

Art after 1945: At home or homeless?

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In the wake of radical geopolitical transformations after 1945, numerous theorists of migration have debated the ways in which the global and transnational movement of bodies, objects and images have changed our understanding and experiences of home and belonging. Art historians, theorists of film and cultural critics have examined the production and reception of images in relation to individual and geopolitical historical and contemporary experiences of exile (Linda Nochlin), migration, immigration and dispossession (Mieke Bal, TJ Demos, Anne Ring Petersen,) and cross-border mobility and marginality (Nilgün Bayraktar). Other scholars have examined visual and material culture in relation to the state, citizenship, human rights and democracy (Ariella Azoulay), or have interrogated the space of queer migrations, refigured as forms of home and homing (Anne-Marie Fortier). Recent feminist art history has returned to traditional categories of the home and the obedient or disobedient domestic imaginary, calling for the need to rethink the discipline's 'new domesticities' (Jo Applin, Francesca Berry, Julia Bryan-Wilson, Mignon Nixon).

With such concerns, contexts and debates in mind, this double-session interrogates art and the expanded field of art history in relation to everyday issues of home and homelessness. It explores the concept and visual representation of home in terms of politics, gender, and race, as contested or confined through borders, or emancipated. The session foregrounds art's role in the construction of narratives of belonging; to consider concepts of being at home, of producing social relations, or to interrogate conditions of homelessness, 'unbelonging', or statelessness.

Speakers and abstracts:

Reading Martha Rosler's *Service: A trilogy on colonisation*

Luke Skrebowski (University of Manchester)

In 1978 Martha Rosler published an anthology of short, self-described 'food' novels entitled *Service: A Trilogy on Colonization*. The anthology comprises three, related works: *A Budding Gourmet* (1973) about a housewife pursuing gourmet cooking; *McTowers Maid* (1974) about a female fast-food worker and *Tijuana Maid* (1974) about a domestic worker in San Diego. Each of these novels had previously circulated in serial form (having been sent out sequentially on individual postcards to a number of the artist's contacts).

While Rosler's postcard novels have been considered in relation to bookworks, mail art and performance art, they have not been discussed substantively as novels. Consequently, they have not been historicised in relation to the specific tradition of the epistolary novel and its reflection on women's historical subjectivation in and through the private/domestic sphere.

In this paper I make a double reading of *Service*, which considers these works as novels negotiating the epistolary tradition and works of art. I claim, however, that they are novels of a very particular, anti-generic sort. They are post-conceptual novels in the expanded field, which participate in the wider feminist critique of analytic conceptualism by specifically contravening its ban on literature and its proscription of subjectivity. In so doing they refuse 'home' at both an ideological and a generic level. They are feminist conduct manuals written against the hegemonic artistic, gender and class norms of the USA in the Vietnam War era. As such, they continue to offer us suggestive lessons.

Go Home Polish: Migration and belonging in a two-speed Europe

Klara Kemp-Welch (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Taking as a starting point the controversy in the UK and in Romania caused by the popular Channel 4 television series *The Romanians are Coming* (2015), this paper analyses a selection of artists' projects that engage with experiences of and responses to EU migration to the UK. With reference to debates around a 'two-speed' Europe, the paper looks at lens-based work produced since the enlargement of 2004 gave successive waves of Central and Eastern European citizens the right to free movement. I will be interested

in the degree to which artists' frameworks and people's experiences of home are structured by the persistence of East/West thinking post-1989, despite its ideological obsolescence. Examining, among others, Adam Chodzko's video *The Pickers* (2009), in which he collaborated with a group of young strawberry pickers from Romania working in Kent to edit historical footage of East End Hop pickers, and Michal Iwanowski's recent photographic project *Go Home Polish* (2018), in which he documented his 1900-km journey on foot between his 'two homes – Wales and Poland' in an effort to take stock of the rise of nationalism on a human-to-human level, this paper explores how documentary projects of this sort might contribute to fostering a better critical understanding of the ways in which concerns about home and about the 'close other' have contributed to the chaos of Brexit.

