role that museum collections might play in their lives. As

noted in the introduction, these reflections work across several scales from individual object, to collection, to community.

For many people, their object choice was driven by aesthetics and what, at first, seemed familiar or recognisable from the past; objects that people could understand from their present experiences. This was, then, challenged by engaging with the objects in alternative ways – thinking about the feelings of an object, turning it upside down, noticing a hairline crack in a camera flash – which sometimes altered these objects and created a relationship that was different from that first moment of connection. Through these engagements the objects and the new memories created of them, disrupted linear time, creating objects that have both the familiarity and comfort of the present and the challenge and distance of the past. New light, and shade, was cast on the objects for many people, both literally and figuratively, opening up unexpected views and engagements.



*“Museum Selfie”  
by Arthur Laidlaw  
and Yasmeen al  
Khoudary  
Petrie Museum,  
UC56003.*

Several responses reflect on the nature of museum collections: how those collections came into being, how they are displayed and how visitors respond to them. Notable here is that the workshops gave people an opportunity to pause and to look actively and to carry that experience of pausing and of looking into their current ways of engaging with museum collections, both as visitors and as curators. There is a sense that collections that may have once felt out of reach, now feel more interactive and more accessible.

The importance of people also comes through strongly in the responses. For some this was a realisation that archaeology, superficially the study of objects in the past, is actually a study of people in the past, through their objects. For others, the objects related not just to people in the past, but also to people in the present and future, both personally and politically, provoking memories and emotional responses. Creative engagements with past objects on the RetRo project have shown the potential to empower the disenfranchised, to encourage quiet voices to speak more loudly. We could not have hoped to do more than this in our collaboration.

Workshop in progress at the Petrie Museum



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The greatest debt of thanks goes to everyone, specialists and non-specialists, who came and participated in the RetRo project, for sharing their time and their stories. My sincere thanks go to the staff of both museums, who welcomed us into their spaces and let us disrupt their usual schedules. Finally, thanks to Shawn Graham for creating *Epoiesen* and his help and support in the editing and production process.



# First Response: Remembering the Romans

Terence Clark

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Masthead Image: Zoe Glen



As a former curator of a large national museum and ardent convert of the museological strategy of IPOPOP (Ideas-People-Objects-Physical) (more on this later), I LOVE the opening postcard. It personalizes Nefertiti and imbues her with sense of humanity and fragility, that is profoundly relatable. Further, it underscores the ancient belief that being remembered and leaving a trace is of paramount importance.

I am not sure if the authors intended to follow IPOPOP and it really doesn't matter. The outcome remains the same, participants became immersed in history and were forced to think about the people and objects in new and intriguing ways.

IPOPOP is a museological theory laid out by Andrew Pekarik and his colleagues (2014). In a nutshell, museum visitors are all wired a bit differently. We all seek different ways of engaging with information. There are four basic preconditions based on our preference for ideas, people, objects, or physical experiences. Different people may view the same object in profoundly different ways.

As an example, the ceramic lamps discussed by Antonia Bell. She's clearly an idea person. Her questions "were these lamps from a temple, commercial or residential building? Could they possibly represent different levels of Roman society? Were they home crafted or made in Roman workshops? What materials were used?" are all idea based and focus on the historical importance of these lamps. She doesn't see the lamps as objects, but rather the ideas the lamps represent.

An object-focused person would tend to ask questions about the motifs, the construction, and the beauty, of the artifacts themselves. Jayne Howe seems object-focused when she notes "[t]he shape of the



small vessel was also attractive to me as I thought it would allow us to catch some excellent shadows and reflections of light. I particularly like the way that the light has hit the vase and allowed us to see the hairline fractures in the glass. We can also see how the glass moves from transparent to opaque in different areas as the speckling on the glass changes, which also adds a beautiful texture”.

A people-focused person would ask who owned these artifacts? In what contexts were they used? They would imagine themselves in the past, using the artifacts themselves. Or more directly, they would draw out the personal aspect of the artifacts. Bringing the person out of a limestone block is done wonderfully by Heba Abd el Gawad, in her postcard to Nefertiti. This short piece subtly brings Nefertiti to life. Great museum labels needn't be long to have an impact.

