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**University of Southampton**

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Winchester School of Art

**The Value of Portraiture: Painting as a Social Practice**

by

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**BA Fine Art (Hons)**

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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# University of Southampton

## Abstract

Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
Winchester School of Art  
Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
The Value of Portraiture: Painting as a Social Practice  
By  
Lucy Woollett

The Value of Portraiture: Painting as Social Practice is a doctoral research project underpinned by the portraits I make: a particular production of painting domestic sized portraits in specific public participatory and community situated contexts, and the ensuing distribution of these objects through various circulations of exchange. The research frames a series of questions about the value of painting people through the circulation of portraiture, painting, social engagement and gift and information exchange, all of which is situated around the alternative economics of post-Capitalism.

Overall, the thesis spans three interconnected projects, which are used as case studies. The first was a self-initiated programme offering painted portraits for services, gifts and favours, which took place in my own network of friends. This project was then extended with a follow-up project in collaboration with The Museum in London, which experimented with a public facing '*Interchange*' of interactions working directly with visitors to the museum. The third and final project sought a new context and network devised as *Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits*. For this I offered portrait sitting to my fellow residents of the council estate where I live in East London in return for their stories of neighbourly exchanges for the better or worse. Questions of subject, subjectivity, community and located ness are common to each of the projects, but with each offering different responses that lead to new considerations about the potential 'value' (or values) of portraiture as a form of social practice.

Throughout, I explore how painting and portraiture can be used as a tool for social engagement and a conduit for exchange: highlighting and developing processes of conversation, interaction and shared experience of the painting process. Simultaneously, I define and reveal how contemporary painting can operate in the social sphere as part of a collaborative, participatory and community situated public art process. The values of portraiture through social practice that I propose offer a pertinent phenomenon and highlight how portrait making can reveal personal and political networks of care and consciousness raising that can embolden the most pressing activist causes in our current situation. I suggest that, in the context of Art and Post-Capitalism, portraiture's means of creating exchange and encounters between people can be considered as a form of alternative economics.

The position I take is revealed through the processes of my own making and the work of other contemporaries who similarly adopt socially engaged methods. Parallel to these practices are the critical fields of painting and the socially engaged which are often confusingly conflated with aesthetics and politics and



used in the case of object-based art vs social practice art. I seek to use the rehabilitation of the aesthetic to draw out a more nuanced discussion. To contextualise my practice, I combine historical and critical contemporary discussion regarding the situation of painting and portrait making through the combined lenses of art history, philosophy, sociology, and visual culture. I have drawn on the notion of Realisms in the 20th Century via Berger and Nochlin which points to an alternative portrait and figurative painting trajectory that highlights artists whose processes of painting people can be examined as socially engaged.

Overall, I put forward that portraiture has more in common with socially engaged practice than a seemingly overarching dichotomy of painting and socially engaged arts practice. Contrary to the apparently oppositional standpoints of a social practice of painting, aesthetics and politics, I present a series of shared concerns/points of connectivity and highlight their values. Furthermore, I propose that these processes of painting people are becoming an increasingly relevant form of connection to each other and means of exchange as we head into a very uncertain and socially distanced future.

# Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iv
Table of Contents .....	vi
Table of Figures .....	vii
Supplementary Materials.....	ix
Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship.....	x
Acknowledgements .....	xi
Introduction .....	15
Artist Statement .....	15
History of practice - retreat and return to painting.....	19
Early notions of the socially engaged in the drawing and painting of people. ....	21
Introducing the projects.....	25
Methodology.....	26
Methodology continued, Diagrams of exchange .....	28
Situating the field of research .....	33
Research Questions .....	34
The Value of Painting as Social Practice .....	35
Chapter 1: Refiguring the Social .....	37
Painting in the Post-Medium Condition .....	39
Socially Engaged Practice and Participation .....	48
Participation and Painting.....	53
People painting people now.....	55
Dialogical Portraits.....	65
Zanele Muholi and Steve McQueen Building and documenting communities through participatory photographic practices. ....	67
Pandemic responses in art Artist Support Pledge and Portraits for NHS Heroes .....	70
Chapter 2: The value of Portrait making as a social activity.....	75
Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours .....	75
Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours at The Museum of London.....	88
Portraits, Services, Gifts and Favours documentation list .....	92
Situations of Portraiture .....	93
The Portrait as a relational model .....	95
The circulation of power and representation in Las Meninas.....	98
Fayum Mummy Portraits .....	101
Realisms in the 20 <sup>th</sup> century .....	102
Berger's Looking Forward.....	103
Alice Neel, Joan Eardley and Eva Frankfurth. ....	104
<i>Interchange</i> at The Museum of London .....	106
<i>Interchange</i> list of documentation .....	132
The Value of Art, Post Capitalism and Alternative Economics .....	132
Chapter 3. Resident Artist: Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits .....	143
Project in brief.....	143
Community Portraits / Community Exchange. ....	145
The UK Housing Crisis and Grenfell Tower disaster.....	148
Khadija Saye's Living Series .....	149
Regeneration artists.....	151
Lady Lucy's Pochade Portrait Shopper .....	153
Portrait sittings at the hall and at people's homes .....	154
<i>Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits Noticeboards</i> and Tour .....	169

Herbert Butler Portraits documentation index .....	176
Conclusion .....	179
Bibliography .....	188
Appendix A.....	193
APPENDIX B .....	201
Project documentation.....	201
Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits .....	206
Individual portraits of residents.....	206
Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits and the Tenants and Residents Hall.....	220
October 2019 residents attending exhibition .....	220
Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits .....	239
Exhibition at Herbert Butler Tenants and Residents Hall.....	239
October 2019 .....	239
Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits Visits .....	241
Over 55's Community lunch at Gacoyne 2 Community Hall .....	241
November 2019 .....	241
Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits Noticeboards (2021).....	245

## Table of Figures

Figure 2: Double Lives Drawings (2015). Pen on paper, installation shot.....	18
Figure 3: Drawing Exchange, with Aviv Kruglanski: Portrait Service at Blackboxx, Basel (2011) .....	19
Figure 5: My Name is Courtney (2009). Colour pencils drawings on paper: A Year in The Life Publication, Room 13, Bristol.....	22
Figure 6: Being Lady Lucy It's fun being a professional feminist (2005) Copyright Lady Lucy .....	22
Figure 7: Being Lady Lucy (2007). Sketchbooks in Vitrine, Copyright Lady Lucy.....	22
Figure 8: Volunteers (2011). Portrait sitting with Volunteer, Royal Festival Hall residency studio at The Southbank Centre.....	23
Figure 9: Lady Lucy : Whitechapel Gallery Staff Portrait Studio (2011). Installation shot watercolour on paper, frames, gouache paint on walls .....	24
Figure 10: Diagram of Exchange Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours .....	30
Figure 11: Diagrams of Exchange Interchange .....	31
Figure 12: Diagrams of Exchange Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits .....	33
Figure 13: Aliza Nisenbaum: London Underground Brixton and Victoria Line Staff, 2019. Commissioned by Art and The Underground. Photo : Author's own Copyright Lucy Woollett 2019 .....	36
Figure 14: Krauss (1997) Diagram from Sculpture in the Expanded Field .....	40
Figure 16: Aliza Nisenbaum "MOia" NYC Women's Cabinet" 2016 Oil on linen 68x85 courtesy t293 Gallery, Rome and Mary Glasgow <a href="http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en">http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en</a> .....	59
Figure 17: Mounirah Al Sohl - I Strongly Believe in our Right to be Frivolous, installed at Drawing Room – photo authors own, Copyright: Lucy Woollett .....	64
Figure 18: Flo Brooks, Full of Sediment, Full of Doubt acrylic on wood (2017). Dimensions variable, photo by Mark Blower, From Is Now a Good Time at Cubitt Gallery, London Courtesy Flo Brooks and Project Native Informant, Copyright : Flo Books .....	65
Figure 19: Anne Wagner with Felicity Allen from film still from As if they Existed by Felicity Allen with Tom Dale Copyright Felicity Allen (2015).....	66
Figure 20: Steve McQueen Year 3 project (2019,) billboard in Stamford Hill, photo by author, Copyright Lucy Woollett 2019 .....	70
Figure 21: Rita by Jane Lees (2020) Image accessed from <a href="https://g.co/arts/dY8QhCuVdA8nM4sD9">https://g.co/arts/dY8QhCuVdA8nM4sD9</a> last accessed 5/1/2021 .....	72
Figure 24 : Diverse Economies Iceberg by Community Economies Collective is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution - Share Alike 4.0 International License.....	135
Figure 25 Drawing from event : A Haystack on Icebergs with Katherine Gibson 4/11/2016 .....	136
Figure 26: documentation from redraw artistic economy workshop .....	137
Figure 28: I am Here, Fugitive Images Photographic still of installation (2011). .....	148
Figure 29: from the series Living, (2017) Khadija Saye photographic print .....	150

- PFSG&F 1 Flyer for Portraits, Services Gifts and Favours (2014) Pen on A 4 paper 76*
- PFSG&F 2 Portrait of Felicity Allen by Lady Lucy in her home studio in Ramsgate with Portrait of the author in the background 79*
- PFSG&F 3 Felicity with her Portrait at her studio (2017) Digital photography Project documentation 80*
- PFSG&F 4 Felicity offers a haircut – author getting haircut – project documentation 81*
- PFSG&F 5 Felicity offers The Helen Of Troy NY Bernadette Mayer as a gift 81*
- PFSG&F 6 Steph holds their portrait in Abney Park, Cemetery, London (2018) 83*
- PFSG&F 7 The author learns to meditate in a paddling pool, Seven Sisters, London - 84*
- PFSG&F 8 Portrait of Gemma and Manuel in exchange for some shoes from Portugal (2017) 86*
- PFSG&F 9 shoes from Portugal in exchange for portrait of Gemma and Miguel (gift)) 86*
- PFSG&F 10 Naomi offers to write exhibition press release for shoes that don't fit author 87*
- PFSG&F 11 Portraits, for Services installed at The Museum of London (2017), Watercolour pics in frames, gouache wall painting, dimensions variable 89*
- PFSG&F 12 Portraits, for Services installed at The Museum of London (2017), Watercolour pics in frames, gouache wall painting, dimensions variable 89*
- PFSG&F 13 Portraits, for Services installed at The Museum of London (2017), Watercolour pics in frames, gouache wall painting, dimensions variable 90*
- PFSG&F 14 Portraits, for Services installed at The Museum of London (2017), Watercolour pics in frames, gouache wall painting, dimensions variable 90*
- PFSG&F 15 Diagrams of Exchange Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours 92*

## Supplementary Materials

1. <https://portraitsforservicesgiftsfavours.tumblr.com/portraitspainted>
2. Song for Chinasa, exchanged by Alex as part of *Interchange* at The Museum of London. <https://soundcloud.com/lucy-woollett/song-for-chinasa>
3. [\*Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits Noticeboard Tour\*](#)  
<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/645698518> password: LLHB21

# Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Lucy Woollett

Title of thesis: The Value of Portraiture, Painting as a Social Practice

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University.
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated.
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed.
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work.
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself.
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Signature: Lucy Woollett

Date: 18/3//2022

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*Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits*

Residents of Herbert Butler estate.

Herbert Butler TRA, Dawn Dardis, Dan and Ros Owen  
Polly Mann, Wick Award, Chair Disco, Anne Marie Payne, Gascoyne Tenants and Residents Association, Sandra at Adelaide Court, Claire Ward Thornton, Pau Ros, Noriko Suzuki- Bosco, Kayle Brandon, Ben Meschko. I would like to give special mention to Onyee Lo for her attention to detail when filming the noticeboard tour and Robbie Hedge for the titles.









## Introduction

The Value of Portraiture, Painting as a Social Practice, is the overarching theme of this practice-based doctoral research project. The mainframe and point of reference is the small domestic sized painted portraits which are used as tokens of exchange in which various groups of people, situated in a variety of locations and social networks, are invited to participate. Three interlocking case studies are presented for contextualisation and analysis, simultaneously forming chapters in which I explore The Values of Painting people in our current milieu through examining how Painting can be explored as a social practice, whilst operating in circulations of exchange and distribution, which can be considered operating in the strategies of alternative economics of post-capitalism.

In this introduction, I will begin with an artist statement, describing how I go about doing and making the work. I will then set out my retreat and return to painting and my discovery of a more expansive practice as a result. Elucidating on how at first a social focus emerged in the group portraits I made, I will then set in motion the three research projects: *Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours*, *Interchange* and *Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits*. From introducing the practice-based work, I then talk about the research methodologies I use, the fields in which my work is situated and my research questions. I end the introduction by prefacing what is in each of the chapters and end on a recent premise responding to the work of Aliza Nisenbaum suggesting that Portraiture can be a Social Practice and how this might relate to our current situation.

### Artist Statement

Lady Lucy is a self - assigned artist name, a moniker that I have operated under over 20 years. Lady Lucy's birthplace was the Internet circa 1996. At the time, I was operating in feminist Riot grrrl music & fanzine communities. Lady Lucy was born as a communication tool for a webchat room pre-web 2.0 and whilst the cult

of celebrity and high prices engulfed the YBA group post Saatchi's Sensation in the 1990s, my practice was performance, fanzine making, mail art, and DJ'ing and music writing. At the time tag names were how people in various music DIY networks communicated, and Lady Lucy was born as an ambiguous pseudonym and active play on class and gender stereotypes.

In the selection of the prefix to her name and in the way, she pursues her work; Lady Lucy finds a new language for feminism. She has no qualms about calling herself Lady. There is an irresistible ambiguity for her between the ironic class association, and the America slang "Hey Lady! (Byatt, L 2006)

The name acts as a performed identity, and the way that it poses questions is its rationale. There is a strong tradition of artists who have used name word/name play as an act of agency for identity and anonymity, for example: Rose Sélavy, SAMO, Linder, Cosey Fanny Tutti, Gilbert & George, Bob and Roberta Smith, Marvin Gaye Chetwynd. In the wider world of pop culture, one that you can see all the above artists work traverse across to, Lady is also a common name for an MC or pop star. This self-naming is something I explored in the film, *Ladies, All the Ladies*, (2008) where I tracked down and interviewed MCs and DJs called 'Lady something', asking them about their names and the sense of empowerment it may give them while working in the male-dominated Urban music scenes.



*Fig 1: Ladies All the Ladies (2008) Digital Video Still*

As Lady Lucy, I make works and projects operating amongst the realms of painting, drawing, photography and moving image and events. My work is strongly informed by an interest in the social function and value of activities, as an artist and more specifically as a painter. I seek to find meaning and political application in the process of work and there is a symbiotic relationship between private studio work and collaborative or participatory work in the public space.



Figure 1: *Double Lives Drawings* (2015). Pen on paper, installation shot

Studio painting, drawing and collage work is concerned with the editing of imagery sourced from the second-hand printed page or the imagination. Taking an economic approach to scale, my work is made in series, applying processes of layering, abstraction, refiguring and the juxtaposing of multiple pictorial references where ideas merge through collage. The photographic and art historical imagery is gathered from my archives of 20<sup>th</sup> century picture book materials of photographic, film, or art history. In other works, fanciful forms appear, which are dreamt from the imaginary or channel a recent happening from real life, the screen or radio. The characterful and colourful works are only finished when someone, something or someplace real or imagined emerges.

I collaborate with Kayle Brandon to produce The Drawing Exchange, an ongoing independent artist project predominantly exploring drawing experiences in social, participatory situations and public spaces. We aim to enable collective and personal enquiry into process led drawing methods. Our collaboration came out of our time working alongside each other as volunteers at The Cube Microplex and Kayle's reflection on my public drawing practice, as opposed to her private practice. Her response was to use my drawing method to create an event, which has led to a series of events over the last 15 years. The first event was called *Drawing Me, Drawing You* which took place in a sports club bar in Bristol. The

basic premise was of people drawing each other and expanded on this to develop various performative exercises. In 2011, we took part in a residency at Blackboxx Basel, a refugee activists project in a Basel park located next to a Swiss detention centre on the border with Germany, where refugees awaited outcomes of asylum status. Blackboxx held a DIY internet café that was open when refugees were let out once a day and it is in this space with these people that we worked with for 10 days in July 2011. We overlapped with other artists who were doing the residency and together with Aviv Kruglanski we developed a spontaneous performative exercise called *The Portrait Service*, where we took it in turns to invite people to engage in an outside portrait drawing exercise.



Figure 2: *Drawing Exchange, with Aviv Kruglanski: Portrait Service at Blackboxx, Basel (2011)*

You could be the model or the drawer. Figure 3 shows the set up and scene where a crowd gather and watch drawing of a couple posing. To me this project exemplifies what I understand to be the value of portraiture as a social practice, how the portraiture process can be opened up to participation and, in this situation, to refugees facilitated by a grassroots activist organisation. I also want to acknowledge the ideas that have developed through my work with Brandon in Drawing Exchange that have led to this research project.

### **History of practice - retreat and return to painting**

Although I am art school trained, the courses have been fairly broad-based and my practice has been strongly influenced by, and evolved through DIY: artist-led self-organised structures that I have been involved with, such as music fanzine networks in the late 1990s, The Cube Cinema Microplex <sup>1</sup> in Bristol and Ladyfest. Producing work in these networks has played equal importance in the development of my work, as I have actively sought out the alternative social structures of artist-led culture, expanding community cinema, and grassroots feminist organisations. It is in these situations where my role as an artist/curator and organiser has changed from project to project: Feminist curator, internet radio show host, illustrator, poster designer, filmmaker.

The retreat from painting came early on, although I was happy and successful making paintings on my foundation, as I progressed to the BA, the painting department of my college didn't feel like the right place for my practice at the time as I needed something more direct for the expressive subject matter and knew that I didn't want to make paintings on canvas, so I gravitated to the printmaking workshop and enjoyed exploring editing and layering found film imagery and text. Painting action was present via mono screen print. After college, the play of painting always appeared in the work I did. My first solo show in 1998 involved me filling the basement of Intoxica record shop on the Portobello Road with 7-inch paintings on cardboard that represented my record collection, the paintings were presented in plastic sleeves and sold for £20 each. I also sought to make and perform art in alternative spaces. I painted live to music, or film, once dressed up as Patti Smith, another time painting alongside an expanded cinema screening of the Russian silent film *Earth* at The Big Chill Festival. I spent many years drawing, producing sketchbook portraits and other works because I didn't have the money for the studio and was happy as drawing was a safe place, and acted as a kind of therapy, a space in which to communicate. All these ways were, I would say, an active refusal to paint with a capital P, however, they were also a way of deconstructing the idea of what I had been taught that paintings narrow boundaries must be, in order to form my practice on my terms and within my interests. I wanted to explain how I turned away from painting and returned to

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> The Cube Cinema Microplex is a long-term social art experiment in the form of an independent cinema, music and events space run by volunteer enthusiasts and artists in Bristol. I was involved as a regular volunteer and organiser from 1999 -2007.



research in this expanded medium. Mark Titmarsh notes this process of turning away from painting is almost expected of the art student even though it is often the starting point. As the dividing line is breeched to another medium or method, a new opportunity for the expanded medium arises. (Titmarsh, 2019, pg. 67)

A return to painting came at Chelsea School of Art, where I was lucky enough to be taught by Ellen Cantor (1963 - 2013)<sup>2</sup> who turned up in my studio and immediately used the tutorial for roleplay where, rather than being told my work referenced Willem de Kooning, I was, in fact, Elaine de Kooning and we were transported back to the painterly space of the New York School. I liked this approach: it was imaginary and feminist and a somewhat safe space to continue painting, added encouragement also came from fellow student and painter Flora Whiteley and this relationship blossomed when we went on to co-curate Suppose an Eyes with another UAL student, Jacquie Utlely, who we had met at the cross-school symposiums.

### **Early notions of the socially engaged in the drawing and painting of people.**




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<sup>2</sup> “Ellen Cantor (1961–2013) was an American artist. Cantor was known for combining pornography, politics, pop culture and the handmade in her paintings, drawings, sculptures, videos, and films.”

Figure 3: *My Name is Courtney* 2009). Colour pencils drawings on paper: *A Year in The Life* Publication, Room 13, Bristol

I have been working with what I believe to be a socially expansive notion of Portraiture for many years. From the years 2000 – 2007 I carried a sketchbook and pens with me everywhere I went and made a sketchbook diary portrait series called *Being Lady Lucy*.



Figure 4: *Being Lady Lucy It's fun being a professional feminist* (2005) Copyright Lady Lucy



Figure 5: *Being Lady Lucy* (2007). Sketchbooks in Vitrine, Copyright Lady Lucy

In 2010 – 2011, I worked on two public commissions at major London institutions: The Whitechapel Gallery and The Southbank Centre where the emerging social focus in the creation of the portraits became paramount. As part of the 60th-anniversary celebrations of The Festival of Britain, I was invited to be an artist in residence. I set up a portrait studio in the Royal Festival Hall and invited volunteers who were giving their time to help run the celebrations to have their portraits painted in pairs. The sixty portraits were on display for two months and represented the diverse biographies, narratives, and opinions of the sitters. An event took place where curator Ele Carpenter and I discussed contemporary ideas and politics around volunteering, in particular, a critique of the Conservatives 2010 election campaign ideology of The Big Society. The collection of portraits was presented in a publication that was distributed as a gift to the volunteers involved. Through working on projects such as The Whitechapel Gallery Staff Portrait Studio and Southbank Centre Festival of Britain Volunteers residency, as well as my proposed project Portraits for Services, Gifts, and Favours, I recognised the significance of an emerging social process with portraiture at its centre. My initial meetings about these projects started through a process of open dialogue and negotiation such as discussions with the groups of people who were involved. These discourses and interactions continued during the painting process itself in portrait studios set up specifically at the cultural spaces.



*Figure 6: Volunteers (2011) Portrait sitting with Volunteer, Royal Festival Hall residency studio at The Southbank Centre Photograph by Brian Benson.*



Figure 7: Lady Lucy: Whitechapel Gallery Staff Portrait Studio (2011). Installation shot watercolour on paper, frames, gouache paint on walls

This carried over into the afterlife of the portraits as all those who took part in the project, recounted their experiences, emphasising that collaborative conversation is integral to the social process. The work, therefore, inhabited various spaces: that of the site of the painting; the community within which it was made, and the oral, discursive and conversational realm ignited by the painting process.

I have introduced the work and projects that I make and how, through the development of work over several years, a social focus began to emerge which led to questioning and cross-referencing of the distinct critical discourses of expanded painting and socially engaged practices. This led me to frame the ways of working, beginning to develop what I wanted to explore and investigate further. This led to the three distinct projects/case studies that I present here, which have taken place through the duration of this research, and which are discussed and analysed at length in each chapter.



## Introducing the projects

The first and second case study involved exchanges which started with a simple offer from myself: I will paint your portrait in exchange for something you can offer. *Portraits for Services Gifts and Favours* happened within my various social networks: colleagues, friends, acquaintances and Facebook friends. A shout-out utilizing social media posts and word of mouth went out asking people if they would like their portrait painted in return for a service, gift or favour. At the Museum of London, I collected the portraits from the sitters in their homes and presented the network of portraits and exchanges together in installation. Here I set up the second project: *Interchange*, a portrait studio for museum visitors where they became eligible for a portrait through their offer of an exchange to be passed on to a stranger. The painting of the portrait set up an *Interchange* of Interactions between visitors to the museum. The concept was to trigger a daisy chain effect where the items offered in exchange for the painted portraits got passed on to a further museum visitor in order to encourage a move out of my social network, to a wider London public to encourage random connections, surprises and, most importantly, for the gift to keep on moving.

The third and most recent project: *Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits* is a series that I painted of my fellow residents and neighbours on the council estate where I lived in Hackney Wick, East London. The project was initiated in close discussion with the estate's tenants and residents' association who introduced me to neighbours that I met at various community events such as a Chair Disco, Seaside Coach Trips and the Christmas Party. In collaboration with Nick Woollett, my father, I designed and fabricated a DIY door-to-door mobile painting studio called *Lady Lucy's Portrait Pochade Shopper*. The finished portraits were offered for the participant sitters to keep in exchange for conversations about neighbourly exchange and encounters. Hand-painted edited snippets from these conversations appear along with portraits when exhibited. These portraits were bought together in a weekend exhibition at the estate's community hall which residents attended to see themselves, along with their neighbours and snippets of conversations. The portraits also travelled to a neighbouring estate to be present at a community lunch for the over 50's. In April – May 2021, the project was reinstalled on public

noticeboards around the estate. This installation adopted the added context of neighbourly exchange in the Covid 19 Pandemic. A guided tour around the noticeboards was shot on mobile phone video, wherein I reflect upon the portrait sittings, daily interactions with my neighbours and the projects involvement in the social fabric of the estate.

## Methodology

The methodologies I have applied in this research project combine models of a reflective practitioner and auto ethnographer. The three case studies or projects follow a journey, and momentum of ideas and have been generated from the organising, making and doing of each of the works that has led me to investigate the various concerns here. I used photography and noted conversations from the fieldwork which add up to keeping a project diary which acts as an auto-ethnography from which to draw analysis. The photographs, diary, emails and associated social media posts act as field observations as I take up the different positions in the work: organiser, painter, researcher. Academics Carole Gray and Julian Mullins describe how the practitioner becomes researcher by means of reflecting on problematic pinpoints in their processes. They suggest that through probing experimentation, the practice moves to its next step to be then further investigated and the analysis of this is knowledge production.

With regard to epistemological issues the practitioner is the researcher – from this informed perspective the practitioner identifies researchable problems raised in the practice and respond through aspects of practice. (Gray, C Mallins J, 2004)

Throughout my inquiry, I have followed this technique through the iterations of the projects. The position I take as researcher is one of the models proposed by Gray and Mullins as “A self - observer through reflection on action and in action and through discussion with others. “(2004)

Artist and Academic Stephen Pritchard discusses his use of autoethnography as a second year PhD student researching how activist art may create spaces for acts of resistance and liberation.

My investigation revolves around intensive field research that is autoethnographic – an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience to understand cultural experience. It challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others, instead treating research as a political, socially-just and socially conscious act. It uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography. As a method, autoethnography becomes both process and product. (Pritchard, S 2015)

For Pritchard, the use of this methodology enables him to consider the whole of his life and work as contributing to the research. He describes using an auto ethnographic narrative reflection from the field work and how this is informed by incalculable conversations with colleagues, participants, family and friends. Such conversations could never be captured through the interview format and it is in this tradition that I conduct my research. This insider perspective is particularly useful in the work, as the diagrams of exchange show below, I am literally inside and at the centre of the networks in which my work is created. The projects I have created here rely on this insider knowledge to discuss, challenge and analyse my position in relation to others. As Allen, Holman Jones and Ellis point out:

Researching and writing from the lived, inside moments of experience allows autoethnographers to cultivate an epistemology of insiderness” of being able to describe an experience in a way that outsider researchers never could.” (Allen T, Holman Jones S, Ellis C, 2015)

My projects have involved many people and organisations and these contributions are invaluable.

Making use of this model of auto ethnographer, I acknowledge my role as central to the practice and research; the work is a record of my time spent with others negotiating, painting, talking and exchanging. In the first project, Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours, I am negotiating non-monetary exchanges for paintings which have a mutually beneficial aim for sitter and artist to test and map this journey. When this project is invited to the Museum of London, I undergo a mission of collecting these pictures myself as the institution requires me to collect them one by one, and accession them into the museum in one go. The same

happens with their return. All of this process was visible on social media: on twitter, Instagram and Facebook and is part of the work's process.

Through *Interchange*, where I offered the exchanges to a wider group of visitors to the Museum of London, my role as the artist is to paint the pictures of the sitters, but also to negotiate exchanges and to follow and document what happened. It is through these conversations of negotiation that projects further developed. This input through participation is crucial to its remit. In the project sections I focus in on particular examples of this in action. Throughout the Herbert Butler Portrait project, the observational notes I kept were more diary in form and I use these in Chapter 3 to reflect upon the moments and the time spent with people. *Herbert Butler Portraits Noticeboard* tour, which is available to view through a link provided in the supplementary materials, demonstrates this reflective process through the form of a guided tour of a public exhibition of portraits and text from *Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits* around the estate on noticeboards. The reflective function of the autoethnographer is truly visible in this film, as I reflect up my time in the community I lived in and how that afforded me knowledge of the networks of care an exchange. My work on the Tenants and Residents Association enabled insights and introductions to people that I would not have had as an outsider. This also enabled me to understand my role as a volunteer in that organisation.

I apply these methods to my practice, which I believe to be painting in the post-medium condition: a painterly portrait practice that can extend the field of expanded painting to incorporate socially engaged practices. How this happens is addressed in Chapter 2: Refiguring the Social, where I respond to theorists, particularly Graw and Westgeest. The participation of people is a key component of my work, which is evident in my methods of involvement, and this is addressed in my understanding of Bishop's work in this field. You will notice a focus on process and circulation of painting and exchange addressed throughout, particularly in Diagrams of Exchange and then again in the section The Value of Art, Post Capitalism and Alternative Economics.

**Methodology continued, Diagrams of exchange**



The three projects outlined above are seemingly inextricably linked through this research project; however, they each occur across differing social networks and have forms of exchange which correspond to their particular context, location and site. An important part of the methodology was the iterative process of moving through the projects and adjusting the situation and forms of exchange in reflective and critical response to the previous project. These *Diagrams of Exchange* can be seen as a methodology that relates to the diagramming of alternative economics which I refer to in the section on Post-Capitalism

I refer to the following Figures 10, 11, 12. Each diagram of exchange refers to one of the three projects. In each case, I am the central player in the orange circle as the artist offering a network of sitters a portrait in exchange for something else. In Figure 12, I made the amendment of both artist and resident offering exchange, in order to point out these two crucial interlinking roles that I play within this project. The purpose of my centrality is akin to being a host, to bring people together through the painting.

Figure 10 shows the exchange of portraits (green dot) being offered for a service (pink dot), gift (blue dot) or favour (yellow dot). The grey arrows show the portraits going outwards to the social circle of artist where they are exchanged.



Figure 8: Diagram of Exchange Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours





Figure 9: Diagrams of Exchange Interchange

The arrow turns back clockwise and returns back to the artist. The types of social connections are visible in purple. It is a simple return exchange model except of

break way encounter on the bottom right, where a portrait is exchanged for a gift and then the gift is further exchanged for a service.

Above in Figure 11, the artist is in the orange circle offering a portrait, except this time it is an exchange for an exchange and the sitting takes place on the boundary of the blue circle, which represents the museum where the portraits are painted and exhibited. The light green circles are the participants in the project. There are still green dots being exchanged for pink, blue and yellow dots, which represent the exchange categories of Service, Gift or Favour, but they do not return to the artist. The green dot converts into the pink, blue or yellow dot and carries outwards in the public realm where the sitter undertakes the portrait with the third party or stranger who is receiver of the exchange offered. The portrait travels back to the sitter when the exchange is finished, where they reside.

Towards the top you will see that not every exchange in this model is successful. Some sitters were unreachable by either the museum, myself or the exchanger, so the exchange offered couldn't take place or the portrait returned. Completed exchanges were not a condition of the portrait being returned.

Below in Figure 12, the artist/resident offers a portrait in return for conversations about neighbourly exchange. The green dots (portraits) follow a path outward on the green line through the networks of the estate and tenants' and residents' association. Conversations appear in yellow; they reach another green dot where the portrait is in the exhibition, still on the estate, and then are returned to the sitter, who is of course a resident of the estate. This diagram demonstrates the portraits' circulation around the estate along with the conversations that were generated.

I have provided these diagrams here to set out the exchanges and networks the portrait projects took place in, but I will provide them again in the project sections and they will be referred back to in the conclusion.



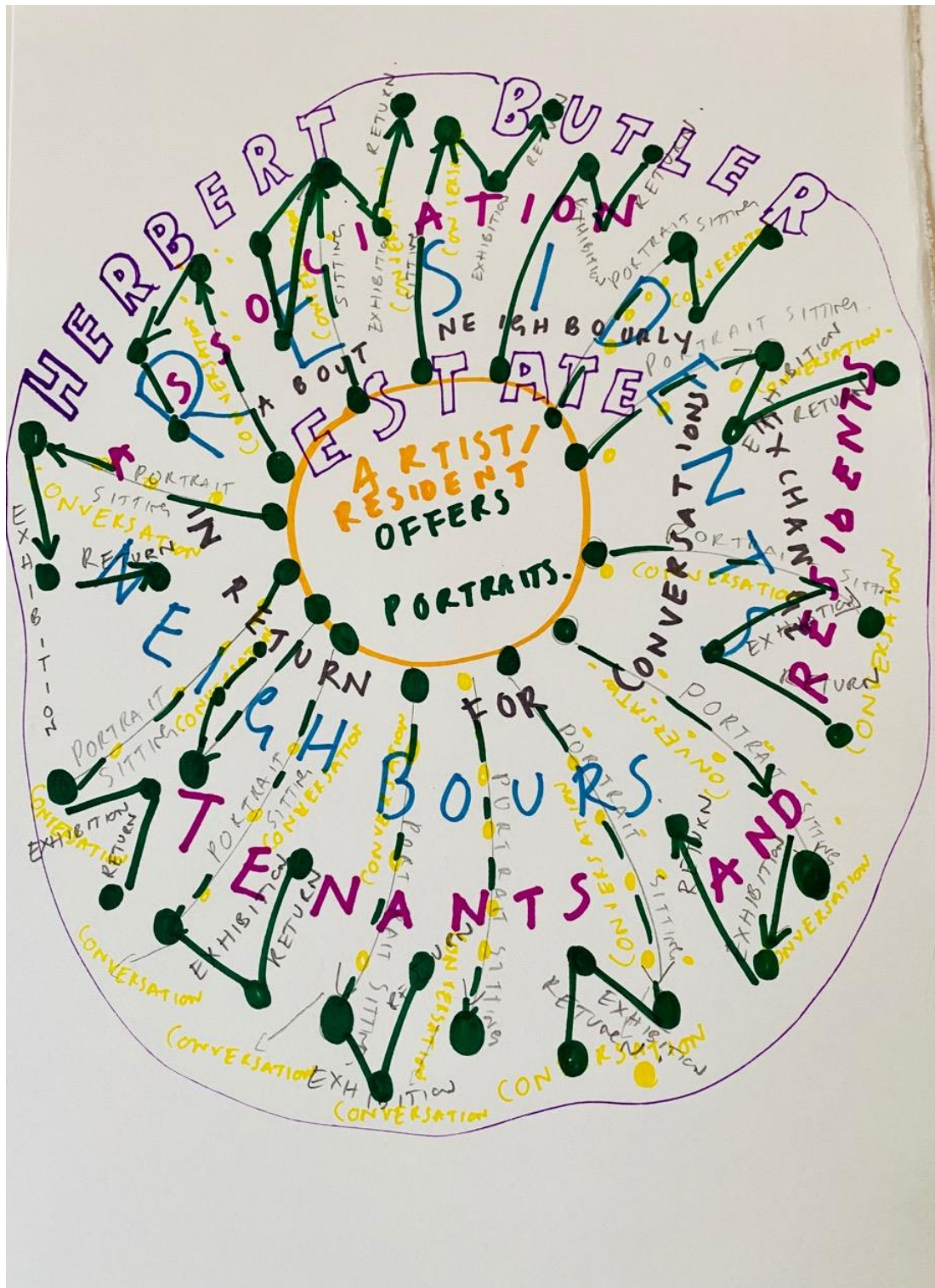


Figure 10: Diagrams of Exchange Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits

### Situating the field of research

As a result of a social focus developing in the portrait-based projects over several years, research became concerned with the dichotomy of, on the one hand being engaged in a material practice of painting, and on the other, adopting participation and socially engaged methods whose programme is to move away from such

material outcomes. Even though contemporary art is not unusual for its ability to be multidisciplinary through a hybrid of mediums, we still see the constraints that are nonetheless placed on certain 'Success Mediums', namely painting. This practice-based research is situated in current Post-Medium Painting discussions which grew from expanded painting ideas. Titmarsh suggests that Expanded Painting can be simply described as "Painting plus something else." Going on to note that

... It is a kind of painting that moves out beyond the easel and the physical limitations of the image to investigate how far painting can go in spatial and temporal dimensions. By expanding off the wall it engages objects and environments while mingling illicitly with sculpture, installation, video and nearly all other media. (Titmarsh, p.13)

My work takes Portrait as its focus but expands and opens the process to potential participants and audiences. The discussions of Post-Medium painting take painting's ability to mingle and mix with other mediums and strategies beyond its traditional situation: the canvas, even those mediums and projects that wanted to disassociate themselves from painting as Graw points out.

