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**Audiencing artscares:**  
**Encounters between art and audience**  
**at**  
**Yorkshire Sculpture Park**

**Saskia Warren**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the ways in which the meanings of site art are inscribed by different audiences and their spatially contingent processes of audiencing. Theoretically and empirically it suggests the importance of the verb ‘audiencing’ over the static noun ‘audience’ to activate the dynamic processes involved in the production of art’s meaning. The thesis is based upon qualitative research undertaken over one year spent at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Yorkshire. It tailors archival, ethnographic and visual methodologies to address how examples of site art within their spatial context are audienced from a range of roles and positionalities. Audiencing is shown to occur non-linearly, with meaning inscribed variously during the processes of making, installation and exhibiting. Each chapter explores different facets of the relationship between site, art and audience, tracing the histories, discourses and situated knowledges that shape the meanings of the sculpture park and its art. Overall the thesis develops understandings of the geographies of art, suggesting how memory, environmental history and situated knowledges are essential to the embodied dimensions of interpreting site art, and exploring the ways in which audiences have read, produced and practiced the local landscape in differently scaled geographical contexts. This project also considers the ways in which the public can be convened and formed in different spaces, using the sculpture park as a case study to develop critical discussion on non-urban site art and non-urban public space. Together the chapters offer new methodological and analytic approaches to framing the cultural and social meaning of art. Mixed qualitative methods are adopted to explore the in-depth, complex meanings of site art within a range of peoples’ lives, revealing the creativity, relational geography and site specificity that lie at the heart of arts’ audiencing.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

I'm always puzzled by audiences. I really don't know who they are or why they're there or what they're thinking.  
(Paul Taylor, Choreographer, 1983, cited in Blau 1990: vi)

In 2010, the Conservative party funded think tank, Policy Exchange, published a report which questioned the 'uncontroversial' assumption that 'the arts are good for society' (Miraz 2010: 15). In critique of the evaluation of arts policy based on social policy objectives, Munira Miraz asked: 'The people who fund the arts, provide the arts, and research the arts have all produced a consensus about the value of what they do... But do the numbers add up?' (Miraz 2010: 15). The arts maintain a prominent profile in the U.K. media despite receiving low levels of funding relative to budgets for other sectors of the state. Undertaken from 2008 to 2011, this thesis spanned the end of New Labour's rule under Gordon Brown and the creation of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government led by David Cameron. Notably, key cornerstones on the value of the arts debate have changed according to the shifting economic climate of the country and particular ideologies of these different political ministries. Value has been assessed by stakeholders variously in relation to widening access, social inclusion, local regeneration and the creation of jobs, increased property prices, and excellence (Jowell and DCMS 2004; DCMS and AHRC 2010; Penrose and DCMS 2011; CASE, TBR, and The Cities Institute 2011). During New Labour's time in power the arts enjoyed increased investment, however recent changes in funding overseen by the new Conservative Minister for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Jeremy Hunt, have halved the Arts Council England (ACE) budget, and significantly reduced the portfolio of arts organisations it supports. In difficult economic times, those who work within the arts have had to work hard to justify continued funding for the organisations and projects they support.

This research aims to provide greater understanding of how different audiences engage with visual art. Rather than attempt to measure the value of art according to social policy instrumentalism, or focusing singularly on the financial gains to be made through the arts, the thesis offers an alternative approach to framing the value of artwork. Taking the case study of Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Yorkshire, it tailors

qualitative methods to draw out the in-depth, complex cultural and social meaning of particular artworks within different people's lives. Yorkshire Sculpture Park, hereafter referred to by its official acronym, YSP, is an arts organisation which extends over 500 acres of historic landscape and four indoor gallery spaces. Through YSP the resultant cross-sectoral research examines the relational geographies of art, audience, and the spatialities of site in the dynamic production of art's meaning. The thesis brings together explicitly two bodies of critical work which had previously remained undeveloped in both geography and art theory: in-depth empirical research into audiencing as an active, negotiated act (Fiske 1992; Rose 2001), with the geographies of mapping and interpreting site art (Kwon 2002; Morris 2011). It conducts an analysis which focuses on a range of people who produce and perform an engagement with site art beyond the artist, curator and art critic who are often at the core of discussion on the meaning of visual art. Integral to this research is the acknowledgment that audiences perform the script of the artspace differentially, informed through the situated modes by which they categorise and relate to the coordinates of the space and works within it.

### 1.1 Tracing the audience

The methodology and theoretical approach that underpin this thesis depart from the assumption that audiences are active agents in the appropriation of art's meaning. This thesis uses mixed methods, encompassing ethnography, archival practices and visual methods, in order to trace the ways in which different audiences perform a relationship with the script of the artspace and the works within that space. It advances existent research on museum visitors by exploring engagements beyond the internal white walls of the gallery or museum. Exploring interactions with art in non-urban sites bring new dimensions to understanding the differential art practices and modes of engagement which take place beyond cityscapes. In the chapters that follow I directly draw upon my empirical and archival data in order to illustrate the trinity of site, art, and audience when mapping visual arts meaning. This research accounts for relationships between historical trajectories and a cross-section of knowledges, with multiple methods that range across sites, activities and archival depositories in order to draw out the dimensions of social and cultural experiences of art in a changing landscape. The thesis follows Tuan's recognition that 'experience has both a passive and active component' (2001: 43). One *undergoes* experience; also 'to experience is to venture forth, or to run a risk' (Tuan 2001: 43 *my emphasis*).

Integral to this research is the recognition that each ‘experience is different’ (Falk and Dierking 1992: 67). Instead of considering audiences en masse, or as one unified whole, this research considers each individual’s experience as distinctive due to ‘personal and social contexts [where] each is differently affected by the physical context, and... each makes choices as to which aspects of that context to focus on’ (Falk and Dierking: 67-68). In empirical exploration of audiences’ experience of site based art, this thesis presents the registers of exchange between the affective qualities of the art, the structures of display and the agency of the audience in the production of meaning.

## 1.2 From the universal museum to the visitor-focused museum

Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach interrogated what they termed ‘the universal museum’ in 1980 (Duncan and Wallach 1980). The model refers to public museums built across the mid-eighteenth century and nineteenth century during northern European imperial expansion, such as the British Museum and the Louvre. Projects of the enlightenment, these collections-centred museums have been recognised to construct a history for the state built on cultural achievements, cultural wealth, and knowledge (Duncan and Wallach 2004). Critical contributions to the universal museum coalesce in object and architectural analysis which emphasises the role of the museum in a broader discussion of the formation of the nation (Walsh 2007; Buchli 2002). Importantly, an essential function of these secular ‘temples’ (Duncan 1995: 7) was to inspire awe in the everyday visitor. Duncan F. Cameron encapsulates the point that the ‘timeless and universal function’ of the museum used ‘a structured sample of reality, not just as a reference but as an objective model against which to compare individual perceptions’ (Cameron 1972: 201). This is especially pertinent with the new art-historical hang which emerged in the nineteenth-century in public art museums. The new hang replaced the later eighteenth century connoisseur’s or gentleman’s mode of display which was linked to the art education of European aristocrats where the fashion was to hang collections, including royal collections, in a way that highlighted the formal qualities of various masters. This was intended to display the collector’s knowledge of current critical fashion. The larger decorative schemes of the connoisseur’s hang were given increased competition by newer arrangements which enabled viewers to trace work by work the progress of particular artists or schools, in a chronological evolution of styles (Duncan 1995: 24-25). The new hang has been considered ‘the triumph of an advanced,

Enlightenment thinking that sought to replace earlier systems of classification with a more rational one' (Duncan 1995: 26). The ideological usefulness of the chronological hang saw it adopted for public art museums over the course of the nineteenth century, where the works of art paid witness to the 'presence of genius', as 'cultural products marking the course of civilisation in nations and individuals' (Duncan 1995: 27). The artist and school-orientated hang persists with the modern art museum developed in the early 1960s. Here, I regard the disembodied zone of the white cube - with minimal furniture – as an environment where the spectator becomes subordinate to the works on display (O'Doherty 2010[1991]; Krauss 2004[1978]; Duncan and Wallach 2004[1978]). The modernist white cube has been critiqued as attempting to 'bleach out the past and at the same time control the future' (O'Doherty 2010[1991]: 11) by transcendental principles, as well as staging capitalist ideology through individualistic ways of experiencing the genius of art (Krauss 2004[1978]; Duncan and Wallach 2004[1978]). While the white cube staged a direct experience of the artwork through the removal of interpretation, there was continuity from the universal model insofar as the architecture of display was designed to inspire awe in the collections and artists they represented.

Writing in 1971, Duncan F. Cameron signalled a paradigmatic shift in the museum's function, heralding the new 'visitor-focused museum' as a space for 'confrontation, experimentation and debate' (Cameron 1971: 18). Since the 1970s, the move towards an audience-focused museum practice has been theorised in museum studies by academics such as Peter Vergo and Eileen Hooper-Greenhill. Vergo (1989) deconstructed the museum as a complex object constituted through a web of political, cultural and economic forces. With increased awareness of the cultural politics of museum architecture, collecting, and display, the function of the museum or gallery has come under further scrutiny and subsequently shifted considerably. A steward of the public-facing approach, Hooper-Greenhill declared: '[the great collecting phase of museums is over' (2001: 152). The 'post-museum' will hold and care for objects, but will 'concentrate more on their use than on further accumulation' (Hooper-Greenhill 2001: 152). This notion of the post-museum is a space which departs from object-centred display, to exhibitions and events as 'conjoint dynamic processes' which enable the incorporation into the museum of 'many voices and many perspectives.' In this new space, knowledge is 'no longer unified and monolithic it becomes fragmented and multi-vocal' (Hooper-Greenhill 2001: 152). Instead of a model of direct transmission in the public art museum, the contingency of objects, museum display and meaning is thereby introduced. In 1991, Steven L. Lavine and Ivan Karp wrote: 'Now few serious

museum practitioners would claim that a museum could be anything but a forum' (Lavine and Karp 1991: 4). Lavine and Karp's diagnosis for visitor-centred museum practice was also formulated in the re-launch of the Malmö institution in 2001 when Charles Esche, Director of Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, claimed:

[Art] has become an active space rather than one of passive observation. Therefore the institutions to foster it have to be part-community centre, part-laboratory and part-academy, with less need for the established showroom function. (Esche 2006: n/p)

Esche articulates a multiplicity of functions required by institutions to foster an active space for art. The focus on social and educational provision instead of more traditional concerns of object care and display are critically developed in the words of Brian Holmes, who has written extensively on the emergence of the museum as a 'proactive laboratory of social evolution' within the context of the decline of the welfare state (Holmes in Doherty 2006: 4). The 'New Institutionalism', as this turn has been termed, is also dually critiqued as a model where the art institution has seen increased corporatisation, wherein the public are increasingly referred to as consumers and the institution's activities are 'driven towards income producing targets and aligned with the interests of commercial entertainment industries' (Doherty 2006: 3). This raises the critical issue of whether institutions, and artworks within those institutions, inscribe their spaces to orchestrate modes of audience participation in a production of agendas beyond the appreciation of art.

The shift towards a focus on visitors has also been evidenced in media discussions of museum practice. A recent article by a journalist in *The Guardian* newspaper documents the move from an authoritative to inclusive museum. Charting the journey of a group of high-profile cultural commentators in their selection of 'the best British Museum', Charlotte Higgins writes:

In different ways and at different speeds, museums appear to be abandoning their authoritarian role as repositories of closely guarded knowledge, which they ration out to a grateful but essentially supine public. That relationship is changing – and for the better. Audiences now have a voice. (Higgins 2011: n/p)

There is widespread arts sector agreement that audiences ‘now have a voice’ as Higgins states, yet the Sociologist Tony Bennett has critiqued the museum as a ‘space of surveillance’ that delimits the extent of the visitor’s engagement with decision-making and the representational process (2007: 60). This thesis argues that it is not enough to claim that the museum is audience-focused – or that individual works within the space are – rather there is the need to perform ‘descriptions and grounded interpretations of what audiences really think and do’ (Lull 1988: 240). In the process it will challenge assumptions about the passive role of the audience by generating a more dynamic cultural mapping of audience agency across the coordinates of the art institution.

### 1.3 Notions of the audience

Key to understanding the importance of the audience within this thesis, and elsewhere, is a recognition of the wider discourse surrounding the usage of terms such as the ‘spectator’, ‘viewer’, ‘visitor’ and ‘consumer’. Across cultural studies, media, performance and the arts, there is movement between these terms and how they describe the role of the audience with ‘incremental and sometimes radical differences’ (Blau 1990: 18). I set out examples of how these terms are used within this literature to develop my argument for the usage of ‘audiencing’ as the central term within the thesis.

In discussion of the visual arts the most common terms used to refer to audiences are the ‘viewer’ and ‘spectator’, yet these terms have been marked by a preoccupation with the visual alongside a struggle against assignments of passivity. ‘By and large,’ Art Historian Donald Preziosi argues, ‘the viewer has been seen...as a passive reader or consumer of images’ (Preziosi 1989: 46). Recent critiques have disclosed the hierarchies of interpretative authority inherent in the critic or arts professional speaking on behalf of the viewer or spectator (Preziosi 1989: 47; Kester 2004: 24, 2009: 8). Preziosi considers this disinterestedness in the role of the viewer to be symptomatic of a hierarchy of knowledge which privileges the vantage point of the artworld elite; the artist, the historian and the critic:

This logocentric paradigm is given a characteristic slant or trajectory so as to privilege the maker or artist as an essentially active, originary force, in complementary contrast to the essentially passive consumer or reader of works. It involves no great leap of the imagination to see that the paradigm simultaneously serves as a validating apparatus to privilege the role or

function of the historian or critic as a legitimate and unvested diviner of intentionality on behalf of lay beholders. (Preziosi 1989: 46)

With consideration to research methods which could be applied in an interpretation of contemporary art, Art Historian Grant Kester argues that: '[t]he contemporary viewer is also available as a resource for the analysis of reception at a level of proximity and detail that is seldom accessible to historians of earlier periods' (Kester 2009: 8). Kester aligns with Preziosi in his critique of the interpretive authority of the historian and critic. The resource of the viewer challenges 'the hermeneutic monopoly that the historian typically enjoys' where 'certain propositions about the viewer's experience... remain untested (except through the surrogate consciousness of the critic)' (Kester 2009: 8).

Further challenges have been issued to the supposed passivity of viewer reception in dichotomous opposition to the active, creative force of the artist (Ranciere 2009: 13; Rose 2001: 5; Pink 2006: 68). The significant reverberations of post-structuralist theory, particularly Umberto Eco's *The Poetics of the Open Work* (1962) and Roland Barthes' *Death of the Author* (1968) foregrounded the interpretative role of the viewer, listener or reader in opening up fields of possibility in the meaning of a piece of artwork, music or text. With this precedent Philosopher Jacques Ranciere's recent usage of 'spectator' continued to redress the power dynamics associated with the role of the viewer/reader in the arts (2009: 2,13). A challenge is made to negative conceptions of the spectator characterised by ignorance and passivity, which is exemplified by Brian O'Doherty, '[t]he Spectator seems a little dumb; he is not you or me' (O'Doherty 1999[1976]). Instead, Ranciere's 'emancipated spectator' is recognised to act 'like the pupil or scholar' where he or she 'observes, selects, compares, interprets' (Ranciere 2009: 13). Ranciere's range of actions indicates more than an optical exchange, however the notions of the spectator or viewer have been seen to privilege the visual over other bodily senses, where the 'viewer's sense of his own presence becomes an increasingly palpable shadow' (O'Doherty 1999[1976]: 38). Justification has been sought for how these terms can usefully be applied to a more active, physical role in three-dimensional installation. The visual has been re-examined to return the argument of the eye to encompass a fuller sensorial and interpretative scope (Hawkins 2010; Morris 2011).

The notion of the audience, however, has been more widely mobilised to embrace the range of positions and participatory dimensions of encounters with the arts

(Bagley 2008, Sperlinger 2005; Martin 1992, Blau 1990). According to the Oxford English Dictionary the earliest recorded usage of the noun ‘audience’ in the English language is in Chaucer’s *Troilus & Criseyde* : “Now I am gon, whom yeve ye audiens?” (c.1374, verse 235)(O.E.D 2011[1989]). The first definition for audience reads: ‘The action of hearing; attention to what is spoken. *to give audience* : to give ear, listen, y.c.1374’ (O.E.D 2011[1989]). Later Oxford English Dictionary usages include ‘an assembly of listeners, y.1407’, ‘the readers of a book, y.1855’, and ‘the listeners to radio programmes or viewers of television, y.1928’ and ‘audience participation, y.1940’ (O.E.D. 2011[1989]). Here the audience is diversely connected to the mediums of literature, political speeches, radio, television and theatre; and the modalities of crowd assembly, reading, listening, watching and performance. The term therefore conjures multiple modes of address and sensory qualities of engagement, rendering it a rich and appropriate term for understanding the multi-dimensional qualities of arts engagement.

Audience theory has been strongly indebted to media studies and communication studies, with the audience in this context emerging in tandem with the development of the modern media (Bennett 2007: 54-55; Williams 1974; Johnson 1988). Informatively, Bennett contends that all early mass communication theories ‘retained the notion of the audience as a unified aggregate of similarly endowed individuals who passively read or hear the works and therefore the message of another’ (Bennett 2007: 55). The passive role of the audience was compounded through power hierarchies inherent in the address:

To be granted an audience – as in the relations of a subject to a sovereign – was to be granted the right to listen to the enunciations of power; to hear and to take account of a message delivered by and from an authoritative source. (Bennett 2007: 55)

Moving beyond analysis of the media and television, investigating the agency of the audience has also been advanced in discussion of the arts. Writing on theatre, Herbert Blau’s *The Audience* questions: ‘*who* is seeing and *what* is being seen? and what is the principle of determination?’ (Blau 1990: 25). Blau describes the audience as an ‘arbiter’ (1990: 4) of quality and taste; a similar critical role to that described in a symposium discussion on audiences with D.J. Frankie Knuckles:

I don't think much about what critics have to say, because to me the only important opinion is the one that I get from the audience on the dance floor, the audience that supports the music that I write and produce. (Ross et al. 1995: 69)

The clubbing audience is considered to be comprised of 'intelligent listeners... who have very sophisticated tastes', however in formal dance performance forms of representation have been critiqued as rarely making an effort to recognise the registers of audience participation 'internal to the performance' (Martin 1992: 103). The integral relationship between the artist and audience for the success of art is also engaged in discussion of conceptualism's 'enigma', where 'its performative playfulness and assumed authority – "I am an artist", "I am making art" etc. – always presupposed an audience which would take its claims seriously enough to resist them' (Sperlinger 2005: 5).<sup>1</sup> Differentially in arts-based education research, performance has transposed the positions of the audience, researchers and performers placing them into new, critical spaces (Bagley 2008; and see Denzin 2003; Madison 1998). Bagley has presented this by casting the audience as 'spec-actor', where they simultaneously perform the entwined roles of spectator and actor in his staged work (Bagley 2008: 65-66).

In an article written in 1963 for the *New Yorker*, Harold Rosenberg wrote on 'The Vanguard Audience', who are 'open to anything'. Here Rosenberg emphasised the various roles of this audience:

Its eager representatives – curators, museum directors, art educators, dealers- rush to organise exhibitions and provide explanatory labels before the paint has dried on the canvas or the plastic has hardened. (Rosenberg quoted in Gombrich 1950 (2009): 476)

The practices of 'eager representatives' of the artworld are drawn, with each performing a role in the production of exhibitions and circulation of the arts meaning. In addition to the social, discursive scene of the artworld shown by Rosenberg, importantly he also illustrates the multiple functions and interests of the audience. The 'Vanguard Audience' is comprised of curators, museum directors, art educators and dealers. In

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<sup>1</sup> Sperlinger refers to the letters and instructions sent by *Orders & Co.* to the President Jorge Areco of Uruguay in late September 1971. He argues that these orders can be seen as part of a wider lineage of 'art as instructions' within conceptualism (Sperlinger 2005: 1-5).

other words, the point is made that the audience consists of art world professionals, alongside non-artworld professionals, or supposed lay beholders. Accordingly, the audience does not detail a particular role, instead the term can be mobilised to describe myriad roles performed from varying positionalities.

The importance of the multiple roles and positionalities performed by the audience in this research is the reason why the ‘visitor’ is framed as a sub-group within this broader mass. ‘Visitor’ is the term most frequently used by the front of house team at YSP and is mobilised when management discuss the numbers of persons entering the park and using the facilities. The visitor is also interconnected with the discourses and economies of consumption. The visitor as guest or ‘client’ is an example of the consumer orientated language of market based visitor studies, where emphasis is placed on arts consumption and improved marketing of the museum or art space as a tourist attraction (Pine and Gilmore 1999: 102, 231; Barker 2008; O’Sullivan 2008). These approaches have attempted to account for the whole experiential scope of visitors to museums (Caru and Cova 2005; Goulding 2000: 261-78; Vom Lehn 2006: 1340-1359; Carnegie 2010; Kerrigan, O’Reilly, and vom Lehn 2009), with limited critical focus on visual arts spaces (Vom Lehn 2010). Research in geography and anthropology has emphasised consumption as practice, with emphasis on the active role consumers play in shaping local cultures (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1995; Crang, Dwyer and Jackson 2003; Jackson 2004). Within this work examples are provided where the site of the production of goods are distinct from the sites of consumption, with recognition that the production site can nevertheless have a bearing on how the items are consumed (Jackson 2004).

While this thesis supports the idea that the active visitor helps to shape local cultures, it recognises more enmeshed sites of production and consumption. This thesis considers examples of artwork in a sculpture park where the site of production and reception intersect and where the processes of creation and reception are entwined. It recognises that ‘visitor’ is often pluralised to ‘visitors’ to describe the weight and extensiveness of visitation in this space, rather than the particular qualitative registers of individual and smaller group engagements with the park. Further, the notion of the visitor can create a boundary between the role of the workers within an organisation and the role of those who attend the park recreationally or for education. ‘Visitor’ in this thesis therefore works with these contingencies to refer to day-trippers, in particular when the empirical findings relate to the perspectives of employees at the park.

“To audience” details an exchange or address between the subject/s and medium or form (Rosen 2006; Lull 1988). The active exchange in audience encounters with site art is the reason I adopt the term ‘audiencing’ in this thesis. My usage of the term is indebted to the work of Cultural Theorist John Fiske which emphasised the process by which the mass media is engaged with by the viewer conceived as a participant. Re-circuiting the unidirectional flow of power inherent in the broadcast address, Fiske’s methodological approach used sites of analysis where viewing television was revealed as an often discursive and social occasion between groups of persons, rather than an isolated, autonomous experience (Fiske 1992). This approach shifted the usage of ‘audience’ from noun to verb – ‘audience’ to ‘audiencing’.

Subsequent contributions to audiencing have followed Fiske’s approach in recognising the agency of the audience, utilising grounded empirical research of audience responses to television, film, comic books and the internet to obtain information on such issues of nationalism, identity, fan-bases and emotion (Dittmer and Larsen 2007; Dittmer and Dodds 2008; Dodds 2006; Gorton, 2009; Gray, 2003). Writing on images in geography, Gillian Rose defines audiencing as ‘the process by which a visual image has its meanings renegotiated, or even rejected, by particular audiences watching in specific circumstances’ (Rose 2001: 5). Privileging the visual, Rose builds on the work of Moores (1993) Morley (1992) and Ang (1985) to propose that in order to study audiencing one might consider 'how audiences react to a visual image... to produce a particular understanding of that image'; and 'how different audiences react to the same image...to demonstrate the complexity of the decoding process,' using different types of one-to-one and group interviews (Rose 2001: 193-7). Rose emphasises that images exert their own power and agency, with meanings constructed in a negotiation between image and viewer. In this research I apply audiencing to an investigation of site art which has methodological and theoretical implications in moving beyond a preoccupation with the image and visuality.

This thesis applies audiencing to the production and performance of the sculpture park. Departing from the approaches of Fiske and Rose, amongst others, an important contribution I make through this research is considering audiencing as non-linear. The research is informed by the various producers and persons who audience an artwork during the making, curating and exhibition opening. I trace audiencing from a range of perspectives, developing four main overlapping ‘groupings,’ termed ‘visitors’, ‘volunteers’, ‘local residents’ and ‘site workers’. Audiencing is thereby reconceptualised to describe entwined practices of production and reception. In this

thesis, preference is given to the term ‘audiencing’ rather than ‘consumption’ due to this degree of exchange and the non-linearity of the art processes performed by various actors observed during the research process. Recognising that the interpretation of art is indivisible from interpretation of site, I investigate how the changing cultural geographies of YSP are variously framed by local residents and long term workers. Audiencing is therefore utilised in the research to take seriously the agency of the individual or group which imbues site art with meaning. Further, in respect of the etymology of audience and the mediums across which audience has served, I use the term to recognise a range of sensory forms of bodily engagement. Through in-depth empirical evidence of audiencing, site art is investigated as a bodily, sensual and situated act. The meaning of art is revealed to be contingent upon spatial context and the positionality of this active, not passive, audience, and dynamic non-linear processes of audiencing.

#### 1.4 Site Art

Art, specifically site art, is an ideal medium through which to explore this analysis for it creates relational interconnections between the audience, work and site. The challenge to authorial intentionality and the artwork as a sanctified object with inherent qualities and meaning can be seen to develop directly from conceptualism from the 1960s onwards, and post-structuralist theory of the same era (Chapter 5). Conceptualism interconnected with site based practices where, ‘ideas, process and experience are prioritised above objecthood’ (Tufnell 2006: 17). Site art is also referenced by the neologisms site specific art, site responsive art and site installation. It follows that embedded into the analysis of site art are contested notions of the status and agency of the ‘site’, divergently located as beyond the gallery, a physical architectural entity, a relational responsiveness that can travel, a disembodied zone and the community itself. Informed by a broader range of disciplines including anthropology, sociology, architecture and urbanism, the contemporary definition of site for artists and curators has shifted from ‘a fixed, physical location’ to ‘somewhere or something constituted through social, economic, cultural and political processes’ (Doherty 2006: 5). Site art has been described as a pilgrimage requiring considerable commitment on the part of the pilgrims or audience to visit (Hogan 2008); alternatively other works have taken the urban metropolis (Kwon 2002; Deutsche 1996; Rendell 2008) and, more

recently, the homes of the audience as their locus (Pica 2011). While I am aware that 'site' has been mobilised variously in site art practices as I have outlined above, in this thesis I also use it as a generic term to refer to the geographical area which YSP manages. The competing categorisations of YSP's 'site' as landscape, estate and park by different audiences are central to the argument of the thesis, as I explore in Chapter 3.

Recent geographical work has also taken as its subject the embodied connection between installation and landscape that centralises performance, process, sensation and experience (Cant and Morris 2006; Morris 2011; Hawkins 2010, 2011). As art theorist and curator Clare Bishop notes, rather than '*representing* texture, space, light and so on, installation art *presents* these elements directly for us to experience' (Bishop 2005: 11). These artworks are often described as 'theatrical', 'immersive', or 'experiential', and presuppose a viewer 'whose senses of touch, smell and sound [sic] are as heightened as their sense of vision' (Bishop 2005: 6). Invested with a move from the disembodied eye to an indivisible relationship between the work and its site which 'demanded the physical presence of the viewer for the work's completion' (Kwon 2002: 11-12), site art challenges the sensorial registers and modalities of interpretive structures through which art is known. The research therefore advances epistemologically and methodologically from the theoretical contributions detailed above by Kester and Preziosi who questioned the authority of the institution and artist in determining arts meaning and cultural value. For this research, examples of site art are selected in accordance to the important interconnections they enable between art, the spatialities of display and the embodied positionality of the audience which underpin the thrust of the thesis.

#### *i) Yorkshire Sculpture Park*

This research is based on YSP, which was the first sculpture park to be established in the U.K. Founded in 1977 by Executive Director Peter Murray CBE, YSP is situated within the eighteenth century designed landscape of the Bretton Estate, West Yorkshire. Historically the wealth of the De Bretton, Wentworth and Beaumont families who built and resided at Bretton Hall and the estate, was generated from agricultural rents, and lead, coal and steel interests (Wright 2001). In 1948, after the private Bretton Hall and estate was sold by the last private owner, the late Viscount Allendale, the land was

divided and put to various uses. The functions included a higher education college based in Bretton Hall and nearby buildings, a horse farm at Longside and private conservation areas surrounding the Upper and Lower lakes. Reunified in recent years under YSP, the park expands over 500 acres with lakes damned from the River Dearne, historic promenades, terraces and statuary, as well as the YSP Visitor Centre and Underground Galleries, respectively built in 2002 and 2006 (see Fig.1.1).



Fig 1.1. YSP Visitor Map, 2010. Zone map and key is in bottom right hand side. No public access areas, Bretton Hall and Nature Reserves, are marked in diagonal yellow lines. Reproduced with permission.

The organisation employs over 100 staff in numerous teams. These teams include: the curators, marketing, accounts, development, education, site, gardeners, sculpture technicians, invigilators, kitchen and retail staff. Located between the conurbations of Wakefield, Barnsley and Huddersfield, the majority of visitors and workers access YSP by car (see Fig.1.2). The nearest mainline train station is Wakefield Westgate which is seven miles distance, with hourly buses connecting visitors to the park from Wakefield, or private taxis for hire. As I outline in greater detail in Chapter 3 and 4 of the thesis, YSP is distinct from the majority of art institutions in the U.K. due to its non-urban setting.

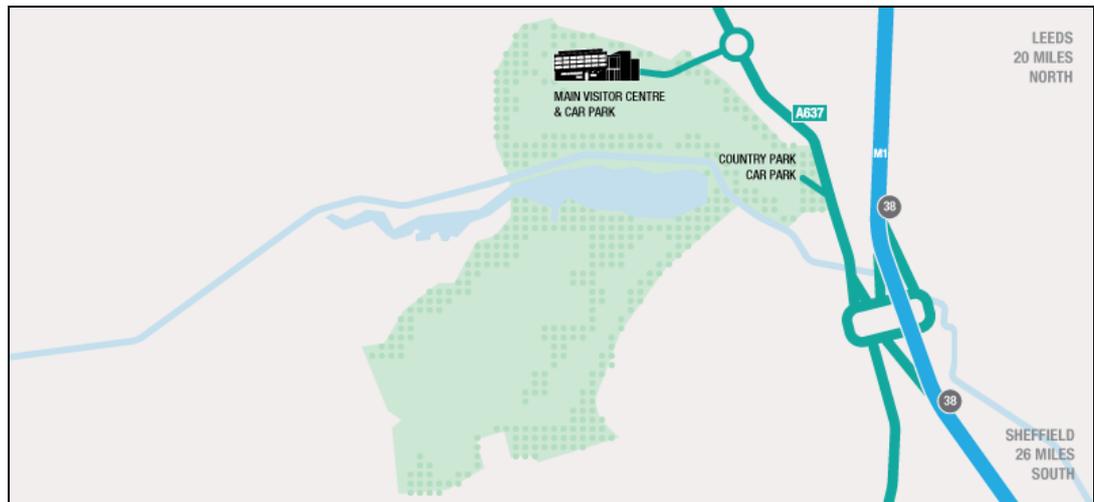


Fig.1.2 YSP map representing the location of the estate in relation to major highways (M1, Junction 38 and A637), with Leeds shown as 20 miles north and Sheffield 26 miles south, 2011. Reproduced with permission.

In the recent funding cuts made by the ACE, YSP received £1.3 million which represented a 5% cut in investment from previous awards. Murray, who was previously a senior lecturer at Bretton Hall College, responded by outlining the remarkable trajectory of development which YSP has undergone:

During the last 34 years, YSP has undergone significant transformational changes. From humble beginnings in 1977, with £1,000 to fund a small exhibition of 31 sculptures and no *audience*, to 300,000 *visitors*, 45,000 learning visitors, multiple projects supporting the *local community* and to generate £4 million annually. 'Great art for everyone' has been YSP's goal since opening to the *public* in 1977, enabling access, understanding and enjoyment of art and landscape for everyone, whilst dismantling many of the barriers that often exist between the public and contemporary art. This vision remains as strong as ever.

YSP is a success story. Our ACE application was described as a 'model application' and was rated as strong, the highest level available against all assessment criteria. For every £1 invested by ACE [Arts Council England] we generate £3. The level of funding provided represents a further cut of 5% from 2012 in addition to the 7% cut already made for 2011 but we will continue to work with ACE to deliver their priority of great art for everyone. (Murray 2011: n/p *my emphasis*).

Murray variously uses the terms ‘audience’, ‘visitor’, ‘local community’, and ‘public’ to describe the bodies of people which YSP have engaged since it was founded. The usage of various terms shows a common slippage across the definition of these groupings as I outlined earlier (Blau 1990). However it can also be read as a tacit commitment to overcoming the boundaries which distinguish the groupings. At the core of the speech is the mission to dismantle ‘many of the barriers that often exist between the public and contemporary art’, with a priority to deliver ‘great art for everyone’ (Murray 2011). The barriers referred to are physical, educational and perceptual. Murray further introduces the practical funding barriers which YSP has confronted since it was founded.

*ii) Enabling access to ‘the public’*

One of the most important aspects of Murray’s speech for this thesis is his claim that YSP opened to the public in 1977. The move from a private estate to a public (art) space was actually less clearly defined and more complex than this statement suggests. The area of the estate now under YSP management was landscaped in the eighteenth century as a pleasure ground in a picturesque style associated with Lancelot “Capability” Brown, and his predecessor, Humphry Repton (Cowell 2009; Wright 2001; Daniels 1999)(Chapter 3). The expense attached with commissioning these highly fashionable landscapers indicates why Bretton Estate was created by the lesser known gardeners, Richard Woods and Robert Marnock (Chapter 3). From the early eighteenth-century to mid-twentieth century, emparkments on the Bretton Estate restricted public access. While the picturesque landscape was primarily designed in collaboration with the landowners for their own aesthetic enjoyment and recreation with invited company, notably the gardeners, assorted workers and villagers who accessed the land also, to varying degrees, materially and discursively shaped the landscape (Chapter 3 and 4). Responding to more recent national and international events, subsequent incarnations of the land led to other kinds of public convening on the estate. During World War I, Bretton Hall was used as an army base by the War Office (Chapter 4), and following this the Bretton Hall College was founded as a higher education campus creating a large community of staff and students living residentially on site (Chapter 3). Further, with the passing of the Country Park Act of 1968 access to areas of the countryside was granted to recreational visitors (Lambert 2006). The Country Park within the Bretton Estate was opened to the public in advance of the passing of the act, and, notably, the

founding of YSP. Bretton Hall College closed in 2006, therefore it is clear that only comparatively recently has the estate been unified under YSP as an artspace.

Bretton Estate was used by a range of publics prior to the launch of YSP: the army, local workers from West Bretton whose housing was tied to the estate, higher education students and walkers accessing public trails (Chapter 3). Directing a key contention of this thesis, recent scholarship on public geographies has shown that publics can be created, mobilised, and convened (Iveson 2007: 3; also see Barnett 2008: 403-417). This intersects with how YSP's spaces have convened differential and sometimes contested kinds of public and landscape practices. The tensions around YSP's public-ness are further mobilised by consideration of the public access paths and byways that cross the parklands enabling access all year round (for routes see map Fig.1.1)(Lambert 2006: 48; City of Wakefield Met District Council 1999; Bartle 2000: 16); and the YSP 'code' that prescribes fixed opening times and visitor behaviours (YSP 2010j: n/p)(Chapter 3). Furthermore, it challenges whether public space is bound to a particular geographical area or can be process-based, therefore highlighting various kinds of media as facilitating the formation of publics in different spatial contexts (Iveson 1997; see Chapter 3). This opens up the discussion in Chapter 4 of the different, relational spatialities in which YSP is discursively and materially located by a range of parties, including the media, local government and visitors.

## ii) *Artworks*

YSP displays over 60 outdoor sculptures in its landscape at any one time. Some of the most prestigious works displayed in the park are a number of modernist bronze works by patron and Yorkshire born sculptor, Henry Moore, and bronzes by fellow Yorkshire born sculptor, Barbara Hepworth. Other sculptures include *123454321* (1993) by the American minimalist and conceptualist Sol Le Witt, *Dream City* (1996) and *Promenade* (1996) by British abstract sculptor Sir Antony Caro and *Hanging Trees* (2007), *Outclosure* (2007) and *Shadow Stone Fold* (2007) by British land artist Andy Goldsworthy. Together the works trace site based practices from the 1960s and 1970s onwards, to contemporaneous site work. Further, once or twice yearly exhibitions are held between the indoor and outdoor gallery facilities of YSP. As well as engaging with YSP as a whole, this thesis focuses on audience encounters with three examples of site art: David Nash's *Black Steps* (2010); James Turrell's *Skyspace* (2004); and Greyworld's *Playground* (1999).

**Nash's *Black Steps*** was commissioned as part of the "David Nash at Yorkshire Sculpture Park" exhibition 2010-11. Nash's work encompasses a wide range of mediums including prints, drawings, indoor sculptures and outdoor works, however he primarily works with wood. While the weight of Nash's work is designed to be displayed indoors for their longevity, his outdoor works are programmed to decay with 'destruction built into them' (Nash BBC4 2010: n/p). Sited on the Oxley Bank, on the south east side of the Lower Lake, *Black Steps* is a permanent site installation. The work consists of 71 logs which have been shaped and burnt by a team of site workers and volunteers to produce a series of functional steps connecting visitors travelling between Oxley Bank and Longside. Surrounding the steps are pieces of black coal which have been sourced from the local area.

**Turrell's *Skyspace*** is sited in a remodelled historic deershelter in the Country Park. In the summer of 1993, U.S. artist James Turrell stayed for several weeks at YSP while he worked on a project for the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust at Dean Clough, Halifax. Reportedly Turrell was fascinated by the history of the Bretton Estate and during his stay at the park he made a proposal to develop the triple-arched eighteenth-century Deershelter into a *Skyspace*. One of a number of *Skyspaces* sited in locations across the world, the *Skyspace* at YSP can be reached by a short walk south of the Visitor Centre. The internal chamber of the *Skyspace* contains simple concrete benches, soft lighting and an aperture cut in the ceiling which allows the visitor to gaze at the sky. There is a subtle manipulation of light within the chamber which, through the square aperture, intensifies the color and form of the sky. This appears to give the light a physical presence that presses into the perceptual space of the chamber.

**Greyworld's *Playground*** was commissioned as part of the *Games in the Park* project (YSP 1999), to engage contemporary audiences with the heritage of the Bretton Estate. The installation is housed within an old pergola from the estate. A participatory, motion and pressure sensitive work, *Playground* consists of wooden boards which line the floor and benches with connected sensors that play music from nearby hidden speakers. The sound is intended to recall past sporting matches, with the noise of bats and balls and audiences applauding. Greyworld categorise their site installation at YSP as public art alongside their other urban-based public art installations, including commissions for Tate Modern and the London Stock Exchange. *Playground* is situated opposite the Grade II English Heritage listed Camellia House, west of Bretton Hall.

## 1.5 Areas of Yorkshire Sculpture Park

YSP is comprised of several distinctive areas which site the works interpreted in this thesis. The central areas of YSP discussed within the thesis are the Country Park, Oxley Bank, Longside, Camellia Gardens, Bothy Gardens and Underground Gardens. In order to introduce the geographies of YSP and provide a spatial framework for the ensuing discussion of audiencing site art, here I outline some of the key qualities of these areas.

**The Country Park** is situated to the north east of the estate, directly beneath the main carpark and overlooked by the viewing platform of the Visitor Centre cafe (see Fig.1.3). Due to its location besides the main facilities at YSP, the Country Park is among the busiest outdoor spaces at YSP. The popularity of the Country Park is also bound to the series of bronze Henry Moore sculptures which work as eyecatchers as the bank slopes downwards towards the man-made lower lake. Across the lake to the south, the bank inclines with the Longside Gallery, managed by the Arts Council, in view. In the middle of the Country Park, the flat-roofed structure of the remodelled eighteenth century Deershelter is just visible, jutting out from the hillside. Within the gates of the structure is housed a key piece of site art within the U.K., Turrell's *Skyspace*.



Fig. 1.3. View south across the Country Park from the main YSP car park with the Visitor Centre to the right (just out of image). The Lower Lake and Longside are visible beyond the trees. Photograph: Saskia Warren 2010.



Fig.1.4 View pointing east in the Country Park, with Henry Moore bronze and sheep belonging to local farmer. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

On the flatter terrain on the south-east of the Country Park is Helen Escobedo's *Summer Fields* (2008), a series of red and yellow steel cylinders. The Country Park is used for grazing by a local farmer therefore at stages throughout the year sheep and their lambs inhabit the landscape, often covering the field in droppings (see Fig.1.4).



Fig. 1.5. View north-west from Oxley Bank, with Lower Lake. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

A wide bridge crosses the Lower Lake from the Country Park to **Oxley Bank**. A private residence is situated to the south east of the bridge, which once housed Dave Edwards' family, the head gardener of YSP (see Chapter 3). The bank by the river is overshadowed by large trees, beneath which fisherman can often be seen at intervals to one another (see Fig 1.5). Nash's *Black Steps* connects Oxley Bank to the higher ground that leads to Longside. The installation is surrounded by coal which is intended to recall the areas connection to the mining trade, and more directly, the coal drop of the 1970s which is manifested in the sharp incline to the east of Oxley Bank. In spring the pathway blooms with bluebells, carpeting the ground in a deep purple-blue offset by bright green foliage. Light breaks through the trees creating a dappled effect which makes this area of the park more inviting than during the winter months when it is often dark and without visitors. Apart from the fishermen, the occasional dog walker and walkers passing though, Oxley Bank is often quiet.



Fig. 1.6 View north from Longside, with Lower Lake and Bretton Hall just visible in the centre. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010

**Longside** opens up on the higher ground above Oxley Bank. The name refers to both the southern area of the park and specifically to the gallery which YSP loans from the Arts Council for major exhibitions. A free shuttle bus connects the visitor centre at YSP to Longside when there are exhibitions in both venues to ease the passage for elderly, infirm or time-pressed visitors. Longside is also resident to the YSP warehouse where large works of sculptures are housed before or following exhibitions.

The area is therefore marked by a large-scale corrugated iron warehouse and rectangular glass-fronted contemporary art gallery. The view from Longside is one of the most spectacular at YSP, scoping back across the entire landscape, taking in the lakes, the Palladian architecture of the Grade II\* listed Bretton Hall and the Visitor Centre in the distance (see Fig.1.6). Besides Longside, a farmer grazes Alpaca in an adjoining field and Friesian cows belonging to another farmer are passed on the walk northwards down the hill towards Bretton Hall and the Visitor Centre.

The area to the west of the Camellia House and Bretton Hall does not have an official name; however, it is often referred to as the **Camellia Gardens**. This area of the park houses Greyworld's *Playground* and sits north of the Upper Lake (see Fig.1.7). The landscaping is more formal in this part of the park due to its proximity to Bretton Hall rendering it part of the original pleasure gardens. The grass is cut regularly, flower beds are kept in shape and the landscaping of the park feels more intimate, sandwiched between the eighteenth century horticultural houses of Bretton Hall, and the significantly less imposing, uninhabited 1960s buildings once used by Bretton Hall College. The Camellia Gardens sit beside another car-park used by visitors and school groups to the Kennel Blocks, where education workshops take place. The area is often well-populated by visitors, particularly with picnickers in the summer months who make use of the tables provided to the north of the gardens.



Fig.1.7 View of Greyworld's *Playground*, Camellia Gardens. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

Completing the circuit of the park, and the central areas discussed within the thesis, are the **Bothy Gardens**. Surrounded by the arc of an eighteenth-century heated wall for growing fruits, the Bothy Gardens comprise of a semi-circle of grass which overlook the wider **Underground Gardens**, and the landscape rising to Longside on the south-side of the park (see Fig.1.8). Benches are positioned along the curvature of the wall to allow visitors to have pause to look across the vista. Within the walls are two smaller galleries and the YSP main archive. The award-winning Underground Galleries are sympathetically built into the hill and therefore masked from view from the Bothy Gardens.



Fig.1.8 Man takes photo of David Nash's *Black Sphere* (2004) from Bothy Gardens, facing south over the Bretton Estate, with Underground Gallery hidden from view. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

From the vantage point of the Underground Gardens, however, the large scale gallery has a rectangle glass-fronted facade flanked by a broad pebbled walkway. The walkway links to a set of steps which joins the Underground Gallery to the main YSP Visitor Centre. The Underground Gallery is the main site for major exhibitions and has the highest concentration of visitors across the seasons apart from the Visitor Centre. Mid-week the area is often busy with school groups on education tours and retirees, while at the weekends the demographic shifts to families, groups of friends and couples.

## 1.6 Thesis aims and objectives

The overall aim of this thesis is to consider the ways in which audiences perform an engagement with artworks in situated social and spatial environments, as well as offering a renewed model for interpreting the cultural meaning of artwork. As part of this project the thesis explores the following research questions:

- How do audiences perform their role in an art experience?
- How do audiences' lived sensory experiences of art shape, produce and problematise the meanings and intersections of art and its exhibition space?
- What materials, spatialities and discursive knowledges shape the meanings of site based artworks and arts institutions?
- In what ways does a more nuanced understanding of audience engagements with site based artwork, including an understanding of the spatial dimensions of art experience, impact upon structures of meaning in arts discourse?

## 1.7 Thesis Structure

The thesis chapters are organised around three overlapping central themes: the histories of the estate; the geographies and creative production of site based artworks; and cultures of visiting. Beyond the applied notion of 'audiencing' I do not adopt one theoretical position to draw out the themes. Instead each chapter applies critical and interdisciplinary approaches which open up and intersect with the empirical findings in the research. Together the chapters offer a critical account of YSP, the geographies of audiencing site based artworks, and, more broadly, of modalities of arts interpretation. Here I summarise the content and argument of each chapter according to how they advance theories of audiencing and understanding of art.

Chapter 2 details the research methods used in this thesis to open up the different reasons and means by which audiences engage with the geographies of YSP. I explain how the combination of research methods created points of comparison between the longer histories of the site and its connection with the geographies of audiencing in the present. I outline the recruitment strategies employed at YSP and the nearby village of West Bretton, reflect on the usage of data collection techniques and the impacts of the research, and conclude with my processes of analysis. Overall, this chapter

establishes the ways in which the methodological approach is tailored to the theoretical concern of audiencing that underpins the thesis.

Chapter 3 introduces the cultural geographies of YSP, framing the materialities of the site, the history of land use, and the narratives which construct its meaning. Considering the sculpture park as public space, I identify the contested ways in which the site is organised by governing bodies and how this intersects with the park's multiple visiting publics. It outlines how the divided geographies of YSP provide case studies of site art which challenges the normative assignation of public space and public art as peculiarly urban centric.

Chapter 4 takes a wider lens to investigate how YSP is variously and differentially located. It identifies the sculpture park through extroverted notions of the local and place, with discussion of the making of David Nash's *Black Steps*, and responses to twentieth century historic events which impacted upon the estate and its local community. It then considers YSP and regionalism, with address to Wakefield District branding itself as 'the home of British Sculpture.' This incorporates local residents' responses to reframing the landscape as a place for art, and broader issues of tourism and regeneration. In the final section, the chapter locates the sculpture park within the frames of the national and international, considering off-site art projects and the economies and materialities of creative networks fostered at YSP.

Chapter 5 provides an in-depth analysis of the creation, installation and reception of the David Nash at YSP exhibition. Through tracing the practices of site workers, volunteers, multiple visiting publics and the media, this chapter considers audiencing as an entwined process involving production and reception. Departing from a formal approach to arts interpretation this advances the social and cultural value of artwork constituted through a range of roles and positionalities at various stages in the exhibition-making and display. It explores the ways in which meaning is inscribed across a range of sites and artworks. It widens the empirical basis of the theoretical contribution made in Chapter 3, illustrating how different publics can be constituted through a range of practices and mobilised across a spectrum of spatial contexts, including non-urban sites.

Chapter 6 considers the ways in which visitors, volunteers and local residents utilise YSP. Developing out from narratological and sociological readings of the script, it considers how past functionalities and genealogies of the estate inform the varying modes of engagement by audiences in the present day sculpture park. Through the site works of Turrell's *Skyspace* and Greyworld's *Playground* it discusses interpretation

with address to situated knowledges, memory and environmental history. It then considers how two key audience typologies at YSP, entitled destination and local residents, correlates with modes of audiencing. I advance that past, present and future scripts continue to write themselves across the dominant present narrative of YSP, informing how the park is conceptualised and performed by these audience groups.

Chapter 7 draws the thesis to a close with some conclusions from the research. It develops an empirically grounded approach to audiencing within the context of an arts institution, opening up the resonances of my arguments to artspaces other than YSP. It demonstrates the importance of different audiences to the production and performance of site art and the sculpture park, a space of alternative and variegated public participation. Further, with recognition of the different publics who are convened and cross the spaces of YSP, it argues for greater visibility afforded to non-urban site art, and relatedly, non-urban public art.

In summary, this thesis offers a qualitative enquiry into audiencing site art. It draws out the social and cultural geographies of site art engagement at YSP, in order to demonstrate that meaning is contingent upon spatial and social context, and the situated knowledges of the audience. Central to the thesis is the notion of audiencing whereby the agency of the audience in negotiating the meaning of art is brought into clearer focus. The dynamic processes of audiencing site art help produce the meaning of place and the relational meaning of the artwork. Together the chapters provide empirical evidence that audiences are not passive receptors, and that audiences cannot be categorically defined or their behaviours programmed. Further, understanding YSP is shown to be indivisible from the histories, interpretations and practices which have produced the landscape it manages. This approach emphasises the contested geographies which shape how site art at YSP is encountered within a range of people's lives, revealing the relational geography and creative productivity of arts' audiencing.

## Chapter 2

### Tracing audiencing at Yorkshire Sculpture Park

In this chapter I explain the multiple research processes adopted in this thesis to explore how audiences navigated, interpreted and articulated their responses to site-based artworks in the spaces of YSP. I begin by outlining why I selected YSP as the site of my case studies, and explain how the intersections between the coordinates of the organisation - the landscape, artworks, and role of the audience – have addressed the theoretical concerns of this thesis. I then introduce the methodology of the research, with discussion of the value of mixed qualitative methods to gain in depth knowledge into how audiences develop degrees of intimacy with or detachment from contemporary art installation in landscape. I detail the research processes utilised in the research to draw out these knowledges; interviewing, participant observation, visual methods and archival research. I then discuss recruitment of different audiences within the fieldwork, by a combination of opportunistic and snowball sampling which targeted four main groupings. These groupings are heuristic devices termed: ‘visitors’; ‘volunteers’; ‘local residents’ and ‘site workers’. The audience groupings could be viewed as artificial and they proved to be unstable given developments in the field during the ethnography. The categories overlapped with some participants belonging to more than one grouping, and others changing role, and therefore grouping, as captured in Appendix 1 where some interviewees appear under more than one category. However these groupings offered a place to start the research in order to engage with the different positionalities from which audiencing art occurs. With emphasis on the movement between different categories and roles of people within the research, I follow this with discussion of how I performed several overlapping roles between visitor, researcher and worker during the course of the ethnography of YSP. I explain how this research and the various methods involved were recorded, including reflection on the partiality of recording processes and knowledge production which is especially pertinent within an organisation with the scale and diversity of functions of YSP. The wider impact of the research is engaged with by discussion of feedback channels established during the research to extend knowledge transfer of my findings. Finally, I explain how the research material was analysed and developed into chapter themes for this thesis.