This workshop was heavily focused on the physical act of interacting and re-imagining the objects. Allowing participants to physically touch real artifacts provides a direct connection the past and it seems this method provoked a great deal of inspiration and thought from the participants. In other museum contexts, where touching actual artifacts is not allowed, replicas or 3D models can have a similar inspiration effect on visitors.

One of the most compelling aspects of IPOP, is not that the recognition that different people see the world differently, rather, that if you can trick a visitor into seeing the world differently, they learn and appreciate your exhibition so much more. This is the concept of flipping. Here you attract a visitor based on their natural preference and once you have their attention, you redirect your interpretation to another of the IPOP preferences.

An example might come from Felix Charteris. At first, he is drawn in by the portrait of a mummy, but that quickly flips to imagining this person. “Imagining an object woke up in the Petrie Museum in 2016 far from home I was drawn to inhabiting her in the first-person and to pretend that instead of peering down I was, in fact, looking up from this clean, cloth-lined cabinet and through the freshly- and repeatedly-polished glass. Examining this mummy portrait and personifying her for even just one short page reminded me of the humanity behind each object. That this painted likeness still elicits both a voice, a story and a ‘new memory’ is remarkable considering the face, pendant and jewellery depicted in the painting are likely lost forever in all other forms.”

Because the authors strove to find multiple ways to interact with history, they seem to have created real interest and excitement in the participants. These different interactions meant that each person could choose an entry point into the past without being forced into normative concepts of art or history. This seems to have allowed for amazing creative engagement with the past. Whether the authors knew about IPOP or merely stumbled onto some of the core concepts, the result is that this type of workshop is a wonderfully compelling way to engage with the past.

For more information on IPOP, have a look at:

Pekarik, A. J., Schreiber, J. B., Hanemann, N., Richmond, K. and Mogel, B. (2014), IPOP: A Theory of Experience Preference. *Curator*, 57: 5-27. doi:[dx.doi.org/10.1111/cura.12048](http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/cura.12048)

Léger, J.-F. (2014), Shaping a Richer Visitors' Experience: The IPO Interpretive Approach in a Canadian Museum. *Curator*, 57: 29-44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/cura.12049>



# Second Response: Remembering the Romans

Gemma Tully

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Masthead Image: Zoe Glen



## GENERAL REFLECTIONS

The RetRo project ties in with an increasing movement towards creative and physical engagement with museum collections. Everything about this piece, from the collaborative authorship to the first hand narratives of participants, promotes the potential to change perceptions by working across disciplines and cultural backgrounds. Too often, my own work included, engagement events become an individual's pet project. This puts the whole purpose of the process at risk as the singular vision can – but does not always - bias and 'over-shape' the outcomes. Having the multiple helpers, working from the 'gentle engagement' methodology, splitting the workshops between two diverse locations/museums and incorporating a range of skill-sets clearly helps to keep the spirit of creativity open and flexible, thus enabling the project to remain true to its aims.

## TOUCH AND CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES

The ability to be able to physically engage with artefacts is essential to any effective museum engagement project, whether with adults or children. Without this tangible connection the traditional museological barriers remain. But, as we see from the RetRo examples, being able to touch and explore artefacts, perhaps seemingly alien, enables participants to find connections with their own life stories and to reconsider what an object, time and culture may mean without having to be 'right'. This is particularly important for Western audiences

when considering the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region, a part of the often world obscured by colonial and oriental stereotypes and contemporary cultural prejudice. The shift in perceptions of the selected artefacts and both the ancient and contemporary history of the Middle East and North Africa, reflected in the workshop output, provides a convincing case for more projects of this nature. What I wonder, however, is how the power seen in the transformation of the RetRo objects - from functional objects to items used by real people, reanimated within contemporary 'lives' (even if sometimes semi fictional) – could be used to offer new perspectives to other audiences? For example, could these creative interpretations, from photos to sketches and written texts, have been displayed alongside the same artefacts when returned to their cases (or placed back into storage) to help others reconsider the role of objects and the museum institution itself in interpreting other cultures? This could aid visitors and future curators who may re-discover these 'reflections', to eschew museum norms, subvert traditional didactic learning and instead consider building their own narratives around artefacts. It could also encourage visitors and professionals to think actively about the unexpected connections between people and things from the past and from other cultures to their personal experiences today.