Painting's codes have proliferated specially in those practices that originally wanted to disassociate themselves from painting. (Graw, 2016, p.89)

My research has been led directly by, on the one hand making object-based practice, but on the other being involved with more social and community practices and both the dilemma and possibilities this poses, in practice and theory and vice versa. This research contributes therefore to the fields of Post - Medium painting and socially engaged practice and Chapter 1 identifies the relevant literature and work being made in these fields.

## **Research Questions**

Leading on from situating the research I have identified three key questions that I will refer back to throughout the thesis and use as key points in the conclusion.

How can painting be used as a tool for social engagement and a conduit for exchange?

How can painting and portrait making reveal political networks of care and consciousness raising?

What are the current values of Painting and Portraiture as a Social Practice and how could this operate in the alternative economic models in the future of the art world?

### **The Value of Painting as Social Practice**

This premise of this research project was touched upon in response to Aliza Nisenbaum's group portrait of Victoria Line staff, which was one in a series of murals commissioned for Brixton station, paying homage to the tradition of political and community mural paintings in the local area. Amy Sherlock asks, "Can Painting Be a Form of Social Practice?" in a frieze profile of the artist, there is a questioning of the "Politics of Representation" which is particularly evident in the marginalized groups that the artist chooses to work with. However, what also seems important for Sherlock is the smaller detail of how Nisenbaum becomes involved and stays involved with these groups of people, a process that began when she went to work with Tania Bruguera's Immigrant Movement International centre and wondered how, as a painter, she could incorporate the participatory processes of her socially engaged colleagues. As Nisenbaum said herself in conversation with Olivier Basciano, she is interested in "networks of ethics and exchange." The artist has a considered approach to making sure the "time isn't instrumentalised.", choosing to develop some ongoing relationships with sitters over years when commissioned to devote her process to "Painting people who may seem marginalised but have solid networks of care." (Nisenbaum, A, 2019)



Figure 11: Aliza Nisenbaum: *London Underground Brixton and Victoria Line Staff*, 2019. Commissioned by Art and The Underground. Photo: Author's own Copyright Lucy Woollett 2019

Looking at the work of Nisenbaum, which is depicting key workers of Transport for London' Victoria Line gathered together at a time when we are forced apart, seems especially relevant to this moment (although this is the artist's composite). This work was produced at a time when Nisenbaum was able to have a portrait studio at Brixton Station; it was in the same time frame as I was taking my portrait studio door to door on the estate where I live and producing neighbourly portraits. The time we have been forced to spend apart has produced some interesting responses both with community exchange and portraiture. We are in a moment when the values of life and art are being drastically rethought as we spend our days considering a never-ending stream of news and figures. How can we account for each other in this moment and look to the future?



## Chapter 1: Refiguring the Social

In this chapter I will draw out a refiguring of the social through considering the value of painting people in our time. Firstly, I set out the discussions of the two fields of contemporary practice where my work is situated, namely: post-medium painting and socially engaged practice and consider how through looking at discussions of both fields, we can understand the places where the fields of practice might crossover, and how this is possible and where there might be more in common that was once thought and how by refiguring the social, I can position my practice.

My practice as an artist is positioned between these two debates of post medium painting and socially engaged practice. My claim is that I make paintings plus something else, which is how in the introduction I described Titmarsh as understanding the notion of expanded painting: the plus part for my work is the social element. I create paintings: portraits which are made for exchange within certain social, cultural and community contexts. The focus for this discussion is not based on the surface quality and likeness itself, although that does play a part in its communicative qualities: relatively quickly composed, naïve and expressive, a style which is more relatable and flawed like the humans we are. This style and way of painting, as I have explained in the introduction, has developed over many years of producing multiple series of portraits in a social or public domain developing into practice-based methodology which is enabled by its context and situation. The focus for this research is how the process of the painting is playing a part in a much wider circle of activities with people and exchange.

There is a need to make contact and connect and painting and drawing can make time and space for this. We are learning to do this in more ways than ever through mobile devices and smartphones and it is as if life in the late capitalist era makes it harder to do this in the old ways. But for some, an insistence on using painting and drawing to depict one another exists as an urgent tool to communicate. The portrait sitting in my work creates space for discussion and communication as this

is an integral part of my painting process - the conversation that takes part between the sitter and I. In the first two projects, the conversation is the negotiation of exchange and in the third project with estate residents, the conversations become part of the aesthetic of the artwork appearing in an installation on trellises in the community hall and later displayed around the estate on noticeboards.

I discuss a number of artists whose work is contemporary and aligned to my own due to the social processes being explicit in creation of the work. This demonstrates a rigorous theoretical framework for an understanding of how my practice of making portraits through participatory and social processes is contextually situated. Establishing a systematic understanding of my field will enable knowledge production in the framework of this thesis. There is a specific focus on the process in painted portraiture in the present, examining how this act of direct connection and exchange with another person through artmaking is deemed an urgent and essential tactic by many artists today (myself included). Furthermore, I will propose the notion of an expansion of the social practice in painting through the acknowledgment of this particular form of portrait making, examining how portraiture operates in the current cultural, political and social climate where we can offer a refreshed agency for the artist, subjects, and viewers. In the age of mass digital portrait making as communication through selfies posted through social media channels and when so much of our lives can seem precarious, in the mechanisms of late capitalism, I will argue that making a painting or drawing can be the most radical gesture. By establishing the contemporary context which can be talked about through developments in Post-Medium Painting, and the socially Engaged discussions, I will demonstrate that there is something at stake in refiguring the social in portraiture.

In the introduction to *These Strangers ... Painting and People* Ann Host describes our predicament in an age when much is uncertain, this form of representation can offer a social function and force that often goes unacknowledged:

In contemporary life in which nearly everything at once is accessible and mobile, everyone has the right to countless identities and everything is open to interpretation, art is orientated towards translation. It cannot save the world or according to the ideas of Emmanuel Levinas, cannot prevent

the other from being kicked. But it can in the words of Rosemarie Trockel, "work on the continuation of politics by other means." (Hoste, A 2016)

By demonstrating an expansion of painting and portraiture to encompass both the discussion of visual culture and socially engaged debates, I will rigorously demonstrate, both theoretically and practically, how certain practices, including the work that I create, use painting and drawing to reflect and comment upon what is happening politically and socially.

### **Painting in the Post-Medium Condition**

The purpose of this section is to situate my practice in the ensuing current of Post-Medium Painting. I acknowledge that such practices are an important and urgent concern in the contemporary painting domain and beyond. While we must acknowledge Rosalind Krauss's *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* (1975) as a key text of relevance to the concept of any medium being able to expand, open out and take on some characteristics of outside influences, this was achieved through applying post-structuralist theory by way of a series of Klein Diagrams. The ideas in the text responded to what we now know as Land Art that was prevalent, albeit emergent in the mid-1970s: work such as Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* required a new set of rules to harness its understanding in theoretical terms. If we examine the Klein diagram in fig 11, we can see Krauss demonstrating that on the vertical points we had Sculpture opposed to site-construction and on the horizontal marked sites opposed to axiomatic structures. It is within the square flanked by landscape / not landscape or architecture / not architecture that possibilities for expanded sculpture open up, where the art form bleeds into other types of practices.

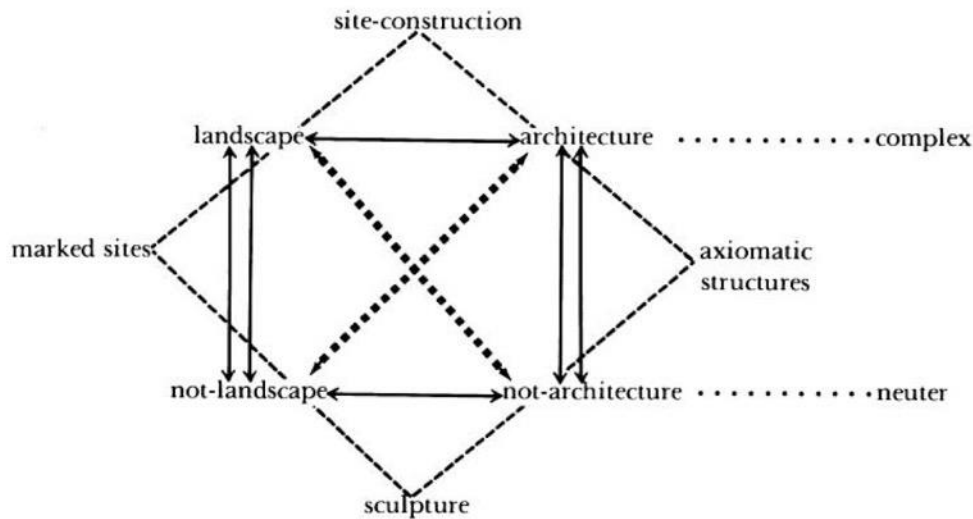


Figure 12: Krauss, Rosalind (1979) The Expanded Field Diagram copied by Williamcromar. The original image was copied from Rosalind Krauss, *Sculpture in the Expanded Field*, October, Vol. 8. (Spring, 1979), pp. 30-44

In *Painting: Critical and Primary Sources* (2015) academics Beth Harland and Sunil Manghani set out two sections regarding Expanded Field and Post-Medium Painting. The Expanded Field section follows on from the Krauss text, and although there was a suggestion by Krauss that Painting could have its expansion, this was set out using the ideas of uniqueness and reproducibility or as not unique and not reproducible, which still suggests a painting framed as a singular image. Parallel ideas were of course explored by the Anti-Aesthetic movement and The Picture Generation who were like Krauss influenced by this Post-Structural thought and where painting was considered unfashionable or ill-equipped to deal with these concepts. Harland & Manghani note that while Crimp called for an end to painting, others such as Lawson (who although criticised art market favourite Neo-Expressionist Painting) saw that painting did have the potential for radicalism.

The most compelling way of tackling the problem of what an artist might do in the face of such complex times appears to be “the least suitable vehicle available painting.” His suggestion is that, in response to the numbing multiplicity of choice of the post-modern condition, painting can become a subversive activity.

(Harland & Manghani (Vol 4 XV11 2015)

It is no longer fruitful to discuss the developments of painting's move away from the canvas using the post-structuralist methods. I believe there has been much work already done to acknowledge this work, as Titmarsh suggests. Krauss's wish was for her text to be open to interpretation which will be the focus for this next section. Post-Medium Painting, where the proponents again take Krauss's later work *Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium*, looks at the particular conditions in which work is made at the end of the in the 1990s. The proponents for Post-Medium Painting consider how painting operates now in relationship to photography, performance but also digital and social networks or any combination of mediums.

There have been various predominant arguments taking place in the field of Post Medium Painting, which have evolved through a series of recent writings, exhibitions, and works and are suggestive of paintings' potential to operate in the social field. I believe this is the field in which I can best situate my painting. I work with painting portraiture, but the paintings form part of a connectivity between people. I share the process, through painting and invitation, which is publicly viewable – for example, live portrait painting at The Museum of London, and when the exchange process became part of the event: Festival of Radical Fun. Walking around my estate with *Lady Lucy's Portrait Pochade Shopper* I painted neighbours in semi-public spaces such as a balcony, community hall or communal living room. This work therefore demonstrates various tactics of painting post medium as it is produced and circulated through a combination of social networks for example friends, the museum or the estate, live portrait painting and interaction and circulating images through exhibitions, blogs and social media.

In the introduction to the catalogue accompanying her Tate Modern survey, *A Bigger Splash Painting after Performance*, where she reframed contemporary painters into the performance art canon, Catharine Wood notices that:

And whereas traditional easel painting was based upon the single artist working upright before the canvas in a one-to-one relationship that was mirrored by the viewer various vital approaches to contemporary painting are based in the social or collaborative situations that tilt and shift that orientation. (Wood, 2012 p.9)

Wood's survey charted painting's development from High Modernism to the present through what is known as The Performative Turn. The show's title is taken from David Hockney's painting of 1967, itself showing a bodily gesture of paint which we can see as the suspended splash of water, resulting from a dive into the swimming pool presented before us. But *A Bigger Splash* is also the name of Jack Hazan's ground-breaking documentary (1975) which invites us into Hockney's world, taking us from London to LA and back again and offering us an intimate and compelling account of the art star in 1960's "Swinging London". Wood uses the painting and its namesake documentary of the actual canvas to describe a "Double Frame or condition" which she believes certain artists since the 1970s have been indebted to and which extend the realm of the possibilities of painting, as she describes:

an important transition in thinking through relations between painting, performance and the activity of daily life often performed to camera and this is a triangulation to which many artists of the subsequent generation are directly or indirectly indebted. (Wood, 2012)

This double frame is the condition painters find themselves in today, and we see artists developing this condition knowingly, either as photographic documentation, painterly performance or paintings forming part of an installation, like a theatre set, in which the viewers of art, act like an audience and become active participants in the work. This setting of the stage is at play in the work of contemporary artists in the show: Lucy McKenzie, Karen Kilimnik, and Marc Camille Chaimowicz, all inviting us into their differing worlds. McKenzie's realm is one of painted interior backdrops used for a film where we enter the set. Kilimnik's *Swan Lake* is an early example of using her well known scatter Installation technique invoking her imagining of behind the scenes at the ballet. We enter through Chaimowicz's threshold into his homage to Jean Cocteau in the form of his imagined boudoir. This double framing and our involvement in it means there is a questioning of where the art is, or to put it more succinctly, where the art object is. Through painting expanding into a theatrical space, we can see our part more clearly and join in the rehearsal. What this is suggestive of is our participation in

the process: these spaces welcome an audience and are reliant upon us enlivening them. Though these artists aren't creating portraiture, the double frame coined by Wood is something that could also be seen in my work, except in my project the people enter the double frame through the portal of my portrait studio. The ensuing circulation of the artwork and exchanges create a space which are reliant on the sitters and exchangers to enliven the painting.

David Joselit, the author who previously discussed how painting belonged to a network in 'Painting Beside Itself' (2009) continues this theme, taking us into the digital age, using the universal action of smartphones snapping images of paintings at an art museum to talk about how this double frame or triangulation now operates in a mass accumulation of imagery taking place under the conditions of modern-day life.

It makes perfect sense that in the early twenty-first century, Cezanne's *Doubt*, which named the ontological aporia of painting as procedure for marking time would become something else which might be called Duchamp's *Doubt*" regarding the aporias of circulation rather than those of production and perception.

(Joselit, D 2016)

Joselit situates the medium operating in a space outside the canvas frame much like the double frame and triangulations of Hockney and the painters in Wood's Tate show respectively, whereas phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's study of *Cezanne's Doubt* (1945) showed how an overly considered brush marked time in the modernist age. Now he suggests it is digital technology creating its renewed circulation away from the canvas. A later major exhibition and publication *Painting 2.0 Expression in the Information Age* (2016) demonstrates how the expanded medium of painting developed in line with Web 2.0 - which then developed into what we now know as Social Media. How does painting continue to develop and reflect these new situations of connection through the digital? In Joselit's curated section and accompanying text, we see an exploration of the concepts of Passage and Transitivity explored. Adopting a Duchampian model again, the painting *Le Passage de la vierge de la Mariee*, (*The Passage from Virgin to bride*) Joselit shows that modernist painting's disfiguration leaves us with a passage, made up of ever-shifting painterly gestures and marks which are

polymorphous by nature. We are being led down the garden path, which he describes as "A Passage of force through Paint." Identifying Transitivity, Joselit claims is different as it demonstrates a gesture of force from entering the canvas from outside the frame. He elaborates on this as follows:

Transitivity, on the other hand, denotes an action that carries on to an object, - especially pictures (which must consequently have crystallized out of painterly passage, or otherwise entered the field of the work, as for instance, Duchamp's bottle brush enters into *Tu m'*) Joselit, D (2016)

Joselit suggests therefore that it is where Passage and Transitivity combine, that Network Painting is born, somewhere between 1960 and 2015. Network Painting assimilates within the communication networks that we are part of now by acknowledging and demonstrating this ever-present entanglement in the mesh through making and aesthetics.

Art Historian Isabelle Graw has traced how painting can be examined outside the frame through a series of edited anthologies published over the last few years.

I didn't want to focus entirely on the isolated picture in my research instead I've sought to outline the idea of painting that has opened up to various contexts in manifold ways. (Graw, 2018 Pg. 335)

Graw understands the process of painting expanding and entering into the world through what she terms, "The Value of Liveliness". According to Graw, the painter leaves traces of her life, through her lively labour because painting inherently appears to have the artist's life embedded within it. Graw claims we can see the labour in the brush mark.

Both Joselit and Graw hint at how socially engaged practice might interact with the painting. Graw talks through how now it's often that painters work in other art forms, or how these barriers between art forms become harder to distinguish.



Painting's codes have proliferated specially in those practices that originally wanted to disassociate themselves from painting. (Graw, 2016, p.89)

Graw has noted that Conceptual Art and Painting have more in common than is often assumed, also that its many different forms can be accepted as painting; however, the crucial point is that painting is never without question and always questionable. Painting can thus act as a meta medium absorbing like a sponge but leaving some of its "residue specificity" so it can be open and heterogeneous, but identifiable. Its problematising is its strength. Graw analyses painting's position by applying the Foucauldian term Formation to understand painting as something that has an openness but also retains a certain semblance. She uses the genealogical method to trace the historical formation of painting. Analyzing this formation Graw claims that we cannot consider the single painting in isolation. Painting's formation includes agents, painters, owners, museums, patrons, collectors:

Formations are not characterized solely by their products ... they are defined by a series of actors, theories, institutions. In this case of painting, these include the painters themselves, and the apologists, patrons, collectors, gallery owners, critics, agents, and museums. (Graw, pg. 16 2018)

In applying Formation, in her analysis, Graw doesn't stop at the edges of the painting to consider its exteriors, the art world, the art market, society thus becomes part of the discussion of the work. We can liken this to Joselit's description of Network Painting, and this is certainly how I understand Painting to work in the realm of Participation and the social or when the painting is made with participants in a community situation like my practice. I would add this element to the formation of painting, placing participants, collaborators alongside those who make up the formation. The liveliness of the painter leaving her traces can be seen in my work in its unkempt nature.

The Art Historian Helen Westgeest may give the biggest key to how painting in its post-medium state can include participation. The book's second part concentrates on painting as a Socio- Critical Time –Based Art. If some painting performances

interrogate social relationships through interactive processes, it is also possible to present video art as a type of socio-critical painting. Westgeest's paper "Painting Expanded Though Included Spectators"<sup>3</sup> described how painting expands by the inclusion of a new dimension, a shift to horizontal floor or wall painting, where Spectators activate the work. She understands artists such as Imran Qureshi, Arthur Zmijewski & Pawel Althamer as employing a blurring of authorship through the artist and their collaborators and/or the audience who are participants in the work. "Painting is a verb, rather than a noun." These works offer "Collective painting performance reflective of Social and Political Issues." The Medium of the work becomes more about the social interaction that it does its medium as the artist reflects on the times we are living in. Thus, in Zmijewski's works, which often end up as a film of the process, we see painting used for a social experiment much like a reality TV show and we can understand this as "Socially Engaged", as the predominant and most important medium is the people involved, the participants. In *Blindly* (2010) an 18-minute film documents a workshop where Blind people were invited to use paint to "describe the world how they see it." I saw this piece when it was part of the Tate Modern Energy and Process display and interpreted it as a profoundly poetic, yet political work, at the time I was working as an assistant to Kate, a Blind person, so it resonated in that respect, but also in across the universal theme of communication.

In an earlier work, *Them* (2007) we see reality TV-style tactics involved where four Warsaw-based groups: young Socialists, young Jewish Group and young nationalists and women from the Catholic Church are invited to come together in a workshop and explore their groups' identities with antagonistic results erupting from collaboration, in a kind of political painting game, where emblems and slogans are cut up, interrupted and set on fire to the point where everyone has to evacuate. Throughout *Them*, we can understand the narrative is controlled and manipulated by the artist through the use of the video camera and his editing. In the first workshop session, the young Socialists open the door of the church of Catholics and by session three the Catholic Ladies are supporting the Nationalists. This piece couldn't be more reflective of the divisive times we are living in now,

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<sup>3</sup> I was present at the occasion of Westgeest delivering her paper on a panel Keeping Painting in its Place: The Refusal of The Expanded Field at The Association of Art History annual conference hosted by University of Sussex, in Brighton in 2019.

worthy of reconsideration and reflection at this time. Although made in 2007, *Them* offers us insight into how very different community and political groups form their collective identities and respond to each other. According to the art historian Claire Bishop:

"*Them* offers a poignant meditation on collective identification, the role of images in forging these identifications, as well as a harsh parable about social antagonisms and the facility with which ideological differences become hardened into irresolvable blocked patterns of communication. "(Bishop, C, 2012, 217-218)

In these two works, we can see participation through painting and socially engaged practice used in very different processes, one bringing us closer together, and the other pulling us or *Them* (distanced and othering title) apart. This film aptly shows us a microclimate of our time where social media platforms galvanise dissent from supporters of many causes in the political spectrum. Most recently we see this on collective protest by the Black Lives Matter movement's response to endemic Police Violence against BAME communities enflamed by the death of George Floyd and on the storming of the Capitol Building driven by conspiracy theorists and Trump supporters.

Others are trying to directly address these matters in a somewhat more explicit way, where community engagement, socially engaged practices, and Relational Aesthetics are acknowledged in this formation. In *Imagining a Relational Painting* (2016), Agnieszka Mlicka uses the basis of invited conversation between painter Catherine Ferguson and non-painter Ken Wilder to imagine a proposition of a relational painting by discussing how the concepts of collaborative, relational and dialogical intersect with painting. There is some need in this discussion for further elaboration on the terms as they appear to slip together. Is this about two people collaborating on a painting together? Instead of attempting to open the frame, they are closing it by merging the artist and viewer. This could be of interest if there were multiple artists and viewers, but it is clear from the start that this experiment is merely an imagining between two academics. They talk about the possibility of relational painting taking place in the Nicholas Bourriaud's idea of 'social interstice' spaces which pave the way for human interaction – this was co-opted

from the Marxian term 'interstice' where commodities trade outside of the usual capitalist system and is a classic example of this field using a post-Marxist dematerialised discussion to give strength to the argument. (Saha, Indria 2016). Although it's clear the authors, writer and painter are engaged in this field and have done their research, it is an imagining which in itself is a wonderful thing but the relational in this discussion is like an imaginary friend.

Summarising, I have discussed the current theories of Wood, Graw, Joselit, Millka, Manghani, and Westgeest and how in various ways they all are considering how painting in the expanded field has endeavoured to take on various forms of being social, of an inclusion and acknowledgement of what is happening outside the frame that may be included in the paintings heterogeneity, liveliness or installation, and also how the painter can make a choice to be active and committed, can begin to understand painting as relational and can include active participants in its production and how the participants become part of its form. I have also highlighted how my practice of making portraits can be discussed in the context where post-medium painting can be understood to contain socially engaged elements. The contribution I feel I make through my work and this study is that the social element is explicit.

### **Socially Engaged Practice and Participation**

In the last 25 – 30 years the relatively new term Socially Engaged Practice or Social Practice, as it is often referred to in the US, has begun to be defined as work of any art form where people's participation takes precedence over material practices and has risen to the forefront of international contemporary art and critical theory. It has offered a paradigm shift in the way art practice has been defined by disciplines such as painting, sculpture, performance, video art, installation art. Bishop describes this as

Post-studio, research-based, social processes, extended over time in immutable form. (Bishop, 2012, p.194)

Key proponents and historians have offered their own critical surveys, with their own interpretations, often attempting to define, redefine or add a critique to an area or concept of social practice with their own terminology, for example *Relational Aesthetics* (Nicholas Bourriaud, 1998) *Dialogical Aesthetic or Art*

(Grant Kester,) *Social Turn*, *Participation* (Claire Bishop), *Situation* (Claire Docherty) and *Do It Yourself artwork* (Anna Dezeuze)

Notable public art commissioning organisations such as Creative Time, NY and Situations UK have helped to create a critical dialogue in this work by investing in the ideas associated with the processes and working methods.

The Creative Time Summit is a roving platform to encounter the intersection of art and politics. Bringing together artists, activists, and other thought leaders working on today's most pressing issues, the Summit presents a critical range of perspectives, new ideas, and strategies for social change in local and global contexts. The bringing together of people in an open forum that is broadcast around the world is perhaps a more appropriate way for the discussion to continue and this has been developed in recent years by Creative Time, an organisation from New York, which commissions public works. Led by curator Nato Thompson and Artist Pedro Lasch, Art of the Mooc is a pioneering massive online course in pedagogy and public practice which has further democratised this discussion, making it available to all who have the Internet. (Art of The Mooc, 2015)

Embracing its international audience, The Creative Time Summit (which is due to be hosted every year in Toronto) September 2017, was previously hosted in Stockholm 2014 and co-coincided with the Venice Biennale in 2015 and Toronto in 2017. It is also broadcast to viewing parties worldwide, such as the one we organised at Winchester School of Art in October 2018 where I invited *Association of The Unknown Shore*<sup>4</sup> to talk about their work and run a Narwhal Horn replica casting workshop for Fine Art students and present their work in the context of the submit theme.

Most infamous, yet contentious is the contribution made by Nicholas Bourriaud's book, *Relational Aesthetics* (1997). The breakthrough text documented and contextualised the proliferation of Relational Art that was seen in the nineties that shifted towards a focus on human relationships, rather than the art object. It has

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<sup>4</sup> *The Association of the Unknown Shore is a growing group of Inuit, British, and Canadian curators, artists, museum & gallery professionals, members of St Stephens Church, Bristol and university researchers. They are critically and culturally responding to Martin Frobisher's 16th-century voyages to Nunavut, in northern Canada. As part of the process, they are working with various entangled, human and non-human threads to produce an in-progress work that acknowledges the legacy of the lives of the three Inuit brought to Bristol in 1577, lives that are entwined with the past, present and future of the city.*

been argued that one of Bourriaud's motivations for his approach was a strategy to frame and embolden work that he had a vested interest in as a curator. Both Kester and Bishop take a far more critical view, pulling apart the ideas and offering far more case studies in their discussions to support and build their arguments.

"Bourriaud relies on a dated caricature of activist art ... to legitimize the artists he endorses." (Kester, 2011)

Kester makes the canny link between the Picture Generation and the Biennale circulating artists of Relational Aesthetics who are commonly connected for their use of deconstruction influenced by Post- Structuralist theory, such as Hirschhorn's Monuments, dedicated to various thinkers such as Gramsci. There is much debate and discussion about where the boundaries of socially engaged practice might lie as the debate forms alongside the practices. Kester points out, when questioned by the social practice conference Open Engagement, that there is no rush to identify the best name for this practice. (Kester, 2013)

The strength of this Socially Engaged practice discussion is the ability to be self-reflexive in the development of a set of interlinked ideas and criticism that develop an understanding of how art has a valued social application and function. Bishop's *Artificial Hells* is a post-social Turn critique which examines the wider context of how this practice operates in society and in one such example talks us through the implications of New Labour's (1997 - 2010) reinvention of social engagement defined as social inclusion to justify spending. This is in turn how Socially Engaged Practice has filtered through to becoming adopted by Arts Council and publicly funded organisations in the UK.

I believe one of Bishop's strengths to be the demystifying of the supposed binaries of painting and socially engaged practices as she draws upon Rancière's rehabilitation of the aesthetic into a more nuanced discussion, in particular, by applying the framework of Politics of Aesthetics and the term Aisthesis.

Partage du Sensible is the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations of that define the respective parts and positions.

(Rancière, J 2011)

The concept of the distribution of the sensible is an influential concept of how politics and aesthetics intertwine, and how each area cannot be considered in isolation without the other coming into play, so aesthetics cannot be considered without politics and vice versa. The French word *partage* has two contradictory meanings: to share and to divide. Bishop accords the significance of the concept of aesthesis in the forming of Rancière's term. explaining that rather than artwork being autonomous, it is our relationship to it that is so. In Rancière's radically different position, the aesthetic functions on the line between being part of everyday life (heteronomy) and being separated from life (autonomy). This is achieved by appropriating Kant's thesis on aesthetic judgement whereby our understanding is temporarily interrupted by two-fold means of reason (in morality) and understanding (in knowledge). Therefore, it is at this autonomous and interrupted moment, that we are forced to draw our own conclusions via this artwork about how the world is ordered. Through questioning and considering the relationship this artwork has to the world, aesthetics and politics are inextricably linked. (Bishop, C pp. 27)

In Rancière's models of art history, 'The Aesthetic Break' is the period in modernism which stretches from cubism when the figure and mimesis began to be deconstructed and painting was declared dead, right through to the Postmodern Anti Aesthetic where figurative painting and particularly portraiture has been seen as the art form that is most associated with the market. It is pitched as outmoded, out of date, unfashionable, irrelevant and as the object for new forms of dematerialised art to push against and to give an argument for their existence. Bishop is concerned about these binaries as she sees this being destructively divisive in the way art is conceived, made and judged and calls out certain champions of the term that disown the aesthetic.

More significantly is the tendency for advocates of socially collaborative work to view the aesthetic as (at best) merely visual and (at worst) an elitist realm of unbridled seduction complicit with spectacle. (Bishop, 2012)

The discourses of socially engaged practices that are deemed more political and relevant and have chosen to perceive painting as an outmoded operation which has turned to the market while losing both autonomy and agency. On the other hand, the well-meaning Socially Engaged Practices often operate closely within

institutions caught up in Neoliberal structures and funding, so where is the happy medium? Bishop explains that it is academia that set up the rigid dichotomy for aesthetics as such it so became associated with the threefold adversaries of “formalism, contextualisation and de-politicisation”, which in turn led to it being used as reasoning against art marketization and therefore art objects. As she points out:

... the academy's embrace of social history and identity politics which have repeatedly drawn attention to the way in which the aesthetic masks inequalities, oppressions and exclusions (of race, gender, class and so on). This has tended to promote an equation between aesthetics and the triple enemy of formalism, decontextualisation and depoliticisation, the result is that aesthetics become synonymous with the market and conservative cultural hierarchy. (Bishop 2012)

I am not so sure about this argument. It in fact seems a conservative judgement on practices that continued to unleash both aesthetic and political power, but I think it is a judgement on the theoretical frameworks rather than the work. Through the scholarship of social injustices that theorise gender, class and race politics, it became clear that aesthetics once held a complicit role in the covering up of prejudice and intolerance. In the now, we can see the damage that has been done by this complicit role that aesthetics holds. It is being campaigned against by a new generation. Through Black Lives Matter, the statues of slave traders that once stood as emblems of powerful figures over our universities, towns, and museums are being torn down. This aesthetic complicity is no longer viable.

Bojana Kunst demonstrates how the social is manifested through art in the time of Post-Fordism. Playing devil's advocate, she pitches what Claire Bishop described as the Social Turn against Nicholas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*. She offers an insightful observation that:

"Every communal form of collaboration is already supposed to be political and connected with ethical issues of being together, referring to communal atmospheres, sharing, exchange, etc." (Kunst, B 2016)

Socially engaged practice in the gallery may not be that radical and effectual after all as it is occurring in an antechamber. Socially engaged art, therefore, cannot be



described as independent or autonomous as it may just walk hand in hand with our current Post-Fordist social conditions. Moreover, socially engaged practices that project organising and production tactics may be another example of late capitalism exploiting the workforce. (Kunst, B, 2015, p.55)

Responding to Kunst particular criticism of the Post Fordism co-opting of the socially engaged, where my projects are situated and how my projects happen is highly important and informs their production values. The work addresses these conditions by suggesting alternatives or showing how art practice can be an alternative to these conditions. The three projects I have set about all address their social structures in their work as this form its context and shapes its outcomes. I believe all the projects use tactics which question the status quo of the networks in which art are made. *Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours* is a DIY, artist led gifting and self-mentoring/care model in which I created value for myself and others through painting and exchange. Bringing together paintings and networks in *Interchange* starts a worldwide set of exchanges that take place far from the museum. The final project, *Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits*, focuses on a community network that I am part of as a resident.

## Participation and Painting

Bishop positions participatory practices in an art-historical frame that encompasses theatre and sites the most important thinker in Socially Engaged Practice as Situationist, Guy Debord, for his use of situations as a concept, one borrowed by Bristol Based Socially Engaged commissioning organisation, *Situations*. Bishop chooses participatory art, so as not to get confused with the nuances and variations of the Socially Engaged which she deems to be generally useful, as every artist can be described as socially engaged. Jeremy Deller explains to Claire Bishop in an interview that:

Francis Bacon was socially engaged, Warhol was socially engaged if you're a good artist you're socially engaged, whether you're painting or making sculptures. (Bishop, pg. 287, 2012)

But Jeremy Deller's, *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001) is an interesting place to consider the previously mentioned battle between socially engagement and painting. Interestingly, Jeremy Deller sees his re-enactment as a ground-up history painting.<sup>5</sup> An epic of the people achieved through participation rather than a paintbrush. Bishop goes on to mention that this work is a history painting played out in the practice of community theatre. It is my thinking that through this "ground-up history painting" played out through community theatre we can see an expansion of painting into the social. It may be useful to think of portraiture in its casual use here, for example, a portrait of a community, made by a community, or of a group portrait, made by a group. I would like to turn to a more recent body of work by Deller *You have the watches, we have the time* (2013) was an integral part of English Magic - Deller's show for the British Pavilion at the 55 Venice Biennial. The work is comprised of renditions created by prison inmates, who, before incarceration, were members of the armed forces. After discussions with the artist on modern-day conflicts, amongst the images depicted are those of British personnel such as David Kelly, the weapons inspector who committed suicide in suspicious circumstances, and New Labour spin doctor Alistair Campbell, whom both had connections to the Iraq War. The play here is perhaps on the idea of sentenced criminals depicting what some public opinion might see as the criminality of the whole endeavour. The anonymity of the imprisoned producers gives power to their voices on the outside.

If we look at Claire Bishop's *Artificial Hells*, we see her, on one hand, use anti-painting rhetoric to discuss what she delineates as emerging participatory practices. Whatever participation is, it's not painting as we know it.<sup>[1]</sup> Her view is one that appears out of touch as she relies purely on the somewhat old hat Greenbergian trajectory to undermine painting, using this difference to justify her research. This seems somewhat naïve since that myth was broken long ago by Rosalind Krauss and which has developed over the last time period, a whole realm of expanded painting and seems to contradict her discussion of aesthetics which I mention in the introduction. Tate Gallery has a room dedicated to the Expanded Painting. However, to be fair the discussion was not so developed by the time Bishop was writing and her specificity is distinctly non-object based,

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<sup>5</sup>Bishop mentions this approach by Deller on her discussion of *The Battle of Orgreave* in *Artificial Hells* p 34. In the notes she sites an article written by Dave Beech. "Deller, Cited in Dave Beech, *The Uses of Authority* 'Untitled 25, 2000."

because, in the wider scheme of artmaking, we are in a de-materialized, conceptual, post-studio zone. In another introduction, this time *Participation* (2006) Bishop correctly points out that this particular oeuvre of the breakdown of Medium Specific art has been much referenced and more important are the overlooked practices that take the social elements as their starting point. But in doing this is Bishop setting out a medium specificity for participatory art practices? Throughout the text you see the word 'painting' being mentioned. There are 59 mentions of the word 'painting' or 'paintings' in *Artificial Hells*.<sup>[1]</sup> So, does Clare Bishop have a reverence for painting, one we might reserve for our nemesis? What does she say about painting? She seems to be, in some paragraphs, writing an art historical account of how painting (object based painted art) expanded to become participation (participatory art practice). Ultimately Bishop's book is a constructive history and critique of these practices and the theories that surround them, so it is not surprising that there would be a possibility to draw out an alternative message and reading.