As I have suggested in the introduction, advancing upon the argument that the identity of an object shifts in different contexts (Kopytoff 1986), I posit that the social

and spatial context of an art encounter is constructed by the situated bodily knowledges of the audience, thus mobilising the contingent and dynamic flux of artwork, site, and audience. This chapter posits that through ethnography, interviewing and archival research, the meaning and value of the artwork in relation to the context of display and reception can be brought into greater focus. Ethnography combined with archival work are well positioned to explore the interrelations of historic and contemporary accounts and practices which build an argument of arts audiencing in landscape. In this context, these processes invigorate understanding of audiencing and the relational meaning of the artwork.

## 2.1 Siting the research at Yorkshire Sculpture Park

The ideal imaginative and sensorial materialities of YSP exemplify site based practices from the 1960s and 1970s onwards. Artworks by Sol Le Witt, Sir Antony Caro, and Andy Goldsworthy, amongst a number of other significant works, perform a role in both the art historical canon and the tradition of non-studio based practice. That is, these site works require the peripatetic navigation of their dimensions in concert with the environmental context, activating the physical agency of the audience in an encounter (Bois 1984; Kwon 2002). The richness of work at YSP also includes contemporary site art, including Nash's *Black Steps* (see Chapter 4 and 5) and Turrell's *Skyspace* (see Chapter 6), alongside a landscape animated by complex histories. YSP was therefore selected as it contains important examples of site art, which would provide detailed findings particular to audiencing these works, as well as informing audiencing practices for all art with address to spatial context.

Mobilising the audience as active and negotiative agents in the production of meaning dovetailed at YSP with a curatorial agenda where the artworks and the landscape change. YSP was conceived as a transitioning programme of art in landscape, in contrast to the majority of sculpture parks which are based around a permanent collection, or are museums which have spilled outdoors (Interview with Lilley 2010). Reworking the notion of the art object that transcends its cultural and political context (see Greenberg 1940, 1961; Fried 1967, 1980, 1998), or the finished sculpture park (Smithson in Flam 1996: 155), YSP displays once or twice yearly exhibitions and hosts loaned works. This curatorial strategy is in part due to the distinctive vision for the park outlined above, and in part necessitated through a limited budget that has never stretched to a permanent collection. The development of internal white-cube gallery

spaces in the form of the Underground Galleries was devised in 2004 to enable a relational dynamic between the indoor and outdoor. The Gulbenkian award-winning galleries were specially constructed with reinforced floors to hold the weight of large scale sculpture. Integral to the methodological concerns underpinning this thesis are the ways in which the YSP case study opens up the categorisation of the site, teasing out the estate's other identities beyond its gallery or museum function. Further, YSP's mission statement includes the aim to create challenging works and the potentially conflicting aim of making sculpture accessible. While these mission statements are broadly audience focused, no substantive work has been conducted into how specific audiences perform an engagement with artworks in their siting.<sup>1</sup> Through in depth research into the social and cultural spatialities of audiencing practices at YSP, the multiple research methods used opened up the compelling history of a move from private estate to 'public' access, noting the indistinct and porous boundaries between the private controlled spaces of YSP and public bypasses which enable foot traffic to the park all year round. Other studies have used city-based case studies to demonstrate multiple use conflict in public places (Stratford 2002; Hay 2010: 72) and civic tensions made manifest through new public art (Deutsche 1996). This research demonstrates a friction and dissonance of use stretching historically and existing contemporaneously across the public spaces managed by YSP, which impacts upon the differential engagements with its artwork. In selecting YSP, this research therefore also poses a challenge to the urban-centric nature of discussions of public space and public art (Chapter 3).

## 2.2. Tracing audiencing: ethnography and archival research

On the limitations and self-referentiality of methods used to trace audiences, Bennett writes:

My main purpose has been to suggest the incoherence of those empiricist conceptions of audience research according to which an objective knowledge of audiences is eventually to be arrived at via the progressive refinement of research techniques. (Bennett 2007: 58)

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<sup>1</sup>Beyond industry visitor studies, by Questions Answered (2007) and Spirul Intelligent Research (2010), where the companies did not conduct depth research. Both companies wrote their respective reports with research drawn from less than one day spent in the park which does not account for weekly or seasonal fluxes in visitation alongside the slower cadences of exhibition and landscape transitions.

Bennett's critique is directed towards quantitative and ethnographic research which distorts the reciprocity of text-reader relations through attempts to construct an objective knowledge of audiences. Here, public opinion is 'always shaped and organised by the very instruments which purport to measure it' (Bennett 2007: 56). The contention that particular methods can turn the audience into the object of study and therefore fail to capture the meaningful exchange between the medium and individual members of the audience is pertinent. In reference to television, Ien Ang enforces this point, disputing whether the audience can be regarded as 'a proper object of study whose characteristics can be ever more accurately observed, described, categorised, systematised and explained until the whole picture is "filled in"' (Ang, 1989: 105). Market research has been critiqued as highlighting the research method, rather than the subjectivities of the audience, where a certain audience is known, 'precisely because it is a large statistical mass brought into being by the survey' (Blau 1990: 4). In this respect, 'the public is a fabrication and a distortion, an aberration of the body politic that is a nostalgic fantasy' (Blau 1990: 4). With regards to museums, quantitative and ethnographic research methods are formulated as 'museum surveillance' that makes visible the 'modern political demands' of the establishment more than the agency of particular audiences (Bennett 1995: 60). Bennett's reference is made to research which highlights the socio-demographic profile of visitors in concern for more 'equitable patterns of access to, and participation in, museums', while actual participation and power in the structures of the museum is limited (1995: 60). Learning from these insights, and others, it was important to me 'to make clear that the things that happen in cultural practices cannot be fully mastered, predicted, and programmed' (Bal 1996: 130).

With recognition of the multiple and overlapping roles performed within museums, this research adopted multiple research methods of ethnography, interviewing, and archival-based practices to gain a wide range of insights into the social and cultural landscape of the Bretton Estate. These methodologies were adopted in order to create points of comparison between the longer histories of the site and its connection with the present social and cultural geographies of YSP. Detailed insights were gained into present day engagements with the park through participant observation, extensive field diary notes, and interviewing visitors, volunteers, local residents and members of the YSP team. This thesis adopts mixed methods, therefore, not to presume a complete perspective on the research questions (Elwood 2010: 96), but to show how they can be used to create multi-faceted and historically attentive explanations of and insights into audiencing art in landscape. Tracing the audiencing of

artworks at YSP in this way establishes the ground between critical research in cultural geography, art theory, and museum studies, and the cultural indices of audiences, site art and the historic landscape of the Bretton Estate.

Ethnography is an intersubjective form of qualitative research through which ‘the relationships of researcher and researched, insider and outsider, self and other, body and environment, and field and home are negotiated’ (Watson and Till 2010: 121). Within social and cultural geography recent calls to ‘rematerialise’ research alongside increased interest in the performed dimensions of everyday life have encompassed ethnography as a way to fold theoretical concerns into empirical research (Latham 2003; Law 2004; Thrift 2000a; Ramsay 2008). A detailed, immersive and inductive methodology, ethnography allows access into the embodied acts and ‘lay geographies’ through which places and objects are encountered (Cloke et al. 2004; Crouch 2000; Smith 2001; Thrift 2000b; Hawkins 2010). This renders ethnographic processes ideal for exploring the intersections between site, art and audience at YSP, with consideration to visitors and workers, bodily registers of art and landscape, and Bretton as workplace and residence.

Ethnography as research method in art theory and museum studies is comparatively underdeveloped. Archival methods are utilised in Michael Baxandall’s influential art historical text *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (1988[1972]), to present the important social relationship between pictures and late medieval society. The recognition Baxandall draws is that artworks are produced within institutions and certain social conventions that influence the forms of the works. Further, the insight that the context of display impacts upon experience of art has revealed that the authority of art, and an authoritative reading of art, is inseparable from the particular authority of the institution (that is historically palaces, houses, and more recently, museums and galleries)(Berger 2008[1972]: 25). Opening the meaning of art to different publics, reader response theory mapped onto the museum has persuasively argued the importance of illustrating the social and cultural specificity of encounters with art or museum objects (Bal 1996; Noordegraaf 2004; Rendell 2008; Duncan 1995, Macdonald 2002). With the exception of Macdonald (2002), these contributions have also relied upon archival research and the author’s situated experience of the museum to draw out understanding of how audiences perform an engagement it. Where studies have used ethnography to articulate the complexities of museum exhibition design, and the politics of appropriation by the active audience (Macdonald 2002; Kelly 2011), the

ethnography of contemporary art has not extended to research with everyday visitors (Cole 2000; Schneider and Wright 2010).

This research seeks to understand how audiences culturally frame their experience, how they ‘recoded as well as decoded’ the exhibition, rather than whether they ‘had got or not got the messages intended’ (Macdonald 2002: 219). The ‘transmission’ model characterises the audience as relatively passive and places emphasis on ‘discovering barriers’ such as educational ability and pre-existing ‘false ideas’ that might impede transmission (Macdonald 2002: 219). The consensus of museum-led qualitative research, aligned with the commercial sector, has moved beyond the behavioural to access the emotional, liminal and intellectual (Barker 2008, O’Sullivan 2008). Here emphasis is placed on art consumption with the aim of achieving transformative effects and developing audiences for greater participation, connectivity and immersion (Denzin 1984, Caru and Cova 2005). However alongside sector interests, museum and commercial research to date has not been conducted in depth and over an extended period of time, and therefore has not accounted for the intricacies of audience experience. Further, research has been constructed linearly from production to consumption, without accounting for the substantive exchange between audience, artwork, artist and institution (Bennett 2007). Ethnographic research is ideally positioned to explore how visitors developed distinctive relationships with site based artworks in both ephemeral and more enduring ways.

Archival research was primarily undertaken at the YSP main archive, the National Arts Education Archive (N.A.E.A), now encompassed into the YSP main archive, the Yorkshire Archaeological Society (YAS) and the University of Leeds Special Collections. The division of the estate in 1948 and subsequent relocation of archive resources resulted in some loss of documentation and created a distributed and much reduced publically accessible archive. Archival methods into the heritage of YSP were therefore limited by a lack of existing primary material, and a bias in the secondary material which focused on the grand narratives of the estate (Wright 2001; Bartle 2000[1994]; Linstrum unknown; Loudon 1829). Recent work in historical geography has explored the sociability and collaborative processes generated by archival research practices (Ashmore, Craggs, and Neate 2011). Debates about archival method in geography have indicated the necessity of moving beyond textbook accounts and towards ‘methodological commentary, exchange and review at a more advanced level’ (Lorimer 2010: 250). More explicit creative practices in archives have been well documented over recent years (DeLyser and Rogers 2010; Harris 2001; DeSilvey 2007;

Moore 2010), with work by historical-cultural geographers experimenting with innovative methods for ‘animating’ the archive (Dwyer and Davies 2010). In this research the archive acted as ‘an active participant in the constitution of relationships’ (Anderson, Adey, and Bevan 2010: 598), alongside archivists and interviewees who directed me towards resources. The Bretton Archive had been dispersed to locations across the region in a material manifestation of the rupturing politics between parties in the recent history of the estate. Encountering these archives generated new understandings about the enduring divided geographies of the estate in tandem with the historical geographies I uncovered. Through this process, I found that mapping accounts of the Bretton landscape was subject to historical chance of what documentation had survived and the discursive politics between archives.

Starting in the YSP main archive, I also found regional and national newspaper clippings relating to press reviews of the park, which I later followed up with online research on published articles and web postings relating to YSP. Reviews were additionally sourced from clipping files kept on public display within the Visitor Centre. Often the media profiling of YSP was participant directed, with articles highlighted for me to review that were perceived to positively or negatively impact upon the image of YSP. My own unsystematic approach sought out press reviews from publically accessible archives, online sources, and the museum in order to gain insights into the wider discursive framing of YSP and its artworks. This informed how the various identities of the park were shaped by media and, in relation, also provided insights into the materials which were accessed and read by a proportion of YSP’s audiences (see Chapter 4). Sourcing reviews by art critics such as Richard Cork who visited YSP during the course of the fieldwork gave me further insights into how exhibitions in the park were audienceed non-linearly (see Chapter 5), as well as the influential and creative processes of representing arts’ meaning put into circulation by the press.

### 2.3 Research processes

The data collection for this thesis proceeded over an 11 month period from September 2009 to July 2010. This period was usually spent at YSP four days per week covering mid-week days and weekends to obtain a range of data on audience engagements inside and outside of standard office hours, or ‘working’ weeks. An average of one day per week was spent doing archival based researching on the heritage of the estate, including the picturesque designed landscape and the architecture of attached buildings (see

Chapter 3), and exploring contemporary media reportage of YSP. The majority of the fieldwork was spent undertaking ethnographic research within key visitor sites at YSP and navigating the different zones of the park, observing the well-trodden pathways of other visitors and visitor groups. Ethnographic fieldwork cannot escape the messiness of everyday life (see Hyndman 2001; Rose 1997; Vail 2001) and therefore this ‘messiness’ has influenced the research processes. The unpredictability of tracing audiencing meant that these key sites included, but were not exclusive to: the Visitor Centre, the Country Park and Turrell’s *Skyspace*, the Camellia Gardens and Greyworld’s *Playground*, the Bothy Garden, and the Underground Galleries.

### *i) Interviewing*

Encounters with art in landscape are three-dimensional and physical, therefore direct observation of visitors in the park was important to understand variegated behaviours at YSP. To gain insights into the cognitive and verbal dimensions of audience engagements, interviews constituted a key part of the ethnography. Formal in-depth interviews were conducted with 60 visitors, which included some volunteers. The semi-structured ‘on-the-spot’ interviews were divided across each seasonal quarter with 20 persons interviewed from September to December 2009; January to April 2010; and May to June 2010.

Initially the interview questions were guided towards the categorisation of YSP as an artspace and the discussion of particular ‘important’ artworks. However, through my initial interviews, I gained insight into the partiality of my line of questioning. During transcription, I reviewed the interview questions and modified the methodology where necessary. Retaining the semi-structured model of interviewing, I adapted the questions to ask non-directive and non-object specific questions such as ‘where have you visited today?’ and ‘how would you categorise or describe YSP?’ In order to maintain sight of my research objectives I included focused yet open questions e.g. ‘what work did you like?’ and ‘what work did you not like?’ (see Appendix 2). Therefore the participant could structure their own answers guided towards the cultural geographies of the park, but not directed towards specific works. The issue of objectifying the audience and losing sight of the particular, distinctive and relational dynamics between audience, artwork and site, formed part of the reason why I did not ask questions relating to occupation, education, and status. Categorising audiences according to socio-economic bandings and level of education has become the standard

framework in government research and policy, arts sector research and some museum studies research (see Bourdieu, Darbel and Schnapper 2002[1969]; Sandall 1998, 2003, 2007; Merriman 1989; Charlesworth 2006; Jowell and DCMS 2004). These categories have become so entrenched in discourses of museum visitations and barriers to access that they risk reaffirming a ‘them’ and ‘us’ culture within the arts (see Mooney 2007). This recognition formed part of the reason why I investigate different types of audience within this research, highlighting the ways in which audiencing practices occur from a range of positionalities that cross categorisations. In order to break from the fixed and often static model of audience research detailed above, I used an open interpretative model which allowed participants to use their own points of reference when answering the questions. The research on visitors, therefore, was framed by the encounter with the park and its exhibitionary spaces rather than the lives of those visiting; though some of the questions were ‘orientated towards the place of the visit within those lives’ (Macdonald 2002: 221).

Unexpectedly, all of the participants recruited for this research were residents of the UK, with a small number on university student visas for the duration of their undergraduate study. While unanticipated, this enabled recruitment for further follow up interviews within the Yorkshire region. This further stage of research consisted of four follow-up, in-depth interviews with some of the visitors recruited at YSP, and four follow up interviews conducted with volunteers at YSP. These took place variously by telephone, in public places such as a cafe, or on a repeat visit to YSP and lasted from 60-90 minutes. Opportunistic interviews were also performed at live events including *Sunrise in the Skyspace* events (see Appendix 1), with three follow up interviews conducted at intervals afterwards. In July 2010, I returned to YSP to carry out the final set of semi-structured ‘on-the-spot’ interviews with visitors who audienced the David Nash exhibition, and completed final interviews with local residents of West Bretton, and workers (see Appendix 1). My interviews with workers were additional to those which, for reasons beyond my control, were conducted by a private contractor, Dr Kathy Cremin, with me present. For the full list of interviews by name see Appendix 1.

## *ii) Participant observation*

Participant observation of six tours conducted by the YSP education department with school and university level students was undertaken with informed consent gained from the guardians of the students. Developed within social anthropology and widely adopted

in geography, the method is often used as a means to understand the everyday experiences of those researched from their own perspectives (Bennett 2002). However, in the particular example of YSP, there were distinctions between the familiarity of the practices for the education officers and the students on a study visit. For the guides, tours formed part of the fabric of the working day, with up to two tours per day each lasting between two to three hours for university and school groups (September-October; and June-July). By contrast, for students, the YSP visit was a special event and a break from the everyday school or university environment. Therefore, given the particular intersectional dynamics of the day-to-day and the event in this research, my participant observation does not pertain to understanding the reality of everyday life (Kearns 2003). Rather it is about understanding different actors' voices and actions which are related to the issue of audiencing at YSP. Discussion of these tours does not perform an overt role within the thesis, except in reference to a school group's participation with Greyworld's *Playground* in Chapter 6. However, it provided the opportunity to observe and talk informally as the different actors went through each stage of the tour route and discussion. This created insights into understanding the dynamics between YSP workers and visitors, and the importance of interpretative mediation and sociality to visitation practices.

The audiencing of special live events was observed across the duration of the fieldwork, on a flexible basis depending upon when the events were scheduled in the YSP programme. However, I focused particularly on tracing the audiencing of the *Sunrise in The Skyspace* events which took place within Turrell's *Skyspace* and the YSP Visitor Centre. I attended three events from October 2009 to March 2010, where I joined the respective groups during the duration of the sunrise and for the post-discussion and breakfast afterwards. For three months, from March to June 2010, extended and focused participant observation was conducted during the making, development and installation of the David Nash exhibition, with sculpture technicians, gardeners and volunteers (Chapter 5). In July 2010, along with the interviews detailed in the section above, participant observation of visitors to the Nash exhibition was conducted, to gain insights into how different persons physically negotiated the large-scale, distributed artworks and the tactile qualities of the outdoor site works (Chapter 5).

Through extended participant observation it became clear that the boundaries between workers and visitors overlapped with regards to the practice of audiencing. Site workers would observe one another as the artwork was produced and installed. Teams from the YSP main offices would come to 'take a look' prior to the exhibition launches.

Often everyday visitors to the park would be stood watching from a mid-distance as the finishing touches to the exhibitions were put into place. Conversely, workers would sometimes attend visitor events in their recreational time, observing the sculpture park and the works from an altered positionality. Volunteers further blurred the boundaries between visitors and workers, with YSP heavily relying upon them to produce aspects of large scale exhibitions and maintain the landscape. Within this thesis, therefore, audiencing is not consigned to the visitor nor to blunt categories of ‘insider’ or ‘outsider.’ Rather, this research design accounts for the multiple, situated positionalities from which audiencing occurs, taking into consideration the multi-faceted roles that each person can perform within an organisation across their working and recreational lives.

### *iii) Visual methods*

During my regular walking tours of the YSP estate, I often took photographs on my digital camera as a way to help document the routes I had taken and what I had seen. The intention was to produce a visual diary of my experiences which would be useful when I came to analyse and write the thesis, as well as providing images which would help to illustrate or construct the points I wished to make. Visual methods, such as photography and filming, have been shown to act upon and manipulate the subject of images, rather than to straightforwardly or transparently document what is seen (Crang 2011, 1999; Pink 2008, 2006; Battista et al. 2005; Merriman and Webster 2007; Sontag 1979). In the case of this research, the processes of photographing the walks helped me to refocus on my surroundings as I travelled through them; the photographs forced me to stop, and look again. This was especially valuable in the cold winter months of 2009 to 2010 when I was often outdoor alone in the expanses of the 500 acre estate and keen to get out of the rain or snow, or to seek shelter. That winter in West Bretton the first snow fell in the last days of October and the last snow and ice did not clear until the beginning of March. Instead of looking down and concentrating on my walking, delimiting my photography to art objects within the landscape, or being distracted by other thoughts, my attention was brought back to distinctive elements of the park (see Section 2.8). These images therefore create a visual diary which recorded and represented my situated research experiences over the course of 11 months.

In four follow up interviews I also asked participants to show and discuss visual materials which they had produced on previous visits to YSP. By utilising creative

visual methods I wanted to avoid applying innovative methods to audiences which could have the effect of obscuring the particularities of the ‘scene’ I intended to research. Instead I wanted to find a less obstructive way in which to observe and record the ways in which audiences chose themselves to engage with the artworks and site. The materials discussed were a combination of photographs, sketches, videos and artworks. In Chapter 6 I argue that in particular responses to Turrell’s *Skyspace* the artwork has acted as a creative catalyst within the spaces of YSP and elsewhere. In other interviews, creative encounters with YSP through textiles and habitual photography were discussed. I did not analyse the visual materials as discrete objects but instead used them as tools to resituate the participants in their memories and recollections of the park, and to open up the different reasons and means by which particular audiences engage with the geographies of YSP. The works became a talking point to stimulate discussion around the aspects of YSP which the individual participants had found interesting or engaging rather than directing them towards certain aspects of the park which I deemed ‘important’. This experimental part of the research does not form a prominent part of the discussion in the thesis however it informs the overall contention that visitors are not passive receptors to the transmission of visual arts meaning. In these cases of producing creative representations of their experiences, different audiences are shown to have particular specialisms and interests which they bring to an engagement with art and site, acting and reshaping the cultural meanings of site art and YSP.

*iv) Practicising multi-sited archival research*

Although Bretton was first documented in the Domesday book, the weight of extant primary and secondary materials focuses on the mid-eighteenth century when the existing structure of Bretton Hall and the picturesque designed parklands of the estate were created. Further to histories of the architecture, landscaping and financial interests of the different owners of the estate, my archival research uncovered 20 years of diary entries from the post holder of Head Gardener of the Bretton Estate (Head Gardener Diary, Bretton Estate: 1963-1985). These diaries dated from the mid 1960s to mid 1980s, spanning the era when YSP was first founded. Mostly an inventory of jobs and plant orders, these diaries chart a potted history of the growth of YSP with entries detailing the increasing workload attached to maintaining the sculpture. Rich narratives of daily life were found in a series of interviews conducted in the 1980s by the late local historian, Cyril Pearce, with residents from West Bretton (Pearce 1981; see Chapter 4).

Read together with the secondary material relating to the interests of the owners of the estate, they provide a broader framework for YSP. These diaries and oral histories act as fragments documenting the different ownerships and usages of the estate over many years, with insights into the lives of workers who laboured for Bretton Hall and the estate, and family life in West Bretton. The contrasting narratives enable a critical foundation for understanding how audiences differentially engage with the contemporary incarnation of the land as a sculpture park, depending upon their positionality and relationship to the estate.

The importance of place in my archival research spoke to my findings through the ways in which the ruptures in the collections and barriers to access relayed their own narratives on the unique relationship of the materials to the heritage of the Bretton Estate (also see Ashmore, Craggs and Neate 2011). The process of researching the heritage of the park informed the social geographies of YSP with various archivists providing personal accounts on the politics of the estate past and present, interwoven with the distribution of the material after the estate was sold, and later when Bretton College was closed by the University of Leeds. The archival based research therefore became interconnected with researching the cultural geographies of the contemporary park. The archival based research evolved to encompass informal interviews and meetings to understand new developments in the landscape management plan (Chapter 6). These archival practices, working between primary documentation, secondary materials, different sites and social dynamics, were instructive for the dynamic, lively connection between the past and the present drawn in this thesis. Additionally, as detailed earlier, I traced the profiling of YSP and its exhibitions through online search engines and archived articles. This intersected with analysis of the exhibition displays, where YSP placed newspaper and journal reviews of current exhibitions for visitors to read. Following the leads given to me by participants in the research, I traced articles which had impacted upon the cultural memory of the organisation and its audiences.

#### 2.4 Recruitment of different audiences

As I outlined in the start of the chapter, my research methods targeted four overlapping user groups at YSP. By tracing audiencing from a range of different positionalities, this thesis opened up the multiple roles of the audience and variegated practices of arts audiencing. The broad groupings identified at the start of the research were:

*Visitors:* Drawn from non-statistical opportunistic sampling of visitors this group comprised of those who were visiting primarily for recreational purposes without alternative investment in YSP.

*Volunteers:* These participants were recruited by a range of opportunistic, 'on-the-spot' interviews within the YSP cafe or wider park, and from focused projects, particularly the production and installation of Nash's *Black Steps* (Chapter 4 and 5).

*Local Residents:* In part drawn from opportunistic 'on-the-spot' interviews, the recruitment of local residents in the research was also the result of a snowball effect, or 'snowballing' (Cloke et al 2004: 156), where participants introduced me to other residents who could bring new perspectives to the research. Local residents were recruited from the historically tied village of West Bretton to the Bretton Estate, and extended to other villages within a 15 minute walk to the park where participants included themselves in this 'grouping' by describing themselves as 'local'.

*Site Workers:* This group comprised sculpture technicians and gardeners employed by YSP who performed a paid working relationship to the land and artworks of YSP. I was introduced to the sculpture technicians and gardeners through my YSP 'mentor', and the Manager of Sculpture and Estates.

Opportunistic or opportunity sampling was employed as it requires a flexible approach where new research leads during the fieldwork can be followed (Patton 2002; Hay 2010). This approach can take advantage of unexpected developments which was suitable for an expansive and multi-functional arts organisation and estate such as YSP, where different teams and upwards of 3000 visitors each day can be distributed across the expanses of the park. The practical considerations which inform how qualitative recruitment is performed within particular situations to accomplish fieldwork tasks have been highlighted (Thomas et al. 2007: 433; Garfinkel 1967). While recruitment was based on a very open criteria of those who were willing to talk about their own experiences of being in the park, my own 'etcetera clauses' included caveats developed through the research such as 'don't approach people who are drunk', and 'don't approach people in a large group'. I tailored recruitment in order to set up a set of conditions where I would be most likely to have the attention of the interviewees. I approached visitors after they had finished eating and/or drinking and therefore avoided

interrupting them when they were otherwise engaged. First, I handed out a copy of a business card with my name, institution and contact details to authenticate that I was an independent doctoral researcher, not affiliated with or sponsored by YSP. Many interviews were conducted in the YSP Cafe, a relaxed space, with privacy from other customers where possible. Every three months, I did 10-30 minute interviews in the cafe with the first 20 eligible respondents. Through an informal semi-structured approach to the interviews I aimed to capture the latent knowledge which audiences possess. I assumed that everything told to me was valid, 'in the sense or being representative of how [participants] viewed the world and [their] place in it at that time' (McDowell 2001: 211).

One issue, however, was that visitors were often at the beginning of their visit to the park or were attending solely for the café. This provided an important cultural framing of the relative importance of the artwork in relation to the amenities of the park for some audiences, which informed my later findings. Yet, to broaden the scope of my findings I decided to move beyond the internal spaces of the YSP Visitor Centre when recruiting. Other sites where interviews were performed were outside Turrell's *Skyspace* and Playground's *Greyworld* to capture the 'live' experience of being with the outdoor works. This decision was informed by the recognition that conversations and power structures that underlie those conversations are in part shaped by the settings where they take place (DeLyser et al. 2010: 11; Valentine 1999; Elwood and Martin 2000; McDowell 2001). Moving beyond table based interviews in the Visitor Centre also helped to avoid an over reliance on discourse analysis and to understand the bodily engagements of visitors with the art in the landscape. In order to gain alternative insights from different types of visitor, I also conducted interviews in sites such as the main YSP carpark and in the walking routes around the park, to trace the proportion of visitors who had not specifically visited the YSP cafe or site art. This enabled the recognition that for a number of visitors, the YSP Visitor Centre and artwork did not feature prominently, or at all, in their routes around the park. The 'emergent and naturalistic design' of the research followed the phenomenon of audiencing YSP where it took me (Patton 2002: 45). If a person or event presented itself at another area in YSP that would enrich the research, the method of opportunity sampling was appropriated to the context, such as with the ethnography of Nash's exhibition (Chapter 5). Through these 'on-the-spot' interviews I inadvertently approached volunteers, including Marnie and Rachel who were recruited for follow up interviews. Other visitors were approached who also identified themselves as 'local' residents, such as Gerald and Toby.

Highlighting the tensions inherent in using audience categories, there was a clear slippage between groupings in these interviews, yet there was also a pervasive mobilisation of these categories by people when talking about their relationship to the park. The open design therefore enabled the research to follow the phenomenon of audience experiences of art and place as they unfolded and revealed unexpected new directions in understanding audiencing.

YSP is a recreational destination for many visitors, with the majority outside of the education programme attending the park in their spare time. The research process therefore had to be attentive to the sociality of the visit context, particularly with interviews and ethnography of groups. Participants in groups of two or three, whether a couple, friends or a family, often continued to talk to each other, using my questions as springboards for their own exchanges or sometimes appearing to find each other's conversational directions more interesting than the ones I posed. While this occasionally meant that the discussions deviated on tangents for which I had not planned, the benefits of this more open approach meant that participants appeared relaxed and engaged with the research in their own ways. In addition to the semi-structured 'on-the-spot' interviews and opportunistic interviews at live events detailed above, a number of informal conversations were undertaken across the duration of the fieldwork. These additional informal dialogues are not directly referenced in the thesis or the appendices, however they informed my broader understanding of the perspectives and practices of audiences and different workers at YSP.

## 2.5 Between visitor, researcher and worker

Melissa Gilbert (1994) argues that we are always outsiders when we are engaged in research as ethnography is about the researcher adopting different roles and levels of participation depending on the demands of the research context. Alternatively Dydia DeLyser (2001: 442) has argued that the 'insider' or 'outsider' question is dependent upon whether or not the research is focused on their own communities. However the relationship of the researcher to the community they are researching, along with questions of belonging, are not always straightforward. Most pertinent for my status and research is anthropologist Kirin Narayan's recognition (1993: 676) that '[w]e all belong to several communities simultaneously', therefore we can be both insiders and outsiders. My professional experience and contacts within the museum sector

recommended me to the research project with YSP, and the Collaborative Doctoral Award more generally. Further, one staff member at YSP acted as my 'mentor' in order to facilitate the research in a supportive role which held some comparisons in title and function to the role of my academic supervisors at the University of Sheffield and non-academic supervisor at & Co. The comparisons between the academic and arts sector community were enforced through the fact that my YSP 'mentor' had herself obtained a PhD and therefore had a strong knowledge basis and understanding of the academic demands of the project I was undertaking. These cross-sector exchanges and relationships demonstrated that often the boundaries and distinctions between sectors and working practices can be too rigidly held (Rendell 2008).

Regular intimacy was afforded with YSP employees through carsharing on my daily journey into YSP from Leeds. These journeys provided invaluable insights into perceptions of both the organisation and visitors. I was able to take part in and listen to different workers professional opinions of the role of visitors, including the mingling of experiences and popular stories of visitor behaviours and feedback. Over the duration of the fieldwork I spent sustained amounts of time with some workers and developed friendships with them. Kath Browne has noted the dialectic relationship between research and everyday life where 'research relations and social relations thus blur the boundaries of the field' (Browne 2003: 140). I joined lunches when asked, if they did not coincide with interviews or participant observation organised elsewhere, and attended special occasions such as exhibition launches, as well as two staff leaving parties and the annual Christmas lunch. The 'sensory sociality' of a range of practices including walking, eating, talking and drinking alongside workers, and also research participants such as volunteers and the general public, was productive of 'place-as-ethnographic knowledge' (Pink 2008: 176-77). Through partaking in these 'collaborative ethnographic methods' both the ways in which people constitute their environments through embodied and imaginative practices, and the ways in which the researcher 'becomes attuned to and constitutes ethnographic places' is brought into greater relief (Pink 2008: 176-77). Sensory sociality as method is particularly applicable to YSP where the cafe and the exhibitions, along with the landscape, provide the platforms for worker fraternising given the relative isolation of YSP from outside amenities, cafes and pubs. Indeed the blurring of social and working relations was enmeshed with the everyday blurring of private and public spatialities within YSP. During the research it emerged that a number of YSP workers were married, dating one another, or related to each other. The extensiveness of the YSP 'family' combined with

the presence of workers in the consumer spaces of the organisation was particularly apparent in the first stages of my research (see photograph of YSP staff with babies in YSP 2008: 300). I would approach people for visitor interviews in the YSP cafe only to find out that they were workers at YSP, were visiting workers or volunteers, temporary contractors or there for a business meeting. Given the closeness of the organisation and the location which situates it apart from urban conurbations and other cultural institutions, the blurring of boundaries between research relations and social relations was therefore produced by and responsive to the particular dynamics of the place I was researching (see Chapter 4).

A further instance where there was movement between my role as researcher and worker was when I was considered a tour guide and interpreter, answering questions from the general public and sometimes workers about the artworks on display, the heritage of the estate, and the organisation. During interviews, I would be asked to direct visitors to places or works that I would recommend on the site, interpret the YSP map, as well as explain curatorial and education decisions, such as the ‘lack’ of explicit curatorial interpretation. In these encounters I emphasised that I was an independent researcher and therefore not affiliated with YSP, or speaking on behalf of the organisation. Nevertheless, I was made use of by various visitors as an authority on the park and the works within it. I later acted as an actual tour guide with the artist Rebecca Chesney. Chesney had been commissioned for a 12 month residency at YSP where she created a set of projects on bee-keeping. Part of the programme of events was a free Easter weekend tour which fused together information relating to beekeeping, the history of the estate and a beekeeping shed which had been built as an observation space. During these tours my role was to contribute knowledge on the heritage at the Bretton Estate. Some workers at YSP were in the audience with the intention to learn more about Chesney’s work and the heritage of the site. By partaking in these tours with others, alongside other events, I came to better understand the lived, sensed, experienced and emotional worlds of workers and audiences, and the liminal spaces which exist between the categories of worker and audience (Crang and Cook 2007; Herbert 2000).

At the same time, I recognised a blurring of my role as researcher and audience member. I continued to see YSP as a tourist destination and place of recreation alongside a place for education and work. In order to extend my insights into audiencing during my research (and also to have my own educational and recreational experiences), I regularly walked around the park, attended exhibitions, and events both mid-week and

at the weekend with my partner, friends and family. This included mapping out all the site art within the expansive estate using the YSP visitor map taken from the YSP Visitor Centre - including the elusive Andy Goldsworthy works on Oxley Bank - traversing the conservation areas and locating eighteenth century statuary works and features, and taking part in heritage tours of the park. Art exhibitions at YSP which I audienced during my fieldwork included the Peter Randall-Page, James Lee Byars, Rob Ryan, STONE, The Gathering and David Nash, amongst others. Apart from the Randall-Page which opened prior to the research, I audienced these exhibitions at the launch events and innumerable times across the span of the shows. Charting the 'life' of the exhibitions, provided good opportunities to meet the producers and the spectrum of workers who had a stake in the exhibitions, from official photographer to marketing assistant to invigilator, as well as the visitors whose footfall is imperative to the measures of each exhibition's success. The importance of remaining connected to the vantage point of being a visitor to YSP informed part of the rationale between why I attended events such as *Sunrise in the Skyspace*. The sociality of these research encounters enabled me to experience ways of being in places with tourists, sharing their gazes and rhythms (Pink 2008). This was integral to developing a sense of collaborative and shared knowledge with the visitors rather than simply doing research on or about them (Delph-Janiurek 2001). A balance was maintained between my role as 'researcher', 'visitor' and 'worker'. Sometimes other workers would also be audiencing these events with me, or hosting them as a member of the YSP team. These experiences brought the recognition that the researcher alongside the participants can perform a number of roles and assume varying positionalities across the scope of the ethnography, which can alter the field as it is researched.

## 2.6 Recording Processes

In total, across the fieldwork, I filled five A5 notebooks with field notes alongside sketches, outlines of curatorial strategies, and mappings of visitor navigations. During the recording of the production and installation of the Nash exhibition I undertook detailed note taking, 'on the spot' interviews and photography. The fieldnotes added sensorial dimensions to the data I could record through interviews and photographs, allowing me to detail the smell, the noise and the motion of the busy processes in the months leading up to the exhibition launch. During the making of *Black Steps* it was not possible to record all conversations and informal interviews due to practical

considerations concerning noise, the pace of work and safety issues (Chapter 5). I was requested to keep back from obstructing the action therefore detailed notes were instead taken. In these instances notes were recorded to ‘remember, document and reflect’ (Watson and Till 2010: 126), with recognition of the iterative processes of analysing and representing my notes at later stages of the research project. Aware of the critique of ethnography and the power structures inherent in recording processes (Pratt 1992: 7), I exercised caution in writing notes in front of participants in order to prevent them from feeling studied. This was particularly pertinent to a museum context where perceptual issues have repeatedly highlighted distinctions in status and education (Bourdieu 1987; 2002[1969]; Merriman 1989; Sandell 1998, 2003, 2007). At the forefront of my mind with all participants was not to intimidate or overwhelm them with questions (McDowell 2010: 161). This was expedient with all the interviews including the general public, volunteers and observing the everyday working practices of participants such as the sculpture technicians. Important to the research design was a sense that the questions and analysis of participants would treat them as individuals with their own situated specialisms and as informed experts within their particular roles. The aim was to draw out their own knowledges, rather than evaluate against the articulacy of art historical terminology, points of reference, or socio-economic models, with implicit hierarchies embedded into the analysis.

Observing and writing fieldnotes about everyday geographies, or ‘fluid social spaces and material encounters’, is more a ‘practice of discovery than an ‘objective’ form of reporting’ (Watson and Till 2010: 126). The research selected the best tools taking into account the practical coordinates of a particular scenario, such as the making of *Black Steps*, despite the recognition that these could not provide a full, sensorial documentation of what actually happened. The partiality of the account, however, was not simply a case of the limitations of research methods. While I attended the weekly YSP Monday meetings to learn about significant events planned for each week, every team had to respond to changes in circumstances and new eventualities. This included an unexpected flux of visitors for the front of house team, or a woodpecker destabilising Antony Gormley’s *One and Other* (2000). It was difficult to know what people were doing at any one time, which was heightened through a lack of mobile phone coverage on certain parts of the estate. Further, while access was open, welcoming and permissive, I did not have access to private meetings between management of YSP. New developments at the park, such as emergent plans for the luxury hotel and business

park tabled by Wakefield City Council, were not disclosed to me nor the rest of the YSP workers body.

As the Nash launch drew closer, I noted that YSP workers appeared to become more measured in their responses to the art and exhibition in my presence. These workers materially and discursively help to produce the environment in which they work, which involves presenting exhibitions such as Nash as ‘remarkable’ (YSP 2010f: cover), and internationally significant. As a researcher I recognised the parallels between my role and that performed by YSP workers in the lead up to the exhibition launch insofar as knowledge production and its dissemination is not a disinterested process. Integral to this research methodology is an understanding that knowledge is produced from ‘positions’ and so is always partial (see Haraway 1988; Rose 1997). Ethnographers must locate their data in the context of the social processes that brought them about, and recognise the limits of their perception of reality (Brewer 2000: 4). Part of the limits of this perception of reality at YSP was constructing a clear narrative which accounted for the multiple roles which workers and visitors performed, and the reasons for why certain things were said or done and other things not said or done. Reflexivity with regards to analysing this process acknowledges that ‘through the multiple partial views of multiple social actors... a particular representation of reality is arrived at’ (Simpson 2005: 75). As this thesis contends, it is important to also recognise that the partiality of views and limits of knowledge production do not undermine the value of such knowledge (Lynch 2000). Indeed, integral to the thesis is the contention that the value of knowledge is not commensurate with how close it comes to being a universal view, but rather, how rigorous we are in trying to construct these various knowledges (Brewer 2000: 44; see also Duncan 2007; Crang 2005; Mason, 1996; Simpson, 2005).

## 2.7 Feedback channels

My participation was further heightened through feedback channels with the curators and marketing team at YSP on my research with different audiences. Informal feedback was a constructive outcome of the cross-sectoral research between University of Sheffield, & Co. and YSP as all parties were working towards mutually beneficial objectives of gaining insights into audience engagements with site art.

I met with my mentor at YSP on a regular fortnightly basis to be updated about any developments or forthcoming events at YSP, and also to feedback on any findings which could inform the practices of YSP. One exchange included feedback from a

number of visitors on the difficulty of reading the free YSP map which is distributed from the Visitor Centre. As a result, I was asked to produce recommendations on revising the map, which I did through annotating a copy of the old map, and submitting a separate bullet-pointed document to the Visitor Manager and Curator. This resulted in a simplified version of the original map which was printed in the *David Nash at Yorkshire Sculpture Park: Free Map Guide* (YSP 2010h: 1), and distributed at the Visitor Desk, and displayed in the YSP *What's On* guide (YSP 2010d: 4). Through this feedback process I was acutely aware of the ways in which I was impacting upon the materialities of the park as I was researching it. I recognised reflexively that through ethnographic process and exchange my own routes and pathways as a researcher (Ingold 2007) were 'entangled in place-making processes' (Pink 2008: 179). My semi-structured interview technique generated responses from visitors to YSP on their usage of interpretative materials, which directly informed the redrawing of the YSP map and therefore impacted upon future visitor navigations of the park. In another instance, I relayed my analysis that visitors had differential understandings of the functionality of the site YSP manages. I explained that depending upon the various access routes people took into the park, YSP and its buildings might not form a gateway or even feature on the pathway of visitors. Unexpectedly, the outcome of this exchange was that YSP created a banner which was placed across the fence between the main YSP carpark and the Country Park. This banner physically wrote across the space that visitors were entering an 'outdoor gallery'. Further high impact feedback informed the redevelopment of the YSP website where my research confirmed a low rate of usage and interest in the existing site. Through my research design process, including my feedback, I was 'co-implicated in place-making' (Pink 2008: 179), along with the research participants and organisation I was researching.

My active presence as researcher manifested itself across the materialities of YSP, which at points gave me pause for reflection on whether I was too ensconced in the field. While I always stressed that I was acting independently as a researcher, I became known to different team members at YSP as knowledgeable on audience engagements with the sculpture park and therefore any comments I made were respected. Instead of 'the invisible, omnipresent narrator', I was the 'copresent interlocutor' (Crang 2003: 499), actively mediating and impacting upon the connection between the organisation and its audiences. As seen above, occasionally this reshaped the field. Yet, pertinent to an analysis of the research impact is Chris Hamnett's critique of what he termed 'postmodern' human geography's 'theoretical playground':

Practitioners stimulate or entertain themselves and a handful of readers, but have in the process become increasingly detached from contemporary social issues and concerns. (Hamnett 2003:1-2)

In the case of this research project the contemporary ‘social issues and concerns’ were those of the role and the interaction of audiences with a particular arts institution, which could inform wider modes of audiencing and civic participation. Rather than operating in a detached, theoretical sphere, the cross-sectoral scope of the research aimed to create productive outcomes for the various parties involved, which the feedback exchange supported. While the impacts were sometimes unexpected, and not always consistent with what I would have wanted - such as with the YSP banner over the Country Park - I could not expect to maintain full control over how the research was interpreted and applied. After all, underpinning the thesis is the assertion that the author, or in this case researcher, cannot hold control over how different audiences map meaning from their work.

As a Collaborative Doctoral Award holder, one of the key objectives of this research project was to foster cross-sectoral exchange between the academy and arts sector. In more formal exchanges I shared my research papers with the curators at YSP and was in turn recommended to represent the organisation at the University of Huddersfield’s Arts Research Festival 2010. During the duration of the research I maintained regular contact with my arts sector partner, & Co., which involved annual presentations to the company on the development of the research and bi-annual meetings with my non-academic supervisor. My research expertise was also engaged by exchanges at arts sector focus groups and research initiatives. This included the Arts and Humanities Research Workshops on the Impact of Arts and Humanities Research Scheme with the title ‘Qualitative Methods of Enquiry into the Arts Consumption Experience and its Impact’ conducted with the University of Sheffield, AHRC, & Co. and Arts Council (Award reference AH/G001146/1).<sup>2</sup> I also acted as a delegate on the ‘Turning Point’, Yorkshire and Humber groups, an Arts Council-led strategy for strengthening the visual arts in different regions over the next 10 years. Further, through recommendation by YSP, I acted as a delegate for the ‘Place-Making action research

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<sup>2</sup> After an initial meeting between a qualitative consultant, two academics from University of Sheffield Business School, and Audiences Yorkshire, the programme undertook a series of workshops with wider cultural professionals and academics and research encounters with two arts organisations, Magna, and West Yorkshire Playhouse.

programme 2009/10', commissioned by the Arts Council England for the Yorkshire region, to develop informal networks and scope for arts development in the region for the next 10-20 years. In all of these research encounters I was able to draw upon my methods and the developments of my findings on audiencing at YSP, in order to help inform debate on policy towards the arts and arts audiences across regional and national networks within the U.K.

## 2.8 Coding and analysis

I recorded all the formal interviews I undertook with visitors, volunteers, local residents and workers and transcribed these fully, incorporating details about the artworks and site where applicable, their positioning within interactions and *how* things were spoken about (Ramsay 2008; Crang 2003a; Laurier 1999). This created approximately 210 pages of typed text which I re-read throughout the fieldwork process in order to refine my ideas, and at the end, to resituate myself in the full scope and richness of the discussions. The origins of coding stem from the sociological tradition of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss 1987). The practice, however, is not understood to be objective. Instead the coding technique I used was a form of 'brainstorming' with the research material revisited to think about possible ideas, themes, and issues at different times during the research (Watson and Till 2010: 128). The iterative process of thinking, doing and writing, was performed through coding as the interviews were transcribed in order to, 'identify general patterns, clarify connections and relations, develop possible insights and refine ideas' (Watson and Till 2010: 128). More focused coding was then used to identify and clarify patterns and relationships in the primary data collected (Crang and Cook 2007: 137). I encompassed an open interpretative approach rather than adopting and applying a particular theoretical or analytic framework.

When coding transcripts I looked at each interview line by line to generate detailed codes using a 'grounded theory' approach, or in other words, codes which are generated for analysis from the research material (Jackson 2001). These codes were a combination of descriptive object orientated terms, typologies for different 'groupings' of audiences, and themes which related directly to the interview content, including, particular artworks, 'daytripper', 'local', 'tourist attraction', 'heritage', and 'event culture.' Through the iterative process I then adopted 'axial' coding to focus on the relationships between the coded primary material. This supported the creation of

interconnected sub-categories which reassembled ‘data that was fractured during the open coding’ (Strauss and Corbin 1998: 124; see also Lin 2011; Crang 1997; Stauss 1997). More focused sub-categories which worked across the broader primary categories included ‘walking’, ‘cafe’, ‘networking’, ‘photography’, ‘education’, ‘art’ and ‘landscape’. I then adopted a more ‘open’ coding approach and read through the interview transcripts and grouped materials in light of the theoretical concerns of this project to ensure that I had reviewed all the relevant empirical data relevant to the topic of audiencing artworks (Crang 2001). A comparable process of coding was also conducted on my archival material, with consideration paid to both the content of the documentation and the public context of archival practices, as discussed previously. The grouped materials from the interviews and the archival practices were compared, and refined to form appropriate chapters (see Section 2.9). Through a combination of coding processes, the multiple reasons and different roles audiences perform within the park were correlated with their interests and motivations, and the wider cultural geographies of the Bretton Estate.

The process of coding and analysing research has been criticised because it results in ‘only telling parts of stories rather than their wholeness’ (Miller and Glassner 2004: 127). Through adopting multiple methods this research utilises a range of materials in order to map a wide range of audience experiences beyond discourse. As I detailed earlier, visual methods did not form a substantive part of the developed thesis, however I did use photographic diaries as a creative form of recording and refocusing my attention on the changing qualities of the environment throughout the fieldwork (see Appendix 3). ‘Read’ together these images help to document the sometimes dramatic seasonal landscape of YSP with ice, snow, rain, mud, winds, clouds and sunshine all impacting upon the aesthetics of the sculpture, as well as the feel of the terrain and the effort of walking across it. Further these images document areas in development or sectioned off for periods of time such as the Oxley Bank or near the Camellia house. Different sculptures and exhibitions were de-installed, moved, and installed, creating another layer to the variance of the park’s appearance and conditions during the fieldwork. The unstable dialectics between the natural and man-made elements of the park, which I later interpreted from reviewing the scope of the photographic diaries, illustrates the ways in which the experience of the artwork, and access to it, would alter with the changing environment. A further tangential outcome of these photographic diaries occurred during this later stage of analysis where I recognised the richness of wildlife which permeated the frames of the images even when I was directing the

camera lens on something else entirely. Mole hills, geese, birds, sheep and cows are all in evidence in the background, sides of shoots, flying in the sky or marking themselves on the earth. This thesis is concentrated primarily on contemporary artworks and the context of their display, yet this munificence of fauna provided insights into the methodological framing devices I used which filtered how I engaged with and represent the spaces of the park. My own biases as a researcher meant that the research findings are focused on the relationship between art and place, however YSP could have been framed by a variety of optics. For example, the wildlife and conservation of the park are central to others viewing habits, as is exemplified with the case of the birdwatcher, Gerald (Chapter 6)(see Fig.2.1). The unexpected but welcome reflexive moments generated by my use of photographic diaries provided awareness not only of how the research design shapes the focus of my findings, but the ways in which unforeseen elements of the park inform my broader understanding of audiences and audiencing at YSP.



Fig. 2.1 Gerald, amateur photographer and birdwatcher, takes photograph of heronry on Lower Lake (centre left of image) from Cascade Bridge. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

## 2.9 Writing audiencing research

Moving from the coding process to detailed analysis and then broad chapter themes was a necessarily ‘messy’ and iterative process (Law 2004; Ramsay 2008). Initially I

planned to write about recurrent issues that had featured strongly within the research findings. I therefore searched for repetition in themes or cases with the aim to represent the main findings of this research (Bennett and Shurmer-Smith 2002). I also paid particular attention to research material which helped to develop the theoretical underpinning of the research on the agency of audiences and/or specific encounters with site art. Emerging through theory and findings was the central recognition in this research that meaning is shifted from within the art object to the ‘contingencies of context’ (Bennett and Shurmer-Smith 2002: 12-13), therefore the social, physical and wider cultural contexts of the art encounter were dominant themes which were important to address in the chapters. I conceived the chapters as case-based with distinct chapters for particular art works which had high prominence in the research, and then a chapter for wider navigations of the site of YSP. The formal divisions between art and site in this structuring template, however, failed to represent the betweenness and liminalities of experiences which audiences both performed and articulated. In subsequent redrafts of my plan, I moved to thematic chapters where different times - past, present and future- coalesce in the accounts of participants demonstrating how the experience of art is related to the contingencies of site, sociality, past memories and future plans.