Art Provoking Law: Uncivil obedience and the unsettling of immigration law

Monica Steinberg (The University of Hong Kong)

In 2009, Nuria Güell organised the Barcelona-based exhibition 'Offside', wherein she sought out and contracted an illegal immigrant to play a game of hide and seek with viewers inside the gallery space. Supplied with an official employment contract, this unnamed figure was thus able to attain legal immigration papers, allowing him to cross a seemingly insurmountable legal boundary. Scholars and artists have long been interested in creative practices intersecting with notions of belonging, citizenship and statelessness, and political protest and civil disobedience (conscientious law-breaking as a means of expressing dissent). Güell's hiring of an individual to shift his status to 'legal' resident builds on an increasing trend in art after 1970 wherein law itself functions as the foundation for creative expression, as a frame within which one might work for progressive purposes. This unorthodox strategy of working within the law – complicit with the letter of the law but defiant of normative rule-following – activates a strategy of uncivil obedience. Uncivil obedience is a looking-glass version of civil disobedience comprising a hyperbolic acquiescence to established regulations, becoming a means of protesting the very rules that are being followed. Through socially engaged projects, Güell, as well as artists such as Ricardo Dominguez and Tania Bruguera, have frustrated and called attention to various countries' strict immigration laws and the problematics of citizenship and statelessness. Their projects are grounded in a form of literalistic rule-following, demonstrating how an art practice comprising bureaucratic antagonism might express dissent ironically through radical compliance rather than defiance.

Adrian Piper on Hester Street: Reconsidering conceptual art's homelessness

Helena Vilalta (University College London)

The group Art & Language defined conceptual art as a 'homeless practice', meaning an 'art without studios'. Homelessness is imagined here metaphorically as a mode of critical 'exile' that seeks to displace artistic production from a private to a public space, but it is also representative of the way in which the dominant historiography of conceptual art has consistently dismissed conceptual engagements with domestic space as its feminist 'other'. The work of Martha Rosler, Mierle Laderman Ukeles and Mary Kelly is commonly identified with this sub-category of conceptual practice, less so that of Adrian Piper. In fact, the few photographs documenting Piper's unannounced actions in the streets of New York (*Catalysis*, 1970) are often used to illustrate conceptual art's roaming impulse: its attempt to bypass art's institutional homes. In this paper, I argue that the iconicity of these photographs has diverted scholarly attention away from the broader ecology of works from which they emerged – namely the private performances undertaken in Piper's Hester Street loft alongside the street actions and devoted to what she called 'object maintenance' – and consider what this neglect might tell us about the historicisation of conceptual art. Drawing on discussions of domestic space as psychic interiority in feminist film studies, I ask to what extent the textual and visual inscription of domesticity in Piper's work challenges Art & Language's characterisation of conceptual art as 'homeless' by recasting the relationship between the private and the public, the psychic and the social, as one of interdependency rather than opposition.

Home and Heartland in Mike Kelley's *Mobile Homestead*

Lucy Bradnock (University of Nottingham)

In the 2010 work *Mobile Homestead*, Mike Kelley mounted a replica of his childhood home on a flat-bed truck driven along Michigan Avenue to the Detroit suburb where he grew up. In its return to the scene of Kelley's youth, the work has been understood in relation to homesickness, nostalgia, and the uncanny, the culmination of Kelley's longstanding engagement with domestic artefacts, spaces, and fantasies. Incorporating interviews with those who live and work along the 20-mile route, and spectacular images of economic ruin, it has also invited interpretations that invoke urban change, home foreclosures, and the demise of American manufacturing during the economic stagnation of the 1970s and the financial crash of 2008. This paper builds on those readings by situating the migration, displacement, and dislocation performed in *Mobile Homestead* within a longer historical context of westward expansion and settlement embodied by the homestead. I argue that Kelly's practice engages with a domestic subject rooted in the politics of the American heartland. In doing so, I link late Cold War concerns about American identity to more recent political rhetoric to explore the ideological links between homestead, heartland, and nation. I argue that while the traditional symbol of the Midwestern homestead serves as a static vehicle for the national collective cultural imaginary, in Kelley's mobile version the homestead ceases to serve as a place of confinement that reiterates dominant national narratives; instead, these are contested by a mobile space that offers the potential to construct multiple, multifarious meanings and identities.