### I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT...

I love the connection the project makes between the creative media offered to participants and the practice of archaeology – writing, drawing, photographing – but wonder how much this link and its relevance was explained to participants and shaped their thinking as this is not clear in the responses? Were archaeological photos, records and drawings also on display/used? These elements would certainly enhance the likelihood of participants feeling they were adding to the archaeological interpretation in some way and I'd be intrigued to hear more about this as it would build on the sense of empowerment.

### PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

The project chimes with my own interest in challenging stereotypes of the MENA region and links in with other larger exhibitions and

projects which are trying to reconnect, interconnect and build new memories and interpretations of the area's heritage. From British Museum exhibitions (e.g. <http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/room%2034%20islamic%20gallery%20booklet%20final.pdf>) to international (<https://web.archive.org/web/20171222181108/http://www.otago.ac.nz/press/books/otago068829.html>) and community engagement/curation projects (e.g. <https://web.archive.org/web/20171227194228/https://museumegyptology.wordpress.com/2013/12/08/re-imagining-egypt-saffron-walden-museum/>), this art-archaeology, creative approach is less traditionally academic and, dare I say it, more able to change hearts and minds in the public sphere. I wonder then what is, or will be, the long term impact of the RetRo project and what further evaluation is planned? Will participants continue to evaluate museums, the MENA region and its history, and the process of connecting with other cultures and communities differently in a year's time? If yes, we need to ask how we can promote this approach at a wider scale and build it into museum practice as a whole.

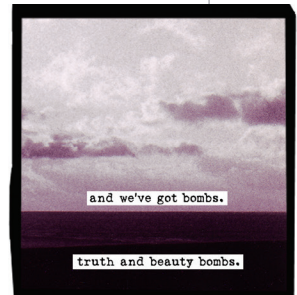
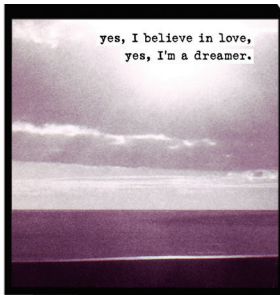




# Truth & Beauty Bombs: The personal/political/poetics of online communication in #archaeology

Colleen Morgan

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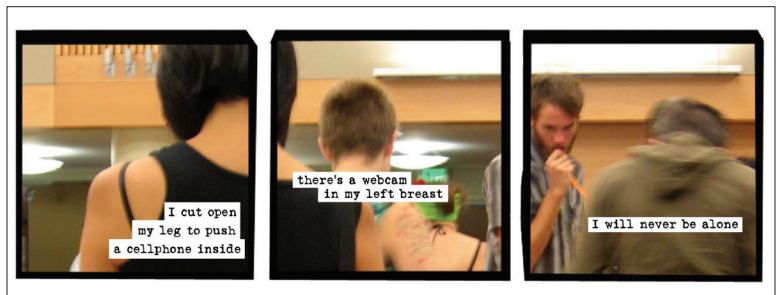
Masthead Image "Shrapnel" A Softer World  
<http://www.asofterworld.com/index.php?id=26>



The original Twitter version has been Storified by Morgan here). We include Morgan's Twitter essay here as a manifesto for creative engagement in history and archaeology in this time, in this place.

## PATC KEYNOTE

1. A Softer World (2003-15) was a unique artefact: a collaborative fumetti (photo comic) that was a perfect remediation <http://www.asofterworld.com>
2. Remediation-refashioning & repositioning of media-is a core trait of online communication but rarely transcendent. [https://monoskop.org/images/a/ae/Bolter\\_Jay\\_David\\_Grusin\\_Richard\\_Remediation\\_Understanding\\_New\\_Media\\_low\\_quality.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/a/ae/Bolter_Jay_David_Grusin_Richard_Remediation_Understanding_New_Media_low_quality.pdf)



