

Judgment Calls: Ethical Dilemmas in Art and Architectural Research

10-8pm, Tue 13 June 2017

Rm 6.02, The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, 22 Gordon St, London, WC1H 0QB

This one-day PhD workshop hosted by the Bartlett and the Slade, and funded by LAHP, the London Arts and Humanities Partnership, focuses on ethical dilemmas in art and architectural research and practice. The day will include presentations from Bartlett and Slade PhD students, as well as talks from invited respondents, Professor Barb Bolt (Victoria College of the Arts, University of Melbourne), *Making it Real: iDARE (innovation. Design. Art. Research. Ethics)* and Professor Estelle Barrett (Institute of Koorie Education, Deakin University), *The Ethics of Intercultural Research*. Among their other research activities, Barb and Estelle are the co-editors of three books on creative research practice: *Material Inventions: Applying Creative Arts Research*, London (I.B.Tauris, 2014); *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a 'New Materialism' through the Arts*, London, (I.B. Tauris, 2013); and *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, (I.B. Tauris, 2007). Dr David Roberts will also be presenting aspects of the ethical protocols he is preparing as part of the Bartlett Ethics Commission and Rowena Lamb will speak about the Ethics and Integrity initiative she is leading at UCL.

SCHEDULE

10.00-11.15 Introductions (Presentations followed by 30 mins discussion)

Jane Rendell *The Bartlett Ethics Commission* (5 mins)

Rowena Lamb *Ethics and Integrity at UCL* (5 mins)

Hayley Newman and **Sharon Morris** *Ethics and Creative Practice* (5 mins)

David Roberts *Ethics Protocols and Practice* (30 mins)

11.15-11.45 Coffee

11.45-13.00 Opening Keynote **Barb Bolt** *Making it Real: iDARE (innovation. Design. Art. Research. Ethics.)* (45 mins talk, 30 mins questions) Chair: **Jane Rendell**

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.30 Panel 1 (4 x 15 mins papers followed by 30 mins discussion) Chair: **Hayley Newman**

Personal Narratives: **Yvonne Feng** *From an Unspeakable Event to an Ethical Bind* and **Judit Ferencz** *The Ethics of Reportage*

Fluid Positions: **Sevcan Ercan** *On the relational nature of fieldwork in Imbros* and **Eloise Fornieles** *Ethics of Eric Self*

15.30-16.00 Tea

16.00-17.30 Panel 2 (4 x 15 min papers, followed by 30 mins discussion) Chair: **David Roberts**

Power Imbalances: **Thandi Loewenson** *Here and There: Drawing and writing between Lusaka and London* and **Lavina Lee** *Modes of Existence: The Complexities of Tooting Market*

Participation and Collective Research Practices: **Luisa Alpalhão** *Participatory deceptions* and **Nick Laessing** *An Ethics of the Anthropocene*

17.30-18.00 Final Plenary

18.00-18.30 Refreshments

18.30-19.45 Closing keynote **Estelle Barrett** *Relationality and Ethics in Intercultural Research* (45 mins talk, 30 mins questions) Chair: **Sharon Morris**

BIOGRAPHIES AND ABSTRACTS

Keynote Speakers

Estelle Barrett *Relationality and Ethics in Intercultural Research*

Abstract In this presentation, I will draw on Australian Indigenous scholarship and research to provoke discussion on ethical know-how in intercultural research. I suggest that the very ontological and epistemological foundations of western research and those that shape western notions of what art *is* and what constitutes value in art, often results in researchers and (indeed examiners) remaining blind to the limitations, partial perspectives and assumptions underpinning their approaches to research. Ethical knowhow within an Intercultural space calls for self-reflexive and meta-critical judgements that disrupt conventional western notions of the role of art and artmaking as the production and the transmission of knowledge. Finally, I will draw the work of Indigenous higher degree by research projects to examine the implication of this work for extending ethical know in practice-led research

Biography Estelle Barrett is Professor and HDR Coordinator at the Institute of Koorie Education, Deakin University. She has co-edited three books with Barbara Bolt: *Material Inventions: Applying Creative Research* (2014) *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a "New Materialism" Through the Arts*, (2012) and *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, (2007; reprinted 2010). Her work in the area of creative arts research and related fields has been widely published in international journals and edited volumes. Her monograph, *Kristeva Reframed: Interpreting Key Thinkers for the Arts* (2011), examines the relevance of the work of Julia Kristeva for the creative arts and creative arts research. She is an international Research Fellow of the International Centre for Fine Arts Research, Birmingham University.

