

DIRTY WORK

In Conversation at *DIRTY WORK* with Clare Twomey and William Cobbing | 04/09/2022

Clare Palmier (The Art Station):

[Clare Twomey](#) and [William Cobbing](#) are artists who are absolutely pushing the boundaries of ceramic practice. Clare Twomey trained in Edinburgh and then the [Royal College](#). William Cobbing trained at [St Martin's](#) and then [De Atelier](#), Amsterdam and then Middlesex. They're both showing their work internationally. Clare Twomey is making site-specific work for large-scale installations and sculptures and William Cobbing is making sculpture, installations and videos. We've worked on [DIRTY WORK](#) PART one and PART two together and we're pleased to welcome you.

Over to you Clare and William.

William and Clare: [00:01:52]

Thank you, Clare.

William: So, how shall we...one thing that I talked to Clare about was not rehearsing at all which leaves us in a way to think about starting points for this...so maybe we should...

Clare Twomey: [00:02:22]

But I've got a burning question. Am I allowed to do that.

William Cobbing: Yes I think so, that's good and that maybe gets me off the hook.

Clare Twomey: Why in your curation, which I've been to this morning, and you must go over there if you haven't seen the other exhibition, it's just absolutely brilliant. Really Genuinely new works. It is very very exciting to see this gathering of contemporary work not only reflecting Will's view of where ceramics is now because it's all such contemporary work but also talking about this practice. Anyway I won't go on and on...my question is, why is this exhibition, entitled DIRTY WORK?

William Cobbing: [00:02:59]

I arrived at the title, a kind of a eureka moment, after selecting and inviting a shortlist of artists and thinking about the concepts of the show. I have to say I also just really liked the title!

Clare Twomey: [00:03:33]

It's fantastic.

William Cobbing: [00:03:34]

Titling artwork is hard and as I don't curate much. I began with the group of artists whose work I really love and thought about an umbrella term to bring them together. Part of the idea behind the title is that it's, I hope its a little bit of a provocative title. Sometimes titles are a bit prosaic and descriptive. I like the resonances of this, and the idea that the literal idea of *dirty work* is palming off the work you don't want to do or something like that or delegating.

I thought particularly about the idea of breaking it into two words, the *dirty* side and the *work* side. Clay is a dirty material from the ground. When we think of dirt - the anthropologist [Mary Douglas](#) came up with a description of dirt as 'matter out of place'. So the idea of dirt, we think of mud, clay or dirt in the ground; in its context within a park, landscape or field, within its context it's fine but as soon as you bring it past the threshold of, say, a domestic space, it becomes a bit more disquieting perhaps or complicated. The value judgement of it turns from one thing into another thing. Particularly, the artists I've chosen for this exhibition at The Art Station deal with the idea of dirtiness of the clay. I've worked with a lot of these artists before such as [Linda Sormin](#), [Markus Karstieß](#), [Gereon Krebber](#) and [Nick Pope](#) (during residencies at the [European Ceramics Centre](#) and with Markus in Newcastle). I've seen them grappling with the material – this dirty material.

The other side of the title is *work*. That alludes to *work* in terms of a consideration of say - what you do. The idea of clay as a verb, the idea of doing and making. For example, particularly your work has a more structured approach to making. Here at DIRTY WORK part TWO everyone is invited to use porcelain chalk and to effectively work with the clay, the material. It is prevalent in a lot of works you've made, such as the exhibition we did at the [Museum Jorn](#) where visitors to the museum were invited to make marks on the vases and then you glazed those with a gold glaze on top. That's a form of work as well. I suppose the other thing I was thinking about was the rudeness of clay, it's an impolite, rude material. Some of the works that are at [The Art Station](#) are funny and rude and poke fun. [Urara's](#) work is sort of rude, sexy and naughty. Nicholas Pope, for those of you who attended the performance I did yesterday, saw that he's sort of naughty. He messed about with me, he messed about with my performance. And I really liked it! I thought it was really funny. He really got his hands dirty.

Clare Twomey: [00:07:52]

It's interesting in the title DIRTY WORK that it is serious yet celebratory but at the same time it's hugely emotional. In terms of what we understand and grapple within the understanding of the dirty work. A lot of the time it's understanding the work we do within the arts, using clay is viewed as *lovely* and there's the assumption that every day *must be magical*, which obviously it is, but it is work. There's this kind of romanticism that sits around clay that indicates it might not be because it's difficult to make any art works and presume that your coffee cups are going to substantially make your life possible; there's this misalignment. So, I kind of quite like that some people are really good at coffee cups, and they do make a living out of it. But there's this kind of misalignment within Dirty Work, which is what you've been talking about, the usefulness of the misalignment. So, with [An Archive of Presence](#), the misalignment is we're using one of the most precious clay materials not one, the most precious to make this seemingly beautiful patination. But, if you persist in wearing dark clothes while being the author of this work, it's still going to leave its traces. And there's a kind of another understanding of what dirty is. Dirty isn't necessarily the grit from the floor or the terracotta. I mean, it's a very particular choice to use this material in lots of ways but I kind of enjoy the complexity of these two words. Dirty Work.

William Cobbing: [00:09:50]

Yes exactly. It is the alignment of those two words and again thinking of the idea of work. I worked with several of the artists showing at DIRTY WORK part ONE last summer at the European Ceramics Centre (EKWC) for 12 weeks in Holland. And we **really worked**. Have you ever been?

Clare Twomey: [00:10:24]

I've only visited. But I've seen people up against it.

William Cobbing: [00:10:26]

So, you will have witnessed it perhaps. For 12 weeks. Maybe it's embodied in what the director Ranti, every Wednesday an artist gives a presentation of their ceramics as a form of introduction. This is what I'm doing, this is what I want to achieve. Ranti everyone is given about 12 to 15 minutes to present their work. And then at the end, the Director looks at his watch, stands up and says "Right, everyone back to work!" So, it's the work, it's a very particular thing. Everyone just goes fine and is bombing it back to their studios and the whole thing is, not quite like a factory, but it's set up as a workplace in terms of efficiency, in terms of working together. There's a big communal kitchen and everyone cooks together; sort of doing, working and making. We joke that it's a bit like the Clay Olympics or something. You get up in the morning and there's a coffee maker and have a couple of glasses of strong coffee, a bit of breakfast and run off to your studio and you're working!