3. @joeycomeau & Emily Horne offered occasional transcendence through remediation of photos & text with A Softer World. Truth & Beauty bombs.
4. I built my first site in 2002 (now dead, but resurrected as <https://juliettestreet.wordpress.com> ) & spent 15 years experimenting w/ #archaeology online.
5. I've posted videos, thousands of photos, maintained two dozen blogs, organized conf sessions, played with geotagging, 3D, virtual worlds etc
6. And yet I find myself increasingly silent these days. Silent when confronted by the whirling outrage machine of social media.
7. I have argued previously for the use of social media to put #archaeology where the people are online, not to build islands, but links.
8. In 2012 @stueve & I asked, "what are you doing to participate?" and outlined the advantages of this participation: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00438243.2012.741810> ...
9. @ArchaeologistSP & @lshipley805 rightly pointed out that this participation was highly contingent & fraught w/ abuse [http://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue38/perry\\_index.html](http://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue38/perry_index.html)
10. B\*\*xit and T\*\*mp seemed to put the last nails in the coffin in cultivating meaningful participation & creative interventions on social media

Integrating 'new and different media in imaginative practices' is seen by many archaeologists as 'too chaotic, too confusing, too messy' (Witmore 2009). If there is a public day, an archaeologist (not the busy director or silent excavator) may address a small audience, no photographs, please. An activist, open, digital archaeology is the opposite of archaeological grey literature. We blog in plain language, we make our photographs and our videos free to view, use and redistribute, we distribute calls to action and we discuss, argue and record our conversations using Twitter and Storify. Noisy, multilingual and multi-authored, and sadly often unarchivable or incompatible with traditional means of archaeological publication, there is so much colour and life in our digital village that it defies boundaries and descriptions. Krysta Ryzewski (2009) identifies this 'techno-savvy' cohort as mobilizing convergences: a 'young, rising generation of archaeologists for whom new media have always been familiar, if not indispensable, components of their everyday lives'. Our 'digital village' as described by Ezra Zubrow (2006), allows us to communicate with one another unhindered, with the traditional boundaries of distance and professional status obsolete at an ever-increasing rate (see also Shanks 2007). In the time that it will take for this publication to make it to print, we will have disseminated the knowledge that this article contains and it will be obsolete. New excavation blogs will start, thousands of photos will be posted and digital archaeology will have moved on.

11. Our colorful & lively community (perhaps a fictive kinship) seemed diminished, the digital village disbanded and in hiding.

12. Is there anything we can do in the face of the outrage machine? Where are the Truth & Beauty Bombs of online communication in #archaeology?
13. I'm pleading for generative, creative, playful communication. I'm asking, once again, for meaningful contributions to online #archaeology.
14. Push the medium, creatively fail, comb through digital detritus for interventions to make you & others think about the past, present, future
15. If we don't make interventions and interfere with the perception of #archaeology why are we feeding content to this corporation?
16. Why are we performing our outrage by tweeting links that are specifically designed to rile, punish, to profit further from political misery?



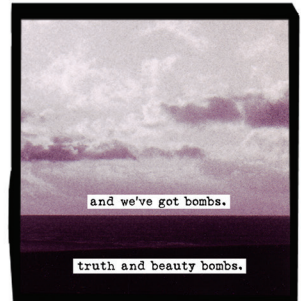
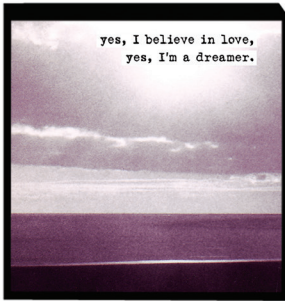
17. I'm not limiting dialog, demanding you to post only about #archaeology, or suppress outrage, but beware of The Nothing of endless reposts.
18. Though you are absolutely a multiple, a collective, a fluid Strathernian dividual and political creature...you are good at #archaeology.
19. The #archaeology in your brain is interesting, beautiful & can bring subtle color and understanding to the world. Communicate THIS.
20. An #archaeology turgid w/ ideas, rampant w/ verve & detail, an active community chewing on big (or small) ideas about humanity & materiality