Barbara Bolt *Making it real: iDARE (innovation. Design. Art. Research. Ethics)*

Abstract Graduate researchers working in the university are required to observe the University's *Code of Conduct for Research* and adhere to the guidelines provided by the *National Statement*, however, practicing artists working in the community are not similarly constrained. Once creative practice PhD graduates leave the university, they are no longer required to gain ethics clearance for their work but use their own developed sense of ethics to make 'judgment calls.' Ethical know-how is situated, contextual, and a mainstay of all professional practices in action. In order to address the disjuncture between institutional ethics and compliance, what we call 'know-what,' and the ethical know-how required in the real world by artists, this presentation sets out the principles and an approach to developing ethical know-how. Through workshopping a case that adapts real world art practice to the research context of the Academy, this presentation demonstrates how institutional know-what can be brought into play *with* ethical know-how.

Biography Barbara Bolt is a practising artist and art theorist and is Associate Dean of Research at the Victorian College of the Arts and the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music at the University of Melbourne. She has written extensively on artistic research and the ethical implications of art as research. Bolt is currently the lead researcher on an Office of Learning and Teaching project, "Developing new approaches to ethics and research integrity training through challenges posed by creative practice research." She is author of *Art Beyond Representation: The Performative Power of the Image* (I.B. Tauris, 2004) and *Heidegger*

Reframed: Interpreting Key Thinkers for the Arts (I.B.Tauris, 2011) and has co-edited four volumes including *Material Inventions: Applying Creative Arts Research*, London (I.B.Tauris, 2014), *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a "New Materialism" through the Arts*, London, (I.B. Tauris, 2013) and *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, (I.B.Tauris, 2007). Her website is: <http://www.barbbolt.com/>

Luisa Alpalhão *Participatory deceptions*

Abstract Two narratives will illustrate two episodes that have occurred in the making of the participatory project [outros espaços], in Beja, south of Portugal, as part of my PhD research which focuses on participatory processes for the making of public spaces. Both episodes, for different reasons, have raised ethical dilemmas during the making process and during their subsequent critical analysis.

What to do when the supposed participants appear not to be interested in participating in an otherwise participatory project? Why should we (outsiders) expect the supposed participants to want to engage on an initiative that was not theirs? What to do when a lack of clarity and transparency in communication is present throughout the supposedly collaborative and participatory project? How to frame a critical and constructive analysis of the project without creating uneasiness amongst the projects' collaborators (the council, the residents, the school)?

The two narratives will be tied up with the overall critique of participation explored more extensively throughout the PhD thesis. I will draw on 'participation and democracy' [Miessen], the 'ethics subjacent to participation-driven projects' [Bishop] and on the notions of 'cooperation and community' [Sennett], uncovering the distorted idea that participation is desired by all.

Biography Luísa Alpalhão is a London and Lisbon based architect & artist and founding member of platform atelier urban nomads. Luísa is currently doing a practice-led PhD at the Bartlett, UCL and lectures at the University of East London. Her research explores the role of participatory projects for the making of public spaces in Portugal.

Sevcan Ercan *On the relational nature of fieldwork in Imbros*

Abstract My doctoral research addresses age-long discussions on the disappearance of 'minorities' under the sovereignty of the Republic of Turkey, and investigates the wider implications of spatial, temporal and political aspects of displacement within the island of Imbros (Turkey) and its diasporic locales. Working through Imbros – an area that has suffered from national tensions of geo-political boundaries and ethnocultural conflicts – often alters my outsider's view by developing an understanding of the field beyond its analytic and aesthetic values. Whilst engaging with this field of persistent conflict and its different actors, I adopt new attitudes, which may have specific reflections on my research itself (such as fluidity of positioning), and also question what my position/role as a researcher operating from a particular 'side' can or should be.

Biography Sevcan Ercan is an architect and researcher with a particular interest in sites of displacement and islands. In 2013 she pursued an MA in architectural history at the Bartlett School of Architecture, where she is currently undertaking a PhD in architectural history and theory.