Clare Twomey: [00:12:02]

The only time I've ever risen enthusiastically at 6 a.m. was when I was at a residency in Hungary, a place called [Kecskemet](#), which is a pretty wild enclave, a marvellous place, a meandering medieval courtyard, very beautiful but there was a particular stress over space. I had two very lovely workspaces; I was preparing to make the work [Trophy](#) made for the [Victorian & Albert Museum](#). And I went there to understand how to make this work. I spent three months there. It was lovely to be amongst others and there's a real sense of when you work with others – and it doesn't happen...I have a [shared studio at Thameside Barrier](#) in London and there are over 400 artist studios, but they are all locked doors and you go there to work. You need conversation, but the time you're in the studio is so precious that you go there to work. Whereas on a residency, there's more of an interweaving of lives and it's not competitive. By 6 a.m I was up, I got get 3 hours of work done before the 50 students rose from their beds and ran amok on everything. And I was going these are my hours, so there is a preciousness about the ability to work. Having that time and often that time away is significantly important.

William Cobbing: [00:13:38]

Yeah, absolutely. So, riffing off the idea of Dirty Work - what you said about the porcelain creating its own kind of dirt. It's almost sort of inverse dirt in terms of the white of the porcelain marks on the darkness of the aprons. I'm really intrigued by the idea of work in this work and say the commission you had at [Tate](#) and several works within your practice. Could you tell me a little bit more and unpack the word *work* in relation to the group work that you allow to happen? The performative idea and the link between the making, what's made and where it goes.

Clare Twomey: [00:14:52]

I can answer all that!

William Cobbing:

Great! I think I needed to stop after the first part of the question!

Clare Twomey:

I think that it's interesting to think about this work because work is never made in isolation. You know, you've been making your amazing head masks work for, I believe, around 22 years. You have these points of resting when they rest in your hands, because it arrives, but the narratives are something that possibly you carry with you.

Interestingly in the pandemic, I was working with a wonderful group of artists and historians and anthropologists and medicals, but we were kind of a group called [Translating Vitality](#) that has a website and we've been meeting for about six years once a year. It was interesting because our focus was [Yves Citton's](#) work that concentrated on the idea of care. This idea of care or of concentration, to focus on something. His work was published way before the pandemic. There's a series of works that came out before this chalk event in the studio, that was about this repetitive labour. From each mark of these continually written books of just small marks came out of the idea of labour and every single one of the millions of tiny little marks that made up these books, small pencil marks, were all delivered with the same sincerity, even though it was a highly repetitive task. And the group took that on but also Yves Citton's work who is a philosopher. Then this year I started working, reading- ironically- an incredibly gruelling book by [Eyal Press, entitled Dirty Work](#). I started reading that maybe a month before I was invited to work with you! But [Dirty Work](#) is really fantastically disruptive. It acknowledges what you've just said, acknowledges that the work we care not to think about such as, how your pigs are slaughtered, how the work of society, is done invisibly.

So, these narratives are not strange to the other works I've made. If we talk about the factory at the Tate; and really at the Tate it was a year's investigation into the ethics of asking people to step into an artwork to undertake work and labour to create an artwork. And is that paid labour? Is it unpaid labour? The values of exchange are really a huge principle. Bearing in mind a decade before that, I'd been working and investigating, how do people step into an artwork? What's the curiosity? What are the rewards? How can this be a shared value rather than a seemingly innate gift? And gifts are... a good old expression – there are no free lunches. This idea of this being from [Consciousness/Conscience](#) which was the piece at the Tate. This narrative weaves in and out of a great deal of the work talking about the invisible labour. Monuments in many ways...

William Cobbing: For those of us who don't know about [Consciousness/Conscience](#) - the actual work - it would be nice to hear about the work.

(Consciousness/Conscience is a ceramic installation that comprises several thousand hollow unfired bone china tiles laid out on the floor of the gallery space. The work is installed so that visitors to the exhibition need to cross the work to encounter other parts of the exhibition. By walking across the work, they effectively destroy the floor to gain access to other works.)

Clare Twomey: [Consciousness/Conscience](#) was made at exactly the same time as William started his huge path of work. It's a series of very low fired bone China boxes. If you needed access to a third of the Tate show was to endeavour to cross these boxes and they would break under your feet. The boxes looked like a tiled floor in many ways, but the impact was that as you walked upon it, you broke it. [Consciousness/Conscience](#) is obviously about the rationale of in that moment that we take something, how do we justify our actions? How do we understand that? This narrative goes back way way back to leaving the Royal College. I went to [Roaches point in Ireland](#) in a lighthouse off Cork for a residency. The narratives of that, of being aware of our impact and questioning the echoes of that. As you walk upon [Consciousness/Conscience](#), it breaks, and the next visitor has a choice if they want to see the [Andrew Lord](#) exhibition just beyond (another great ceramicist) would be that you could walk in the footsteps of others. But there's still incremental impact. I think for me, a lot of the works are about unpacking what is the incremental rather than what is the dramatic. And this work here, is an incremental work in many ways.

William Cobbing: [00:20:36]

You've described *Consciousness/Conscience* like walking through fresh snow. That's really interesting. I really like that idea of the incremental mark to space. So, with *Consciousness/Conscience* I imagine there was quite a trepidatious moment. Did you see as the first person who walked over that?

Clare Twomey: [00:21:03]

Well, it was absolutely fantastic! You've got to work quite hard to get [Royal Crown Derby](#) to sponsor you to just lay out stuff that's going to break every single day! They were amazing. It's really really insane. [Hugh Gibson's father](#) had set up founder of the Arts Council and his daughter is a sculptor, so he was ready for me to walk through the door and say, "We're just going to do this. Can you help me?" In that moment when we were at the Tate, it was a huge privilege and very exciting to be invited to make this work at the Tate, *Consciousness/Conscience* was 17 years ago or something ridiculous!

When the show opened the sponsor stood next to me while I was saying, "well, this is it, this is what we've done. It's laid out dividing the exhibition on the floor". And then, this is what you must learn from the work that you make, a group of students came in with one of the curators and annihilated it in front of us! And I just looked at Hugh and I said, "there you go!" That was a good demonstration of how the work went, he didn't even get to walk on it. It was hilarious! It was also really interesting that the great [Emmanuel Cooper's](#) response was to pick it up the clay and eat it! He wanted to see what the firing temperature was.

William Cobbing [00:22:31]

Was it like, were people happy to be the first to walk over it. Or was it more incidental?

Clare Twomey: [00:22:39]

I don't think it was noticed in some ways, they just ploughed through to look at everything and then that beautiful plate popped off the wall! It was like a whirlwind of art testing going on. I don't know what they did to that lovely pile of clay! In some ways what we know about live practice; we can guide and we can ask. However, the test of the work is in the doing, it's such difficult knowledges to collect because there are no presumptions.

You know for all of you working on *Archive of Presence* today, I'm hugely grateful, this work is going to be collected in about three years' time. [Clare Palmier](#) from [The Art Station](#) is going to invite you to the place where it was all gathered after 15 countries have undertaken this. However, the work must make sense in the moment and that moment is different for all of us.