### **People painting people now**

I would now like to turn to the artists working with painting (portraits and figurative) who I can most align my practice to. I consider all of these artists to be creating a form of painting which actively acknowledges the social and includes some socially engaged strategies. In the last 20 years there has turn towards of figurative painting and an even more specific form of portrait making, which I would consider to be a Post-medium notion of portrait making which encompasses the socially engaged. This current gravitation towards realisms, figurative painting and portraiture and how this relates to a consideration of how we relate to one another in the here and now can be demonstrated by considering several major shows in the time frame of this research which include this trend. Associated with this is also a range of writing that accompanies these shows.

Jennifer Packer, *The Eye is Not Satisfied for Seeing at Serpentine* (2020-2021), Aliza Nisenbaum at Tate Liverpool (2020-2021), Chantal Joffe's *For Esme, Love*

or *Squalor* at Arnolfini (2020), Lynette Yiadom-Boakye's retrospective Tate Britain show (2020 and restaged due to lockdown), *Radical Figures, Painting in the New Millennium* at Whitechapel Gallery (2019-2020), David Hockney *82 Portraits and One Still Life* at The Royal Academy (2016), The curation and The Whitney Biennale (2017), The Turner Prize (2017), *Mastry*, Kerry James Marshall's 35-year touring retrospective (2017), *Downtown*, Hilton Als curated show of Alice Neel's work (2017), Joan Eardley's retrospective at National Galleries Scotland (2017), *Tight Rope Walk at The White Cube* (2015- 2016), *All Too Human* at The Tate Modern (2018). All these examples demonstrate a commitment to the painted figure and more specifically a currency of the painted portrait and how, where and whom those likenesses are painted.

The making of painted or drawn portraits in the present is both a powerful process for social change, but equally the culpability of the artist and institution and whom and what they choose to represent have recently come in to question. This reflects an age of turbulent times and divisive politics; however, as I will demonstrate, the portrait can act as a resistance to the most pertinent social and political concerns of today: migration, transgender identities, Black Lives Matter and the neoliberal economy in the age of late capitalism.

Firstly, I would like to look at a monumental moment in recent history:

7<sup>th</sup> June Bristol UK: The toppling of the Statue of Edward Colston by Black Lives Matter protestors which were sparked across the US in response to the death of George Floyd in police custody. The toppling of this statue and others can be seen as the ultimate action and response of how human representations through monuments sanctioned and commissioned by councils and government can uphold and symbolise the power and legacy of colonialism. The City of Bristol knew this needed to happen, it was long overdue. The Police response in this moment was low key, the mayor supported the action. It was a triumph, a moment of radical change. The Museum collected banners from this historic collective action so future generations could learn and be educated of the moment that the history books were turned as Janelle Janelle Monáe rallying cry goes:

America, you a lie

But the whole world 'bout to testify

I said, the whole world 'bout to testify  
 And the tables 'bout to  
 T-t-tables 'bout to  
 (Janelle Monáe, 2020)

In an age of these urgent concerns, it might be the moment to consider the necessity of a more “Ethical Portrait”, which is what Nestor does in her piece of writing documenting the dehumanisation and identity stripping of transgender prisoners, with particular reference to the case of Chelsea Manning. The support network campaigning for the prisoner’s release commissioned a portrait by Alicia Neal which “serves as a site of solidarity.” Nester describes her understanding of this notion:

To be a description of someone who holds political weight, is integral and empathetic; which challenges marginalisation through a visual image.  
 (Nestor, H 2018)

This “Ethical Portrait” of Chelsea Manning is an insightful demonstration of how I see the expansion of social in portraiture being important today, acting as a catalyst for consciousness-raising. It emanates strength and integrity which is followed through from the respect and sensitivity of its collaborative commissioning not only through the terms of representation of a person, but the wider political concerns of the support network, that of the human rights and identities of trans prisoners. It offers hope for the future, a social and political force, which foresees and contributes to Chelsea Manning’s eventual release and the clemency given by Obama.

The Whitney Biennial of 2017 was organised in the run-up to the presidential election and took place two months after the inauguration of Trump, so the curators were keen to recognise and address a rapidly evolving political situation and consider how art could respond. Co-curator Mia Locks addresses the need to get back to grassroots when the bigger picture seems out of control, this doesn’t mean a cosy notion of home, rather a contested community, but one where our interaction with others helps confront the situation.

Interested in the face-to-face encounters of direct experience many of the artists in the show see a form of intimacy in both feeling a place – a kind of doing set in the place they call home. (Locks, M 2017)

In a parallel move, Richard Prince makes a gesture of disdain to his newly inaugurated president by disowning a 2014 portrait painted from a screen grabbed Instagram Selfie of Trump's daughter, Ivanka and returning the princely sum of £36,000 which she paid for the item. There are many issues that we can observe through Prince's Instagram Selfie Portraits: the images appropriated without permission from personal social media feeds seems a far cry from Nestor's notion of an "Ethical Portrait."

Through the Whitney curation, we see a range of the practices that are all in some way addressing the status quo. Within this curation, I want to note the inclusion of several figurative painters invested in working with the portrait: Aliza Nisenbaum, Henry Taylor and Casey Celeste Dupuy-Spencer. Nisenbaum and Taylor in particular focus on disenfranchised communities that are close to them.

Nisenbaum began her latest series when she went to volunteer at *Immigrant Movement International*, a community space in Flushing Queens initiated by Tania Bruguera –a well-known socially engaged practitioner. After teaching English via Feminist Art History status, Nisenbaum began thinking about the social process of her painting and the involvement of the community. Taking time to connect, she bonded with various families which involved painted portraits at the centre, in her studio and at their homes. Since the more intimate family portraits, her paintings have evolved to work with specific groups such as the one pictured in fig. 13 where she worked with The Women's Cabinet at The Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs. *MOIA'S NYC Women's cabinet* (2016) extends the reaches of Nisenbaum's engagement with issues of political visibility. Each of the women depicted is an immigrant and were chosen in 2015 to work with the mayor's office of Immigrant Affairs as Women Leader Fellows based on their demonstrated commitment to advancing the status of immigrant women and girls (the group included Nisenbaum). (Dreskin, J 2017)





Figure 13: Aliza Nisenbaum "MOia" NYC Women's Cabinet" 2016 Oil on linen 68x85 courtesy t293 Gallery, Rome and Mary Glasgow <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en>

It's interesting to understand the curator's intention to create an aesthetic and social space where current concerns were addressed together through varying art forms and then to consider the controversy in response to white American painter Dana Schutz's painting called *Open Casket*. This is an abstract figuration appropriated from the 1955 photograph of Emmett Till, a 14-year-old black boy who was brutally murdered and whose white murderers were shortly acquitted. Mamey Till Mobley decided to leave her son's body in an open casket, so the public would witness his wounds. This ignited the Civil Rights movement. Her powerful call was: "Let the world see what I have seen." (Berger, M, 2017) It is important to consider the story of Emmett Till before the fall out at 2017's Biennial. A protest was staged in front of the painting by Parker Bright who wore a T-Shirt with the words "Black Death Spectacle" and Hannah Black penned an open letter of protest to the organisers of the Biennial, demanding the "Painting Must Go." Should Dana Schutz have recognised the controversy that would have ensued? She claimed the painting was made from a mother's point of view after seeing the current struggles such as Black Lives Matter. Critic Hilton Als asked if censorship

in the form of the removal of the painting was the solution: "When did the oppressed, become the oppressors?" whilst talking to Tim Adams about his Alice Neel show *Downtown*, which also had been accused of cultural appropriation because of Neel's depiction of her Harlem neighbourhood. While the focus remained on this painting and the controversy, other important artists and works in painting such as Alisa Nisenbaum's and Henry Taylor's lost their focus. Did *Open Casket*, therefore, take the focus away from the present urgent need to be addressed whilst underplaying the mistakes of history?

Let's return to Bristol in the summer of 2020 and the aftermath of the statue of Colton being toppled by activists, where we see the sculpture *A Surge of Power (Jenn Reid)*, by Marc Quinn, appear on the empty plinth overnight. It depicts Reid with her fist raised just after the triumphant moment of resistance. Is this a YBA artist showing previous form by using a shock tactic in the renegade spirit of Bristol's most famous street artist Banksy, or a genuine collaboration with Jenn Reid? Who asked it to be placed there and what right does Quinn have to interject in replacing the statue? Does this discussion on Quinn's art take away power from the politics in force or is it an act of Allyship? Without wanting to take away this moment of power or delegitimise Reid's involvement, these questions are important.

An article by Paul Clinton in *Frieze* highlights ugly sentiments expressed in response to the 2017 Turner Prize nominations of Hurvin Anderson, Andrea Buttner, Lubaina Himid and Rosalind Nashashibi, who are all deserving of their recent respective exhibitions which have made a significant contribution to contemporary art. It is worth mentioning that it was also announced that the upper age limit of 50 for the prize would be lifted to reflect the realities of a practitioner's development over time. Emerging first as a discussion on social media, the journalist Januszczak asks "identity politics is there a bleaker phrase in art?" This is one comment amongst a series of perturbing tweets. At the same time Artlyst published online an entire article outlining the nominees with the worrying headline: "Turner Prize Shortlist Announces Obscure Multicultural Pick and Mix". This sounds closer to what we might expect from a Daily Mail headline. This response to the Turner Prize appears to epitomise and reflect the divisive political climate created by the Brexit vote and pulling apart Januszczak's accusation of



navel-gazing identity politics. Clinton argues that identity politics is, in fact, a collective struggle:

“At the risk of stating the obvious, identity politics are primarily concerned with widespread social and structural issues of inequality, even when they are addressed through the personal. Racism, misogyny, homophobia and class identity are all collective rather than singular struggles and any attempt to draw biography often serves to situate the individual in relation to their social context.” (Clinton P, 2017)

Using both the examples of Cindy Sherman and Lubaina Himid, Clinton goes on to say that identities are constructed within the bigger picture of visual culture.

When considering Himid's *Naming the Money* her work says more about the struggles of a collective people, rather than a person. In 2017 Himid presented a triple retrospective for which she was nominated and won The Turner Prize. Her immersive painting installation *Naming the Money*, originally commissioned by The Hatton Gallery, was a major part of her triple retrospective which gained her the prize nomination. It involved the installation of a hundred cut out life-size paintings of figures accompanied by a soundtrack. Himid collectively reveals the concealed life histories of black slaves, who can be seen, but not heard, in white, European, aristocratic history painting which is displayed in public galleries across the world. The figures are introducing themselves in the soundtrack and tell of their lives before and after they were captured, speaking to each other and in turn, to us, the audience who are participating and witnessing the conversation. Simultaneously the text also appears on an invoice attached to the figures' backs and so their double live and unheard voice is revealed to us, whilst sadly reminding us that these people's previous lives were invisible, and they were mere commodities to the slave traders.

These examples also exist in an age where figurative portrait making has, perhaps, more relevance than ever. The need to spend time with one another to understand and give agency to ourselves and our communities is linked to and

can be seen in the socially engaged form of portrait making of Syrus Marcus Ware, Barbara Walker, Flo Brooks, Felicity Allen, and Mounira Al Solh. How we might construct, create and keep a community is inherent in all this work. Its aims are rooted in various forms of current activism: migratory, feminist, queer, trans and Black Lives.

Canadian Artist and Black Lives Matter activist Syrus Marcus Ware makes large scale drawings of her fellow activists, part of what she describes as sending love letters to her community. The portraits are consciousness-raising, an act of empowerment and documentary broadcasting from inside the Black Lives Matter community. The importance of telling one's own story is at play in the case of Syrus Ware: a black trans man who is an activist, artist, and father. These are not distanced news photographs of activists gathering in crowds but the individual voices that make up that crowd and how they relate to one another and us. The larger than life portraits act as a demonstration of the importance and urgency of activism.

### **Space, Place and Who – The work of Barbara Walker**

Birmingham based artist Barbara Walker is highly regarded British artist who is well known for her large scale drawn figurative and portrait work. Barbara's community is the Afro-Caribbean community of Birmingham where she has worked for decades. As her son grew into a man, she used his experience of stop and search to create life-size portraits documenting the unnecessary and racist exchange with the law that many black people have suffered through Stop and Search tactics.

It is this same decade's old racist police violence that we see being protested in this moment. *Space, Place and Who* was a residency and exhibition of Walker's recently taken place at Turner Contemporary Margate. Giant building scale drawn wall portraits greet you in the gallery's foyer made using charcoal and Margate Chalk. We are introduced to five differently aged women from the African Diaspora living in Margate who jointly tell of their experiences of arriving and living in the town – some are longstanding residents and others are recent arrivals. Each of their experiences are compellingly individual and contrasting from the perception of a quiet seaside town, to talking of the cleansing sea air to, the availability of buying hair products, the experience of being a Margate teenager to arriving as a refugee in Kent on the back of the lorry from Sudan. Through this project Walker

shows us a network of care as the women discuss their experiences in the accompanying soundtrack. It is evident that Walker has worked intimately with each of these people. The process of participation is fundamental to this work. The portraits are framed by the women's voices talking together of their experiences and it is here that we see and hear a network of care revealed.

We are no longer invisible, we need to make ourselves visible and this was an opportunity to do just that. I was also pleased that it was an artist of African Caribbean decent because I didn't want the gaze to be that of somebody who may not have shared some of my experience. The gaze is different when it comes from someone who is similar to you (Walker B, 2019)

Temporary for the exhibition maybe, but emblematic of the importance of the strength of such a group. I saw the work on two occasions in Jan 2020, firstly when I visited for the Turner Prize, and the work fits into the collective theme of the show, the prize sharing of which I mention on page 68. Visiting again in September 2020 for *We Will Walk- Art and Resistance in the American South*, I reconsidered the power of the work in light of the BLM protests of the summer and the display of the force of black women's collective art making in the form of the beautiful *Gees Bend Quilts*.

The Lebanese artist Mounira Al Solh's work *I Strongly Believe in our Right to be Frivolous*, (Fig 14) was initiated in 2012 as a response to the forced migration of Syrian and Palestinian refugees to Lebanon. She has created an ongoing series of 350 portraits that document the encounters and conversations with refugees from the Middle East and North Africa. The project follows her where she is based, for example, for *Documenta 14* (2017) in Basel she drew the stories of refugees in the city. The mass of drawings has grown as the migration crisis has grown. The drawings are produced on yellow lined legal paper, reclaiming its usual officious purpose as document contributing to the rigorous and complicated process of obtaining citizenship. The conversation and knowledge exchanged with Al Solh appear alongside the drawings. Just as Syrus Ware chooses a form of documentary through drawing, and is part of a community, so is Al Solh as she

sees herself as making work from the inside out, giving a voice to those who are hidden.



Figure 14: Mounirah Al Sohl - *I Strongly Believe in our Right to be Frivolous*, installed at Drawing Room – photo authors own, Copyright: Lucy Woollett



Figure 15: Flo Brooks, *Full of Sediment, Full of Doubt* acrylic on wood (2017). Dimensions variable, photo by Mark Blower, *From Is Now a Good Time* at Cubitt Gallery, London Courtesy Flo Brooks and Project Native Informant, Copyright: Flo Books

Flo Brooks's paintings of people and situations, which are sometimes self-portraits, are about loving and caring for family and the queer community. Inherent in the experience of liminality, the brightly coloured often collaged juxtapositions depict his life as an artist transitioning from female to male. The starting point for these paintings was a move back to the South West of The UK undertaken on a dual mission to take care of and work with each of his parents while simultaneously taking care of his transitioning body which was undergoing hormone treatment. There is a beautiful open-ness and honesty to a negotiation of life which is placed before us in the subjectivity and composition of the painting. In *Is Now a Good Time* (2018), the painter's solo exhibition at Cubitt Gallery, we step inside Brooks' painted version of reality, which makes mundanity extraordinary through the action of painting. Each of the paintings depicts a moment of domestic exchange between parent and artist, sometimes with an added cast of cats, creatures or a curious ten-year-old boy called Henry. There is a celebration of family and bodily intimacy at play here, as painting becomes part of Brooks' self-care, bringing humour into the sometimes difficult tasks like, "Putting that blasted belt on the washing machine." (Brooks, 2017), which we can see taking place in the painting *Full of Sediment, Full of Doubt* (2017) in fig 15. The life-size acrylic paintings are brightly coloured and filled with shapes depicting domestic objects from every-day life that explode from the painting, suggestive of energy which also adds humour to the painting. The mundane practical tasks being attended to in the imagery are contrary to the scope and imaginings of the brush. Flo's parents, the stars of his show, appeared at the opening and were recorded for a podcast with Cubitt curator, Helen Nesbitt. In another project, *Outskirts*, Brooks further explores liminality, this time through what he describes as "social portrait project" where he collects writings from others interested in the liminal and makes collaged painted portraits from their stories.

### **Dialogical Portraits**

Felicity Allen's *Begin Again* project is made up of a series of what she calls 'Dialogical Portraits' which she started when she left her job as head of Education at The Tate Britain and 'reinvented herself as a practicing artist'. The portraits are

dialogical because they are created out of portrait sittings which also function as dialogues with her friends, colleagues, and contemporaries. The accompanying project logbooks act as evidence of these conversations.



Figure: 16: Anne Wagner with Felicity Allen from film still from *As if they Existed* by Felicity Allen with Tom Dale Copyright Felicity Allen (2015)

*As if they Existed* (2015) is a film that was produced while Felicity had a residency at Margate Contemporary and acts as a kind of group portrait of a set of Felicity Allen's contemporaries and feminist luminaries from the arts and writing world, including feminist art historians Grizelda Pollock and Anne Wagner. In creating this space Allen creates a distinctly feminist space, almost Utopian, where painting and identity can be discussed by women, amongst women. Knowledge about the relational nature of painting is being produced before our eyes as we hear Wagner telling Allen:

The sitter sort of creates her own fiction of identity as well as the painter creating his fiction, and you know the idea of behaving for a portrait. (Allen, 2017)

The women are in dialogue with Allen, but also us, as we are invited into this space too, through the filmmaking. As we watch the film we see the artist in the frame, the famous trope of the painter in the picture is reinvented for a personal and political cause. Through being invited into this space we can learn, not just

about the individuals as a subject, but also a discussion on portraiture through feminist art history is opened out and offered up. If we think back to Nisenbaum's teaching of English Via Feminist Art History, then consider the parallel as Allen in painting and filming her own art history lessons it is interesting to see the portrait space as a relational space and one that relates strongly to forms of pedagogical practices.

I believe that the ideas and practices which I have been discussing in this section all, in some way, refigure the social through figurative. All these artists are in some way working with visibility and identity. This is achieved as their practices expand to include social and participatory elements either in the making and/or the viewing. Allen, Al Solh and Nisenbaum have all chosen to work with migrant communities, their activism takes place through the act of exchange via portrait painting. There is a reinvention of the art historical, to refigure painting in an age of post-studio dematerialised practice. In fact, in many of the works we see the studio being a flexible situation as the painting work is a documentation of life and its concerns.

### **Zanele Muholi and Steve McQueen Building and documenting communities through participatory photographic practices.**

I want to look at the work of two photographers, Zanele Muholi and Steve McQueen, where I understand their portraiture practice as embodying relational and politicised socially engaged practice. This work could only be achieved in photography, for a variety of reasons, but I think it is important to point out how these photographic portraits are created and distributed amongst networks of people and how this suggests future possibilities for expanding the medium of photography whilst raising the subject of how art operates in society.

Walking through the Arsenale section of the Venice Biennial in 2019, the figure and the head is omnipresent as we meet myriad representations of the human form amongst other formal abstractions and systems which reflect upon the exhibit theme *May We Live in Interesting Times*.

Firstly, visual activist Zanele Muholi appears to us in a series of black and white photographed self-portraiture paste ups titled *Somnyama Ngonyama, Hail the Dark Lioness*. Muholi's aim was to take photographs of 365 days in the life of a Black Lesbian artist. The images hold the power through format and discipline as we meet their gaze offered in various forms of performed non-apologetic and proud appearances. Whilst challenging histories of racism through their referencing of colonial ethnographic imagery, they also talk about gender and queer politics. Muholi's work is at its forefront political, hence their self-appointment as a Visual Activist rather than Visual Artist. An earlier series called *Faces and Phases*, started in 2006, created a photography document of Black South African lesbians at a time when gay marriage was legalised, but queer people were still persecuted through hate crime and brutal murder. Here we see how Portraiture can give visibility and power to a marginalised community. The people they work with are active participants in the work, as Muholi points out, "because you partake in a project that will inform many audiences." (Human Rights Watch, 2013) They see themselves as an activist first and this choice renders power through the direct nature of the imagery. Muholi believes in building an activist community and portraiture is the way which she achieves this. Using the capital from the artwork, they return this back to their community through to fund resources and education. Infamy's gives a platform for the photography and voices of the queer people participating in the series.

Steve Mc Queens epic project *Year 3* sought to create a giant group photographic portrait of all London primary school children of the titular year enrolled in the 2018 – 2019 session. The classes were professionally photographed by a team instructed by the artist and filmmaker. Inspired by his old school year 3 photo taken at Little Ealing Primary in 1977 when he was aged 7, McQueen chose this age group for the documenting of a future London generation due to the pivotal stage they reach in their development where they become aware of the world beyond their family or care groups.

"It's a very formal photograph, it's really you know it's like you standing sitting and cross-legged with the teacher either side or one side. I used to love that format and it was just about reflecting on, on that class, it was reflecting on that school and it's also something which can be so local and



in a multitude of other photographs can be kind of global and reflect out all of futures. "(McQueen, 2020)

Over 3,000 framed class photos were exhibited together in a giant cumulative display on every wall of Tate Britain's central Duveen Galleries. Only the school and the children from the class knew of their position in the installation, and children visited in their year groups. To see the photos that were out of sight, there was a giant moveable magnifying glass in operation, a bit like a ladder you might see in an old-fashioned library. In parallel, there was a coordinated temporary outdoor display of the class photos blown up to billboard scale across 3,000 sites in all of London's boroughs on streets and on railway and Tube stations. After the Tate exhibition closes, the portraits will then be returned to the school. The different stages of participation and involvement can be traced across different situations and is achieved by the collaboration of multiple organisations: this project was produced by Tate, Art Angel and education specialists A New Direction, all taking on important roles in the project, from the first invitation to the negotiation of the class photography sitting, the class visiting with their school and their families and the viewing themselves on billboards. When the classes visited the galleries, they were instructed to make themselves heard. In the usually quiet, almost silent space of the gallery they were not just seen, but most definitely heard.

This project takes the format of the school class photo, which is usually shown at school or sits at home on a shelf or mantelpiece until it is replaced by the next years photo. The circulation of the image has a limit; it doesn't often go beyond this private space. What does it feel like for a child to understand themselves in relationship to not a class of 30 but a whole city of 100,000 children all the same age? What does it mean for the parent's families and teachers of the children and to us the viewers? The important thing here is that it is a survey that captures everybody through the children, unless their consent forms are unfillable: a multitude of stories, faces and places and true celebration of diversity at a time when divisiveness threatens. There was no way of knowing that when year 3 became year 4, it would be a very different year when many of these children couldn't be together, except for those who had parents who were key workers, in which case they would be in much smaller classes, missing their usual friends but perhaps making new ones when everyone else had to stay at home.



Figure 17: Steve McQueen Year 3 project (2019,) billboard in Stamford Hill, photo by author, Copyright Lucy Woollett 2019

## Pandemic responses in art Artist Support Pledge and Portraits for NHS Heroes

In the recent months due to the Covid-19 pandemic we have all witnessed or been involved with acts of community cohesion: from the *Clap for Carers* every Thursday evening at the peak of the first wave, to the quick setting up of Mutual Aid groups where local grass roots communities were able to help those in need quicker than the authorities.<sup>6</sup> In visual art communities, two of the responses we have seen have been artist led initiatives *Artist Support Pledge* and *Portraits for NHS Heroes* programmes. *Artist Support Pledge* was initiated on 16<sup>th</sup> March by Matthew Burrows, the premise being that any artist can sell their work for no more

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<sup>6</sup> On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020, 259 Mutual Aid groups supporting people self-isolating or shielding due to Covid-19 had formed. (2020, Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK)

than £200 by posting to their own Instagram account under the hash tag of #artistsupportpledge. In return, they pledge to buy someone else's work once they reach the goal of £1000 or the equivalent local currency worldwide. The programme encourages a culture of generosity and has been highly successful; many artists including myself have used it as funding support system during the crisis.

*Portraits for NHS Heroes* is another programme set up in response to the pandemic where initially portrait artist Tom Croft offered a portrait to any NHS worker and then suggested others do the same. This parallels the social phenomena of *Claps for our carers* and *Thank You NHS*, an outpouring of public thanks for key workers. Over 800 artists offered portraits to NHS workers, via their social media feeds. In the words of the first NHS member of staff to be painted, A & E Nurse Harriet Durkin, on another painting in the project, *Ready to Go* by Lindy Lloyd:

I think this portrait is so powerful because when wearing the full respirators, all the machines/vents are on, and everyone is communicating it's impossible to hear. Closes circuit communication is so important in emergency settings so having your name on the front of the gown is helpful for members of the team to direct a task or communicate with you.  
(Durkin, H 2020)

There is no doubt of the power of the emotional value of these paintings. A document of NHS staff working on the Front Line at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic or *Heroes* as the project, the public and the government call and celebrate the people. Each work has been negotiated between the NHS Staff

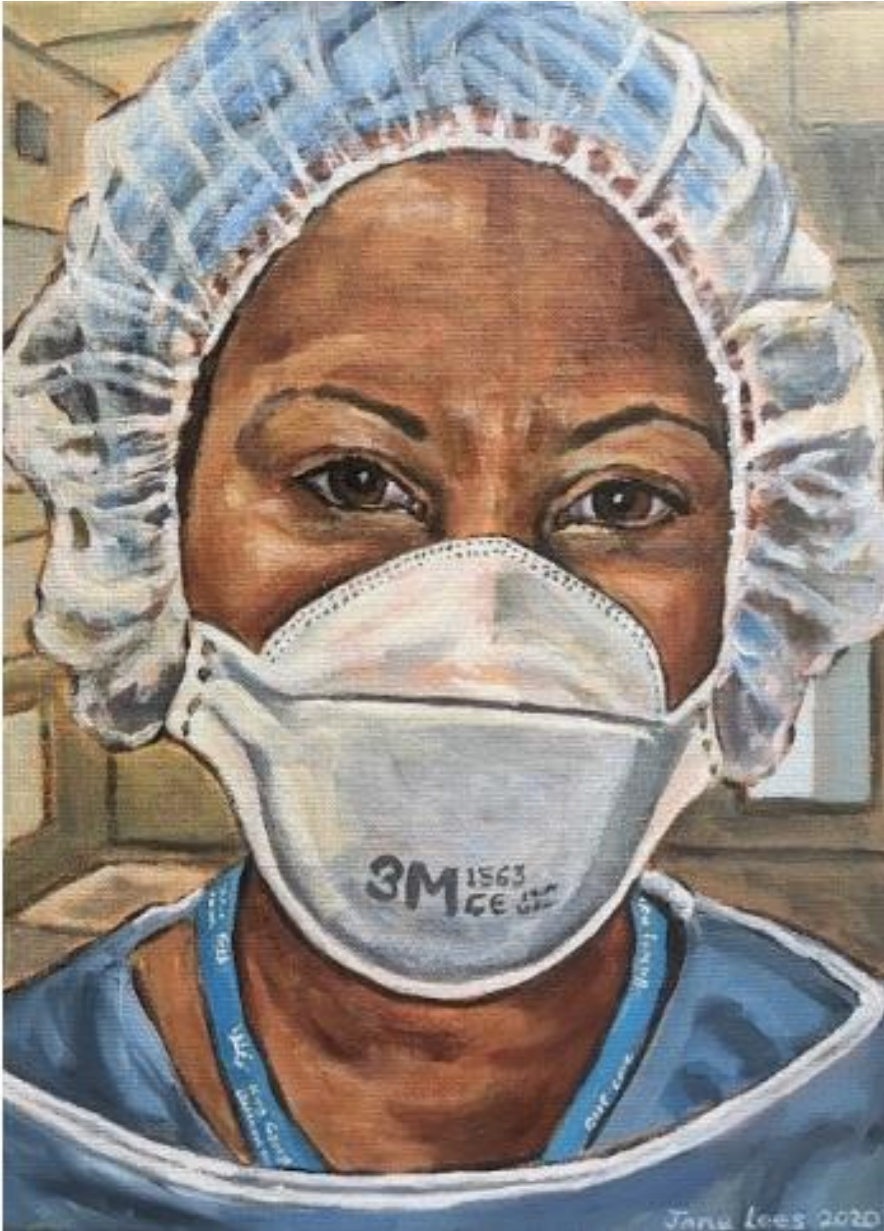


Figure 18: Rita by Jane Lees Portraits for NHS Heroes (2020) Image accessed from <https://q.co/arts/dY8QhCuVdA8nM4sD9> last accessed 5/1/2021

member and the artist as the works are in most cases produced from photographs that the health worker has chosen. Rather than the traditional sitting for a portrait, these images are negotiated over email conversations and WhatsApp chats. I am not privy to these conversations, but I imagine a chance for some time/a moment or two away from the arduous and emotional labour of the hospital ward or any overloaded NHS Work situation was a welcome break, offering a rare chance for refecation and micro recuperation before the next imminent work shift. To us viewers it tells a more personal story of working in the NHS in the height of the pandemic for the time and attention paid to each worker is more than the rolling news can generally offer. In *A Fortunate Man, The Story of a Country Doctor*, the 1967 document of Doctor John Sassal (an alias) and his Forest of Dean practice

and its people, John Berger attempts to assess the value of the Doctor's work. It is of course priceless.

What is the social value of a pain eased? What is the value of a life saved? How does the cure of a serious illness compare in value with one of the better poems of a minor poet? How does making a correct but extremely difficult diagnosis compare with painting a great canvas? Obviously, the comparative method is equally absurd. (Berger, J, 1967)

The disparity that is at play is on the one hand being some important grassroots painted document of NHS workers, the portraits themselves exude empathy, love, kindness and bring up all sorts of questions, such as the multiplicity of how, who they are painted. One picture I immediately was drawn to was of Rita by Jane Lees (Fig 13). Rita seems protected by a halo-like PPE, it turned out that Jane Lees is a vicar which might explain the link to the religious iconography. Applying comparisons of value to the labour of Key Workers in Covid-19 pandemic is insensitive considering the ineffective PPE at the start of the crisis which caused hundreds of deaths to workers because they were vulnerable at work. The value of the NHS is such a contested and complicated issue and claps, portraits and gifts cannot make up for its neglect and road to privatisation. There seems to be a divide between the taskforce of vernacular portrait painters working in relative safety and the people working on what has been termed "The front line." However, these portraits hold stories of the sittees' lives during the pandemic that we are forced to confront, and the multitude of paintings is the project's power. Setting up projects such as these in response to the covid-19 pandemic will have far reaching and longer consequences for a self-sustaining artist funding ecology that is driven by artists themselves.

I believe that these responses, which have been driven by social media and connecting people, points towards the premise of post-Capitalism and to the structures of Alternative Economics. They also relate to other gestures where once giant art prizes have decided to share the money out. The four recipients of the Turner Prize 2019 shared their £20,000 prizes and in 2020 The Turner Prize awarded bursaries to 10 artists. The Art Fund Prestigious *Museum of the Year*

award is now shared and the Jarman award winners of 2020 decided to share their wealth.

## Chapter 2: The value of Portrait making as a social activity

In this chapter I will present an analysis of my first two interlocking case studies *Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours* and *Interchange*. In both of the projects I ask people to exchange something for the portrait either for myself in the first example or to be passed on to make a connection with someone else in the latter. As I discussed in the previous chapter by looking at the work of others, it is not just the exchange value at stake, but value is also embodied in the time spent together making the portrait. What is particular to this situation of portrait making and how can we elucidate its value? The various art historical breaks and philosophical moments that draw out a particular expansion of the social in portraiture and the theories associated with these will be examined. I will reconsider moments from this history and re-examine the social aspects which will reframe and bring to light the function of portrait making as a socially engaged practice. I believe this social function of portraiture has always had relevance in society but seems especially now. After the section on *Interchange* project at the Museum of London where I initiated a network of exchanges with the public, I will discuss how this exchange mechanism might be a microcosm or at least take on board the dialogues about alternative economics of post-capitalism and how art could operate in these conditions.

### Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours

The flyer displayed below, PFSG 1, is the original call out for the project *Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours* that I put out on various social media channels and through word of mouth. It reads “Open to Offers” and invites people to propose a Service, Gift or Favour that they would be prepared to swap in return for an A3 Watercolour Portrait painted by myself. Highlighted are some examples that I had garnered from initial and informal conversations to encourage ideas. The only stipulations I encouraged, and later insisted upon, were no money or art to be



offered in return. These were put in place to a: stop people offering cash, the standard route to obtaining a picture and think about what could be offered as an alternative, also to find out how the people offering saw the value of the portrait. and b: to try and differentiate between the free exchange of art for free which is an already well-known practice between artists and creatives.



PFSG&F 1 Flyer for Portraits, Services Gifts and Favours (2014) Pen on A 4 paper

The project came about as a way to test some research ideas that had developed around portraits and exchange, and the querying of what type of art practice this was. After a series of institutional projects, I felt the need to reclaim my practice and interrogate what was going on. Pragmatically, it operated as kind of informal mentoring scheme to connect to others and rethink the work. It took place at a precarious time for myself where I was between jobs existing on a very low income or unemployed. There is a time similarity here to the timing that Allen



describes in *Begin Again Chronicles (2015)* as the portraits she made of colleagues and friends met in the public art sector corresponded with the implementation of the UK's Austerity regime. It worked as a practice-led project, as the process of the project developed, and conversations took place, a research framework began to be formed. I logged my progress on a Tumblr blog and various Social Media as a way of keeping track of the project. People got involved by asking questions and offering their gifts, services or Favours. There was a considerable negotiation involved and sometimes during the sittings, people offered food.

The journey has taken me from London to Dancing Ledge, Berlin and The Isle of Mull. This process has built relationships with individuals through the process of painting and exchanging for services, gifts, and favours. Each painted work or object rests within the discursive and social realm of its happening. A full list of exchanges so far is available on the project blog listed as no 1 in the supplementary materials. In an article, self-published by one of the sitters, Antonio Ciutto describes the experience of himself and his partner getting painted for the project:

... My partner and I once sat for a Lady Lucy portrait as part of her "Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours" reciprocity project: an exchange of things for mutual benefit. In return for a round-trip to Berlin and a stay at our apartment we received a portrait. We became participants in one of Lady Lucy's unspoken social psychology experiments. Exposed and vulnerable, we sat for several hours while Lady Lucy slowly, diligently painted our likenesses from the foot of our bed. The intimate event became an art-social game. (Ciutto, A 2019)

An iteration of this project happened as I started the doctoral research. I started paying more attention to what happened in each of the sittings, and the life of the exchange between us. There have been about 25 exchanges so far as part of the project and here I will discuss a few of them as examples of what took place.