Judit Ferencz *The Ethics of Reportage*

Abstract Through my PhD research on the East London housing estate Robin Hood Gardens, I had the good luck to come to know a Bangladeshi family who are council tenants at the estate. Two years ago, when I started my studies, I once spent an afternoon in their kitchen, drawing them as they were preparing a meat curry for a family celebration. I have since spent there several afternoons, sharing stories and meals. The realisation of their living conditions, how seldom meat curry appears on their table, strikes me at the heart each

time I visit. As an illustrator I feel responsible to speak up of what I witness as the lack of dignity in lives on the estate as it is undergoing demolition. But how can I remain respectful to my friends, while exposing their lives to report on the mundane issues of the demolition processes? As I am now conducting a UCL funded research at Harvard, one of the most expensive colleges in the world, on the architectural drawings for the estate which envisioned a social role for the building, I question where the value of architecture lies, as well as my own role in the research.

Biography Judit Ferencz is an illustrator, originally from Hungary. She has published with Vintage Classics, Random House, L'Harmattan and Granta. She is currently a PhD student in architectural design at The Bartlett, UCL where she is conducting a RIBA funded research on the conservation of architectural heritage through the graphic novel.

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Lavina Lee *Modes of Existence: The Complexities of Tooting Market*

Abstract *Modes of Existence* is a site writing project developed for the MA Architectural History module Theorising Practices directed by Jane Rendell. The project visually documents and critically engages with an urban marginal space – one of the oldest covered markets in south-east London, contemporarily caught in the currents of gentrification and the destructive plans of Crossrail 2. Due to a lack of archival material or literature on the market, I had to investigate the market through regular site visits entailing conversations with both traders and regular customers, as well as photographing the temporality of the setting throughout a period of three months. Such a process revealed the less apparent issues of the site and the complex relationships within it. The challenges of a highly social project reinforced my understanding of the importance of ethical awareness and the consequent limitations to artistic freedom. The resulting piece is an editable and shareable booklet containing photographs and texts representing the market in its current state of existence. The project raises the question of who and what matters during times of rapid urban change. The site writing ends with an artistic act symbolising reclaimed equality and serving as a reminder of ethics to the authority in question.

Biography Lavina Lee is a graduate of BA Architecture from the University of Kent and is currently completing the MA Architectural History at the Bartlett School of Architecture.

Thandi Loewenson *Here and There: Drawing and writing between Lusaka and London*

Abstract The most influential colonial plan for Lusaka was produced in 1950 by the architect G.A. Jellicoe at 12 Gower Street, a short walk from the Bartlett School of Architecture. Fragile drawings sent from London, now filed in the National Archives in Lusaka, detail the complexities of a plan aimed at 'absorbing the problems attached to planning a multiracial society'. Amongst the same files are a set of letters to the British government powerfully criticising colonial rule. Sent in 1957, these letters were written by the first president of Zambia, Dr Kenneth Kaunda, from information he'd received whilst being hosted in exile by the Labour Party.

This history of design and advocacy produced about and for Lusaka by those not wholly situated within the city raises ethical questions around the power imbalances between the sites where knowledge is produced, and by whom, and the sites of study. I explore these issues as they affect my own research exploring the forces influencing the development of Lusaka today. I locate this in the context of a growing wave of critique in African universities - to the extent of attacking the use of English and the presence of white and light skinned Africans within the academic environment - regarding perceived foreign influence as barriers to overcoming the subjugation of knowledge produced and embodied on the continent.

Biography Thandi is an architectural designer and PhD researcher working between London, Lusaka and Harare. Her research is exploring the impact of resource extraction and recycling on Lusaka, and how designing and performing urban fictions can create spaces for exploring and critiquing current practices in the city.

PhD Student Speakers from the Slade School of Fine Art

Yvonne Feng *From an Unspeakable Event to an Ethical Bind*

Abstract My research project originates from a dramatic incident of my mother's imprisonment and my state of disorientation caused by it. I have no power to alter the incident, nor am I exposed directly to the experiences of imprisonment or violence – yet I feel an impulse to retell her stories; to feel as she feels. The event becomes a story that I live out and turns into imagined experiences that I gain access to through drawing and painting.

In my research, I propose a conception of *self-forming* and *self-empowerment* through storytelling in artmaking. Throughout the project, I attempt to address the questions of how storytelling can be a means for the expression of the self in multiple stances and a way of thinking through the experience of an aporia, and how the work of art as a fictional creation can imply the meaning of ongoing life events.