To see your work William is, for me, absolutely exciting because I've seen different developments of it, and I feel a great kinship with the brave work you're undertaking. But with *Archive of Presence* when you come in and you're asked to draw, maybe you haven't drawn for a very long time, there's so many interesting things that can happen with live work that as an artist you can try to guide but the authority lies with the invitation in so many ways.

William Cobbing: [00:24:08]

That's an interesting phrase, could you tell us more about the authority with the invitation, because I guess when you're inviting participants to be involved, honing that invitation is crucial. And can you tell us a bit about your process in terms of honing that?

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Clare Twomey: [00:24:36]

Yeah. The wonderful thing about the factory at the Tate is that you've got the toughest team on your side. There were 20 curators and everything was going through these very complex but rich conversations. Everything is tested before you can undertake such a vast live work. It's understanding there can't be a vagueness in any moment because if there is, it possibly crumbles the concept. You really have to know what you're asking. It's been one of the most exciting things for me yesterday, to hone this work *Archive of Presence*, because I need your help to understand how to make this the best it can possibly be. To understand this is a slow process of honing. It's fundamental to the authority of invitation to make sure you know what you're doing. I'm interested about this long, long, long conversation, of *Archive of Presence*.

I met you in the attic of the Jorn museum when you presented a very different work, equally as beguiling. Today I'm curious to ask you about this work and starting this body of ongoing work, because it wasn't a blip. This has been a continuum throughout your practice. I'm interested about that journey. I want you to start at the very beginning of course.

William Cobbing: [00:26:28]

The exhibition was called [The Secret History of Clay](#) at Tate Liverpool in 2004, showing an interesting array of artists from [Gauguin](#) to [Gormley](#), esteemed generational artists like [Lucio Fontana](#) and young contemporary artists such as us, Francis Hugh Pritchard, Roger Hiorns, Mark Titchner. Being quite young, it was a seminal moment for me in the sense that the work I made *Eating My Teeth* (performance, 2004), it was a very focused moment for my work, similar to what I did yesterday; wearing a clay head!

Clare Twomey: [00:27:35]

But what made that a good idea? Where did that start in your studio?

William Cobbing: [00:27:42]

If I was really to trace the origin of that idea, I was studying at De Ateliers (De Ateliers is an artist institute that focuses on artists at the beginning of their professional practice) in Amsterdam and reading a book about David Lynch, it had some photos of David Lynch making film experiment animations. He'd got a little toy policeman and put chewing gum on the policeman's head and there were ants crawling into the chewing gum! I'm interested in how ideas develop, I get ideas for sculptural works by reading books or seeing still images, a change of one medium to another. Seeing the photograph of the little small policeman sculpture somehow turned into me wanting to put clay on my head! I don't think I even modelled it at first. And then I started modelling it. Sometimes you make a work that you're not quite prepared to do, you don't quite understand. The date for this work was 1999 to 2002, I made a really rough version of it in 1999 when I was at De Ateliers. Then I remade it knowing that the exhibition was coming up because it was a really grainy rubbish version in 1999. I wasn't ready to do performance then, I trained at St Martins doing sculpture and I was passionate about being a sculptor at this point. Partly to do with St Martins conventions of the sculpture course, even though there is a long, interesting history of sculptors who did performative works like Gilbert and George, Barry Flanagan or Jan Dibbets, when he came over from Holland to make a spoof performance sculpture works. The work I was doing at this time was really sublimated and hidden away for a few years. It took quite a long time.

Clare Twomey: [00:30:58]

In that time was it baking, kind of brewing?

William Cobbing: [00:31:06]

Yes, I think so! That's an interesting idea; it's marinating, simmering. It's in your side view, slightly forgotten about. But it niggles you. Part of it is almost a kind of contempt for the work, a sort of feeling of, well, what is this? is this what I want to do? It doesn't fit into what I do!

Going back to Jan Dibbets once came into my studio, and I'd made this big installation of a big mushroom, kind of weird, sort of sprawling installation. And I'd been working on it for weeks and Jan Dibbets came in my studio said, "Well, this looks like kind of British sculpture from the 1960s, and it didn't work then and it's not going to work now!" and he slammed the door behind him! I was 22 or 23 at the time. Oh my God! and he's totally right! They had these wheelie bins out the back so I threw it away! My time in Holland, on a much more mixed Fine Art course, 2 years Masters, enabled me to embrace performance. So that was thinking about works that you make that have a weird formation period.

Clare Twomey: [00:32:55] So I think it's quite interesting, this work in in a line of I do like monumentality at any point; but this work is very much in a line of ephemeral works which start with *Conscious Consciousness* and then move to the Jerwood when I made a dust wall of clay and behind it a gold veneer that was released when the clay on the wall was scratched or touched. There'd been a kind of series of dust works that moved towards this more ephemeral work. Then there's another series of works which lean into narratives of monumentality, industry or production; acknowledging the silent labour that happens with the figurine makers in the 1700's. Which was the large work I made in Canada at the Gardner Museum. There's never a point where I think, I'll give one a rest and then move onto this one. It's an interweaving, because I don't make much work in the studio, it's a lovely studio, it's like a library, my works are activated on site. You can't even pretend you know what monumentality is until it's cited in some way.

What I am hearing from you is something I understand; you don't purposefully know its this moment. These things need to rest, it's usually something around the purpose of the invitation when it starts to make sense. From the *Eating My Teeth* performance at the Tate, were there moments of rest for a couple of years? Or was it constantly ticking away from the moment you figured out "This is the thing where I step into this body of work".

William Cobbing: [00:35:15]

After I did the *The Secret History of Clay* at the Tate, I worked on a few concrete head videos. One did one called *Excavation* where I had a big concrete wall on my head and with hammer and chisel, I chip away at it. That was quite a key work, but it took me in a strange direction to the Helen Chadwick Fellowship at the British school in Rome, and then the Ruskin School, Oxford. And weirdly, that pushed me into a research zone that turned into my Phd which was about Gradiva. A story about a Freudian dream narrative where a Greek bust relief of a female God is buried under the ash of Vesuvius and is excavated which lead me to think about casts in Pompeii. I was really involved in that kind of research practice for quite a long time and that took me away from video. Until a key transition moment when I did the Norma Lipman Fellowship at Newcastle University in 2013, where I worked with Markus Karstiess and returned to ceramic and got back into performance. Between 2005 to 2013 I was working more conceptually and research driven and then really returned. The transformative time of the Norma Lipman Fellowship in 2013 was when ceramic really became something that was totally central to me and my work. It became very important.