Exemplifying the betweenness of accounting for the processes of audiencing site based art work at YSP, the themes and material encompassed in each of these chapters are relational and sometimes overlaps. Interview material with one participant may, for example, inform the heritage and land politics of the site (Chapter 3), alongside furthering understanding of the different positions of the audience within the context of the Nash exhibition (Chapter 5). Further, while interviews may have been conducted sequentially, such as with a first ‘on-the-spot’ interview, followed by an in-depth second interview, where appropriate to the theme of a particular chapter this material has been connected together. This approach to representing the research addressed emerging thematics on audience engagements with the sculpture park, rather than focusing on the particular synchronic development of individual conceptions of the park and its artworks.

Within this thesis I detail the real names of participants where I am referring to material which is already published by or on them, and where their names are already referenced. For example, this would be the case in articles published by YSP workers, or when I am referring to articles or interview recordings by interviewers, journalists or critics where the names of the particular workers are included. This coincides with

Sharon Macdonald's approach (2002) where the actual names of some museum workers are used when they are in singular and key positions, and where that position is important to frame the meaning of the empirical data. This thesis maintains the anonymity of participants where practical and effectual, which includes all visitors, volunteers and local residents interviewed, and workers where possible.

## 2.10 Conclusion

This interdisciplinary and collaborative research adopted a range of qualitative methods which were tailored to explore my research questions on how audiences construct meaning from site based artwork. The ethnography of YSP, a visual arts organisation, and tracing processes of audiencing contemporary art, have pushed at the interstices of art theory and geography, and resulted in focused and broader theoretical findings on the role of audiences and differential modes of audiencing. Archival research and experimental visual methods were distinctive processes through which this design evoked the wider cultural geographies that frame audience/art encounters. Taking my lead from audiences within the field, I tailored these methodologies to respond to the ways in which particular audiences were already engaging with the YSP scene, in order to explore the encounters through their behaviours and dialogue including follow up interviews where participants showed me their photographs and artwork. This married the research design with the theoretical approach underpinning this thesis: the contribution that audiences are individual and active agents in the appropriation of the meaning of art. In the chapters that follow I directly draw upon my empirical and archival data in order to explore the trinity of site, art and audience when mapping site arts meaning.

## Chapter 3

### **Introducing Yorkshire Sculpture Park: overlapping geographies of landscape, estate and sculpture park**

The only one of its kind, Yorkshire Sculpture Park is an international centre for modern and contemporary art, experienced and enjoyed by thousands of visitors every year. (YSP 2010k: n/p)

Well there has been massive politics there. For of course as far as the [Bretton] college [was concerned], to some extent, and to the village, the sculpture park was an *infiltration*. Because it wasn't there at one time and they were spoiling the landscape through putting these horrendous sculptures up. (Interview with Mary 2010)

The first quotation above taken from YSP's website, re-launched in November 2010, describes the park as 'an international centre for contemporary art', categorising it as a space for the display and reception of artworks. The visual centrepiece of YSP is the Visitor Centre completed and opened in 2002. The Visitor Centre is built on the north of the Bretton Estate, overlooking the Country Park with a vista to the Lower Lake, damned in the eighteenth century, and Longside. Writing a history of the other dominant institution situated in the park, the eighteenth century Palladian mansion, Bretton Hall, Bartle introduces the 'rich tapestry of local history' connected to the Bretton Estate (1994: 2). The heritage of the Bretton Estate can be mapped today in the organisation of the site, the land use, the architecture, landscape gardening and assorted published histories of the park. Further, oral accounts such as the quotation from Mary, a local resident, uncovers the perceptions of the changing land politics and presentation of the park, as Bretton Hall became a Higher Education College (1948) and YSP was founded (1977). In this chapter I address the particular historiography and teleology constructed by YSP's publications including maps, website and catalogues, which establishes the sculpture park as opening access to 'modern and contemporary art' for 'thousands of visitors every year' (YSP 2010k: n/p). Through researching the alternative geographies of the park, including the histories of Bretton Hall and its land, this chapter maps the land ownerships and usages which have marked the materialities of the site and cultural memories of local residents, workers and visitors. By reviewing materials from a range of sources and interviews this chapter uncovers the divided

landscape. Considering YSP as public space, I identify the contested ways in which the site is organised by governing bodies and how this intersects with the park's multiple visiting publics.

### 3.1. Landscape, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, and Site Art

The argument I advance is that art experience is dependent upon context, and as such, is indivisibly connected with landscape theory, particularly within cultural geography. The etymology of landscape derives from the Dutch word *landschap*, a sixteenth century term attached to painters within the height of the Dutch landscape tradition (Czepczynski 2008: 9; also see Cosgrove and Daniels 1988; Oakes and Price 2008; DeLue and Elkins 2008). The roots of landscape therefore emphasises visuality in the process of representation. The historiography of landscape traditions develop in the nineteenth century with the study of visible elements of landscape by a school of German geographers interested in spatial differentiations and the evolutions of civilisations (Czepczynski 2008: 17). Common to different theories within the school was an approach which combined a rise in nationalism, and the nation, with the environment. Shortly following the German school, sensitivity to regional variation, including traditions, institutions, food and language, and possibilism - the recognition that humans can selectively respond to environmental factors in a number of ways - was advanced by the French geographer Paul Vidal de la Blache (Mitchell 2001; Bonnemaïson 2005). However, *La tradition vidalienne*, as Vidal's contribution came to be known, was critiqued for its over-emphasis on regional politics and the ways that it minimalised the role of town and cities given that Vidalian regions were primarily rural (Mitchell 2001; Bonnemaïson 2005). Yet, the emphasis on place as containing naturalistic, historical and cultural dimensions remains relevant to understanding how YSP is constructed and conceptualised as a unique cultural offering through its landscape (see Chapter 4).

Countering environmental determinist approaches to landscape, in early twentieth century U.S cultural geography, Carl Sauer and the Berkeley School radically altered how landscape was investigated. Sauer advanced that through active fieldwork and description of the physical landscape, geographers could uncover the layers of human activity that acted upon it (Sauer 1925; also see Oakes and Price 2008: 149). To analyse a culture, Sauer defined visible elements of culture which he linked with material manifestations of civilisation read within the landscape, using them as markers

of cultural areas. Or as Czepczynski aptly frames the approach: 'languages, belief systems, customs and religions weave links between humans; these links leave a material trace' (Czepczynski 2008: 20).

Responding to the deficiencies of the dominant Berkeley School approach with its focus on the material expression of culture and their manifestations in landscape, a broader 'cultural turn' within geography emerged in the late 1980s. Most directly associated with Cosgrove and Daniels' *Iconography of Landscape* (1988), the representational approach emphasised that different individuals and groups in society could 'read' the landscape in profoundly different ways. Post-structuralist approaches developed in linguistics, literary criticism and semiotics were put to use by cultural geographers 'to read the landscape as a sort of text' (Oakes and Price 2008: 151). Central to these approaches was the positioning of landscape as symbolic:

A landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings. That is not to say that landscapes are immaterial. (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988: 1)

Emphasising landscape as a way of seeing, the cultural turn can be seen to place human beings at the centre of geographical knowledge, with account of beliefs, ideologies, tastes and experience (see Duncan 1990; Duncan and Ley, 1993; Cosgrove 1999). However, by emphasising landscape as an unstable medium, it also signalled a crisis in how we represent the landscape and places around us.

Within the new cultural geography, other currents such as critical perspectives from Marxist and feminist brought a more politicised approach emphasising historical and material power relations, rather than a more textually inspired bent (Oakes and Price 2008: 151). Don Mitchell emphasises the economies, labour and racial currents with which landscape is charged, arguing 'race riots, fiscal crisis after fiscal crisis [we can't just] fiddle with geographies of fenceposts and log cabins' (Mitchell 2001: 35; also Mitchell 1996). This Marxist Historical Materialist critique is levelled at both the 'superorganic' approach (Duncan 1980; Jackson 1989), prevalent in the work of Sauer and the Berkeley School, as well as certain representational approaches that appeared to turn away from the existence of a literal landscape. Feminist approaches in geography and art history have further argued that landscape is not only imbued with power relations of labour in a capitalist society; landscape is also imbued with gendered power relations (Kolodny 1975; Pollock 2003; Rose 1993). Rose identified that the landscape

is often depicted as feminine with the ‘dominant visual regime of white heterosexual masculism’ looking ‘actively, possessively, sexually and pleasurably’ at the landscape, in comparable ways to looking pleasurably at women as objects (Rose 1993: 88). Pertinent to this research, the non-representational turn, or more-than-representational (Lorimer 2005, 2008), provided a further counter argument against the signifying structures of representational theories by attempting to communicate human experience of being within and practicing landscape and the world around us (Thrift 2000b, 2007; Crouch 2000, 2010). While attempting to find a ‘before’ structures of signification has in turn been problematised (Tolia-Kelly 2007, 2008), the non-representational turn has been productively framed as how we relate to and process engagements with the material world (Anderson and Harrison 2010).

The development of the theory outlined above demonstrates the deep interdisciplinary interconnect between geography and art in an investigation of landscape, which is vital for research on site art in a sculpture park. Landscape has been reconceptualised from the pictorial and, alternatively, a physical geographical structure, to a way of seeing and being in space. This definition of landscape in the context of the thesis retains the importance of its materiality, with particular address to labour in the production of landscape (Williams 1977; Mitchell 2000, 1996), mapping the experiences of sculpture technicians and gardeners who produce the designed parklands and exhibitions. Further it retains the experience of being and moving through landscape by utilising ethnographic audience-focused methodologies. Of equal import, feminist approaches to landscape, informed by feminist approaches to knowledge production, have directed the contention of the thesis that different audiences bring situated and partial knowledges to each embodied encounter with YSP (Rose 1993; also see Haraway 1988) (see Chapter 6). This thesis also draws on representational approaches by recognising that ‘the meanings of verbal, visual and built landscapes have a complex interwoven history’ (Daniels and Cosgrove 1988: 1), which I engage with through working across interviews, images, maps and writings that together help produce the multiple meanings of the Bretton landscape. Moreover, the mode of reproducing audience experience necessitates working within certain representational structures, even if we attempt to rework these in order to better communicate a particular position ‘that transcends the observational and/or cognitive’ (Rose and Wylie 2011: 222). This thesis therefore draws on a wide range of landscape scholarship, working between representational and non-representation approaches, to argue that

‘landscape is best understood as a kind of produced, lived and represented space’ (Mitchell 1996: 572-82).

YSP can informatively be considered a landscape installation. Indeed YSP has been cultivated to create an experience where the encounter with sculpture is symbiotically connected to a physical engagement with the landscape. As an interpretative panel in the lower fields reads:

The setting is more landscape than parkland, requiring a walk through the countryside to appreciate the full power of each work. The element of surprise is the key to the siting of these works: [Henry] Moore said that sculpting is like a journey, “providing different views as you return.” (YSP, Interpretation Panel, lower fields, 2002)

The mediation presents the relationship between the landscape design and siting of the artwork to maximise the ‘the full power’ of the visitor’s experience. Taking a longer historical view, Bretton Park was landscaped in the eighteenth century as a pleasure ground in a picturesque style. No plans exist of suggested improvements, however there are letters and planting histories which detail the work of gardeners Richard Woods (Cowell 2009: 26; Wright 2001: 19) and Robert Marnock (Wright 2001: 58; Marnock 1845). Bretton Hall, under the ownership of Sir Thomas Wentworth, later Blackett, had entered a new phase of wealth in the mid-eighteenth century when capital amassed through agricultural rents was greatly enhanced by the inheritance of iron, lead and coal interests alongside estates in Northumberland (Wright 2001: 5). Nevertheless, in comparison to the wealth of related lines of the Wentworth family, such as nearby at Wentworth Woodhouse, then the largest country house in Europe, Bretton Hall was of a lesser order (Wright 2001: 7). Brown and his ambitious predecessor Humphrey Repton, who set out to be ‘the leading landscape gardener of his time’ (Daniels 1999: 1), were highly fashionable (Cowell 2009: 106). The expense attached with commissioning Brown and Repton might explain why Bretton Estate was landscaped by lesser known gardeners in a comparable style with ‘a strong emphasis on the naturalistic and artfully informal’ (Cowell 2009: xix), and yet with less unified results. As Fiona Cowell writes in the first monograph dedicated to Richard Woods:

Whereas Brown was said to be happiest – most successful – in his interpretation of naturalistic embellished landscape, Woods was surely

happiest in the gardens round the house, where he could combine pleasure ground with kitchen garden with flower garden, threaded through with winding paths and looking over a neat pleasure park with intimate pieces of water. He was far more skilful on a small than on a large scale, and indeed, represents a seeming contradiction: a practitioner of a version of the 'English landscape garden' who was more comfortable with the pleasure ground than the park. (Cowell 2009: 163)

Though impressive there is an aesthetic disjuncture to the Bretton Estate evident with the siting of Bretton Hall on a gradient in the middle of the pleasure ground. In 1829 distinguished botanist, journalist and author, J. C. Loudon, visited Bretton and subsequently noted:

The grand misfortune is that there is no marked natural situation for the house; this building with the whole of the offices, splendid hot-houses, and gardens, is placed on an inclined plane or bank of considerable steepness, but with scarcely any indulgence or irregularity (Loudon 1829: 682).

Above the north of Bretton Hall lay the Italian garden with one of two small ponds remaining today. A terrace divides the Italian garden and Kitchen garden which forms an arc along the Bothy Wall, a heated stone wall for the growth of fruits. Due south of the Bretton Hall are the parks which open onto the Upper and Lower lake allowing the vista up the banks of Longside. In another area of the estate, due east of Bretton Hall, was Broad Ing or the New Deer Park, now the Country Park. YSP today reflects the distinct sections of the park indicated through Cowell's description of Wood's landscaping style. The lack of a unified plan for the landscaping of the entire park can also be accounted for through the number of improvements on the parklands conducted over a duration spanning the mid-eighteenth century to late nineteenth century. In recognition of the different areas within the landscape, YSP represents itself in the free *Visitor Guide Map* (YSP 2010b), as having various 'zones'. These 'zones' are colour coded to enable visitors to break up their visit depending on the duration of time they have to navigate the site (as shown in Chapter 1, Fig. 1.1).

This English garden heritage interrogates the distinction between 'nature' and 'art' in the landscapes of historic estates, especially pertinent in the case of the sculpture park in the Bretton Estate. The historic connectedness between landscape design and art

is further elucidated upon with the careful artistry of the plans for the improvement of country estates, most recognisably the monochrome drawings of Brown and Repton's 'Red Book' watercolours with overlays (Daniels 1999: 4-5; Cowell 2009: 107-8). Discernable in these 'pictures' is the important notion of variety in the picturesque landscape where distinctive parts of the scene come together as a unified whole. These pictures worked as artistic models to be scaled up for the finished 'object'. However as Yve-Alain Bois contends, there is a contradiction in the theory of Brown, Repton and their peers when they treat the scenic garden with its 'promenade, temporal experience' and landscape painting 'as though they were one and the same thing' (Bois 1984: 43). It is vital to the dynamics of the picturesque that the landscape is not just a picture but should be designed as something to travel through, as described by aristocratic amateur gardener and writer on the picturesque, Uvedale Price: 'by a partial and uncertain concealment [the garden] excites and nourishes curiosity' (Price 1810: 249). Indeed for Bois, the picturesque garden is an escape from the pictorial and the visual, into the embodied experience of moving in the landscape, 'for the picturesque is above all a struggle against the reduction "of all terrains to the flatness of a sheet of paper"' (Bois 1984: 37). This is also the case with sculptures. Indeed when sculpture is displayed in site then appreciating the relationship between the dimensions of the artwork and variety within the landscape is essential to understanding the dynamics of YSP. Quoting artist Richard Serra on the relationship between the landscape, his sculpture and the spectator, Bois writes, 'the sculptures "point to the indeterminacy of the landscape. The sculptural elements act as barometers for reading the landscape."' Or again, "The dialectic of walking and looking into the landscape establishes the sculptural experience" (Bois 1984: 34).

This principle is encapsulated in the title of YSP's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration publication *Landscape for Art* (YSP 2008). The exceptional opportunity to bring designed landscape and large scale sculpture into conversation was recognised by Founding Director, Peter Murray. In an interview, Murray reflected on the distinctive spatial capabilities of the site that would enable a sculpture park:

As soon as we started I recognised the potential of this place, this location. I knew it would work. I don't say that with any arrogance. It was very, very, very hard work. But the potential of the site was obvious from the outset.  
(Interview with Murray 2010)

The ‘potential’ of the site lay in its capabilities to play host to a range of works, and to offer a rich variety of experiences as the visitor walks through it:

One thing which is particular to this landscape is as you walk through it the experiences change and that’s to do with the quality of the landscape. It’s designed in that way. Sometimes to artists it’s a challenge to take on that landscape, that scale of it. But if you walk around the landscape and get to know it, there’s lots of intimate areas too... I think the variety, the beauty, the range of different spaces make it probably one of the best sites for sculpture in the country. (Interview with Murray 2010)

This critical relationship between site and artwork is explored by Miwon Kwon. Tracing the genealogy of ‘site-specific’ art, Kwon examines site specificity ‘not exclusively as an artistic genre’ but as a ‘peculiar cipher of art and spatial politics’ (Kwon 2002: 2). She traces three key stages of site-specific theory and practice since the late 1960s with recognition that ‘the paradigms are outlined as competing definitions that operate in overlapping ways in past and current site-orientated art’ (Kwon 2002: 4). Emerging from the lessons of Minimalism, site-specific art was initially informed by a phenomenological or experiential understanding of site which took the site as ‘a tangible reality’, and ‘whether interruptive or assimilative’, the work ‘gave itself up to its environmental context, being formally determined or directed by it’ (Kwon 2002: 12). Here the ‘site-specific turn’ is invested with a move from the ‘disembodied eye’ to ‘an inextricable, indivisible relationship between the work and its site, [which] demanded the physical presence of the viewer for the work’s completion’ (Kwon 2002: 11-12). A second strand, represented by artists including Daniel Buren, Hans Haacke and Robert Smithson, variously conceived the site ‘not only in physical and spatial terms but as a *cultural* framework defined by the institutions of art’ (Kwon 2002: 13). The epistemological challenge effected through foregrounding the cultural framework in site-specific art not only shifts meaning from ‘within the art object to the contingencies of its context’, but acts to ‘challenge the “innocence” of space’ (Kwon 2002:12-13). This highlights the ways in which the spaces of presentation serve an ideological function in a controlled environment. More recent works, perhaps in critique of the claustrophobic ‘cultural confinement of art (and artists) via institutions’ chart a move to site-orientated practices in non-art spaces, to more ‘public realms’ (Kwon 2002: 3).

Kwon places into a trinity the situated and embodied positionality of the viewer, the art work and the site, in order to draw out the importance of context in reading art's meaning. A student of Rosalyn Deutsche, site-specificity is conceived by Kwon, in Deutsche's terms, as 'urban-aesthetic' or 'spatial-discourse' (Kwon 2002: 2). That is she 'seeks to frame site specificity as the cultural mediation of broader social, economic and political processes that organise urban life and public space' (Kwon 2002: 3; Deutsche 1996: 1). Notably although Kwon situates the application of her 'spatio-political' (Kwon 2002:2) work on site specificity in the urban domain, she nevertheless acknowledges a shared critical heritage in site specific work created in non-urban contexts: '[w]hether inside the white cube or out in the Nevada desert, whether architectural or landscape-orientated, site specific art initially took the site as the actual location' (2002: 11). It is a point of interest that the reference to the Nevada desert recalls another monumental work of art sited in the desert, Turrell's *Roden Crater*. A network of tunnels and chambers constructed within an extinct volcano, *Roden Crater* will allow visitors to observe celestial phenomena from the Arizona desert when it opens to the public from 2012 or 2013 (Saito 2011: 507), depending on fundraising and construction schedules (Roden Crater 2011: n/p). Started in 1979, *Roden Crater* is Turrell's largest and most ambitious *Skyspace*, and has led to various others sited internationally, including the Deershelter *Skyspace* at YSP. The spatio-political framework Kwon introduces around site-specificity, therefore provides a critical approach which has important and complimentary insights beyond the public spaces of the urban, relating to (also public) non-urban spaces and site works. Drawing upon case studies at YSP, this thesis argues that non-urban sited art and art institutions are also subject to the cultural mediation of social, economic and political processes recognised more widely with public art located in town and city centres.

Writing across the fields of architecture, art and cultural geography theory, Jane Rendell's notion of 'critical spatial practice' explores the new territories interdisciplinary thinking and practice can help to map. To respond to this new 'exploded' terrain she writes:

We need to understand artworks as products of specific processes, of production and reception, that operate within a further expanded and interdisciplinary field, where terms are not defined by one discipline but by many simultaneously. (Rendell 2008: 43).

Making complimentary connections to those drawn by Kwon, Rendell references the conceptual, land and performance artists of the 1960s and 1970s that provided a 'historical perspective on our current condition in terms of both art and architectural discourse and wider critical, cultural and spatial debates' (Rendell 2008: 3). Rendell takes seriously Kwon's concern of 'undifferentiated serialization' where one site is taken after another without examining the differences between them foregrounding, after Homi Bhabha's concept of 'relational specificity', an 'understanding of site that is specific but also relational' (Rendell 2008: 16). In a departure from Kwon, Rendell investigates non-urban spaces, in the form of the 'site' (outside the gallery space) which operates in relation to the 'non-site' (the gallery space). This develops the dialectic of Robert Smithson's theory of site and non-site developed in the 1960s and 1970s, where the site was the artwork and the non-site was the display of documentation of the artwork. Rendell incisively identifies this dialectic as 'the first exploration of relational sites through art practice' (Rendell 2008: 16).<sup>1</sup> Developing an understanding of the specific relationship between site, work and public engagement, citing the work of Nick Kaye (2000) and Alex Cole (2000), she considers how public art sites are interacted with and represented:

These new understandings do not define sites in terms of geometry but in relation to the cultural and spatial practices that produce them, including the actions of those who investigate them (Rendell 2008: 15).

This understanding of the production of site through specific cultural and spatial practices, highlights the role of the organisation in shaping audiencing of site art. It further implicates the practices of the audience in determining the context and content of the artwork, alongside the cultures of representation engendered in part by the researcher him or herself.

At the core of understanding the connectedness of the 'spatio-political' (2002: 2) framework of Kwon's site and art, the 'inbetween spaces' of Rendell's 'relational sites' (2008: 16) and Bois' 'experience of reciprocity, of mutuality' between persons, objects and landscape (1984: 58), is Doreen Massey's notion of relational space. For Massey, space is not an empty container, or 'the dead, the fixed' (Foucault 1980: 70), rather

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed the relationship between the gallery space and other spaces beyond the white walls is practised aside from site specific work. Functions of museums and galleries involve work which are often 'off site' in order to perform socially engaged practices, such as outreach and education work.

space is, 'a product of relations-between' (Massey 2005:9). Space is 'always in the process of being made. It is never finished; never closed' (Massey 2005: 9). Massey's relationality intends to 'liberate space from closure and stasis... Instead set it into chains alongside openness, heterogeneity and liveliness, new and productive life' (Massey 2005: 19). Indeed relationality, as social relations, always comprises the temporal alongside the spatial. Massey outlines that space must always be conceptualised with time, indeed 'the aim should be to think always in terms of space-time':

What is at issue is not social phenomena in space but both social phenomena and space as constituted out of social relations, that the spatial is social relations 'stretched out.' (Massey 1994: 2)

Certainly at YSP the spatial dimensions are constituted through a shifting politics of social relations. Indeed; '[t]he fact is... that social relations are never still; they are inherently dynamic' (Massey 1994: 2). As relationships between institutions and persons who have resided on the Bretton Estate have changed over time, alongside economic and political processes, so too have the spatial coordinates of the landscape. Once central geographically, politically and economically to the Estate, Bretton Hall now lies empty waiting for contractors to sign a deal to transform the Grade II\* listed building into a hotel. The contemporary power house of the site is now YSP's Visitor Centre, to which the main entry point to the site has been relocated to ease visitor access. The central offices are connected to the Visitor Centre: this is the loci from where artists are commissioned; new staff are contracted; and existing staff are paid. Further, the new heart of the estate contains the main trading quarters, including the YSP cafe and YSP shop, selling branded merchandise, quality design, and crafts. As YSP's website advertises: 'YSP's Centre and entrance is a landmark building, designed by Feilden Clegg Bradley Architects, that offers a restaurant, shop, resource area, auditorium and conference spaces in a vibrant and contemporary setting' (YSP 2010g: n/p)(Fig.3.1). The contemporary design of the Visitor Centre with geometric lines of stainless steel, wood and glass signals a break from Greek revival architecture, a prestige style synonymous with grand nineteenth century national museums and galleries. Above all, it signals a break in style and function from the Palladian architecture of Bretton Hall.



Fig 3.1. YSP Visitor Centre designed by architects Feilden Clegg Architects, opened in 2002. Photograph: YSP. Reproduced with permission.

Pertinently, Massey has identified that: ‘Since social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power and meaning and symbolism, this view of the spatial is as an ever-shifting geometry of power and signification’ (Massey 1994: 3). The interconnectedness between social relations, axes of power and symbolism are at the core of tensions between the overlapping spatial coordinates of Bretton Estate and YSP.

In what follows I draw from Bois, Kwon and Rendell in acknowledging that accounts for how humans, art and landscape relate need to incorporate an appreciation of the lived experience of being and moving in site. The spaces of YSP are identified as ‘inherently dynamic’ (Massey 1994: 2), informed through a heritage which lives on, acts and shapes present concerns of the YSP organisation, those who visit and those who reside near the estate. By considering the perspectives of workers, local residents and YSP’s various publics I write into discourse narratives which have been obscured from view, and which add rich layers to YSP’s palimpsest of cultural geographies.

### 3.2 YSP organisation and its workers

In order to understand YSP it is vital to gain insights into how the spatial coordinates of the site are produced and utilised. Notwithstanding wider influence born from media

commentary on the visual arts, on a more localised level audience experience of YSP is mediated through the architecture of the site and the available interpretation materials. The free *Visitor Guide Map* is available from the Visitor Centre with colour coded maps sited on the wall of the centre and overlooking the vista across the Country Park. Inside the cover of the *Visitor Guide Map* a mission statement introduces YSP:

Yorkshire Sculpture Park is an international gallery for modern and contemporary sculpture that challenges, inspires and delights. A visit to YSP is an exploration of art and landscape for everyone. (YSP 2010b: 1)

On the back of the *Visitor Guide Map* it adds: ‘Yorkshire Sculpture Park is an outdoor art gallery’ (YSP 2010b: 4). Further descriptions include ‘the visitor can enjoy walks in 500 acres of beautiful landscape’; ‘visit four unique indoor galleries for changing exhibitions; and ‘[t]ake part in a dynamic programme of events and activities’ (YSP 2010b: 4). For visitors navigating the extensive site, the map represents the different areas of YSP into colour coded ‘zones’. These zones are then engaged in various orders depending on the duration of the intended visit with suggested itineraries printed next to the map (see Chapter 1, Fig.1.1)

The YSP website also describes the hybrid functions of YSP. The website uses the same descriptive coordinates referenced in the *Visitor Guide Map*, however they are alternatively formulated:

YSP is an extraordinary place that sets out to challenge, inspire, inform and delight. With four indoor galleries and 500 acres of 18th century parkland, it is an international centre for modern and contemporary art, experienced and enjoyed by thousands of visitors each year. (YSP 2010k: n/p)

YSP advertises a mission statement ‘to challenge, inspire, inform and delight’, which, reading across its published material, is referenced in relation to its indoor galleries, an eighteenth-century landscape and parklands, its international standing, and the importance of its sculpture displays. It is relevant that the YSP organisation does not have one ‘party line’ on how it brands itself. Instead even within the same document several descriptions coalesce. YSP is both internationally-facing *and* grounded in the Yorkshire landscape; YSP aims to challenge *and* delight; YSP advertises its indoor galleries *and* simultaneously defines itself as ‘an outdoor art gallery’ (YSP 2010d: n/p).

Further, information plaques are sited throughout the grounds of YSP, however the placement is so discreet as to escape the notice of a number of visitors. This signposting is designed to operate in synergy with the cultivated landscape and siting of sculpture to create ‘an extraordinary place that sets out to challenge, inspire, inform and delight’ (YSP 2010k: n/p). The concept for the panels and maps is to provide further guidance for those visitors who want it without interfering with other visitors who would like a self-directed experience of the work and landscape. Yet the balance between enabling access for less knowledgeable or confident visitors to the sculpture park while maintaining a challenging experience for both new *and* established audiences is difficult to achieve. Indeed the mission statement and branding of YSP points towards a multiplicity of functions, targeted towards a diverse range of publics that its liminal position as landscape, public park, artspace, local heritage site and place of work attracts. Additionally it provides insight into the scale of an operation that involves numerous teams with various remits.

This section will now turn to the vantage points of those who comprise the working body of the organisation. This will provide insights into what YSP means to longstanding employees who have helped to build and sustain YSP, and who represent it daily. The first example is drawn from the Curator of the Archive, Angela de Courcy Bower, who writes in her article ‘Gallery without walls’: ‘[t]he varied and beautiful landscape provides an ideal setting for the siting of sculptures out of doors and Britain’s first open air gallery’ (de Courcy Bower 1988: 10). More recently, Clare Lilley, Director of Programmes, directly contradicts de Courcy Bower in how she chooses to identify the sculpture park: ‘I don’t like the term ‘Gallery without walls’ (Interview with Lilley 2010). Lilley emphasises the unique quality of working and curating sculpture in landscape rather than in the quodian white walled gallery space. In an interview she explains:

There are lots of different examples of sculpture parks around the world, much older than this one, but generally speaking those are museums which have spilled outdoors and this is a very different concept. This was curating temporary exhibitions in the landscape. (Interview with Lilley 2010)

Lilley also associates outdoor sculpture with providing a setting which enables wider access for new audiences: ‘I had the desire to work somewhere without barriers to walking through the front door’ (Interview with Lilley 2010). Yet, she also emphasises

the professional issues of working with and displaying sculpture outdoors, given the large scales of work and landscape: '[t]he Sculpture Park makes challenges for people; the only equivalence I can think of is the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern' (Interview with Lilley 2010). Notably, while the setting of YSP is described as 'unique' due to its landscape, its 'challenges' of scale are compared to the best known and most visited of contemporary art spaces, Tate Modern. Indeed, while Lilley states the 'landscape is the blood of the place', she acknowledges the cultural aura of the indoor gallery, '[there was] difficulty of getting credibility within the status quo in the U.K.; this was achieved with the Underground Gallery as it had 'white walls' (Interview with Lilley 2010). The persistent importance of the indoor gallery for critical recognition can thereby be seen to materially and discursively act upon an artspace established as an alternative space to experience sculpture outdoors. Departing from this approach, Murray connects the spatial interface between the galleries and landscape of YSP as key to its importance:

To have that relationship between the indoor and outdoor is very rare... [At the David Nash launch] we were talking about, with some of the press in London, the way in which you can have a gallery where you can show some of the works, and from the gallery you can see some of the landscape and from the landscape you can see the gallery. That sort of interaction is terrific and there's very few places where you can do that. (Interview with Murray 2010)

Murray, Lilley and de Courcy Bower connect the politics of display, especially concerns of enabling public access, with the constructed environment of YSP. Moreover, these coordinates are structured in relation to a London-centric visual arts establishment. Read together Lilley and de Courcy Bower point towards the convergence of the personal and the political where the appreciation of YSP on a professional platform is aligned yet the mode of expression is divergent. Nevertheless, choice of terminology aside, all three accounts accord with the conceptualisation of YSP as a gallery or centre for art. With invested passion, de Courcy Bower states:

The reputation for siting sculpture, the quality of exhibitions, the commitment to providing opportunities for artists and the pioneering of policies designed to increase the enjoyment and understanding of

contemporary sculpture have earned YSP strong national and international recognition. (de Courcy Bower 1988: 12)

Speaking contemporaneously, Lilley affirms the importance of YSP: ‘YSP is one of the best museums and galleries in the country’ (Interview with Lilley 2010).

*i) Bringing the Estate back in*

While landscape is evoked in the interviews and publications I have detailed above, direct reference to the Bretton Estate is remarkably absent. If we turn to two other accounts from long term workers, the history of the land which YSP leases is brought more sharply into perspective. Dave Edwards, Head Gardener, in an oral history recording describes his memories of working for Bretton Hall College and living with his family on the estate:

I started as the Propagator Gardener in 1981. It must have been about 1984/85 I got promoted as one of the Head Gardeners at Bretton Hall. In fact I was the only gardener at the start of the sculpture park, at that time. Basically it was me, on my own, doing the lot. I can’t remember the exact acreage but we hadn’t got Bretton Country Park, we hadn’t got Longside. I used to live at Dam Head Cottage at the end of the lake, for 12 years...My children were brought up down in Dam Head. (Interview with Edwards 2010)

Edwards describes the division of the Bretton Estate when it was under the ownership of several different organisations, persons and trusts. He also reveals the movement of land and workers, charting the growth and expansion of YSP in the mid-noughties with the leasing of the Country Park and Longside from Wakefield Council. Through the vantage point of a gardener who had lived and worked on the Estate for almost 30 years, Bretton Estate is positioned as a place of residence alongside a place of rich personal and social history. Edwards describes his ‘small farm with chickens, goats, we even had a bull,’ which he kept when he lived on site on the south side of the lower lake, Dam Head, Oxley Bank (Fig. 3.2), and acknowledges ‘you couldn’t imagine that now’ (Interview with Edwards 2010). The success and development of YSP as a professional

large scale centre for arts has altered the more private, agricultural and personal landscape which Dave Edwards was able to cultivate for his family on site in the early



Fig 3.2. Head Gardener, Dave Edwards with daughter and bull on their family holdings at Dam Head, Oxley Bank, Bretton Estate, c. 1984. Reproduced with permission.

1980s. With the development of YSP, new uses for the land were brought in and over time other practices, such as families living on the estate, become part of the fabric of Bretton Estate's cultural heritage.

Linda Clarke, YSP retail assistant, who has 'worked here about 28 years', traces an even longer personal history with the estate (Interview with Clarke 2010). Clarke began work at 16 at Bretton Hall College, working in the catering department, and living in the hostel on campus. Arriving to work at the Bretton College at a young age, Clarke married another worker on the estate, and brought up her children on the site now occupied by the Visitor Centre and main YSP offices (Fig 3.3). Clarke, like Edwards, moved between the two dominant institutions on the estate, from employment at Bretton Hall College to YSP. Alongside the account of Edwards, Clarke provides insights into the changes to the functionality of the Estate:



Fig 3.3 Retail assistant, Linda Clarke in front of Bretton College buildings, c.1970s. Reproduced with permission.

The 60s were good years... Where we now have the Underground Gallery is where my husband practiced his golf every Saturday morning. I think my son has probably climbed every tree here. The students used to canoe on the lake (Interview with Clarke, 2010).

This quotation explains how the appearance of the site has shifted, with the Underground Gallery now built where her husband used to play golf. Furthermore, Clarke also indicates a change of policy in what was once permissible on the estate to those codes of conduct exercised now (see the YSP ‘code’ in Section 3.4). The dialectic between politics of display, that is the internal and external art spaces of YSP put in play by the curator and archivist, are shifted by the gardener and retail assistant to internal and external divisions of labour, living and recreation. Further they introduce a longer temporal frame through which the ownership and occupation of the land has changed on both a personal and political level. Through the stories of Linda and Dave an alternative history of being in the place is recorded. They excavate the recent history

of the sports, students and residencies that marked sections of the estate. Moreover through a chronological recounting of their experiences of living and working on the Estate they displace YSP as the epicentre of the site, centralising the importance of Bretton Hall College.

The distinctions of de Courcy Bower, Lilley and Murray on how to characterise the unique character of YSP, and the contrasting accounts of Edwards and Clarke on the teleology of the estate, provide examples of two different contextualities at play within the multiple cultural geographies of the Bretton Estate. The heritage, in particular the landscape, of the Estate is represented by de Courcy Bower, Lilley and Murray, as an ‘asset’ of YSP. Pertinently Barbara Kirstenblatt-Gimblett asks with relation to ‘destination culture’:

What happens when a place becomes a ‘sight to be seen’? What happens when a village, or a city, or country, becomes a museum?... Whole places are being treated as exhibits themselves (Kirstenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 448).

Kirstenblatt-Gimblett contends that the ‘tourism- heritage- museum industry’ (1998: 448) reinvents places in relation to the demands of cultural display and the cultural industry, thereby creating new cultural geographies. In the case of YSP, this invites audiences to look upon and behold the landscape as a place for the display of sculpture, or indeed, a *Landscape for Art* (YSP 2008). By reframing the landscape in terms of its wider social (and personal) historiography, Edwards and Clarke provide openings into the cultural geographies of Bretton Estate that have been obscured by the dominant narrative of YSP’s development.

### 3.3 The Heritage of YSP and Bretton Estate

YSP opened in 1977, however the documented history of the Bretton Estate stretches back to the Norman times where it was listed in William the Conqueror’s Domesday Book of 1086. The Domesday Book entry described Bretton Hall as ‘wasteland’ meaning no agricultural farming or livestock were on the land. Published histories of the Bretton Estate focus on the grand ‘power’ narratives of the gentry who developed and owned the Estate, their lead, coal and agricultural economic interests (Wright 2001; Bartle 2000[1994]), the architecture of the Bretton Hall mansion and other buildings (Wright 2001; Linstrum unknown), and the design of the parklands (Land Use

Consultants 1996, 1999; Wright 2001; Sleeman 2006; Cowell 2009). Derek Linstrum writes in his article ‘Bretton Hall History and Expansion’, the eighteenth-century was a ‘great era for house building’ with Bretton Hall rebuilt in 1720-40, following a fire in the old timber Hall (Linstrum unknown: 5). Linstrum and Wright document that the Palladian architectural style of the new Bretton Hall is likely to have been influenced from Sir William Wentworth’s six year Grand Tour of Europe. As Cyril Pearce, Wright and Linstrum accord notable architects of their respective eras, John Carr, Jeffrey Wyatt (later Sir Jeffrey Wyatville), William Atkinson and George Basevi Jnr, all played a role in creating the mansions, lodges, glass houses and follies, some of which remain in evidence today.

Richard Woods and Robert Marnock influenced the design of the landscape, opening up the vistas, damming two lakes from the River Dearne and planting a rich variety of trees in concentrated areas, or ‘clumping’ a style associated with their fashionable predecessor Brown. Linstrum accords: ‘The design of the landscape has been attributed to Lancelot “Capability” Brown, and if it cannot be proved to be his, it is greatly influenced by his manner’ (Linstrum, unknown: 4) (see Fig.3.4).

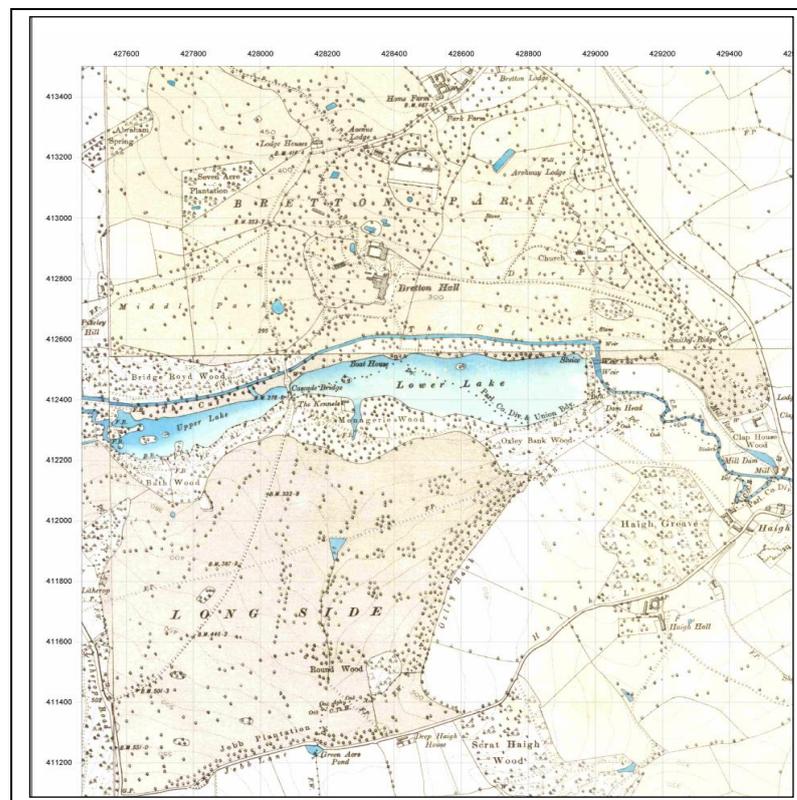


Fig 3.4 County Series Map of Bretton Estate 1891-2. Evident improvements include the Bothy Garden marked north of Bretton Hall and the Upper and Lower Lake dammed from the River Dearne.

In 1996, the Landscape Agency were commissioned to draw a 'Landscape Masterplan' and later in 2000 the 'Integrated Landscape Management Plan' (Landscape Agency 1996, 2000). These plans collated a history of the landscape and architectural features on the Bretton Estate, with recommendations on how the 500 acre estate could be reunified under the management of YSP. With evident awareness of the terminology surrounding debates around eighteenth century landscaping, Landscape Agency emphasise the cultivated design of Bretton Estate:

Visitors to Bretton Park in its heyday would have recognised its great strength and appeal as the combination of 'nature' and 'art'. They may also have recognised that nature had been cleverly manipulated through creating lakes, directing views by carefully placed tree clumps and so on. (Landscape Agency 1996: 5).

The objectives of the Integrated Landscape Management Plan were to provide recommendations to ensure the protection of the Bretton Estate's heritage for future generations. As Lynne Green writes in her essay for YSP's *Landscape For Art*: 'The underlying imperative is that the character of the Bretton Park should be preserved, while ensuring its long-term future as a public resource' (Green in YSP 2007: 21). One of the suggestions by Landscape Agency was a restoration project to include 'the acquisition of land to reassemble the original parkland' (Landscape Agency 1996: 5). This original parkland is based on the era of Lady Diana Beaumont, notorious illegitimate daughter of Sir Thomas Wentworth. Improvements under Beaumont were conducted from 1792 onwards when she inherited the estate. Wright contends,

[Beaumont] was certainly a keen, even obsessive gardener. It would be reasonable to credit her with the creation of most of the formal grounds and gardens around the house, particularly the terraces, fountains and walled gardens immediately north of the Hall. (Wright 2001: 59)

These features were built by 1810 and in evidence in the John Hall Survey of 1810 (see Fig. 3.4). Under Beaumont, Jeffrey Wyatt was commissioned to build the Camellia House to hold exotic plants. In further evidence of her passion for horticulture and displays of wealth, Beaumont commissioned a unique domed conservatory measuring

60ft in diameter and 45ft high, at a cost of £10,000. Considered to be the largest of its kind in the world at that time, the conservatory was built of iron and glass with a huge copper dome (Bartle 2000: 12). While the Camellia House exists today, the domed conservatory was sold off by Beaumont's son following his inheritance of the estate. Other 'improvements' included the continued emparkment of the Bretton Estate to curtail traffic on the road to Wakefield and the demolition of the farmstead on Longside to create an unfettered vantage from Bretton Hall across the lake. Wright contends that the mid-nineteenth century saw, '[p]robably Bretton at its best,' offering support to a style of landscape 'improvements' associated with Repton's Red Book overlays which removed workers and travellers from view (Wright 2001: 68). The heritage status of Bretton Estate is recognised through its listing on the *English Heritage Register of Historical Parks and Gardens of special interest in England* as Grade II, with Bretton Hall, the Stables, the Chapel, and Archway Lodge listed as Grade II\* (English Heritage 2011: n/p; York Archaeological Trust 1999: 3).

The division of the land was markedly different in the mid-late twentieth century to the relative cohesion the site now has under the lease of YSP. In 1948 the Second Viscount Allendale sold Bretton Hall and 260 acres of land, maintaining his residence at Bywell Hall in Northumberland. Following the auction, the mansion house was sold to West Riding County Council. In 1949, Bretton Hall became a Teacher training college specialising in music, art and drama. This teaching college in various permutations remained the central institution on the Bretton Estate until the 2000s. The Upper and Lower lake was under the control of The Bretton Lakes Nature Reserve, which was jointly managed by the College and the Yorkshire Naturalists Trust. Wakefield Council owned the Country Park. Later in 1985, The National Arts Education Archive (NAEA) was founded to considerable media attention in the purpose built Lawrence Batley Centre on the Bretton Hall Campus.

The founding of YSP marked a new phase in the development of the history of the estate:

In 1977 there was little support for contemporary sculpture; the grounds of Bretton Hall College were closed to the public and the move from private to open access raised many issues. There was no audience or public support, no staff, and just a 'one-off' grant of £1,000 from Yorkshire Arts... In the early years great patience and ingenuity were required to deal with the bureaucracy, politics and lack of funding. (Murray in YSP 2007: 7)

As Murray details, when YSP was founded it operated from Bretton Hall College and shared the colleges grounds. At this point Murray was still a Senior Lecturer at Bretton Hall College, working part time to secure the future of YSP with little initial funding or support from the local council. One of the ‘major battles and disagreements’ Murray refers to is the Education Act of 1988 and the subsequent 1992 Further and Higher Education Act which meant that assets from local authorities were transferred to independent institutions. Accordingly, Bretton Hall became an independent college and, ‘what ensued were legal issues to contend with regarding land ownership... That was very complex and took a long time to resolve’ (Interview with Murray 2010).<sup>2</sup> As a result of the Education Act, Bretton Hall and YSP became two separate institutions. YSP could no longer share the assets, including the land, of Bretton Hall College and needed to establish its own assets with finite resources. A slow period of development began from 1989 with the opening of the Bothy Garden and Cafe, the opening of the Bothy Gallery in 1990 and the launch of the Pavilion Gallery in 1991.<sup>3</sup>

In 2001, the future of Bretton Hall became unstable when it was evaluated as underperforming following a HEFCE inspection and the University of Leeds were invited to support the College. At this point there were 2,500 students attached to the campus (Bartle 2000: 16). Until 2007, YSP shared Bretton Estate with Bretton Hall College under the governance of the University of Leeds. Bretton Hall was finally closed due to financial constraints and the University of Leeds Governing Body agreed to sell the campus back to Wakefield Council, moving the School of Performance and Cultural Industries to the central Leeds-based campus. Subsequently, the Bretton Hall mansion has remained empty with no public access (Bartle 2000: 16; Fig. 3.1).

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<sup>2</sup> See Richards, H. <[Http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp](http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp)> (5 Dec 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Of a less serious order, events that demonstrated a souring of relations between Bretton Hall College and YSP in the mid 1980s include details of the ‘Ice Cream Wars’ recounted in the Head Gardener’s Diaries. Before the opening of the Bothy Cafe, YSP’s refreshments were served from the Kiosk which remains beside Kennel Block. Reportedly Bretton Hall College allowed a permit for another ice cream trader to set up and sell products poaching the punters from YSP’s vendor. An ensuing fight broke out between traders which led to the affectionate terming of the ‘Ice Cream Wars’ by long term staff members. Whether this is accurately recorded and retold by the staff of the day does not negate the importance of the story as part of the anecdotal cultural memory of the politics of the divided Estate in the 1980s and 1990s (Head Gardener Diary (1985), unpublished, University of Leeds, Special Collections).

### 3.4 Public space: Bretton Estate and YSP

If you put art in a public space whether it's a museum, whether it's a gallery, whether it's a city centre or whether it's in our beautiful landscape you've got to take responsibility for that... You've got to create a situation where a) the public has access to it, and b) [they] feel comfortable, so they can actually enjoy that experience. You have to create that potential. (Interview with Murray 2010)

Well the park is obsessed with what people shouldn't do. And that has been relevant every time I've come here. I've had arguments with the park wardens, you know, I was walking into the nature reserve one day and someone shouted at me 'get out of there'. Like that. Because I didn't fit the look of someone who he thought would be a member. (Interview with Gerald 2010)

As Kurt Iveson writes, '[To] find an audience is to make a public. It is to construct a scene through which ideas, claims, expressions and the objects through which they are articulated can circulate to others' (2007: 3). For Iveson, however, the 'scene through which ideas, claims, expressions and the objects through which they can be articulated' can circulate is unambiguously urban. 'How are cities put to work by those engaged in efforts to circulate ideas and claims to others, and how do their efforts in turn (re-) shape cities?' (Iveson 2007: 3). Murray's words clearly intersect with Iveson's procedural approach to convening publics, emphasising: '[w]e created an audience, we definitely created an audience for Yorkshire, in terms of contemporary art and sculpture' (Interview with Murray 2010). This thesis contends that by looking beyond the city, and expanding the analysis of relational space to the countryside, the notion of mobile publics can productively be applied to YSP. How are YSP's spaces put to work by those engaged in efforts to circulate ideas and claims to others, and do their efforts in turn (re-) shape the spaces of YSP and the publics it convenes? Expressly, how does YSP and its publics put its landscape to work as a sculpture park and how does the sculpture park in turn reshape the landscape and those different publics? This section will explore the contested geographies of YSP and the Bretton Estate, through exploration into how the space has been shaped to communicate the YSP 'mission' and YSP 'code.'

As the opening quotation from Murray suggests 'public space' can occupy various sites, internal, external, city centre or, more provocatively, landscape. Iveson distinguishes two central approaches for how 'public' is defined: topographical (context) and procedural (process). He problematises topographical approaches which,

‘miss the messy and dynamic urban geographies of publicness’ (Iveson 2007:6). Iveson correctly identifies that *contexts for action* (public/private) are not necessarily aligned with *kind of action* (Iveson 2007: 8-9). A public space does not necessarily make a public address, and vice versa, a public address need not be conducted in a public space. This point is exemplified by Deutsche who writes with reference to public art: ‘[p]otentially any exhibition venue is a public sphere and, conversely, the location of artworks outside privately owned galleries, in parks and plazas, or simply outdoors hardly guarantees they will address a public’ (Deutsche 1997: 59). Iveson’s procedural approach diverges from attempts to categorise what is public or private space. Usefully, public can be understood as ‘process based’. Indeed, ‘public space is understood to be any space which, through political action and public address at a particular time, becomes “the site of power, of common action coordinated through speech and persuasion”’ (Iveson 1997: 10). This draws attention to complex geographies, such as various kinds of media as public space, ‘given their role in facilitating the formation of modern and contemporary publics’ (Iveson 1997: 11). The problem of geographers tying the public sphere to bounded public urban spaces has been argued by Clive Barnett (2004: 190; also, Barnett 2008).<sup>4</sup> There is an importance to “‘stretch out’ our conception of the public to take into account the importance of a range of spatial practices to the making of publics’ (Iveson 1997: 11). This language recalls that of Massey where the spatial refers to social relations ‘stretched out’ in time (Massey 1994: 2). If the spatial is constituted through social interaction and relations, and publics are made through a range of spatial practices, then a public can be ‘created’ in and across various spaces.