The next sequence of images *PSFG&F 2 – 5* show the Spring 2017 sitting with Felicity in Ramsgate and the items that Allen offered in return. Allen offered me a

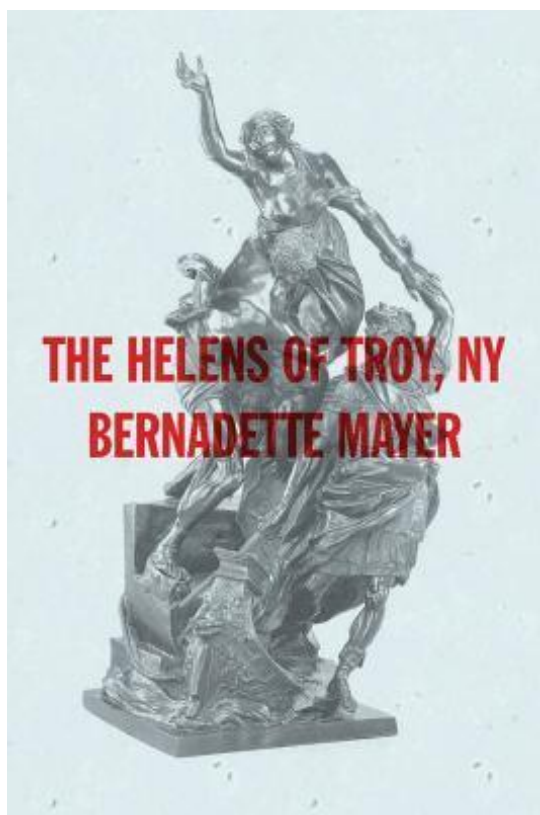
haircut at her hairdressers in Lower Marsh, Waterloo and a poetry book *The Helens of Troy* by Bernadette Mayer. Additionally, and perhaps most important, was hosting from the artist - an invite to Allen's home one weekend in the Kent seaside town to paint her and be painted. At first this was a challenge because of the clause I had put into place to prevent the swapping of art, but while I gave Allen her portrait after she painted me, I did not receive one in return. I discussed Allen's dialogical portrait making in the previous chapter. Through this sitting our practices interlinked and Allen asked me to think of how I would "Interpret Exchange"? This came about as the artist asks those she paints to think about how they would like to offer something back to her. Allen doesn't exchange the physical painting, but for her it is an exchange of labour, and as such in the portrait you see Allen painting myself with me out of frame painting her. The most fruitful thing to come out of this exchange is a friendship and the ongoing discussion of how our work intersects with portraiture and exchange. This conversation can be seen in the image below PFSG&F 3 as I portray Allen in her studio painting me. I am out of frame but my likeness can be seen behind artist as she paints. This portrait sketch is directly influenced by my study of Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1656), the most famous portrait making composition in art history, a subject to which I will return later in this chapter. In my portrait, Allen herself is the subject and I take the position of the viewer.



*PFSG&F 2 Portrait of Felicity Allen by Lady Lucy in her home studio in Ramsgate with Portrait of the author in the background*



*PFSG&F 3 Felicity with her Portrait at her studio (2017) Digital photography Project documentation*



*PFSG&F 4 Felicity offers a haircut – author getting haircut – project documentation*

*PFSG&F 5 Felicity offers The Helen of Troy NY Bernadette Mayer as a gift*



Below IN PFSG& F 6 -7 is documentation of the exchange I undertook with Steph a friend I met through my day job. In September 2017, whilst talking in the break room at our call centre they offered the facilitation of a meditation session for a portrait. As it was summer, we decided to visit Steph's local green space and means of escape, Tower Hamlet's Cemetery Park in Bow. The sitting was quite uncomfortable as we hadn't really considered the practicalities of painting in a graveyard and we were talking a great deal, so the painting was finished at home and then later returned to Steph. By the time I had finished the painting Steph had moved near to Abney Park Cemetery in Stoke Newington so we took the photo there. Substitution of one of London's Magnificent Seven Cemeteries for another.

The meditation session took place the next summer in a paddling pool in Seven Sisters in the middle of a heat wave. It came at a period of time when I was suffering with anxiety and so it was a good opportunity to learn some skills to delimit the stress in my life. In the last year, I have certainly found meditation useful at times, even joining an online session. Reflecting back on these two situations now, they highlight what some people find of value in lockdown, to be able to access green space and to use some tools of self-care.



*PFSG&F 6 Steph holds their portrait in Abney Park, Cemetery, London (2018)*



*PFSG&F 7 The author learns to meditate in a paddling pool, Seven Sisters, London - project documentation (2018)*



At first this exchange with Gemma and Manuel appears to be a simple one. At a mutual friend's birthday meal, a couple, Gemma and Manuel offer a pair of Portuguese trainers after quoting the example of a previous exchange with Rita and Pepe who exchanged a pair of handmade shoes chosen from Majorca. I visited their flat in Forest Hill to paint the portrait – *PFSG&F 8* and a week or so later a box arrived at my studio with the shoes that Manuel had bought back from Portugal. I was very happy with the look of the shoes and tried them on, but they were a little too tight. I thought that I would be able to wear them but unfortunately after a year of trying to wear them in, the shoes still didn't fit. I didn't tell Gemma and Manuel what happened.

In 2019 Naomi, a journalist doing a paid internship at The Economist, came to live in a sublet in our shared house around the time I was finishing *Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits*. As a self-organised project, I was trying to get the press release written and sent off to try and get some coverage in the local news. One evening Naomi told me she liked the shoes – I had got them out again to see if they would fit and so I said you can have them, and she offered help with the press release. You can view how this anomaly is represented below in *PFSG & F 15 Diagrams of Exchange Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours*. On the bottom right of the diagram a portrait (green dot) is exchanged for a gift (blue dot) which then gets exchanged again for a service (yellow dot). There is an extra branch of the diagram.

What's of interest here is the seeping of one project's economy into the other, of something that becomes obsolete to someone, becomes useful to someone else. The model of exchange that naturally occurred over time in this instance is the model that I wanted to use in Interchange. It also is an example of the kind of day to day exchanges that happen when we live together or are neighbours, which is the model of exchange that I wanted to capture in the project for which Naomi wrote the press release.



*PFSG&F 8 Portrait of Gemma and Manuel in exchange for some shoes from Portugal (2017)*



*PFSG&F 9 shoes from Portugal in exchange for portrait of Gemma and Miguel (gift)*



*PFSG&F 10 Naomi offers to write exhibition press release for shoes that don't fit author*

## Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours at The Museum of London



A key component of the practice work for this thesis was staged at The Museum of London in summer 2017. I was invited by Lauren Parker, the curator of *City Now*, *City Future* to present *Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours* at the launch of a yearlong season which examined the condition of urban living in the present and the future. At the same time as bringing the portraits together temporarily for this project there was an opportunity to create a further project with museum visitors to and to widen the circle of exchange which evolved into *Interchange*, which I will discuss later in the chapter.

We live on an urban earth. More than half of the people on the planet live in urban areas. By 2050, it's predicted that two-thirds of all humans will be city-dwellers. *City Now City Future* explored how we live in cities today, what cities might be like in the future, and how we can all be part of making our cities better. (Museum of London, 2018)



[illegible]

*PFSG&F 12 Portraits, for Services installed at The Museum of London (2017), Watercolour pics in frames, gouache wall painting, dimensions variable*



PFSG&F 13 Portraits, for Services installed at The Museum of London (2017), Watercolour pics in frames, gouache wall painting, dimensions variable



PFSG&F 14 Portraits, for Services installed at The Museum of London (2017), Watercolour pics in frames, gouache wall painting, dimensions variable

Documentation of the display seen in *PFSG& F 11 -14* bought together all of the portraits and exchanges that had been undertaken since starting the project in a new installation featuring the portraits framed by gouache painted text highlighted the services, gifts and favours offered in return.

*Portraits for Service, Gifts and Favours* transitioned from existing as a self-organised project amongst friendship networks to becoming a display at a major institution and there was an incongruous nature to this process, which required some problem solving around the practicalities of such an undertaking. The portraits to be put into the display belonged to the participants, each portrait resting in a distributed network of private homes in multiple locations. I travelled around to people's homes and picked them up or I met the sitter at a convenient location to them. This included me travelling to Berlin just before the show to pick up two pictures, the cost of which I took out of my fee. On the return from the museum, a friend who was part of the project took them back to Berlin for me and in return I took them out to dinner to say thank you. This journey in the work is not something that can be fully shown, although it is present in Instagram posts. Every participant was required sign a loaner's agreement form and after I gathered them I checked them into the conservation department for them to be checked like any artefact accessioned into a museum would have to be. This was for insurance purposes and to protect both parties. The key to understanding this project is its vernacular situation of the portrait making, and the ensuing distribution. Paintings come to be displayed in multiple locations on the homes of the sitters. The value is of course much more than the thing that is being exchanged. It is the longer-term networks of friends, acquaintances and colleagues that grew from this situation. Below in *PFSG&F 15 Diagrams of Exchange Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours* you can see how the exchanges take place within the artist's social circle. The portraits (green dots) move out from the artist to sitter whilst the Service, Gift or Favour are returned to the artist.



PFSG&F 15 Diagrams of Exchange Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours

## Portraits, Services, Gifts and Favours documentation list

- PFSG&F 1 Flyer for Portraits, Services Gifts and Favours (2014) Pen on A 4 paper 76
- PFSG&F 2 Portrait of Felicity Allen by Lady Lucy in her home studio in Ramsgate with Portrait of the author in the background 79
- PFSG&F 3 Felicity with her Portrait at her studio (2017) Digital photography Project documentation 80
- PFSG&F 4 Felicity offers a haircut – author getting haircut – project documentation 81
- PFSG&F 5 Felicity offers The Helen Of Troy NY Bernadette Mayer as a gift 81
- PFSG&F 6 Steph holds their portrait in Abney Park, Cemetery, London (2018) 83
- PFSG&F 7 The author learns to meditate in a paddling pool, Seven Sisters, London - 84
- PFSG&F 8 Portrait of Gemma and Manuel in exchange for some shoes from Portugal (2017) 86
- PFSG&F 9 shoes from Portugal in exchange for portrait of Gemma and Miguel (gift)) 86
- PFSG&F 10 Naomi offers to write exhibition press release for shoes that don't fit author 87
- PFSG&F 12 Portraits, for Services installed at The Museum of London (2017), Watercolour pics in frames, gouache wall painting, dimensions variable 89
- PFSG&F 13 Portraits, for Services installed at The Museum of London (2017), Watercolour pics in frames, gouache wall painting, dimensions variable 90
- PFSG&F 14 Portraits, for Services installed at The Museum of London (2017), Watercolour pics in frames, gouache wall painting, dimensions variable 90
- PFSG&F 15 Diagrams of Exchange Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours 92



### **Situations of Portraiture**

The situations of the portraiture I make are key to the process. The portrait does not just encompass the local situation, but networks of people connected worldwide over the Internet. Understanding what is at stake aesthetically, socially and politically at this time as well as in the past is central to the use of the portrait in the present and the social. Ultimately, this will help obtain a systematic understanding of the field, identify the knowledge gap, and understand the journey I will undertake to create original knowledge through my practice-based research.

Those who could buy banquets, horses, bulls, houses, hung on their walls generations of portraits painted to celebrate a continuity of power and worthiness ... The poor have neither annals nor portraits. Their lives are unrecorded. (Berger 1972)

The problematizing of the portraiture's values in sociological terms were most famously pointed out by John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, (BBCTV, 1972). Here the writer and broadcaster explains how portraiture, through the history of Western Art, poses a series of urgent questions. He discusses how, like the bourgeois, white, European society in which it functioned, portraiture in turn reflected and even animated the divides of race, class and gender that existed in that society. *Ways of Seeing*, which is now over 40 years old, has had such an impact because it began to look at the wider images in our Visual Culture. It presented theory as accessible to a wider public using TV screens and foresaw many of the postcolonial and feminist debates that were taking place and was a direct response to the monolithic approach to the art history of Kenneth Clark's *Civilisation*.

Art has always been a social activity, as Janet Woolf points out in her thesis *The Social Production of Art* (1993) "Everything we do is located in and therefore affected by social structures." A practice that is undertaken by humans in a sociological sense and in portraiture specifically, this has a double function as the exchange happens in the making of the portrait and the viewing of the work. Who has tried to describe this function, and what is it? In a sociological sense and using some structures invented by Pierre Bourdieu, we are all actors and agents in our fields, each with our distinct habitus and varying forms of capital: economic, cultural, symbolic. Art operates in society at large. This is something we inherently know but using sociological methods to understand how art operates in our society in the past and present for good and bad can help us in the future. It can help us understand inequalities and the injustices that prevail. We not only ask these questions of art but might also expect art to answer for us. In sociological terminology, humans are actors (in the single), agents (in the plural). The domains we operate in are 'fields' such as the Art World, The Film Industry, The Culture Industry, Cultural Production, etc. Bourdieu believed that the sociology of our culture was so important in the late capitalist society, comparing its importance to the ground-breaking sociology of Religion achieved by Durkheim in the late 19th century:

“Bourdieu himself is particularly concerned with the fate of art in a late capitalist society, arguing that the sociological study of culture is the sociology of religion of our time.” (Fowler, B, 1999)

For example, in Industrial Victorian society, Marx questioned the Capitalist Mode of Production, Morris examined the relation of Art and Labour, and Baudelaire pinpointed modernism with *The Painter of Modern Life*. Now, in our complex globalised and late-capitalist world, how can we understand the world we live in? In 1951 Arnold Hauser completed his four-volume Marxist sociological survey of art: *The Social History of Art* (1951). No such study had previously been completed. In this work, he re-examined *The Western History of Art* as a social concern, accounting for why, from the Stone Age to Hauser's own time of the post-war film age, a people, at a particular time, made a particular art. This was a distinctly Marxist analysis, surprising because at the time it was created, where Art History was for the elite and before new Art History was born, it looks at class, ideologies and the economics of the particular societies through time. It is an art history for sociologists and Marxists alike, which cuts a slice through time, but which is as problematic as any standard art-historical account that is offered. Hauser's sociological intention with his investigation was to understand society better in the present.

### **The Portrait as a relational model**

Many thinkers have tried to understand the portrait as a relational model, but their ideas have not yet been connected through a thread. Derrida's *Memoirs for the Blind*, James Lorde's *Final Portrait* and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Cezanne's Doubt* have all been interesting and considered studies about what happens between artist and model.

*A Giacometti Portrait* by James Lorde is an account of a painter's time extending, like Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological description of the brush marking time in *Cezanne's Doubt*. Late in his life, Alberto Giacometti (painter) invites James Lorde (writer) to sit for a portrait. The painter admits to the writer his frustrations - the futility of painting a likeness in the photographic age and the difficulty in finishing a portrait. The sitting time gets extended without the writer's

explicit prior permission and the subsequent delay provides a fortuitous and fertile ground for the writer to later reflect by forming notes and memories into a penned portrait. Is the portrait in *A Giacometti Portrait* the portrait by the painter of the writer or the writer of the painter? The difficulty in life is reflected in the difficulty of the painting, where struggle in real life is discouraged but the artist's struggle is necessary. Therefore, I suddenly understand the appeal of Giacometti, the student's artist. James Lorde's account of his extended and delayed sitting acts as such an accessible version of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological explanation for Cezanne's inability to get something finished:

But there have been portraits since Ingres," I insisted. "Cezanne painted some pretty good ones ... "But he never finished them," he pointed out." After Vollard posed a hundred times the most Cezanne could say was that the shirt front wasn't too bad. And he was right. It's the best part of the picture. Cezanne never really finished anything. He went as far as he could then abandoned the job. That's the terrible thing: the more one works on a picture, the more impossible it becomes to finish it. (Lorde, J pg. 9 – 10 1980)

Though the extended time of the sitting and self-doubt of Giacometti is frustrating for Lorde, ultimately it ends up being part of the process that enables the writer to pen his portrait of Giacometti. Who is the Velázquez in this picture, is it Giacometti or James Lorde, or is it, in fact, Geoffrey Rush, the actor who depicted the artist in the recent film, or, indeed, the filmmaker? All questions we might bring to bear on the site of this portrait, the last one made by Giacometti. In *Art and Illusion* (1996), Ernst Gombrich concludes Part One, entitled *The Limits of Likeness*, with an acknowledgement of the situation of portraiture.

But what matters to us is that the correct portrait, like the useful road map, is an end product on a long road through schema and correction. It is not a faithful record of a visual experience but the faithful construction of a relational model. (Gombrich, 1996, p.78)

In *Truth and Method*, which was published in the same year, the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer furthers this notion of the portrait as a relational model and

is by making use of the word 'occasionality' to describe the significance of the moment in the situation of the portrait.

'Occasionality' means that their meaning and contents are determined by the occasion for which they are intended so that they contain more than they would without this occasion. Hence the portrait is related to the man represented, a relation that is not just dragged in but is expressly intended in the representation itself and indeed makes it a portrait. (Gadamer, 2006, pp 38-39)

Richard Brilliant uses Gadamer's concept in his introduction to his 1991 *Survey on Portraiture*, which is an important link to make as there is much to discuss by looking at the sociological field:

"The necessity of expressing the intended relationship between the portrait image and the human original." (1991 p.7) He also goes on to discuss the portrait's locus at "the interface of Art and Social Life" (1991, p.11). Portraits reflect social realities. Their imagery combines the conventions of behaviour and appearance appropriate to the members of society at a particular time, as defined by categories of age, gender, race, physical beauty, occupation, social and civic status, and class. (Brilliant, p.11) However, whilst Brilliant is taking into account important ideas of sociology and society, he is not fully updating us with the important Postmodern and feminist ideologies. Despite being written in 1991, women in this text are seen as passive subjects, and there are no representations of women artists in their own right. Artists of other ethnicities are not mentioned either. Interestingly the opening chapter's title is *The Authority of Likeness* whereas Gombrich acknowledges the "Limits of Likeness."

The first portraits painted as separate entities were the *Fayum Mummy Portraits* painted in encaustic and tempura as a form. They had a function in the society of remembering the dead to their peoples. They were painted in an Egyptian area called Fayum, but they were painted in the Greek tradition by a professional middle class of Greek Egyptians from the 1st – 3rd century, and just as the art historian Svetlana Alpers describes the

merging of the different forms of representation through *Las Meninas*, these paintings are remarkable because not only are they the first portraits of humanity we can lay our eyes on, but they are themselves a product of a historical break, from the Egyptian “Eternal Profile” to the full-face portrait of what we know today.

James Hall explains to us how the last Greek Philosopher Plotinus was afraid to sit for a portrait and therefore of falling into the pond of Narcissus. Even though Plotinus moved the philosophical discussion forward towards an object or portrait to be considered as sacred as life itself, he still held back. James Hall suggests that the sacred shine portraits may have been made as self-portraits and believes that Plotinus must have come across the *Fayum Mummy Portraits*.

### **The circulation of power and representation in *Las Meninas***

*Las Meninas* (1656) by Diego Velázquez is an important discussion point because of its particular situation of portrait and how it has influenced not only painting and art history but itself a paradigm shift that continued to influence, challenge and question whose artist’s gaze knowingly looks out from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Spanish Royal court into the future.

Michel Foucault used a new methodology which he terms as *Archaeology* in his examination of various histories. In the opening chapter of *The Order of Things* (1966) Foucault re-examines the infamous painting *Las Meninas* and applies it as a threshold to unearth an archaeology of the theory of human knowledge, Epistemology. Philosopher Garry Cutting describes the methodology as such:

Foucault’s archaeology aims at history without the individual subject ... But archaeology emphasizes that the stage on which we enact our history as well as much of the script is established independently of our thoughts and actions. This separates it from conventional history which tells of individual subjects moving through time. (Cutting, 2015)

Foucault opens the door to his book, whilst simultaneously opening the door on the studio of Velázquez, the Kings painter, loyal friend and keeper of the court.

Foucault's approach means through the text we get an archaeology at the site of Las Meninas, The Spanish Court of 1656. As Foucault traces back the steps of time he is not looking for a timeline (generally how history is perceived) but instead eruptions of ideas, the breaks that make that history. Foucault's Archaeology examines the past through sieving through layers of how the world is organised, i.e. *The Order of Things*, and by doing this we can see how these past moments relate to the present. He uses Archaeology to describe this, and where an archaeologist would create a physical dig and examine the objects found, Foucault applies an archaeology of knowledge to examine various objects via his method of discourse which examines how ideas and representations reflect and produce forms of social control, relationships, concepts and identities. For Foucault, *Las Meninas* is a particular break, a painting which not only represents, but reproduces a new way of thinking - a portal which takes us from classical to Modern. The representation not only reflects a representation, but puts into effect a new form of representation, a new set of power relations where the artist is equal to the Sovereign power. Foucault asks, "Because, we can only see that reverse side, we do not know who we are or what we are doing, seen or seeing?" (1986 p. 5) The painting deconstructs itself. The "Painter's sovereign gaze commands an invisible triangle." The painter himself appears, acknowledging and greeting his audience, then it is his painting itself that proceeds to lead us on a merry dance around the form of the picture plane, our eyes bouncing back and forth between the self portrait of the painter and the court scene of its title. What is not seen is of importance. We are seeing the viewpoint of the king and queen who are off picture, and in the position of the viewer, and also reflected in a mirror. *Las Meninas* simultaneously questions the authority of representation, the magisterial court and the role of the artist. We can see how Foucault's reading influenced Post Modern thinking: In *The End of Painting* (1981), Douglas Crimp describes the difference of Hennessey (1982) and Foucault's interpretations of *Las Meninas*. For Hennessey, the key is the wonder of skilled master painter operating alone, whereas for Foucault the debunking of this "entrenched historicism" through its analysis is the key to its understanding. *Las Meninas* for Foucault is a representation of how classical representation operated. It is the only way that representation can move forward and as such is a challenge. According to Foucault, what's actually at stake in this painting is a provocation to courtly hierarchy, which provides insight in how a society is ordered.

This is indeed a painting in which the artist on one hand and the spectator on the other have usurped the position of the subject, who is displaced to the vague reflection in the mirror on the rear wall of Velazquez's palace studio. For within the seventeenth century theory of representation, these parallel usurpations and displacements were the very ground of representations possibility. (Crimp, 1981. p.79)

Although Alpers builds on Foucault's reading she adds to the discussion by proposing that the famous painting brings together two dominant ideas of how representation was thought of and produced at the time in 17 C Europe. One model ignores the viewer, whilst the other acknowledges the viewer. Essentially Foucault merges these two ideas together and thus we read a double meaning, a meta double meaning if you like, and this is what has confused everybody, even if they have tried to understand what it means. As Foucault interrogates the past it means he can look to the future and his discourse on Las Meninas is what we could call a New Art History.

Art historian Svetlana Alpers questions why Las Meninas has eluded art historians and why the single most famous writing on the painting was by Foucault, a philosopher. Alpers demonstrates the two threads of representation embodied in the painting. The first, she explains, has been explained by Théophile Gautier in *Qu'est Donne le Tableau*. There is space for the viewer to have presence in the painting. We can step inside the painting. Alpers mentions how the gazing subjects of Velázquez portraits meet our eyes and make distinction between glance and gaze. The gaze refers to the viewer. Las Meninas is not just one situation, but a possibility of different situations.

The second thread is not of identifications of the figures as this has been proven, but the king and queen and their reflection. Who can be seen or not seen in the scene? Where are the Sovereign super couple, aka The King and Queen? Alpers infers that scholars have tried to answer this question by building a theatrical narrative to create a culpable back story to gain greater understanding of the pictorial space. This would go hand in hand with the much talked about breaking of the paintings fourth wall.



Although *Las Meninas* pushes the rank of painter up to nobility, this is contradictory as Velázquez embraced the very craftsmanship that this modern interpretation would have him reject. (Alpers, 1983)

Alpers notes how *Las Meninas* has been reduced to its current meaning by two shifts, firstly the proximity of the king and artist has been greatly exaggerated. Separated are its meaning in its 17th century context and its appearance which is preferable for the modern viewers of the painting. The separation of meaning and representation means it is almost impossible to decipher in art historic terms. While art historians and their concepts such as Panofsky's Iconography and later Gombrich's Art and Illusion seek to separate meaning from representation, Foucault's analysis is strong precisely because he is not an art historian and so can see through these art historical tactics. He sees a representation and it is in within the representation that meaning is found in the exchange between the viewer and the scene before us. However, Alpers argues even Foucault has it wrong. There is not one way of treating representation in 1656, but two. Firstly, there is a method of representation which says, "How I see the world" and secondly there is "How We see the world". The first doesn't acknowledge you as the viewer in the representation, but the second does. The First mode is Albertian, the second is Northern. *Las Meninas*' trick is that we see both of these coming together.

### **Fayum Mummy Portraits**

Berger describes the *Fayum Mummy Portraits*, the earliest portraits known to humans, as emitting a heterogeneity which, through our viewing, somehow connects us to our modern-day condition, perhaps they might even remind us more of each other now than a selfie can. An artefact in the British Museum can make us feel more alive than a digital image. Greek Egyptian painters created them to remember and memorialise the dead to their contemporaries during the embalming process. However, the fact that we now see them as artefacts means that remains of representation are at odds with their original purpose: to be destined for burial and invisible; interned in eternity.

They served as a double pictorial function: they were identity pictures- like passport photos for the dead on their journey with Anubis, the god with the jackal's head, to the kingdom of Osiris; secondly and briefly, they served as mementos of the departed for the bereaved family. The embalming of the body took seventy days, and sometimes after this, the mummy would be kept in the house, leaning against a wall, a member of the family circle, before finally placed in the necropolis. (Berger, pg. 8, 2015)

Berger concludes his essay with an insightful observation of why these particular portraits speak to us so presently. How can they be the most ancient portraits, and simultaneously the most contemporary? In Berger's view, it is because these portraits have a renewed function, as well as being an artefact to recall lost past peoples, the paintings remind us of lives that have been lost by displacement or death in migration, in the 20th century and now in our own time - what Berger describes as "Memories of those partings". Migration is a subject he has commented on, knowing that it is one of the most pressing concerns of our times. These works speak to us on a more humane level than images we might see on our news feeds, as they are an imperfect painted image, worn through time.

It is my view that the threads of the social need to be woven into the expanded idea of the portrait, and I hope that this section some way to trace this expansion amongst ideas in the histories, philosophies and cultural theory of such work. I have aimed to highlight the ways we can begin to see portrait making as a social activity, a relational model and how situations of portraiture come about. We can see how Portraiture painting functions not only as a cohesive social action, but how it can in paint respond to the political and cultural issues of our present time: not only how it reacts, but also how it reflects and how in turn we reflect upon this. We can trace the idea of a relational model through Art History from the time of The Mummy Portraits and back to the present day. I will now consider the circulation of Realisms in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

## **Realisms in the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

As the Grand Narratives of Art History and Modernism begin to be challenged through post-Structuralist and Post-Modernist thought, Berger was beginning to create his sociological examination of art at this time. In 1967 Berger announced, in a collection of essays about Cubism, that no more portraits should be painted: “It seems unlikely that any important portraits will ever be painted again.” Berger believes that portraiture's purpose in the world will be updated so that it can “serve a more modern function.” (Berger, 1967)

I think what Berger is hinting here is Portraiture's social function, although in this essay he talks about the art form changing in line with the technological advances of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout this thesis, I have talked about Berger's commitment to a more demotic form of realism and will continue to do so.

In 1973 feminist art historian Linda Nochlin presented her vindication of Realism with a tongue in cheek title, *The Realist Criminal and the Abstract Law*. Proposing a plurality for Realism, rather than a singular entity, Nochlin suggests we study the ‘Road Map’ where Realism can be considered with another genre's who's borders it meets. Realism is useful as it doesn't focus on a singular genre construct, i.e.: Portraiture, Figurative Painting, History Painting. There are plentiful examples of remaining allegiances to figurative painting, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and into the contemporary where artists have refreshed the act of figurative resemblance onto canvas. Realism was not for relegation, but for reinvention. Timothy Hyman cleverly brings together many of the 20<sup>th</sup> century figurative artists who resisted abstraction and insistence on the real to represent a “core of experience – physical, social psychological – that could not be reduced or schematized, in his book *The World New Made: Figurative Painting in the Twentieth Century* (2016). This study is important as it recognises those who have been unrepresented and dispossessed through the relegation of realism through its various enemies, formalism, conceptualism and expanded field.

### **Berger's Looking Forward**

In post-War London Berger brought together his belief in the politics of the real in a two-part show of British realist painters held at Whitechapel Gallery and at South London Gallery. Looking through his correspondence with the Whitechapel's then director, he eschewed the choice of big names to bring a fair mix of known and

well-known artists to the table, you could say this inclusivity was in the tradition of the working-class painting clubs of Ashington Group and earlier East London Group who were well known for their realist painting. The socialist politics of the show are clearly stated in the last sentence of the exhibition catalogue:

It may hearten those who, realising the futility of art being separated from the beliefs and problems of society, “look forward” to the time when artists will again be able to communicate with their unselected neighbours.  
(Berger, 1952)

### **Alice Neel, Joan Eardley and Eva Frankfurth.**

Three 20<sup>th</sup> century artists became committed to painting the people living in their surrounding neighbourhoods from the 40's through the post-war period. Alice Neel, Eva Frankfurth and Joan Eardley chose to live and paint in Spanish Harlem, New York, Townhead, Glasgow and Whitechapel, London. Each of them achieved this by adopting a particular process unique to themselves and their situated practice. What they share is a purposefulness to distance themselves from their art world contemporaries, geographically through living and setting up unconventional studio spaces in the poorer part of town and formally through their use of realism and particularly portraiture.

They challenged the context and economy of the portrait by choosing the opposite of what portraiture had been used for previously, setting domestic studios up at home or in Eardley's case in the centre of the community. None of them worked to commission, they chose Realism and wanted to capture their communities in flux. Neel the multi-cultural milieu of Spanish Harlem, Frankfurth the Windrush Generation newly arrived in London, some of whom worked with her in a Piccadilly Café, and Eardley the poor children from the soon to be demolished slum tenements of Townhead.

For these artists, Portraiture was a method of gaining communication connection and closeness and care to their sitters. Reproductive labour is evident in their imagery and their processes. Theirs was a new way of and through looking at their

methods we can see how these practices are connected and in turn how they connect to the methods that I use as an artist.

Graduating from Glasgow School of Art with a Postgraduate diploma, Joan Eardley (1921-1963) was quickly honoured and encouraged by those who taught her. She took it upon herself to devote attention to the inner city where she studied, and so her painting became a direct record of the run-down parts of Glasgow and its people. Townhead at this time was an area which had overcrowded tenement buildings with many of its inhabitants living under poor conditions and Eardley was drawn to the liveliness that this area invoked and became a familiar character in the streets she painted, pushing a pram of painting and drawing materials around the area.

Neither positioning herself as a social realist nor socially engaged, in fact she outright denied any affiliation of this kind of sympathy. The involvement of children in her paintings came about accidentally as a result of their curiosity as they saw the artist in the streets. Her studio acted as a sort of after school club, where children came to be drawn and studied and in turn, under a guise to keep them quiet, their own creativity was encouraged. They drew pictures and bartered in tea, cake and clothing. She built a bond with one family in particular, The Samsons, and spend seven years making pictures of them. As Pat and Anne Samson reflecting upon their experiences for the BBC, she documented their hard lives but also celebrated their spirit.

” Eye, we loved it, because we got a thrupenny bit and piece and treacle ... back then it was a luxury. (BBC, 2015)

The process of making these studies seems more important than the keeping of the drawings, sketches of the children and the children’s sketches were discarded, burnt or made into paper aeroplanes. Eardley made many studies, a process which then produced larger paintings.

Eva Frankfurter (1930 – 1959) was a Jewish German refugee who studied at St Martins with Leon Kossoff and Frank Auerbachian and worked in Realist tradition

from German Expressionism and the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, which translates as The New Objectivity. Frankfurter produced an extraordinary body of Portraits of her fellow workers at Lyons Coffee House and at Tate and Lyle factory on London's docklands. She was never without a sketchbook, a tactic I understand very well, as I mentioned in the introduction I carried a sketchbook everywhere for almost a decade in the project *Being Lady Lucy*.

Alice Neel is quintessential to mention here as she traversed the 20<sup>th</sup> century's Modernist movements and lived for a long time outside of it until she was rediscovered due to her involvement with The Women's movement in the 1970's. She acquired a notion of a sort of socialist painting from being part of the artists' department of the post 1929 crash Works Programme Administration. In her flat in Spanish Harlem stretching decades she painted her neighbours, inviting them into her studio in her flat where she also raised her children. Like Frankfurter and Eardley she lived in realism she wanted to depict, although this was by the choice of each of these artists it also reflected their lives as single women artists living out of the mainstream art world.

### ***Interchange* at The Museum of London**

After looking at some models of how the painting of portraits has been understood in sociological terms and how I understand it's history on more demotic terms, I would like to return to my second case study *Interchange*, where I made portraits in return for exchanges with visitors to The Museum of London to make connections between people and to see how painting and exchange would circulate amongst visitors to the museum.





*Interchange 1 Lady Lucy paints Jean-Paulo and Sara at the museum*

Following on from Portraits for Services, Gifts, and Favours for the Museum I created a new work called *Interchange*, with the basic idea that people who had their portraits painted would pass on their exchange to another. [SEP] The main shift was to move away from the system of one-to-one exchange taking place within my social circle to an interchange system in the public realm surrounding the Museum and beyond and see where this would take people and the things that were exchanged. It turned out due to the museum's international audience that the services, gifts and favours and portraits travelled worldwide. A walking tour took place in Canberra Australia, a Bulgarian cooking pot got carried to Berlin, some hand drawn postcards were sent from India and more local people met up, learned French in a café, were mentored at their studio, had a cookery lesson.

The public were invited to have their portrait painted at a portrait studio in the exhibition space, the portrait sittings took two hours. The sitters became involved through the museum's publicity network, but also in an impromptu manner if they came across the project and had the time to be painted. The

people who chose to be involved began by filling out a form online where they were asked a couple of questions designed to prompt dialogue and act as an icebreaker as well as survey the motivations and interests that people had.

1. What is the service, gift or favour you are offering? 
2. Why do you want to be part of this project? 

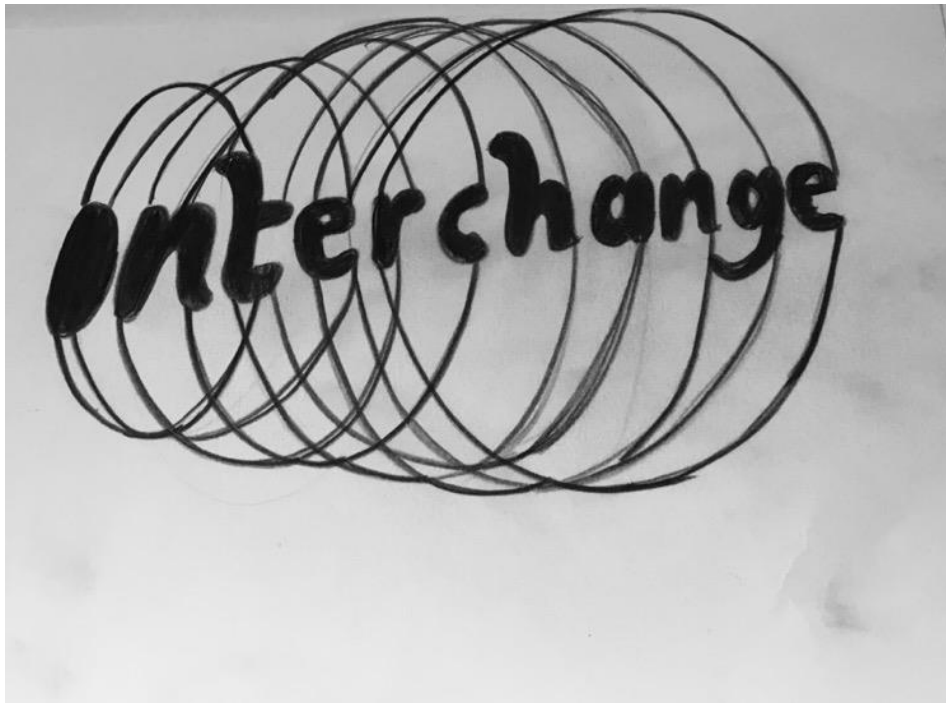
There were some interesting responses and willingness to be involved and offer something for a stranger. Some of the responses were as follows:

This is an out-of-the-box activity and I think these initiatives can produce unexpected amazing results. What if they keep cooking more healthy dishes? What if our families become friends? What if?

