

Autoarchaeologies / of an artist-organiser / (doing fieldwork) in Finland and Latvia.

Andrew Gryf Paterson, DA Thesis abstract, 8.2.2017. andrew.paterson@aalto.fi | <http://agryfp.info>

This doctoral dissertation is a contribution to practice-based, artistic research methodologies, named here as *autoarchaeologies*, and reflects upon my ‘artist-organiser’ practice over the durational period of 2009-2014 in Finland and Latvia.

In my practice I self-identify as an ‘artist-organiser’, who combines artistic and organisational working, including aspects of creative conceptual work, with curating, communications and cultural production, and social and community development in presence-based, remote and online networks. This position developed over 15 years in connection with Media Lab Helsinki, predominately working independently beyond academia, intensively in associational activities, collaborating with individuals and cultural organisations in transdisciplinary, hybrid practices, consisting of numerous processes, such as workshops, event-organising, and ‘artistic fieldwork’ in situ in various cultural festivals and non-arts-orientated venues, communities and localities; *as well as* telling stories or narrating these activities in presentations or public discussions, reflecting and writing up texts as articles or essays as a reflective researcher. Whereas each activity—often undertaken as grassroots cultural or heritage activism—hoped for some more or less modest changes in society, artefact production (including fragments or traces of activities) and articles adds to understanding of experience, learnings and some gleaned answers about what one has been doing, and so towards better research questions or curiosities, that in turn inspires further practice.

Hence the thesis aims to address how hybrid practices such as my own meet the additional aspect of being a researcher who includes one’s own data in the analysis, as informed by autoethnography. Over time, I faced an emerging research problem which in interpreting and making sense of the relationship between my practice-based activities and experiences in multiple contexts, over a longer duration of time: How to present activities and experiences— that have happened as open-ended events and processes in multiple contexts over time— within the re-telling of practice-based artistic research, in my case, as an artist-organiser?

Inspired by earlier MSc thesis (2001) and following practice-led research in virtual, augmented and mobile media environments (2002-2006), I addressed the problem of authoring in spatio-temporal data structures, whereby I borrowed from the archaeological and geological practice of stratigraphy, which records inter-related strata (or loci in time-space) to chart inter-related contexts and durations in virtual and augmented environments. However, as my practice and research became more diverse over the years, and my experience accumulated, I saw the value of applying an archaeological perspective to my own practice that had become distributed in various locations over periods of time. The conceptual and literal stratigraphical mapping method suggested assistance towards answering the above question with a set of sub-questions: Where-when have been the foundations of different processes? What are the ‘red threads’ (and other colours too) of open-ended processes, and how have they developed or been sustained? What has been before or after or contemporaneous? In which directions has activity expanding beyond the periods of planned fieldwork or process? This updated stratigraphical method, when published (Paterson, 2011a) suggested some value of applying to ones own practice as a contribution to autoethnographical method of interpreting one’s own experiences and processes, described tentatively as an ‘auto-archaeological interpretation’. In the context of increased meta-data-augmented documentation of practices and everyday life via ubiquitous mobile computing and online publishing platforms, there is arguably increasing amount of personal (small or big) data to interpret and analysis. One archaeological theorist suggests, with access to multitude of data available about our own and others past activities, we are all (potentially) archaeologists now.

This article-based thesis is based upon five articles related to and based upon my artist-organiser practice. including the afore methodological article published in 2011, ‘Stratigraphical Recall: An auto-archaeological interpretation for artistic fieldwork’. The introduction offers background reflections on my practice, early influences, cultural and educational background and values which influenced me before I became a researcher. My aims and motivations, scope of research, knowledge, disciplinary fields that the thesis offers itself towards, is complemented by contextual introductions to the different cultural associations and venue-partners I have been involved with in Finland and Latvia. The methodological section introduces relationships to social science and fieldwork, to develop an understanding of autoethnography as it overlaps with an autoarchaeological approach. Recent developments in thinking in contemporary archaeological thinking and practice, considering the ‘contemporary past’, the stratigraphical record, and transdisciplinary application of archaeological approaches by artists and other practitioners are also referenced, to give support to the thesis. These questions can be summarized as seeking to understand the contextual chronology and genealogy of processes, using my own practice and experiences as example.

The four other articles included (2013, 2011b, 2010, 2016) are reflections upon the creative conception, motivations, organisation and broader social or theoretical context of four different processes I have been engaged in from approximately late 2008 to late 2015. Arguably they all have a different boundary object as the subject for multi- and trans- disciplinary inquiry, respectively the arctic crowberry, online videos, talkoot and soil. The order of the articles are presented in a mixed reverse order, with the latest one added at the end as a contemporary ‘bracket’ that mixes *literally in practice* many of the themes presented in the methodological approach. These are listed below.