21. Obviously this is happening amongst the noise! @ArchaeologyLisa was inspired by a twitter convo to contemplate: <http://castle-sandcoprolites.blogspot.co.uk/2017/04/did-people-of-catalhoyuk-build-boats.html>
22. @ArchaeologyLisa didn't keep her bright new idea to herself, she didn't wait 5 years for publication, she pounded out a blog post & shared.
23. It doesn't even have to be strictly #archaeology! @rajoyceUCB ends each day with a few lines from a poem.
24. I'm deeply grateful for @lornarichardson hosting this twitter conference, for reclaiming this space, and I hope there are more interventions

# First Response: Truth & Beauty Bombs

Shawn Graham

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Masthead Image "Shrapnel" A Softer World  
<http://www.asofterworld.com/index.php?id=26>





Sometimes I teach in a horrible classroom in my university's engineering building. It has two pillars in the middle of the rows of seats. The seats themselves are fixed in permanent industrial rows, students arranged neat and tidy and facing the front. The lectern (!) is fixed in the middle of the podium. It's a machine for transferring 'knowledge' from my head to my students. There is an extremely clear (and bad) philosophy of learning embedded within the very bricks and mortar of the room. As for a classroom, so too for social media. The worldview embedded in the very functions of any social media platform one would care to name is extractive (<https://web.archive.org/web/20171227194507/https://hapgood.us/2017/09/14/a-state-sales-tax-on-personal-data/>) and colonialist ([https://web.archive.org/web/20171222171846/https://motherboard.vice.com/en\\_us/article/nz7eyg/wikipedia-zero-facebook-free-basics-angola-pirates-zero-rating](https://web.archive.org/web/20171222171846/https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/nz7eyg/wikipedia-zero-facebook-free-basics-angola-pirates-zero-rating)) in the extreme. How do you foster 'interaction' on these platforms? You make it as convivial as possible for extreme emotions. And thus outrage is the ore from which riches are mined (see also Maha Bali & Chris Gilliard, "Praxis, Privacy, and Care in Digital Pedagogies." (<https://youtu.be/SnoE1LdNL8k>)).

But sometimes... sometimes something wonderful happens. Lorna Richardson took that platform and fashioned a wonderful space out of it (<https://web.archive.org/web/20171227194750/https://publicarchaeologyconference.wordpress.com/>). She created the conditions for actual listening to take place. The format of that conference involved a set number of tweets, threaded, and appearing in one minute intervals. To get the whole picture, you had to wait, setting up a

tension between the author and the reader created by the imperatives of the platform - resisting the imperatives - to respond automatically. For me, it meant that I was actually at the edge of my seat to see what would come next.

When has that ever happened to you at a conference?

Which brings me to Morgan's keynote, whose tweets are collected here in Epoiesen. Morgan's Public Archaeology Twitter Conference keynote was a cri-de-coeur, from someone who remembers the web we lost (<https://web.archive.org/web/20171227194906/http://anil-dash.com/2012/12/the-web-we-lost.html>), the web we have to save (<https://web.archive.org/web/20171227195002/https://medium.com/matter/the-web-we-have-to-save-2eb1fe15a426>). In twenty-four short bursts, Morgan crystalized the germinal issue from which all of our public engagement flows: that we, as archaeologists, were losing the information wars here on the 'outrage machine of social media'. That we were going about it all the wrong way. That we could be doing more.

We need to change the rules of the game (<https://web.archive.org/web/20171227195216/http://www.longviewoneducation.org/social-media-isnt-for-learning/>). Cultivate acts of resistance (<https://web.archive.org/web/20171227195259/https://hapgood.us/2017/09/05/students-as-creators-and-the-capitalist-impulse/>). Screw with expectations. Deliver some truth and beauty bombs of our own. Break things hard.

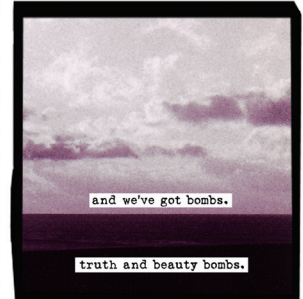
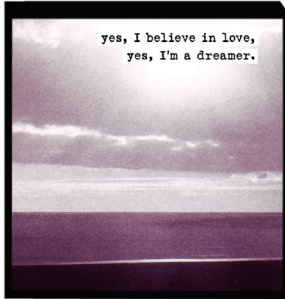
If we don't make interventions and interfere with the perception of #archaeology why are we feeding content to this corporation? - Colleen morgan

Too many of us remain unaware of what platform capitalism is doing to us (<https://web.archive.org/save/https://twitter.com/zeynep/status/908430690487865344>). Morgan's essay, in its beautiful brevity, should be a rallying call for us all. Maybe there's still time to do something different.