The event provides fruitful source material for my research and artmaking. However, using the narratives about my mother to make work creates some ethical dilemmas. In the presentation, I will speak about how my relationship to the narratives has changed along my research; what impact this project has on me as both an artist and an individual; and whether the act of artmaking ought to be bound to ethical duties.

Biography Yvonne Feng is a practice-led PhD researcher at the Slade School of Fine Art. Her recent exhibitions include 'Tipping Point', in The Foundry, London; 'The Intercontinental', in Roaming Room, London; 'Refuse: Refuge: Re-fuse', in Koppel Project, London; 'An Amnesiac's Stories' (solo), in Hundred Years Gallery, London.

Eloise Fornieles *Ethics of Eric Self*

Abstract Eric Self is a genderqueer rabbit. He has a low voice, a band, an attitude and a vagina. Eric is an anthropomorphised character that I use as a vehicle for my practical research in performance art. The research questions whether gender can be understood as a spectrum, using anthropomorphised animal characters to reinterpret archetypes and create original narratives. The 'gender spectrum' will go on to establish an understanding of gender as a condition that is not limited to a specific set of values but can vary across a continuum. This is important because the way in which gender is currently understood leads to inequality and prejudices that are amplified in mainstream narratives and played out within our day to day.

The ethics in question when performing as Eric lie in the folds of fictioning in public. The codes of identity and social cues are blurred by costumes, masks and technological equipment which changes the performers voice from female to seemingly male. These interventions disrupt the public's notion of how to relate to the human within the anthropomorphised animal and therefore strips the audience of certain behavioural indicators. In doing so a queer space is opened by the character in which the audience must question their own ethical conduct in relating to both the animal character presented to them and the unknown human they understand to be within it. Eric Self tests the boundaries of how to relate to the gendered body and in doing so challenges (and potentially shifts) the ethical framework in which we socially operate and define gender.

Biography Eloise Fornieles is a London based artist and researcher on the Slade School of Fine Art practice led PhD programme. Fornieles has performed and exhibited widely nationally and internationally including New York, Madrid, Tel-Aviv, Paris, Moscow, Miami, Buenos Aires, Amsterdam and Beijing.

Nick Laessing *An Ethics of the Anthropocene*

...a delicious tension between uncertainty – or the state of decision making in a probabilistic environment – and the periodic duty to act. It is clear that the decision as to whether, when, and in what way to act must be guided and shaped by the best available evidence.¹

...when what we think, say, feel, and do is going in the same direction.²

Abstract This presentation will consider the above attempts to define ethical practice in the context of a research project looking at artistic responses to climate change in the Anthropocene. How can the overwhelming evidence of climate science guide and shape responses from the perspective of artistic practice? How can we search out and identify the axes of the thinking, feeling and doing that move in the same direction? Is a model based on activism and functional reaction required? How can collective responses create safe contexts where these issues can be discussed and explored?

My studio practice is in partnership with the Electrochemical Innovation Lab at UCL. Assisting an artist with no previous formal scientific training to transform water into hydrogen gas is something of an experiment in itself. This cross-disciplinary work and my previous collaborations have led to questions that confront conventional notions of practice within an art world that prefers to reward individual authorship. Ethical issues are key here in generating and maintaining inclusivity – recognition of group input is an important motor of the project. The presentation will discuss how collective responses to the wider themes of the research can be established through the practice itself, for example in fitting out a car to run on hydrogen gas with a group of mechanics, or working in a lab to develop an electrolyser alongside PhD chemical engineering students.

Biography Nick Laessing is a visual artist. His work has been exhibited in museums including Centre Pompidou Paris and the Serpentine Gallery London, and many galleries and project spaces internationally. Recent group exhibitions include *No Such Thing As Gravity* at FACT Liverpool curated by Rob La Frenais and *The Promise Of Total Automation* at Kunsthal Wien, curated by Anne Faucheret. The research project *The agency of Hydrogen in an art of the Anthropocene* explores evolving methodologies for artistic practice within discourses of the Anthropocene. It investigates the history and development of technological and functional responses to ecological and climatic crises in art. The studio work, a collaboration with the Electrochemical Innovation Lab at UCL, investigates the process of building renewable, non-polluting energy devices that use water-electrolysis to make hydrogen fuelled installations.

¹ Goodman, Kenneth, *Ethics and Evidence-Based Medicine: Fallibility and Responsibility in Clinical Science*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, P.139

² Porter, John, *UCL doctoral school ethics course*, 2017