I like the idea of paying it forward. I am a Londoner born and bred and volunteer as I believe it is important to appreciate what we have and share with others.

Frustrated by the values of mass markets, I love the idea of a smaller economy based on trading skills.





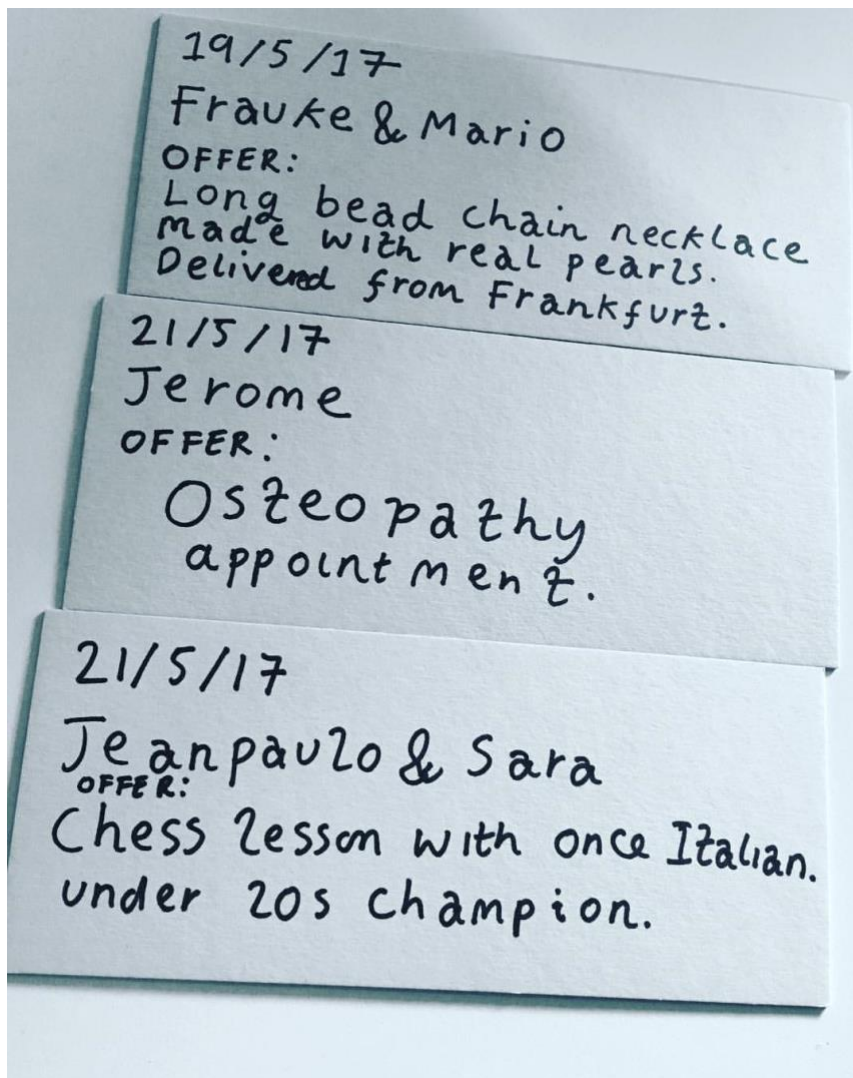
*Interchange 2 logo design for interchange - pencil on paper (2017)*



*Interchange 3 Design for of Interchange display (2017) Watercolour*

The recipient will most probably be a stranger to the 'gifter' and receives the service, gift or favour under no obligation to exchange anything further, although

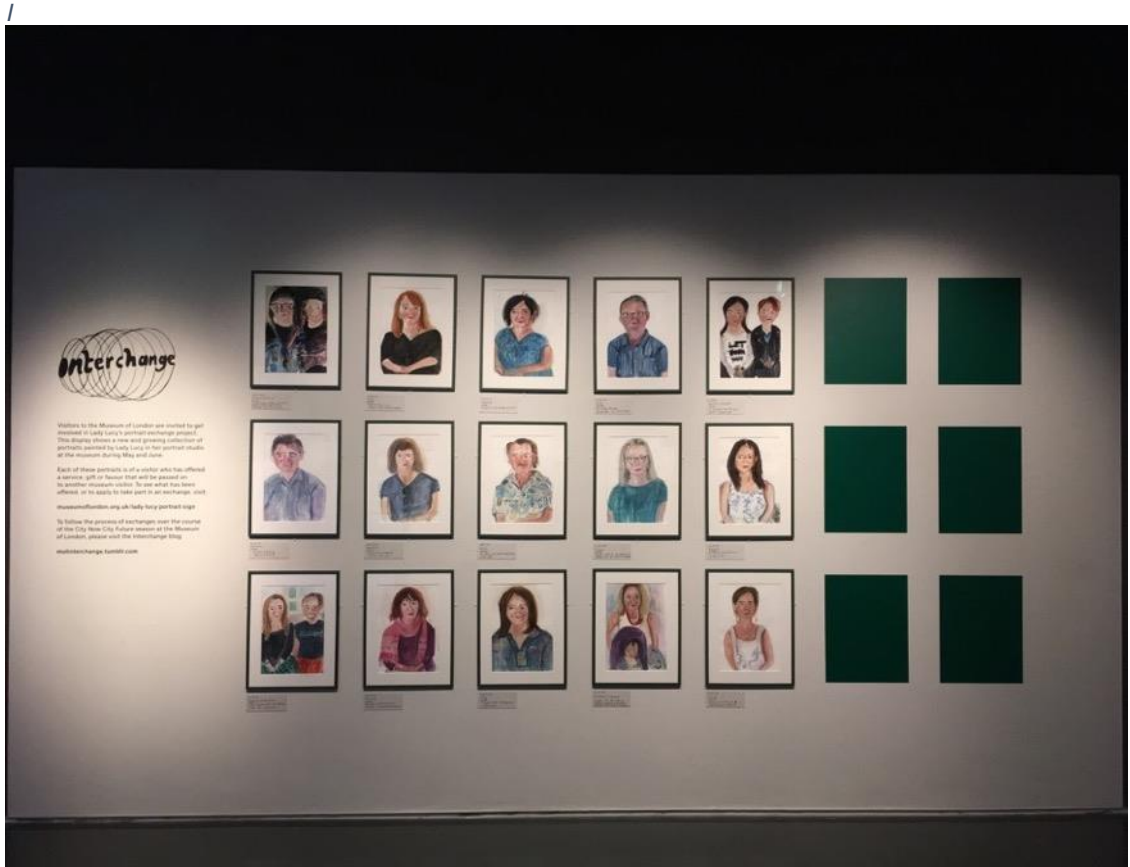
this might create some interesting outcomes, as the gift should keep on giving. All that was asked is that they can provide some feedback on their participation, which would be used for the research project. As the portraits were painted the display of the painted portraits accumulated and the accompanying offers that could be chosen by the public increased. Below *Interchange 4* is an example of the hand-written offers that were placed below the portraits in the *Interchange* where people could pick offers from. They could also choose them online too.



*Interchange 4 Handwritten offers from Interchange portrait sitters*



Interchange 5

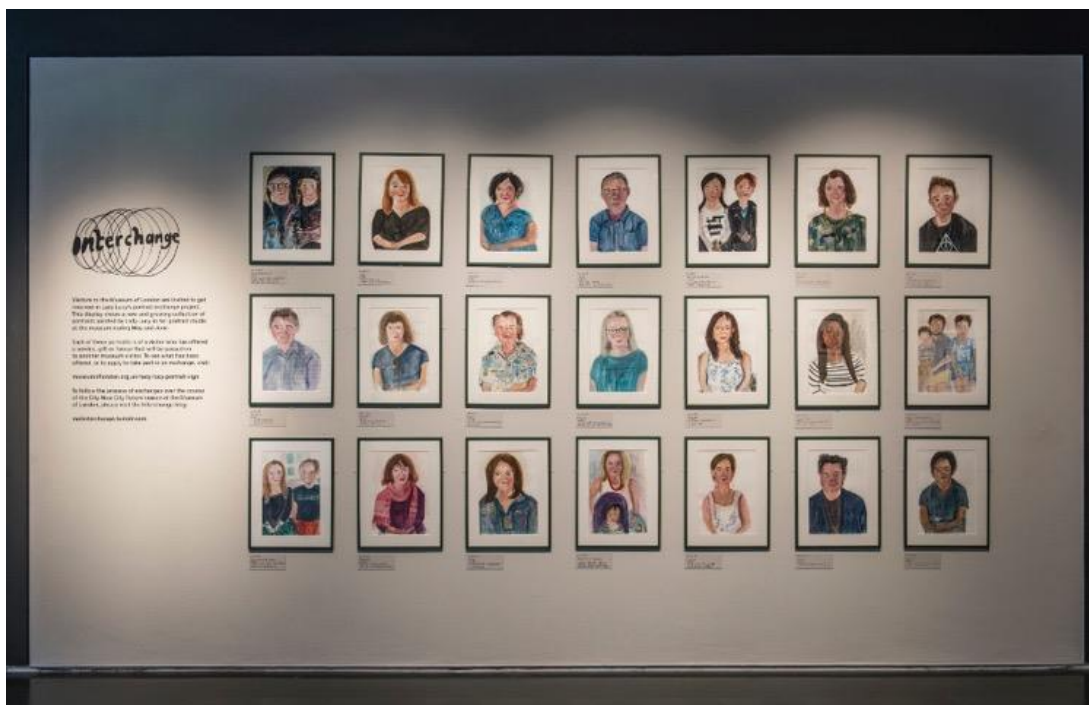


Interchange 6 Interchange display with 15 portraits and exchanges





*Interchange 7 Interchange display with portraits and exchanges*



*Interchange 8 Interchange display with 21 portraits and exchanges*

Images 4 – 8 show the display building up week by week. It was only at the end of the show that the display was full, thus the portraits and exchanges were in constant flux. I would have preferred for the display to more reflective of its

transitory nature, but due to security the paintings had to be under glass. There was not a work around for this situation. Working with a museum in this situation has its benefits and its constraints.

The first people to be painted were Frauke and Mario. *Interchange 9 – 10* The experience was a surprise birthday present from Frauke to her partner Mario and took place at the launch for the City Now, City Future season. They had travelled from Frankfurt for a weekend to London. Frauke offered a home-made string of beads. Some offers got taken up by museum visitors, but some like this one I ended up distributing through my networks, offering them to people online or when I bumped into people. Rory took the beads after I had a very rushed conversation with him at Liverpool Street Underground Station. This was not how I had envisioned the project working out as I was keen to take it away from my circle. I was happy to offer things to people in any case, it was like being a matchmaker and people seemed happy and grateful to take up the opportunities. I met Frauke and Mario when I returned the painting to them, they came to my studio and bought me a pot plant as a gift, which is still in my studio complex.



*Interchange 9 Frauke and Mario offer homemade pearls sent from Frankfurt - with their portrait at the launch of City Now, City Future*



*Interchange 10 Frauke and Mario place their portrait and exchange offer in the Interchange at Museum of London*



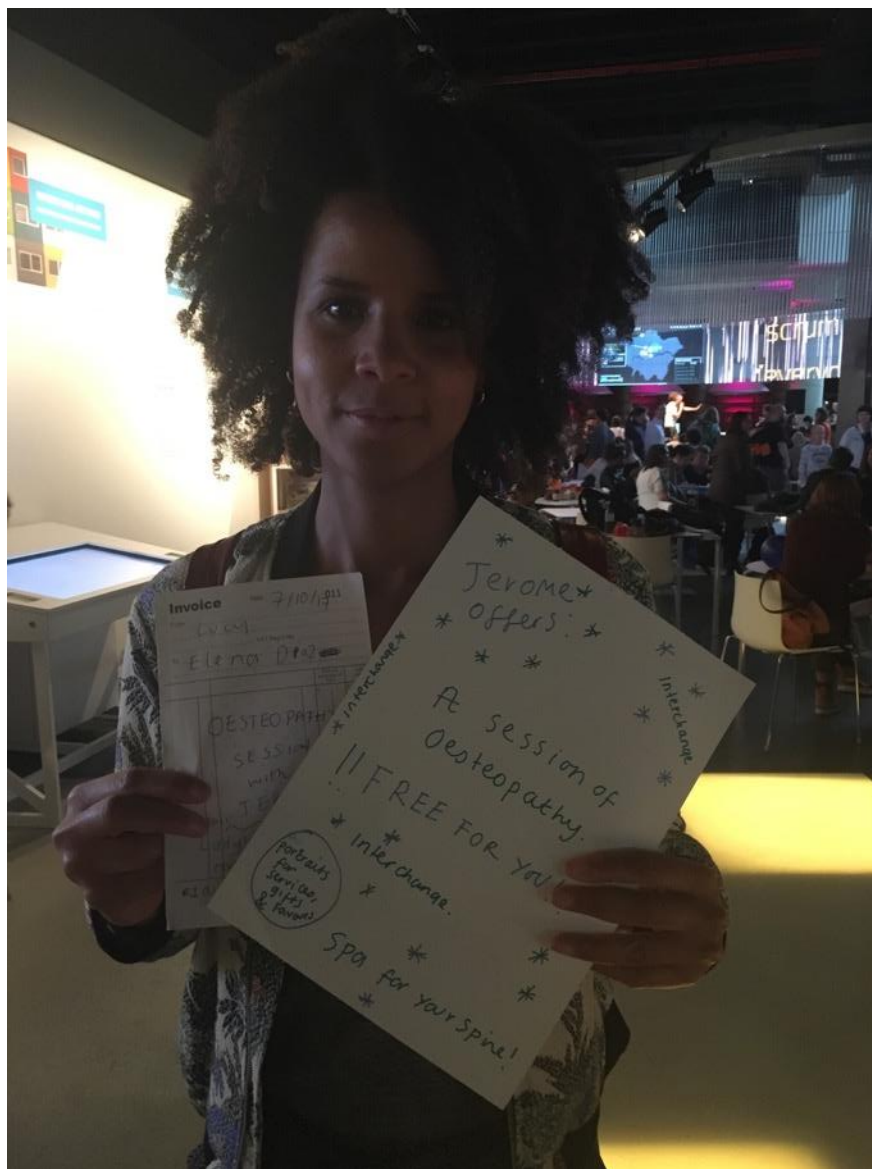
*Interchange 11 Rory receives Frauke's pearls and they are sent to Rotterdam*





*Interchange 12 Jerome offers a session of osteopathy*

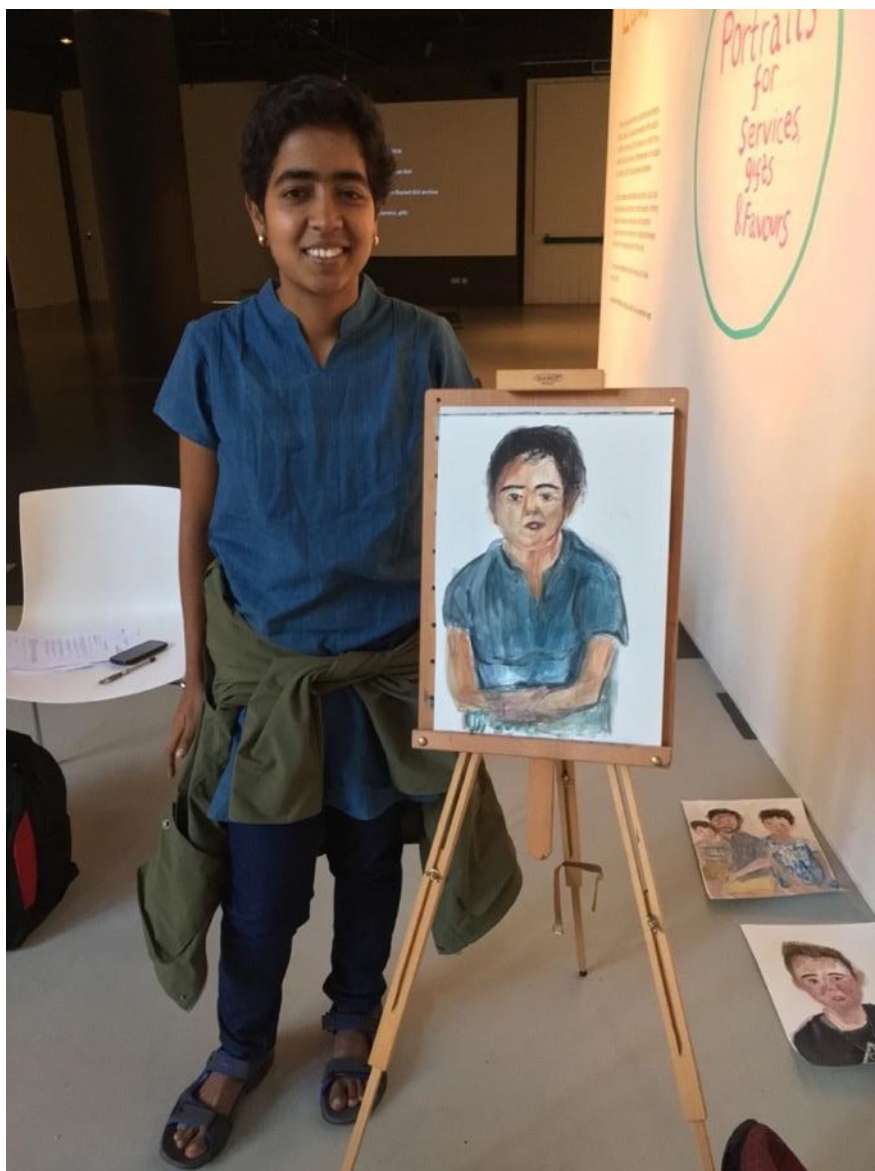




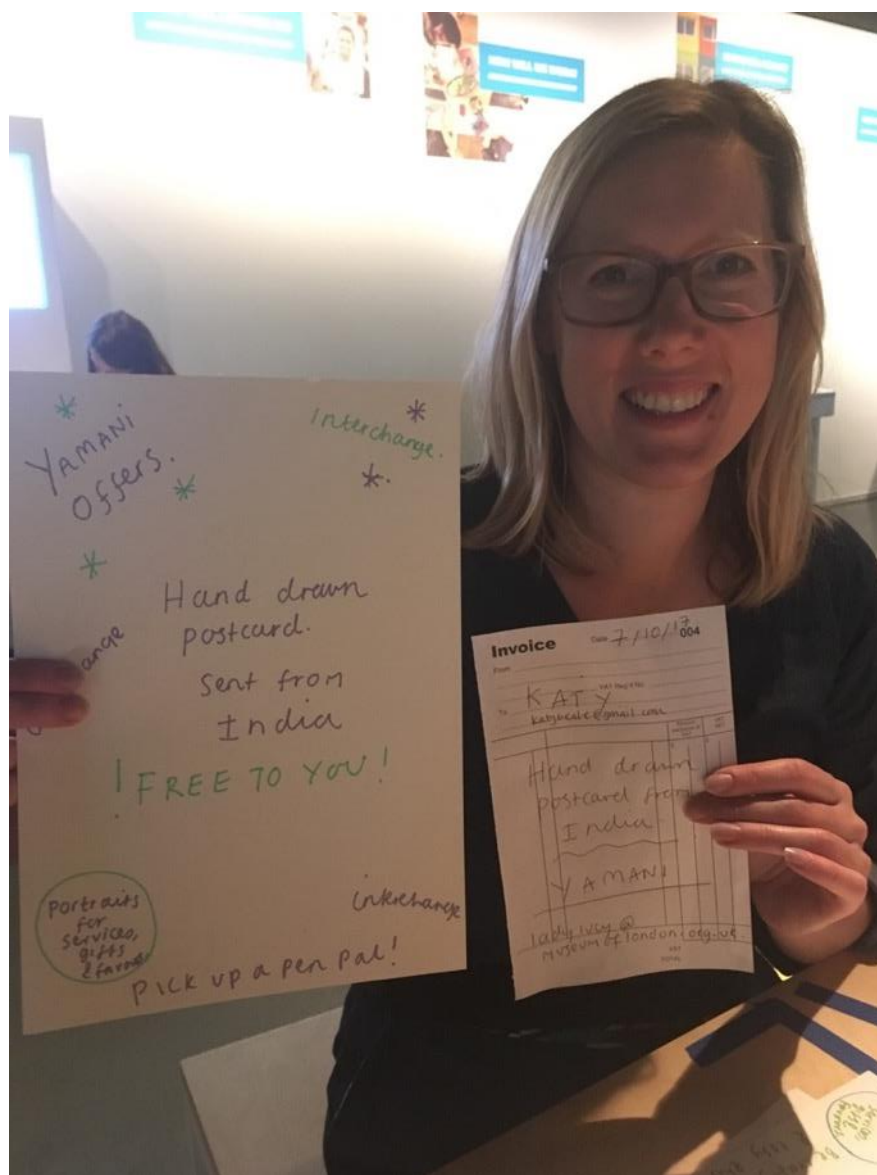
Interchange 13 Elena selects Jerome's offer of a session of osteopathy at The Festival of Radical Fun



*Interchange 14 Jerome at his office with his portrait, photo taken by Elena when receiving her treatment*



*Interchange 15 Yamani offers a hand drawn postcard sent from India*



Interchange 16 Katy selects Yamani's offer of a Hand drawn postcard sent from India



*Interchange 17 Katy receives Yamani's hand drawn postcards*





*Interchange 18 Felicity offers a walking tour of Canberra, Australia*



*Interchange 19 Gill enjoys a guided walk with Felicity in Canberra, Australia*



*Interchange 20 Polaroid photograph of Lady Lucy painting by participant*





*Interchange 21 Angela offers: Learning how to cook a home-cooked Italian Meal*



*Interchange 22 Mary learns how to cook pasta with Angela*



*Interchange 23 Alex offers: composing a song for someone*





*Interchange 24 Chinasa listens to the song Alex composed for her*

*Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours* and *Interchange* were intended to encourage the everyday non-monetary exchange that takes place amongst us. It is not a call for volunteerism or free labour but an aim to highlight and acknowledge that within the capitalist structure in which we are living, there is also an alternative economy-taking place. I was paid a fee by the Museum of London, which is regarded as a self-employed income. To put this amount into perspective, my fee covered around the same amount, or slightly more, than my expenses for an average year of self-employment. This comment is not meant to reflect badly on the curators or funders of the project itself, as I feel I was paid well and supported. It is meant to answer a possible question about being paid for the

project, when this project is based on non-monetary exchanges. It also reflects the realities of precarious employment in the creative industries.

*City Now, City Future* pulled together many different community groups and initiatives, all who were trying to make a difference to the future of London.

*Interchange* did generate some really interesting encounters between people, but how were those encounters part of the artwork and how could they be possibly represented and documented? I kept a list of the exchanges completed (see below) – some took longer than a year or so to complete. It required a lot of chasing up from myself. In the end, just over half of the intended exchanges took place, the others dropped away. In some senses, it was at successful as it could have been, but in other ways it didn't work how I expected to. This is the nature of working with so many people in a structure like a museum.

*Interchange* exchanges completed as of 11/2/18

Frauke & Mario – Rory – Pearls  
 Jerome – Elena – A session of Osteopathy  
 Felicity – Gill – Walking tour of Canberra, Australia  
 Alex – Chinasa – A song written especially for you  
 Iva – Ildiko Traditional Bulgarian Cooking pot  
 Angela – Mary, some Italian Cooking and a little Italian language  
 Tezuka and Sarah – a surprise sent from Hong Kong  
 Lara – Dana – French language at Patisserie Valerie  
 Amber – Sarah – A poem in a box  
 Lise – Tessa – Haircut  
 Yamini – Katy – a handwritten postcard sent from Hong Kong

Below you will see two diagrams. The first *Interchange 25* shows a flow of exchanges that took place throughout the project. From a central point reaching out from the word *Interchange* are two flows heading in opposite directions. The group of lines moving outwards across and around the left represents the moments when the portraits are painted and the exchanges offered. You will notice that portraits are returned at this moment as they exchange taking place was not a condition of the portrait being returned. This flow meets up with the other group when the exchanges are taken up and together they move around the right side. It is here you will notice the drop off as participants drop out or are unreachable, however you will see some lines reach the end of the flow in the bottom left which is where the whole process has completed.



*Interchange 25 Diagram of flow of exchanges in Interchange (2018) Lady Lucy. Pencil on paper*

Creating this diagram helped me reflect on the whole system of paintings and exchanges and when I felt frustrated from the administration of the project, it gave me an understand of its whole purpose. In the next section I talk about how artists exploring projects which explore alternative economics use diagrams to understand how their projects can be positioned in an alternative space within mainstream economics, and I see these diagrams that I have created for the projects being aligned to this diagramming tactic. The Diagrams of Exchange for Interchange demonstrates how this project operates in the social and cultural spheres of the artist and museum. The portraits which are represented by green dots reach out from the artist to the threshold where the museum and the public meet. Here there the line splits as one line represents the exchange that the sitter has offered the third party (member of the public) and the other line represents the portrait returning to the home of the sitter.



Interchange 26 Diagrams of Exchange interchange

*Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours* and *Interchange* presented a foundation from which to continue to investigate the potential for painting to be considered a socially engaged practice, but more crucially to think about alternative economics in Post-Capitalism, which I will now turn towards.



## **Interchange list of documentation**

- Interchange 1 Lady Lucy paints Jean-Paulo and Sara at the museum 107*
- Interchange 2 logo design for interchange - pencil on paper (2017) 109*
- Interchange 3 Design for of Interchange display (2017) Watercolour 109*
- Interchange 4 Handwritten offers from Interchange portrait sitters 110*
- Interchange 5 111*
- Interchange 6 Interchange display with 15 portraits and exchanges 111*
- Interchange 7 112*
- Interchange 8 112*
- Interchange 9 Frauke and Mario offer homemade pearls sent from Frankfurt - with their portrait at the launch of City Now, City Future 113*
- Interchange 10 Frauke and Mario place their portrait and exchange offer in the Interchange at Museum of London 114*
- Interchange 11 Rory receives Frauke's pearls and they are sent to Rotterdam 115*
- Interchange 12 Jerome offers a session of osteopathy 116*
- Interchange 13 Elena selects Jerome's offer of a session of osteopathy at The Festival of Radical Fun 117*
- Interchange 14 Jerome at his office with his portrait, photo taken by Elena when receiving her treatment 118*
- Interchange 15 Yamani offers a hand drawn postcard sent from India 119*
- Interchange 16 Katy selects Yamani's offer of a Hand drawn postcard sent from India 120*
- Interchange 17 Katy receives Yamani's hand drawn postcards 121*
- Interchange 18 Felicity offers a walking tour of Canberra, Australia 122*
- Interchange 19 Gill enjoys a guided walk with Felicity in Canberra, Australia 123*
- Interchange 20 Polaroid photograph of Lady Lucy painting by participant 124*
- Interchange 21 Angela offers: Learning how to cook a home-cooked Italian Meal 125*
- Interchange 22 Mary learns how to cook pasta with Angela 126*
- Interchange 23 Alex offers: composing a song for someone 127*
- Interchange 24 Chinasa listens to the song Alex composed for her 128*
- Interchange 25 Diagram of flow of exchanges in Interchange (2018) Lady Lucy. Pencil on paper 130*
- Interchange 26 Diagrams of Exchange interchange 131*

## **The Value of Art, Post Capitalism and Alternative Economics**

Post-Capitalism is a movement of ideas which believes Capitalism is approaching its end point because it will no longer be able to self-sustain through its adapt and reproduce mechanisms. It is predicated on analysis and projection on the failure of our current economic model, Neoliberalism, so as the free market system stalls, the technological revolution will bring undoing by creating new possibilities. As Paul Mason summarises his main argument of his book on the subject:

“... That Capitalism is a complex adaptive system which has reached the limits of its capacity to adapt.” (2015)

Although post-capitalism has relatively recently come to the fore as a movement, its ideas have always been around as an alternative and critique to the dominant system of economics. Beech takes a lead from Rob Lucas's short book cover synopsis of Mason's Post-Capitalism and discusses the relevance of the historical utopian myth of Cockaigne in reference to this current set of treatises on the future whereby true emancipation is achieved through the achievements of automation. If 14<sup>th</sup> century Post Capitalism was envisioned as Pastoralism for the masses, let's look to our future in terms of machines working for us with mass roll out of Basic Income. Whilst the microchip possibilities of Post-Capitalism are being set out, I would like to focus on the grassroots economic projects which Mason's pinpoints as growing localised alternative economies "Parallel currencies, time banks, cooperatives and self-managed spaces have proliferated." According to Mason, he notes this trend as one of the trio of after effects from the information age which are part of a transition towards post-capitalism and which exists in the gaps propagated by the current states failures. He also notes that these projects go unacknowledged by the economic status quo as although their parallels exist in business we have come to know as such phenomena as the sharing economy. What really needs to happen for progress Masson suggests, is for successes of the grassroots economic projects to be taken on board by larger powers believing that it is

"Only if these micro-level projects are nurtured, promoted and protected by a massive change in what Governments do. "(Mason, 2015)

This is where I believe a sub movement of Post-Capitalism has a strong role to play in creating possibilities of networks of exchange. By experiencing and acknowledging the bleakness of the world as it stands, we must begin to look for alternative ways of operating within it.

Through the development of these projects, I have participated in some astute workshops of the Re Drawing the Economy global research group which uses mapping to elucidate the "diverse economies of particular communities". Its purpose is to expand upon the growing ideas and models which enable us to "take back the economy as we know it." The first I attended was an intimate Haystacks event in the Viner Street studio of artist Kathrin Böhm. These events are inspired

by the coffee morning meetings of the organisers home village in Germany. In 2006 Gibson talked through the work that she achieved as one half of the pen name J K Gibson-Graham known for their Feminist Critique of the Political Economy. The illustration below is using the now widely utilised Iceberg metaphor (see figure 4) that was conceived by Diverse Economies research group.



Figure 19 : Diverse Economies Iceberg by Community Economies Collective is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution - Share Alike 4.0 International License



Figure 20 Drawing from event: A Haystack on Icebergs with Katherine Gibson 4/11/2016

In the drawing of the event that I did, we can see Gibson's call for people to get involved in the taking back of the economy. "The more we can get involved the better and that includes artists." There was also a conversation between two artists who use alternative trade mechanisms in their practices: Kate Rich who was present with *Feral Trade* and Bohm who was representing her initiative *Company Drinks*.

In *Art and Value* Dave Beech (2015) charts a survey of art's economic exceptionalism through history's epochs of economics. Beech has discovered that art operates exceptionally in its economic realm when compared with standard commodities, thus if you were going to use Marx's *Capital* to critique art as a commodity, you will need to show caution, as art cannot be addressed like standard commodities operating within Capitalism. Art is commodified without being a commodity. When addressing questions and ideas of Art and Value (of which there have been many attempts) we must take this exceptionalism into consideration before moving forward.

Introducing the Art in Commodity seminar at the ICA, Spring 2017, Beech explained that the focus of the day was to:

Unpack some urgent issues around the economic context of art, including unpaid internships, payment of artists, public funding of the arts, 'Value engineering' practices in arts institutions, the economics of art education and the facts of the art market. (Beech, 2017)

In June 2018 I attended a further session at the newly opened *Centre for Plausible Economies* at *Company Drinks* headquarters in a renovated park building in Barking. Szreder and Bohm had built on the suggestion from Gibson to “bring artistic action and critical thinking to reclaim the economy”. This builds on several of Böhm’s projects which use alternative mechanisms of economy in artistic practices such as *Trade Show* and of course *Company Drinks* (both ongoing) at whose headquarters were hosting the proceedings. That day we would redraw artistic economies in groups and as per chance I found myself in the art world working group which was convened by artist Rosalie Schweiker. It was suggested that instead of mapping the art world, my art practices would be used as a case study which the image below shows:



Later I discovered that Neil Cumming had written about being in the group,

“I tried to keep an account of what was revealed: including the dense network of supportive relations, of family, friends and colleagues, of how opportunities are opened through social contacts, the love for art which is both a source of pleasure and fulfilment and source of exploitation, the diverse investments involved - of time, continuous learning, affective labour, and the joy when an exhibition, project or artwork is shared and finds its audience. We also discussed the means by which money flows through this economy in diverse and often precarious streams, including state benefits, commissions, fees, bursaries, sales, wages, loans and debt. (Cummings, 2018)

It was on the theme of my work as a diverse economy that I set about the first project *Portraits, For Services, Gifts and Favours*, and the purpose of the installation of these portraits and exchanges at The Museum of London along with the accompanying slide show was to show what the value of these interactions had been, some of them Services, Gifts and Favours, some material, some immaterial. Through the process of exchange, the value of the portrait painting is questioned. Is it the value in the goods offered for exchange or in the moment of interaction and engagement in the process of painting itself? The placing of an emphasis on the personal interaction and offer of exchange provides grounds for discussing alternative value systems other than those of the commercial marketplace. Re-examining the images from the diverse economy mapping workshop and Cummings' interpretation, I understand the networks that contribute to this diverse economy. The word precariat is balanced on top of privilege. My support networks are various Studio Groups, Artist Collectives, friendship groups, funding, institutions, DIY music networks. This goes for most artists I know. Artistic economies are diverse, and it is now that I understand *Portraits, Services Gifts and Favours* as an opening up of a discussion on this. The project ended up as a show at The Museum of London, but this was the tip of the iceberg of the project. The diagram I produced for the show highlighted the exchanges that I took part in, the project of deals I had negotiated between the sitter's and myself, what they felt they could offer with some prompting by myself. The display itself took



place in the context of *City Now, City Future*, a yearlong microcosm involving hundreds of people, projects and organisations which encapsulated the experience of urban living in London, many of us operating and existing in the structures and mechanisms of society which successfully operate below the water line of the iceberg.







## Chapter 3. Resident Artist: Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits

### Project in brief

In 2018, after moving house to a shared maisonette on The Herbert Butler Estate in Hackney Wick, East London, I became interested in working with the community surrounding me whilst considering the complexities of gentrification, the housing crisis, precariousness and class. Through volunteering with the estate's Tenants and Residents organisation and offering my community organising skills, I began to research a project on our estate offering painted portraits in return for stories of neighbourly exchange and encounter. I am writing this up in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, where community exchange through the quick formation of thousands of local Mutual Aid groups via WhatsApp has been a crucial collective manoeuvre set up to help those most in need. In the last few months, we have seen community co-operation come to the fore as we realised the people best placed to help those in needs are sometimes next door.