Clare Twomey: [00:37:36]

It's interesting hearing you talk about clay because, your interest in clay is not surface but a deep understanding of clay. That's what I understood from us moving around your curation this morning is, just talking about the Celadons, (a ceramic work by Markus Karstiess) it's not just how it looks. It's about how the materials are at play or the work that is needed to

bring them meaningfully to a piece of work. There's a real depth of understanding. Maybe this understanding comes from the time you spent meditating the idea of research, but there's a real sense of clay as a material. It's not just useful, it's essential. The depth of your knowledge is essential.

William Cobbing: [00:38:35]

That's right. One of the things I've often thought about and it's very much linked to the EKWC (European Ceramics Centre) is the idea of at what point do we specialise? At what point do certain artists specialize in ceramic work? I was trained in fine art, sculpture, fine art and then fine art research. At no point did I do anything focused on ceramics. No one ever taught me how to mix a glaze or slip cast, until last summer at EKWC where I made my first slip cast under expert tuition!

I feel like I've approached clay from the wrong direction which has maybe given me a certain idiosyncratic, or conceptual, deep emotional, physical, haptic, un-expert relationship to clay. When putting clay on my head, I just buy a bag of clay, make an armature and put it on my head! This involves no ceramic specialism, no one has to teach me!

However I'm working with more ceramic objects now and applying a different type of knowledge into learning the particular techniques. For example, a friend, Linda Sormin, whose work is at The Art Station, an amazing, beautiful, complex, fragile lattice of different clays and ceramics; exquisitely made, almost like it's alive and moving. She's an amazing person and was a dynamo at EKWC. I gleaned a lot of technical advice from Linda, who talked about coming from the other direction, she'd trained in an applied form of ceramic and is completely expert. So, from the applied direction, moving into what she considers to be fine art place, which is heavily reliant on her expertise in ceramics. She talked about the idea of labelling, this often gets brought up in talks about clay. She talked about feeling like a bit of an imposter; moving from one realm of ceramic into the other. But that was just a phase and now she has justifiable confidence in the area of ceramic work she makes now. It's quite interesting. It's the complete inverse of where I've come from.

Clare Twomey: [00:42:08]

I think both of those arcs are really interesting because they both rely on permissions, probably held within oneself.

Both Linda and I trained in craft. I never glaze things and I feel I've always dodged that question, somehow I've never really partaken. This idea of permissions and the way you've both moved and you're crossing this central...

It's very interesting because talking to you around your crystalline glazes, which is phenomenally difficult to undertake! But you've done it because it's necessary, not because it's part of the ten glazes one must undertake to understand glazes. From my perspective, my knowledge of craft has given me loads of authority to say, "I can stop this process halfway through and we're fine with that". Somehow my permissions came from knowing I have good knowledge so this isn't a naive thing. This is directly purposeful at this point, to have all these bowls unfired and pour water in them continually as part of a performance, because in many ways I know which part of the pendulum I'm stopping. I see a lot of questions here around Linda's work and permissions, but Linda's work is so complex. I think the complexity of the identity she's been playing with have been so important and empowered by the Black Lives Matter movement. All of the revisions that she's had to burden on her shoulders for others as well. Her work is fabulous. She had a great show at Messum's in Wiltshire, look her up!

Willam Cobbing: [00:44:28]

Moving onto a sort of a tangent, an observation I have in terms of your work. It's very unrelated or very sort of contrasting approach to broken ceramic and breaking ceramic. So in *Consciousness/Conscience* where specator's view walk through tiles and break them to Monument I've not seen that in person but it's, it's moved from Holland to, Is it Paris?

Speaker2: [00:45:10] Yes. So, it's had different sightings and Erik Schilp who we're very lucky to have here today, was the first person to commission the work in Holland. It was a huge, great pile of broken china that was in a museum that was set up to keep things precious and care for them. So, it was a real affront to understanding of what can an object be? What is the matter that makes objects? And then this year it was at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris for a vast exhibition. 350 works looking at the different ways ceramics has been used throughout the ages, and this was commissioned as the entrance work. So, it could kind of really disrupt any ideas one might have about what ceramics can be. So, for me, *Monument*, is a work that's been made about 14 years ago but it's narrative is moving into a narrative of...I stop industry. I take out all the things that are broken before they're turned into either tiles that are used in ceramics industry or the French works all went back to be used in road coverings (It's kind of ground up to be part of road). So, there's this real sense of the broken things, things that didn't make it to museums.

At the centre, the curator went to great efforts to allow me to use the works that were in between status. There was a vast collection of these beautiful, beautiful tiles, some of these couldn't be disposed of because they're Dutch history. They also couldn't be used in the museum because there was no way to save them. Instead, they were used inside the sculpture to talk about the in-between status of objects and they're sitting next to Wedgwood Remnants, Portmeirion remnants. And so, this vast work that we remade for the start of this exhibition was about disruption. But it's also about the disruption we're all experiencing by sitting here on this beautiful summer's day at the start of September, which is all a bit wonky one way or another, isn't it? So, the stopping of process is really important. I think that part of my authority when I go to work in or work with manufacturers is I know you, I know you, historically, this material. You can trust me. There's a lot of knowledge that's poured into these - what seem like chaotic moments.

William Cobbing: [00:48:16] Thinking about the word you mentioned earlier, the idea of permission and also thinking about classifications of things and objects. It foregrounds what we would normally not see, what would normally be hidden away or thrown away. So, it sort of celebrates and it puts it in the entrance area in in Paris. It was as important as a sort of hugely significant installation in the mass of it, really drawing attention to the idea of waste and the cultural or anthropological value.

So, thinking back to ideas of dirt, that might be regarded as a sort of dirty material. Also thinking of *Consciousness/conscience*. And I bet I'm sure a lot of the visitors who went, who saw that at Tate, really enjoyed breaking the tiles. The same way that Ai Weiwei has got a cheeky grin on his face when he's dropping the vases. It's like enjoyment of iconoclasm. We possess an idea – it doesn't often happen – we're given permission to break things.

Clare Twomey: [00:49:58] Or maybe you're unafraid, because I think that a lot of your work is about being unafraid. I think that's really inspiring to experience and witness that.

William Cobbing: [00:50:10] The flipside, for example your tiles- usually people are quite afraid they might break something. However, because of the context of the exhibition, they're empowered and normally I'd be afraid but I've given permission to just jump in and walk away very, very quickly. And that's quite enjoyable.

Clare Twomey: [00:50:41] Which takes us directly to the Victorian Albert Museum. When the curator approached me and said, "We can't collect your work, our policies won't collect your work, would you come and make us something?" Then we made the Wedgwood, the work *Trophy*. They weren't given permission to take anything, but they saw others doing so. This idea of communicating to do something slightly rebellious, to steal a bit of Wedgwood from the Victorian Albert Museum.