While the ‘public’ context cannot be defined by the street, the square or the park, or a definitively urban context, there are nevertheless, ‘acceptable norms about ‘public’ and ‘private’ which have a strong typographical dimension’ (Iveson 1997: 14). Warner gives the example of Greek philosopher Diogenes masturbating in the streets of ancient Athens, in a kind of ‘performance criticism’ of normative ideas about public and private (Warner 2002: 14). On the Bretton Estate a comparison can be made with the transgression of normative ideas of decent public behaviour in the area of Bella Vista, to the north of the Bothy Gardens. This area was a popular area for cottaging; anonymous

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<sup>4</sup> Formative understandings of the public defined it in relation to the city and its political, print and recreational spaces, with German Sociologist Jürgen Habermas’ definition of the public centred on the salon or coffee shop and imaginings of the political debates to have taken place within (Habermas 1989[1960]).

sex in a public space between homosexual participants (Interview with Lilley 2010). The cottaging site was publically advertised on the internet, generating disdain from non-participating local residents (Interview with Mary 2010). As I was informed, dog walkers using certain areas of the site became nervous about who and what they might encounter. The actions of Diogenes worked as political critique, yet arguably connecting the cases are the ways in which they demonstrate normativity built into public spaces through the performance of certain non-normative acts. The coming together of those who practiced cottaging and dog-walking in Bella Vista reveals a clash between the different publics who convene in the spaces of YSP and how they put those spaces to use. Murray argues that the visiting public for YSP was not a pre-given prior to the founding of the sculpture park, although in the case given above other types of public were already mobilised in the area. This case study provides a lens onto the alternative publics who have performed the spaces of the park in various ways. It demonstrates that YSP convenes diverse publics with variegated, sometimes conflicting, social behaviours.

The 'complex' interweaving of private and public interests and public access to the Park is woven into the landscape of the Bretton Estate. As I have established Murray founded a sculpture park on the Bretton Estate, a private historic estate in West Bretton, West Yorkshire. While the buildings and nearby land of the Bretton Hall mansion remain sectioned off with 'no access' signs, bridlepaths and public access pathways cross the estate which enables entry to the Park all year round. The indistinct boundaries between what visitors can consider open access and private space is characterised in this excerpt from an interview with Ben, a local resident:

Ben: You come up this road, come along the main big roundabout [towards West Bretton village] and turn left towards Denby Dale. Just 100 yards down there, there's a path into Bretton that side. Then you'd come into the top of this driveway here. You know if you go into the carpark there's a bridlepath and you can go along the path through the farmer's fields. Towards Denby Dales.

SW: Is that a public rights of way?

Ben: Yes, there's a footpath. Public access.

SW: So can you access the park anytime of year if you wanted to?

Ben: Oh yes, easily, yeah. There's public rights of way. Which you can access anytime of year.

SW: So is YSP public access?

Ben: Probably not, not the YSP. Well some of it is. You can get to some of it through public rights of ways. But you can't use other areas. You can't get into the [Visitor Centre]. (Interview with Ben 2010)

Another local resident from West Bretton claims villagers had privileges which meant they could gain access to the Bretton Estate when it was a 'private' country estate: 'People from the village have always had access to walk through the parkland, at one time before the sculpture park and the college were around people didn't have access over it but the village people did' (Interview with Mary 2010). This is supported by evidence from a set of interviews conducted by Pearce in West Bretton, where villagers describe special privileges of access such as skating on the ice of the lakes during winter and walking on the grounds during warmer weather (Pearce 1981).

As Murray has described the acquisition of land by YSP was a gradual and often politically charged process:

At the beginning when we first started we didn't have all this land, we just had one area which was near the Camellia House. So it's been a bit like a patchwork quilt. We've added areas as we've moved along...We didn't start with 500 acres, we gradually acquired it. (Interview with Murray 2010)

In the teleology of YSP, the Country Park was acquired late in 2004. The Country Park provides an exemplary case study through which to draw out how the changing land ownership put the land to differing usages. In turn this manipulated the presentation of the site and behaviour codes sanctioned on the site.

Under the Country Park Act of 1968, YSP is listed as a Country Park by Natural England.<sup>5</sup> Lambert, in his history of the Country Park, records the binary relationship between the growth in mobility and leisure which precipitated the creation of country

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<sup>5</sup> Country Parks were established as a result of the 1968 Countryside Act and there are currently more than 400 sites that call themselves Country Parks in England. They are reportedly visited by over 70 million visitors a year, see: [http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/countrysideparks/](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/countryside/countrysideparks/).

parks for urban workers. This perceived necessity to create Country Parks had a dual function to protect the ‘deep countryside’ or ‘for safeguarding existing parkland’ (Lambert 2006: 47).

As a result it is noticeable that Country Parks, the bulk of which were laid out before 1987, where located in historic parkland, rarely cover the complete designed landscape or anything like it. Many - for example Cannon Hall near Barnsley - extend to only a small part of the parkland, with the result that they have contributed to fragmented ownership and its concomitant problems. (Lambert 2006: 48)

Canon Hall shares the south west boundary of Bretton Estate. The division of the estate which Lambert describes for Canon Hall was also enacted at Bretton Hall, where only the Country Park was made for public access. Bretton Hall, Cannon Hall and nearby Wentworth Castle – which historically belonged to another wing of the West Bretton Wentworth clan – were brought in the 1950s, much earlier than the 1968 Country Park Act, by their respective councils (Lambert 2006: 48).<sup>6</sup> This also meant that in addition to the bridlepaths and public access paths which cross the Estate, Wakefield Council enabled public access to Bretton Country Park prior to this coming under the lease of YSP. While this does not undermine the claims of YSP that it opened public access to parts of the estate, it does nuance the assertion that, ‘in 1977 it was not open to the public and now we have 300,000 visitors, or thereabouts, a year’ (Interview with Murray 2010). Perceptions of the ‘publicness’ of the estate and the impact of YSP on this ‘publicness’ need to be related cautiously to particular areas, or zones, in what is now the integrated park, with awareness of the chronology of access. Indeed prior to 1977, the Country Park had its own visiting public, albeit not an ‘arts’ specific audience nor necessarily a supportive public for the development of a sculpture park.

Notable publics already visiting the Country Park were walkers and dog owners. The leaflet, *City of Wakefield Met District Council, Bretton Country Park, Footpath Trail* details that there are ‘public footpath’ trails on site and architectural features which could be of interest to the walker ‘leaving it to visitors to determine the one(s) to employ’ (Wakefield District Council 1999: 2). The plan on the leaflet shows ‘the park itself’; ‘points of interest on the Nature Trail’; and the ‘footpath route leading from the

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<sup>6</sup> This added to the momentum for the Country Park Act to be passed. (Lambert 2006:49).

Park' (Wakefield District Council 1999: 2-3). As the Natural England Country Code states:

By law, you must control your dog so that it does not disturb or scare farm animals or wildlife. On most areas of open country and common land, known as 'access land' you must keep your dog on a short lead between 1 March and 31 July, and all year round near farm animals. (Natural England Country Code 2004)

On public paths, however, the owner does not have to put a dog on a lead at all 'as long as it is under close control' (Natural England Country Code 2004). However, YSP notifies on the 'Visit' section of their website:

We welcome caring dog owners and dogs have access to over 350 acres at YSP. For health and safety reasons, however, dogs are not permitted in the buildings or Bothy and Formal Gardens, with the exception of assistance dogs. *Please abide by the Countryside Code and local bye-laws: dogs must be kept on leads and under control at all times.* (YSP 2010i: n/p)

At YSP, in the Country Park there are sheep who graze in the summer months however there are no livestock in winter. According to the Country Code, while dogs should be kept under 'close control' they are allowed off their leads on public paths and 'access land' where there is no farm animals and they are obedient. Therefore YSP can be seen through its 'Rules of Conduct' as exercising a discretionary set of social codes at odds with public rights as set out in the Countryside Code.

The reason for this is clear through YSP's 'Code'. YSP's official documentation is keen to identify the Country Park, alongside the rest of its leased land as an 'outdoor gallery':

Yorkshire Sculpture Park is an outdoor gallery. We want your visit to be memorable and enjoyable. In order to get the most out of your visit, please follow the YSP *code*:

- Children must be supervised at all times
- Look and touch, but do not climb or sit on outdoor sculpture - you may damage the sculpture and yourself

- Picnic in designated picnic sites only
- Barbecues are not allowed
- No ball games, kite flying, tree climbing, skating or skateboarding
- Use litter bins provided
- Cycles on main roadways only
- Horse riding on bridlepath only
- Cameras only permitted outdoors and for private use
- Close all gates and be aware of livestock
- No food or drink in galleries. (YSP 2010j: n/p *my emphasis*)

This determines the difference between the outdoor spaces of a park where ball games would be permitted and the outdoor spaces of YSP where children are not permitted to play games.

Wakefield Council details on their website: ‘Bretton Country Park is part of the estate once attached to Bretton Hall and is also home to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and a nature reserve’ (Wakefield Council 2010: n/p). This implies that YSP is part of the wider Bretton Country Park. However in practice YSP manages the whole parklands of the Bretton Country Park, and the Nature Reserve exercising their own rules of conduct.<sup>7</sup> Confirming this, despite the public access paths and bridlepaths, YSP advertises opening times to the ‘open air’ sections of parklands:

Summer: Galleries + indoor facilities 10am-5pm / Open air 10am-6pm

Winter: Galleries + indoor facilities 10am-4pm / Open air 10am-5pm

YSP is closed 24th - 25th December inclusive. (YSP 2010e: n/p)

The politics of the estate and its recent near reunification has simplified issues of who manages which areas. However the question of public rights to access public footpaths, bridlepaths and country parks following the Country Code of Practice, is in a degree of conflict with the YSP control of the land through opening times, seasonal holidays and locally inscribed codes for visitor behaviour. While a much greater area of land has been opened to public access, YSP’s mission statement (Section 3.2) and YSP’s ‘code’ have changed the purpose of the parkland from recreational area to an outdoor gallery.

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<sup>7</sup> The only area which is still owned and managed privately from YSP is Bretton Hall, and its surrounding buildings, and the N.A.E.A. with the exception of the Camellia House.

Ben who had been visiting the Bretton Estate with his family since he was five years old reflected on the changing design of the park:

It's become a lot more sculpture orientated with this building being built [the Visitor Centre in 2002]. It's become more of a sculpture display area. You still have all the Country Park but it seems to have more sculpture in it than I remember from my younger days. (Interview with Ben 2010)

This 'sculpture orientated' place is physically signposted through the 'YSP Code' which is mounted on a large sign to the left of the Archway main access road alongside the big yellow YSP banner which runs across the top of the Country Park. While a rebranding of the Bretton Country Park to YSP, keeping the original name to refer to a 'zone' within YSP, may appear to be a question of semantics, through the YSP 'code' expectations of visitor behaviour and conduct have been reformulated. The assimilation of the Bretton Country Park into the wider functionality of YSP, and the aegis of an outdoor art gallery, brings into question how public perceptions and engagements with the estate have responded to the change (Section 3.4).

Utilising comparisons between the Greek agora, or marketplace, and American parks, commons, marketplaces and squares, Don Mitchell brilliantly captures the normative and exclusionary principles of 'public space', which are '[n]ever simply places of free, unmediated interaction, however; they were just as often places of exclusion' (Mitchell 1995: 438). In the Greek agora citizenship was permitted to 'free, non-foreign men' and 'denied to slaves, women and foreigners' (Mitchell 1995:108-127). Meanwhile Mitchell notes in the contemporary 'public park', there is 'a desire to sweep the homeless from visibility,' also for perceived 'reasons of order' (Mitchell 1995: 440). The aegis of maintaining social order legitimises certain codes for 'appropriate' behaviour in public and eliminates others. Mitchell contends that green belts increasingly opened around cities, or in the comparable case of YSP's Country Park as a retreat from the city, are open recreationally to the 'public', yet they are still subject to patrolled codes of conduct. Indeed there is a difference between 'open' spaces using the name 'public' and the political function of public space:

In each case open space serves functional and ideological roles that differ from political public spaces. It is rare that open spaces such as these are designed or appropriated to fulfil the market and civic functions that mark

the public space of the city. More typically, these open spaces share certain characteristics with pseudo-public spaces. Restrictions on behaviour and activities are taken for granted; prominent signs designate appropriate uses and outline rules concerning where one may walk, ride, or gather. These are highly regulated spaces. (Mitchell 1995: 444)

I have shown by use of Iveson that the ‘publics’ and therefore the ‘publicness’ of YSP cannot be geographically bounded. Mitchell makes a pertinent point, however, on the distinctive functional and ideological role of the park as a place for public recreation, education and commerce in a sanctified environment. The market and civic points of congress in the park are situated in the public space of the Visitor Centre, which operates like a mall with a presence of security, cafe and shop assistants regulating the space. Outside in the park itself, wardens patrol to ensure no damage is made to sculptures, the architecture and land. The functionality of art gallery ascribed to the Bretton Estate has enabled the inscription of behavioural codes which are overseen by YSP.

YSP has worked hard to make its own publics through a careful choreography of its material spaces, media engagements and off site community projects. Instances include mail outs, hosting media open days and evening events, education projects, outreach work in the regional and international communities, alongside launching profiles on new internet web 2.0 platforms such as Facebook and Flickr. These combine both site and non-site elements, working with a relational connection between the spaces of YSP and the Bretton Estate, and the procedural approach of public address across wider geographies through a range of spatial practices. However, the contested geographies exemplified by the Country Park are indicative of divided politics on how the park today should function, what the material presentation of the park should be, and what behaviours ought to be permitted on site. The reaction against this inscription of the space as an artscape is evident in the quotation from Gerald, a local resident, provided at the start of this chapter, ‘[w]ell the park is obsessed with what people shouldn’t do... And that has been relevant every time I’ve come here’ (Interview with Gerald 2010). The park has multiple publics which have been mobilised at different times in the trajectory of the estate and which have various, divergent understandings of the signification of YSP and its landscape. These different understandings carry important ramifications for how the space is represented and acted upon by those who control and those who play audience to the site.

### 3.5 Public perceptions of the geographies of YSP

It was always a big open space to go walking in rather than somewhere to come and look at sculpture. (Interview with Ben 2010)

During an in-depth interview, one participant who had lived in the village of West Bretton since birth describes the significance of Bretton Estate:

Mary: All the older houses in the village were built for the employees of Bretton Hall either as farms or working actually at the mansion house, cleaners and for the maids, and those kinds of things, for the Hall. So West Bretton village only exists because of the park, not the sculpture park, but Bretton Hall.

SW: Have you visited the estate over a number of years?

Mary: Yes, in different guises... I have always known it: as a child to go down and play in the park; and an adult walking round the parkland; and an adult working at Bretton Hall. And visiting the sculpture park as well because we had close connections with the sculpture park as the college. It was all part and parcel of the same thing. (Interview with Mary 2010)

The retired villager has engaged with the park over a lifetime with different needs at particular junctures of her life: in childhood she used the park 'to play'; and as an adult she used it for 'walking'; and as an economic base for employment. For this resident the Estate is 'all part and parcel of the same thing', however she recognises the politics which have structured the development of the land and YSP:

Well there has been massive politics there. For of course as far as the college, to some extent, and to the village, the sculpture park was an *infiltration*. Because it wasn't there at one time and they were spoiling the landscape through putting these horrendous sculptures up. (Interview with Mary 2010)

This 'infiltration' of the sculpture park altered the known, familiar landscape through the erection of 'horrendous sculptures'. The term 'infiltration' is particularly

evocative for it captures a perception of the sculpture park as actively establishing itself in the college, before growing and dominating the landscape. This account infuses the expansion of YSP with an aesthetic and political agenda which forms a counterpoint to the somewhat organic narratives of YSP's development expounded by Murray, for example, 'I had this idea of developing sculpture in the grounds which eventually evolved into a sculpture park' (Interview with Murray 2010).

This local resident's perspective contrasts with that of the visitor who uses YSP in main part for the sculpture:

Anna: If it wasn't for the sculpture I don't think we would come. It's a long way to come for a park that isn't otherwise all that special, it's a beautiful park but it wouldn't be worth an hours drive.

Lucie: Yes, it would be just a park. It's certainly the sculpture which makes it unusual. (Interview with Anna and Lucie March 2010)

This dialogue is an inversion of the geographies of Bretton Estate articulated by the life-long local resident, Mary. For Mary the significance and character of the Estate was established prior to YSP, and the sculpture park disrupted the function and appearance of the site, at least until familiarity and acceptance was gained over a period of time. For Anna and Lucie, however, more recent visitors to the park, the distinguishing asset which attracts them for a day out are the sculptures. Interestingly, while recognised as 'beautiful' the landscape is not considered 'all that special.' However these oppositional positions actually hold a shared approach to interpreting the coordinates of the park. For Mary, Anna and Lucie the artworks and the landscape are identified independently of one other, each with their constituent features. These formal approaches where context and art object are assessed separately from each other diverge from the more relational, experiential approaches of Bois, Kwon and Rendell.

Another participant engages with YSP as a facility rather than centre for art or historic landscape. Belinda writes in the important regional nexus point of YSP:

Yes, I've been a lot. And to me, I suppose it's this cafe area. Not so much now but for my working life, I often used to use this as a key meeting point for work meets, because it's just off the motorway for people who live in Sheffield, or further south, and anywhere off the M1 you would meet here.

(Interview with Belinda 2009)

YSP for these four persons has widely divergent resonances: a landscape altering imposition; a place most worth visiting for sculpture in the outdoors; and a place for business meetings in Yorkshire. The examples above could each identify YSP with one or two main characteristics which justified their revisiting, however other participants emphasised the pull of a 'good day out':

Hellie: We love to come here for lunch. It's one of the favourite spots for my daughter who lives in London so we always have our lunch here. We just had a lovely day. The main gallery is closed for a new exhibition, which we were a bit disappointed by, but I can pop here anytime. We had a little potter around – myself, I've been looking at the Rhododendrons. Is there anything you've been looking at in particular, Vanessa?

Vanessa: The bronzes...

Hellie: Yes. So the idea is that after our lunch we'll wander. We want to take in – what's it – The Deershelter. We haven't been there in a while. Just have a look around... (Interview with Hellie and Vanessa, May 2010).

In this interview mother, Hellie, and daughter, Vanessa, reference the cafe, the Underground Gallery, the plants, walking, the bronze sculptures and Turrell's Deershelter *Skyspace* as the assemblage of their positive experience of YSP. Further in the interview they continued the thematic of the relationship between 'nature' and 'art' which is evaluated in relationship to their experiences of London art exhibitions:

Hellie: Also it's a lovely place to come and see art, because it's in its natural environment. It's a beautiful place anyway and it's very peaceful. It's a fantastic place to hear birds. So it's a beautiful place for nature as well as having all these beautiful objects.

Vanessa: Because in London you go and you see all these Blockbuster exhibitions and it's standing room only. I went to see the Anish Kapoor with a friend and you're pressed up against people and you just don't get that at all here. You're able to, you know, see the art.

(Interview with Hellie and Vanessa 2010)

In an evocation of Massey, Hellie and Vanessa describe the geographies of YSP as alive and relational, not that of an empty container. However the expansiveness of the site enables a communion with the artwork away from the masses: '[y]ou're able to, you know, see the art' (Interview with Vanessa May 2010). In contrast to Lilley, the Director of Programmes, the London galleries are called into reference only to emphasise the qualitative difference in an experiential engagement with YSP (not from a professional or competitive vantage point). Indeed the social context of the visit in this case is described in oppositional terms to the Blockbuster experience: '[y]ou're pressed up against people and you just don't get that at all here' (Interview with Vanessa 2010). In other words, the experience is defined *in relation* to the white cube experience.

Jessica has visited YSP since it opened in 1977 and has volunteered regularly for the organisation. She appears to struggle to find the wording for somewhere she has known and seen change over an extended period of time. In order to define YSP, Rachel articulates all the usages and attached memories she has of visiting the 'place', where:

You can combine looking at a really good collection of contemporary sculpture in the outdoors and related indoors, and it's a place where where you can just come for a walk with the family and it's easy way to spend an afternoon in the countryside in a nice setting and it's a place where you can come and enjoy having a meal with friends. It combines all those things. So you can follow any of those threads or combine them so works on all sorts of levels. But it's also always retains its commitment to that contemporary sculpture and making that accessible to everybody. So the outdoors and the facilities here help to make that [art] accessible to everybody.

(Interview with Rachel 2010)

Rachel's description recalls in a subjective lens the multifarious ways in which YSP brands itself in its published material. While the account is articulated in different terms to the local villager Mary, who worked for Bretton Hall, it is clear reading across the two that the meaning of YSP and its landscapes for long term 'visitors' are interwoven with personal narratives and histories. This is thrown into relief by another new volunteer, Sara who has only been visiting YSP intermittently for 4 years: 'I see it as an exhibition space... An exhibition space in a beautiful place' (Interview with Sara

2010). With insight, local resident and volunteer, Ben, illustrates that the positionality of the worker or audience is integral to understanding the cultural geographies of YSP:

I suppose it depends which entrance you come in from. If you come from this entrance [the archway] you come to have a look at the sculpture, the galleries and that sort of stuff, but if you come from the far carpark [the Bretton country park] then you don't see anything until them hay bale things [Helen Escobedo] so it probably depends which side you come from. I suppose if you come from Longside you have that gallery up there, and you have that long country walk before you get to any more sculpture down this side. So it depends where you're coming from I suppose. (Interview with Ben 2010)

In everyday vernacular Ben recognises that the categorisation of the park depends on the 'approach' of the viewer across the extensive site. As he describes, the functionality of the parkland as 'art gallery' is decidedly clearer if approached from the main visitor entrance. However if the 'far carpark' is used, the dominance of YSP over the Bretton Country Park is less physically apparent. The material signifiers of the sculpture park are identified as the sculpture, the gallery and 'that sort of stuff' (Interview with Ben 2010). Again, similar to Mary the physical landscape itself is identified as distinct from the sculpture park and almost as a neutral space 'you don't see anything until them hay bale things' (Interview with Ben 2010). Further, it is clarified through this account that YSP can appear and be understood differently by the same person depending on where they access the site and where their journey takes them on each encounter. Deutsche aptly outlines that:

Site-specificity, an aesthetic strategy in which context was incorporated into the work itself, was originally developed to counteract the construction of ideological art objects, purportedly defined by independent essences, and to reveal the way in which the meaning of art is constituted in relation to its institutional frames. (Deutsche 1996: 61)

That is, site-specificity returns the material of the art work to its context, which is always framed by institutional and geographical processes. YSP's landscape is an installation produced by centuries of power relations and style conventions that have

defined the spatial organisation and presentation of the land. These improvements include the creation of pleasure gardens in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and the diversion of the main access route following the shift of visitors from Bretton Hall to the YSP Visitor Centre. In both instances across different centuries the landscape is restructured in order to facilitate a contemporary functionality and ideology. Indeed the artworks sited in YSP are mobilised within a cultural and aesthetic framework of the Bretton Estate *and* sculpture park. However, depending on the length exposed to the sculpture park, visitors and workers are usually more sensitive to one system of framing than another. Deutsche connects site specific art to a teleology that combines public art with social function:

The newly acknowledged reciprocity between artwork and site changed the identity of each, blurring the boundaries between them, and paved the way for art's participation in wider cultural and social practices. For public art, the objective of altering the site required that the urban space occupied by a work be understood, just as art and art institutions had been, as socially constructed spaces. (Deutsche 1997: 63-64)

Deutsche is concerned here with the usage of art to restructure urban space, in order to embed a brand of urban politics, that of urban redevelopment (Deutsche 1997: 64). Her desire to 'approach contemporary public art as an urban practice' is generated in response to this perceived remodelling of the function of public art (Deutsche 1997: 64). However if we consider the park as relational to the city - as a place of recreation for urban dwellers to travel - and therefore as fulfilling a civic function as a leisure facility (Lambert 2006), and later education facility, there are pertinent ramifications for Deutsche's model applied to YSP. With address to YSP's landscape, we can understand the park as a site installation, with a later shift in function to a controlled public space for the display and reception of artworks. The site art at YSP has occupied the non-urban space within its landscape, also revealing a socially constructed space that aims to convene an arts-orientated public. However this landscape has previously been structured to convene different publics, such as landowners and their guests, recreational park-goers and students living on campus. It is thereby revealing to consider not only the ways in which the meaning of art is constituted in relation to its institutional frames (Deutsche 1996: 61), but the ways in which particular institutional frames privilege certain ways of audiencing landscape and art.

### 3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the cultural geographies of the park are informed both through the structuring devices of eighteenth century landscaping on Bretton Estate and the development of YSP as an ambitious centre for the display of art. The curated coordinates of the space, picturesque landscape and monumental sculpture, are intended to provide variety for the embodied spectator who navigates the various zones of the park (Bois 1984; also interview with Lilley 2010 and Murray 2010). These accounts privilege a conception of the landscape and sculpture park as cultivated for the pursuit of art. Contrasting accounts foreground a history of working and living on the estate (Interview with Edwards 2010; Interview with Clarke 2010) and the historic economic and recreational centrality of the estate for nearby communities.

A major narrative which marks the land and discourse of the park is that of opening access to the wider public, from the 'private' country estate to the 'public' art gallery (Interview with Murray 2010; Lambert 2007). Through charting the contested landscape of the estate from 1948 to 2004, I have shown the complexities of ascribing 'public' space and a 'public' collective to the Bretton Estate and, later, YSP. Public rights of access which cross the estate and the changing status of the Country Park, alongside continued no access areas to Bretton Hall, complicate categorical accounts of YSP as a public/private space. Instead, a process-led understanding of publics which can be mobilised by various spatial practices, including new technologies (Iveson 2007; Barnett 2002), and also through long standing visiting practices, informs the way in which various not always consistent or complimentary publics make meaning from and act upon the park. As I have shown, these practices are mitigated by the encoding of acceptable behaviours on site, most notably through the YSP 'code' (YSP 2010: n/p).

I have argued that the spaces of YSP are 'inherently dynamic' (Massey 1994) informed through a heritage which is physically manifest in the architecture and land of the estate, and in various published and oral accounts of those connected with the estate. The contested geographies of YSP and the spatial coordinates of land, artwork and public, means that the park can usefully be informed through critical arguments on public space and public art which are usually urban-centric (Deutsche 1997; Rendell 1998; Kwon 2002; Massey 2005). Understanding the park as a public space effectively conjures the relational connectedness of mobile publics to the park and YSP's networks with other wider cultural arts establishment, while accounting for the highly regulated spaces of the park (Mitchell 1995).

Working in the domain of critical spatial practice, YSP makes the intervention of placing artwork in a landscape with publics created over different time frames in the history of the estate. YSP ‘engages with the social and aesthetic, the public and the private’ (Rendell 1998: 6), producing spatial practices which variously draw support and criticism from these multiple publics. Changing ownerships of the park and shifts in functionality have created overlapping templates for the ways in which various publics perceive the geographies of the park, and the ways in which they should engage with it. This is exemplified by the different categorisations of the park by one long standing visitor and a curator.

I don’t come here to look at the sculptures. It’s a beautiful park and a great place to take your kids. (Interview with Harriet 2010)

It’s not a park, it’s a gallery. (Helen Pheby, Curator 2010)

## Chapter 4

### **Locating the spatialities of Yorkshire Sculpture Park: local, regional, national and international scales**

Yorkshire Sculpture Park does what no other gallery or museum in the U.K. can do. (Interview with Nash 2010b)

In terms of sculpture, it [YSP] has helped to put the region on the map. I think it's contributed enormously to the economy of the region. It has contributed with employment: we employ over 100 people now. And also with tourism. (Interview with Murray 2010)

This chapter traces the multiple scalar geographies that YSP is located in by different parties, informing the discursive knowledges audiences bring to the organisation and its artworks. It connects to the third research question outlined in Chapter 1 and develops from Chapter 3 to investigate what materialities, spatialities and knowledges shape the meanings of site based artworks and arts institutions. Overall, I argue that YSP is representative of an extroverted notion of place (Massey 1994), which hosts and responds to the mainstream art scene in local, specialised ways. In the first section I consider how 'local-ness' and notions of place are inscribed by workers who live on site at YSP, the art and articulations of David Nash, through the site-based artwork *Black Steps* (2010), accounts of late residents from West Bretton and visitors to the contemporary park. I show that YSP is constituted in part through local materials and working practices, yet argue that this is not a bounded sense of place or place-making (Lippard 1997; Casey 2002; Amin 2004; Cresswell 2005; Pollock and Sharp 2007). In the second section I show how YSP is relationally located within discourses of regionalism (Zukin 1991; Massey 2004; Matless 2010) and the wider cultural networks of Yorkshire (Fedorio, Heaton and Madden 1991, Barke and Harrop 1996, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, Rugg 2010). I engage with a derisive attack in the media waged by academic and commentator, Germaine Greer, on the Yorkshire locality of YSP's important works (Greer 2007), which is countered by responses from readers and YSP visitors. Considering representations of YSP by Wakefield District Council, regional media, and YSP management, the promotion of a post-industrial regional identity that builds on Yorkshire's arts heritage is outlined. The artistic and economic relationality

between the regional and local context is drawn discursively by accounts from local residents on a changing landscape. In the final section, I consider national and international spatialities of YSP. Through the account of sculptors, Brute Force & Ignorance, I explore how the place-specific practices cultivated at YSP are exported to different national and international sites. Further this chapter engages the consultancy work YSP does in public art commissions beyond the physical geographical boundaries of West Bretton, informing the reach and prestige of the sculpture park. Together the sections of this chapter show the different geographical scales through which YSP is discursively and materially located by a range of audiences, as well as demonstrating the relational movement between these spatialities that inform the meanings of YSP and its artworks.

#### 4.1 YSP and the local

YSP has been described as a ‘cultural island’ (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010), that does ‘what no other gallery or museum in the U.K. can do’ (Interview with Nash 2010b). Modern and contemporary sculpture intersects with a post-industrialist heritage to create a unique ‘landscape for art’ at YSP (YSP 2008: 1; also see Revill 1991: 236). The unusual spatial coordinates of YSP for a museum or gallery include a history of employees who have lived on site (see Chapter 3). This continues to the present day with the head sculpture technician, Gregg, resident in the Grade II\* English Heritage listed Archway lodge and another technician, Bill, living on the parklands in a caravan. While the site plays home to these employees, the nature of living there is separated from a normative domestic experience. YSP according to Bill is an ‘escape’ from home comforts which ‘make you soft’ (Field diary entry on Bill 2010). The remoteness of YSP from urban conurbations is emphasised, ‘there’s no neighbours to worry about here’ (Field diary entry on Bill 2010). Further distinguishing YSP as a non-urban place, Gregg maintains a small local trade of fresh eggs from the chickens he keeps on site which are sold to workers in the YSP offices and other employees. These examples establish YSP as a place apart from urban-based galleries and museums. They also point towards the ways in which the rural landscape facilitates, or isolates, particular social dynamics between those who live and work there. Yet, I argue that far from being a ‘cultural island’ (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010) this landscape forms a nexus for wider geographies of sculpture production and reception. Local meaning is inscribed by different audiences, and through local materialities and

working practices, that relationally intersects with national and international creative influences.

David Nash is an established British sculptor who works primarily with wood. His international reputation is evidenced through five works owned by Tate Collection, along with works in the collections of other leading museums, galleries and public spaces. The sites of these collections and spaces are diverse, from Stedelijk Museum, Aalst, Belgium to Grizedale Forest, Cumbria; the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, to Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art; from Honolulu Airport, Hawaii, to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Nash's work has been chronicled in solo exhibitions since the 1970s with more recent exhibitions including: Kukje Gallery Seoul (2007); Annely Juda Fine Art, London (2005); Kunst im Bethmannhof, Frankfurt (2001); Nishumira Gallery, Tokyo (2001); Galerie Lelong, Paris (2000); and his hometown, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Wales (2000).<sup>1</sup> There has also been a long-standing relationship between YSP and Nash prior to the YSP retrospective in 2010-11 (see Chapter 5). Nash first exhibited at the sculpture park in 1979, returning in 1981 for a twelve month fellowship, and once more for his mid-career exhibition in 2010 to 2011. Nash referred to the large scale exhibition as a 'life statement' spanning 40 years of his career and enabled only through support of YSP (Interview with Nash 2010b).

The exhibition crossed between all the internal gallery spaces – the Underground Galleries, Garden Gallery, Bothy Gallery alongside the Arts Council-owned Longside - in addition to several external sites across the park. As part of the YSP retrospective, Nash was asked to do a permanent installation. In discussion with curators at the sculpture park, the old Oxley Bank steps were selected as a suitable site. This bank connects the south side of the Lower Lake and the higher ground leading to Longside. The resultant *Black Steps* was realised through a labour intensive process of burning, scraping and treating 71 oak blocks which were then installed with careful spacing in the site of the old steps on Oxley Bank. In undertaking the project, Nash did not simply transport pre-prepared logs into YSP. The extensive coordinates of the sculpture park enabled Nash to have the internal and external workshop space he required to produce the ambitious project on site (see Fig. 4.1 and 4.2). The steps were created by a team of five YSP sculpture technicians and a volunteer who each took a stake in refining the development processes.

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<sup>1</sup> For David Nash's Curriculum Vitae, see <http://www.kingsplace.co.uk/files/biographies/cvs/NASH,%20David-cv.pdf>. [Accessed 28 January 2011].



Fig 4.1. Sculpture technicians stoke fire for the burning of David Nash's *Black Steps*, on site at Longside.. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.



Fig 4.2. Sculpture technician hoses down the tarmac due to unexpected overheating from the fire. Longside, YSP. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010



4.3 Sculpture technician drives cherry picker forklift vehicle to lift logs from the fire. Longside. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.



Fig 4.4 David Nash demonstrates to sculpture technicians the technique for propane torching the burnt steps. Longside. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

Refining the development processes was made expedient through a tight schedule which required all the 71 steps to be completed within one week, allowing a further three weeks for installation. Asked to reflect on the constant alterations to technique one technician joked, ‘we’ve got to innovate; blue skies thinking; [we are] always pushing boundaries’ (Interview with Bill 2010). Fires were stoked to burn the logs, with cherry picker forklift trucks used to lift the hot charred wood along the ‘production’ line manned by a series of sculpture technicians overseeing each stage of the process (see Fig. 4.3).

After hose pipes jetted water to cool the burnt logs, propane flame guns were used at the ends of each one to create Nash’s desired effect (see Fig. 4.4). At the final stage of preparation sculpture technicians and the volunteer sanded the logs with paint remover tools till they achieved a silvery-black finish, before treating the logs with a mixture of 60% linseed oil and 40 % wood preserver. The cherry pickers were used to transfer the finished steps into the warehouse ready for installation on the Oxley Bank. Alongside the on-site development of artistic processes, the materials of the project were also locally sourced. The wood was provided by Yorkshire-based timber merchants, Earnshaws, who are documented to have worked with the estate under its various ownerships since the nineteenth century. Inbetween the finished black steps were placed pieces of coal that were also sourced from the local area. In total a mass of over 30 tonnes of coal was used (see Fig.4.5). Nash has described the relationship of the materials selected for *Black Steps* to the YSP land and its industrial heritage in various mediums of address, including BBC 4’s documentary *Force of Nature: The Sculpture of David Nash* (BBC 4 2011: n/p). For Nash, the coal was a symbolic allusion to the former coal industry that was a source of wealth for the local area, rendering the material important to the history of the land and to the region. *Black Steps*, along with Nash’s other outdoor works, ‘is very specific to the circumstances of where it is sited’ (Nash in BBC 4 2011: n/p). The installation is actually embedded in a coal drift on the Oxley Bank. *Black Steps*, therefore, excavates this particular resource and cultural heritage which has historically and in the present time shaped the material and cultural sense of the local.

Lucy Lippard’s account of ‘the Lure of the Local’ identifies the local as ‘about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, what will happen there’ (Lippard 1998: 7). She recognises, in alignment with Massey (2007) (see Section 4.3), that as a term “regionalism” ‘continues to be used pejoratively’ (Lippard 1998: 36). Indeed in the visual arts regionalism tends to mean ‘corny backwater art flowing

from the tributaries that might eventually reach the mainstream but is currently stagnating out there in the boondocks' (Lippard 1998: 36). However as Lippard recognises 'all art is regional', including that which emanates from cultural capital cities. While highlighting the lack of recognition of cultural capitals' to other regional contexts and their artistic outputs, Lippard actually stresses the 'interesting and energetic' qualities inherent in quality work from regions. Negating a reading which erodes the importance of the regional and local in art theory and practices, Lippard posits, 'mainstream art in fact borrows incessantly from locally rooted imagery as well as from the much maligned mass cultures – from Navajo blankets to Roman Catholic icons to Elvis to Disney' (Lippard 1998: 36). In fact:

If content is considered the prime component of art, and lived experience is seen as a prime material, then regionalism is not a limitation but an advantage, a welcome base that need not exclude outside influences but sifts them through a local filter (Lippard 1998: 37).

Lippard's insightful analysis of the processes by which mainstream art borrows from local imagery and passes through the 'local filter' is crystallised in Nash's *Black Steps* installation at YSP. *Black Steps* can be observed as 'place-specific' public art (Lippard 1998: 263). This notion of 'place-specific' is made manifest through the coal seams that run in eighteen bands through the land of the Bretton Estate and YSP (Wilkinson 1989: Foreword). Furthermore, the site of the Oxley Bank acted upon Nash's artistic process and vision for the installation. While the artist intended to work from the bottom of the bank in order to visualise the flow of the steps as they ascended the bank, the steep gradient meant that the heavy machinery required working from the top first. This shows how an installation made by an internationally significant artist was inspired through the unique relationship of cultural heritage and place to contemporary sculpture at YSP. Notably this work could not have been realised in a white cube gallery in London (O'Doherty 2010[1991]) due to the production demands of machinery and space, alongside the necessary creative resonance of the piece with a post-industrial northern landscape. As such the 'local filter' provides productive resources and tensions of history, site and place which are negotiated in *Black Steps*.



Fig. 4.5 Woman walking on David Nash's *Black Steps*, with over 30 tonnes of locally sourced coal pieces. Oxley Bank. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

Tim Cresswell has described how place can mean privacy and belonging, ownership and connection, social hierarchy, place-making, and/or projections of community identity (Cresswell 2005: 1-7). Ultimately places are:

Spaces which have been made meaningful. They are all spaces people are attached to in one way or another. This is the most straightforward and common definition of place – a meaningful location. (Cresswell 2005: 7)

Defining place as a meaningful location is integral to understanding YSP. For Nash, YSP is a place which he has returned to several times to exhibit and on occasion to produce his sculpture. The culmination of this enduring relationship between organisation, artist and place was the mid-career retrospective of 2010 to 2011. Nash described the meaning of this huge exhibition at the close of his preview tour audienced by employees of YSP:

Through doing this show I've built my town. This exhibition documents a whole journey of 40 years... Thank you YSP for letting me put this on; nowhere else would have let me. This is my free show, a wonderful open priory. (Interview with Nash 2010b)

Nash's description of YSP as a 'wonderful open priory' imbues the place with a special creative significance, while capturing its relationality to what happens elsewhere. He welcomes 'the community brought [together] over the course of the exhibition [who] all engaged in the spirit of it' (Interview with Nash 2010b). YSP is formulated as a supportive artistic haven, with emphasis placed on the meaningful relationships forged between workers, the organisation and his work. Nash puts his stamp on YSP permanently with *Black Steps*, reworking the fabric of the site by installing an artwork which shapes how the place will be used by visitors. Importantly, while Nash contributed towards developing the appearance of the site, this is also a place that will be made meaningful to numerous visitors over the life of the installation. Nash described the work as having a 'participatory element', insofar as 'visitors walking across the wooden steps will have an effect on the steps over time' (Interview with Nash 2010a 2010) (see Fig.4.6).

Within only six weeks of opening to the public, one regular visitor affirmed how *Black Steps* had already become a part of her experience of YSP, ‘I come once or twice a week so I’ve walked up it many times... I love this place and have brought my children since they were young; they’re now 28 and 30 years old’ (Interview with Wendy 2010). For Wendy, the installation had become a part of YSP’s trajectory connecting the area’s past with the present:

I think there is something so Yorkshire about it [*Black Steps*]. It’s so right for this setting by the lake and with Bretton Hall over the way. I think it must be the coal and wood which makes it feel so Yorkshire. (Interview with Wendy 2010)

As Tim Cresswell has written with regards to place, ‘[a]s well as being located and having a material visual form, places must have some relationship to humans and the human capacity to produce and consume meaning’ (Cresswell 2005: 7). The meanings of *Black Steps* are produced by a coming together of the artist, site workers, volunteers and visitors

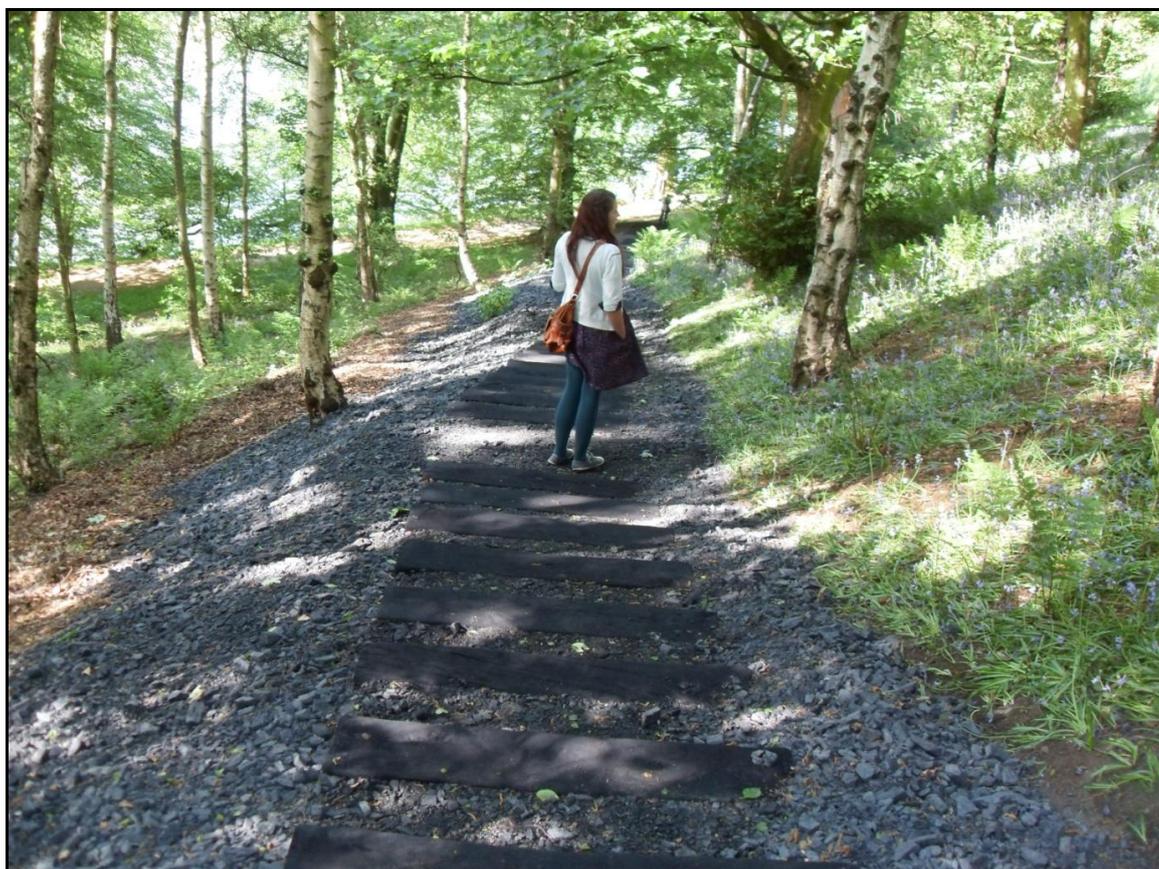


Fig. 4.6 Woman walking on David Nash’s *Black Steps* at the private opening of the YSP exhibition on 27 May 2010. Oxley Bank, YSP. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

who each performed various roles in the creation and audiencing of the work. More broadly, YSP is an example of where ‘places gather things, thoughts, and memories in particular configurations’ (Escobar 2001: 143). As Nash’s retrospective shows clearly, YSP is not fixed or bounded through a permanent collection of artwork. A changing programme combined with site commissions such as Nash’s *Black Steps*, Turrell’s *Skyspace* and Greyworld’s *Playground*, mean that the material appearance and visitor experience of YSP alter along with the artistic configurations within the park. The material of the site takes new forms, through natural processes, yet also through manipulation by people. In the case of *Black Steps* this resulted in a permanent art installation which augmented the lay of the land - and also the meaning of this part of the landscape - through its status as a functional art work. The work is intended to change, to live and breathe as different visitors traverse the steps, each in their own way inscribing meaning into the work and the place in which it is situated. As Wendy stresses in the epigraph to this chapter, a sense of the local and connections to local heritage are integral to the realisation of this artwork. The local heritage is intricately woven with the resources of the place. The materials of the area – here coal and wood – and symbolic representations of coal mining are a strong part of the identity of the region to which Nash responds. This artist who works internationally has engaged with a unique set of local coordinates to produce *Black Steps* and his largest, most complete exhibition to date. YSP is a place that creates a ‘particular, unique, point’ (Massey 1994) where international art interests intersect with the local in dynamic, meaningful visual forms. This insight importantly extends beyond YSP and is relevant to other site based art. Through the case study of *Black Steps*, site art is shown to be produced through local materials, arts practices and histories that connect to wider creative networks. This local-ness is inscribed by a range of participants and circulated by various modes of address, including artistic directives to the site workers, speeches to the wider YSP team, documentary broadcasting to a television audience, and more localised visitor encounters with the artwork. I argue that the extroverted sense of place that informs YSP and its artworks is part of a longer relational trajectory, evident from certain political and economic events of the twentieth century. Regional, national and international events impacted upon the materialities and discursive cultural memory of Bretton Estate and the tied village of West Bretton, despite their relative independence from nearby conurbations.

i) *Between four counties*

There was an old catch question 'Where do four counties meet?' Well, that used to be at Bretton Crossroads (Sidney in Pearce 1986: 16).

The history of the Bretton region until the mid-twentieth century reveals that local residents considered themselves fairly isolated from nearby towns and geographically marginalised from regional politics. As the quote above from a local resident testifies, the village of West Bretton fell between four different counties. This sub-section shows that the degree of isolation can account in large part for a dependency of local residents on the Bretton Estate for employment, recreation, and, historically, for governance. However, developing my argument above, I show that the local history of Bretton is marked by connections to national and international political events. While Bretton was interred on familial plains - with Bretton Estate at the core - the coal strike of 1921 and World War I and World War II ruptured local lives and altered the lived landscape.

As outlined in detail in Chapter 3, YSP is situated within the parklands of the old Bretton Estate and borders West Bretton. Historically the village of West Bretton was wedded to the Bretton Estate. Bretton Estate initially built residencies in the village for workers of the estate, and continued to control what building took place in the village until the estate was sold by the owners, the Allendales, who inherited Bretton followed the death of W.B.Beaumont, in 1948 (see Chapter 3). Therefore as one local resident noted 'West Bretton only exists because of the Bretton Estate' (Interview with Mary 2010). A body of interviews conducted by historian, Cyril Pearce, for the Bretton Heritage Project in 1986 records residents reflecting on governance, employment, and recreation in the area from the beginning of the twentieth century (Pearce 1981). The interviews reveal that governance was at first overseen by the local parish and the estate before coming under the jurisdiction of local authorities in the mid-late nineteenth century (Pearce 1981; also Wilkinson 1991).<sup>2</sup> However, as the quotation at the start of this section indicates, even with these significant local government reforms, Bretton bordered four counties rendering it peripheral to each. In addition, tied employment and poor transport links until the introduction of buses meant regional focus, provision and authority appeared to circumvent Bretton Estate:

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<sup>2</sup> Local reforms Laws of 1856, 1888, 1894 (Wilkinson, 1989: 47).

Everything belonged to the Estate- every stick and stone in Bretton belonged to the Estate, and it stretched nearly to Barnsley and nearly to Wakefield and all. To Midley, Flockton, Middlestown, Horbury - all over the place - there was some Estate land you see. But nobody owned anything in Bretton beyond the Allendale Estate. So everything you did you had to get permission. (Sidney in Pearce 1986: 19)

In addition to providing an insight into the scale and power of the historic Bretton Estate, Sidney, who lived in the village for 24 years also describes the economic reliance of many villagers on the Estate:

Bretton was dependent on the Bretton Estate. There were three sources of income - the coal miners, farm workers or Estate workers. There was practically the whole of Bretton people absorbed in those three industries... But I would say there was a lot of loyalty towards the Allendale family. In retrospect, you think, they seemed to have everything and we had nothing. (Sidney in Pearce 1986:16)

Sidney's own parents were employed by the estate; his mother as a cook and his father as a woodsman. Reflecting on the period of the late 1920s and 1930s, another local resident Susan agreed, 'everything was run by Allendale and his people... No new buildings were allowed in those days' (Susan in Pearce 1986: 15). Alongside the control of property rights and administering the largest segment of employment, the estate also dominated local recreation. Frank recalls for young children there was an annual regatta on the lake when the Bretton grounds were opened for the day:

We used to dress up in our best clothes, and at teatime, the doors were opened and all the maids came out from the Hall, dressed up in their white finery. [They] brought huge clothes-baskets, and these were full of long current buns, sort of Hot Cross Buns... And you had to take your own mug, and these pots were filled up with hot, steaming tea, and we were given that, I suppose, as a reward for being good. (Frank in Pearce 1986:1)

In 1897 the only pub in the village, *The Beaumont Arms*, was closed by W.B.Beaumont. Recalling village stories passed down to him, Sidney asserted, ‘at the time [the] branch line for a railway between Wakefield and Barnsley was being built there were lots of navvies [who] used to come and create a disturbance’ (Sidney in Pearce 1986: 20). Wilkinson concurs that ‘the village’s inn was closed down on the instruction of W.B.Beaumont’, due to the ‘navvies’, who ‘made too full a use of its facilities’ (Wilkinson 1990: 28).<sup>3</sup> There was no social venue in the village until the Bretton Institute, a private club, was built and donated by the Allendales in 1919 (Frank in Pearce 1986: 27; Wilkinson 1989: 62). The institute organised weekly dances as Beth, a housemaid for the Bretton Estate recalled: ‘there used to be dances at the Bretton Institute... We had to ask special permission to go to a dance, but we were allowed’ (Beth in Pearce 1986: 5). The Institute also built a tennis court, a bowling green and organised cricket, with the cricket team managed by the agent of the Bretton Estate (Wilkinson 1989: 65).