# Second Response: Truth & Beauty Bombs

Eric Kansa

<http://dx.doi.org/10.22215/epoiesen/2017.14>



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Masthead Image "Shrapnel" A Softer World  
<http://www.asofterworld.com/index.php?id=26>



In her keynote “Truth and Beauty Bombs”, Colleen Morgan looked at the social media landscape in archaeology and saw despair. Anger, ugliness, and endless tweets of political outrage over Brexit and Trump all dominated conversation topics in much of Anglophone archaeology.

The title she chose, “Truth and Beauty Bombs” succinctly encapsulates these themes. The “truth” and “bomb” part of her title starkly highlights current dangers. Social media platforms have been weaponized to subvert democracies and weirdly globalize local nationalisms. Bots and “Big Data” powered analytics, aided by the profit-driven complicity of Facebook and Twitter, now target millions with individually tailored lies and disinformation. Archaeology’s voices on social media must contest a territory swept up in a storm of memetic and psychological warfare waged by nation-states and international networks of oligarchs. As the meme would have it, “This is fine”.

Morgan calls us to rise above the rage and put more beauty into the online world. She speaks with authority with a deep history of research and thoughtful engagement with social media (much more than my background, as I focus on the digital communication of structured data in archaeology). She also has a much great command of the theoretical frameworks and scholarship needed to approach an understanding of social media.

So my comments come from my research background that does not closely align with Morgan’s area of expertise despite the fact that we can both be classified as “digital archaeologists”. Though I recognize I’m well out of my depth intellectually in this area, her keynote

provoked me to greater introspection on my own use of social media, particularly over the past year, where I have expressed a stream of outrage over the ongoing assaults on democratic and civil society. I gave a public viewing to my anger, bitterness, and sleep-deprived anxiety over unfolding political catastrophes. I think many of us tried to use social media as a means to resist and “do something” to fight back against the forces of illiberalism.

Of course, this means, proportionally speaking, I tweeted far less about archaeology, open access, open data, and my other areas of research. So, I’m definitely guilty of not contributing much to our profession calling via social media. Was my online outrage “weaponized” in a way that harmed archaeology’s budding online community? I know this has put a strain on my own relationships, and I think Morgan rightly points out how social media’s monetized outrage has frayed some of the “fictive kinship” (as she put it) of our entire online community.

I’m struck by the emphasis on aesthetics in Morgan’s keynote, and the title “Truth and Beauty Bombs”, sets the stage for that. She wants us to fight back with beauty. I find myself struggling more with this point, as the aesthetics she chose to highlight did not resonate with me. I lacked the background to understand or appreciate the particular aesthetic Morgan chose as exemplars. And in some ways, I wonder, if this highlights a deeper issue. Archaeology is a highly niche area of concern. It has its own aesthetics and styles of prose that take years of dedication to appreciate and master (I wish I could...). I think there are even emerging sub-genres of digital archaeology, perhaps epitomized by *Epoiesen*, with their own (dare I say “hipster”) aesthetics.

So, I’m left wondering how do we use beauty to confront evil in a way that goes beyond self-referential connoisseurship? We face urgent challenges. Archaeology, at least in any positive form, requires and should help sustain democratic society. Yet, the language and style of archaeology seems so far removed, so “academic” (in a pejorative sense), and so inaccessible. Will many non-archaeologists recognize our efforts to counter ugliness with bombs of beauty?

Again, my point in this response is not to criticize Colleen Morgan’s points. I’m in debt to her for provoking me in more introspection and thoughtfulness about how to engage in social media as a responsible “public intellectual” (not to sound all high-and-mighty, but if you engage intellectual topics online, you’re a public intellectual).