Everybody felt slightly uncomfortable, on the boundary, leaving because nobody had actually said it was okay to take a piece. I had to work really, really hard with the press office to try and control the language because it comes back to that invitation. We're not going to tell you it's okay to walk in and take these, but if you see others do it, will you do that too? . That really brings us back to this work, which is about collective thinking, collective seeing and those invisible moments. It comes back to that sense of responsibility and visibility and every single action matters. It may not be recognised, but somewhere it matters.

William Cobbing: [00:52:02] I guess something that I particularly like about your work is these events where you invite people to participate. I suppose the idea of the collective over the individual. The idea of the mass forming through lots of marks, sort of somehow being larger than what an individual person could do.

Clare Twomey: [00:52:28] It's interesting because in many ways, with *Consciousness/ Conscience*, we didn't ask people to do that. It was the work was the challenge. If you wanted to see this work, this was your choice, and some people didn't know it would break. There were loads of different issues around that. But in a sense here, invisibility is really important. This this work is about the invisibility of labour and the invitation to complete this work without identity, without, you know, being the hero, being named, all those things. This is about a collective journey which we've all experienced somewhere along the line.

William Cobbing: [00:53:15] Again, thinking of identity, it sounded like an important moment for you when you worked with Siobhan Davies. Could you tell us a bit about what you were saying about uniform and the idea of performative uniform as well?

Clare Twomey: [00:53:16] Yeah. I think really this is going to be my return question to you about performativity. When Siobhan Davies invited me to make work with her, she had been following some of my work for about year. We had some conversations and then there was this wonderful invite, which was incredibly intimidating. I was asked into a dance studio with two people in close body contact and I was invited right inside that. Sue would turn around and say, "Well, Clare, what do you think about this?" I panicked deeply inside me, because there were two people in a huge amount of physical contact, and I have nothing to say. I was completely overwhelmed. You're *right* next to me. I had not grown up in a world of theatre or ballet or all of these sensibilities. So, the physical, overwhelming invitation was just pure panic. I thought I needed to leave because it was something I had never experienced before. From that point, Sue coaxed me along this journey to understand how her physical world worked and how she saw that connecting to the physical world of craft, this honing of an action, this honing of a movement, and what those repetitive forms can mean. So eventually we made together a work, my work was entitled *Is It Madness, Is It Beauty?* in the context and in response to *Rotor*. From that point onwards we worked well, we're still in very close contact now but fundamentally super important to the performance works that happened in Canada, but also the work that's happening here in the sense that. 1) It's serious work, not entertainment. The work you're undertaking is done with complete sincerity. And the idea that when you put on this apron, if you're assisting on this project, is that it actually gives you the permission and slides you into the sense of permission that you are now the carer of this work. Your work here is to help everybody who wants to be part of this. So, in that sense of I've never been a participant in the work that I make by asking others to hold that in many ways because in a way the work isn't about me or my performance abilities or anything like that. So, the process is important in terms of understanding what live work and performative work is, the responsibility of that, to allow others to find a gateway to join you so they don't feel like I did. On the very first day when I walked into the dance studio I had no idea I was going to be confronted with two bodies that I would have some

responsibility for. So, in a way, the moment which you talked about, where you weren't ready for performance because you decided there was something else going on, how did how did performance become, I'd like to say bearable, but it's more than that. Essential, isn't it?

William Cobbing: [00:57:04] Yeah.

Clare Twomey: [00:57:05] And you are the performer in or a very close director of...

William Cobbing: [00:57:11] Yeah. I guess it's important and it's not important if I'm the performer in certain works that I've done. The thing I suppose that happened at the beginning of the pandemic it was suddenly made it really important that I was performing; the videos shown at Art Station and that I've been making over the last two and a half years. That's super important in the sense of my response to the middle of March 2020. Everyone in our shared studio thinking, Oh, they're going to, they're going to lock us out. And then suddenly we were given permission to be in our studio and it became a sort of haven. I suppose then also a place of isolation and so therefore the performances I made are performative diaries. Because their first dissemination was through Instagram. And they are very diary like in the sense that I've got the date and effectively every day when I make one, I post it on Instagram. I suppose thinking of that idea of the of process and the uniform in your work and thinking of what Siobahn Davies had said to you.

But even the performance I made here yesterday, is a bit of a pastiche of the Marina Abramovic *The Artist Is Present*, but it's a kind of pastiche fondly meant in that I'm wanting to play with what Abramovic did. So, you have the aprons, I have the table and chairs, the idea of a prop. I think people feel comfortable putting on an apron to do the work with the porcelain, the very act of doing that it gives you permission, you start to feel involved. I would hope with my table and my chairs that it's a slightly more subtle act where now you're sitting in front of me and so you're now in the zone, you're on this kind of performative level with me right now. Perhaps linked to I'm wearing an apron here and I've got porcelain chalk and I've been told what to do with it. So now I'm in this bubble, this performative, participatory zone.

Clare Twomey: [01:00:09] But it's also there's also a moment there that it gives other people the permission to watch. There's this idea that you've set a stage and you're working with your sitter and there's this space with live work or performance where there needs to be a permission to witness something because the relationship is so close.. It's like being the front row of the ballet catching the dancer's eye, you know you're so close, it's a personal relationship and that permission to watch, that theatre.

William Cobbing: [01:01:00] In the same way that yesterday when I did the performance there was a gathering. So, it's multi-layered in terms of the sort of interaction that I have, there's a very focused personal interaction where I'm making the clay head for someone and then people can observe that. Similar to your work in the idea of taking things away, at the Museum Jorn once the vases were fired what happened with them?

Clare Twomey: [01:01:52] They weren't allowed to be taken away. And that caused that caused a huge amount of anxiety for many people.

William Cobbing: [01:01:59] Do you do works where things are allowed to be taken away?

Clare Twomey: [01:02:04] Yeah. Those moments are around why? There's a real tightness because these works are big. There's a honing of that understanding before we go to site to understand why something might be taken, stolen, given, broken. All these things have the same value, which is that it must be vital. When I worked with the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, and we asked people their experience of what it is to be humane. A year later, when we were back on Westminster Bridge, and we were handing those sentences back to people, that gift of the spoon that was a model of one that was used in the Bosnian death camps by the survivor Nishad that I worked with. There was absolutely no choice but to do that because it's a porcelain spoon that someone takes responsibility for, with the hand-written words – If humanity needs... there were 72 different repeating words in the conversations that had arisen. There's this idea that you're holding something that could break. You just need to drop the spoon and it's in 100 pieces. But the idea that one must hold it like one must hold society, one must hold humanity, one must care for this, hold it gently.