Our estate is a municipal namesake of Herbert Butler: former Mayor of Hackney, who stood against Oswald's Black Shirt fascists and became Labour MP for various Hackney constituencies from 1945 – 1970. In a blog post by Municipal Dreams, using a picture from Hackney Archives, Alderman Butler can be seen at the opening of Hackney Town Hall in 1937.<sup>7</sup> Atlee's Post War Labour Government of which Butler was an MP kick started decades of commitment to paying for and building council housing, which ended when Thatcher introduced the right to buy scheme and the subsequent administrations, including New Labour, increasingly failed to replace the housing stock. With little central investments for housing, local authorities relied increasingly on private investments for new housing, which has

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<sup>7</sup> Please see <https://municipaldreams.wordpress.com/2013/11/12/hackney-town-hall-that-great-dignified-centre-of-civic-life/>

followed the path of gentrification: forced removal of tenants under the guise of community consultation and collaboration.

It is in this context and issue in the public consciousness via the housing crisis post Grenfell Tower disaster that I found myself wondering what kind of group portrait/exchange project could take place within our estate community. Leading on from the previous projects I was interested in finding out what kind of exchanges be they words, gestures, gifts, cash take place amongst us. I also considered my politics of getting involved in working with local grassroots organisations and connections. Herbert Butler Estate is situated in a Lower Output Area with high deprivation according to some case studies. It has been subject to speculation and focus due to its proximity to the Olympics development. In 2010 the FT made the claim that Herbert Butler Estate held “the dubious honour of being the area in London most densely populated with benefit claimants.” This article was written in anticipation of the austerity measures introduced by the incoming Conservative Government and questions if there will be a chance of these people being employed within London’s boom economy with the added benefit of our estate possibly benefitting from the huge amounts of money being pumped into the area. In 2014, a Guardian article linked to a Love Thy Neighbour report then pointed out that Herbert Butler estate residents had missed out on the benefits of regeneration.

I was astounded by what I saw as a lack of context for these figures and representations. Although the Love Thy Neighbourhood research team put in time to researching the area, it seems to miss what I see as the multitude of Hackney Community Projects set up in the area. I am not sure how the figures for the benefit claimants came about, but this needs more context too, the area included at the time two sheltered housing blocks and social housing by its very nature is available to those most vulnerable, and more likely to be on benefits.

Leading on from the *Interchange* project as part of the City Now, City Future Season, I had been thinking about the amazing number of different community groups that have been brought together for that project, but also curious to find out what would happen if I made work in my immediate community. There were a few guiding principles that I set out with:

Ground Up: to make a project that started from a grassroots level and develop a more careful and considered project over a longer period, to allow a process of discussion to inform what I wanted to archive. From the outset, I applied the *modus-operandi* of self-organised, artist led model. This is an important distinction, as the project was led by my research and ideas in direct response and enquiry to community activities. I took on the role of being a resident artist, rather than becoming an artist in resident. Newman succinctly describes how this distinction was made when she created the role of Self-Appointed Artist in Residence in the City of London. For Newman, it is about ensuring an “agency to act Independently of The City and its inherent values” as if the city or bank had employed her as Artist in Resident it would not be an equal relationship. (Newman, 2013)

Domestically distributed: I wanted to create a domestically distributed project which would be embedded in its locality. The portraits that were created will belong to their sitters and live in their houses or whichever site they choose for them. It could be with another family member or friend, for example, which was suggested by some. Over time the portraits will change location, as residents move, pass them on, clear them out or sadly die.

### **Community Portraits / Community Exchange.**

I wanted to make portraits within a community and understand what that meant. Here, I wanted to test out what it really meant for portraiture to be socially engaged, by applying true tactics of community engagement. There is an agency which comes about making work in this way and can help forge connections through community co-operation. Artist and academic Lorraine Leeson uses the term “Socially Situated” to differentiate her working methods to that of Socially Engaged Practice.

I will make a case here for the support of initiatives that are not only “engaged” but socially situated and stem from an organic and developmental relationship with community. (Lesson, 2018)

Leeson’s 2018 book *Art Process and Change Inside a Socially Situated Practice* offers us a thorough analysis of her decades long practice. The artist worked in an



artistic collaboration with Peter Dunn working with many different groups and organisations within various communities, in particular focussing upon East London. Describing a variety of principles and methodologies, Leeson looks at the function of art in a social context. The chapter Process and Product enlightens us to the methodologies she applies to be involved in work of which the aim is to bring about positive transformations in society. At the outset of any project, Leeson believes an invitation is necessary when working with a particular community. Believing that art can stand with social change and contribute to it, rather than shout from the side-lines means that an invitation is necessary from one of the organisations who are contributing to this. Looking to my project with my neighbours, I initiated the project, but I did so as a resident who is by default invited to be part of one such organisation, our Estates Tenants and Residents organisation.

I noticed a poster on my estate noticeboard with an email address, got in touch and went to have a coffee with Dawn Dardis and Ros Owen, the Chair and Treasurer of the Herbert Butler TRA. I took this as the invitation that Leeson is saying is necessary. At that meeting, I explained that I was interested in volunteering offering community organising/social media skills whilst suggesting initiating a portraiture project on Herbert Butler about neighbourly exchange. At the outset and throughout the project I presented progress at our estate meetings. It took a while for the project to percolate: to work out what it could be and how it could work. I wanted things to evolve slowly for relationships to potential sitters evolve through informal conversations with fellow residents at TRA events, including an annual resident's coach trip to the seaside, Christmas Party, Coffee mornings, and the quarterly Estate meetings. I kept a log where I wrote about who I met and what had happened such as the entry below.

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Went to the coffee morning for the Christmas hamper sign ups this morning, talked to a couple of people from TRA about the portrait project. Angela who I met before and a friend of hers who followed me on Instagram. Next week I am thinking of bringing along the Herbert Butler

noticeboards I made. Harry who lives in the neighbouring block and who has the dogs said he would pop by next week.



HB 1 Herbert Butler Tenants and Residents Association (2018) - paint on cut canvas on cork board with pins

I was interested in what would happen when I worked with the community that I lived in and created the project in collaboration with a grassroots organisation. This method of working was used by Fennel, Johnsson & Zimmerman in collaboration with their fellow residents of Samuel House on The Haggerston Estate, East London. The I am Here project was highly visible grid of 67 window sized portraits of estate residents past and present installed on The Regents Canal side blocks of Samuel House which were undergoing the generic regeneration process. This project later developed into The Film Estate: A Reverie. Through self-organised public art and film, these residents-initiated projects deliberately and playfully reversed the usual discussions and perceived viewpoints. We view and understand the estate's collective experience –

witnessing and documenting of the endemic neoliberal process and they describe the work below.

Through their open windows, facing on to the canal, they often overheard passers-by speculating on reasons for the building's demise and its current state. The installation aims to disturb this one-way interrogation by replacing the 67 bright orange boards with large-scale photographs of the residents on the estate: onlookers no longer stand unchallenged, as their gaze is met and returned by a multitude of faces constituting of current and former residents on the estate. "(Fennel, Johnasson, Zimmerman, *I am Here*, 2019)



Figure 22: *I am Here*, Fugitive Images Photographic still of installation (2011).

## The UK Housing Crisis and Grenfell Tower disaster

The housing crisis in London and the UK has affected many of us and dominated news items since the early 2010s. It was tragically epitomised in the failures that led to the Grenfell Tower Fire tragedy, the UK's worst domestic disaster in living memory that killed 72 residents of a social housing tower block, part of the Lancaster West Estate in North Kensington a corner of one of London's richest

boroughs. Unimaginable, in terms of lives lost, displacement, disruption and sorrow of the residents and their families. It is now apparent that the lack of duty of care, through the cutting costs on building standards combined with profit over people and systematic racism caused this to happen. Grenfell stands as a symbol of the failure of Neoliberalism and the years of gentrification, regeneration of housing and privatisation of public services housing services by successive governments. (Boughton, J 2018, p 1-3)

As council after council regenerates estate after estate, and private rents are forced upwards, the pertinent issue is the lack of any real affordable housing readily available. The issue is a long and politically complex and starts with Thatcher's Conservative Government's introduction of the Right to Buy Scheme intended to offer council tenants the chance to become homeowners. The subsequent decisions made by successive Neoliberal administrations not to reinvest the money back into municipal housing stock from the sale of these properties combined with the lack of power of councils to borrow money to build led to investment from elsewhere. This is a classic example of profit over people as the trend shifted towards Councils having a Housing Association arm that could garner private interest and investment and wasn't subject to the controls. There are many excellent sources of information on this subject, some written, but others have evolved through successful housing activist campaigns of Focus E15 Mothers and the London Renters Union, artist documentaries such as the *I am Here* project and *The Great Housing Swindle*, and there have been some inspiring and successful activist fightback and success stories from housing campaigns but the unimaginable tragedy and injustices of The Grenfell Tower fires weigh heavily on our minds.

### **Khadija Saye's Living Series**

Khadija Saye was a talented Gambian-British artist who lived with her mother Mary Mendy on the 23<sup>rd</sup> floor of Grenfell and who both tragically perished in the fire. As Saye's photography developed, she took inspiration from the world around her including Grenfell tower. The *Living* series depicts Gambian Women of the diaspora in their own homes, and I think it is important to voice Saye's own words here:



Today, I will be showing work from the *Living* series where I documented Gambians in their living rooms in #London. I was interested in the cultural Synthesis of differing aesthetics that resonate all through the African Diaspora. A visual document of the migration of #culture.

(Saye, K 2017)



Figure 23: from the series *Living*, (2017) Khadija Saye photographic print Image  
source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BVEv6molPJt/>

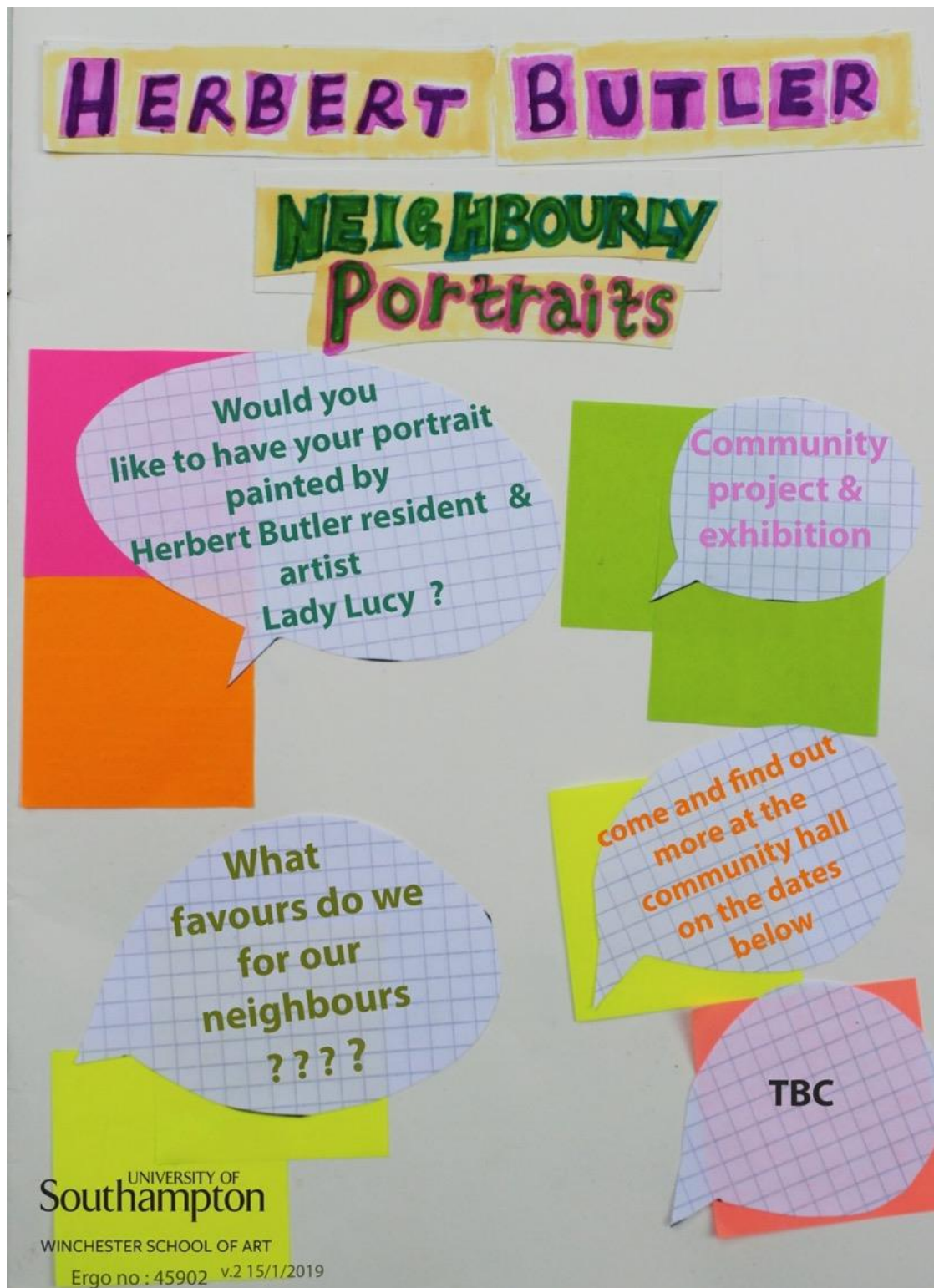
The artist's mother Mary Mendy is the subject of a photo in the *Living* series. Sat relaxed on her sofa at home, woven through the photograph is a visible merging of Gambian and British cultures: the colours and patterns of the fabric of Mary's dress, in contrast to the carpet and sofa. Almost out of sight there is an animal patterned shopping trolley. In the background, we see the Gambian flag crossing the Union Jack. We imagine the ornaments and photographs in the cupboard. This already poignant photograph that formed a series called *Living* and celebrated life itself was then published across newspaper pages paying homage to the victims at the time of the tragedy. The meaning and power of this incredible photograph that contributed to forging Saye's burgeoning career is instantly changed when it appears in newspapers, sometimes cropped as a victim's photo,

resonating and highlighting the tragedy on so many levels including the institutional racism and classism entrenched in the disaster.

Much work has been done to preserve the work left and celebrate the life lived by Grenfell Artist Saye, most recently as an outdoor public exhibition reproducing her tintype Self Portrait Series *Dwelling: in this space we breathe* (2017) in South Kensington sited a mile from where she lived and died.

### **Regeneration artists**

I was aware that there was a great deal of art projects already associated with regeneration and demolition and that this type of socially engaged practice however well-intentioned comes with its problems. Often an artist may be sent into an area that is being regenerated by an interested party invested in the development, who may use the section money to offset their responsibilities. Artists are used to ease the process, to get residents on side and often the Section 106 agreement the legislation put in place to lessen the impact to the local community of building developments. Some works are all very necessary in terms of genuine forms of politically engaged work and of activism, but often this work is developed by an artist from outside the community documenting this process. There are now infamous cases of these processes backfiring due to their insensitivities and processes of Art Washing such as when Art Angel attempted to commission Mike Nelson to build a Pyramid shape public sculpture which would memorialise the 1974 Heygate Estate in Elephant and Castle, only to be met with outrage from the soon to be displaced inhabitants.



HB 2 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits Poster

I initiated a new project offering oil paintings of my fellow residents and neighbours living on our estate. The portraits are offered for residents to keep in exchange for stories of neighbourly exchange and encounter.



Post Brexit vote there was much divisiveness in the political climate which resonated through communities. The project came into being and developed as countdown to Brexit approached. This was reflected in some of the conversations. I painted two women from the Windrush generation who settled in Hackney and live in sheltered accommodation opposite my flat. I heard their stories and ate Rosa's cake.

### **Lady Lucy's Pochade Portrait Shopper**

I collaborated with my father Nick Woollett to design and fabricate a DIY portable painting portrait studio, Lady Lucy's Portrait Pochade, so that I could visit people in their homes or the community hall to paint the portraits. The base for the trolley was fabricated by using of the frame of a discarded 'Shopper' found on the street and based upon home-made Plein Air painting kits. Pochade is a French name for a painting sketch and is used as a reference to the tradition of Plein Air painting. At the time of making the mobile studio, I wrote this log:

This week progress was made on the mobile portrait studio.

We worked together before on the Lady Lucy portrait studio I am working with my father on making this who I worked with before on the bigger Lady Lucy's Portrait Studio (2010). We are using the base of an everyday shopping trolley that was found in the street and converting into carry paintings, paint materials and a homemade pochade box which will the attach to the tripod to make a mobile easel. The pochade box and the tripod easel is a commonly used DIY technique for plain air painters as alternative to shop bought expensive painting kit. I like the idea of the DIY approach – it suits both the economy and the environment of the project. The Shopping trolley base was found by my dad as he does, the morning litter picks. It also acts as an accessible devise to talk about process too. After the Lady Lucy portrait studio is finished, I will decorate it. When I get to somebody's house to make the portraits, I will unpack the kit into parts. The shopper acting as a carrier for surfaces and paints and the pochade box on a tripod as an easel with room for the palette. Tripod references that we are making paintings after photography of course.

The kit is also designed to unfold and pack away and to be taken on public transport which is much more mobile than the previous portrait studio.

### Portrait sittings at the hall and at people's homes

The first person I painted was Trinidad who came to the community hall to be painted.



*HB 3 Coffee morning at Herbert Butler Tenants and Residents for people interested in the project*



*HB 4 Trinny at her portrait sitting at Herbert Butler Tenants and Residents Hall with portrait*

I met Trinidad when she had come to sign up for a Christmas hamper and she was open to the idea of having her portrait painted. When I bought the hamper and whenever I visited Trinidad, she welcomed me inside, although that is different now. When the portrait was finished, I made it into a poster and stuck it

up around the estate and then more people got in touch. I painted all the portraits in Spring/ Summer 2019 and think how lucky it was to make that work then. I worked up close with people inside in their kitchen's and living rooms. We held an exhibition at the community hall where neighbours met one another at the opening.



*HB 5 Trinidad with her finished portrait at Herbert Butler Community Hall*



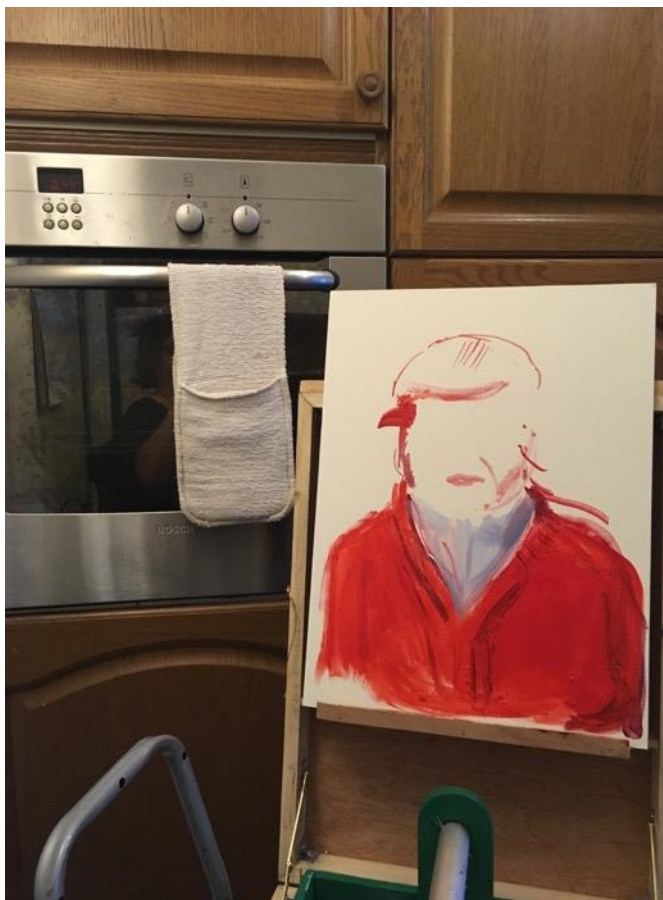


*HB 6 Rosa chats to Sheila during the sitting at Adelaide Court resident's lounge*



*HB 7 Rosa with her family photographs and freshly painted portrait at Adelaide Court resident's lounge*





HB 10



HB 11



HB 8



HB 9







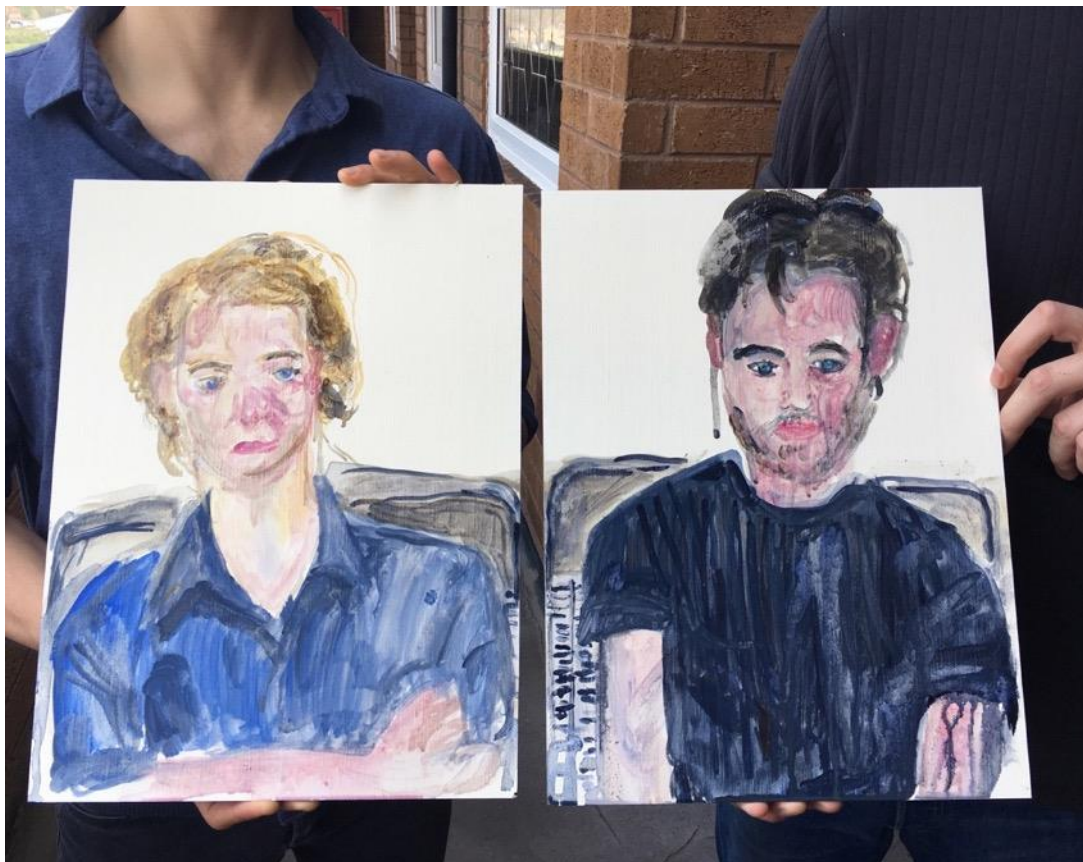


*HB 13 HB Poyan's sitting, portrait at various stages, Pouyan with his portrait,*





HB 14 The portrait is revealed to flatmates Richard and Arthur

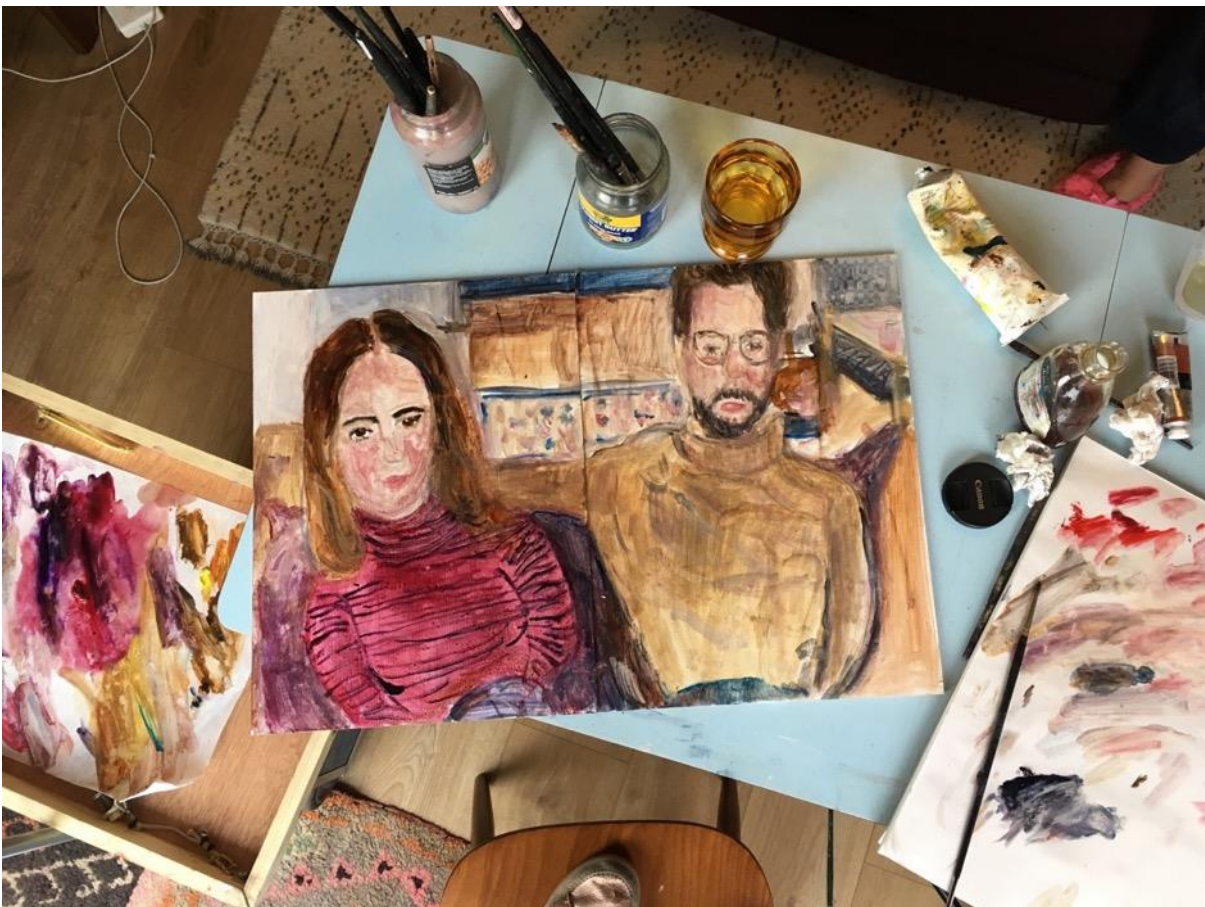


*HB 16 close-up Richard and Authur hold their portraits outside their flat*



*HB 15 Richard and Authur hold their portraits outside their flat*









*HB 17 Portrait sitting on Jim's balcony*



*HB 18 Jim on his balcony with completed portrait*



*HB 19 Jim's portrait on his mantelpiece*

It's a beautiful Spring sunny day in early May and I am mindful that K I have been painted portraits for three months now and I am reflective of the portraits I have painted as I walk over to Jim's flat. His home is very light and airy - a painter and decorator and he had some snacks laid out for me but as I look around, I am drawn to the balcony. The view from the balcony is expansive, it looks out over the perimeter edge bushes of the estate over Mabley Green. There is an openness to nature in this marsh edged part of London which is incongruous with all its regeneration and building.

Like Rosa in Adelaide Court, Jim looks out for his neighbours on the other end of the estate, one family in particular he explains. There is a big jar of dog biscuits in the kitchen which he throws out to a dog who appears below us. He told me that one neighbour asked him to stop feeding his dog. Jim brings out the photos and tells me about them, there is the picture of when he ran off to Butlins, and pictures of his children and grandchildren.

How a person's identity is reflected by themselves becomes apparent throughout the sittings, just like when you visit a person in their home for the first time, you look around for clues and build a mental picture, constructing a portrait in your mind of who this person might be. Something that I managed to capture on the painting and which I added in at the last moment was Jim's arm Tattoos.

He has 'Love & Hate' knuckle tattoos that he got done in Piccadilly inspired by Robert Mitchum.

Jim says that spirits have visited: "Things happen when I'm around." He is a holy man, and is from a big family, the oldest who left Ireland at 15 to come and get work in the UK to provide for his family. At the end of the sitting, he absolutely insists on tipping me, which I try and stop him from doing but I also feel it would be really rude to not take the money.



*HB 20 Jim's portrait freshly painted.*





HB 21 A resident Mike helps transport Lady Lucys Portrait  
Pochade studio

HB 22 Portrait in Melissa's kitchen

In October 2019, an exhibition was staged in the Herbert Butler community Hall with an opportunity to bring the portraits, the participants and the community together. The Herbert Butler Tenants and Residents community hall is small in the scale of other community halls. It occupies the bottom floor of maisonettes flat, so for scale one might think of a small one-bedroom council flat or on an alternative scale it could be measured against the space that small artist run galleries hold, such as Transition or Five Years.

I wondered how I could host all these portraits in this space, along with snippets of some of the conversations that had taken place regarding neighbourly exchanges. Inspiration came from the variety of ground level gardens that I had witnessed when I had been leafleting for the TRA and thought of the metaphor of the Garden fence, a domiciliary divide that keeps us apart, but also bonds us through our sneak peaks through and talking over.



*HB 23 Melissa with her finished portrait on the balcony of her flat*

I thought of a homemade garden-like structure built from bits of fence, trellis, and wood and the idea took flight after visiting the Stadtteलगarten community gardens in Tempelhof Feld Berlin. Although drawn to the immediate DIY ramshackle aesthetic of the gorilla urban gardens in Berlin, I went for a more formal structure than this, so the work could be navigated and viewed safely in the small space, and so the structure itself didn't deviate from the installation but remained part of it and complimented it. In the end, I settled on a simple structure of a 3-panel screen

which were ready made. The Garden trellis panels screwed together using hinges to make the screens. The screens are transportable and can fit into a large car, and the hand-painted words and phrases on linen which have been edited from diaries of the sittings frame the paintings. Listed below are the words and phrases from the sittings to reflect the neighbourly exchanges we had discussed in the sittings.

They are the Keepers of the Keys

Through the Tenants & Residents Association we represent ourselves

Living between here and there

They knocked over his house to build your block

I throw biscuits to the dogs

I can hear through the walls

We got to know our local drug dealer

Jim had seen the poster with Trinidad's portrait on and wondered how he could get on one, so his portrait became the poster for the project displayed in HB24

### ***Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits Noticeboards and Tour***

In April 2021, when the winter lockdown was lifting, I reconfigured the work in an installation across 12 noticeboards around the estate. Being an insider as member of TRA committee, I had access to these noticeboards as my role had been to put up posters, I knew how problematic they could be in terms of getting keys to work and the general condition, but I decided it was important to show my work for the viva in the social network it has been made in. It had been over 18 months since the community exhibition and life had changed dramatically on the estate, there had been no community events with people gathering although we kept up with our Christmas Hamper distribution to families and older people. The noticeboard tour film reflects on the sittings and project acknowledging the pandemic and how these portraits and words take on different meaning. In Appendix A is the transcript of the film, and the film ink is provided both here and in the supplementary materials. The film adds to this text, as a piece of autoethnographic writing, I am at the centre, and I am talking about my experiences as a resident, artist and member of the TRA. Through I explore and point to wider issues such as loneliness, social exclusion, Mutual aid, networks of care, housing inequality through my conversations with my neighbours.





HB 24 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits exhibition poster with Jim's portrait



HB 25 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits exhibition at the tenants and resident's hall



HB 26 Rosa with her portrait at the exhibition





*HB 27 Dan and Ros and family with their portrait*



*HB 28 Harry and his portrait on the mobile studio*



*HB 29 Anne and Jim share a drink and look at the portraits - Anne's portrait in foreground*





HB 30 Marion and family visit the exhibition

## Herbert Butler Portraits documentation index

- HB 1 Herbert Butler Tenants and Residents Association (2018) - paint on cut canvas on cork board with pins 147*
- HB 2 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits Poster 152*
- HB 3 Trinny at her portrait sitting at Herbert Butler Tenants and Residents hall with portrait 154*
- HB 4 Coffee morning at Herbert Butler Tenants and Residents for people interested in the project 154*
- HB 5 Trinidad with her finished portrait at Herbert Butler Community Hall 155*
- HB 6 Rosa chats to Sheila during the sitting at Adelaide Court residents lounge 156*
- HB 7 Rosa with her family photographs and freshly painted portrait at Adelaide Court residents lounge 156*
- HB 8 157*
- HB 9 157*
- HB 10 157*
- HB 11 157*
- HB 12 158*
- HB 13 159*
- HB 14 The portrait is revealed to flatmates Richard and Authur 160*
- HB 15 Richard and Authur hold their portraits outside their flat 161*
- HB 16 close-up Richard and Authur hold their portraits outside their flat 161*
- HB 17 Portrait sitting on Jim's balcony 163*
- HB 18 Jim on his balcony with completed portrait 163*
- HB 19 Jim's portrait on his mantelpiece 163*
- HB 20 Jim's portrait freshly painted. 165*
- HB 21 A resident Mike helps transport Lady Lucys Portrait Pochade studio 166*
- HB 22 Portrait in Melissa's kitchen 166*
- HB 23 Melissa with her finished portrait on the balcony of her flat 168*
- HB 24 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits exhibition poster with Jim's portrait 170*
- HB 25 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits exhibition at the tenants and resident's hall 171*
- HB 26 Rosa with her portrait at the exhibition 171*
- HB 27 Dan and Ros and family with their portrait 172*
- HB 28 Harry and his portrait on the mobile studio 173*
- HB 29 Anne and Jim share a drink and look at the portraits - Anne's portrait in foreground 174*
- HB 30 Marion and family visit the exhibition 175*







## Conclusion

This doctoral research project has been undertaken in what can only be described as a tumultuous and ever-changing time. Since starting this journey in 2016, we have seen the Trump administration come and go, Grenfell Tower disaster, Brexit, two UK general elections and a global pandemic. We have seen resistance and fight back through activism and community organising such as Black Lives Matter, Mutual Aid and the British housing crisis activism movement. It is a lot for us all to digest what and who we have lost and how we might go forward as people alone and together at the same time. In that sense, this thesis does have considerable context, as a key part of my workings as an artist and researcher is to try and compute, understand, communicate and reflect back. As this project draws to a close, I have begun to understand this writing as a whole as an auto-ethnographic work and considering it as such is the key to relaying its findings as conclusions are drawn from it.

The three interlinking portrait projects took place pre Covid-19 pandemic but were reflected upon in the duration of the lockdown. It is impossible to think now how this working with people might have happened previously. Much of the activity took place with people that we might not interact with that closely due to the social distancing measures. The act of sitting physically with someone inside without a mask and talking to them at length while painting their portrait would be impossible in the lockdown. The final part of *Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits* was delayed as it was not possible to safely return the paintings to my neighbours' homes.

Reflecting back on the work prior to lockdown necessarily involves revisiting the extent to which I have addressed the core questions of my research. Through undertaking the three practice-based research projects I have shown how through a series of interconnecting projects using three different models in differing frameworks and locations, each of which respond to the core questions of the

research in their own ways. Throughout I have used painting as a tool for social engagement and a conduit for exchange. The portrait making in my practice acts as a participatory method, but it is only part of the process of a wider circulation of activities of organising. The portrait is offered as an entry point for a further discussion about the different exchanges that take place between us. As we all are aware, everyday exchanges have become even more pertinent as we try and reach out. I believe that the socially engaged and community engagement processes that I use have just as much effect and influence as the painterly process and argue that this doesn't weaken either process but, in the processes, coming together to make a new kind of process, the work and its effect can be strengthened.