These processes represented in the articles, all together, coincided and were inspired and supported by intellectually, and sometimes practically not only Pixelache Helsinki association and festival in Finland, but by the context of the Renewable Network, initiated by RIXC Centre for New Media Culture in Riga, 2009, still ongoing as a mailing list, research focus and symposia series by the Latvian cultural association and it’s regular partners, including myself. The Renewable Network supported and promoted the emergence of art-science and transdisciplinary research overlaps in region in various formats, including the social mapping of actors, projects and subjects in the Baltic Sea Region, but also further afield. These articles and acknowledged gaps raise up together better research questions as outgoing conclusions: How do seemingly disparate activities or agencies relate to each other? How do past, present and future practices relate to each other? How does linear-temporal objectification of lived experience and work relate to non-linear foldings and relationships of what I—and we—artistically organise, research, create, make and do?

Reference links

Doctoral Thesis update, Aalto ARTS Media Dept.

Slide-based summary [EN]: <https://archive.org/details/paterson-2017-agryfp-auto-archaeologies-da-thesis>

Fieldwork elaboration [EN/RU]: <https://archive.org/details/agryfp-2013-artistic-fieldwork-in-finland-latvia-ncca-kaliningrad>

Bibliographic range of interests

https://archive.org/stream/agryfp-2017-autoarchaeologies-da-thesis/paterson_2016_agryfp_da-thesis-bibliography_051113 NB: To be updated to 2017 version updated pre-seminar.

0. Preface, incomes, acknowledgements

Supervision, Supporters, friends, fundings
Epigraph

1. Personal introduction(s)

Reflections on practice, artistic-research & practice-based research
Cultural and educational background, practice / values

2. Aims and motivations, scope of research, knowledge, disciplinary fields

Research questions, What does the research offer
Literature review of practices, practice-based research

3. Contexts and locations

Where different processes took place

4. Towards an Autoarchaeological methodology

Literature & referencing for autoethnographies → autoarchaeologies
Direct relation to Article #1 (methodological)

5. Overview of Case-articles

Summary of articles & concurrent processes
What do the different articles communicate and tell to us, how/where are they positioned in the stratigraphical narrative
Direct relation to Articles #2-#3-#4

6. Outgoings (aka conclusion)

Discussion of stratigraphical narrative 2014-2009
Connections, developments, learnings, weaves gained between the articles
Direct relation to Article #5

7. Articles (presented facsimile as published)

#1 (2011a): Stratigraphical recall: An auto-archaeological interpretation for artistic fieldwork
#2 (2013): Mountain crowberries: Foraging and measuring knowledge or experience
#3 (2011b): Pull-down Screen, Fold up Chairs, a Laptop and a Projector:
The Development of Clip Kino Screenings, Workshops and Roles in Finland
#4 (2010a): A buzz between rural cooperation and the online swarm
#5 (2016): Reflections on Soil Present(s), Past(s), Future(s)

8. Appendixes

Facsimile of stratigraphical narrative 2014-2009
...
Glossary

9. Bibliography

10. Index

Articles included within thesis

#1 Paterson, A. G. (2011a). Stratigraphical recall: An auto-archaeological interpretation for artistic fieldwork, In Lily Diaz (ed.), Special issue of *Journal of Visual Arts Practices*, Vol. 10 # 1, ISSN 1470-2029. Bristol: Intellect Ltd.

#2 Paterson, A. G. (2013a). Mountain crowberries: Foraging and measuring knowledge or experience, In Laura Beloff, Erich Berger & Terike Haapoja (eds.), *Field_Notes: Field and Laboratory as Sites for Art&Science Practices*, Helsinki: Finnish Bioart Society, 2013. Accessible from: http://bioartsociety.fi/book/Field_Notes-From_Landscape_To_Laboratory-2013.pdf

#3 Paterson, A. G. (2011b). From a pull-down screen, fold-up chairs, a laptop and a projector: The development of Clip Kino screenings, workshops and roles in Finland, In Geert Lovink & Rachel Somers Miles (eds.), *Video Vortex Reader II: Moving images beyond YouTube*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2011. p.81-94. Accessible from: <http://networkcultures.org/videovortex/vv-reader/>

#4 Paterson, A. G. (2010a). A buzz between rural cooperation and the online swarm, In Marcelo Vieta (ed.), *Affinities: Journal of Radical Theory, Culture and Action*, Vol. 4 Issue #1, 09.2010. Online: Simo Fraser University. Accessible from: <http://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/affinities/article/view/6149>

#5 Paterson, A. G. (2016). Reflections on soil future(s), present(s) and past(s), In Rasa Smite, Armin Medosch, Kerstin Mey, Raitis Smits (eds.), *Acoustic Space #15: Open fields, Peer-reviewed Journal for Transdisciplinary Research on Art, Science, Technology and Society*, Riga-Liepaja: RIXC-MPLab, 2016. Accessible from: <https://archive.org/details/agryfp-2015-soil-presents-pasts-futures>

Supervision committee

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Since 2015

Assoc. Prof. Vytautas Michelkevicius, Dept. of Photography & Media Arts Vilnius Academy of Arts, curator, artistic director of Nida Art Colony, Vilnius/Nida, LT. <http://www.vda.lt> | <http://www.nidacolony.lt> | <https://vilnius.academia.edu/VytautasMichelkevicius>

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Andrew Gryf Paterson: Publication history 2016-2002