Weirdly enough about eight years after that project, one of the spoons turned up in Thailand just a couple of weeks ago. A lovely ceramicist, Sarah Howard, was out there and somebody showed her one of the spoons. You really cared for that. Thank you. The idea if something is exchanged or taken there's a hugely articulate moment within that's the reason why. At the Tate when we made the factory, everybody was paid for their labour. If you're going to make a factory in such a privileged environment, you've got the help of 20 curators to make sure you've scrutinised every single rationale in that. The purpose was to come into the factory, which thousands of people did, and if they laboured, they were rewarded with another object, but they couldn't take their own object home because that's kind of indulgent. They had to take the object that somebody else had made home and then take responsibility for that object. It's a sense of really understanding in that moment of exchange, that moment of labour, that moment of completing an artwork that we have here, then how do we understand the responsibilities, but also the sense of what that gift or stealing or breaking might be? There was a beautiful example of that in the Foundling Museum where people could take a cup.

The foundling museum in London is quite new museum. And it was it was where babies, unwanted babies were given to the foundling hospital, a hospital being a place of care rather than a place of fixing. This work represented in many ways by a cup and saucer. The people who came into the exhibition could take one of these cups and we asked nothing from them. They didn't have to sign a book. They didn't have to take anything to tell us anything. But on the base of the cup was an invitation for them to do something to benefit society. We got 1500 dedications from lots of people, including the ongoing charity, the Coram Charity. So, some people put the cups back, they couldn't do it and people who took the cups, they didn't have to tell us what they did, but some of them did and they went beyond it. So, there's this real sharpness, a real honing of that rationale about the idea of responsibility.

William Cobbing: [01:06:36] And the idea of responsibility is really important or bestowing on the participant. Maybe this links to a sort of a broader discussion about an idea of where choreographed events or performative events link to a kind of relational practice.

William Cobbing: [01:07:04]

It's something that's very much ensconced in your work, and in relation to the performance I did yesterday. It's super important that the clay heads I've made are available as well, that they're taken away or fired first then taken. The idea of responsibility and in the sense of after the firing there's then the question of which head is mine and being involved in that process.

Clare Twomey: [01:07:56]

In this extended process of the work, because the interesting thing is your practice is hugely momentary and ephemeral in many ways. The point where there could be responsibility and joy in keeping those moments, when was that part of your practice? In this long journey of this artwork, so from 1999 moving through to the point where you were inviting the sitters, was that always the moment within the sitters work that they would always take their portrait with them?

William Cobbing: [01:08:48]

I've only been doing the portrait works since about 2019. I was commissioned by the Feÿ Arts Festival, which is in a chateau in a forest, south of Paris. I had a studio in the forest, I wanted it to be a sort of Joseph Beuys type studio. So, I made a studio out of pallets, and I did the first version of this. I made the clay heads which dried overnight and fired the next day in a fire pit so people could take them away over the weekend. And using the residual heat from the fire pit I made food. The idea is very much thinking of process and of performance. I've never been taught performance and often people are taught performance formally. I've been taught sculpture; sculpture is really at the starting point of what I do. The performance has been augmenting what I do, sculpture, and it's increasingly been integral to my practice. I think of sculpture and performance as very much the same thing. One of the first conversations I had along the way is with a fellow Saint Martin's tutor, Geoff Horrigan during a performance group tutorial. The example was of a student, ballroom dancing with a column on trolley wheels. It was good, but Geoffrey said the beginning and the end weren't very good and he said you really need to think a lot about the beginning and the end. What he said felt like an important pedagogic intervention. I've been adding those things and trying to develop a slightly more nuanced relationship with the audience I'm working with. That also includes Brian Catling's Cabaret Melancholique, which is a slightly mad off kilter cabaret night that we used to do just before Christmas, which was effectively like a baptism of fire, a little bit like stand-up comedy. You go up on stage and you've got an audience who are out for your blood, I mean that in a friendly way you get heckled. It's a particular performative Brian Catling art crowd - I'd say I learned a lot from Brian's more confrontational performances.

Thinking a lot about why this is a pastiche of the hugely influential performance artist Marina Abramovic. The performance I did yesterday is a way that I can show that influence, is by pastiche sometimes. Part of me wanted to move on from the idea that what you're having is a presence with the artists. It's an added bonus if you can get your clay head.

More seriously, it's entropic, it's the passing on. It doesn't stay within you and the event; it moves beyond you into everyday life. One really nice thing about clay is it's that 20 of these clay heads are made from an £8 bag of clay. Clay is a glorious thing. It takes a lot of notches off the idea of the preciousness of materiality. Yet some ceramic objects are obviously justifiably, hugely valuable, but as a raw material it's just clay.

Clare Twomey: [01:14:05] I like the way we've come back to raw material because maybe this is a good moment to ask if there's any questions that may be maybe arising now we're at raw material, which is so easy to talk about.

Q from audience member:

I'm curious what your thoughts are around performance and the element of control. It seems that both of you relinquish control, hand over to others to act in life and to participate. But also, there are some rules coming through in the works and I'm curious where you feel your control begins and ends and where that setting of parameters exists and doesn't exist.

Clare Twomey: [01:15:08]

If you saw the Pollock retrospective at the Royal Academy that answers all of those questions. Rehearsal is everything in so many ways. After seeing the bloodiest Macbeth ever possible in a theatre in Peckham and the actors as part of a group where the actors came out and talked to us afterwards about what they'd undertaken. And there was this great question from a young person who asked the actors, Are you scared when you're playing? I can't remember which role it was, but it was staggering. It was a fearful presentation of Macbeth and the actor was so great and his response was, "If I'm afraid I'm not doing my job properly". It was just such a great and succinct answer that's really stayed with me and helped me. I think in many, many ways part of my responsibility in the work is to make the right invitation to make the work possible, and that does require a huge amount of knowledge. None of this happens by accident. It's years and years of knowledge and generosity and understanding. So as much as understanding that the Shakespearean actor knows exactly if he's scared on stage, he's screwed up. He's not actually acting anymore. He's now in a different moment, and that may not be helpful to supporting the rest of the crew. Then, in the same way that yesterday I had the pleasure of working with all the wonderful people supporting this work. It's a real sense of handing over the responsibility, because if I don't hand over the work well and we don't understand what the aim is, then it's unfair on the community that we don't get the work to where it could possibly be. A lot of the time it's the rules which exist or the guidelines are to support the endeavour. And if you let that slide, maybe we don't reach the goal which other people have invested in. But at the same time, all of these works are live. And yesterday we were learning how this work can work. It was an exhausting couple of hours and bringing all the knowledge from the Tate, from all the other performative pieces. And you've got to be in a position with performative works that you allow every single person, everybody here to bring their anxieties and their joys to that moment. If you restrict that, then you're suffocating the person who's willing to help you complete the work. There's lots and lots of relationships which hopefully aren't danced out publicly, but they are the points that enable something magical to happen, not just for the artwork, but I hope in every moment of engagement, whether it's stealing, breaking, keeping, doing that inside every person who's helping to make that work; It stays with them. There's a meaningful moment, not just a greater moment. And so that work is choreographed, is full of knowledge. But yes, I think the same of Pollock's work.