As detailed above, the local importance and wealth of the Bretton Estate meant that villagers were fairly sheltered from national economic turns, particularly the Great Depression. Most villagers were employed by or in relation to the estate therefore there was a low level of job losses during the 1930s:

I wouldn’t think [the depression] hit a place like Bretton compared to other places because there was nobody involved in industry. Quite a number of men worked at Earnshaw’s - a timber works – which seemed to survive through it all. And the rest of the men seemed to be on the land and on the Estate. (Sidney in Pearce 1986: 18)

Similarly West Bretton residents were apparently not directly affected during the coal strike of 1921, prior to the large national strike of 1926. As one resident, Frank, noted, ‘The colliers in the village were a minority... the majority of the people seemed to work either on the estate or in farm’ (Frank in Pearce 1986: 9). However, the regional coal mining crisis of the 1920s made a strong impression on villagers due to the events surrounding illegal outcropping in Woolley Edge, which neighboured Bretton. Stories of miners who broke the picket line and illegally exploited a residue of coal at the Old

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<sup>3</sup> Surprisingly, according to interviews with local residents, even after the Allendale’s sold the estate, power was still kept over the licensing of a new pub in the village, ‘when the Estate was sold, there was a clause in everybody’s contract conveyance to say that they couldn’t open a pub or ale house or anything without paying a royalty to the Allendale Estate’ (Pearce 1986: 27).

Bells pit in Woolley Edge have been passed down through subsequent generations of villagers. The following account of a villager taken in 1986 describes these events as told to him:

While they were digging this gantry hole, they dropped straight into a seam of coal about six foot thick and this was the start of the coal mining at Woolley Edge. All the blackleg miners which they called them in those days- these were chaps that wouldn't abide by the union ruling. (Colin in Pearce 1986: 27)

Also demonstrating the enduring import of the events at Old Bells pit on the local imagination another villager Des stated:

One day a party of miners came over from the direction of Flockton and the people working at the [Old] Bells pit were warned that this party was coming. They all left the pit premises and scarpered in all directions... They all looked very scared when they came. (Des in Pearce 1986: 31)

Eighteen coal seams run underneath the village of West Bretton which confirms the significance of coal in the village despite the fact that the immediate area was not professionally mined (Wilkinson 1989: Foreword). The accounts of villagers describing the coal strike presents the connectedness of Bretton to Yorkshire's broader coal mining heritage, with the material and symbolic importance of the mineral excavated in Nash's *Black Steps*.

However, the heritage of Bretton Estate demonstrates that concerns of local residents were not straightforwardly provincial. Beyond the coal mining strikes, a national and international series of events also impacted upon life and the landscape of Bretton Estate and West Bretton, particularly through the outbreak of World War I and World War II. The war memorial in the village built in 1921 is testimony to a number of men from West Bretton who died in World War I. This stone memorial still stands on the corner of the Bretton Estate on the central road linking Wakefield, West Bretton and YSP (see photographs of the building and unveiling of the memorial in Wilkinson 1989: 84-85). The estate continued to play residence to the Allendales with a large employed workforce until World War II:

The estate must have employed over 200 people in that period. There were kitchen maids and cooks and housekeepers, butlers, Hall boys, housemaids, grooms, gardeners, gamekeepers- you name it. And so it went on right up to WWII. (Frank in Pearce 1986: 4)

During World War II Bretton Hall and its surrounding parklands were requisitioned by the War Office. Effectively this ended the private ownership of Bretton Hall although for the beginning of the war the mansion was shared between the owners, the Allendales, and the army, '[t]he Allendales lived in part of [the mansion], the officers lived in part of [it], and the servants' quarters were taken over for the troops' (Fred in Pearce 1986: 26). World War II dramatically altered the familial connections between Bretton Estate and West Bretton given that local employment no longer centralised on the estate, with focus redeployed to the war effort. Wilkinson documents that a number of villagers signed up to fight in World War II as they had done in World War I (Wilkinson 1989: 86-87). After World War II, due to death duties, the estate was sold to West Riding Country Council and subsequently became a Higher Education College, shifting it fully from private to local authority ownership (see Chapter 3).

The local and familiar plains on which Bretton was interred had the benefit of sheltering residents from national crises which paralysed England at the time, such as the Great Depression. Nevertheless, I argue that the local situation for Bretton was not introverted or insular. The coal strike of 1921 had a strong impact if not materially then on the imaginations of local residents, with stories passed down through generations of broken picket lines and illegal outcropping of coal. In addition, West Bretton was directly affected by international politics with the outbreak of World War II and World War II. Bretton is therefore a place which has been located at the periphery of four counties in Yorkshire, and which has historically related itself strongly to local landscapes of power. Yet, Bretton has also been responsive to regional, national and international economic and political events which have materially and symbolically helped to shape a sense of place.

This extroverted 'local-ness' informs understanding of audiencing YSP by demonstrating how memory is inscribed in the local landscape by particular audiences. These accounts can be found in unpublished interviews with old local residents (Pearce 1981); however they also live on in younger generations of families resident in West Bretton (Interview with Mary 2010; Interview with Gill 2010). Past histories of the land and its communities have significant discursive power in shaping how new incarnations

of the land are recognised such as YSP, as I discuss further in Section 4.2 below. Yet, the local also acts as a fertile ground for creative inspiration and for contextualising arts meaning, as shown by Nash's *Black Steps*. An internationally-significant artist, Nash has returned to YSP on a cyclical basis throughout his career, responding to the materials and spaces of the local estate in his artwork. The local-ness of YSP is thereby produced by these past and present audiences in distinctive ways. Yet challenging a parochial understanding of the area, I argue that the sense of the local has always been informed by its relationality to different scalar geographies.

#### 4.2 YSP and regionalism

There is a strong statement of regional locatedness embedded into the very title of the organisation *Yorkshire Sculpture Park*. Writing for *The Guardian* in December 2007, Germaine Greer makes the complaint that a visual arts collection of national significance is based in Yorkshire rather than London:

For 60 years, the Arts Council has been collecting sculpture on your behalf; it now owns more than 7,500 pieces, most of which you will never have the chance to experience. If you can manage to get yourself to West Bretton near Wakefield, you may see some of them dotted round the 500 acres of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park; others may be displayed in four indoor galleries. The park is seven miles from the nearest railway station and a taxi will cost you a tenner, which Londoners have to add on to the £112.50 - the least the day return will cost a single adult. (Greer 2007: n/p)

Greer exemplifies partisan, London-centric commentary on arts and regionalism. She confuses the distinction between YSP and the Arts Council, considering the collections of the Arts Council and the spaces of the sculpture park to be shared when in actuality they belong to two separate organisations. In addition, by emphasising the journey to the sculpture park ['a taxi will cost you a tenner'] Greer's intended reader is a Londoner confirmed by her inclusion of the price of a day return ticket from London to Wakefield. Finally, by emphasising that her implied (London) audiences may 'never have the chance to experience' those works which are on show either at the Arts Council at Longside or YSP, Greer's critique centres upon cultural institutions of import that are based in 'the regions' peripheral to London.

Unsurprisingly, Greer's article attracted numerous critical replies from readers that were posted onto *The Guardian* website:

Germaine Greer's invective implies a visit to Yorkshire as a terribly onerous chore. Why ever would anyone suggest such an important national collection be located in the far-flung reaches of the regions? God forbid that art lovers in Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield and surrounding areas might be afforded the opportunity to see work outside the capital. (May in Greer December 2007: n/p)

For Matless (2010) the 'integrity' of regions is brought out in competition or defence against dominant powers or other regions, such as when cultural value or capital is debated. This 'integrity' of the Yorkshire region is evident in the response to Greer's London-centric article. The respondent utilises this opportunity to bring attention to the concentration of quality cultural institutions based in the Yorkshire region:

Yorkshire also has one of the greatest concentrations of sculpture in Europe, with the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds City Art Gallery, the Underground Gallery and Longside Gallery at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, soon to be joined by the Hepworth Museum [sic] in Wakefield. (May in Greer 2007: n/p)

The respondent embraces the collective power of these assorted galleries and museums in order to qualify Yorkshire as an important region for sculpture on a national level and also 'in Europe.' This collective employment of resources to raise the cultural profile of the region mirrors the Moore/Hepworth collaborative conference design which I discuss later in this section. Meanwhile another reader response utilises a prose style written in a supposed Yorkshire regional dialect which, although not entirely convincing, humorously distinguishes itself from Greer's Standard English:

Dus thee not know, Germaine that t' get me sen to London t' see museums, galleries and such like costs nigh on £112...! Sculpture Park, now that's a reet grand day out. Just up t'road, 4 quid t'park for t'day, walks n'all. Kids love it. That Goldsworthy stuff were smashin.' (Hudson in Greer 2007)

The second respondent reverses Greer's argument, first in style and then content, through an attack on cultural capital. The sculpture park is 'just up t'road', the 'kids love it' and the artwork is appreciated 'that Goldsworthy stuff were smashin'' (Hudson in Greer 2007). Or as another respondent comments, '[u]p here we call it redistribution of wealth' (bigdaddiesgonemad in Greer 2007). This provides a counter argument to Greer pitted against the capital and its media organs. Following Lippard (Section 4.2), a case is instead made for the value of the visual arts based in regions other than London which are accented by regions and local signifiers of identity.

This case study shows the locatedness of YSP within a regional network of facilities which compete with other regions, particularly London, for national funding, cultural resources and audiences. For Matless, the contested relationship between regions is integral to their distinctiveness and status:

Region carries such questions in a way that 'place', for example, may not, with a dual relational status of something carrying its own (contested) integrity of definition, yet also being a region of something else, however connected or cut off it may be. (Matless 2010: 75)

Cultures of competition between regions are demonstrated by Zukin (1991) and Massey (2004) who show movement between investment, amenities and exposure given to cultural scenes in different regions. The 'fact' of the 'concentration of [London's] mutually celebratory elite' which 'reinforces its dominance' is conveyed by the media focus on the capital's arts scene (Massey 2004: 120). Massey (2004, 2007) conveys the dominance of London over other regions in the U.K. through inequalities in economic and cultural wealth. London is home to the highest concentration of museums and art galleries in the nation, alongside the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). In addition to hosting the most powerful cultural and political institutions, London is also the base of media. National newspapers, review guides and major art publications including, *The Guardian*, *Evening Standard*, *The Times*, *The Independent*, *Time Out*, *Frieze*, *a-n Magazine*, *Art Monthly*, *20x20*, *ArtReview*, *Blueprint*, *Blue Review*, *The Burlington Magazine*, are all based or have an office in London. Greer advocates that London ought to be the privileged site of national cultural resources, which is reflected in funding allocations for the arts across the U.K. Statistics released by the Arts Council, England, detail that in 2009/2010, 178,412 arts organisations were regularly funded in London in comparison to 26,994 in Yorkshire (ACE 2010: 87). In the same

year, in total, £184,494 was paid to London-based arts institutions, with £27,862 allocated to Yorkshire (ACE 2010: 87). The monetary privileging of London and the South-East is enforced through semantic differentiation, evidenced through the fact that they are rarely described as regions:

When you talk about ‘the regions’ you mean those parts of the country beyond London and the South-East (are the latter not regions too?). It is a classic binary of dominance and subordination. The rest of the country is what is left after London has been defined. The Rest of the Country is not-London to London’s London. (Massey 2007: 116)

It is incisively asserted that for the ‘understanding of regional inequality to be challenged it needs to be contested by another geography’ (Massey 2007: 117) This thesis aims to represent such a geography by bringing ‘other regions back into view by recognising them as their own locations of their own trajectories and – like London too – as the shifting products of the relations within which they are set’ (Massey 2007: 117). A challenge to regional inequality is evident in the example above where readers of *The Guardian* in the north of England wager a vehement defence within national media of YSP’s locatedness in Yorkshire, not London.

i) *‘The Home of British Sculpture’*

Ahead of the heavily publicised launch of the Hepworth Wakefield in Spring 2011, Wakefield Council began the process of rebranding itself as a destination for tourism, or ‘[t]he Home of British Sculpture’ (Experience Wakefield 2011: n/p). YSP is an important cultural facility within Wakefield’s portfolio of visual arts organisations. Drawing upon YSP and the Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield Council markets itself on its website:

As the home of Yorkshire Sculpture Park and The Hepworth Wakefield (opening May 2011) the visual arts are a vital part of life in the Wakefield district. Recognised as one of the world's leading open air galleries, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park features more than 60 contemporary sculptures displayed across 500 acres of delightful parkland. The Hepworth Wakefield will be Yorkshire's landmark gallery for visual arts. Opening in spring 2011

this stunning building, designed by award-winning architect David Chipperfield is located in an outstanding setting on Wakefield's historic waterfront. (Experience Wakefield 2011: n/p)

Reconstructing the identity of Wakefield and centring upon the visual arts has also been the project of local media. The *Yorkshire Post* newspaper announced in a headline: 'Arts funding is receding but Wakefield is pushing the boat out in a big way' (Hickling 2011: n/p). Considering the development of the Hepworth Wakefield, regional journalist Hickling states,

The biggest purpose-built [gallery] outside London, will put Wakefield on the map, turning it into a "cultural hub" which will bring in 150,000 visitors a year. It will also regenerate the waterfront area at the southern entrance to the city where the gallery sits on the headland of the River Calder with foundations coming out of the water on two sides. (Hickling 2011: n/p)

Hickling relates the regeneration of Wakefield as a 'cultural hub' to urban renewal and tourism revenues, which aligns with the broader cases made by Rugg (2010), and Pollock and Sharp (2007) on the impact of arts practice on place-making. The change in how industrial towns have attempted to promote themselves to combat the long-term decline of British manufacturing industry and to adjust to long term structural change (Barke and Harrop 1994) through the development of a major new cultural facility (Fedorcio, Heaton and Madden 1991) is exemplified by Wakefield. These accounts intersect with the argument made by David Liddiment, chair of The Hepworth Wakefield Trust, for investment in Wakefield. Notably this is advocated in competitive terms against London:

The mindset is that London is the only place to be – this country more than most is metrocentric. We owe it to people who don't live in the south east to ensure that they have the same access to world-class art... There are so many examples of the arts acting as a catalyst for change. You can see here in this part of Wakefield that it's ripe for regeneration. (Liddiment in Hickling 2011: n/p)

The utilising of cultural heritage in order to boast city and regional identity is supported by the *Yorkshire Post*:

The Hepworth Wakefield will open this spring and it is surely right (Castleford having rather belatedly picked up the torch as well) that neighbouring towns that gave birth to two giants of 20th century British art should properly mark the fact. Leeds already has the Henry Moore Institute which runs a world-class programme of research and events.

(Hickling 2011: n/p)

I have shown how government allocations to local regional bodies enforce regional differences. Institutions within these regions foster a shared cultural identity in order to create a strong profile in connection or competition with other places or regions. This networking of institutions was visible in a collaborative conference entitled 'Moore/Hepworth' co-hosted by the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds Art Gallery, the Hepworth Wakefield and the Arts Council Collection based at Longside in June 2011. The call for papers placed focus on the intersection between the leading modernist sculptors Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore and the '*county* of their birth':

In Spring 2011 focused attention will be given to the work of Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth in Yorkshire. It sees the opening of The Hepworth Wakefield gallery, with inaugural collections displays focussing on Hepworth's sculpture, the retrospective exhibition of Moore's work at Leeds Art Gallery, and the prominent inclusion of the two artists' work at the Henry Moore Institute and Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Next year therefore provides an excellent opportunity to consider the relationships between these two artists in the *county* of their birth. To enable this, five arts organisations in the region will work together to stage a conference - the first in a series of collaborative events - that considers the local geographical, social and political contexts for the artistic development and subsequent critical reception of Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth.

(Henry Moore Institute 2010: n/p *my emphasis*)

The conference demonstrates the networks between YSP and other visual art institutions in Yorkshire working together to foster a strong regional profile. It also shows a clear

awareness of the importance of promoting and exploring a shared cultural heritage. The conference was scheduled to coincide with the opening of the Hepworth Wakefield, ensuring curatorial displays which intersect with the academic sessions and, in relation, a varied programme to attract conference attendants. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has highlighted the connection between the individual museum attraction, and wider regional and international tourism networks:

Tourism needs destinations, and museums are premier attractions. Museums are not only destinations on an itinerary: they are also nodes in a network of attractions that form the recreational geography of a region and, increasingly, the globe. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 450)

YSP competes for visitors in an increasingly competitive tourism industry, where marketing difference is central to attracting audiences. The sculpture park brands itself as ‘unique’, putting forward that as ‘the only one of its kind, YSP is an international centre for modern and contemporary art, experienced and enjoyed by thousands of visitors every year’ (YSP 2010k: n/p). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett terms this ‘destination culture’ (1998: 455). Yet, as I have demonstrated YSP is also located within discourses on regionalism to regenerate Wakefield District and Yorkshire more broadly as a tourist destination for art. YSP’s strength as an art institution and popular attraction is a central part of the *VisitYorkshire* (VisitYorkshire 2010: n/p) tourism drive. The *VisitYorkshire* campaign includes a stand at Waterloo Station and adverts on the London Underground that feature YSP. This provides YSP and Yorkshire with a presence in major terminals of London encouraging commuters and tourists to travel to attractions beyond the perimeters of the capital, yet it also shapes prospective audience conceptions of YSP through its regional contextuality.

*ii) YSP and regional image*

Having the sculpture park in Yorkshire has been an incredible plus because Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth were both born in Yorkshire. They were both born within Wakefield District Council which is where the sculpture park is. (Interview with Murray 2010)

The opening of YSP in 1977, as the first outdoor centre for sculpture in Yorkshire, and indeed the U.K., points towards an institutional launch of national significance realised

in terms of its regional identity. The importance of its locality outside of London remains integral to the fabric of YSP, which is located within an expansive historic landscape. As Murray contends, the geographical basis for the sculpture park in Yorkshire was given validation through a rich cultural heritage in the forms of leading British sculptors, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth, who were both born in the region. Moore's role in the park extended beyond his artwork and place of birth. He gave full support to the development of a sculpture park in Yorkshire becoming one of the founding patrons of YSP.<sup>4</sup> Long-term visitor and volunteer, Rachel, described YSP in the late 1970s as 'a cultural refuge', offering another choice to 'the working men's social clubs' of the time (Interview with Rachel 2010).

However, when it first opened YSP was perceived by local residents as disconnected from the local and regional heritage of the area. Local residents expressed sentiments of alienation and resistance to the new arts organisation which began to change the appearance of the landscape. At the time of the YSP launch, the Head Gardener of Bretton Hall College, Eddie Frost, described the 'strange sculptures' which 'began to appear' (Frost in Pearce 1986: 2). The description of YSP 'spoiling' the known landscape is further emphasised by Mary, a local resident of West Bretton:

They were spoiling the landscape through putting these horrendous sculptures up. As you can imagine Henry Moore sculptures aren't everyone's cup of tea, nor are Barbara Hepworth's, and things like that. Some people used to look at those things and think, 'Why? Why? I'd rather have a tree, thank you very much. (Interview with Mary 2010)

Rather than enhancing the aspect, the language used by Mary describes the development and growth of YSP as destroying what existed before. Instead of connecting Moore and Hepworth with the region, either through birth heritage or through their bronze industrial aesthetic, for this resident the modernist sculptures represented a break with the past (see Fig. 4.7). Crucially, the reframing of the landscape became more accepted, however, as the 'benefits' of the park were recognised:

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<sup>4</sup> 'Henry Moore was terrific. He came very early on and was extremely helpful. He became a founding patron' (Murray, Founding Director, 2010. Appendix 8.5).

I think people have now come to accept it and I can see the benefits of having the sculpture park there. It employs people from around the village and where else is there around here for people to go? You'd have to go to a town somewhere to get some work. So that's a good positive. (Interview with Mary 2010)



Fig 4.7 Couple in front of Henry Moore's *Two Piece Reclining Figure*, 1979-91, Country Park. Photograph: Saskia Warren 2009.

As Pollock and Sharp detail, over time residents' indifference to public abstract art grew as the work became more familiar in the landscape of Ayr, west Scotland (2007). In comparison, of greater importance for West Bretton residents are the employment and tourism generated by YSP, with recognition of the facilities it offers for recreation:

A lot of people do go down either to walk around the parkland which is always lovely whatever time of year...There's also the shop and a cafe and restaurant down there. So a lot of people from the village will go down for a walk, tootle round the sculpture park and go in either for a morning coffee or some lunch in the afternoon. (Interview with Gill 2010)

The facilities YSP offers as a tourist attraction and economic base are emphasised instead of the artwork and education programme. West Bretton does not have any shops, pubs or social venues apart from the West Bretton Cricket Club. While the *raison d'être* of the institution had shifted from the function of a private estate, continuities remain with the central institution on the estate providing resources in the form of employment and recreation facilities to local residents of West Bretton and surrounding villages. This connects the manorial role YSP is ascribed today with the role the private Bretton Estate played for local residents up until 1948.

YSP generates employment for the local resident population with a number of employees resident in West Bretton and most of the body of workers commuting from within Yorkshire. While the sculpture park has changed the appearance and functionality of the local area, the shift in the area's identity has provided a new tourist industry which, according to Peter Murray, the founding director of YSP, 'has helped to put the region on the map' (Interview with Murray 2010). This institutional perspective on the impact of YSP on the region, is mirrored in the sentiment of another local resident, 'YSP brings people in and you get some famous people coming to exhibit which means it must be on the map' (Interview with Gill 2010). As Murray and the local residents express, to be 'on the map' on regional, national and international terms indicates cultural status and concomitantly economic activity.

#### 4.3 'On the map': the national and international profile of YSP

Undoubtedly London remains the cultural power-base of the arts in the U.K. Indicative of this is that despite being based in Yorkshire, YSP holds press meetings in London for the launch of major exhibitions. For the press launch of the David Nash exhibition (June 2010 – April 2011) a team of staff including the Head of Press, Director of Programmes and Head Curator travelled by train to London. However, the sculpture networks and contracts agreed on site at YSP provide insights into the park as an alternative base for the visual arts, facilitated by the fact that it is non-urban space which can accommodate the scale, weight and heavy machinery needed for large scale sculpture production and display. This section provides examples which show the exchange of local communities of practice and production at YSP with national and international cultural projects, providing different scales for audiencing the work of the organisation.

Sculpture technicians, Brute Force & Ignorance, were initially commissioned to do an arts project at YSP as emergent artists in 2005. The project culminated in an

exhibition in the Upper Space of the Visitor Centre and a catalogue entitled *Map of Meaning* which was sold in the shop (YSP 2005). Through the project, other work offers were made:

During that time we were building stuff for our own piece and they realised that we were skilful, they were just about to open the [James] Turrell and asked if we could help out. I think it was the second show in the Underground Gallery and it was quite a complex one and they had quite a small team. (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010)

Turrell's installations have been sited in numerous locations around the world. I discuss Turrell's work and responses to the Deershelter *Skyspace* at YSP in greater detail later in Chapter 6. The Turrell exhibition at YSP (2005) described above was similar to an exhibition which had been put on in Japan, however, '[t]here they had put it on for £1.5million and here they were doing it for £250,000... This was partly why there was so much work to do' (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010). From the success of this project circulating discursively around specialist creative networks, Royal Academy artist David Mach commissioned Brute Force & Ignorance to repair his work *It takes Two* (1991).<sup>5</sup>

That was our first big commission. So we made, repaired these two big sumo wrestlers and took it to Paris, then put it outside the collector's warehouse. Since then we've been making art for people [artists]. (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010)

Brute Force & Ignorance, highlight that, 'when we got here we realised there was a lot of acquaintances with people, there was an existing network' (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010). Continuing art contracts have been obtained through the relationship with YSP and by artists who have worked with YSP, including several international projects with Andy Goldsworthy. These projects have been undertaken across the U.K. and numerous sites across Europe and the U.S.

As mentioned above with the example of Nash's *Black Steps*, artistic projects at YSP are often responsive to the park's geographies of site and place. However YSP

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<sup>5</sup> D. Mach, *It Takes Two*, 1991. See, <http://www.davidmach.com/cv.asp> [Accessed 28 January 2011].

projects and engagements are not always geographically bound to the location of the park. Work has been carried out within the region, as well as internationally, which gives YSP important presence beyond the perimeters of its material site as an organisation and brand. Part of a body of community-orientated work, including outreach and education projects, was a project conducted in the small town of Castleford, West Yorkshire, with the Cuban artist Carlos Garaicoa in 2009. Garaicoa was initially approached in 2005 by the sculpture park's Director of Programmes, Lilley, and the Arts Council England, Yorkshire (ACEY) Director Adrian Friedli after they had audienced his work at the eighth Havana Biennial, Cuba (2003). According to Curator Helen Pheby, '[d]uring his visit in March 2005, Garaicoa stated that he would only make a proposal for an artwork if he felt a genuine connection with the place, not simply create something for the sake of a fee (Pheby 2010: 13). Garaicoa, referring to Wakefield in the masculine, elucidates:

All the wealth of Castleford is somehow associated to its mineral resources, to the land. When I speak of wealth I mean his history as a Roman settlement, of his minerals that made possible the mining and industries, its particularity as hometown of the most well-known English sculptor.  
(Garaicoa in Pheby 2010: 13)

Castleford was a site of some importance during the industrial period but 'suffered greatly after the last mine closure in 1987, which combined with the failure of other major industries, brought about a debilitating economic decline' (Pheby 2010: 10). Garaicoa's *The Observatory* was a proposal to build a cultural space in the town 'that grows from the place, its people, history and heritage' (Pheby 2010: 10). The exhibition of the project was opened by Barbara Follett, then Minister for Culture, Creative Industries and Tourism, and was endorsed by the local MP, local government, ACEY, and a number of residents groups in June 2009. Pheby carefully documents that *The Observatory* was intended in the first stage as a conceptual artwork, yet it was designed to be feasible as a fully realised large-scale space (Pheby 2010: 10). Despite the involvement of David Barrie, Channel 4 documentaries and the status and integrity of Garaicoa the final stage of *The Observatory* has yet to be achieved. Nevertheless, part of the overall success of the project can be located in the drawing together of local, regional and international networks networks to promote Castleford as an important place for investment and community engagement with the visual arts. The project is

indicative of the active role YSP, and other arts professionals and bodies, can play as advocates for regeneration in cities and regions. In Castleford's case this drew together local cultural heritage with an international artist and national media and television to create a high public profile for the arts project.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

At the start of this chapter, through accounts from resident site workers, Nash and visitors, I presented the importance of the local and the relationship of place to YSP and the production of site art such as *Black Steps*. This art work brings out the geomorphic existence of coal seams under the surface of the land and the heritage of coal mining for the local area. Instead of reading the notion of place as insular or exclusive, however, I demonstrated how *Black Steps* was a meeting of the local and global interests in site art, or 'place-specific' installations. Through archival accounts of past residents of West Bretton, this understanding is developed with emphasis on how historic concerns were ruptured by dramatic political events of national and international importance, such as the coal mining strikes of the 1920s, and more traumatically, World War I and World War II.

This chapter then traced another trajectory of YSP's locatedness within networks and representations of regionalism. Using the example of Greer's article 'Hidden Heritage' in *The Guardian*, and reader responses, I illustrated the competition waged between Yorkshire and London for cultural capital and media recognition. To understand the intersection of YSP with notions of regional identity I considered the rebranding of the Wakefield District as a 'home for sculpture' by regional government, media and cultural facilities. This is drawn through wider cultural and economic analysis of the marketing of places and regions to compete for tourism in the current, post-industrial landscape. However, I have also argued YSP utilises London as a central hub of power for national media, transport connections and audiences in order to provide a broader profile for the organisation.

Analysing the wider profile of YSP, the chapter then extends out from the regional to show how YSP is located in national and international projects, demonstrating the scope of the organisation's working practices and influence. YSP, while operating outside of the cultural nexus of London, offers the extensive space and specialisation in sculpture which means that the expertise of its sculpture technicians have been utilised 'off-site' in national and international projects. As Brute Force and

Ignorance suggested YSP may be considered a ‘cultural island’ in terms of the place-specific exhibitions they produce on site. Yet the profile and networks of YSP are unbounded by the locus of the organisation, instead extending to national and international artists and alternative sites and spaces.

Through reference to the mobile publics who visit YSP and the local area, in addition to internationally-renowned artists who travel to exhibit at YSP, the multi-locatedness of YSP on local, regional, national, and international scales has been shown. Notably the movement between the local and (inter)national is not purely a contemporary phenomenon. Indeed, the landscape gardening of the Bretton Estate, the original ‘polite’ art of the park, was created in response to high society fashions in the eighteenth century, while the Palladian architecture was inspired through influences of the Grand Tour in Europe (see Chapter 3). Both landscape and architecture were also mediated through the local, executed in response to finite financial resources and the unusual gradient of the land. Furthermore, YSP and the ‘place-specific’ artwork discussed in this chapter continue the legacy of ‘landscapes of power’ as a compromise between vision and the material aspect of the place, ‘a territory with its own flora and fauna and local allegiances’ (Zukin 1991: 5), brought to life by local residents and powerful local histories. Through the example of YSP the local and regional need not be separate from, or simply act as a filter (Lippard 1998: 37) for outside influences. A distinctive history is connected with an outward-facing and responsive present, by adopting an open, extroverted understanding of place. Fred Lukermann observes the notion of place as ‘locating in relation to some other place or thing’, defining place as meaningful connections within and between other places, persons and objects (Lukermann, 1964: 168). At the home of YSP, these meaningful connections are forged between landscape, artwork, artist and audience, in a cultural and artistic nexus that exists in relation to a wider regional, national and international visual arts scene. Moreover, this chapter shows how the different spatialities of YSP are produced by a range of discourses and modes of address, which shape the contextual knowledges that audiences bring to the park. The local, regional, national and international act as framing devices used by the media, local government, cultural institutions, among others, which in varying ways materially and discursively locates and inscribes the multiple meanings of YSP and its site art.

## Chapter 5

### Audiencing David Nash

After three years of planning, ‘David Nash at Yorkshire Sculpture Park’ opened to the public on May 31<sup>st</sup> 2010. The extensive exhibition was the culmination of 40 years of work by Nash and featured a body of 263 works. Sites and galleries across the sculpture park staged the various components of the exhibition. The Longside Gallery situated in the south-west of the park was loaned from the Arts Council to display an extensive number of works from the Nash family collection at Capel Rhiw, his home and studio in North Wales (for the YSP site map of the exhibition see Fig.5.1). The interpretation on the wall of the Longside Gallery informed that: ‘more than two hundred works in four galleries and the landscape trace the evolution of a practice dedicated to trees and wood.’ Meanwhile on the other side of the park, the Underground Galleries were filled with works which represented the ‘various themes and methods of working wood into form – sawing – carving – burning – eroding – growing’ (YSP 2010f: 19). The Garden Gallery sited in the historic walls of the Bothy Garden above the Underground Gallery traced Nash’s evolution as artist from ‘a painter to a tower builder to object builder’ (YSP 2010f: 19). Sited beside the Garden Gallery, the Bothy Galleries central exhibit was the film of the *Wooden Boulder*, which documents part of the journey of Nash’s work as it travelled along a stream from 1978, joined the River Dwyryd, then sank out of visibility for five years, before reappearing in 2009 (YSP 2010f: 93; also see BBC4 2011: n/p). While Nash approximates that 90% of his works are made for indoor display a number of outdoor works were also installed in the landscaped parklands of the sculpture park for the exhibition. The permanent site installation *Black Steps* was commissioned by YSP for the Oxley Bank, which I discussed in Chapter 4. Additional new works for the Underground Gardens included *Red Column* (2010), *Black Dome* (1986-2010), and a widening of Nash’s traditional oeuvre into metal work with *Chinese Irons* (2010).

The entire scope of the site and its exhibitionary spaces played host to Nash’s sculpture and prints. Integral to realising the project was the harnessing of the creative and industrious talent of various YSP teams and volunteers. From February to late May 2010, the majority of the workers and sites of YSP were assigned to the development, creation and installation of the exhibition. This chapter charts the exhibition-making

processes across the spaces of YSP, including the development of *Black Steps*, *Chinese Irons* and *Black Dome*. Tracing both the production of the works and the audiencing of the finished exhibition, in this chapter I consider the roles different actors perform that impacted upon the art. I argue that both the process of making and the visitor engagements with the exhibition are stages where meaning is inscribed into the works. Furthermore, I argue that the process of audiencing the artworks occurs during the making of the work and continues to evolve during the display. Accordingly this chapter provides empirical insights into three main groups who perform distinctive roles in the audiencing of *David Nash*: site workers, volunteers and visitors. These examples of audiencing are framed with ‘higher profile’ audiencing from art critics and creative industries, highlighting how a reconceptualised notion of audiencing can draw connections between segments of the public with address to site art, and can be helpful in the re-evaluation of dominant narratives of the work.

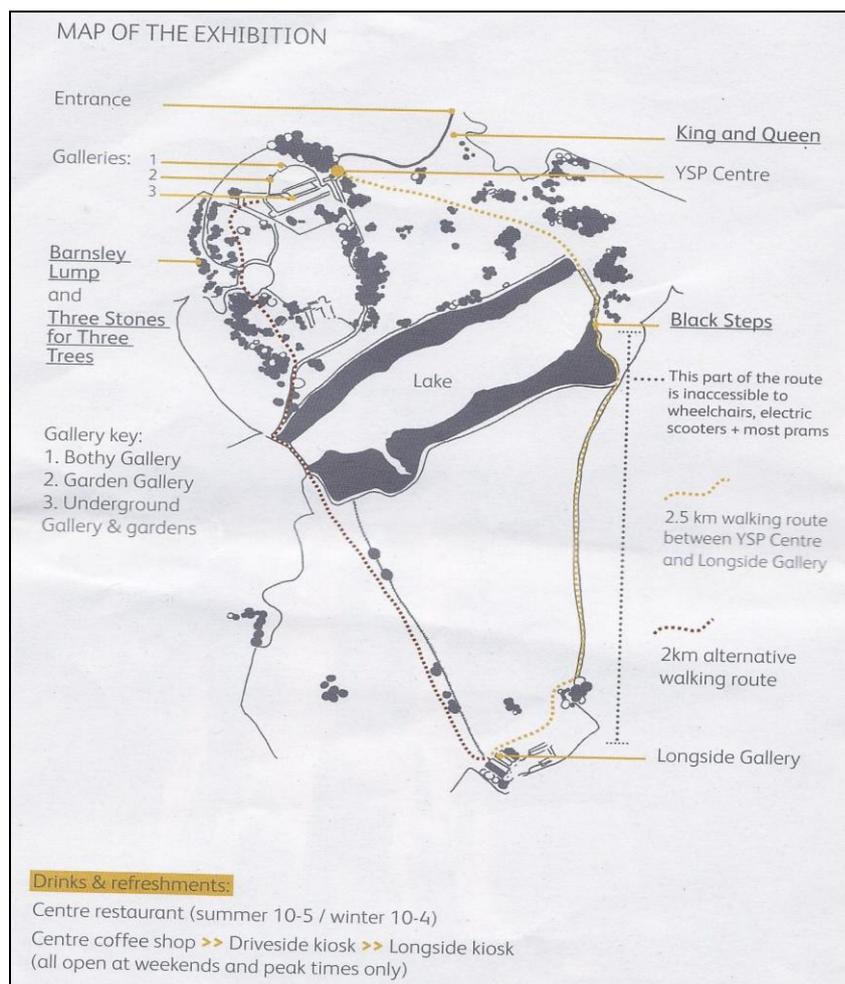


Fig.5.1. Map of David Nash at YSP produced in the David Nash at YSP Guide 2010. Detailed on the map is the site of *Black Steps*, Longside Gallery, the Bothy Garden and Underground Gallery and garden. Reproduced with permission.

## 5.1 'Wood splits, cracks, warps, opens fissures': David Nash's sculpture

The artwork of Nash has been characterised by 'growing' works with all of his long practice revolving around an 'element of change' (Proulx 2010: n/p). The importance of process in Nash's work is emphasised by the writer Annie Proulx in a special guest article for *The Guardian* 'The wild wood of David Nash' (Proulx 2010: n/p), where she attests:

For me the most compelling attribute of David Nash's work is this element of change. Unlike other artists he seems not interested in the static sculpture. The preservation and conservation of a petrified forest are not part of his style. Because he uses raw, uncured, untreated wood, change is inevitable. Wood splits, cracks, warps, opens fissures, changes colour, displays its knots and swellings, flaunts a grain, succumbs to fungal and microbial growths, to natural chemistries and mineralisation, softens and loses bits of itself, decays. Everything in the world moves toward decay. (Proulx 2010: n/p).

Proulx illustrates the living and dynamic qualities of Nash's sculptures, where the material object moves in a cycle 'toward decay' (Proulx 2010: n/p). Nash breaks with convention through burning the pieces of wood he creates, or through purposively creating objects which may never be seen, such as *Wooden Boulder* which disappeared from view submerged in a river bed (YSP 2010f: 93; also see BBC4 2011: n/p). Critic and writer Ben Tufnell affirms, 'we can follow [Wooden Boulder] or not, imagine it or not; Nature makes it happen' (BBC4 2011: n/p). Intersecting with concerns of conceptualism, Nash foregrounds the importance of process in his sculptures undermining in some works at least the artwork as an easily-packaged or marketable commodity. Nash's sculptures are rarely, if ever, finished art objects. The focus on process creates interest in the production of the works, including the 'strong narrative to the sourcing of the wood' from which Nash's sculptures are formed (BBC4 2011: n/p). Further, in creating artworks which continue to grow and to change through time, he also generates interest in the life of the sculpture beyond formal production. Through this technique Nash 'allows nature to take off when him and his tools have been put down' (BBC4 2011: n/p). Marina Warner captures the 'independent vitality' of the

works ‘beyond the artist’s control’, where, ‘their maker isn’t setting himself up as a master of natural processes but a catalyst and then a witness’ (Warner 1994: 19). While the weight of Nash’s work is designed to be displayed indoors for their longevity, his outdoor works are ‘programmed to decay’ with ‘destruction built into them’ (BBC4 2011: n/p). Explaining his methods, Nash says that he doesn’t ‘work with wood but with the elements: wood, earth, air and water’ (BBC4 2010). These fundamental elemental processes are integral to the creation of Nash’s work, with the cyclical augmentation and deterioration of the pieces.

Furthermore, and central to this thesis, is the argument that an important part of the evolution of Nash’s sculptures are the ways in which people act upon them. The first *Black Dome* (1986) was installed in the Forest of Dean sculpture trail. While the individual pieces were tied down to protect the work in expectation of a visiting public, Nash did not intend for people to walk across the work. According to Nash this realisation of the way people used *Black Dome*, notable from the eroding away of the pieces as is shown in Fig.5.2, led to several functional Steps works, the most recent of which was *Black Steps* for YSP.



Fig.5.2. Eroded *Black Dome* (1986), Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail. Photograph: Peter Telfer, 1986. Reproduced with permission.

During the complex, multi-stage process of burning and preparing *Black Steps*, Nash stressed that the installation had a participatory element insofar as visitors walking across the wooden steps would have an effect on them over time (Interview with Nash 2010a). Nash noted that '[t]he main thing about audiences is managing expectation' (Interview with Nash 2010a). Ruminating on a long artistic career in which over 2,000 works had been made, he explained, '[i]f you change what you do, they can get lost or aren't sure [but] if you keep what you do the same they become bored' (Interview with Nash 2010a). Cheryl Haines, a gallerist from San Francisco who represents Nash, has described him as a 'cult figure' in the U.S. with an audience who would not usually be seen in an art context in 'any other circumstances' (Haines in BBC4 2010: n/p). Elsewhere, Tufnell writes that, Nash has 'always been conscious of the need to draw in his audience... especially as he has always shown in non-art spaces, and has deliberately sought to address an audience not familiar with the tropes of contemporary art' (Tufnell in YSP 2010f: 131). Forging or maintaining a connection with a perceived audience at the YSP exhibition was important to Nash. Nevertheless, alongside Haines and Tufnell, Nash uses a collective subject for 'the audience' which although not idealist (Vermoert 2007), still fails to capture a range of subjective encounters with the work.

This chapter identifies the various producers who inscribe meaning into the artwork and their installation within YSP. The aim is to provide insights into the various ways and points at which the meanings of the works are structured and to point towards emergent themes. It also informs existing accounts from artists and arts professionals in order to develop new narratives on the social and cultural meaning of site art. For three months between March and June 2010 I conducted participant observation focusing on the development of new site works by Nash for the YSP exhibition and the installation of them in the landscape. Here I document the responses of site workers and volunteers who laboured to support Nash in the realisation of the works commissioned by YSP and the finished exhibition. This research demonstrates a distinction between site workers which I was unaware of prior to undertaking the project. The site workers sub-divide into gardeners and sculpture technicians with both teams working independently under the line management of the Manager of Sculpture and Estates. Through ethnographic processes of participant observation, I observed the day to day processes of making art at YSP. I locate the productive tensions which mitigated the vision of the artist with the logistical demands of a resource limited arts organisation bound to a tight programme schedule.

Alternative insights are gained from volunteers. Support from volunteers is relied upon all year with independent projects or for sustained periods such as through invigilating in the exhibition spaces of the Underground or Garden galleries. However for the development of Nash's large scale exhibition there arose the opportunity for volunteers to help with the production and installation of the work. This chapter provides insights into three volunteers' individual reasons for volunteering, along with their experiences of the work. I demonstrate that the process of development provides an experiential and interpretative bridge which informs the volunteers understanding of Nash's work, heightening their ability to respond to the works in the exhibitionary context.

I returned to YSP in July 2011 to investigate the audiencing of the exhibition by visitors following the launch of the exhibition. Through participant observation and interviewing in designated sites across the exhibition spaces, both indoor and outdoor, I recorded the way in which different audiences responded to Nash's works. These divergent examples of audience participation, or indeed non participation, present alternative means of understanding the social and cultural value of the artwork provided by site workers and volunteers. While a portion of responses are characterised by mutism (De Bolla 2001: 3), an inability to articulate a response to an artwork, or the reverse, a heightened form of exclamation, a significant number of visitors redirect any focused analysis of the art to the wider context of experiencing the sculpture park en masse as an installation (also see Chapter 3). Through recording the scene of engagement and the reasons for visiting, the ways in which the artworks are audienced by individuals or groups of visitors are brought into perspective.

Finally, I demonstrate the way that the Nash exhibition is audienced by the creative industries and visitors during the exhibition-making, in order to demonstrate that the meaning of the exhibition was in production prior to the launch. I provide examples of a film-maker, a photographer and a critic who audience and represent Nash's work in their film, photographs and writing to coincide with the opening of the show. This demonstrates interest in the processes of making Nash's sculpture, however, more broadly, it opens up recognition that meaning in the art world is inflected by and packaged during the stages of post-production. Further, I exemplify how visitors audience the making of the show prior to the launch by special tours. Therefore this section brings into relief the argument of the thesis that audiencing occurs non-linearly, with meaning produced and circulated discursively and materially at all stages during

the conceptualisation, making, display, and processes of visitation, and, indeed, through the legacies of documentation and cultural memory.

Overall, this chapter conceptualises the audience as active, creative agents in the production of the meaning of site art. This frames the meaning of art as dynamic; contingent upon the positionality of the audience, spatial context, and purpose of engagement, which links to the multiple positionings of art and place explored in Chapter 4.

## 5.2 Art, site and audience

The intervention into audiencing (Fiske 1992; Rose 2001) I make in this chapter is to address the process in relation to art in landscape. The relationship between art, site and audience was drawn in the mid-1960s, where Land Art interconnected with conceptualism as one pivotal ‘aspect of a sea-change in art and thinking about art’ (Tufnell 2006: 17). Also termed a ‘dematerialisation’ of art (Lippard 1997[1973]), conceptualism posed resistance to the sanctified object or form as the chief constituent of the art work. An important strand of conceptualism for this thesis was the distancing of the artist’s hand from the production of the works and the related questioning of authorial control over the artwork (Sperlinger 2005: 21-22). The latter point is encapsulated by the artist and critic Sol LeWitt, who not insignificantly, is displayed in YSP:

Once out of his hand, the artist has no control over the way a viewer will perceive the work. Different people will understand the same thing in a different way. (LeWitt 1967: 81)

Despite working primarily in a gallery context, the writing and installations of Robert Morris exemplify the reinvented role of the audience shifting from spectator to participant that is central to this thesis. Morris moved across various mediums which opened his work up to the accusation that he was ‘elusive and virtually styleless’ (Lippard 1997[1973]: viii). However form was less integral to the cohesion of the works than concept. Morris entailed a phenomenological rather than philosophical approach to investigating the functionality of art (Bird 1999: 92), using the bodies of his audience to create the art. In his short-lived show at the Tate Gallery, which opened on 28 April 1971 and was closed five days later, Morris ‘pushed up against the hegemonic

definitions of work, site, context and audiences in ways that clearly revealed their regulatory boundaries and exclusions' (Bird 1999: 92). This altered the 'reflective spectator/object relation' where meaning is constructed by 'optical exchange across a visual field' (Bird 1999: 96) to a haptic or tactile phenomenology of the body as it encounters the physical world. In Morris' divergent works, form was less important than the creation of 'an arena for performative play; in which the active participation of the spectator completes the work' (Newman and Bird 1999: 96). Conceptualism can be seen to redraw the boundaries of art and the role of the audience, particularly in the participatory works of Morris. Yet, while the disruptive potential of the work was investigated, or 'the *work* of the work of art' (Bird 1999: 92), in most instances conceptualism's relationship with a broader audience remained 'vague and undeveloped' (Lippard 1997: xvi).

Conceptualism interconnected with site based work or land art practices where, 'ideas, process and experience are prioritised above objecthood' (Tufnell 2006: 17). As American land artist, Robert Smithson, wrote on his 'post-studio' work:

I also wanted to get away from specific object orientation. I developed an interest in the mapping situation, and an interest in finding new sites outside of the white walls of the gallery or museum. (Smithson in Flam 1996: 234)

These new, often isolated sites offered fertile ground to work outside the art institution, most famously executed in Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* in the Salt Flat plains of Utah, U.S. For Smithson, '[t]he most compelling artists today are concerned with 'place' or 'site' – Smith, de Maria, Andre, Heizer, Oppenheim, Huebler – to name but a few' (Smithson in Flam: 104). In conversation with Smithson, artist Allan Kaprow challenged the degree to which site art moved beyond the art institution:

You face a social pressure which is hard to reconcile with your ideas. At present, galleries and museums are still the primary agency or 'market' for what artists do... Therefore your involvement with 'exhibition people', however well-meant they are, is bound to defeat whatever position you take regarding the non-value of your activity. (Kaprow in Flam: 50)

Kaprow comments on the tension between the idea of the site, or landscape, and the financial imperative to remain connected to the art institution, or 'non-site'. Smithson -

along with other site artists – does not sever a relationship with galleries and museums, or the value chain of the artwork. Smithson often still showed documentation relating to his projects in galleries and museums, and continued to be represented by them. Smithson justified this ‘irony’ of the continued connection between the site and non-site as a ‘comprehension of limits... [that] set up a dialectic’ (Smithson in Flam: 234).

Based in Britain in the late 1960s and early 1970s, artist Richard Long critiqued the monumental site works of Smithson, and other U.S. artists, as ‘true capitalist art’ (Long in Andrews 1999: 215). Keen to distance his own work from that of his U.S. contemporaries, Long stated:

My interest was in a more thoughtful view of art and nature, making art both visible and invisible, using ideas, walking, stones, tracks, water, time etc, in a flexible way... It was the antithesis of so-called American Land Art, where the artist needed money to be an artist, to buy real estate, to claim possession of the land and wield machinery. (Long in Andrews 1999: 215)

Long wrote retrospectively in 1982:

In the mid-sixties the language and ambition of art was due for renewal. I felt art had barely recognised the natural landscapes which cover this planet, or had used the experiences those places could offer. Starting on my own doorstep and later spreading, part of my work since has been to try to engage this potential. (Long in Fuchs 1986: 236)

In *A Ten Mile Walk* (1968), Long engages experience of landscape by walking in a line for 10 miles across Exmoor, south-west England. Different vantage points are embedded into *Ten Mile Walk*, which Tufnell has argued to be simultaneously ‘dematerialised, part action, part documentation’ (Tufnell 2006: 11):

For the viewer the only trace of the work, our only way of accessing this reality, is through a map with the route of the walk ruled onto it... For an audience, *A Ten Mile Walk*, England 1968 is a piece of Conceptual Art. Nonetheless it is also sculptural in its articulation of a passage through space, and distinctive in the radical simplicity of its approach to landscape (Tufnell 2006: 11).

The walk is documented to have taken place, yet it is through the presence and imagination of the viewer that the line on a map of Exmoor becomes actualised as a physical, embodied event. The work is radical in its transformation of corporeal site based practice, into dematerialised conceptual art, and, with the viewer, transitioning back into lived experience. Of this impact Nash is quoted as saying, ‘Long liberated us, I respect him for liberating a lot of artists just by stepping over the boundaries of object-making’ (Nash in Cork 2004: 44). While divergent and wide ranging, arts writer Jeffrey Kastner, draws the connection between conceptualism and contemporary site orientated practice as a desire to animate the possibilities of arts practice:

What began in the mid 1960s with a small number of committed conceptualists – disenchanted with the modernist endgame and animated by a desire to measure the power of the artwork isolated from the cosmopolitan commodifications of the white cube – has grown over the last thirty years to include a widely diverging collection of forms, approaches and theoretical positions. (Kastner 2010: 11-12)

While not explicitly concerned with audiencing, and certainly not utilising this term, monumental site practices such as Smithson’s challenged the role of the audience through requiring greater expense, time, and physical navigation to visit the actual ‘sites’. Moreover, whether in the site or non-site context, site art requires a projection of the audience imagination in order to realise the full scope of the art, which is particularly apparent with the work of Long. These works with their distinctive modalities interrogated the content and value of art. However, they were not oriented towards a general public. As with the earlier quotation taken from Tufnell, the ideal audience could be intended for the works or anachronistically written in, yet actual research into the ways in which different audiences responded to these altered templates for arts engagement were not documented, nor seemingly a point of real enquiry. This is a lacuna that the thesis attempts in some ways to address.

YSP intersects with these discourses and practices through showcasing a body of twentieth and twenty-first century sculptures in their landscape including modernist, conceptual, and site art (see Chapter 1). This traces a site-based genealogy of important artistic developments in British and international sculpture in the historic setting of the Bretton Estate, Yorkshire. Furthermore, through the building of internal gallery spaces, YSP has established its own relationality between site and non-site. For Smithson,

‘[o]bjects in a park suggest static repose rather than any ongoing dialectic. Parks are finished landscapes for finished art’ (Smithson in Flam 1996: 155). The picturesque landscape tradition of the English garden was considered to be an exercise in formal direction and curtailment of the wilds of nature. Smithson considered the sculpture park along with modernist work as concerned with debates on form, which he sought with his site-based land art to break from.