Taught, Tether, Teeter: Walking the archipelagic home-space in Janine Antoni's *Touch*

Kate Keohane (University of St Andrews)

Janine Antoni's practice has been widely discussed within the discourses of psychoanalysis, performance art and counter-canonical feminist gestures (Jones and Heathfield, Nixon, Tannenbaum). *Touch* (2002) marks an anomaly in Antoni's oeuvre, as the video shows the artist traversing a rope stretched across the length of the horizon in front of her childhood home on Grand Bahama Island. It is necessary to ask why, on return to the post-colonial home-space – from which she frequently tries to distance herself – the artist conceptualised a work that generates analysis founded upon precarious transition, as opposed to the tougher engagements with space present in her works of the 90s.

By reading *Touch* alongside Édouard Glissant's theorisation of the archipelago, and his concept of 'tremblement' in particular, this paper proposes the archipelagic home-space as a problematic and fragmented site of becoming that allows for simultaneous connection and disavowal. Through association with the concept of 'trembling', it is possible to offer a more nuanced interpretation of the feminist potential of *Touch*, in a manner that does not propose violence as the greatest contributor to affect. The space in which Antoni's body moves is – in an echo of Glissant's thought – interstitial, a zone of contact, and a performative arena for simultaneous tension and the embrace of imbalance. The use of Glissant within this context self-reflexively elucidates and further troubles the issues within Antoni's film and the narrativisation of the lived experience of place and placelessness, homecoming and domesticity.

The Home and the Street

Thomas Morgan-Evans (University College London)

At the 2014 Brighton Photo Biennial Fringe, Anthony Luvera's installation *Assembly* (2013–14) presented a series of photographs of people who had experienced homelessness in the city. Luvera titled these photographs *Assisted Self-Portraits*, the subject choosing the location of their photograph, activating the camera (using a cable shutter release), and selecting the final print. The role of Luvera in this instance is of archivist, providing a home – as per Jacques Derrida's famous extrapolation of the term in the essay 'Archive Fever' – for the images. In the proposed paper, this work will be considered in parallel to the 2008 geography/housing policy research project between Sarah Johnsen, Jon May and Paul Cloke, part of which was 'Imag(in)ing 'Homeless Places': Using Auto-Photography to (Re)examine the Geographies of Homelessness'. I will discuss the parallels between these two bodies of work, and other art historical examples, considering their ethics and poetics, as both traverse the increasingly taught and relevant territories between the street and the home; be that of the subject or of the discourses involved in the work.

Curating Domestically: A case study in Museums Sheffield's post-war British art collection

Abi Shapiro (Museums Sheffield)

Recent feminist scholarship suggests domesticity is not merely a theme in works of art but it can be a lens through which to rethink issues such as identity, labour and social relations in the production and reception of art. Current research regarding the 'new domesticities' offers particularly instructive ways to consider the 'formal, visual, political, and psychic' economies of home when revising histories of post-war cultural activity. This paper will explore ways to apply some of these approaches to curatorial practice using the case study of a research project at Museums Sheffield. This includes a discussion of an exhibition at the Graves Gallery (30 March – 6 July 2019) that reconsiders representations of the home in post-war British art from Sheffield's collection. I will discuss how research methodologies informed by new domesticities facilitated a series of public engagement sessions that supported the development and interpretation of the exhibition. I will consider how these activities enabled new forms of knowledge about domesticity to materialise that shaped the choice of works in the exhibition and how this created new research outcomes for post-war British art history.