William Cobbing: [01:18:58]

This brings me to the idea of creating, thinking about the framework, context and hone parameters for the interactive performance. I find it's different for everyone, but sometimes issuing instructions or a clear procedure for a more interactive form of performance can be quite helpful. If you can engineer a set of parameters which helps people feel comfortable and want to be engaged. In the sense of this performance, I've now tried it out a few times and it changes every time.

But the version I did last summer at EKWC it was a bit more complicated - it had an extra element.

I made a clay portrait with clay which was taken to a photo booth and photographed which was edited in Photoshop and put into an ID card that I'd made, printed it and put on a lanyard with a ribbon around it. So you immediately had your thing, a momentary and hopefully enjoyable experience for my audience that seemed to work. But it does require a lot of consideration that's better suited for participatory performance. I've worked on this and I'm pushing it.

Q: audience member [01:21:40]

I'm interested in the idea of how disconcerting it is for the audience to participate in performances while trying to encourage them to feel like participants. Sitting down for a live portrait, thinking they're going to get a portrait but slowly realising they're getting an imaginary portrait. It's disconcerting to participate in a piece of artwork whether it be in a gallery or museum. When you see someone taking part in a piece of work you think, can I take part? Can I get away with it? The audience are right on the edge of being intrigued, feeling success and feeling failure.

William Cobbing: [01:22:53]

Yes! I really appreciated the moment Nicolas Pope massively threw a spanner in the works during my live performance yesterday! The ball of clay I was passed was messed up, it was the wrong shape. I felt someone's hands on my hands, they were big hands! I thought what's going on! This is weird!

I could hear him talking to me saying "I started it!" He certainly had the confidence, naughtiness, arrogance to do whatever he wanted, perhaps because I've known him a long time. He became the equivalent of the heckler! He was playing with the relationship between performer and audience in the widest sense. There are conventions of participating, audience, social norms. Even when we're participating there's a passivity, adherence to social norms.

Audience member Question:

Yes, It's the uneasiness, the edge, the accuracy of the request; you can do this, but you can't take it away. What? I'm going to do all this labour, but I can't take it away. That's a moment of frisson from the audience. It's not a usual transaction. Participating in a performance is for the greater good of the artwork.

Clare Twomey: [01:25:30]

Yes. A lot of the work I've done it invites the audience, your institutional trace is massive when the opportunity isn't just for the visitors or those who come to be part of the artworks, it's also the institutional learning. There are clear points where the institute has had to change what it does and add different values to what they thought they were valuing because of the work that we do on site. So that opportunity, where I think you might have said, I can't remember, but the idea of risk, the risk can look quite gentle but institutionally it's massive. For example, to steal something from the V&A, that's not a good idea, right? There are boundaries and negotiations. I've had curators arrive from other countries and speak to the curators I've worked with and ask; Can you trust her? Is she on time, is she on budget, does she freak out? It's this idea that you're going in not to test the artwork or the time and the moment that you're in. It's also to test the institute. The work is complex and far reaching.... Sometimes.

Clare Palmier:

It feels that both performances, here in Framlingham and at The Art Station, move the audience through some sort of transition. With William's performance it felt like a gathering of some sort, a gathering of resistance, fear of taking part in something that essentially is just sitting opposite someone that can't see you! And then there's that moment when people hesitate to participate and feel uncomfortable of being exposed, but the participation soon becomes pleasurable because there's an exchange and there is an actual exchange and then an imagined portrait to hold at the end

And with Clare's work the transition of moving into that space of performance, to take part, there's a sense of belonging, taking part, doing something together, development of emotions, time, scale and finally enjoyment. Creating enjoyable moments that can be shared, it's a wonderful thing!

Clare Twomey: [01:28:25]

Yes! Because the joy of watching the participants performances yesterday was just so clear and so powerful and something I hadn't expected within the work. Watching the absolute joy it brought to people who were helping to complete these incredibly big scrolls. There are these points where this is enjoyable.

William Cobbing:

Yes, I have found the trepidation of participation in my performances interesting. I deliberately do it in quite an informal way, I speak to the volunteers that help with my performances beforehand to talk about the performances. I brief them, outline what I'm going to do and give pointers for things to watch out for and instructions on how to guide the participator. It's important to set up this kind of facilitator because I can't see anything!

For example, when I did the performance at the European Ceramics Center, I formalized the performance by having a desk, hence why we provocatively called it 'Border Control'. The facilitator was behind the desk, which deliberately made approaching the performance awkward for the participator!

The participants were told to wait in the queue, he's going to make a clay head for you, then photographed and get made into an ID card that you can take home, and then you can enter the open day! Participating in my performance wasn't compulsory for entrance to the open day. But for those people who wanted to join in with my performance there were subtle parameters in place to facilitate my performance.

There are really strict parameters but also the incidences of spaces where, as I mentioned earlier Nick Pope wanting to rebel!

I remember someone at a past performance, was determined to take away their portrait home on the day, even though I made it clear that they were going to be put through a reduction firing to produce a really nice fired version. They said "No I want it and I'm not going to wait for it to be fired and I'm just going to have it". And I think they walked out with it!

Clare Twomey:

And I think one of the interesting things from that is that this is live work. And as much as you guide it, you're absolutely learning at every turn because you know that, that may return to you in another narrative form at some point.

William Cobbing:

Absolutely. But I do like the idea, of this sort of disruptor or the heckler in any scenario. I think in a way you have to almost create risk as a subject because your performance is a of bigger scale and there's more at stake, perhaps. But it's the idea of what happens when someone goes a bit rogue, what do I do about it and how do it deal with a rogue participant!

Clare Twomey:

And I think again and again that comes back to the central point of the concept. It comes back to the invitation or the starting point, because that usually has the answers for why that might be happening in some form or other.

Audience member Question:

I come from an understanding of clay as a material and the polarities of both your works; warm clay, pristine porcelain is very interesting and for me as a ceramicist is brilliant. However, from a technical side, getting the clay to be fired for health and safety and all the things behind this, could you explain more about this?