Nature does not proceed in a straight line, it is rather a sprawling development. Nature is never finished. (Smithson in Flam 1996: 155)

Smithson recognised that the picturesque landscape tradition was a response to the formal French gardens of the eighteenth century, and therefore an issue of form and taste, yet he brilliantly misconceived the supposed ‘static repose’ of the sculpture park. Nash’s work highlights how the qualities of nature and art continue to evolve and grow together, altering both site and work. The dynamic elements of this relationship shift again when the next artist show is installed. Indeed, contrasting to other sculpture parks, as detailed in Chapter 3, YSP does not have a permanent collection, and therefore its arts programming resists the static and finished. The installations in the sculpture park alter on a 6 to 12 month basis from show to show. In the Country Park the Henry Moore sculptures transition every few years, most recently in 2011. Other notable YSP dynamisms include the natural changeable elements of seasonal weather, the impact of wildlife on the sculptures and landscape, and diseases such as elm disease which ravaged the parklands in the 1970s, impacting upon the variety of trees and vistas evident in the park today. Far from ‘finished landscapes for finished art’, YSP is comprised of evolving, seasonal parklands with a combination of temporary exhibitions, loaned sculptures and sited works.

Smithson wrote, ‘[t]he viewer, be he an artist or a critic, is subject to a climatology of the brain and eye’, in description of the experience of being in landscape (Smithson in Flam 1996: 156). Smithson frames the viewer as either an artist or critic, however this research identifies the exclusivity and limitations of this notion of the viewer. This thesis recognises a range of different audiences and processes of audiencing as relevant to an analysis of the meaning of art and landscape, including those from outside the art world. Curator and visual arts writer, Mike Sperlinger emphasises the diverse lineage of conceptual art: ‘early conceptual art seems to have an increasing presence, both via historical survey shows and via its influence felt through

much contemporary work- whether it is site-specific, 'relational', dematerialised etc' (Sperlinger 2005: 3). What connects certain conceptual art, and by inference related contemporary site based practices, is their attempt to 'reinvent the viewer' (Heartney 2008: 59) in their 'specific (and often highly subjective) way' (Friedling 2008: 12). Importantly, by tracing audience encounters with Nash's site art, this research does not write about the idea of the reinvented viewer. Instead it speaks of the multiple positionalities of different audiences through in-depth empirical enquiry into actual art encounters at YSP.

Focusing on contemporary art, Grant Kester, supports the audience-focused approach through positing that the meaning of the artwork is unfixed and subject to reinterpretation depending upon context and audience. Kester importantly considers the audience in the actual production of the contemporary artwork, rather than considering reception as the final stage in a chain of creative processes (Kester 2004: 10). Concentrating on non-object based practices, 'dialogical or participatory practices that mobilize very different forms of intersubjective affect, identification, and agency,' Kester identifies the requirement of new models for understanding visitor response:

One of the most promising areas for new research in the field of contemporary art involves the development of more nuanced and detailed models of the processes of reception mobilized in such practices. (Kester 2009: 9)

Through utilising the contemporary viewer as a resource for analysis, contemporary art history can pose something of a threat to unregulated and multiple chains of interpretative authority (Kester 2009: 7-9). As I introduced in Chapter 1, by considering the character of interaction, rather than simply the physical or formal integrity of a given work or the artist's experience in the production of that work, new important sites of meaning can be revealed. A move to considering process-led works provides a contextual situation which centralises the importance of the audience as a creative and mediatory stage in the production of the artwork. Kester argues that, 'the object-based artwork (with some exceptions) is produced entirely by the artist and only subsequently offered to the viewer' (Kester 2009:10). As a result, 'the viewer's response has no immediate reciprocal effect on the constitution of the work' (Kester 2009:10), and the physical object remains essentially static. In comparison, '[d]ialogical projects... unfold through a process of performative interaction' (Kester 2009: 10). Yet, as I have outlined

with the sculpture of Nash, object-based artwork is neither inert nor static, which is particularly apparent within the changing landscape. I argue that while the structure of participatory or dialogical artwork renders clear the importance of the audience for the completion of the work, object-based art is also audienceed during the process of production by various participants. This performative interaction during the creation and exhibition-making of the artwork impacts upon the multiple meanings of the work itself and the social context of the artspace.

Indeed, Clare Bishop has stridently proposed that it is a misreading of post-structuralist theory to apply work such as Eco's 'The Poetics of the Open Work' (1962) to a specific type of work that requires literal participation (Bishop 2004). This is a direct critique of Nicholas Bourriaud's notion of 'relational aesthetics', and book of the same title, on artwork that focuses on the realm of human interactions and its social context in the 1990s. In a critique of interpretations of art where art can be seen to transcend its context (Greenberg 1940, 1961; Fried 1967, 1980, 1998), art included under the rubric of relational aesthetics are not considered discrete autonomous objects. Instead work such as Rirkrit Tiravanija's *Untitled (Free)* (1992) - where free Thai food was gifted to museum goers - create intersubjective encounters between art and a community of visitors. The relational artwork charts a move from formal concerns and is instead 'entirely beholden to the contingencies of its environment and audience' (Bishop 2004: 54). Yet, relational artwork does not reflect social relationships, rather it produces them through a programmed set of interactions, and is therefore 'automatically political' in implication (Bishop 2004: 54). Indeed, 'It is no longer enough to say that activating the viewer tout court in a democratic art, for every art work - even the most 'open-ended' - determines in advance the depths of participation that the viewer may have with it' (Bishop 2004: 64). What I stress instead in this chapter is the point made by Bishop that every work of art is potentially open and certain forms of contemporary art simply foreground this understanding in the formal structure, 'thereby [redirecting] the argument back to artistic intentionality rather than the issues of reception' (Bishop 2004: 57). This thesis therefore attempts to uncover sites of analysis where the audiences' role in the performance of site art can be traced to add new dimensions to understanding the work beyond its formal structure and the artist's intentionality.

Nash's exhibition encompasses a wide range of mediums including prints, drawings, indoor sculptures, outdoor works, alongside a functional permanent installation. Nash defines his art as 'mainly abstract works' (BBC4 2011: n/p). Distinctive in form, these works are sited across a range of spaces, internal and external,

requiring different types of engagement with audiences in concert with the rules of the YSP 'code' (see Chapter 3). Advancing from Kester, in what follows this chapter particularly engages with the ways in which audiencing does not simply take place after the launch of the exhibition, in a linear fashion following the creation and curation of the artworks. However rather than focusing expressly on examples of dialogical or participatory artworks which structure, to a greater or lesser degree, the mode of engagement, I consider a range of Nash's site works with audiencing traced from the stage of production. The thesis aims to democratically reopen the question of arts production and the production of art space, through the question of who produces it and for which audience.

As I outlined in Chapter 3, different publics convene in the geographical spaces of YSP for a range of variegated practices. They are also, as Chapter 4 demonstrates, addressed and created in differently scaled spatialities that relationally connect back to the physical site and localised art practices of YSP. To help deliver the Nash exhibition, a corpus of volunteers was enlisted from across the region, with some travelling nationally to YSP. As previously detailed, Murray has argued that YSP created an audience for the sculpture park (Interview with Murray 2010)(see Chapter 3). Yet, this particular public of volunteers was created to help with the production of the artwork and exhibition, not for the more usual reasons of visitor footfall after the launch. I argue that the audiencing of Nash can therefore be traced through the process of creating and delivering the works, as well as after the official opening of the exhibition. Further, this insight points towards multiple positions which a person or collective can perform in relation to the artwork and YSP. Alongside considering the multiple roles of the volunteers in the technology of production and audiencing of Nash's work, I also trace the ways in which the site workers simultaneously create and audience the works in their everyday working environment. Therefore I provide examples from the different mobile publics who audienced Nash during the production and exhibition of the works. This creates insights into the ways in which the artwork is constructed by various actors. Furthermore, this provides insights into the processes by which audiences inscribe meaning into the works and the stages and ways through which the work becomes recognised as a piece of art.

### 5.3 The production of David Nash at YSP

#### i) *Sculpture technicians and gardeners*

##### *Black Steps* (March 2010) Longside

On the first day of preparation for *Black Steps* there is bright winter sunshine and blue skies. A large fire is burning behind the YSP warehouse at Longside. The sculpture technicians are charring each wooden step slowly in the fire under the direction of David Nash (see Fig.5.3). I ask Ned, one of the technicians, ‘Is this art?’ He replies: ‘Why not? Well, you wouldn’t do this process for any other reason, which is one of the definitions some people give for art’ (Field diary entry with Ned 2010). Two days later I return to the production site. I am informed that the fire which is again burning the logs for *Black Steps* was lit by two of the site technicians at 7.30am, much earlier than their usual start time. The passageway behind the warehouses is set up like a production line, with the burning logs at the front, then the cherry picker forklift ferrying the charred logs to be hosed down, sanded and treated.



Fig.5.3. David Nash demonstrates to the site technicians the charring technique for burning the ends of the logs for *Black Steps* (2010). Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

However, I observe that two days into production there is a continued creative evolution with the preparation method. The technicians voice concerns that the fire is not burning the ends of the logs properly. As a result the logs are being kept too long in the core heat of the fire, leading to the middle of the logs ‘overcooking’. There is also a theory voiced that the heat of the fire combined with the green oak is pushing the moisture through the steps leading to cracking in the charred surfaces. Due to this surface cracking, the head technician instead wants to alter the production process by using a weedkiller flame with a long throw for the ends of the logs. Alan Mackenzie, Manager of Sculpture and Estates, has reservations about whether this will lead to more cracks but is ‘supportive of new ideas’ (Field diary entry with Mackenzie 2010). I note that the rest of the team are keen for solutions to speed up the process. In response Nash says that it is fine to experiment but suggests that first the team should put the logs into the flames at an angle. Nash affirms that this is the best technique he has developed for burning wood, asserting his technical authority gained through working with wood and trees for over 40 years. At the close of the day with 15 steps finished, I repose my question to Ned, ‘Is this work now art?’ This time the technician replies: ‘It feels heavy enough to be art’ (Field diary entry with Ned 2010). When I press, he levels, ‘[t]he point [at which] it will be art is the installation’ (Field diary entry with Ned 2010). All of the other four technicians collected around labouring agree with this comment. The point at which *Black Steps* will become artwork is when it is installed into the intended site of Oxley Bank, YSP. The transformation of the work into art according to this consensus will occur at the stage when the components of the work, the site and Nash’s directives are resolved.

The *Black Steps* case study can be characterised as demonstrating a normative approach where the art is evaluated against the vision of the artist. Instead of laying focus on the subjective interpretation of the art, and thus risking losing sight of the art object, this example shows the role that the art plays within the technicians’ daily lives. In media studies, audience reception theory has recognised that, ‘[i]nstead of asking what texts mean or what people do with texts, research should ask how texts are located and understood as part of, indeed as agents in, the practices of people’s daily lives’ (Livingstone 1998: 14). As represented in the field observations and images above, Nash’s site art opens itself up to analysis of how it is located in and understood as part of the practices of YSP worker’s daily lives. The physicality of the work, and three-dimensional, visceral qualities of Nash’s art, means that this analysis becomes even more pertinent than it is with the textual example provided. The relationship between

the technicians and art can be characterised by communal, manual productivity, where refining the process and materials are of central concern. Ideation and critical interpretation of the *Black Steps* is not part of the remit of the work and, unless prompted, does not form part of the day-to-day discussion.

*Chinese Irons* (April 2010), Underground Gardens

A large lorry awaits to be unloaded on the terrace in front of the Underground Galleries at YSP (see Fig. 5.4). The lorry driver must wait until the Peter Randall-Page sculptures from the previous exhibition have been loaded onto a separate vehicle. After the Randall-Pages have been secured for transport across the country, the lorry is eventually opened by one of the sculpture technicians and inside is a number of metal domes cast in iron. Together the pieces form a 20 tonne work, which has been manufactured and imported from China. All this has been paid for by the art collector Philip King.



Fig.5.4 Peter Randall-Page works are packaged to be delivered to private collector while lorry of Nash's work waits to be unloaded, Underground Gardens. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

The site technicians tell me that at the moment the work does not have a definite name but that they think it is called *Iron Dome*. I am informed that the iron surface has deliberately been oxidised, however this process will be speeded up with cold water and with propane gas to give the effect of elements acting upon the dome pieces. I ask Bill whether he is pleased with how the exhibition is coming together. With a fraught schedule and dry humour, he replies: ‘I’ve got two more weeks to do it all and you ask me whether I’m pleased? (Field diary entry with Bill 2010). When the exhibition opens in June 2010 the name of the work has changed to *Chinese Irons*. From the design to the finished execution, the vision of the exhibition remained almost entirely constant (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010). Yet the instance of *Chinese Domes* points towards the flux inherent in the exhibition-making process. Nash had not seen the work prior to the delivery of the pieces, therefore the extent to which they were oxidised and the curation of the work remained unknown to the artist until close to the exhibition launch (see Fig.5.5). The change in name of the work from the projected title, *Iron Dome*, to the final title once the work was in situ, *Chinese Dome*, was indicative of the development from the intended piece into a transformed artwork. While this allowance for change was built into the exhibition design, with flexibility as to the exact details of how the work would be sited and the title, this nevertheless points towards a discontinuity between artistic intentionality and the final artwork. This point is encapsulated by Warner’s observation that Nash’s work evolves ‘beyond the artist’s control’ (Warner 1994: 19). Furthermore, as I have shown above with the original *Black Domes* (1986), the augmentation of the work continues after installation through human and environmental impacts on the materials. Site installation informs that ‘bodies and landscapes [are] emergent through their mutual relationships rather than as autonomous or pre-defined forms’ (Morris 2011: 334). *Chinese Irons* directs us to the variety of factors that shape the narrative of the artwork, including the industrial production and transportation of the work, the negotiated curatorial decision-making between artist, and organisation, and dynamics of landscape and audiencing pre and post installation. This makes clear that cultural practices - such as processes of creation and qualities of reception - ‘cannot be fully mastered, predicted, and programmed’ (Bal 1996: 130), yet they can be made more visible.



Fig.5.5 Delivery of *Chinese Irons* with oxidised surfaces, Underground Gardens. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

*May 2010, Underground Galleries, YSP.*

There are two weeks to go until the launch of David Nash at YSP. One of the gallery invigilators, Malcolm, who has been drafted in to help with the exhibition preparation tells me there is a joke amongst the site technicians and gardeners: ‘After Nash? There’s no after Nash’ (Interview with Malcolm 2010). During the process of repainting the Underground Gallery walls bright white in line with museum exhibition protocols, Malcolm explains that, ‘it’s busy at the minute, we’re going back and forth between here and Longside... There’s lots of work still at Longside’ (Interview with Malcolm 2010). Nash’s works have been stored in the warehouse at Longside and are being delivered by the site workers and curators to the various indoor and outdoor spaces designated for them. Asked about Nash’s work the invigilator replies that he ‘liked the metal works from China, when we were offloading’ (Interview with Malcolm 2010). Malcolm then articulates an idea for curating *Chinese Irons*:

For [Japanese artist, Isamu] Noguchi we created little plinths. That would work well as I thought it would look good reflected in the pools [of rain water which will collect on the terrace]... But knowing this place they will just be plonked on the ground and will sit in pools when it rains and the terrace floods. (Interview with Malcolm 2010).

Asked whether he told the curators this idea, Malcolm responded: ‘No, they wouldn’t listen’ (Interview with Malcolm 2010). Laughing, he clarifies, ‘they’d listen but deliberately do something different’ (Interview with Malcolm 2010). This humorous slant on the creative hierarchy at YSP is reinforced by the accounts of volunteers Ben and Marnie on the *Black Steps* project discussed later. While the material form and meaning of *Chinese Irons* is recognised to be contingent on numerous factors of production, a hierarchy presented in this excerpt adds weight to the recognition that the museum is not ‘a forum’ (Lavine and Karp 1991: 4), particularly in terms of decision-making. This case study highlights the self-censored creative vision of workers with lower levels of cultural capital within YSP that would otherwise remain anecdotal.

#### *Black Dome* (April 2010), Underground Gardens

Three of the gardeners are redoing the turfing on the far bank of the Underground Gardens where the *Black Dome* will be installed (see Fig.5.6). The bank is on an incline which needs to be levelled for the presentation of the art. The gardeners have two weeks to finish the job and to put in the coal which will surround the *Black Dome*. This utilisation of coal has been conceptualised to create a synergy with the mining evocations of the *Black Steps* installation on the south-east of the Upper Lake. Edwards and the other gardeners instead emphasise the labour of the task, ‘[the site team] realised it was hard so got us to do it’ (Field diary entry with Edwards 2010). This departs from the critical conceptual understanding of *Black Dome* as eroding, with impermanence built into the work, as the charred surface continues to react with the natural outdoor elements. The gardener’s account of hard labour instead establishes the physical production entailed in the creation of the landscape and artwork, which is often obscured from view (Wright 2001: 68; Buchmann 2006). The labour of the gardener is read through YSP structures of power which aligns thematically with the previous case study on the installation of *Chinese Irons*. I am told that the Manager of Sculpture and Estates, ‘keeps finding us things to do before the opening,’ when, ‘usually we get left

alone to get on with tasks' (Field diary entry with Edwards 2010). The build up to the exhibition opening is realised by the gardeners less as a creative time when the community of workers join together, and more as period of heightened control, curtailment of autonomy and bodily exertion.

*Black Domes* has been installed (see Fig.5.7). The invigilator Malcolm selects *Black Domes* as his favourite work in the exhibition. Asked why, he responds: 'Because there was no interference, we got on with it and Nash liked it' (Interview with Malcolm 2010). In parallel to the account of the gardeners, a desire for autonomy is presented. However, developing from the case study of *Chinese Irons*, in this instance creative input is interlaced with autonomy which heightens the appreciation of *Black Dome* over the other works in the exhibition. Detailing this creative labouring, Malcolm narrates:

At first we thought about 12 black pieces were missing as not all of them were touching. Then we checked against the pictures and saw that only the centre pieces touched. We could order in any way as long as the tallest pieces were in the centre. It [just] had to be dome-shaped. (Interview with Malcolm 2010)



Fig.5.6 Head Gardener prepares site for *Black Dome* (2010), Underground Gardens. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.



Fig.5.7 Completed Black Dome (2010), Underground Gardens. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010

Malcolm's account is again normative in respect of following the vision of the artist, which is required professionally. However, it also demystifies the making of the work, providing insights into the value of art conceived in terms of the everyday working environment, as opposed to a discrete autonomous form. The art is remade by Malcolm. This does not compromise the authority of the artist in this instance, but it does reveal a correlation between immersion and creative connectivity. Rather than the meaning of art operating in a disinterested realm of judgment, meaning is produced more forcefully through direct, hand-on interest.

Brute Force & Ignorance are an independent sculpture team who do freelance work for YSP, high profile artists and collectors. They offer a useful point of contrast to the examples drawn from permanent YSP technicians. Sam, one half of Brute Force & Ignorance, interprets the humour of the work in connection with a tour given to YSP staff by Nash ahead of the exhibition launch:

At art school I was always drawn to Nash, especially the growing pieces. But also there's a lot of humour in his work... Yesterday he was doing a tour - while I was sitting there cleaning one of the pieces - and he [said] to the

staff that ‘these are all players’ in a room with *Red Flash* and *King and Queen*. These are all theatrical players and they can be on their own or on stage together. And I don’t know if there’s anyone else which makes such characterful work. A lot [of the works] are comedic. (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010)

Sam aligns himself with the artist through emphasising his appreciation of the technical skill needed in the use of the chainsaw, ‘[one] also appreciate[s] him as a maker because he’s amazing with a chainsaw; he’s not beating away with a chisel’ (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010). This alliance extends to an appreciation of Nash’s studio in Wales, ‘that is the ideal... It’s beautiful.... That’s [my] dream’ (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010). The partner in Brute Force & Ignorance, Mark, considers the vision of both curators and Nash:

Its magnificent. Its been really fascinating how much work has been moving around the site and the vision which has been going on. With the curators and David, how the galleries and landscape will look and they got it right. (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010)

They discuss a perceived disconnect between the YSP technicians and the artists work, ‘They don’t seem to be as big fans as us... which is unusual... Maybe it’s been too gruelling’ (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010). Further, they infer a resistance to the indecision in the execution of the exhibition. Again positioning themselves on the side of the artist, Sam and Mark state:

I don’t see why there shouldn’t be indecision until it’s right. There shouldn’t be resistance to that, it’s [Nash’s] prerogative to come back a couple of days later. (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010)

Brute Force & Ignorance present a close relationship with the artist professionally and interpretatively. Indeed, their role as ‘sculptors’ rather than ‘technicians’ is important to them, as they informed me with a stated preference to the former term. They locate themselves on the side of the visionary concerns of the artist and at a distance to the logistical issues of the organisation. The insights that Brute Force & Ignorance bring to audiencing Nash’s works are that of the specialist and trained arts professional. Their

account illustrates that audiencing cannot be understood as a final stage of consumption, distinguished from the making of the works (Fiske 1992; Rose 2001; Pink 2006; Tufnell 2006), rather the meaning of the works for these professionals is entwined with witnessing ‘how much work has been moving around the site and the vision which has been going on’ (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010). The impact of the art is bound to the narrative of its processing, ‘they got it right’ with the pair still thinking of themselves as artists (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010). This demonstrates that ‘audiencing’ as an involved process of witnessing and interpretation, in this case alongside hands on support, can occur within an organisation. The research provides a stage through which to demonstrate that the site workers often perform the role of audience during the making process with their own situated readings of the art.

## *ii) Volunteers*

Marnie (July 2010)

Marnie volunteered to help produce prints of Nash’s work, overseen by the artist’s son, during the exhibition preparation. Subsequently, she invigilated Nash in the Underground Galleries. Marnie emphasised that the most vivid memory of the exhibition’s development was ‘to be able to meet [Nash] and to work with him’ (Interview with Marnie 2010). Further, she describes the anticipation of observing the exhibition-making: ‘[t]here was also the chance to look into the Underground Gallery as they brought things in [and] seeing how exciting that looked and then the final result’ (Interview with Marnie 2010). The context of the shows development rather than the content of the exhibition is emphasised here, ‘[i]t was quite exciting to see how it had all come together, with these [art] things it seems as though there’s an awful lot to be done before’ (Interview with Marnie 2010). Moreover, to be ‘part of the process’ enabled a deeper connection with the artworks when they were completed:

I suppose just instead of being the viewer, or the visitor who comes and reads the notes, or a guide, making what you can of it, you somehow learn through the setting up... [Through] seeing something taken down and something new being put up. (Interview with Marnie 2010)

Marnie explained that she learnt through seeing the teamwork. Alongside the atmospheric qualities of this, or the ‘very good buzz’, she considered the process ‘more enlightening about the work’ (Interview with Marnie 2010). Marnie highlights that working on the project in a social engagement enabled a connectivity to the work and workmanship which would have been absent otherwise:

I felt more related to the work. Much more related to the work than I would have been... I think it made me feel more related to the pieces and the process. (Interview with Marnie 2010)

For Marnie, the central points were the access to the artist along with the access to the professional team and exhibition-making as an ‘outsider’. This provided revelatory aspects of the experience, enabling the volunteer to feel more related to the work. Further, this ‘behind the scenes’ narrative helped to strengthen her notes as an invigilator, and her role of representing YSP, ‘to learn about how he sees and relates to his work’ (Interview with Marnie 2010). Marnie’s account shows how meaning is constructed during the process of the arts production and installation, with these stages informing understanding of the finished works. This account of audiencing therefore intersects with the convergence of conceptualism and site art where ‘ideas, process and experience are prioritised above objecthood’ (Tufnell 2006: 17). The emotive connection engendered through the processual exposure to the artist, the team and the production of the work, made Marnie feel more related to the ‘pieces and the process’ (Interview with Marnie 2010). However the lure of the artist as the originary force remains strong in this testimony, with importance connected to how Nash ‘sees and relates’ the work as a blueprint for the work’s meaning (Interview with Marnie 2010). While the collective power of the exhibition is read through the lens of the team’s production of the works, the hand and the vision of the artist performs a strong influence over Marnie’s interpretation of the exhibition.

Francis (July 2010)

Francis volunteered to help prepare *Black Steps*. She travelled up from Tunbridge Wells, Kent, ‘altogether, about five hours’ to stay in West Bretton’s bed and breakfast for two weeks in order to volunteer (Interview with Francis 2010). Francis had researched Nash before her volunteer project by reading published art history texts on

the artist and sourcing images of his artwork. She explained, '[w]hen I knew I had the opportunity to come here, I went back on the internet and found another couple of books which I've now read... I looked at all [Nash's art] work' (Interview with Francis 2010). Along with Marnie, Francis emphasises that meeting Nash was 'the pinnacle of that experience', where, 'to meet Nash and see him on his cherrypicker cutting *Red Column* was just brilliant' (Interview with Francis 2010). She describes the privilege of being able to work with an established artist 'he just accepted that there are people here ready to help him and produce this amazing exhibition' (Interview with Francis 2010). This account supports that of Marnie, demonstrating the pervasive force of the artist's creative persona. Francis incorporates the insight that the aura of the artist is supported through information circulating on the internet and published in art historical literature.

Francis describes her initial reaction as being in 'awe' with 'all these crates with so much work, work he was doing outside, work I could see, work in progress' (Interview with Francis 2010). Notably these examples show that it is the productivity and the collective power of the works altogether that impacts upon Francis. After meeting the artist, the process of being involved with the exhibition making is drawn. However, along with Marnie, the emphasis is made that insight into the process informs understanding of the artwork and strengthens a connection with the work once it is completed:

So the part of me who would arrive in the park and walk up Oxley Bank and not know anything about the process, I would have probably thought this is a nice walk. I would have thought these are black steps and surrounded by coal. How did they get them black? Yet, having worked on it... I look at each step and that process that I have actually done on those steps is there. I have an intimate connection with it. Absolutely. They almost feel like part of me, which is really lovely. (Interview with Francis 2010)

The intimate connection with the art is forged through the hard work spent producing the steps. Francis reflects:

I suppose I have a sense of pride that I was privileged enough to be part of that whole process. I mean David Nash was very particular – this is what you do, you do that you do that and you do that and that. And you follow that process. (Interview with Francis 2010)

Again, supporting Marnie's account, Francis perceives a linear hierarchy of artistic and authorial production with Nash driving the creative direction. Francis' 'intimate connection' with the finished work is enabled through an engaged tactile process of working on the development of the steps. This testimony of audiencing altered the 'reflective spectator/object relation' to a 'felt and lived experience of corporeality' with *Black Steps* (Bird 1999: 96). However, while writing in new perspectives on audiencing Nash's work through an account of the experiential processes of making the steps, Francis remains loyal to the vision of the artist both in her adherence to his directives and her account of the meaning of the work.

Importantly, Francis recognises that the whole of the sculpture park is an installation, '[t]he place has to be produced' (Interview with Francis 2010). As detailed in Chapter 3, YSP brings together a cultivated picturesque landscape with sculptural interventions into various sites of that landscape (Smithson in Flam 1996; YSP 2006; Kwon 2002; Bois 1984). This case study writes in how some audiences experientially engage with the whole designed park as a discrete object, instead of compartmentalising it into separate zones, features and works. Volunteering for YSP during the Nash project reveals insights into the structure of the organisation:

I could see the structure both within YSP and within the artist structure. There is the artists and there is the work... I was lucky enough to be a little part, a cog in that process. (Interview with Francis 2010)

This does not reveal audiencing as a process that necessarily rewrites authorial intentionality. Conversely, Francis along with Marnie, appears to exalt the position and authority of the artist. Yet, the account does move beyond 'objecthood' and provides insights into the work the art performs in the lives of the volunteers, enabling new skills, perceptions, learning and networking which would otherwise be absent.

Ben (March-May 2010)

Ben, a local resident introduced in Chapter 3, volunteered at YSP with a view to gaining experience and a post in the conservation team. He was initially assigned to work on installing *Black Steps* on the Oxley Bank. Ben explained that he has been helping since

February, which entailed, ‘coming in and helping [YSP] with whatever needs doing’ (Interview with Ben 2010). Asked about the nature of the Nash project, Ben expanded:

When I first agreed to do it... I thought it [was] just putting some steps down [and] I’ve done that before with some other volunteering I’ve done. But working when David [Nash] has been there... It’s been interesting to see how he looks at it, and works with it. It’s been a completely different experience. It’s not just been steps, it’s been an artwork almost. (Interview with Ben 2010)

Ben foregrounds the practical aspect of installing or ‘doing some steps.’ He connects this at first to his previous experience of working elsewhere making steps, however through working alongside the artist, ‘it’s been a completely different experience’ (Interview with Ben 2010). Due to the distinctive approach of how ‘[Nash] looks at it, and works with it,’ the steps are changed from a functional feature of the landscape to ‘an artwork almost’ (Interview with Ben 2010). In most part Ben talks about the work in practical terms, which is consistent with his role and interests in YSP as an environmental conservationist. Later in the interview, he is agreeable to considering the steps as an artwork, ‘I can see where David is coming from’, however, ultimately, ‘it’s a set of steps on a well used path... I’ll always look at it like that’ (Interview with Ben 2010). The significance of this statement with regards to audiencing is Ben’s interpretation of the art installation through its utility rather than concept, which speaks to Ben’s situated knowledges as an environmental conservationist. Further, Nash’s *Black Steps* replaced a set of old steps which were already on the site. Therefore Ben’s exposure to the parklands over years of repeat visiting, including regular traversing of the old steps, have provided the precedent for how he interpreted the functional installation at this specific site. The process and finish of the work which ‘make[s] it look good’ is recognised as a way in which ‘to make it artwork’, Ben adds, before saying, ‘I suppose’ (Interview with Ben 2010). There is a suggestion that Ben is making an effort to see the installation as artwork given that the remit of YSP is an ‘international centre for modern and contemporary art’ (YSP 2010k: n/p). After all Ben is seeking employment at YSP. However, it is also clear that given the particular practical work Ben is seeking to do at YSP, *Black Steps* are viewed through the optics and language of a conservationist. This intersects with the way YSP is differentially perceived due to its multiple, distinct functions (Chapter 3). A number of practitioners

across fields occupy the same space at YSP, however their perception of the space, and the objects within it diverge according to the particularities of their role and status within the organisation, as I traced in Chapter 3. This is apparent when Ben draws attention to the Blue Bells which grow annually on the site of Black Steps:

One thing I've noticed, there's a lot of blue bells along that path, and we've been cutting into the bank where the blue bells are. And because we're not exactly picking the bulbs out and throwing them out I've been wondering if come next spring they will be bluebells coming up through this coal.

(Interview with Ben 2010)

This quotation testifies to Ben's knowledge of the changing landscape of YSP, enforced by his labouring on the Oxley Bank for *Black Steps*. Through his knowledge of the site, Ben recognises that with the seasonal Blue Bells are likely to emerge through the coal in the Spring, augmenting the work. This observation further demonstrates that YSP is not a 'static' park (Smithson in Flam 1996: 155); there is a coming together of natural and manmade interventions which draw connections between art installation, site and the particular grounded knowledges or future imaginings of the audience. When asked whether he had mentioned the growth of the Bluebells to Nash, Ben responded:

No, no! Well I've mentioned it to some of the volunteers but I haven't mentioned it to David as we're not supposed to mention any of our own ideas when he's around. We just dig. We just dig where he tells us to [Laughs]. (Interview with Ben 2010)

Ben's account illustrates the perception of a hierarchy within the production of the exhibition, with volunteers labouring at the bottom rung and the artist as the visionary at the top of the ladder. This analysis intersects with the 'structure... within YSP', which Francis observed, where she was 'a little part, a cog' in a wider process (Interview with Francis 2010). Both accounts communicate an awareness of their junior position and lower status relative to the importance of the artist. Contrary to the critical representation that the 'maker isn't setting himself up as a master' (Warner 1994: 19), and despite their own role in the production of the works, they assert the artist's authorial intention as the creative force for the artworks.

Overall, the accounts of Marnie and Francis are notably more aligned with one another than they are with the account of Ben. For the first two case studies, a central point of discussion was meeting the artist. The process of working within the organisation and gaining insight into the production of a large scale exhibition appears more important than the end product of the individual artworks or the artworks evaluated en masse as an exhibition. All of the works at YSP were art objects, however the emphasis on production rather than the finished product intersects with Lippard's 'dematerialisation' of art (Lippard 1997[1973]); and arguably the re-materialisation of the landscape. However, for Marnie and Francis the process supported a connection with the art through an embodied experiential relationship which enabled them to relate and communicate 'something else' in the work. The process of production therefore becomes entwined with the audiencing of the artwork and exhibition. Both Marnie and Francis view their involvement as personally enriching but also as an altruistic or productive way to support YSP. For Marnie, this develops her role. Meanwhile, Francis channels her passion by acting as an advocate for YSP, 'I love it and I'm very keen; I want this place to thrive' (Interview with Francis 2010). These responses are distinct from Ben's, which is informed through the alternate circumstances and objectives for why volunteers gave their time and labour. Where Marnie and Francis were both retired, Ben was younger and unemployed seeking a volunteer opportunity with a view to paid employment. The narrative of labouring was strong in the account of Ben, which is consistent with the physicality of installing the steps. However, the registers of this account are clearly distinct from the enchantment of being in the process of art production and the company of an established artist evident in Marnie and Francis's narratives. For Ben, his job was to 'just dig' whereas for Marnie the process was 'more enlightening' (Interview with Marnie 2010), with Francis asserting she was 'privileged enough to be part of that...whole process' (Interview with Francis 2010). The divergent economic and employment circumstances alongside the recreational interests of the individual volunteers are thereby revealed as central to the ways in which they conceptualise their roles and the quality of experience in their respective art projects. The audiencing of Nash by the volunteers reveals that experience of art is relative to the perception of the individual, which is dependent on positionality, and could 'never be disconnected or disinterested' (Campany 1999: 125). Additionally, the purpose for the engagement differs, meaning that the art can perform various significances in everyday lives, for example as a vehicle to employment or a means to realise a dream, which empirically challenges 'a privileged role of vision in aesthetics and perception', as

described by critics such as Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried (Molesworth 1999: 115).

Further to the functionality of *Black Steps*, the Nash exhibition was participatory for this convened public insofar as volunteers helped to produce a permanent installation and exhibition at YSP. The roles the volunteers were provided with, however, were heavily prescribed: ‘this is what you do, you do that you do that and you do that and that’ (Interview with Francis 2010). The experiences were participatory insofar as volunteers shared in the labour, but not the design of each respective project (Bishop 2004; Doherty 2007). Nevertheless, through observing the production and installation of *Black Steps*, it was evident that YSP were grateful to their volunteers. The sculpture and site technicians were inclusive, offering regular tea, lunch vouchers and sharing jokes. Further, they provided specialist clothing: gloves, overalls, masks, and so forth. This hospitality offered to volunteers derived in part from a need to sustain relationships given that a number are required by several teams at any one time. This connects to the heritage of YSP which relied on volunteers to start the sculpture park when initially they were only granted £1,000 from Yorkshire Arts (see Chapter 1). With the British Arts Council funding cuts announced in April 2011, the continued need for YSP to have goodwill and free labour from a body of volunteers will remain in order to maintain the posterity of YSP. Yet, the volunteers held control over which projects they selected to work on. Amongst teams there were jokes of ‘stealing’ volunteers, for example where one volunteer moved from gardening to exhibitions. Therefore, despite being non-permanent employees of YSP, the volunteers appeared to be regarded as a vital part of the organisation, supporting both the maintenance of the landscape and art programme. A central point I make by these case studies is a reconceptualised notion of audiencing where there is no clear delineation between workers and outsiders at YSP, or a ‘them’ and ‘us’ culture (Mooney 2007). Enthusiastic visitors are able to volunteer at YSP in large numbers. This blurs the normative linearity that conceptually divides arts production and exhibiting from reception, which is conceived as the final stage in a flow of processes. The shared experiences between workers and volunteers are brought into view, demonstrating that audiences can, at least in part, be familiarised and known.

#### 5.4 After the exhibition launch of David Nash at YSP

David Nash at Yorkshire Sculpture Park was officially launched on 27 May 2010 (Fig.5.8). In July 2010, six weeks after the opening of Nash, I returned to YSP to

observe and interview visitors to the exhibition. I selected three sites - the Underground Gardens, Longside and Oxley Bank – which were situated in different areas of the park, each offering distinct perspectives onto the Nash exhibition. The Underground Gardens face the Underground Galleries providing a meeting between the site and non-site experiences of Nash’s sculpture. Longside is situated on the far side of YSP, and can be reached during exhibitions by the YSP shuttle bus or by navigating the site by foot. This offered a point where the scale of the exhibition and scope of the exhibition could inform audience responses. Meanwhile, Oxley Bank is the locus of the permanent installation *Black Steps*. At this site a focused response to a single work was solicited, informed through how audiences used and interpreted the art. I have introduced the relationship between site, artwork and audience with *Black Steps* in Section 4.1. In this section, I further develop this discussion with findings from the Underground Gardens and Longside.



Fig.5.8. Official launch of David Nash at YSP, 27 May 2010. Underground Garden with view of *Red Column* (right hand side). Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

*i) Underground Gardens*

An elderly man, Donald, and his wife, Britta, were running their hands over one of the wooden blocks in the Underground Gardens. Donald told me with conviction:

[I] love the exhibition, love wood. I'm always working with wood, not in sculpture but in the garage, turning and carpentry. The scale of wood takes hundreds of years to grow, it's so impressive. (Interview with Donald 2010)

The impact of Nash's work for this visitor was the wood as artefact, with its materiality embodying an extended passage of time, rather than art object, 'my only qualm is that they don't put dates of the wood next to them... I would be really interested to know how old they are' (Interview with Donald 2010). The lack of installed interpretation which is a trademark of YSP is underlined. Curators continue to advance the argument that this enables a direct encounter between artwork and audience. In this instance the tactile communion with the wood that characterises the engagement is enabled through YSP policy which allows outdoor works to be touched. Donald appears to pay homage to the material through the biographical detail proffered on his domestic activities of turning and carpentry. He also presents a strong emotive response; 'I can just look at wood and it makes me very happy,' finding it, 'beautiful', and, 'very moving' (Interview with Donald 2010). The couple tell me that they were visiting the David Nash exhibition on that day with The University of the Third Age.<sup>1</sup>

The next account exemplifies a resistant approach, which is then negotiated by the multiple functionalities of the sculpture park. The couple in their 40s, Tim and Amy, had not come with a view to see the David Nash exhibition. In fact this couple distanced themselves from appreciation of all modern (and apparently contemporary) artwork, 'modern art usually doesn't do it for me, I'm not usually interested' (Interview with Tim 2010). However, with echoes of Donald, the material of the exhibition forged a connection during the visit, 'but I liked this because it's wood' (Interview with Tim 2010). The couple had intended to visit YSP to have a walk but the exhibition 'happened' to be on wood. The emphasis of the visit was therefore placed on navigating the site, '[we've] been up to Longside – saw the exhibition there – and right round the

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<sup>1</sup> The University of the Third Age markets themselves as 'self-help, self-managed lifelong learning co-operatives for older people no longer in full time work (U3A, <http://www.u3a.org.uk>: April 2010).

site' (Interview with Tim and Amy 2010). Here, the David Nash exhibition is described as a feature of the circuitous peripatetic route, however, it is not figured as a destination in itself. Notably, the couple had not heard of Nash or the exhibition prior to planning their visit to YSP. This example reveals that the experience of Nash's artwork is connected with other features and areas of the site, yet the experience of the work was secondary to the navigation of the parklands, and contingent upon the exhibition being on route. The fact that Nash's chief material is wood, which appealed to the pair, created a bridge into the exhibition despite the perceptual barrier that the man had in place prior to visiting that 'modern art doesn't really do it for me' (Interview with Tim 2010). In this instance the combined functionalities of the Bretton Estate, as park and art space, worked together to engage a couple who would not usually travel expressly to see a modern, or contemporary art, exhibition. This couple were not attracted to the dominant encoding of the park as a centre for modern and contemporary art, however, the landscape brought them to audience the Nash exhibition. It therefore provides an example which supports the statement of purpose made by Peter Murray that YSP enables 'enjoyment of art *and* landscape', dismantling barriers that 'often exist between the public and contemporary art' (Murray 2011: n/p *my emphasis*). In this instance, the design of the YSP walking route through different areas of the estate means that, '[t]he dialectic of walking and looking into the landscape establishes the sculptural experience' (Bois quoting Serra 1984: 34).

In a final narrative another couple in their early 20s, Hailey and James, found out about the Nash exhibition through a tourist information centre in Wakefield. However, their primary reason for visiting was to have a 'day out' and a picnic (Interview with Hailey and James 2010). On leaving the Underground Galleries, the couple commented that the exhibition, 'smells amazing', referencing the scents of earth and charred wood (Interview with Hailey and James 2010). Read alongside the first couple, Donald and Britta, the different bodily registers of the exhibition are made apparent. The feel and smell of the exhibition are demonstrated through behaviour and through speech. Hailey and James also refer to the architecture and curation of the exhibition, '[We] really like the use of space', in particular the use of 'large scale trees' (Interview with Hailey and James 2010). However they build a caveat into the relevance of their responses by apologising for a lack of art historical knowledge, 'We don't really know much about the art... Wouldn't you want to speak to someone else who does?' (Interview with Hailey and James 2010). This demonstrates a pervasive perception of the exclusivity of contemporary art, with the visitors undermining their own agency in

audiencing Nash's work. The 'post-museum' has been announced as a space where knowledge is 'no longer unified and monolithic', and, 'becomes fragmented and multi-vocal' (Hooper-Greenhill 2001: 152). This example, however, points towards a wider cultural view of persistent hierarchies of art knowledge, with some opinions more important and valid than others. The couple were reticent to express their ideas, even when directly asked, which has implications for the scope of audience responses recorded in the everyday museum environment when researchers are not actively engaging a range of participants. While 'none speaks loudly' (Delyser 2004: 493), the traces uncovered in this empirical investigation of visitors demonstrate together the roles of individual visitors in the creation of YSP as artscape. This research set about illuminating other traces of audience engagements which are not usually recorded or circulated by the organisation, for example in visitor books, and feedback forms, which add new, sometimes less confidently expressed, narratives to the social and cultural meaning of art.

*ii) Longside*

Exiting the Longside Gallery a pair of friends in their 30s, Eliza and Justine, critique the use of material and technique Nash uses for a number of his works. As one told me, '[t]he works I didn't like are the ones where he chars them or makes them very angular... I think: why didn't you just use metal?' (Interview with Justine 2010). The other friend, Eliza, mirrors this response by concurring that 'I much prefer the more natural pieces' (Interview with Eliza 2010). When asked if they came to see the Nash exhibition, they respond:

Eliza: No we meet here regularly because it's a good midpoint and I used to be a student at Bretton Hall.

Justine: We meet mainly to have a catch up and a walk and then to see the artworks.

Eliza: It's not really for the art, we don't even check what is on first. Although we always go and see the exhibitions [when we are here] in the galleries and outside. Often we see each exhibition several times, even if we didn't like it in case we missed something. (Interview with Eliza and Justine 2010)

The connection to the site is important for these visitors as they have visited for a number of years. Further, Eliza was a student on the campus of Bretton College (Chapter 3). In comparison to the environmental history of the site as Eliza's old college and the social agenda of the meets, the artwork they see on their visits is relatively arbitrary. The chief objective is to have a social meet with the art relevant only as a backdrop to this get-together. In fact, Justine informs me that they often 'come back and see something and think, 'Was I even looking before?'' (Interview with Justine 2010).

In contrast, a middle aged couple, Joe and Nadine, state their positive response in hyperbolic terms:

Unbelievable, loved it... I think people don't realise how important YSP is... because it's between Wakefield, Huddersfield and Barnsley they don't think it's relevant. But the work they show here is important... We wish we would see them making it, really. It would be good to see the workmanship [that goes into it]. (Interview with Joe 2010)

This couple had intentionally visited the sculpture park to see the David Nash exhibition and their appreciation of both artwork and the wider function of YSP are apparent. The response of the couple intersects with the argument made in chapter 4 on the regional significance of YSP. The couple demonstrate pride that art of national importance is situated in a space situated between post-industrial Yorkshire cities. Interestingly this couple posit a desire to 'see them making it', recognising and appreciating 'the workmanship' which is necessary to create an exhibition on the scale of *David Nash* at YSP (Interview with Joe 2010).

Comparably, another young man in his 20s visiting with his parents informed me that:

I'm blown away by it! Just still processing it. Really amazed by the scale of the place, it's just so impressive. I'm an artist so I've come [on recommendation] for ideas and to get inspiration. (Interview with Jessie 2010)

For Jessie, his personal context informed the response, as it did for Donald and Britta in the first example. However, Jessie had visited with the eye of an artist 'for ideas and to get inspiration' (Interview with Jessie 2010). Jessie's focus was what he could learn from the art as an impetus for his own practice. Aligned with the example of the middle

aged couple, the exhibition and the entire site of the sculpture park appeared to have a strong impact which was difficult for this visitor to put into language.

Insightfully, De Bolla (2001) suggests a collapse between ‘having’ an experience and ‘making’ an experience. For De Bolla the encounter with artwork is not passive – whether a painting by American modernist Barnett Newman, Canadian pianist Glenn Gould's second recording of Bach's "Goldberg Variations" or a poem by Wordsworth - rather the subject always mediates and acts upon the art work through their perception (De Bolla 2001: 15). Accordingly the art, or recognition of the art, is made in the encounter with the person. This is what De Bolla considers the aesthetic experience. De Bolla's analysis intersects with the critique made by Bishop that an artwork does not need to activate a literal engagement from the audience in order for that encounter to be meaningful (Bishop 2004: 64). In fact spectatorship can be understood as active, ‘she [or he] observes, selects, compares, interprets’ (Ranciere 2009: 13). Importantly, the defining aspect of the work is not the formal qualities of the art, but in the strength of the encounter (in whatever form this takes). While the depth and strength of the encounter may be negotiated by distinctions of culture, background, training, education and expertise, my findings on audiencing demonstrate that the experience is also negotiated by the purpose of the visit. The communality of art engagement extends beyond the aesthetic realm of judgment to the conditions which underline the reason for visiting. Indeed, while registering the artworks, those visitors who came to socialise or to walk or who did not visit with the purpose of seeing the artwork tended to be more disengaged in their articulated responses to the Nash exhibition, despite extending polite goodwill in their answers.

### 5.5 Performing David Nash

As I argued in Section 5.3, the audiencing of David Nash at YSP was in circulation during the stages of exhibition-making. This audiencing was performed by various teams at YSP alongside a cross-section of practitioners from the creative industries. On one day in March 2010, a curator arrived at Longside to ‘take a look’ at the development of the new site works, including what became *Black Steps* and *Red Column*. Her other purpose was to interview Nash beside the large Californian wood totem pole of *Red Column* which was later installed beside the Underground Gallery. Alongside the curator was the filmmaker, Peter Telfer, who was present with a video camera to record the interview (see Fig.5.9). The finished film, spliced with other

interviews and footage from the exhibition making, was intended to be circulated on the internet website, Culture Colony, to generate interest in the exhibition and Nash (Culture Colony 2011: n/p). Further, the film would have another life in the Project Space, which is on the ground floor of the Visitor Centre. Telfer told me he had been filming the work *Wooden Boulder* since 1994. As detailed at the beginning of this chapter, Telfer's film was projected in the Bothy Gallery. Reflecting on past screenings of the film, Telfer noted that audiences often cry in the galleries despite there being no music or emotional triggers in the film manipulating the level of response. The independent, official photographer for YSP, Jonty Wilde, also turned up to the workshop site to document the making of *Red Column*, *Black Steps* and the warehouse at Longside. The curator was enthused that acclaimed writer Annie Proulx had agreed to write the introduction for the official David Nash exhibition catalogue (YSP 2010f: 7-10). However, she was more excited about the prospect of Proulx writing a piece for *The Guardian* with the explanation that, 'books don't circulate enough, we can raise much more interest through a Guardian article' (Interview with Pheby 2010). In the same week, the critic Richard Cork observed the making of *Black Steps* and interviewed Nash for an article for the Royal Academy Magazine, later entitled 'An Elemental Artist' (Cork 2010: n/p).

These documenting processes are integral to creating a high profile reception for the exhibition and YSP. Moreover, this entourage of interested parties reveal that these representations are often placed into circulation in the press, and increasingly on the internet, while the formal qualities of the artwork and the exhibition installation are still being finalised. The narrative of the production of the work was clearly compelling with Nash present throughout at YSP. However the examples above point towards the professional audiencing which is inbuilt into the networks of the artworld at various stages of the art-making. The narrative of the art work, and the meanings of the work, were already being created, processed and circulated prior to the completion of the discrete object and its installation within a community of works in the finished exhibition. Therefore audiencing is clearly enacted in a non-linear chain of processes, based in part upon publication lead times, and from multiple positionalities. Particularly striking was the creative industry generated by Nash's exhibition, offering employment to sculpture technicians, critics, curators, film makers and photographers, who all performed a role in the production of the work and its cultural meaning in different ways and at differing times.



Fig.5.9. Peter Telfer films David Nash chain sawing wooden block, Longside.  
Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

In addition, through the publicness of the processes of exhibition-making, with professionalism, Nash continually performed his role as an artist. Developing from the instances of interviews, photographs and filming detailed above, Nash also partook in a special ‘behind the scenes’ open day for Friends of YSP. On 23 May the Development team at YSP organised an event to help connect to those who had supported YSP through time or money. The purpose of the day was to show the friends what goes into the exhibitions. The tour of 16 persons began with one of the curators giving a talk on the exhibition, before the tour progressed to see Nash sawing the wood of *Red Column* on the way to the Longside warehouse. After the warehouse had been viewed the group walked down to see the installation of the Oxley Bank steps. At this stage Nash was again present. Nash then gave a short question and answer session, where he was

considered to be humorous and engaging by one of the Friends of YSP, while another spoke about how it made them appreciate the workmanship involved. The last stage of the tour involved a walk up the Country Park to the terrace by the Bothy Gardens. Here members of the site team were moving Nigel Hall's work for transportation to a private collector's estate across England (see Fig.5.10). While this work appeared to be a glimpse into the functions of the exhibition process, in fact the open day had manipulated the activities of Nash and the workers in order to provide a good programme for the visitors. Gregg, the head sculpture technician, informed me that the 'behind the scenes' day had actually interrupted his schedule. They were deliberately moving the Nigel Hall sculpture that day for the tour. In these examples the 'everyday' was performed back to the audience (Rugg 2002: 57), with the labour of the workers concentrated in order to communicate certain messages about the important and difficult work the sculpture park undertakes to their visitors.

As detailed, Nash and the site workers performed their roles for the writing and cameras of critics, photographers and film-makers. YSP showcases itself as an installation. The performance of their daily tasks of creating artwork was then represented in articles, films, online and on displays at YSP. Meanwhile for the 'Nash open day,' the technician's and artist's day is interrupted and rerouted to appeal to Friends of YSP and possible donors. YSP and its actors can be seen to provide a performance of the spaces of the sculpture park for their different audiences, in order to sustain the work of commissioning and displaying sculpture. This professional theatricality recalls the work of Richard Sennett where, 'the fundamental creative strength of the actor [is] the ability to play with and invest feeling in external images of self' (Sennett 1997: 37). Indeed, as was discernible with Nash and the workers who represent YSP, '[this] theatricality has an equally special, friendly relation to a strong public life' (Sennett 1997: 37). The professional performances of the creative processes undertaken on site at YSP are harnessed as one way to maintain support for the ambitious work of the organisation during difficult economic times. In Chapter 6 I widen the critical lens to discuss how YSP, and the work they perform, informs only part of the cultural inscription of the land and usages of the Bretton Estate. The heritage and past functionalities of the site as a private estate, higher education college and place of work coalesce in the contemporary landscape, providing multiple, sometimes conflicting, scripts of visitor engagement.