I will now return to reflect back on the three projects in response to the research questions. Firstly, through *Portraits, Gifts and Services*: The act of offering a one-to-one exchange, non-monetary value is created for both the artist and sitter. It offered an open invitation for interpretation of what one watercolour portrait by the artist Lady Lucy might be worth. But its remit is much wider: it asked not only what an art object is worth, but what is the worth of time spent together, that essential condition of making a portrait which, in this project, is also mirrored in the return service, gift or favour. Here I would like to reclaim the old adage of "It's the thought that counts", where kindness prevails over actuality of gesture, and it is, of course, true to use 'It's the time that counts. This project was possible because of the free time I found myself with. I had very little work, and subsequently very little income. Through creating a distributed painting project amongst my social circles, I created a network of support, mentorship and care as an artist. In the regathering of the portraits through The Museum of London exhibition I threw light on those connections and brought people together to visit the show. The wall installation gathered the portraits and framed them with gouache painted text: this wasn't just about what I have managed to garner but documented what sort of things we can do and offer one another and the everyday exchanges amongst people that fall outside of the commercial marketplace.

The Second project *Interchange* took the premise of *Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours* and extended outward to a wider public audience. The model was that portraits were offered to members of the public and that the reciprocal gesture would be offered to a third party from the Museum who was unbeknownst to either

me or the portrait sitter. Rather than coming back to me, the gift would be passed on. This project took place in the context of a yearlong season that involved many different community networks from around the city considering its future possibilities. *Interchange* began, rather than finished, at the Museum of London. The art show kick started a new model of portrait exchange in the context of a yearlong season about the future of London, *City Now, City Future*. This brought many people together in the interchange. The person I painted being the point of the interchange where the exchange goes on to another person. This project was possibly because of the international reach of the museum's audience. Museum visitors from Germany, India, Hong Kong and Australia sat, the latter three came across the portrait studio and gave their time to the sitting and offering and returning an exchange to the next person. In *What We Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art* (2005), educator and writer Ted Purves surveys the shift towards situating the practice "into a literal transfer of goods and services from the artist to the audience." (Purves T, 2005 P x– xi) He positions this trend towards the relational and to expanded practices, although not mentioning painting, of course. In my work the painting is placed as an equal amongst other non-material goods and services, for example, a walking tour, a chess lesson, a French Lesson. It is the action of setting up this system of exchange which means in can be examined within the terms of an alternative system for exchange and distribution of artwork. If we return to the Diagram of Exchange, we see how the green dots move around the network and value is created through each transition. This is where I understand how portraiture can operate in future networks of alternative economic models in the future of the art world.

Finally, through *Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits*, I chose my immediate surroundings – the estate where I lived – and focussed on the network of care and support from the Tenants and Residents Association. This project responded to some outsider views of the estate written in report form to reveal the value of the networks of care and consciousness raising amongst residents on the estate. In the noticeboard tour, I acknowledge the autoethnographic insider position as both resident and TRA committee member. This enables me to have knowledge of how this operates. For example, when Jim tells me about the looking out for one another relationship he has with one family and the important role this has played in both household's lives and its reciprocal nature. This is represented by the phrase 'I throw biscuits to the dogs': A simple act of connection to the neighbours'

pets. Working with Shiella and Rosa in the sheltered accommodation shed light on how they relate to one another. Through painting them, I witnessed their care for each other. Simultaneously through the portrait sittings and my work on the TRA organising events, I developed relationships with neighbours who became friends. I see this project as a portrait of the people networked by the Tenants and Residents organisation, as I mention at the end of the video. Through the reflection on the video and transcribing it, I believe this work uses the autoethnographic method and where it can be most useful as Adams, Hollman Jones and Ellis point out:

Autoethnographers offer these accounts – these “thick descriptions” in order to facilitate an understanding and often a critique of cultural life by encouraging readers to think about taken-for-granted norms, experiences, and practices in new unique complicated and challenging ways.

(Adams, Holman Jones and Ellis, 2015)

All of these projects are open ended and not perfect. *Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours* is still open to offers. Many of the Museum of London *Interchange* exchanges were left incomplete and because of lockdown, the Herbert Butler residents who live so close to me did not receive their portraits until Summer 2021 until the lockdown restrictions started lifting.

As I have demonstrated, Portraiture has always been a social act and through retracing art history we can understand common goals. I have discovered a series of practices of painting and drawing that are also using portrait making in drawing, painting and photography as a form of social engagement. I think the power is in the openness of such works - how acknowledging this social process gives a voice to the portrait sitters and shed light on the situation which in a portrait we might feel is closed off to us, such as when in *Space Place Who* by Barbara Walker we hear the voice of the sitters and how important the process has been. The portrait reaches to someone and if we see an active response, we are sure there is life. In this sense, the portrait is very much a conduit for exchange. It is an exchange itself.

Returning to something that Aliza Nisenbaum said in a talk in 2018 regarding how time in her work wasn't instrumentalised: it is here that we might understand that



pushing against time is all important and portrait making can give us that space as we are in essence spending time with another person. Painting and portrait making can reveal political networks of care and consciousness raising if your politics are embodied within it. The practices I am interested in are the works that show that and don't try to use it for another purpose or indeed let it be used for another purpose. This is not always the artist's fault. As I discussed in the section about pandemic responses at the end of chapter 1., we saw the project *Portraits for NHS Workers* emerge where the key workers from NHS sitters sat remotely or were painting from a photo for an interconnected collective of portrait painters. Reaching out to one another has become an even more important function in these times but made more the difficult. Similar projects tried to show solidarity to our situation and the heroes of the pandemic such as the *Everyday Heroes* (2020), the outdoor show of pasted up portraits and poetry about Key workers at Southbank Centre last summer. While I have absolute faith in all the artists intentions and a lot of the work did translate well as gigantic vinyl visions indeed many of the portraits were familial connections, such as Barbara Walkers paintings of her sister who is a NHS worker, I am not sure of the institutions intentions, in fact I feel that the artists and the people they depict might feel let down, as behind these giant homages they were hiding their treatment of their own staff as critic Hattie Judah questions in The Guardian:

Some 400 jobs are on the line, overwhelmingly among the organisation's lowest-paid sectors, including the very same front-facing roles celebrated in the portraits quite literally cloaking the complex's facades. It displays brass neck in the extreme for an organisation to glorify key workers so publicly at the very moment it threatens its own with redundancy. (Judah, 2020)

What seems to be occurring here is worrying case of art washing. Who is complicit in this process? Is what we are seeing the distribution of the sensible?

“Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time.” (Rancière, 2011)

Rancière believes that politics have an aesthetic in as much as they revolve around a game of hide and seek of what we can and cannot see and who has the

ability to speak. We are told by the politicians and the media to celebrate the keyworkers, but what about the keyworkers themselves? Many have died. Southbank Centre are celebrating the keyworkers, but not their precariously laboured staff who have lost their livelihoods. What is problematic in this shows not the images themselves, the people paintings and photographs really do shine through, and they represent important lives to represent and reflect back to us, it is the framing of the portraits and in this case an institution choosing to disregard the lives and welfare of their own staff who are protesting, but ultimately jobless by the end of the summer.

Through the examples offered, the distribution of art has already dramatically changed in the last year due to the pandemic. Portraiture has responded by a series of paintings and projects about celebrating keyworkers our heroes of the day and there is a self-organised system for artist buying and selling Artist Support Pledge. No one is sure how the art economy is going to operate in the next few years and how things will function post-pandemic, but I think artists will seek out alternatives and respond to the situation

Taking this work forward, I am currently artist in residence at the Royal Marsden Hospital in Chelsea where I am working with nursing staff and cancer patients in the Critical Care Ward. This project is in its very early stages and at the moment making portraits with cancer patients is an ethical concern. But this presents a possibility, too. Working with nurses making collages gives me an insight into their care time with their patients. A nurse told me that one of the things patients want to do is give a gift to others. I see this project developing as working with patients to create a work that they can give to others, for example, a long-term patient wanted to give something to his children for their birthdays, so I made a couple of collages for them. My role with staff will enable them to take a break and make some collage work, which is a such a direct artform and enables imagination in juxtaposition of colours and shapes from the start.

I had an interest before lockdown of working with groups of women to make group portraits. I visited the Glasgow Women's library, as I had done a poster making workshop 20 years ago as part of Ladyfest UK and wanted to revisit the organisation and my roots in feminist organising. I am interested in the discussions of the economies of such groups.



portrait making of Joan Eardley, Eva Frankfurter, Alice Neel and its relation to a rethinking of realism in the 20th century and how that relates to the work I make.

Finally, please, listen to a *Song for Chinasa*. It is a song that Alex wrote as part of the *Interchange* project at the museum of London. They never met, but it is a song without words, for on hearing that Chinasa was a singer, Alex hoped that she would put some words to it. You can open the link here:

<https://soundcloud.com/lucy-woollett/song-for-chinasa>



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## Appendix A

### *Herbert Butler neighbourly Portraits Noticeboard Tour*

To view the video, follow this link:

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/645698518>

Password: LLHB21

This is a transcript of *Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits Noticeboard Tour* around the estate.

During April and May 2021, I exhibited *Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits* around the estate on 12 noticeboards. Installed on the boards were prints of the portraits, project documentation and painted acrylic text on canvas and linen.

It formed part of my viva examination and the examiners requested that it should form part of my final submission.

*A Cat called F is in a cardboard box positioned on a stool and as the camera pulls out, we see the artist Lady Lucy is in her front garden, undergrowth, trees and plants can be seen with mobile portrait studio and a portrait painting of T.*

Hi, I'm the artist Lady Lucy and I am standing in my front garden in a house that I share on the Herbert Butler Estate in Hackney Wick in East London and in 2019 I started a project painting with my neighbours on the estate. I worked with the Tenants and Residents group meeting neighbours at events such as Chair Disco



seated exercise class for the over 55s, also seaside coach trips that we organised and Christmas Hamper and met residents through these events.

*Camera moves to show mobile portrait studio.*

I worked with my Dad Nicholas Woollett to create this mobile portrait studio – DIY painting portrait studio which is based on a shopping trolley that he found actually when he was doing his litter pick near where he lives, and we designed it, so it was based on a Pochade painting (box) this is a Pochade Box which is usually used for outdoor painting – landscapes etc. (Plein Air painting) but we reinvented this idea of using a Pochade Box to create portraits in this situation so we could take it around houses.

*Camera pans back to artist in garden*

So, I wanted to paint neighbours in their houses and asked them if I could come and paint them. The neighbours get to keep their portraits and in exchange I guess they talk about neighbourly, the way that they interact with other neighbours. At the time – in 2019 of course there was of course a very much a feeling of maybe divisiveness, because of the Brexit vote and the upcoming election that was going to happen, and I just wanted to find out how people were relating to each other in that situation. Of course, this all happened pre-the pandemic as well, so recently I thought it would be good to reassess this work and I set about putting the portraits or copies of the portraits on noticeboards around the estate with text that I made at the time.

So, I'm going to do a tour of the noticeboards and my housemate Onyee Lo is filming us.

*Onyee gives thumbs up in front of the camera as Lucy walks out the gate to the path and camera follows.*

Come with me and we'll go to the first noticeboard.

*Camera follows artist around path to show AC some red brick flats*

So, some of the first people I painted were R & S who live in AC here which is sheltered accommodation.

*Camera pans around to show estate surroundings, flats, trees, lampposts.*

It's not actually officially part of the estate but I met them through the Chair Disco exercise class that the tenants and residents' group had organised and I quite like the idea of them being unofficially part of the estate but including them as part of my project and at some point, AC and Herbert Butler (Estate) separated and that got taken over by, well by H H, anyhow the idea was to sort of bridge a gap between the two.

*Camera follows artist along path*



So, R & S I painted in their shared lounge after the exercise class, and it was really interesting how R & S sat together at the portrait (sittings) and watched over. Sort of watched over the portrait sittings and it was a public – private situation.

*Camera follows artist through Blue Herbert Butler Estate Gate on to a main road.*

It's very loud here. So, R & S actually feature on the first noticeboard that we're going to come to.

*Camera follows artist to noticeboard against red brick wall.*

Here they are and these are the friends that live in AC together and actually a lot of the text that goes with the portraits – snippets of conversation that people talked about when I was painting them but sometimes for obvious reasons it's not the person that's actually saying it in the portrait. Don't take it so literally. But in this case S is talking about the fact that at some point this block used to be, before it got built it used to be some houses where her ex-husband lived and so I thought it was important to put this on the wall of this house where this actually happened.

So, Rs kept in touch so, Since the pandemic R's (kept in touch) because she literally lives opposite our house so we can see each other from me from the balcony. We talk to each other, we kept in touch. R came to see this (the noticeboard) so it's really great that she's taken part in the project. At the moment, she is a bit separated from S because they've all being "locked" in their rooms as the lounge isn't open so ...

*Walks along road passed some cafes and shops on other side.*

So, you can imagine, I used to pull my portrait studio along here and you know when I'd be walking along pulling it, people would definitely look and get involved you know in the project and that. In a way, it was designed so people could access it in that way it had my name and the project on it, the name of the portrait studio on it and people were really curious about it and still are. It's been in our garden for a bit

and a builder recently came into our house and there was a guy who quite curious about it and so I talked about it

*Turns corner into M St and points at flats and signpost with map.*

This is M St and there is a map of Herbert Butler Estate here.

So, we've just walked from no 11- where I live is no 11 and AC is no 12 and we're going to walk around M St and the backup in-between S St to look at the noticeboards. There are 12 noticeboards all together.

*Camera follows Walk Up M St black railings on the left in front of flats.*

So, the first noticeboard I think is A, coming to A and this noticeboard is, it's a portrait in a noticeboard, but it's in-between the houses (flats), so its slightly hidden.

*Turns down path in-between flats to noticeboard 2*

Here is A. Now I met A, A used to come to some (events) when A's daughter was born. She used to come to, I think I first met her at the Christmas party and she used to come along to the (TRA) events and I think at that time she had a lot of time alone on her own at home so it was good, she got involved in the estate stuff and when we started doing the project she also offered to fix some of my clothes and I gave her some wine and this kind of thing and we still have that.

*Close up on noticeboard 2.*

With this noticeboard, I wanted to make sure that I included the very important (council) information and also the Mutual Aid information. The importance of putting the work in this framework is that they are part, this project has very much been part of the social fabric of the estate and also, it's obviously during this time (pandemic), these images (and information) relate to each other and for a long while I've been interest in this social element, the social function of notice boards. I've been documenting noticeboards around Hackney, since I moved here for about 3 ½ years now hashtag noticeboardsofhackney

Now were going to go to the Community Hall, this is the (Tenants and Residents) Community Hall. You can see its closed off, it's quite hidden, it's austere but we've (TRA) done a lot of important events in there and it needs to work, so I think Hackney Council are on the case (with repairs and renovation)

Now this is J, and J lives over in these flats over there and J's portrait I painted on his balcony on this lovely spring day in 2019 and you can sort of see, well the balconies are great because they look over M G. J told me his whole life story and it's really amazing and when he came to England from Ireland at 15. He talks a lot about his responsibilities, his family and one family in particular that he lives near that he's really close to and what he's done for them and what they've done for each other and how they keep an eye and he also talks about Throwing Biscuits to the dogs, so I'm really happy with this text with J. J also was also very happy for me to put his poster (portrait) around the estate when I was doing the project, so he sort of became an unofficial poster boy.

Now we're going to see D, C, E & R. This is a great family that I know through the Tenants and Residents (Association) organisation and it's the vice chair, the treasurer and their children. When we were doing this project. When I painted this portrait, I painted it in their living room, but I also go home and painted afterwards as it was quite difficult to keep the family together (to paint).  
This text:

Through the Tenants and Residents Association we represent ourselves

is something that D who is the chair of the TRA organisation said. D didn't want to be in a portrait, but she really helped organise other peoples, quite a few of the portraits especially the older residents like J and H who we'll see later, and she kind of negotiated the terms sometimes of the portraits. So, this in a way kind of represents the TRA as it has the family, then it has D's (input), and the portrait is by me. The position of this is very near the house where the family live, the chose the position so they could see it from their house.

We are going to walk up to see Mariam's portrait now, Mariam contributed to – in that year when we were doing the project there was a street party for The Big Lunch. It was the kind of event you couldn't have had during the pandemic. I mean it was outside – a gathering, it was a glorious day, people contributing, and cooking and Mariam contributed some great food for that event. We are going to go up to her portrait now.

When we had the exhibition in the community hall, originally the exhibition was on trellises in the community hall – you will see a little snippet of it now of the (inside) of the space I just showed you. Mariam came with her family. There's Mariam. Underneath this there is text about the project, it just gives some information. It is supported by Herbert Butler TRA and Wick Award. Wick Award are a local organisation who support community projects in the area, and they gave me some money for this project which is fantastic. It couldn't have happened without them. When we did the exhibition, we did the exhibition over a weekend in the Tenants, and Residents' Community Hall I was really surprised at how many residents actually came to the event. It's great!

So, this is a big Herbert Butler noticeboard, but hum I didn't want to put any portraits up here, because it's just got paint splattered all over it and it's a dumping ground. It just didn't seem appropriate to put anybody likeness in there. So instead, I selected these words I CAN HEAR THROUGH THE WALLS which I think we can all relate to as we've spent so much time indoors, you know, we've all been at home. It also relates very strongly to the trellis – as on this estate there is a lot of peering over.

This is someone who got involved, when I painted someone, he carried the portrait he helped me up and wheeled it along and helped me out. That is this building, S C here.

We're going to walk across S C now, hum I ended up painting a lot of people here, it was hum actually 3 sets of people on the top row of S C, 3 sets of people on top of SC all who I think are home owners and 2 of them were the only people to get in touch with me, who I didn't approach – who got in touch with me from the notices around. So, it struck me that I really needed to make a balance between the kind of people I was painting on the estate. There are 3 types, or I guess 4 types of residents here really, which are council tenants, leaseholders, private renters like myself and then actually unofficial residents, one of whom I did paint. An unofficial resident at our house, who I invited to come back and be painted.

This is A & R who I painted, and this is kind of, it was great sitting in a way, but at first it was a little bit awkward, there wasn't very much space and I think they wanted to get their portrait painted because they were housemates at the time and I didn't know anything about them and it was the kind of situation where I went into and we had to get to know each other very quickly, so we played some interesting games, both of them had been actors and we were playing this warm up games which helped in the portrait making situation, so it actually ended up being a lot of fun even if at first it was awkward.

## MY OLD NEIGHBOURS HELPED ME GET AWAY

This text is nothing that they said, it relates to another neighbour who was talking about their experience at somewhere where they lived before living here. But it

relates to us kind of being stuck inside and the complications and emergencies that come along with that.

We're now walking down a path along the estate CC it's called, and this noticeboard has M and N in it and the reason I wanted to put them together is they are both part of the Mutual Aid – the Herbert Butler WhatsApp group, so they've both been vocal on that so it's interesting to represent that, what those two people actually look like. You know when we're talking in these groups, we might not know each other (IRL), but it's a way of connecting with our neighbours. This includes, I purposely kept this poster of a day trip from 2019, that we took to, where did we go? Southend on Sea as a sort of memento from the previous pre-pandemic days. Halcyon pre-pandemic days.

*Artist walks away from noticeboard and on to narrow path, red dahlia flowers and shubery can be seen between the fences and the masoinette terrace of the estate. A dog howls from behind a gate as we see a green space with trees at the edg. The green is also surrounded by lampposts and a children's playground can be seen in the distance. Arriving at another big estate noticeboard.*

## LIVING BETWEEN HERE AND THERE

Ah, so this is Living between here and there, reassessing this it is talking about the liminal space that we are now living in between before the pandemic and after and lockdown and un lockdown. I also really like the position of this noticeboard because its in-between two houses no 18 and no 19, so it's literally between neighbours. It also represents I think, two different types of tenants on the estate. Two different resident (types) homeowners and also council tenants. T was the first person that I painted, I painted her in the community hall, and I met her at the Christmas (party), she signed up for a Christmas hamper. In this year, we were able to give her at the end of 2020, and because in 2020 she hadn't signed up for a hamper and because I knew where she lived, we were able to give her a hamper.

*Reflection in the noticeboard of artist and housemate filming with houses in background. We can hear birds chirping and an aeroplane flying above. As the artist begins to walk to the next noticeboard site.*

So, the text I wrote, they were snippets of conversation about what was actually happening (at the time) A lot of this text takes on new meaning and this is definitely in the case of this portrait that we are about to see.

*Artist walks into emergency bay and there is a sign saying No Ball Games. Opposite, some newly built flats can be seen they have big windows and the colour grey of the bricks contrast with the 70's red brick of the estate. Out of view there is a primary school and children can be heard playing. We have reached the next noticeboard*

## THEY ARE THE KEEPERS OF THE KEYS

This is J. Again, I got to know J, he used to come to events. He used to offer support and attend coffee mornings. I asked him if he would be happy to have his portrait painted and he was happy, but he didn't want to sit for a portrait, so we agreed to have him painted outside his door (from a photo) At the time he lived at

no \* but he doesn't live there anymore, his house has been cleared and nobody really knows what's happened to J which is really sad. He used to talk to his neighbours, but we don't know what's happened to him. So, the key thing, I like the idea that he was the keeper of the keys, now the council have got his keys.

*Artist turns around and starts walking to the green.*

I also hope that this noticeboard might prompt some information about what happened to J. I have asked his neighbours and asked around, but nobody seems to know anything. It's really sad, but I hope he's safe. So, we're now coming up to the penultimate noticeboard which is of P.

Camera points up to houses and artist turns corner into roadway.

So, P was an unofficial resident of Herbert Butler Estate as he came to stay with us dehuman rights activist who was an Asylum Seeker and came to the UK ... A friend recommended him to us, and we were looking for someone for the room. He came to stay with us for a few months as people were going on holiday and we could offer him a room for free and he became a friend and I got to know him, so when I did the project and come back and we used to have lots of discussions P and I, so the text is really about that although I don't necessarily think that we should agree to disagree. I mean to get on sometimes we do have to, but I think it's a dilemma that we all have these days, definitely.

And now we're going to go to the last noticeboard which is of H, H and his dogs S and B.

*Walking past some maisonettes we see a life size Spiderman rag doll in a tree.*

GOT TO KNOW

Now H is literally our neighbour, we see him all the time, with his dogs he's there. We might actually see him; I wouldn't be surprised if he crosses our path in a second. You'll have to excuse the rubbish here.

*Turns down a pathway through an open black metal gate between buildings towards a final noticeboard. Rubbish can be seen strewn on the floor.*

So, this is H and his dogs S and B, although I didn't put the dogs' names on there. So, this Portrait was arranged by it was negotiated with D. This a particular one that D negotiated. H didn't want to sit down for a portrait to be painted, but he was happy for me to borrow, use these portraits lovely pictures of him and his dogs and paint a picture of them which I painted in the garden. So last one is slightly different, it's not a head and shoulders portrait, but I think that it's interesting that it's different as well and Harry, I think is happy with it.

Dogs' barks can be heard in the background.

During the pandemic, I have got to know Harry a lot more as I've seen him, I ask after him, we ask after each other. I see him when I've been Rollerskating over in the park and he's been walking the dogs, so yeah, he's a really great character, such an important part of the life of the estate. So, this really sums it up, so through these portraits, through creating these portraits I got to know the residents better. I got to be part of this tenants and residents' group, so the project really functioned in that organisations and couldn't have functioned without it.

*Emergency services sirens can be heard.*

So, it's almost a portrait of that, a portrait of the estate, but also a portrait of the TRA. So, we're coming to the end of the tour now, thanks very much. Thank you very much Onyee for filming thanks very much.



## APPENDIX B

### Project documentation

Much of the project documentation is within the thesis, but here is provided  
A chance looks at the imagery without the words.

I have left images in place in the main thesis where they remain a crucial part of  
the discussion

*Image 1 Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours (2017) wall installation framed watercolour portraits with hand painted gouache text dimensions variable. 203*

*Image 2 Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours (2017) wall installation framed watercolour portraits with hand painted gouache text dimensions variable. 204*

*Image 3 Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours (2017) wall installation framed watercolour portraits with hand painted gouache text dimensions variable 204*

*Image 4 Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours (2017) wall installation framed watercolour portraits with hand painted gouache text dimensions variable 205*

*Image 5 Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours (2017) wall installation framed watercolour portraits with hand painted gouache text dimensions variable 205*

*Image 6 Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours (2017) wall installation framed watercolour portraits with hand painted gouache text dimensions variable. 205*

*Image 7 Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours (2017) wall installation framed watercolour portraits with hand painted gouache text dimensions variable. 206*

*Image 8 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Harry and his dogs (2019) waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400 207*

*Image 9 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Pouyan (2019) waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400 208*

*Image 10 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Anne (2019) waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400 209*

*Image 11 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Rosa (2019) waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400 210*

*image 12 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Jim (2019) waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400 211*

*Image 13 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Mariam (2019) waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400 212*

*Image 14 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Nimi (2019) waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400 213*

*Image 15 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Jamil (2019) waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400 214*

*Image 16 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Shiella Waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400 215*

*Image 17 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Melissa (2019) waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400 216*

*Image 18 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Trinidad (2019) waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400 217*

*Image 19 mage 13 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Arthur & Richard (2019) waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400 218*

*Image 20 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Dan, Cerys, Ezra and Roz (2019) waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400 219*

*Image 21 : Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Harry and his dogs (2019) waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400 220*

*Image 22 resident attending exhibition 221*

*Image 23 Residents attending exhibition 222*

*image 24 Residents attend exhibition 222*

*Image 25 Resident attends exhibition 222*

*image 26 Residents attend exhibition 223*

*image 27 Resident attends exhibition 224*

- Image 28 Residents attending exhibition 226*
- Image 29 resident attending exhibition 227*
- image 30 Resident visiting exhibition 227*
- image 31 Residents at the opening night 228*
- image 32 Exhibition opening night 228*
- Image 33 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, waterbased oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable 229*
- image 34 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, waterbased oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable 230*
- image 35 Image 33 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, waterbased oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable 231*
- Image 36 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, waterbased oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable 231*
- Image 37 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, waterbased oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable 232*
- Image 38 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, waterbased oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable 232*
- Image 39 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, waterbased oil on linen 233*
- image 40 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, waterbased oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable 234*
- Image 41 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, waterbased oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable 235*
- image 42 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, waterbased oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable 236*
- Image 43 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, waterbased oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, homemade portrait studio, dimensions variable 237*
- Image 44 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, waterbased oil on linen board, with home made portrait studio dimensions variable 238*
- image 45 Image 33 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, waterbased oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable 239*
- image 46 Image 33 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, waterbased oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable 240*
- Image 47 Hebert Butler Neighbourly Portraits visits Gascoyne 2 Community Hall, Nov 2019 241*
- Image 48 Hebert Butler Neighbourly Portraits visits Gascoyne 2 Community Hall, Nov 2019 242*
- Image 49 Hebert Butler Neighbourly Portraits visits Gascoyne 2 Community Hall, Nov 2019 242*
- Image 50 Hebert Butler Neighbourly Portraits visits Gascoyne 2 Community Hall, Nov 2019 243*
- image 51 Hebert Butler Neighbourly Portraits visits Gascoyne 2 Community Hall, Nov 2019 243*
- Image 52 Hebert Butler Neighbourly Portraits visits Gascoyne 2 Community Hall, Nov 2019 244*
- Image 53 Hebert Butler Neighbourly Portraits visits Gascoyne 2 Community Hall, Nov 2019 244*
- Image 54 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 1 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard. 246*
- Image 55 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 1 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard. 246*
- image 56 Herbert Butler Neighbouly Portraits noticeboard 2 246*
- Image 57 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 2 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard. 247*
- Image 58 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 3 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard. 248*
- Image 59 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 4 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard. 249*
- Image 60 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 4 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard. 250*
- Image 61 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 5 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard. 251*
- Image 62 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 6 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard. 252*
- Image 63 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 6 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard. 253*
- Image 64 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 7 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard. 254*

- Image 65 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 7 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard. 255*
- Image 66 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 8 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard. 256*
- Image 67 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 9 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard 257*
- Image 68 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 10 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard. 258*
- Image 69 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 11 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard. 259*
- Image 70 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 12 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard 260*

### **Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours at Museum of London (2017)**



*Image 1 Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours (2017) wall installation framed watercolour portraits with hand painted gouache text dimensions variable.*



Image 2 Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours (2017) wall installation framed watercolour portraits with hand painted gouache text dimensions variable.



Image 3 Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours (2017) wall installation framed watercolour portraits with hand painted gouache text dimensions variable





*Image 4 Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours (2017) wall installation framed watercolour portraits with hand painted gouache text dimensions variable*



*Image 6 Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours (2017) wall installation framed watercolour portraits with hand painted gouache text dimensions variable.*

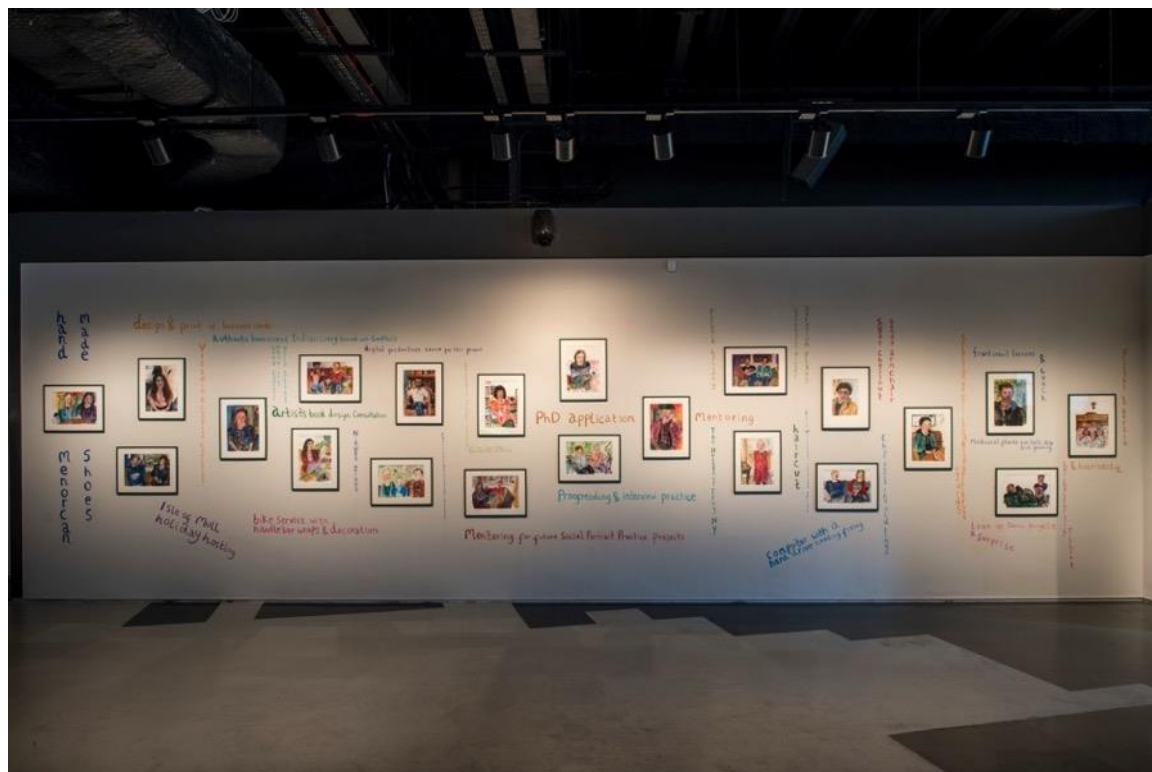


Image 7 Portraits for Services, Gifts and Favours (2017) wall installation framed watercolour portraits with hand painted gouache text dimensions variable.

## Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits

## Individual portraits of residents





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Image 8 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits: Harry and his dogs* (2019) water-based oil on linen board 300 x 400





Image 9 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits: Pouyan (2019) water-based oil on linen board 300 x 400





*Image 10 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits: Anne (2019) water-based oil on linen board 300 x 400*





Image 11 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits: Rosa* (2019) water-based oil on linen board 300 x 400





image 12 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits: Jim* (2019) water-based oil on linen board 300 x 400



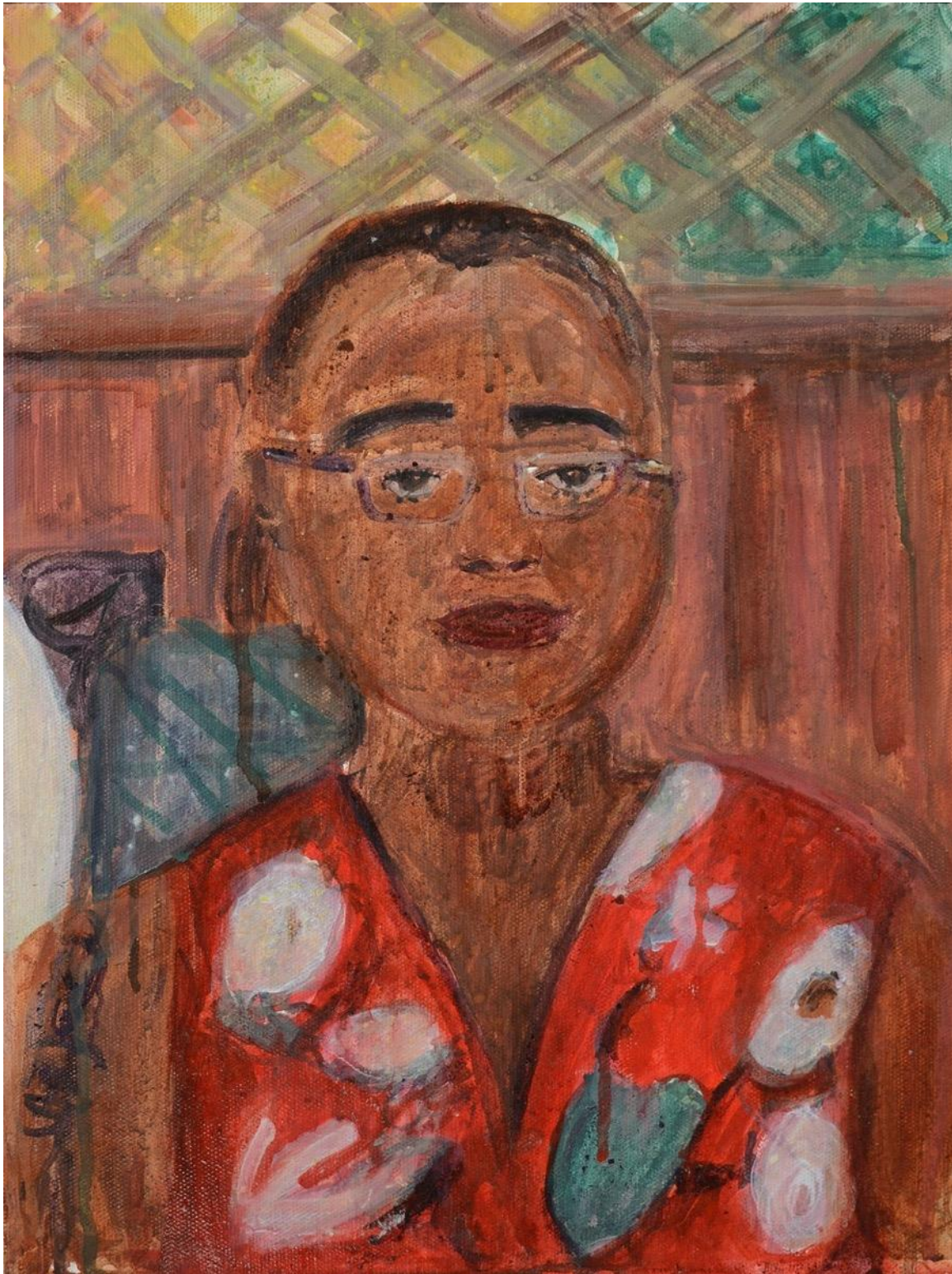
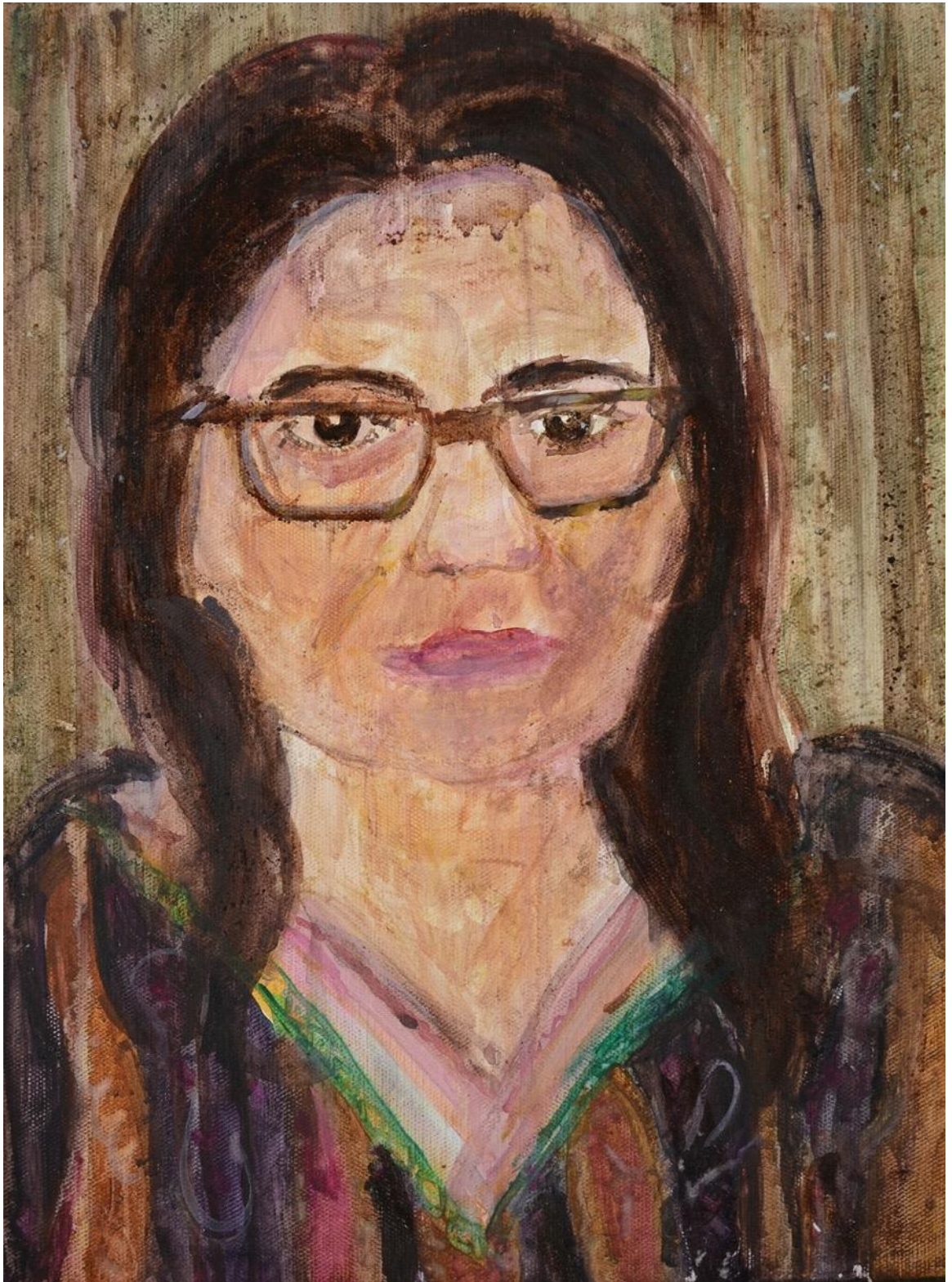


Image 13 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits: Mariam (2019) water-based oil on linen board 300 x 400





*Image 14 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits: Nimi (2019) water-based oil on linen board 300 x 400*



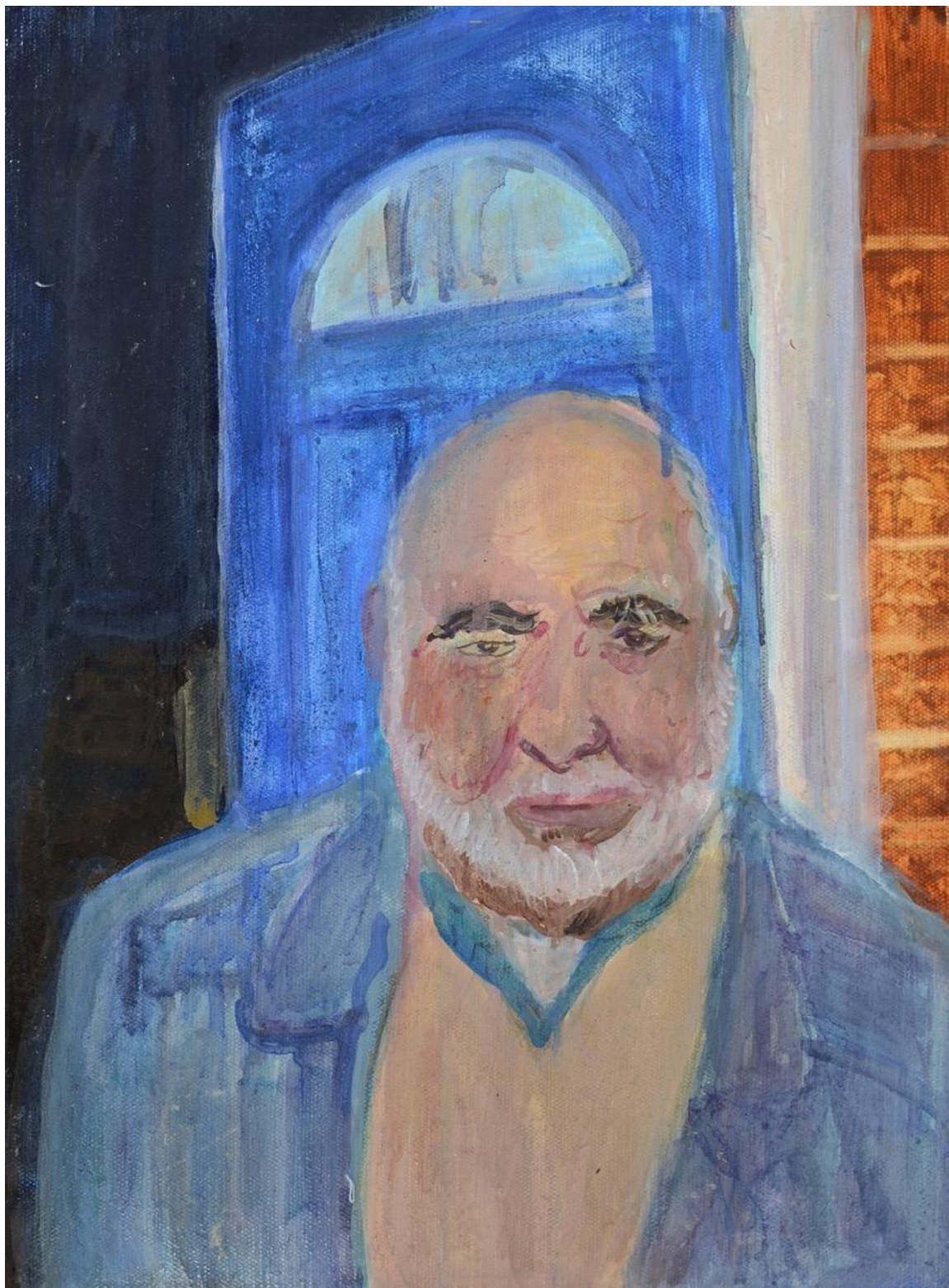


Image 15 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits: Jamil (2019) water-based oil on linen board 300 x 400



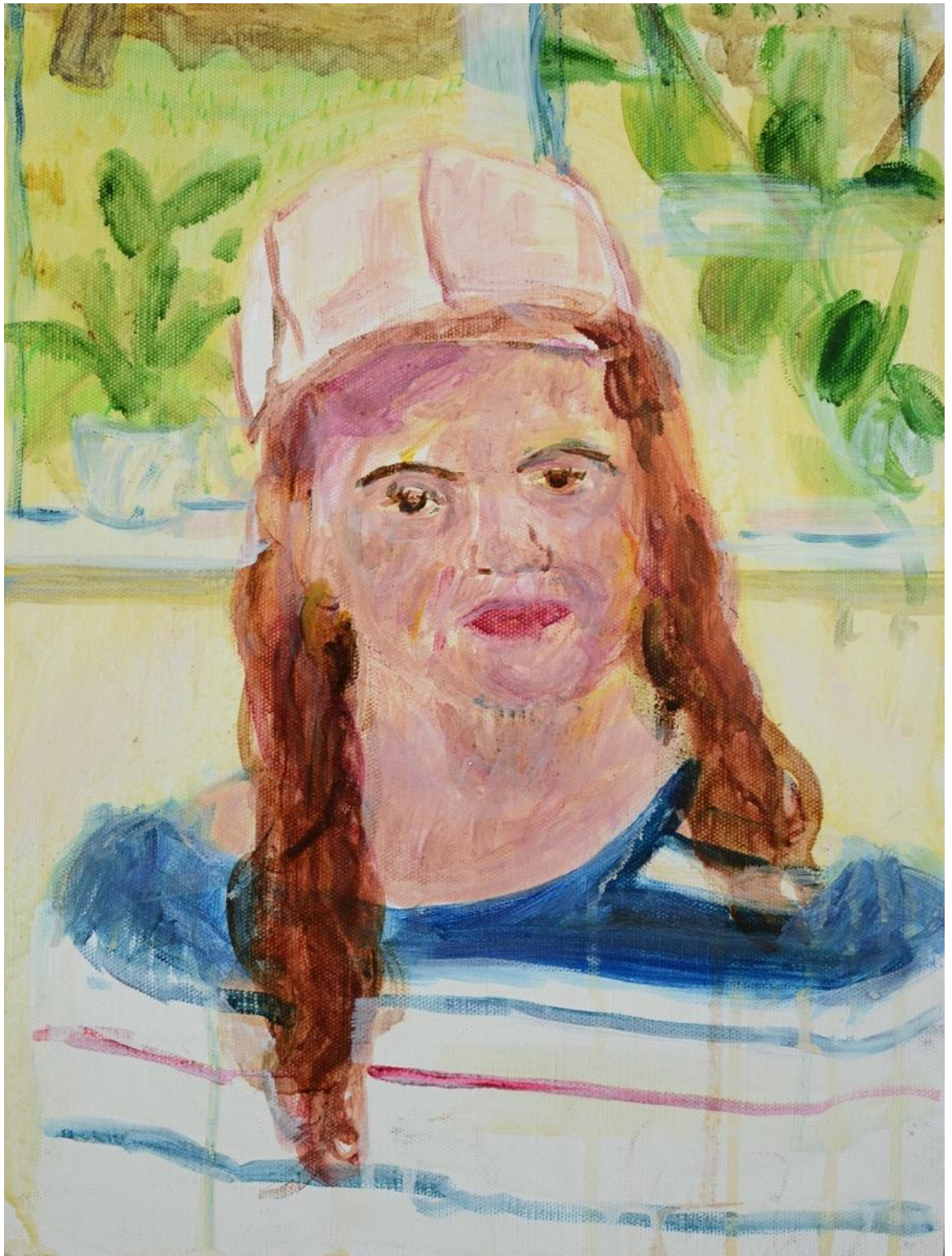


Image 16 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits: Shiella* Water based oil on linen board 300 x 400



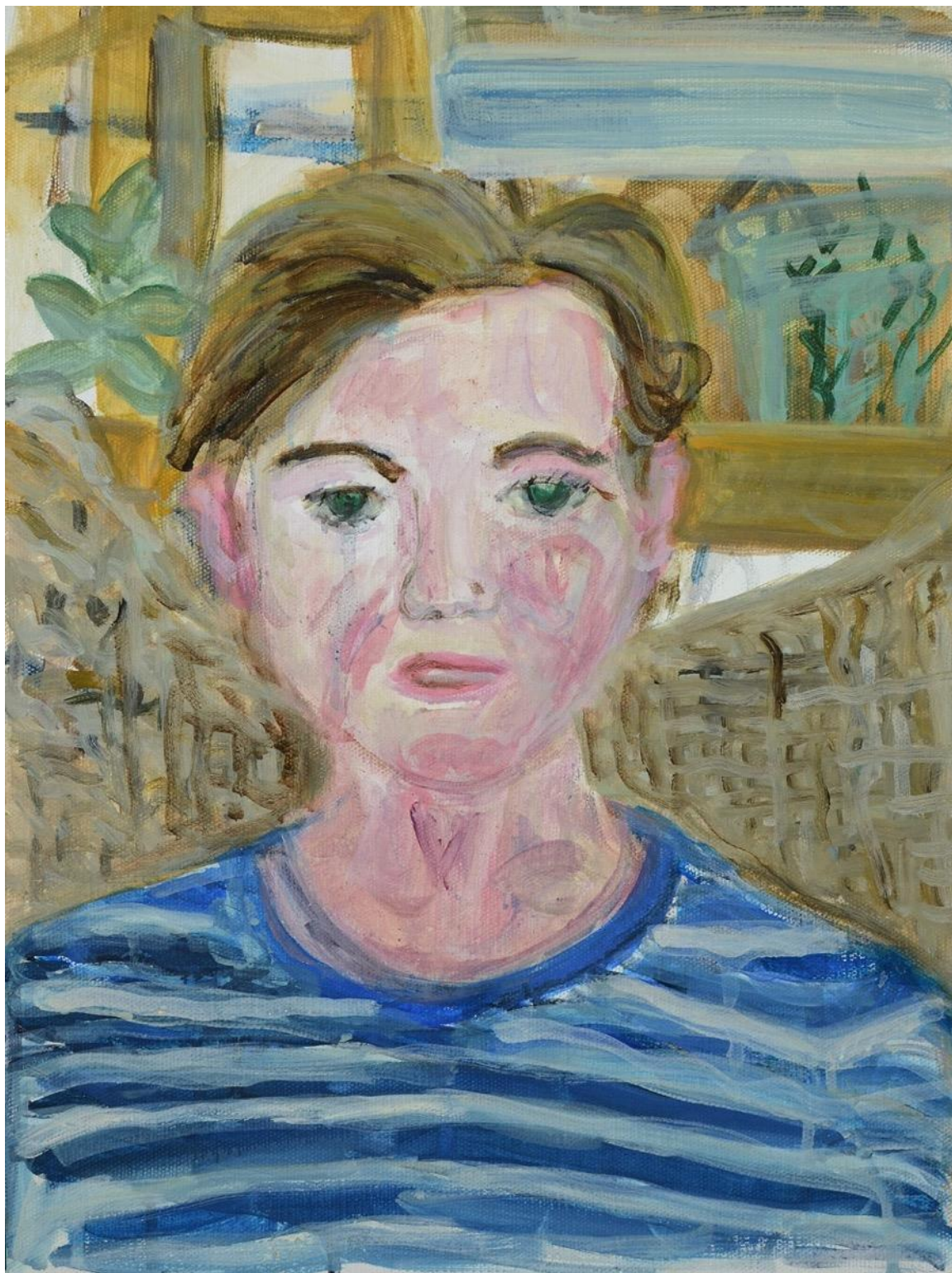


Image 17 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits: Melissa* (2019) water-based oil on linen board 300 x 400





*Image 18 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits: Trinidad (2019) water-based oil on linen board 300 x 400*



*Image 19* *mage 13* Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits: Arthur & Richard* (2019) water-based oil on linen board 300 x 400





*Image 20 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits : Dan, Cerys, Ezra and Roz (2019) waterbased oil on linen board 300 x 400*



*Image 21 : Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits: Harry and his dogs (2019) water-based oil on linen board  
300 x 400*

**Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits and the Tenants and Residents Hall**

**October 2019 residents attending exhibition**





Image 22 resident attending exhibition





Image 23 Residents attending exhibition

image 24 Residents attend exhibition



Image 25 Resident attends exhibition



image 26 Residents attend exhibition





image 27 Resident attends exhibition







Image 28 Residents attending exhibition





*Image 29 resident attending exhibition*



*image 30 Resident visiting exhibition*





image 31 Residents at the opening night



image 32 Exhibition opening night





Image 33 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits* (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable



image 34 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits* (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable





image 35 Image 33 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits* (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable



Image 36 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits* (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable





Image 37 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits* (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable



Image 38 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits* (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable



*Image 39 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable*





image 40 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits* (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable



*Image 41 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable*





image 42 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits* (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable



*Image 43 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, homemade portrait studio, dimensions variable*





Image 44 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits* (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with home-made portrait studio dimensions variable

## Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits

Exhibition at Herbert Butler Tenants and Residents Hall

October 2019



image 45 Image 33 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable





image 46 Image 33 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits* (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable

## Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits Visits

### Over 55's Community lunch at Gascoyne 2 Community Hall

November 2019

*All Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits (2019) installation shot, water-based oil on linen board, with acrylic text on linen on wooden garden trellis, dimensions variable*



*Image 47 Hebert Butler Neighbourly Portraits visits Gascoyne 2 Community Hall, Nov 2019*





*Image 48 Hebert Butler Neighbourly Portraits visits Gascoyne 2 Community Hall, Nov 2019*



*Image 49 Hebert Butler Neighbourly Portraits visits Gascoyne 2 Community Hall, Nov 2019*



Image 50 Hebert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits* visits Gascoyne 2 Community Hall, Nov 2019



image 51 Hebert Butler *Neighbourly Portraits* visits Gascoyne 2 Community Hall, Nov 2019





Image 52 Hebert Butler Neighbourly Portraits visits Gascoyne 2 Community Hall, Nov 2019



Image 53 Hebert Butler Neighbourly Portraits visits Gascoyne 2 Community Hall, Nov 2019

**Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits Noticeboards (2021)**





Image 54 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 1 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard.



Image 55 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 1 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard.

image 56 Herbert Butler Neighbourly Portraits noticeboard 2





Image 57 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 2 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard.



*Image 58 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 3 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard.*





*Image 59 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 4 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard.*



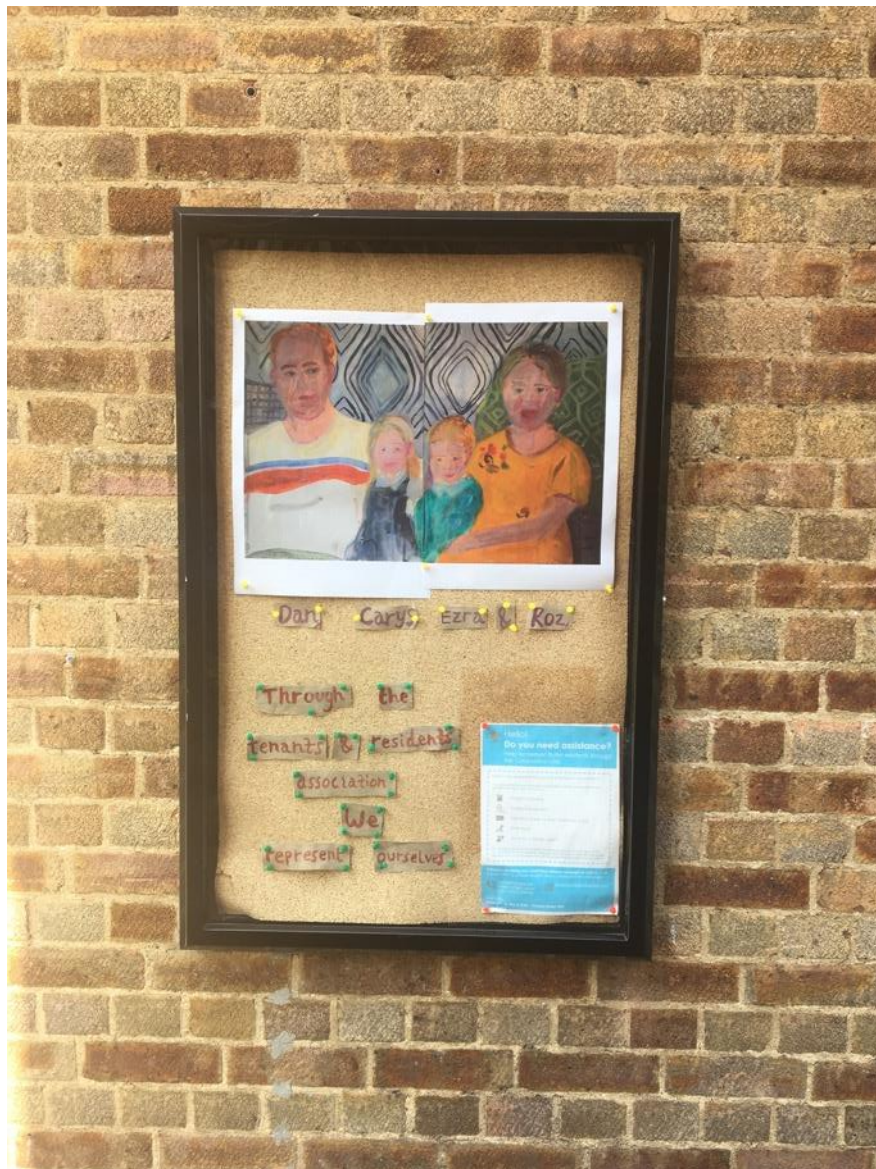


Image 60 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 4 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard.

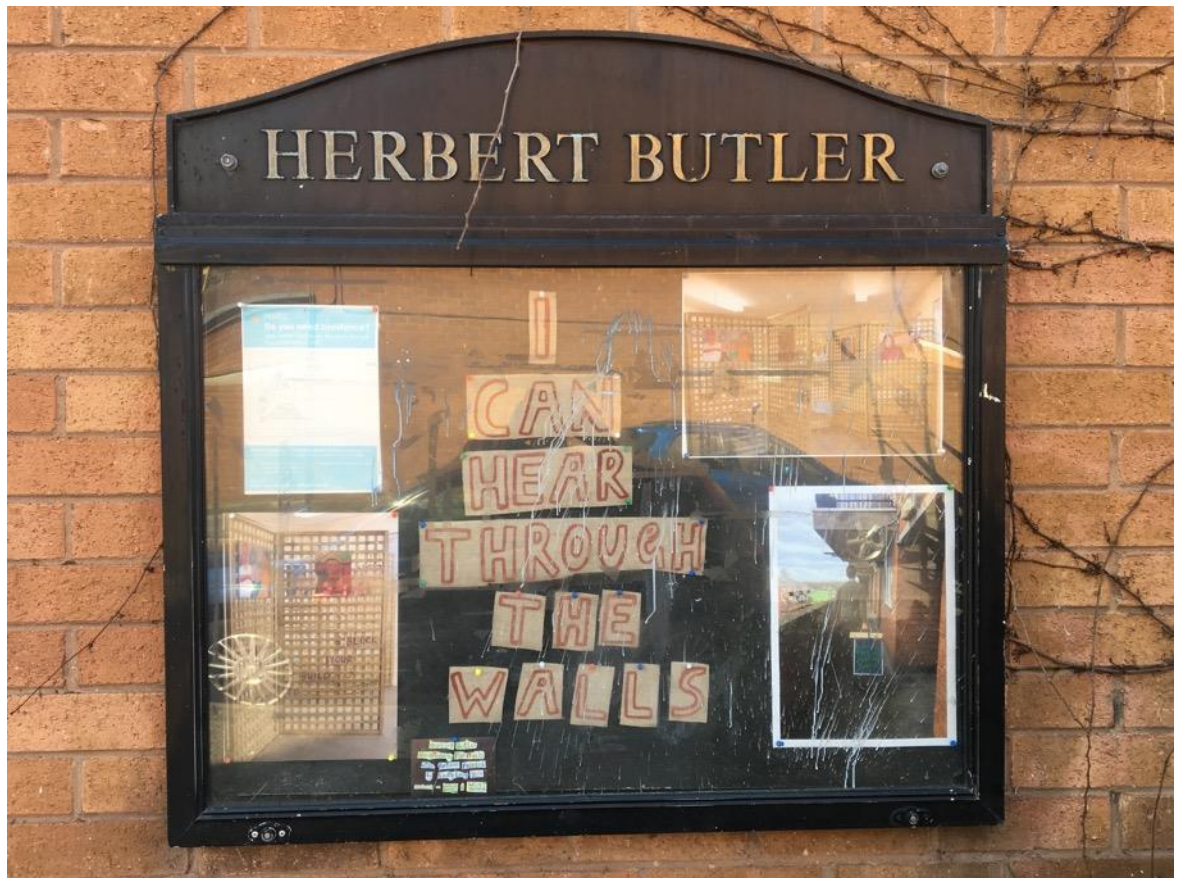


Image 61 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 5 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard.





*Image 62 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 6 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard.*



*Image 63 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 6 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard.*





Image 64 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 7* (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard.



*Image 65 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 7 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard.*



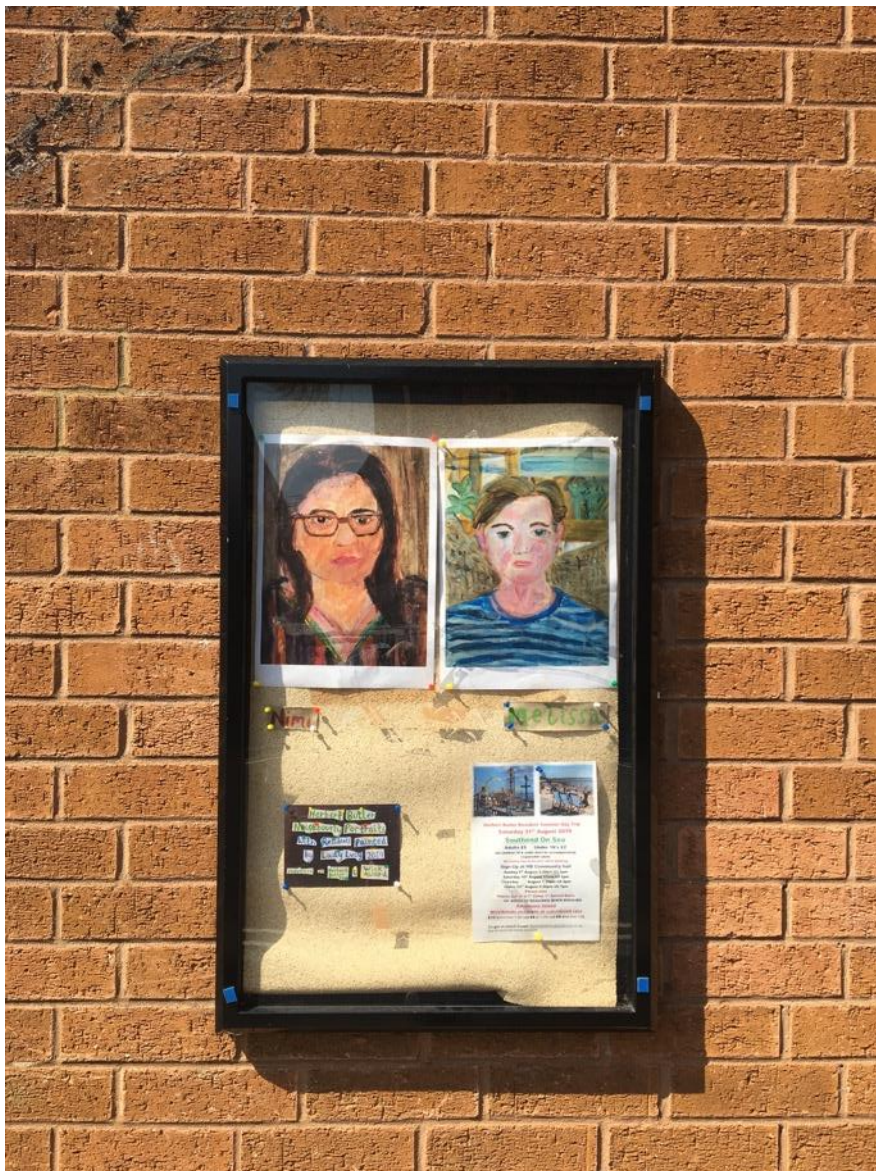
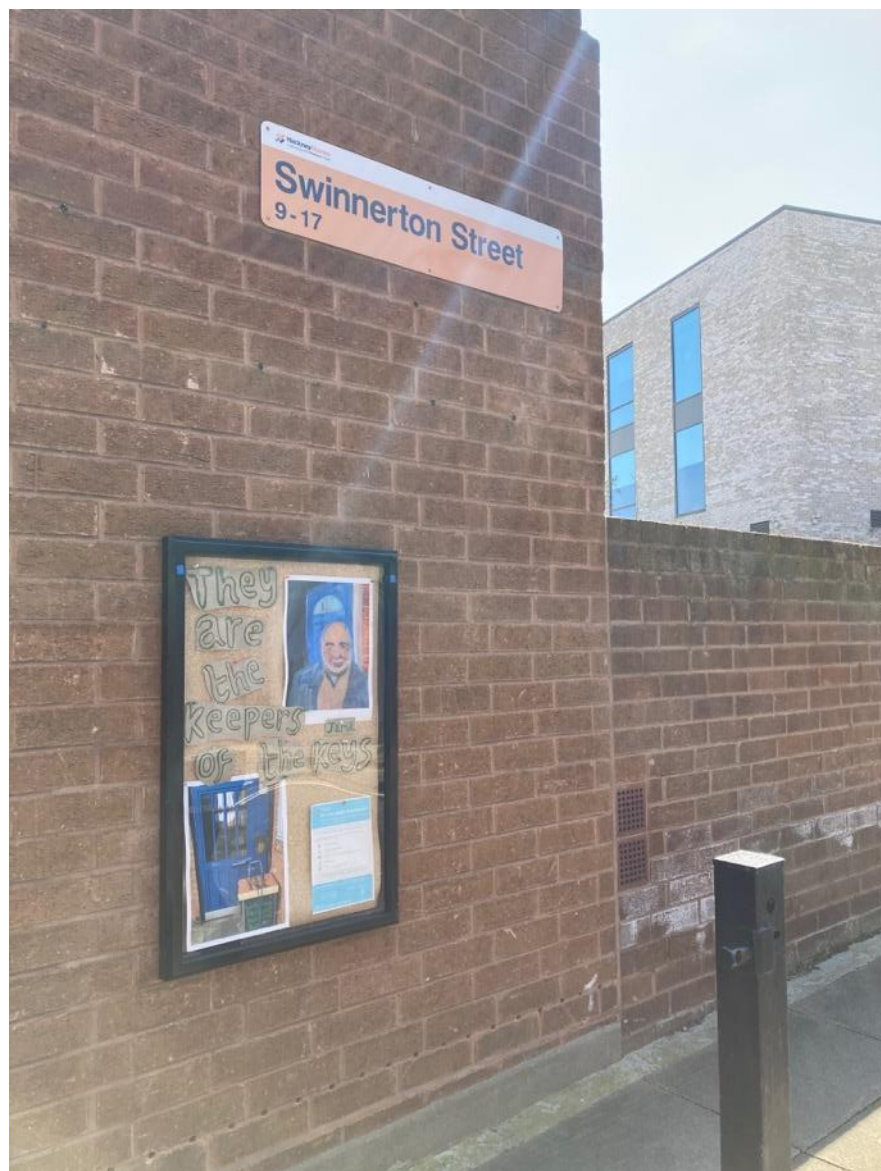


Image 66 Herbert Butler *Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 8* (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard.



*Image 67 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 9 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard*





*Image 68 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 10 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard.*



Image 69 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 11 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard.



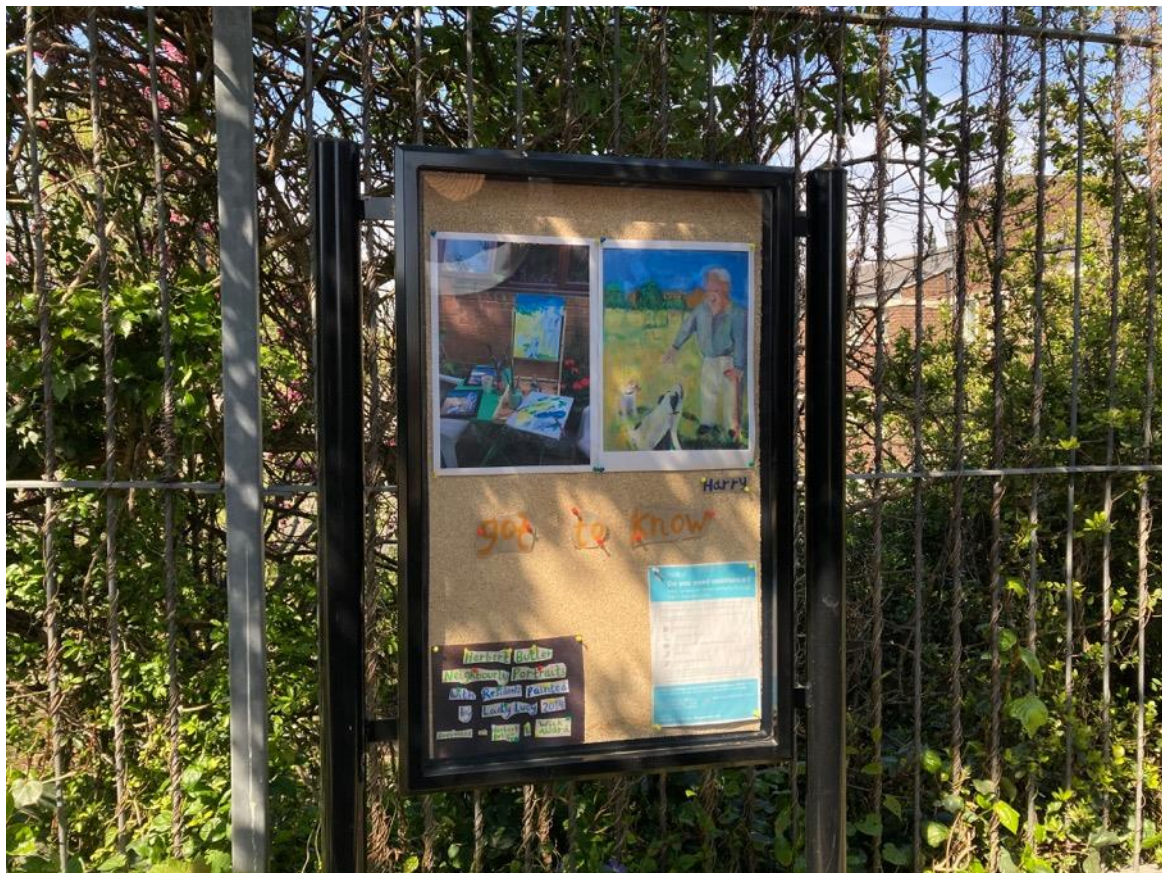


Image 70 Herbert Butler Neighbourly portraits noticeboard 12 (2021) colour prints of paintings, acrylic text on linen, map pins, estate noticeboard