Clare Twomey:

Yes, this again comes down to this set of knowledges, you know, like the crystalline glaze, you know, that those lovely porcelain chalks, the materials are being fired to the first point of cristobalite change, which is when this ceramic clay material becomes ceramic. And so at this point and we've tested it multiple times for different sites of use, not in the clay chalks here, but for *Consciousness Conscience*. It's looking at things like the dust emitted so that once it's reached 572 it goes through the first point of cristobalite change which changes the dust particles so that they're now equivalent to walking on a

sandy beach, so they're non carcinogenic. So making this work also comes with responsibility for caring for the people who are helping you make the work in many ways. And that's the same with the beautiful dust work I made at the Jerwood, which we had to mix with an emollient that had been industrially tested to make sure that there was no clay dust emitted and the floor work we made sure that it gone through cristobalite change, but it would break evenly for the five year old or the 40 year old. So their experiences were the same value in terms of physical encounter. And so the knowledges that sit behind this and things like this beautiful paper which will be used internationally with the situation we're in, I won't need to ship it because we've got a global supplier. So wherever whether you're in Japan or Italy or France, the site will be able to be able to stay to the same paper by the same producer.

When we did the Bronte Parsonage project, we rewrote Wuthering Heights. Then the research and care that went into making sure the manuscript we made was exactly the same size as the other manuscripts that weren't lost, and that the paper was produced as close to the parsonage as possible. And so there's lots of deep material work and that's probably as important as the work that you hand over in terms of your dialogues about the invitation or the context you're working in. I think everybody knows when something is just for fancy. Every part of this jigsaw is valued, there's probably a very good reason, which I haven't asked you about, about the terracotta, you know, this material or this which has all kinds of histories running through it. Why did you choose terracotta over a porcelain for these works?

William Cobbing: [01:37:23]

I did an exhibition called Terrapolis curated by Iwona Blazwick at the Whitechapel and Neon, an arts organisation in the French Gardens in Athens. Really interesting artists; Sarah Lucas, Markus Karstiess, Anthea Hamilton, Norbert Prangenberg. The idea of Terrapolis being about terror and terror coming from the earth.

I often go for very earthy, very brownie red clays because of it coming from the earth in that sort of sense. And then also, one of the one of the lovely discoveries I made at the European Ceramics Center, was when you fire the terracotta clay under a reduction firing is that it goes an aubergine colour, a shiny aubergine colour. It's such a gorgeous sheen ceramic.

Clare Twomey [01:38:42]

Yes! It's melting, isn't it?

William Cobbing [01:38:46]

It's funny you say melting because it's quite hard to get the reduction right. A piece I fired in European Ceramics Center, the temperature overshoot maybe by about 20 or 30 and the sculpture melted because it was terracotta but the white clay, which is a stronger body state was fine. I'm very interested in the fleshy quality of clay and the colours in that as well.

One thing that I think you do very responsibly and well is proper research and health and safety. It's brilliant that you've researched the right temps for porcelain and stress test it. I suppose the counterpoint is when things go disastrously wrong, I think we mentioned or talked about the Ai Weiwei sunflower seeds, millions and millions of them were made with a certain type of porcelain, which meant that when it was opened in the turbine hall at Tate Modern and people started walking on it, it started emitting dust, which was the bad dust, which I assume is carcinogenic

Clare Twomey [01:40:32]

But also it was lined with lead, uncontained. So that's a multitude of problems!

William Cobbing: [01:40:43]

What went wrong? It's quite an extraordinary level of going wrong. I mean, that was designed to be an interactive sculpture and it's - and then the whole thing was cordoned off.

Clare Twomey: [01:41:01]

But that's a cultural context, because that's actually what happened in China in Jingdezhen was standard practice. Actually, when you move standard practice to a really tight, highly ventilated and controlled environment, it exposes all kinds of different cultural differences. The issues were partly cultural in terms of what clay practices in Jingdezhen, which is quite interesting.

William Cobbing: [01:41:34]

So designing in those changes or designing in those differences is obviously sort of super important!

Clare Twomey: [01:41:40]

Yes!.

Clare Palmier:

Well, thank you both so much. It's been really enjoyable. I wonder if you would be able to close this conversation by briefly talking about what your experience has been like to come here to rural Suffolk to two market towns, Saxmundham and Framlingham.

Clare Twomey: [01:42:18]

I think for this piece of work which has been brewing for a while, it has real meaning to come to such a small community, because from what I understand, a lot of the people who have come to help complete the work. It's about this community and often, when you're working at institutes like the V&A or the Tate, there's a massively global community that arrive. But actually it's very, very interesting to recognise here, how close this community is. So this is working with the closeness of this community, which is really moving and is really helpful to understanding the disciplines of this particular piece of work, which is about recognising how communities work together and the fact that this is a place where communities gathered in all of its wonderful iterations, from theatres to assembly halls to antique centres. This is the right place for this work to try and understand itself. And as a born and bred Ipswich girl, it's the first work I've made in Suffolk. So it's really lovely to be home. Yes ever! It didn't take me long, did it?

William Cobbing: [01:43:55]

Yes for me, obviously thinking about it, it's so great to have artists involved in exhibiting in the show such as yourself, Richard Oliver, Ryan Gander, Karren Densham, Ali Hewson, who are very much based here. Since I've been here there's a really great arts community, which The Art Station is really helping to foster as a hub, because it's an exhibition space has artists' studios and workspaces. It's important to provide these opportunities and different ways in which you can engage in a particular place or hub. In the early conversations we had about me curating the show we talked about the proximity of Suffolk to Europe and remembering when I was a student at the European Ceramics Centre, the sculpture tutor and I packed up his van with all the ceramics and went to Holland and then to Harwich.

We discussed shipping routes, migratory routes and the fact that there's a really strong link there. Part of it is also the idea of forging relationships with Europe post-Brexit. But one of the things I really appreciated was the support The Art Station gave towards the shipping of the work from Holland. You helped engage Mtech and worked with them to get lots of this

work from Europe which I think is probably quite ground-breaking in the sense of loads of shows are being cancelled between British artists showing in Europe, European artists showing in Britain, it's been made very difficult in terms of the way Brexit's been implemented. It's been a bit irresponsible in a way and hasn't been done properly. So something like this exhibition feels like a really nice opportunity to develop those bridges and links.

Verity at the art station went over to collect sculptures from Rotterdam and the European Ceramics Centre and made a great video of the routes to collect the work. So, part of my experience of this show is about the mirroring of Holland and Suffolk and the landscapes, the idea of maintaining friendships and communicating and not cutting ourselves off.

I've really felt how close and friendly the artist community is here.

Getting to talk to Ryan Gander and a lovely chat with one of my heroes Sarah Lucas yesterday who's working here and was also talking about how much she enjoys working here and thinking about this area as being really good!

Clapping

Clare Twomey [01:48:23]

Thanks, Clare. We need ice cream now, don't we? Really?

Laughing