Fig.5.10 Nigel Hall sculpture is moved with Friends of YSP watching during the Open Day 23 May 2010, Bothy Terrace. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

## 5.6 Conclusions

The audience are really interested in the how the works are made - it is part of the process, part of the magic. And the process isn't written about.

(Interview with Malcolm 2010)

This chapter has argued that audiences 'are plural in their decodings, that their cultural context matters' (Livingstone 1998: 5) and for the multiplicity of the audience itself. This is exemplified through the divergent optics of volunteers, sculpture technicians and visitors in accord with their status and interests. Yet, this chapter resists focusing on divergences in interpretation to the exclusion of observed commonalities (Ang 1994), or focusing on the 'active audience' and losing sight of the work altogether (Corner 1995). Maintaining in view the importance of not dissolving differences between the audience, I have aimed to represent the richness and breadth of diverse forms of audiencing while connecting them to overarching emergent themes. Connecting the findings were the embodied dimensions of site art experience; the dialogue between landscape and artwork in the generation of that experience; and the multiple functionalities of YSP.

Far from operating in a transcendent space - cut off from past and future - the site work was related to social and cultural recreational experience. For some visitors, artworks within the Nash exhibition were 'chanced' upon and resonated despite harbouring negative perceptions of modern and contemporary art prior to the encounter. And for some others, the exhibition was a destination that promised and delivered inspiration for previously held passions.

The non-linearity of audiencing is decisively demonstrated by examples of the extensive network of photographers, camera men and critics who each have an interest in the exhibition. Here, the narratives of the artwork, artist and organisation are placed into circulation during the exhibition-making and prior to the completion of the works. These empirical findings advance from Fiske's 'sites of analysis' with recognition that the audiencing of art, whether object-based or participatory, occurs in a chain of creative processes beginning from the production of the work. Audiencing is shown to be multiply generated by the various actors who produce and manifest the artwork with meaning, including creative industry practitioners, site workers, volunteers, and visitors. This chapter brings into view how the public spaces of YSP are used as a stage to perform the work by the sculpture park through these variegated audiences, their situated modes of meaning-making and powers of dissemination.

Overall, I have traced the different actors who create and perform an engagement with the artwork of Nash, arguing for a non-linear and multi-positional approach to understanding the modalities of audiencing Nash. Reception studies for media have made visible an audience which has hitherto been 'devalued, marginalised and presumed about in policy and theory' (Livingstone 1998: 4). Intersecting with these approaches, the labour of gardeners, sculpture technicians, volunteers and visitors have been made visible within this chapter, to address the wider social and cultural contexts in which art is created and made valuable within people's lives. This chapter goes further by challenging a normative approach to categorising the audience as non-worker and reception as occurring after the artist releases the artwork. The multi-positionality of audiencing is demonstrated through the ways in which site workers and volunteers oscillate in the production and reception of the artworks. Importantly, the findings do not extinguish the aura of the artwork, or straightforwardly affirm the death of the artist-as-author. Instead, through demystifying the process of 'making', and the multiple hands involved in 'making' throughout the process of audiencing, it highlights inconsistencies with the concept of authorial control revealing that meaning is generated from a broader range of perspectives and practices.

## Chapter 6

### Cultures of Visiting: scripting and re-scripting audience engagements

A museum is a 'public place' but only for those who choose to be a museum public. A museum is a 'simulated' public space: its auto-directional and omnifunctional. What do museum goers want? What are you doing here anyway? (Vita Acconci in Doherty 2010: 135)

You probably want people who are pontificating about the Moore's... I don't even look at them to be honest. I come here for the grounds, to sit here and look across the view. (Interview with Toby 2009)

This chapter explores how visitors, local residents and volunteers utilise YSP. Signage on the main entrance to the park outlines prescribed visitor behaviours to 'YSP: outdoor gallery + museum' (see Fig.6.1). Yet, YSP is not a 'white cube' gallery space sealed off from the outside world (O'Doherty 2010[1991]: 8). As I detailed in Chapter 3, public access paths, byways, and bridlepaths cross the estate, an independent livestock farmer shares two of YSP's fields, and the land is home to two workers and one private residence. Acconci states that a museum is 'omnifunctional' in the epigraph to this chapter. This is certainly the case, however YSP offers more extensive functionalities than most art spaces. YSP is comprised of galleries, designed parklands, conservation areas, grazing sheep in the Country Park, historic eighteenth century architecture, including the Palladian mansion Bretton Hall, besides 1960s college buildings, now unoccupied. These multiple functionalities and geneologies of the different built areas of the sculpture park inform the varying modes of engagement by audiences within the site and with the site art. I argue in this chapter that the meaning of particular works is contingent upon their audiences, informed through the purpose, the context and the personal narratives of the audience in communion with the coordinates of the site and qualities of the art work. Read across the site installations of Turrell's *Skyspace*, Greyworld's *Playground* and wider navigations of the park and its facilities, this chapter argues that traces of past scripts from the college and the estate which mark the different histories and functions of the site coalesce in contemporary modes of audiencing the park and its artworks. I advance that these traces continue to write themselves across the dominant present narrative of the sculpture park, informing how audiences conceptualise and engage with the park.



Fig.6.1. Sign on main entrance to YSP with codes for visitor behaviour in text and visuals. Photograph: Saskia Warren.

This chapter draws from the notion of ‘the script’ as developed in narratological readings of the museum advanced by the art and aesthetic theorist Mieke Bal, and later Julia Noordegraaf, and sociological readings drawn from the sociologist and science and technology theorist, Bruno Latour. Latour’s understanding of ‘the script’ is a contribution to the wider project Actor-Network-Theory (ANT). ANT seeks to develop a more coherent and inclusive mode of sociology which recognises technology as a constituent part of the society in which we live, providing analysis of how objects and humans co-exist. Latour’s ‘script’ assumes that designers consciously or unconsciously incorporate an imagined user into the design of an object: ‘I will call *prescription* whatever a scene presupposes from its *transcribed* actors and authors’ (Latour 1998: 306). The designer in this way guides user-behaviour. Yet, Latour also acknowledges the importance of human agency. While the user as presupposed in the script may coincide with the user-in-the-flesh, in many cases the user may resist the inscribed instructions:

I would be tempted to call the way actors (human or nonhuman) tend to extirpate themselves from the prescribed behaviour *des-inscription* and the way they accept or happily acquiesce to their lot *subscription*.  
(Latour 1998: 307)

Indeed, as Latour identifies: '[t]here might be an enormous gap between the prescribed user and the user-in-the-flesh, a difference as big as the one between the 'I' of a novel and the novelist' (Latour 1998: 307). By contrast, Bal, and later Noordegraaf, consider the script with relation to narratology developed in literature studies. Here, the script indicates the space between intentionality and reception. This recognises the multiple vantage points which are written into any text or display, alongside the recognition that the reader or viewer will bring their own situated knowledges to a reading of the art work or gallery exhibit. Noordegraaf references Latour, and his sometime collaborator Madeline Akrich, yet deviates from his work with an application of the script to the museum space. She advances a narratological understanding of museum dynamics where the visitor acts upon the script of the exhibition space, ultimately creating their own experience:

I do not share the implicit view of visitors as passive victims who are subjected to the ritual of the museum. In my view, visitors are active agents who by their physical presence, behaviour and viewing habits have an active role in shaping the museum space. (Noordegraaf 2004: 15)

With regards to museology, Carol Duncan preceded Noordegraaf in establishing the notion of the museum as ritual scenario, a dramatic field that provides the audience with directives alike a musical score or a play script (Duncan 1995: 1-2). Duncan contends that in reality people 'misread or scramble or resist the museum's cues to some extent; or they actively invent, consciously or unconsciously, their own programs' (Duncan 1995: 13). Meanwhile, Philip Fisher termed the museum a 'ritualised social script' (Fisher 1991:12), with emphasis placed on the prescriptive behavioural codes embedded into the collective psyche of the museum which 'makes certain acts possible and others unthinkable' (Fisher 1991: 12, 18). Divergently, Duncan and Noordegraaf elucidate on the negotiation of the museum script by the individual or group, recognising the agency and differentiation of audiences. Although distinct projects, these different approaches to the script can be read together productively for, firstly, they illuminate upon an ideal user imagined and inscribed through the design process. Secondly, they point towards

the way in which the actual user performs a relationship with the objects and exhibition in a live encounter. This creates a third text, or scene, which forms the focal point of my analysis.

I argue that the meaning of site-based artwork is contingent upon the context of its display, or the site/non-site, and the negotiation of both by each individual to the park. As detailed in Chapter 2, in order to provide insights into the audiencing of YSP, semi-structured interviews were conducted with visitors to the park. These ‘on-the-spot’ interviews enabled live insights during participants respective visits to YSP, without prior exposure to the questions or time to rationalise and construct prepared responses. Using opportunistic sampling as a method to follow the phenomenon of audiencing YSP, I varied the location of the interviews in order to increase the scope of information obtained. While the majority of interviews were conducted in the YSP cafe where sound recording was enabled by the enclosed walls, other interviews took place outdoors in the outdoors. Performed near Turrell’s *Skyspace* and Playground’s *Greyworld*, alongside other locations on site, this weight of interview material and ethnography provided narratives of audience engagements with the art and landscape that form the basis of this chapter.

### 6.1 Situated Knowledges

This section draws out the situated knowledges of different audiences through empirical evidence based upon the case study of Turrell’s *Skyspace*. This central theme informs how audiences differentially and creatively map meaning from encounters with the Deershelter *Skyspace* diversifying from the scripts of interpretative panels and other mediation. The historic Deershelter is a short 10 minute walk from the YSP Visitor Centre, on undulating terrain part way down the Country Park (see Fig.6.2). To access the *Skyspace* the visitor is required to enter the gate which is closed to keep the grazing sheep outside of the Grade II English Heritage listed structure. Signs notify the visitor that the *Skyspace* is open from ‘10- 4 pm. in Winter’ and ‘10- 5 pm in Summer.’

Outside the *Skyspace*, a YSP interpretation panel reads:

James Turrell is one of the world’s leading artists. Working with natural or man-made light, he makes thought-provoking and beautiful works which often have a profound effect on the viewer. (YSP, Interpretation panel, Deershelter *Skyspace*, 2006)



Fig.6.2 View of Deershelter from the Country Park with YSP Visitor Centre in the background, far left. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

Another panel outside the space explains the rules for visitors:

Timed viewings may be allocated to avoid over-crowding. Please respect the experience of other visitors. Do not be noisy or use mobile phones. Do not picnic or smoke. Allow yourself time, space and silence. (YSP, Interpretation panel, Deershelter *Skyspace*, 2006)

The YSP interpretation firmly emphasises the hand of the artist; Turrell '*makes* thought-provoking and beautiful *works*' (YSP, Interpretation panel, Deershelter *Skyspace*, 2006 *my emphasis*). The structures which enshroud the artwork are decisive both foregrounding the importance of the artist and the rules by which the artwork is to be engaged with. This reinforces the authority of the artist and the institution, despite the rhetoric drawn by the mediation of an open 'thought-provoking' work 'which often have a profound effect on the viewer' (YSP, Interpretation panel, Deershelter *Skyspace*, 2006). To experience the *Skyspace* the visitor must walk through the lightly lit arches of the eighteenth century Deershelter and into the remodelled main chamber. Here concrete benches line the edges of the chamber with inclined walls that guide upwards

toward the ceiling (see Fig.6.3). Cut into the ceiling is a square aperture which opens out onto the sky. Through a trick of perspective affected by the soft, yellow lighting of the bulbs that line the top of the seating, the colour intensity and physicality of the sky appears to materialise more fully within the aperture when gazed at from within the chamber. While interpretation of the *Skyspace* remains open to the visitor, as is ultimately the case with any artwork, a framework for engaging with the installation is inscribed through the signage and architecture, which directs behaviour and understanding.

The following narratives and analysis aim to create the important recognition that audiences are specialists who 'use' art according to their own situated knowledges. Donna Haraway has insightfully outlined these 'situated knowledges' do not make a claim for 'a doctrine of objectivity that promises transcendence' (Haraway 1988: 579). Instead, meaning must exist in the ability to partially translate knowledges 'among very different – and power-differentiated communities' (Haraway 1988: 580). Differential bodily knowledges are drawn upon by Maria and Jeremy,<sup>1</sup> respectively an amateur choralist and undergraduate student in architecture, to inform the meaning of the artwork:

I'm actually a tenor... did you hear us singing in there? Well, we were singing because it has the most beautiful acoustics and we were just saying that we want to bring back our quartet and sing in here. .. In music there's this return to communal singing and I wonder if there could be something like this for art. Communal art. It's about bringing people to the artwork and seeing what they make of it. It's coming from the inside and sharing.  
(Interview with Maria 2009)

With the architecture course [we've] been doing the tutors have been trying to get us away from what you think architecture is and [the course has] been a lot more expressive this year. We've been looking at a lot of sculpture and trying to be more creative... One of the things they told us was to look at the *Skyspace* in the Deershelter. (Interview with Jeremy 2009)



Fig.6.3. James Turrell's *Skyspace* (2006). Photograph: Jonty Wilde, 2010.  
Reproduced with permission

In the first narrative, Maria describes how she brings herself to the space as a singer. She also volunteered that she was an occupational therapist, and can be seen to interpret the sensorial qualities of the *Skyspace* through these embodied lenses. Maria explains that the *Skyspace* ‘slows you right down, I can actually feel my blood pressure dropping’ (Interview with Maria 2009). The work of the installation is described by Maria through physical registers rather than visual description, with the *Skyspace* articulated as acting upon the body and her related stress levels. This opens up the question of whether the experience of installation work is ever purely centred on optics (Hawkins 2010), with the relationship between visual and sensory modalities (Pink 2006: 17) vital to the subject’s self-reflexive understanding of the artwork. Turrell’s work is conceptualised as a productive place which brings people together creatively; a space for ‘communal art’ (Interview with Maria 2009). This connection is forged through Maria’s interest with communal singing which she exercises in the *Skyspace*, ‘Did you hear us singing in there?’ (Interview with Maria 2009). The narrative provides a heightened illustration of the active role the audience performs in an encounter with artwork. Where spectatorship has persuasively been argued as an active, negotiative act, with focus on theatre and images as detailed earlier, the account of Maria demonstrates a physical, oral act of performing a relationship with installation art. This act is demonstrative of the non-uniformity of visitor reception and modes of engagement, providing illustration not only of the formal qualities of the artwork but of the potential for creative reimagining of art according to situated specialisms.

Comparatively, for Jeremy, the organised visit to *Skyspace* was also creatively directed, in this case through guidance from the tutors on his university course. The visit to the Deershelter *Skyspace* was intended to push the boundaries of architecture - ‘trying to be more creative’ - through its intersections with sculpture. Insightfully, the architectural design of the chamber itself forms the primary curiosity:

I think you can look at the sky anytime you want but to walk into that environment and to put a frame around the sky suddenly makes it more interesting... It took me a few minutes to know what I was looking at... Because when I went it was such a cloudy day and it just looked like a fluorescent day [in the chamber]... I found it interesting that just by having a frame around the sky, it becomes art. (Interview with Jeremy 2009)

Here the framing device of the aperture actually recreates a distinct subject and object relationship rather than collapsing it. This example, therefore, is a critical corrective to the account of Turrell: '[m]y art deals with light itself, not as the bearer of revelation, but as the revelation itself' (YSP 2005: n/p). Instead Jeremy proposes that the architecture of display is the most engaging aspect of the work, 'I found it interesting that just by having a frame around the sky, it becomes art' (Interview with Jeremy 2009).

The revelation is the transformative potential of the architecture of the *Skyspace* rather than the light itself. Or, indeed, the way in which the architecture and internal lighting makes and transforms celestial light. This provides a rupture between Turrell and the curator's interpretative design and the audience response. Jeremy's particular, specialised response to the *Skyspace* resists dematerialising the artwork (Lippard 1997:2), however through foregrounding the architecture, it also challenges where the artwork resides. Jeremy underscores the importance of context in the determination of the artwork, intersecting with Kwon's account of the critical cultural turn in site-specific installations. In this narrative, it is not the immediacy of the light but the contingencies of the formal structures of the *Skyspace* which holds value, meaning the whole architectural arena of the Deershelter *Skyspace* becomes the artwork.

In both instances above the analysis of experience is distinct, however, the installation acts as a creative catalyst in the geographical spaces of YSP and beyond. Notably the encounter with the *Skyspace* was neither a singular nor finite experience. Follow up interviews with Maria and Jeremy revealed that both had revisited YSP and the *Skyspace*. Further, they had reproduced their engagements with *Skyspace* in representational spaces beyond the sculpture park. Marking the commemorative occasion of her retirement as an occupational therapist, Maria returned with more choir members and recorded their communal singing in the *Skyspace* on videotape. Recordings of the tape were then distributed to the homes of all those who had partaken in the singing. Meanwhile Jeremy revisited with his partner. On the second visit he developed sketch book drawings from his first visit which were later revised and submitted as part of the assessed component of his university course. Jeremy also visited Turrell's *Skyspace* (2000) in Kielder Park, Northumberland, in the same academic year, drawing connections between the two site works. In the narratives of Maria and Jeremy, YSP hosted creative and educational exchanges as well as existing in dialogical and representational spaces beyond the geographical boundaries of the park, posing the critical question of how we can demarcate and measure the perimeters of art

experience and visual art's impact.

A further account provides the insight that the spatial dimensions of YSP are not those of an empty container but rather a set of physical axes which act upon the visitor and upon which the visitor acts. In the case study of Sue these spatial coordinates of the landscape negate an encounter with the artwork:

I've been ill and I'm still not very well so that affects my mobility. We did well but that gradient is too difficult. (Interview with Sue 2009)

Sue's mobility concerns recall Hawkins's critical spatial sensibilities, where the embodied experience of travelling through installation art is informed by landscape practices. In fact in the spatial context of YSP, the embodied experience of being in landscape directly informs the quality of art engagement. The landscape is not described in terms of its aesthetic appearance, instead the gradient is referred to in bodily registers of (im)mobility. For Sue, the incline of the Country Park leading to the Deershelter is 'too difficult' to access (Interview with Sue 2009). The material and cultural framework of the site installation is in this instance unintentionally effective in shifting the focus from within the art object to the contingencies of its context, undermining any notions of the neutrality of space. The audience curates their experience in dialogue with the conditions of site and artwork, filtered through embodied registers of their own desires and physical needs. This illustrates that the artwork cannot be read apart from the site or individual, for the site acts on both the artwork and the audience in particularised ways. The built environment has been shown to discriminate against certain bodies in the geographies of disability (Imrie and Thomas 2008; Imrie and Edwards 2007; Imrie 2003; Imrie 1996) and feminist geographies of maternity and obesity (Longhurst 2010; Longhurst 2008; Longhurst 2007[2001]). This case study reveals that the landscape of YSP can also create restrictions and barriers beyond the perceptual, which obstructs rather than produces a meaningful visual arts encounter.

In an adjacent narrative, the following excerpt from Lizzie and Kevin illustrates the dynamic liveliness of the site:

Lizzie: It feels very spiritual. In fact I was thinking it was somewhere could come once a week and spend time. Just sitting. Quite happily. Just watching the clouds. And birds. You see them occasionally. They just, sort of, appear from nowhere. I like that.

Kevin: We had to chase some sheep out today.

Lizzie: Not from right in [the *Skyspace*] but from the grass bit. We had to chase them out. (Interview with Lizzie and Kevin 2010)

The encounter in the *Skyspace* in this case is mediated through the unexpected. Birds and sheep enter Lizzie and Kevin's experience, in the first instance appearing to cause a disruption to the direct relationship between the couple and the *Skyspace*. Yet, the aperture serves to refocus the vision, facilitating 'experience of the sky and celestial phenomena' (Saito 2011: 507), and I argue, heightening awareness of the relationship between the inside and outside space. Whereas the internal chamber of the Deershelter is a purpose built space, the site beyond is a functioning landscape still used by local farmer, Phillip Platt, to graze his sheep.<sup>2</sup> For Lizzie and Kevin, the boundaries between the site and art are clearly materially blurred. The *Skyspace*, the sky, the landscape and its human and non-human inhabitants do not only act upon each other, they serve to situate YSP as a living installation. The mediatory aspect of architecture and display is here emphasised through the chasing of errant sheep from the inner sanctum of the art. Challenging the received notion that Turrell's *Skyroom* and *Skyspace*'s 'forces us to attend to the sky as the main focus' (Saito 2011: 505), this narrative uncovers the important recognition that YSP is multi-functional and has uniquely relational qualities as both working landscape and artspace.

Lizzie and Kevin's account clearly demonstrates YSP's multiple scripts, which are historically layered and overlap in the park's current geography. These scripts result in greater complexity and opportunity for 'misreading or scrambling' (Duncan 1995:13) than the ritualised script of the internal gallery space (Fisher 1991: 12; Noordegraaf 2004: 15; O' Doherty 1999: 9). Due to the changing land uses of the site from the private historic estate, to educational college, and sculpture park, visual material markers remain as testament to each of these eras. While the dominant institution on the Bretton Estate has changed, continuities between these eras have stayed in place apart from the residual buildings of Bretton Hall and the college buildings. Lizzie and Kevin's account excavates the usage of the Country Park by the local farmer in a shared agreement with YSP which continued when the art institution gained management of the parklands. The co-functions of the site coalesce in contemporary interpretations of

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<sup>2</sup> In fact farmer, Phillip Platt, uses Andy Goldsworthy's *Shadow Stone Fold* (2007) as a working sheep fold bi-annually, bringing artwork and agriculture together. See photograph by Alan Mackenzie in YSP 2007: 253.

the park and its artworks. In this narrative, the traces of different scripts are materialised, physically imposing upon the dominant present narrative of the sculpture park, informing how these visitors conceptualise and engage with YSP.

Notably there are comparisons between the role of the ethnographer and the role of the audience when considering an immersive art experience, such as the *Skyspace*. In the same way that ethnographers ‘become part of the fabric of the context they are researching’ (Skjulstad et al., 2002: 213), on entering the installation and ‘walking into the piece the whole audience were in the field, ensconced in the richness and complexity of the experience’ (Bagley 2008: 67). The comparison Bagley draws between the role of the ethnographer and the audience is particularly enabling for he recognises subjective responses of audience members as rich, complex, and specialised. Through considering the audience as individual experts, differential knowledges can be brought to inform the Deershelter *and* Skyspace, in particular experiences which challenge whether the installation can be conceptualised singularly as a visual arts experience. As I discussed in Chapter 2, there is a structural bias in the research where I focus on YSP primarily as an artspace. Notably, in this case study both the farmer and his sheep are different audiences who variously use the site, and a shortcoming of this research is that I did not interview the farmer (or his sheep). Yet this recognition nevertheless opens up the definition of sculpture, developing on from the work of art critic and theorist Rosalind Krauss in her seminal essay ‘Sculpture in the Expanded Sphere’ (Krauss 1979). In part of this essay, Krauss specifically considers sculpture for the open air, and the transition from the style of commemorative statuary sculpture to modernism. Late in the nineteenth century the transition was made from ‘commemorative representation’ which ‘speaks in a symbolical tongue about the meaning and use of that place’ to ‘its negative condition, a kind of sitelessness, or homelessness, an absolute loss of place. Which is to say one enters modernism’ (Krauss 1979: 33). Encounters with the Deershelter *Skyspace* can be characterised as a return to the contextual contingencies of place and sitedness. While Turrell himself and curators may discuss that his main material is the light itself, it is clear that for many visitors the structural complexities of the Deershelter and the technologies of the space provoke equal contemplation. By extension, the lived, bodily experience of being in the space and the sensuous dimensions of the engagement, including the aural, bring a textured, richness to an appreciation of the various ways in which the work functions for different audiences. These narratives demonstrate that through attention to audience engagements with site art, including understanding of the spatial dimensions of art experience,

meaning in arts discourse can be opened and reassessed. These situated knowledges position audiences as individual experts with particular specialisms which are informed by personal biographies, recreational interests and differential sensual bodily knowledges.

## 6.2 Social memory and landscape history

Mapping audience encounters with Greyworld's *Playground* illustrates the important contextual thematics that impact upon cultures of visiting at YSP. *Playground* was commissioned as part of the *Games in the Park* project (YSP 1999), to interpret and engage contemporary audiences in the heritage of the Bretton Estate. The installation is housed within an old pergola from the estate (see Fig. 6.4). Upon entering the installation and walking onto the wooden boards which line the floor or sitting on the benches which face inwards, the motion and pressure of the audience triggers sensors that play music from nearby, hidden speakers. The sound is intended to recall the noise of a sporting match with sounds of batting and audiences applauding. There is also a mellifluous music that emanates from the benches when pressure is applied by audiences who take the opportunity to sit down.

The YSP interpretation plaque, which is partly concealed by the undergrowth of nearby plants, details the artist collective's vision for the installation:

It is not clear what kind of game was played here but as the visitor investigates the area the sounds of past sporting endeavours emerge from the space itself. The movement of visitors activates abstract, melodic swells and gentle ambient tones that suggest the distant activity of players and spectators. Through its use of sounds and architectural elements, the installation creates a symbolic link between the past and the present, gently referring to the Bretton Estate's sporting history. Only when the work is being actively experienced by visitors is it complete. (YSP, Interpretation panel, *Playground*, 1999)

The interpretation provides an ideal scenario where the inquisitive visitor 'investigates the area' triggering the recorded sounds, and then identifies these 'sounds of past sporting endeavours' (YSP, Interpretation panel, *Playground*, 1999). According to this blueprint for engagement, both the sports sounds and 'architectural elements' of the site, create a 'symbolic link' between the historic and contemporary (YSP, Interpretation

panel, *Playground*, 1999). These connections are drawn, and the work is completed, through the experience of the audience. *Playground* therefore was intended to act as a creative bridge between the history of the private estate and the present day sculpture park, with the artwork performing the historic spaces of the site.

The plaque directs a physical engagement from the audience in order for the intentionality behind the participatory work to be realised. Greyworld write that the installation, completed in August 1999, is ‘open to the public seven days a week’ (Greyworld 2011: n/p). As noted earlier Greyworld refer to ‘the public’ and categorise their site installation at YSP as ‘public art’ in alignment with their other urban-based public art installations (Greyworld 2011: n/p). In accord, YSP details on their website that ‘Greyworld have subsequently worked on several site-specific commissions including works for Tate Modern and the London Stock Exchange’ (Greyworld 2011: n/p), thereby also drawing a connection with *Playground* at YSP to London-based public works by Greyworld. Public art as termed by Greyworld here refers to public-facing, with the potential to engage a sector of the public, rather than public funded, or in open, public owned space. Indeed, with the instances of work equated above, the ‘public’ of this art can be the millions who walk by Tate Modern each year, financial workers who enter the London Stock Exchange or those who visit the Yorkshire landscape of YSP. The important aspect to this body of people is not geographically or sector bound, or even outdoor or indoor, city or countryside. Greyworld create artworks that ‘rely on the presence of people to be complete’ (YSP 2010a: n/p). Therefore the primary determinate for *Playground* is that the public art installation is performed by any audience. This narrative elucidates the problematic of artwork which is intended to technologise particular behaviour resulting in a certain sensory and interpretive outcome. The following vignette provides insights into the problematic of creating an ideal user or audience for *Playground*, and integrating that singular model into the design of the work. However, through my argument of how the different scripts of the park compete in present interpretations of the artwork, I demonstrate alternative perspectives on the installation’s relationship to the geographical spaces and heritage of YSP.

In January 2010 a woman and man, Abigail and Marcus, walk along the sculpture access path towards *Playground*, discussing the old Bretton Hall College. They walk across the wooden boards but no sound emanates from the nearby speakers. I sit on one of the benches causing sound to be generated (the benches appear to be more pressure sensitive than the boards on this occasion). Abigail turns to Marcus and says, ‘Look,

there's speakers! [This] is some sort of soundscape' (Interview with Abigail 2010). The woman identifies for the man that the speakers and music are referents for a soundscape, an aural medium of artwork. They walk away from the space, back through the Sculpture Trail pathway. Five minutes later they return to the installation. Abigail and Marcus walk back across the benches and once more no music or sound is generated. I intervene to ask them whether they were aware their movement is supposed to trigger sound? Abigail responds, 'No, we knew it was linked to something but not us' (Interview with Abigail 2010). I asked them if they noticed it was an artwork? Both responded 'no'. Did they notice the sign to the right of the pergola? 'No, where?', replies Marcus. They go to read the sign and afterwards Marcus tells me:

Oh, it's a shame because [*Playground*] sounds really good. It's a shame because it doesn't work the way it was intended. (Interview with Marcus 2010)

In this instance, in contrast to Nash and Turrell's work, the failure of the art is that it literally does not function according to the design. The idea behind the work is considered by Marcus to be better than the actual live encounter with the installation, which is in a state of disrepair. The work is designed to generate a reaction from the audience, to change the 'traditional barrier' between art and audience (YSP 2010a: n/p), therefore the success of the work is bound with active audience participation.

Comparable findings of audience engagements, or disengagements, were gained through participant observation of YSP education tours with schools and university groups. An education officer on one tour in November 2009 brought a group of 14 and 15 year olds to *Playground*. Encouraged to walk across the wooden planks, one of the young adults agreed, however, the visitor did not trigger the sensors and generate sound. The education officer continued to encourage the young adults to engage, and with more pressure and movement, the recorded sound and musical notes emanated from the speakers. While this was met by enthusiasm evident through general laughter, chatter, jumping and skipping on the benches, one of the group noted with seeming disappointment that the sound of the sports players could not be controlled. While pressure and motion trigger the sensors, *Playground* could not be performed with precision as an instrument might. Although *Playground* had been conceptualised as an audience-focused artwork, the technologies which inscribe user engagement were enacted through mediation, in this case, the education officer. This poses a challenge



Fig.6.4 View of Greyworld's *Playground* (1999), with the Camellia House in the background. When pressure is applied to the wooden planks and wooden bench, recorded sound is played from nearby speakers. Photograph: Saskia Warren, 2010.

to understanding participatory artworks as audience-focused and instead suggests an implicit reversal, where the audience is asked to perform in accordance with the vision of the artist, or arts professionals, redirecting 'the argument back to artistic intentionality rather than the issues of reception' (Bishop 2004: 57). Accordingly, the work such as Greyworld's *Playground*, is participatory only in form rather than design (Doherty 2007; Bishop 2006), which challenges the argument that participatory works such as *Playground* are 'truly democratic art' (Popper 1975: 12). In 2007 Greyworld's *Playground* was restored through a generous grant from the Friends of YSP. However given the complex of technologies it requires to function and exposure to the elements, the live encounter with *Playground* often fails to correlate with the design description detailed on the YSP interpretation plaque, the artist collective's website or *Yorkshire Sculpture Park: Essential Sculpture Guide* (YSP 2009: 31). For Abigail and Marcus, the intentionality for the work communicated through the interpretation was more engaging than the live reality of the work. Similarly for the education group, mediation was required in order for *Playground* to be transformed into a responsive platform for

audiences. In tracing new sites of meaning-making through audiencing these narratives connect to the artist's intentionality or the guidance of the institution acting on behalf of the artist. Even when operating as intended, the case study explicates on the limitations of the formal structures of participatory art discussed in the previous chapter, where 'even the most open-ended' often determines in advance 'the depths of participation that the viewer may have with it' (Bishop 2004: 64).

However, the apparent failure of the work to independently engage audiences actually opened up alternative readings of the work in relation to the function and heritage of the YSP site; or social memory of the landscape. To return to the narrative of Abigail and Marcus, this technological 'failure' generated new narratives on the wider significance of the site art within the estate. Asked what the purpose of their visit to YSP was, Marcus tells me:

[It was] for the trees and to look at the place. I came here when it was still a college and it is sad really because it was full of life and really exciting but now it's so quiet. (Interview with Marcus 2010)

Informed through the account of Marcus, *Playground* becomes symbolic of the whole of YSP, and the estate after the closure of Bretton College. The estate was recalled as 'full of life' and 'really exciting' yet on the mid-week visit, YSP appeared 'so quiet' (Interview with Marcus 2010). The creation of social memory has been explored through tourism practices and their impact upon the production of towns and attractions (DeLyser 2004). In this case study, the social memory of the estate is actively created in part through the lived practices of thousands of students who once resided on the estate, and who revisit their pasts there.<sup>3</sup> By engaging with the personal narrative of this ex-student, the heritage of the estate is accessed in dialogical response to the limitations of Greyworld's *Playground*. He tells me that the pergola once hosted a different artwork during his days of Bretton College 17 years before. The recent history of the estate, rather than the more distant heritage referred to in the interpretation, is uncovered alongside the importance of other past functions of the site for some audiences. Murray has stated that 'we created an audience, we definitely created an audience for Yorkshire, in terms of contemporary art and sculpture' (Interview with Murray 2010). YSP has clearly made 'a big contribution to the cultural landscape' on sculpture in the U.K.,

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<sup>3</sup> A large scale reunion was organised by ex-students of Bretton Hall College in Summer 2011, with photographs later posted on a Bretton Hall website administrated by college alumni. See <<http://www.bretton-hall.com/images-reunion-2011-1.htm>> [Accessed 20 October 2011].

which is internationally recognised (Interview with Murray 2010). As Marcus explains, however, other members of the public were already connected with the landscape and the markers within it under its previous ownerships, in particular the Bretton Hall College. Rather than a chronological and naturalising teology of success, where YSP has grown and prospered in importance in inverse proportion with the ailing and closure of an unsustainable college, this returning ex-student provides insights into an alternative framing of the site. According to Marcus, YSP during the week lacks the energy and population of the college days. He reflects, ‘we should come back at the weekend... Or when it’s sunnier’ (Interview with Marcus 2010). This statement points towards the different times when the park is popular with visitors, and the altered areas of the park which are now populated, in contrast to previous incarnations and inhabitations of the landscape (Interview with Robert 2010). Through the ruptures of its participatory and emotive dynamics, *Playground* triggered memories of a different era for the park. In this instance Marcus performed a different script to the one transcribed to him.

The following narrative develops from the account above by providing insights into how the artwork is interpreted according to past visits, and other features of the YSP landscape. This exchange illustrates that repeat visits to YSP are also ritualised, with one of the participants navigating the same areas of the park, on each visit to YSP. Asked whether they had visited Greyworld before, the two friends, Anna and Lucy, reply:

Anna: Oh yes, by the Camellia House, I’ve been there many times! I’ve been there with children as well and they love it. You walk through and it sets the music off.

Lucy: Oh no I haven’t been there

Anna: It’s fantastic... There’s a very old Yew Tree behind it, which children used to climb on but they’re not allowed to anymore because it was damaging [the tree]. Yes, that’s nice.

Lucy: Where is it?

Anna: It’s down by the Camellia house, on the other side of the lawn. There’s a sort of arch and a wooden platform and if you walk through there it sets off a tape of music.

Lucy: As you talk I realise that there is probably a lot that I don't know. I tend to go to the Visitor Centre, the Bothy gallery, Underground Gallery and back [to the Visitor Centre] But listening to you talking... I realise that apart from that one bit I actually don't know it very well.

Anna: Well if you go to the other carpark, which we often do in the summer, then you walk round the park, then you see all these other areas.

Lucy: Oh I see. I've got more to discover then.  
(Interview with Anna and Lucy 2010)

Anna and Lucy reveal the social context of visiting, where one more experienced friend orientates the other. Social networks such as new partners or friendship groups have been found to encourage museum and gallery participation (Everett and Barrett 2009). In this instance these networks can also introduce individuals to different areas or experiences within a more complex set of related areas, structures and works such as YSP. Past visits to the site, where 'children used to climb' on the Yew Tree are recalled as a way to explicate upon the coordinates of the artwork (Interview with Anna and Lucy 2010). Architecture and landscape are utilised to articulate a response to the work, 'it's down by the Camellia house, on the other side of the lawn,' alongside formal descriptions of the works sensory qualities, '[t]here's a sort of arch and a wooden platform and if you walk through there it sets off a tape of music' (Interview with Anna and Lucy 2010). This is indicative that the artwork is mapped in relation to the coordinates of the site, as well as its formal qualities. In addition, advice is proffered on how to navigate YSP in order to access the work on future visits, 'well if you go to the other carpark... then you see all these other areas' (Interview with Anna and Lucy 2010). This narrative demonstrates that the work does not operate as a discrete object but is contingent upon ritualised habits and social factors of visitation.

*Playground* in these case studies is connected to other features within the park, memories of past visits, rules of engagement and intended future visits. The distinction between Marcus and Anna's experience of the functionality of the work demonstrates that the meaning of the art is not fixed, as indeed the features of the art are not entirely stable. This is more acute in a technical piece of art, though the point is salient for all art, as has been shown earlier with the works of Nash (Chapter 5) and Turrell's *Skyspace*. In part, the instability of the meaning of the work is contingent upon environmental factors, heightened through the outdoor elements; however it is further

dependent upon the particular engagement of the visitor who acts upon the art, inscribing themselves on the cultural meaning of the piece. The conceptual framework of audiencing site art is therefore informed dually by instability of meaning and spatial context.

### 6.3 Local vs. Destination audiencing

The narratives in the above sections excavate the cultural value of Turrell's *Skyspace* and Greyworld's *Playground*, situating the meaning within the context of site and the situated knowledges of individual audiences or their companions. Taking a wider lens, interview material and ethnography presented the routes visitors had taken through the park, the other works they had encountered, if any, on their visit and their opinions of the YSP experience. These accounts together reveal YSP as multi-functional and multi-directional; as both art space and historically layered landscape. These navigations can be correlated with the temporal length of the audience relationship with the site, and the relative distances of the audience to the park. Emerging from the research is the strong sense that proximity to the park is connected to the mode of visitation. Those who live within close proximity to the park – 10 to 15 minute drive – more than not stressed that the purpose of their visit was to walk in the parklands and to use the amenities of the site, in particular the cafe. These audiences tend to designate themselves 'locals' and are mostly repeat visitors who have returned on a frequent basis to the park, for example, several times a year sustained over an extended period of time. On the other side of the research spectrum, audiences who travelled from further destinations - where the journey time was in excess of 30 minutes - stated their purpose most frequently as 'seeing the art.' These 'destination' visitors may have travelled to see a particular exhibit, for an art event, such as *Sunrise in the Skyspace*, or because, for example, 'it's always been on our list of things we wanted to see.' As I stated in Chapter 3, a distinct but related set of audiences who travelled from further afield can be characterised as day-trippers. These visitors may have seen the sign on the motorway, or on a list of attractions in the area, and are visiting the park primarily as a recreational social excursion. As one day tripper told me:

I'm on my way back home to Derbyshire, Halifax, so it's a good place to stop... I've always driven past on the motorway and seen the brown signs [tourist attraction] and for the last 20yrs have thought 'I really must come'. And I finally made it! (Interview with Rose 2010)

In this case Rose, and her elderly parents Sidney and Glenda, were on the 'way back home', therefore YSP acted as a tourist attraction combined with a convenient set of amenities (Interview with Rose 2010). In the following sections I provide accounts that reveal distinctive patterns between those who term themselves 'local' and those who I evaluate as 'destination' visitors in their differential engagement with the script of YSP. Therefore this section traces the various and differential usages to which audiences engage with the park, providing a wider framework for understanding the relationship between art, site and audience.

### *ii) Local audiencing*

Critical theoretical contributions to site art and landscape design have emphasised the merging of art and site in each, establishing an entwined dynamic of work, context and the viewer's sensorial experience (Kwon 2002: 12; Daniels 1999: 4-5)(see Chapter 3). While I work with the contingencies of these aspects in YSP, evident from a significant section of visitors are their personal distinctions between these categories when reflecting on their own experiences of the park. Focusing in the first part on those who distinguished themselves as 'local', visiting the park was often distinguished from appreciating the artworks situated within the grounds of the park. Occasionally these reflections were disparaging towards YSP as an organisation, or communicated the belief that an appreciation of the artwork was expected of them (though perhaps not actually thought or felt). This shows YSP is recognised to be encoded as a space for art, however certain audiences, who have visited over a period of time, continue to quietly resist this script as their purpose for visiting and mode of engagement when on site.

Toby lives in the nearby village of Sandall and visits YSP regularly to sit in the cafe, and occasionally walk in the grounds. He states:

You probably want people who are pontificating about the Moore's... I don't even look at them to be honest. I come here for the grounds, to sit here [the visitor cafe] and look across the view. (Interview with Toby 2010)

This indicates that Toby had certain expectations of my objectives as a researcher on YSP, which are that I would favour those who talk in depth about the art, rather than other reasons for visiting (see Chapter 2). Toby draws upon ‘the Moore’s’, a reference to Henry Moore whose work is displayed across the Country Park in full view of the YSP cafe balcony. As well as being located within the scopic range of visitors’ sat in the cafe, Moore’s sculpture is considered a ‘touchstone’ (Interview with Lilley 2010) of the park and are amongst the best known of the works on display. For Toby, however, the facilities which enable him to ‘look’ across the view of the grounds and Bretton landscape are his stated purpose of visiting, set apart from Moore’s sculpture.

Ben, who lives in Crigglestone, also draws the separation between art and the landscape. As earlier stated in Chapter 3, Ben considers the park, ‘always a big open space to go walking in rather than [a place] to come and look at sculpture’ (Interview with Ben 2010). The prefix of ‘always’ suggests continuity in Ben’s conceptualisation and practice of the park, rather than a change of perspective as the park became larger and more professionalised, with a greater body of sculpture. As Ben states:

I live at Crigglestone which is a couple of miles away and when we were younger this is where we’d come. We’d come for a weekend walk or that sort of thing... So [the estate] was always a local country park and this is where we would come to get a bit of fresh air. (Interview with Ben 2010)

Ben has been visiting the park since he was ‘about five’ mostly with his family and sometimes alone. Asked when they would visit, Ben particularly recalled the rituals of New Year visits:

A walk to work off the excesses of New Year’s eve, to blow out the cobwebs, it’s just a walk round. Again we’d stick to around the lakes where the nature reserve is. (Interview with Ben 2010)

The familiar circuits of the walk compare to the earlier narrative of Lucy where the same route is followed despite the wider expanses of the estate and programmes that YSP showcase. In this instance, Ben and his family ‘stick to’ circumnavigating the Upper and Lower Lakes, walking through the nature reserve on their route around. In fact Ben explains that, ‘I’ve only been up to Longside this month, since I’ve been volunteering [on David Nash’s *Black Steps*]... It’s too far really, I’ve never been there’

(Interview with Ben 2010). Despite regularly visiting the estate for almost 30 years, Ben reflects that ‘there will be places I haven’t been to round here definitely’ (Interview with Ben 2010). Ben adds that he ‘needs to explore’ (Interview with Ben 2010) echoing Lucy’s remarks, who, with reference to Greyworld’s *Playground* stated, ‘I’ve got more to discover then’ (Interview with Lucy 2010). One of YSP’s aims is to challenge audiences, and they offer different programmes in order to maintain this objective. However, in these instances, audiences repeat visiting habits, in some cases with familiar routines established prior to the development of YSP. New exhibitions or artworks at YSP do not result in a change of direction or altered behaviours. Rather, visiting the landscape of YSP offers recreation in a known environment.

For Ben, Bretton Hall still defines the estate rather than the Visitor Centre at YSP, or the art sited by YSP:

Well that’s why this area, this park, is here. It’s Bretton Country Park. So that’s probably more significant for me, really, than the sculpture. That is [Bretton Hall is] the sculpture really, you could say. The house is the sculpture. (Interview with Ben 2010)

This account accurately describes the overlapping of scripts in the landscape of the Bretton Estate. The parklands continue to be referred to as Bretton Country Park in some council and walking media, despite those sites now residing under YSP’s areas of management (Wakefield Council 2010: n/p; Peak District View 2010: n/p). The architecture of Bretton Hall is described as ‘the sculpture’, and appears to connect more with the long term visitor than the twentieth and twenty-first century sculptures sited by YSP. Ben infers that his interest in the architectural form of Bretton Hall was instilled because of his father’s profession:

I suppose it’s because my dad’s a builder so he’s always been looking at big houses, churches and cathedrals and when we’ve been on holidays it’s something we’ve looked at. (Interview with Ben 2010)

This account read alongside those of Lucy, Maria and Jeremy reveal that for a section of YSP’s visiting public the historic architecture of the site is as important as the landscape and artworks, or even more so in this account. Background experiences inform the engagement and interpretation of the importance of the YSP in relation to other scripts and materialities which remain in the park today. Ben’s proximity to the site means that

the journey does not require transport or future planning. This informality and spontaneity juxtaposes with the narratives of those who travel from further afield, who rely upon transport and who come for an ‘event’ or special occasion, as I discuss later.

Gillian and Rob are an elderly pair of friends who had returned to the site to revisit their old place of work, the horse stables on Longside, which have since closed with the buildings removed. While they do not live locally now, their long-term memories of the site open up insights into the history of the landscape juxtaposed with the present day sculpture park. YSP has been open since 1977, however Gillian and Rob recall a longer history of the site and articulate more interest in the social and cultural heritage of the site than the modern and contemporary artworks on display:

Gillian: We’re more interested in the fact that our former boss used to own half the park – he owned Longside. We’re interested in that because we remember when it was a stables. In fact I used to come and do the book-keeping there.

Rob: He used to use Longside for training horses...

...

Gillian: I’ve been to Longside and I’ve been to the College – as I used to have a friend studying at the college – but I’ve never been to this part inbetween. Though I’ve seen the Barbara Hepworth sculptures. But I haven’t done this bit up here.

SW: So what were your reasons for visiting today?

Rob: Oh a day trip out, really. A bit of lunch.... We like to talk about the past. We worked for Peter Hinchliff.

Rob: He’s dead now.

Gillian: He then bought it for his daughter, her name is Norton. And she now lives in Penniston. But she divorced her husband and sold the stable.

(Interview with Gillian and Rob 2009)

The YSP Visitor Centre is described as a ‘part inbetween’ (Interview with Gillian and Rob 2009). For Gillian and Rob the central part of the estate was Longside with Gillian also referencing the Bretton Hall College. The interest in the sculpture park is secondary to these other areas of the park, despite YSP inscribing the land with sculptures, along with signage and occasional posters that mark their land management. The sculpture park, and the works within it, was not the reason for the original engagement with the

site and they pale in significance in comparison to ‘talk of the past’ (Interview with Gillian and Rob 2009). The visit offers a social opportunity to commemorate past memories of the landscape and Gillian and Rob’s relationship to the functioning of the site. This account reinforces those of the volunteers in Chapter 5 where physical participation with the production of the artworks strengthened a connection with the completed pieces. Gillian and Rob’s working connection with the previous usage of Longside relates them to the past and disconnects them with the current incarnation of the art spaces of the park. As Gillian further described:

We’ve seen Henry Moore, three together down there, which we can’t understand head nor tail of... [Nor] Nigel Hall... We think it’s quite clever being able to make something so large... With all the dimensions. But we’re ignorant as to the meaning of it. We need educating. We much prefer Michelangelo.... I think, really, what we need, beside each thing, is an explanation for what the artist had in mind. That would help us. (Interview with Gillian and Rob 2009)

For Gillian and Rob, there are too few interpretative art interventions by YSP to enable them to access the modernist work of Henry Moore and Nigel Hall. In this testimony an enframing of the works is desired in order to help the pair with ‘the meaning of it’ (Interview with Gillian and Rob 2009). In fact they state that they need ‘an explanation for what the artist had in mind’ (Interview with Gillian and Rob 2009). This demonstrates that there are differing interpretative scripts which work for particular audiences. In this instance, for an elderly pair without confidence in interpreting or engaging with modern or contemporary work, a lack of interpretation acts as a barrier. Rather than the museum functioning as a ‘forum’ (Lavine and Karp 1991: 4), this pair subscribe to a more orthodox approach of the expectation that the museum should educate their audience through ‘explanation for what the artist had in mind’, with artist intentionality as the measure for a works meaning. Pollock and Sharp have considered how the local landscape can be acted upon through Stephen Hurrel’s *Constellation* (2003), a piece of public art situated in Ayr, on the west coast of Scotland (Pollock and Sharp 2007: 1062). Pollock and Sharp argue that the non-representational style of Hurrel’s *Constellation* excluded certain members of the community, leading to a general day to day attitude of indifference to the artwork. While Henry Moore’s modernist sculptures are different in form to Hurrel’s participatory new genre public art,

a comparable distancing from the abstract sculpture is apparent in Gillian and Rob's account. Gillian and Rob are not indifferent to the work, as Pollock and Sharp found with some residents in Ayr, rather they are focused on another story contained within the landscape, which had been quarantined by the development of YSP.

Gerald was first interviewed taking photographs of the heronry from Cascade Bridge which crosses between Upper and Lower Lake, creating an intersection between the Bretton Hall gardens and the banks of Longside. Gerald lives in Clayton West, after a period of time as a resident in the closest village to YSP, West Bretton. The journey into the sculpture park takes 'five minutes as I live just down the road' (Interview with Gerald 2010). Gerald in alignment with the testimonies of Toby, Ben, Gillian and Rob makes the distinction between the art and the landscape, visiting primarily, '[t]o come out and take pictures of the park and the landscape and the wildlife' (Interview with Gerald 2010). For Gerald, a visit 'can be very therapeutic... I'm a very stressed out person at the best of times and it sorts me out' (Interview with Gerald 2010). However in contrast to Toby, Ben, Gillian and Rob, Gerald considers the sculpture 'a massive bonus' (Interview with Gerald 2010). His enthusiasm for YSP is tempered with a difference of opinion on whether the organisation 'gets it right' in terms of the bringing together of sculpture with landscape:

It's a fantastic space, it's a unique space in as much as you get a mixture of wildlife, you get a mixture of walks, and a massive bonus is the sculpture – when they get it right! It can be quite amazing. They don't get it right that often but when they do it's a great place.... And it never gets boring. You know there's times when I've come every, single day for 6 months and still look forward to coming. I drive people insane with [my enthusiasm] (Interview with Gerald 2010).

Gerald situates himself and his tastes in opposition to his perception of YSP as an organisation with 'people cut off, sitting in their offices making decisions' (Interview with Gerald 2010). Despite the belief that '[t]hey don't get it right that often', his passion for the sculpture park is evident through regular repeat visiting and continued advocacy of the park to friends and relatives, 'I drive people insane' (Interview with Gerald 2010). Gerald here draws a distinction between the 'fantastic space' of the estate and the YSP organisation, or 'the park' (Interview with Gerald 2010). He

perceives himself as having a right to the space and its different areas to photograph wildlife, resenting workers of YSP who act to restrict those rights.

Well the park is obsessed with what people shouldn't do... I've had arguments with the park wardens. I was walking into the nature reserve one day and someone shouted at me 'get out of there', like that. Because I didn't fit the look of someone who he thought would be a member of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. So I had a big verbal exchange with him, swearing and that. I said, 'you're a park warden, I'm not trying to sneak into a football match. (Interview with Gerald 2010)

In actual fact at the time of the interview the nature reserves were closed to all members of the public and no longer fell under the management of the Wildlife Trust, therefore Gerald would not have had permission to access this area of YSP. On the one hand, the confusion in this account points towards the complicated layering of scripts in the Bretton Estate history, with the unification of the estate under YSP realised only in 2010. On the other hand, there is an evident perception of barriers to YSP as an organisation, and certain areas of the estate, including a sense of being judged, and relatedly a curtailment of rights of access. Instead of productively enabling access to the public in a relaxed environment as YSP media purports, for this visitor the park 'is obsessed with what people shouldn't do' (Interview with Gerald 2010). The testimony intersects with Mitchell's 'normative and exclusionary' principles of public spaces which are 'highly regulated' as I explored in Chapter 3 (Mitchell 1995:444). This evidences a conflict of opinions on what activities and what freedom of movement ought to be permitted on the Bretton Estate, with a clash of perspectives on how the space ought to be utilised and managed. The contested politics of space at YSP demonstrates that the park has a range of visiting publics, who are not necessarily an 'arts' specific audience nor necessarily advocates of the organisation. Yet, with the accounts of Toby, Ben, Gillian, Rob, and Gerald, other aspects of the Bretton Estate have strong biographical resonances or support recreational interests in the present. Therefore these accounts reveal conflicting scripts in the contemporary landscape of YSP, mingled with traces of scripts recalled from past experiences of the park. These are performed by members of YSP's audience in differential ways resulting in either subscription or resistance to the dominant encoding of the park's aim to be an 'international centre for modern and contemporary art, experienced and enjoyed by

thousands of visitors every year' (YSP 2010k: n/p). Together, they recall Cresswell's definition of place outlined in Chapter 4 as: 'spaces people are attached to in one way or another... a meaningful location' (Cresswell 2005: 7). YSP resonates as a meaningful place in each of these different accounts by local visitors, diversely charged with personal connections. Audiencing site art is thereby seen to be inflected by dimensions of resonance and biography, especially where art becomes secondary to site in scripts of local visitation.

*ii) Destination audiencing*

The majority of visitors to YSP that I spoke with travelled for a longer time and further distance than those who termed themselves 'local'. From my interviews, a group emerged that I term 'destination' audiences who made the journey of 30 minutes drive or more by private vehicle to YSP especially because of the artworks, event programme or facilities of YSP. Rachel describes herself as: 'a member of the friends.... and a volunteer invigilator... And I'm just interested in the park and sculpture' (Interview with Rachel 2010). She visits YSP once a fortnight to invigilate the Underground Gallery. However, she has been visiting YSP since it opened in 1977. Therefore her patterns of visiting and frequency have changed, 'previously I visited three or four times a year, sometimes once a year... I've been coming here a long time so it's varied a lot' (Interview with Rachel 2010). Rachel states that the primary reason she 'comes' to YSP is for the artwork:

I come for the sculpture. If I was just going for a walk I probably wouldn't come here. There are other places I would walk. I come for the sculpture, but it's nice to combine it with those other things. (Interview with Rachel 2010)

In comparison to the above set of narratives from local visitors, Rachel distinguishes between the different elements of the park in an auto-analysis of her own purpose for repeat visiting. However, the 35 minute drive from Holmfirth means that '[t]here are other places I could walk', if there was not the sculpture to distinguish YSP (Interview with Rachel 2010). Alongside the sculpture, over the duration of Rachel's relationship with the park, YSP has provided multiple functions. Acting as a volunteer since retirement, Rachel finds the park, 'a useful network place', a nexus point where she was provided 'an opportunity to find out more about how it works, and to learn more about

the sculpture and meet people who are involved in the artworld’ (Interview with Rachel 2010). Her account exemplifies the multiple roles that one person can play within an arts organisation, especially a multi-layered arts and heritage site such as YSP. Rachel supports the organisation through her volunteer work but she also uses the working relationships between the other volunteers, the Friends of YSP and the workers of YSP as a creative artistic platform. As an amateur artist, Rachel uses the natural materials and inspiration taken from the park and weaves them into her own photographs and artworks. Describing her practice, she says: ‘I take photographs and then I do drawings and stuff... I eventually develop some textile work from those images’ (Interview with Rachel 2010). Her photographs are integrated into a blog, with ‘related photographs of my [textile] work on there’, which is organised in a calendar format, tracing her practice in synchrony with the changing seasons (Interview with Rachel 2010). The natural changeability of YSP, which is responded to in Rachel’s work, is integral to her appreciation of what the organisation provides:

It’s not a permanent exhibition, so the sculpture changes. It’s a brilliant place to see that kind of work in this kind of environment. I’m so lucky to be so close to it. (Interview with Rachel 2010)

The temporality of the programme and landscape of YSP are part of the uniqueness of the sculpture park also attested by the Director of Programmes, Lilley:

I don’t want to work somewhere where things don’t change... This was curating temporary exhibitions in the landscape. (Interview with Lilley 2010)

As Lilley goes on to state the only other sculpture park in the world which has changing exhibitions is Middleheim in Belgium ‘and theirs is fairly on and off’ (Interview with Lilley 2010). Rachel utilises the temporality of the sculpture park by weaving aspects of the site into her textile artwork and blog, thereby creatively engaging with the ‘landscape in process’ (Crouch 2010: 15). The multiple roles Rachel occupies in relationship to the park – long term visitor, volunteer, patron, networker and amateur artist – demonstrate the various positionalities from which one person can audience the sculpture and park as the elements of the site change and develop over a period of time.

Other distinct encounters with YSP occur outside of normal opening hours. *Sunrise in the Skyspace* is a paying seasonal event where visitors are able to watch the sunrise in Turrell's *Skyspace* and enjoy a cooked breakfast in the cafe at the Visitor Centre for £22. These events are usually held four times a year, however due to high demand on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2009, a fifth event was scheduled to take place. On this date I attended the event, and at 6.15am a group collected outside the YSP Visitor Centre, then headed down to the *Skyspace* in the dark. After the sun had risen, we left the Deershelter. A large group of children and adults gathered together for a photograph in celebration of one of the party's birthday. The artist, Vicky, who leads the *Sunrise in the Skyspace* events, mused that she didn't realise it was such a big group and this explained why the social dynamic were so different to previous times when she had led the event (Field diary entry with Vicky 2010). In the queue for breakfast I asked one of the birthday party, Sandra, where she has travelled from and whether the experience was what she had anticipated:

I've come up from London. When I was first heard about it, I was told that we'd be watching the dawn chorus in landscape. I didn't realise it was a sculptural installation until Vicky said it was. (Interview with Sandra 2010)

'Good breakfast, isn't it?', a young man, Ethan, asked me (Interview with Ethan 2010). Ethan told me that he was also part of another birthday party, and was attending with a group of friends from the University of Leeds. The event was his friends' present to him, 'I thought you would have seen the same thing looking out of a skylight in your bedroom at home... But it's a great birthday present' (Interview with Ethan 2010). This event, with an unusual number of people in birthday groups, demonstrates a market for aesthetic experience (Pine and Gilmore 1999: 231). In the accounts above the details of the artwork, or even whether an artwork was due to be visited, was less important than the occasion. The experience of the *Skyspace* was negotiated through the social context of the occasion. As Vicky testified, other *Sunrise in the Skyspace* events were quieter and more reflective. This event contrasted with an earlier *Sunrise in the Skyspace* held in October 2010 that I attended where 33 people sat in silence, refraining even from photographing within the chamber. On this earlier occasion, I spoke to Jacob, who had visited both in the daytime and for the event. I asked whether his experience of the artwork was different?

Yes, because in the day you're still looking for things - a cloud which crosses the aperture or a bird which flies over it. In the morning you focus on the colours - it's really about how the colour changes in the sky, through the light of the sun rising. (Interview with Jacob 2010)

In Jacob's account, there is an altering experience between the *Skyspace* during sunrise to the daytime experience of the *Skyspace*. In the daytime, motion was emphasised through the aperture whereas the focus in the *Sunrise in the Skyspace* experience at daybreak was the gradually changing tones of the sky. Both Jacob's experiences at the *Skyspace* were arguably not of objects but rather of events (see Saito 2011: 507). These accounts across the different events are indicative that the artwork and the personal and collective experience of artwork are not static. This is heightened through a light work such as Turrell's *Skyspace*, however these variables are set in motion to varying degrees in each separate encounter with an artwork. The marketing of an event context by *Sunrise in the Skyspace* emphasises the importance of social dynamics when evaluating the meaning of art, including depth of immersion in the art experience. The accounts of Sandra and Ethan are also revealing of the occasional partiality of the artwork in the purpose and subsequent enjoyment of visiting an institution which defines itself as an art's space, especially when visiting recreationally in a group. The artwork becomes an aspect of a wider purpose to visiting, in Ethan's case 'a great birthday present' (Interview with Ethan 2010), as opposed to a destination for itself. This again relates the understanding of the meaning of the artwork to the contingencies, and wider facilities, of the geographical, economic and social environment.

In these accounts, local audiencing can be seen to contrast with destination audiencing through the performance of historic and more esoteric scripts of the park, versus more conformist subscriptions to the dominant script of the park as contemporary artspace. Local audiencing reveals rituals of visiting, where the same walks and features are returned to repeatedly by audiences. In these accounts, YSP's relevance is often peripheral to longer narratives of the estate. Where local audiencing can be argued to cast the importance of YSP as an epoch within a grander teleology and chronology of the estate, destination audiencing aligns more closely with how YSP brands itself through published materials, its mission statement and YSP code. Here, destination audiencing is shown to engage more with YSP's programme of events, with greater responsiveness in discussion of arts engagement, even where the motivation for visitation was an 'event' instead of an immersive aesthetic experience. The differential

performances of the scripts of YSP, therefore, do not operate in a rarefied field apart from outside life. Instead the discursive and practiced experience of the various aspects of the site and art at YSP are informed by the relationality between the bodily situated knowledges of these different types of audience, the temporal extension of their engagement with the estate, and the multiple, overlapping scripts of YSP.

#### 6.4 Conclusion: the future, past and present scripts of YSP

This summer, visitors can discover some of YSP's hidden secrets as historic lakes and woodland are opened to the public for the very first time in the Park's long history. (YSP 2011a: n/p)

It will be a mess for a few years then [YSP] will come good again. I don't know how the hotel will affect the art but it will affect the landscape and the whole use of the landscape so much that it will affect how the art is appreciated. They're planning 400 business users a week. (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010)

After my fieldwork had finished at YSP, in Autumn 2010 work began on the Landscape Management Project. In-depth talks, meetings and reviews between Natural England, English Heritage and YSP had preceded the conservation work. In 2009 to 2010, with the support of English Heritage and funding from Natural England, YSP commissioned a private company, Landscape Agency, to produce an updated version of their 'Integrated Landscape Management Plan' (Landscape Agency 2010[2000]). Along with providing YSP with an understanding of the historic development of the eighteenth century designed landscape detailed in the first version, the revised plan further provided a framework for the conservation and future management of the Bretton Estate. Following the recommendations in the plan, Natural England awarded £500,000 to enable YSP to restore and enhance 85 acres of woodland reserve around the two 65 acre Lower and Upper Lakes, alongside restoring the water management infrastructure, historic footpaths, bridges, views and historical eighteenth and nineteenth century stone statuary features (YSP 2011a: n/p). As YSP detail, the planned works to include woodland management will, 'open up historic vistas [and] allow the reconnection of the historic Grade II\* listed Bretton Hall with the listed and designed landscape' (YSP 2011a: n/p). As the above quote published on YSP's website sets out, from Summer

2011 visitors can gain access to the areas which were previously part of the nature reserve and previously part of the historic private Bretton Hall: ‘a Greek-style Summer House, a now landlocked Boathouse... and a magical Shell Grotto’ (YSP 2011a: n/p).

Alongside the completion of the first stage of the Landscape Management Plan, executed to secure the future of the landscape for the next 10 years, other developments of the site will impact upon the space. Part of this new phase of development are the luxury hotel and business park planned to be built on the site of the park still owned by Wakefield Country Council following the closure of Bretton College in 2006 (Chapter 3). The luxury hotel is planned to be developed within Bretton Hall, with the business park built where the old 1960s buildings of the college are situated. Although the hotel and business park will not have any authority over the 500 acres of park under the management of YSP, as Sam from Brute Force & Ignorance notes, ‘it will affect the landscape [and]... affect how the art is appreciated’ (Interview with Brute Force & Ignorance 2010). An influx of daily commuters to the business park is likely to radically alter the demographics of the sculpture park adding new publics with different purposes of visiting the site to those I have already outlined in this thesis. Far from the dead, the fixed (Foucault 1980: 70) and finished (Smithson in Flam 1996: 155), the constellations between the facilities, landscape and visitors to the sculpture park will continue to develop, impacting upon the dominant script of the park as art space and, relatedly, the modes by which audiences engage with the site and artwork within it. Therefore over the next five years the complexity between institutions and subjects who act upon the site, and the interconnected meaning-making of the public artwork on display, are likely to be significantly altered in the future spaces of YSP and the Bretton Estate.

At the beginning of this chapter Acconci is quoted describing the production and control of the museum as a ‘simulated public space’ (Acconci in Doherty 2007: 135). I have demonstrated that the coordinates of YSP are more complex than a white cube gallery or standard museum, with the dynamics of the public spaces of YSP also acting in intricate and multifarious ways. Indeed YSP is a confluence of several types of space: gallery, heritage site, lived residence, past workplace, conservation area and parklands, with planned future functionalities including the hotel and business park. I have argued that is not one script at YSP, although the organisation advocates one dominant script of a centre for modern and contemporary art (YSP 2010k). The histories of the site as a private estate, a place of work or place of education continually impact upon the present meaning of the landscape and the artworks installed there. Interpenetrating the past with the present, John Wylie’s reading of W.G. Sebald’s texts employs the notion of

‘spectrality’ which is relevant here. ‘The ghostly, or the spectral’, Wylie notes, ‘is, always, *revenant* ... The spectral is thus the very conjuration and unsettling of presence, place, the present, and the past’ (Wylie 2007: 173-4). Cresswell also identifies the unfixity of landscape, which requires space for ‘temporality, for movement and flux and mundane practice’ (Cresswell 2003: 269). Cresswell here elucidates on the connectivity between landscape and practice:

Landscape, on the one hand, appears to encapsulate the notion of fixity – of a text already written – of the production of meaning and the creation of dominating power... Practice, on the other hand, is about fluidity, flow and repetition. It is about the negotiation between continuity and change. (Cresswell 2003: 270)

Through considering vision as a form of practice, landscape can be thought of as ‘a practised environment’, and is subject to ‘an injection of temporality and movement into the static’ (Cresswell 2003: 277, 280). In response, Daniel Weston argues that in landscape ‘[t]he crucial point is that the spatial and the temporal interact’ (Weston 2011: 185). As I have outlined through different narratives in this chapter, the active performance of audiencing YSP and its artworks by audiences demonstrate non-linear, non-sequential spatial and temporal interaction. There is a mingling and sometimes dissonant friction in the present YSP landscape with the past scripts and features of Bretton Hall, the defunct Bretton College, old Stables, and conservation area. The visible haunting of the present by the past is evident in the revisits of old workers to the estate and the narratives of the past landscape they excavate such as those of Gillian and Rob. There is a powerful sense of disjuncture in the accounts of these audiences as they recall a known landscape and yet encounter an unfamiliar sculpture park, marked with seemingly impenetrable contemporary art works. Meanwhile in the accounts of others, such as amateur artist and volunteer, Rachel, the revenant heritage of the Bretton Estate provides a tapestry of riches which locates YSP as a unique cultural offering. This chapter has argued that this confluence of spaces - historic, contemporary and future - create several overlays of scripts on the land and artwork managed by YSP which are performed according to the interests, histories and situated knowledges of each individual or group to the estate.

The proposition of this chapter has not singularly been to offer an analysis of a contemporary art gallery script but to understand this in the context in which it is enacted. In the scene of the live encounter at YSP, the vision of artistic and curatorial

intentionality is challenged as divining the meaning of site art. When analysing the script of the exhibition it is necessary to consider the ways in which the museum does not simply respond to the visitor's needs (Pine and Gilmore 1999: 231), but acts to sculpt them. The sign on the main entrance to YSP is indicative of this encoding of the park as artspace with the simultaneous inscription of behaviours, 'no climbing, no ball games', and so on. Indeed as curator, Helen Pheby stated, 'it's not a park, it's a gallery' (Field diary entry with Pheby 2010). Yet, the architecture of YSP as an organisation ought not to be afforded culpability to an extent where it overshadows the other functionalities of the site and agency of visitors to the park. This chapter has framed YSP as an outdoor gallery *and* public space. As demonstrated with the accounts of local audiences and destination audiences some deviate from the dominant script of art gallery prescribed to them. Returning to Latour, it could be argued that the dominant script of the present day art space is not inscribed in the user yet, especially older resistant repeat visitors or new 'uninitiated' visitors. However a certain proportion appear to be responding to alternative scripts activating their own agency as publics to the art and spaces of the YSP landscape. Notwithstanding YSP's uniqueness, the implications for this research extend to other artspaces given that most are contextually and multiply located, therefore they are overlain with other scripts and narratives. All museums and artspaces have certain pasts and contextualities that help shape the meanings and political resonances of the works they display. Through audiencing research, the performance of these various scripts can be brought out revealing how the multiple meaning of artspaces are produced from different positionalities, from the eighteenth-century landscape of YSP to Tate Modern inhabiting a post-industrial disused power station, and beyond.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

Taken together, the chapters in this thesis offer new methodological and analytic approaches to framing the social and cultural meaning of art. The critical currency of this thesis therefore stretches beyond just the academy, to challenge how museums, art criticism and the media engage with the audience. It provokes a reassessment of how audiences are represented and understood, and the tools we use to trace audiencing. In doing so, the thesis argues against a certain complacency of arts writing on audiences. For example, in a recent article entitled ‘People don’t come for good art’, the art critic Waldemar Januszczak (2011: n/p) ponders over the ‘amazing numbers’ of visitors to exhibitions at the Saatchi gallery, which held three of the highest attended shows in 2010 following *The Real Van Gogh* at the Royal Academy.<sup>1</sup> ‘All of which prompts the question: why?’ (Januszczak 2011: n/p). Januszczak postulates:

People don’t come to the Saatchi for good art or worthwhile exhibitions. They don’t come for education or enlightenment or self-improvement or progression. They don’t come for any old reasons of liking art. They come for the buzz. (Januszczak 2011: n/p)

In the first instance, the problem with this approach is a methodological one. Januszczak writes that the popularity of the Saatchi is helped because entrance to the gallery is free, and visitors can ‘pop into the shops on the King’s Road’, then ‘pop into the outdoor food market’ (Januszczak 2011: n/p). He claims the contents of Saatchi’s shows are tried and tested, explaining visitor figures by a tautological gesture to the ‘buzz’ of the shows where visitors come because other visitors come (Januszczak 2011: n/p). The critic’s demonstrated empirical research, however, only extends to the observation that ‘clusters of foreign tourists darted this way and that’ and ‘you could sense the visitor excitement’ (Januszczak 2011: n/p). The assumptions on visitation are not evidenced by interviews or any extended empirical investigation into the qualities of experience audiences will take away. The true value of art is framed by Januszczak according to a

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<sup>1</sup> Januszczak details that *Newspeak: British Art Now*, attracted 557,192 visitors, the ‘tedious’ *Indian Art Today* managed 407,796, while *Abstract America: New Painting and Sculpture* ‘succeeded in luring’ 837,200 visitors to the Saatchi Gallery, London, in 2010 (Januszczak 2011: n/p).

historiography of the breadth and originality of Saatchi's exhibitions to date, along with the enlightenment values of self-improvement and progression associated with the universal museums of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Guided by his own suppositions, Januszczak fails to engage with the contingencies and spatialities of arts audiencing in the wider relevance of visual art's meaning.

In the second instance, the limitations of this approach can be seen to extend politically to a misrecognition of audience agency. As part of an ongoing project of critique directed towards wider audiences and participation, Januszczak writes in an earlier article:

Great audience participation comes at great cost. These days, people go to galleries not searching for civilisational milestones or profound aesthetic experience, but hoping, instead for fun and explosions.

(Januszczak 2010: n/p)

The critic equates participation and fun, in tension with aesthetic experience. Januszczak's analysis is the result of observations informed by over 30 years as an arts critic, but they are disengaged and even contemptuous of the people who enter the scene of his exhibition going and writing. In the course of the thesis I have acknowledged the potential flaws of art which formally structure participation, highlighting how participatory art can be seen to direct the audience according to the intentionality of the artist, undermining gestures towards a more inclusive or democratic medium of art making (see Chapter 5 and 6). My issue here lies with the critic's behaviourist approach to audiences, which touches upon a surface analysis of visitor practices as a springboard for his interpretation of the artworks under discussion. In the following reference to artist Nairy Baghramian's work, Januszczak's position is crystallised:

You cannot sit on the sculpture, slide down it or photograph yourself hanging from it. The creativity being examined is the artist's alone, not yours. And it is all the better for it. (Januszczak 2010: n/p)

Though I focus on a very different artspace, this thesis *has* engaged with the physical dimensions of audiencing over which Januszczak seems to stand in judgement. More extrovert, declarative aspects of audiencing are shown by participants such as Maria, the amateur choralist, who greeted me outside *Skyspace* with the question: 'Did you hear us

singing in there?’ (Interview with Maria 2010). Yet, importantly, examples such as this reach beneath what can be observed on the surface to illuminate the creative, interpretative dimensions of audiencing. At the same time, and just as relevant, are the quieter moments of audiencing recognised within the research. Also examples of active engagement, these moments include the couple outside Underground Galleries who tentatively communicated their insights on the smell, scale and impact of the Nash exhibition, but only after checking whether I would rather speak to someone who is more knowledgeable about art (Interview with Hailey and James 2010). Challenging Januszczak’s opinions, this thesis shows that the creativity involved in producing the meaning of art is *not* the product of the artist alone. Accessing the social and cultural meaning of art instead requires tracing the inbetween spaces of the artist, artwork and audience and the experiences these set in motion. The dynamics of these inbetween spaces demand greater exploration than a snap-shot of the here and now in the timeless present of the white cube. A place apart, YSP resonates with contested cultural geographies which are the result of rich histories and pregnant futures that map themselves physically and discursively across the present day artscape. Recognised as a meaningful location, place and history activate the experience of site art at YSP. This requires a more nuanced approach where qualitative methods are tailored to explore the in-depth, complex meanings of site art within a range of peoples’ lives, revealing the dynamism, relational geography and site specificity that lie at the heart of arts’ audiencing.

### 7.1 Audiencing Yorkshire Sculpture Park

This thesis is framed by the verb *audiencing* to explain how audiences perform an engagement with site and art in the spaces of YSP. By tailoring ethnographic processes to the field my methodology expands the scope of Rose’s work on audiencing visual images (Rose 2001), with recognition that audience experience of art in landscape is multi-sensory and three-dimensional. The audience is shown to comprise of individual specialists who act upon the artwork, physically and interpretatively. It demonstrates how the situated knowledges of these audiences enrich knowledge of site art by their variegated frames of reference and behaviours, which provide different sides to the story of the artwork than the accounts mounted on YSP plaques and printed in other official interpretation. The non-uniformity of audience reception is highlighted which in

turn creates the potential for infinite creative re-imaginings of site art according to audiencing.

Furthermore, this thesis makes the contribution of recognising that audiencing occurs non-linearly, with particular focus on site art. The non-linearity of arts audiencing involves rethinking audience research in geography, culture studies and the arts which consider production, display (image, screening or exhibitioning), and then reception as a flow of stages, with the role of the audience only activated at the final stage (Rose 2001; Moores 1993; Morley 1992; Ang 1985 and Caru and Cova 2005). Registers of audiencing art can be seen as ‘internal to the performance’ (Martin 1992: 103), with meaning inscribed during the process of making, installation and exhibiting. This adds empirical weight to Kester’s argument that the meaning of artwork is unfixed and subject to reinterpretation (Kester 2004: 10), with meaning created from a range of perspectives during the entwined production and reception of the artwork.

Additionally, by embedding myself within YSP, the research has highlighted a range of different audiences who inscribe artwork with meaning. I argue that the audience is not a bounded category of people. This adds nuance to previous work on museum and arts engagement which have arguably erected a boundary between museum professionals and visitors. Instead of entrenching a ‘them’ and ‘us’ culture within the arts (Mooney 2007), this thesis argues that the audience cannot be separated from YSP, understood either as a body of workers or organisation. The audience can occupy several different positions simultaneously and transition over a period of time which unlocks alternative insights into the meaning of a place and the artwork sited there.

Further, by tracing audiencing this thesis has revealed that the audience is entwined with role and action. This invigorates the creative potentiality enacted by the framing ‘to audience’ and ‘to experience’, with the active corollary ‘to venture forth, or to run a risk’ (Tuan 2001: 43). The meaning of art is therefore altered from something determined and closeted, to owing its substance to each audience encounter. New analysis on conceptualism has reviewed examples of art which ‘did not signal the disappearance of the artist so much as put their circumstances into sharper relief’ (Sperlinger 2005: 5). Through audiencing this thesis has sought to illuminate the social and cultural context of the production of art and its meaning, contributing to placing the geographies of art into sharper relief. In doing so, it does not affirm the death of the author. By emphasising the active role of different audiences, this thesis instead

presents the coming together of various creative agencies in the production of the meaning of site art.

Critical theoretical contributions to site art and landscape design have illustrated the merging of site with art, establishing an entwined dynamic of work, locality and the viewer's sensorial experience that owes a debt to phenomenology (Kwon 2002, Bois 1984, Daniels 1999). Of great pertinence to YSP, the picturesque garden has been realised as an escape from the pictorial and the visual, into the embodied experience of moving in the landscape, or 'a struggle against the reduction "of all terrains to the flatness of a sheet of paper"' (Bois 1984: 37). This thesis works with the potential of the YSP landscape to play host to sculptural experience, nevertheless an appreciation of the park was often distinguished by audiences from an appreciation of the art within the grounds. In particular, this research reveals a pattern where local residents make a division between art and landscape - and between sculpture park and the Bretton Estate - in their narratives of visiting YSP. The differential responses to the landscape reach beyond appearance, connecting with relationships of power and work, or labour, on the historic estate (Mitchell 2000: 35). While these accounts demonstrate that different individuals can 'read' the landscape in profoundly different ways (Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988; Duncan and Ley, 1993), this research shows that the YSP landscape has been variously produced and practiced through time. The meaning of YSP is therefore shaped by a range of facets including cultural memory, familial history, and the human experience of being within and practising the landscape through work and recreation. These biographical and temporally-inflected themes advance upon geographical enquiry which centralises process, sensation and direct experience in an interpretation of installation art (Morris and Cant: 2006; Morris 2011; Hawkins 2010, Hawkins 2011). The sensory modalities of audiencing site art within this thesis contribute empirical evidence that installation art is never purely centered on optics (Hawkins 2010), with bodily interactions and descriptions emphasising sound, touch, smell and movement along with the visual. Yet, through tracing audiencing this thesis develops understandings of the embodied experience of site art by weaving memory and environmental history as essential to the dimensions of site art. This analysis of site art shows that the meaning of the work is not exclusively produced during a contemporaneous encounter, through analysis of the biography of a particular artist, or 'by elucidating the inner logic of the pleasures they offer an experienced and sensitive eye' (Greenberg 1950[1993]: 26). Meaning can be differentially framed by past experiences and knowledges of the landscape as detailed above, which intersects with

extant perceptions of art. Grasping how site can resonate with audiences' *a-part* from art brings new registers of understanding to the relational meaning of art staged within a sculpture park with potent, always revenant pasts.

In tracing the audiencing of YSP this thesis configures the sculpture park as public space. Existing critical work on site art has orientated around urban life and public space. I show how site art has been imprecisely positioned as an 'urban-aesthetic' and conflated with 'spatial-discourse (Kwon 2002: 2). This thesis empirically builds out of the lacuna in these literatures through recognising that Kwon's 'spatio-political' (2002: 2) and Rendell's 'inbetween spaces' (2008: 16) can open up the dynamics of audiencing non-urban site art, specifically at YSP. Working with Iveson's procedural approach to the public (Iveson 1997) this thesis considers the ways in which the public can be convened and formed in different spaces. In identifying the bridlepaths and public access paths which cross the Bretton Estate, it shows that public access was enabled to the site prior to the foundation of YSP. Through archival research and interviewing, it uncovers the different publics who have accessed and used the park over the years including estate workers, local villagers, the army, higher education students, farmers, conservationists and art visitors. Changing ownerships of the park and shifts in functionality created overlapping templates – or 'scripts' – for the ways in which various publics perceive and experience the geographies of the park, and the ways in which they should engage with it. Working in the domain of critical spatial practice, YSP 'engages with the social and aesthetic, the public and the private' (Rendell 1998: 6) to produce gallery and landscape exhibitions. The thesis argues that the spaces of YSP are 'inherently dynamic' (Massey 1994), informed through the heritage of the estate and its relational connectedness with mobile publics and creative networks. Site and site art are accordingly performed by YSP's publics in differential ways resulting in either subscription or resistance to the dominant encoding of the park as an 'international centre for modern and contemporary art, experienced and enjoyed by thousands of visitors every year' (YSP 2010k: n/p). Contested and conflicting positions on the meaning of the place and art displayed there can be seen to be representative of a critical spatial politics of non-urban site art. The theoretical and empirical approach to audiencing at YSP within this thesis, therefore, offers new understanding on the role of the audience, the sensory modalities that are key to the meaning of site art, and the sculpture park as public space.

## 7.2 Chapter summaries

By mapping and tracing audiencing at YSP, this thesis has shown some of the ways in which meaning of art is contingent upon different audiences and resonates with the cultural geographies of place. In doing so, this thesis has engaged with the importance of moving conceptually from the noun ‘audience’ to the verb ‘audiencing’ to activate the dynamic processes involved in the production of site art’s meaning with address to geographical context. As such, each section of this thesis has highlighted dimensions of the enmeshed relationship between site or spatiality, art and audience.

Chapter 1 provided a critical framework for the thesis. The shifting function of the museum and role of the audience were introduced, with the need for more detailed ‘descriptions and grounded interpretations of what audiences really think and do’ (Lull 1988: 240). The important heritage of YSP was also introduced, along with a contextualisation of the current political and economic environment for the organisation. By tailoring archival, ethnographic and visual methods to an exploration of site art, the methodology outlined in Chapter 2 advanced upon existing studies of art and audience which do not incorporate a range of audience experiences in in-depth, longitudinal studies (Bal 1996; Noordegraaf 2004; Duncan 1995; Cole 2000; Schneider and Wright 2010; Morris 2011). The mixed research methods created a nexus between the histories of the park and the geographies of audiencing in the present day sculpture park. The various positionalities from which the meaning of art is produced and inscribed is traced by mapping audiencing from a range of perspectives, including workers, volunteers, local residents and visitors.

In Chapter 3 landscape is conceived as a way of seeing and being in space which retains the importance of its materiality, combined with the partiality of knowledge production that are integral to the thesis (Kolodny 1975; Rose 1993; Mitchell 1996; Pollock 2003; Anderson 2010). The chapter builds from Massey in recognising that the spaces of YSP are ‘a product of relations-between’ (Massey 2005:9), which is pertinent in a landscape with the significance of Bretton Estate’s manorial history and divided land use. Public access paths and byways cross the estate, engaging YSP in questions on public space and public use, extending the scope of existing work to the medium of art and non-urban space.

Chapter 4 situated the multiple spatialities within which YSP is located –local, regional, national and international – and through which the meanings of the park and

framings of the site art are variously constructed. Mobilising an extroverted notion of the local and of place that presents site art as a relational meeting between the local, regional and (inter)national (Lippard 1997; Casey 2002; Cresswell 2005; Pollock and Sharp 2007), it described the making of David Nash's *Black Steps*; then situated these insights into broader historical currents, with reference to the Great Depression, coal mining strike of 1921, World War I and World War II which ruptured the local area of West Bretton during the twentieth century. Examples of regional cultural networks and off-site national and international projects further demonstrated the multiple scales and discourses that shape knowledges of the park and its artworks.

Chapter 5 empirically revealed a reconceptualised notion of audiencing, by investigating the creation, installation, and reception of the David Nash exhibition 2010 to 2011 within different sites of YSP. It showed how YSP convened different publics, constituted through a range of practices and mobilised across various spaces. Further, it illustrated how the whole of YSP is showcased and performed as an installation. An extensive network of photographers, filmmakers and critics are hosted by YSP during the process of exhibition-making, which mobilised the meaning of the exhibition and individual artworks prior to their completion. Combined with tracing the ways in which volunteers and visitors audienced the artwork during the making, this chapter advanced from Fiske's sites of analysis (1992) to demonstrate that audiencing of art often occurs in a non-linear chain of processes and from a range of positionalities commencing with the production of the work.

With focus on encounters with Turrell's *Skyspace* and Greyworld's *Playground*, Chapter 6 showed dominant themes of audiencing site art at YSP, informed by the notions of situated knowledge, social memory and environmental history, which emerged consistently through the empirical findings of the research. I adopted narratological (Fisher 1991; Bal 1996; Duncan 1995; Noordegraaf 2004) and sociological (Latour 1998) readings of the script – how an object or space is encoded to draw certain prescribed behaviours from users - to consider how visitors and volunteers performed YSP. The notion of the script enabled the teasing out of how the spatial and temporal interacted, with past functionalities and genealogies of the estate writing themselves across the materialities of the present day park and memories of visitors, informing varying modes of engagement.

Together these chapters show that meaning in art is negotiated by audience and place, and that experience is not quantifiable. The audience cannot be considered nor represented as one homogenous group, neither therefore can the meaning and political

resonance of (site) art be fixed. The audience comprises a mass of contexts and positionalities which can transition in relation to an institution and artwork. Further, the meaning of place is fragmented which is historically accentuated by changing land ownerships and land uses. This thesis, therefore, demonstrates that audience, art and site are both heterogenous and subject to change. In mapping audiencing, the contingent, relational and dynamic meaning of site art is brought into focus, which belies a singular, fixed 'definition'.

### 7.3 The museum as forum?

The wider relevance of this thesis lies in its implications for museum practice and media discourse on the arts. One of the more straightforward but potentially far-reaching of these findings is a recognition that the sociality of a visit shapes an arts encounter. The social and spatial context of the visit - rather than a solitary, isolated vantage point - is central to understanding how meaning is produced for most audiences. Museums have embraced the social dimensions of visiting through increased areas dedicated to recreational spaces of consumption, including cafes, restaurants, shops and bars. This also applies, however, to the actual group and family-centred audiencing of exhibitions. In the first instance the sociality of art experience raises the question of how writing on art can incorporate the intersubjective dimensions of audiencing works, exhibitions and the wider spaces of the museum that shape experience? Furthermore, recognition of the sociality of arts experience has implications for museum practices on courting media coverage. Journalists, art critics and arts writers are invariably invited to VIP events to review exhibitions, where they are closed off from the wider public in special lunches, dinners, and museum led-tours. This practice was evident at YSP with the David Nash private launch where his columns - which lined the corridor of the Visitor Centre - were specially covered and then 'unveiled' to create an aura of privilege for the guests, wherein they would feel they were the first to have encountered the works. Arguably, private showings continue to produce a closeted vantage point of art, which feeds into a focus on the meaning of art disengaged from an everyday social and cultural context. This is exemplified by the critic Hugh Pearman writing on his experience of *Skyspace* in April 2006:

My only reservation is that the YSP is getting to be a popular place... this *Skyspace* is rather too easy to get to, near the entrance. Being in there alone

is one thing. Being there with gaggles of shouty kids on a day out from Leeds will be quite another. (Pearman 2006: n/p)

Pearman presents a quiet encounter at the opening of *Skyspace*, undisturbed by a broader real (and imagined) audience. The majority of audiences attend during normal opening hours and without special privileges, therefore the relevance of reviews such as these are compromised. Moreover, the earlier excerpts cited from Januszczak show that critics need to not only *enter* the scene of the everyday exhibition environment, but they also need to *empirically* engage with audiences if they are interested in addressing different dimensions of arts meaning. Through focusing on the geographies of art this research aims to centralise the social and cultural context of art experience. Notably YSP has started to post visitor comments on its website alongside those of critics, which is an example of the ways in which museums can begin to include different audiences in its discourse. This helps to reframe the audience as specialised experts, rather than passive receptors, which is a key contention of this thesis.

Counter to claims within museology and the museum sector the museum is not yet ‘a forum’ for all visitors (Lavine and Karp 1991: 4). Included in this research are the voices of audiences who felt a disjuncture with the Bretton landscape in its present form as a sculpture park. Also evident from the research was the simple fact that a significant proportion of visitors still wanted what they considered authoritative guidance on the meaning of artworks within YSP. In my interviews the line of questioning was often reversed so that I would be asked ‘to explain’ the art. This desire for museums and their practitioners to transmit knowledge is indicative of disconnect or even resistance to the supposed multi-vocal approach of the ‘post-museum’ (Hooper-Greenhill, 2001: 152). This research shows the importance of recognising certain gaps between critical thinking, museum rhetoric and what particular audiences quietly think and do. The need for clear interpretative materials was evident for many participants with discussion of the usability of maps, panels, and guides to support physical and conceptual access to the art on display.

Looking forward, the spatialities of YSP will continue to change in the future. The Landscape Management Plan has made a dually aesthetic and conservation driven intervention into the park. Moreover, the future development of a luxury hotel and business park planned for Bretton Hall is likely to radically alter the demographic of the publics visiting the park, to include hotel workers, clients and business workers. This will add alternative dimensions on how the park is conceptualised and audienced.

Further, it will create new scripts for how different audiences categorise and engage with the site art displayed, opening up fresh avenues for researching the geographies of art at YSP. These emerging dimensions to the park offer new points for reflection, with consideration to the mobile publics and economies which network YSP to regional and national business, tourism and arts sectors. Important to future research will be maintaining and advancing critical recognition of significant arts practice that is conducted away from London and other metropolitan centres, and which also work at a distance to national media offices, such as the practices at YSP. Public art is still tightly bound to critical discourse on urban spaces, with focus on towns and cities, yet public art practices have widely taken beaches, woods, trails and, of course, parks, as their physical location. By understanding the way in which publics can be convened in a variety of spaces, and giving increased visibility to non-urban public art, research can better engage with the mobilities of creative ideas, artwork and audiences and the wider relational geographies of art.

New methodological directions opened up by this research include utilising video to develop findings on audiencing art. I refrained from employing video practices in this project due to reservations on whether innovative empirics would support or obfuscate my enquiry into how audiences engaged with site based artwork. During this research, however, I discovered that a number of audiences brought their own technologies and creative methods to the park. In the medium of installation art, video recordings could further understanding of the bodily qualities of art encounters alongside developing investigation into distinctions between how visitors articulated themselves and actually behaved. Although resource-heavy, this would create the potential for real time visual recordings of different audiences with the art which could then be co-interpreted. In addition, there is extensive scope for extending audiencing research to web-based practices. At the close of my fieldwork YSP re-launched their website with new web 2.0 participatory platforms built in with hyperlinks to other interactive sites. This was intended to boost usage of the website which was considered to be underperforming. Audiencing research into the virtual spaces of the museum potentially mobilises a far broader set of networks and practices, with consideration to international audiences who can interact with the museum and their workers online via participatory platforms. Further, research into the virtual spaces of the museum with consideration to how audiences interact with the museum and its collections beyond its physical loci would be cutting-edge, furthering methodological enquiry into audiencing and informing emergent aspects of museum practice.

## 7.4 Conclusion

To conclude, this thesis has analysed the dimensions of audiencing site art in the spaces of YSP. Audiencing is applied to a visual arts context revealing the active agency of the audience in an engagement with site and art. In focusing on audiences the research importantly attempts to move beyond the subjective lens of the critic and researcher when framing meaning. Instead of conducting an analysis from just my own situated experience of the art within YSP, this research is enriched through interviews with over 80 participants incorporating a range of contrasting perspectives, with focus on sculpture technicians, gardeners, volunteers, local residents and visitors. Adopting mixed methodologies the thesis maps the visual, bodily and spoken in order to exemplify the multiple sensual and interpretative registers of experiencing site art. Through a combination of qualitative and archival research methods, it advances upon existent research on art and audiences, drawing out the historical and environmental dimensions of audiencing art. Moreover, in repositioning the audience to include a range of roles which inscribe meaning into art, this research has illuminated the ways in which art is performed and made meaningful. It situates the multiple audience as sophisticated, socialised individuals, recognising that the response of the audience cannot be programmed nor determined. Audiences change, move affiliation, and resist easy categorisation. YSP is shown to be a contested landscape, produced and utilised by different publics from the eighteenth century to the present day, which creates a dynamic, sometimes turbulent environment for the display of site art. With recognition of the publics who are alternatively convened or cross the spaces of YSP, and the civic function of the gallery, YSP is addressed as a public space; framed as a controlled space, and one of variegated public engagement. The social and cultural geographies of audiencing art at YSP are thereby tailored to non-urban site art, with visibility afforded to arts practice and audiencing which is locally accented and dynamically produced in this historic, designed landscape for art.

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## Appendix 1: List of Interviews

### Interviews with visitors in Yorkshire Sculpture Park research

Those highlighted also took part in telephone or face to face follow-up interviews

Name	Recruitment Strategy	Occupation (where stated)	Age	Stated purpose for Visit	Date
Abigail and Marcus	Outside Playground, Camellia Gardens.	Unknown and ex-student	30-40	Walk and cafe	March 2010
Anna and Lucy	Cafe	Retired and Teacher	50-60	Social and art	March 2010
Belinda	Visitor Centre	Unknown	50-60	Shop and cafe	December 2009
Brian	Visitor Centre	Retired	50-60	Family visit	September 2009
Chris and David	Visitor Centre	Retired and architect	50-60	Day trip	October 2009
Davey	Outside Skyspace, Country Park	Student (foundation year)	16-20	Education	October 2009
Dominic and Rita	Carpark	Unknown	50-60	Exhibition	March 2010
Donald and Britta	Underground Gardens	Retired	80-90	Exhibition	July 2010
Eliza and Justine	Outside Longside	Unknown	40-50	Revisit old college and walk	July 2010
Florence	Visitor Centre	Retired	80-90	Walk and art	May 2010
Gabbie and Mia	Cafe	Regional Development Agency	30-40	Conference	February 2010
Gerald	Cascade Bridge	Photographer	36-40	Photography	January 2010
Gillian and Rob	Visitor Centre	Retired	70-80	Revisit old workplace	October 2009
Hailey and James	Underground Gardens	Students (undergraduate)	20-30	Walk, picnic and art	July 2010
Harriet	Cafe	Housewife	30-40	Social visit, cafe and walk	February 2010
Hellie and Vanessa	Visitor Centre	Unknown	50-60 20-30	Cafe, walk and art	May 2010
Henry and Annabelle	Carpark	Unknown	40-50	Social, cafe, walk and art	March 2010
Jacques, Dan and Jeremy	Outside Skyspace, Country Park	Students (Undergraduate)	16-20 21-25	Education	October 2009
Jessie	Outside Longside	Artist	20-30	Exhibition	July 2010
Joe and Nadine	Outside Longside	Unknown	50-60	Exhibition and walk	July 2010

Lizzie and Kevin	Visitor Centre	Unknown	30-40	Walk and art	July 2010
Maria and Imogen	Outside Skyspace, Country Park	Occupational Therapists	51-55 61-65	Walk and art	October 2009
Mark, Shelley and Rosie	Outside Playground, Camellia Gardens.	Unknown and student (school)	40-50 11-16	Family visit for walk, cafe and art	March 2010
Marnie	Visitor Centre	Retired	60-70	Volunteer	May 2010
Muhammed, Aalim and Ted	Country Park	Unemployed	30-40 50-60	Community art visit	April 2010
Paul	Carpark	Unknown	40-50	Walk, cafe, and art	March 2010
Rachel	Cafe	Retired	61-65	Volunteering	March 2010
Si and Jennifer	Outside Skyspace, Country Park	Construction manager and teacher	30-40	Walk and art	October 2009
Sidney, Glenda and Rose	Visitor Centre	Retired	80-90 56-60	Walk and art	September 2009
Sue and Will	Visitor Centre	Retired and Architect	50-60	Walk and art	October 2009
Tess and Jacqui	Underground Gardens	Retired	60-70	Exhibition and whole park	July 2010
Tim and Amy	Underground Gardens	Unknown	40-50	Walk and cafe.	July 2010
Toby	Visitor Centre	Unemployed	36-40	Cafe and shop	September 2009
Wendy	Oxley Bank	Unknown		Dogwalking	July 2010

### Interviews with visitors to the *Sunrise in the Skyspace* events

Those highlighted also took part in telephone or face to face follow-up interviews.

Name	Event date	Lives	Occupation (where stated)	Age	Purpose
Alexis	13 December 2010	Manchester	Mature student (undergraduate)	31-35	Education (undergraduate)
Ethan	13 December 2010	Leeds	Student (undergraduate)	21-25	Birthday party
Jacob	24 October 2010	'Local'	Chemical Plant Manager	36-40	Experience
Joseph and Emily	24 October 2010	Unknown	Retired	71-75	Self-guided education
Megan and Natalie	14 March 2010	Scotland	Artist and retired	61-65 31-35	Mother's day
Samantha and Tyler	14 March 2010	Birmingham	Curator and teacher	25-30	Revisit experience
Sandra	13 December 2010	London	Unknown	46-50	Birthday party

### Interviews with volunteers

‘On-the-spot’ interviews followed by formal interviews.

Those highlighted also took part in follow up interviews.

Please note: Rachel and Marnie were both recruited from visitor interviews and are therefore also tabled in the first table.

Name	Age	Occupation (where stated)	Lives	Project	Date
Ben	31-35	Unemployed	Local	Black Steps	2010
Francis	56-60	Retired	Tunbridge Wells	Black Steps	2010
Marnie	56-60	Retired	Leeds	Printing and invigilating	2010
Rachel	61-65	Retired	Holmfirth	Invigilator	2010
Sara	31-35	Artist	Wakefield	Black Steps	2010

### Interviews with local residents

Assortment of ‘on-the-spot’ interviews and snowball effect interviews.

Those highlighted also took part in face to face follow-up interviews.

Please note: Ben was recruited from volunteering and is therefore also tabled in the third table, above.

Gerald and Toby were recruited from ‘on-the-spot’ interviews and are therefore also tabled in the first table.

Name	Age	Recruitment strategy	Interview conducted	Lives	Employment /Interests (where stated)	Date
Ben	31-35	‘On-the-spot’ opportunity sampling	Oxley Bank and YSP Visitor Centre	Crigglestone	Volunteer, then YSP conservationist	2010
Gerald	36-40	‘On-the-spot’ opportunity sampling	Cascade Bridge and YSP Visitor Centre	Clayton West	Photographer	2010
Gill	56-60	Snowball	B&B West Bretton	West Bretton	B&B owner	2010
Mary	51-55	Snowball	B&B West Bretton	West Bretton	Retired, ex-Bretton College Administrator	2010
Toby	36-40	‘On-the-spot’ opportunity sampling	YSP Visitor Centre	Sandall	Unemployed	2009

### Workers involved in research

Informal conversations and notes recorded in my field diary, and working practices also documented through photographic diaries.

Those highlighted also took part in formal recorded interviews, with the name of the interviewer included if other than myself.

Name	Date	Occupation	Project(s) within research	Interviewer
Bill	2010	Sculpture technician	David Nash	
Brute Force & Ignorance: Sam and Mark	2010	Independent sculpture technicians	David Nash	
Clarke, Linda	2010	Retail Assistant	Heritage	Kathy Cremin
Dara	2009/10	Education Officer	Education Tours	
Edwards, Dave	2010	Head Gardener	David Nash and heritage	Kathy Cremin
Gregg	2010	Head Sculpture Technician	David Nash	
Lilley, Clare	2010	Director of Programmes	Various	Kathy Cremin
MacKenzie, Alan	2010	Manager of Sculpture and Estates	David Nash	Kathy Cremin
Malcolm	2010	Gallery Invigilator	David Nash	
Murray, Peter	2010	Founding Director	Various	Kathy Cremin
Nash, David	2010a	Artist	David Nash	
Nash, David	2010b	Artist	David Nash launch speech	
Ned	2010	Sculpture technician	David Nash	
Pheby, Helen	2009/10	Curator	Various	
Robert	2010	Information Desk	Information	
Vicky	2009/10	Artist and part time guide	Sunrise in the Skyspace	

## **Appendix 2: Questions for ‘on-the-spot’ semi-structured interviews with visitors**

### **Initial Questions for interviews**

Estimated interview duration: 10-20 mins

Follow-up: With a view to recruiting 20-30 participants for focus groups or longer one-on-one interviews

### **Mediation/Interpretation**

-Did you read any material on YSP before visiting? For example, did you visit the YSP web site?

-Did you use interpretative material from YSP e.g pamphlets, maps etc?

-Did you bring your own information or guide book?

-If you did use any of the above, how important were they in shaping your experience? Did you follow them carefully or use them for pointers?

### **Route**

-Which route did you take around Yorkshire Sculpture Park today?

-What did you see?

-How long did you spend at YSP today?

### **Art works**

-Did you visit the Deershelter today? Did you enter the space inside? What did you think?

-Did you find the soundscape ‘Playground’ today? Did you play with it? Did other members of your group interact with it?

### **Social Context**

-What were your reasons for visiting today?

-Were the cafe and/or the shop part of the reason for visiting?

-Did you visit with other persons or did you choose to come on your own?

-Did you take photos or film any parts of your visit? If so, are you planning to share this material?

- Would you be planning on visiting YSP again?

At close: Invite participation for one-on-one follow up interviews.

## **Revised questions for interviews**

Estimated interview duration: 10-20 mins

Follow-up: With a view to recruiting 20-30 participants for focus groups or longer one-on-one interviews

### **Mediation/Interpretation**

-Did you use any interpretative material today e.g pamphlets, maps etc?

-If yes, can you tell me how you used it and what you thought of it?

### **Route**

-Where have you visited today?

-What did you see?

-How long did you spend at YSP today?

### **Works**

-What work did you like? Why?

- What work did you not like? Why?

### **Social Context**

-What were your reasons for visiting today?

-Did you visit with other persons or did you come on your own?

-Did you take photos or film any parts of your visit? If so, are you planning to share this material?

- Would you plan on visiting YSP again?

-How would you categorise or describe YSP?

At close: Invite participation to one-on-one follow up interviews and provide business card with name, working title of project and contact details.

**Appendix 3: Example of a photographic diary**

**January 12 2010**



Fig.I Two walkers and their dogs enter the Country



Fig.II View across Country Park with Henry Moore



Fig.III View across Country Park of sheep



Fig.IV View north of Country Park with Deershelter



Fig.V Path connecting Country Park with Lakeside



Fig.VI View of Antony Caro's *Promenade* (1996)



Fig.VII Molehill in Lakeside



Fig.VIII Bretton Hall



Fig.IX View of Greyworld's *Playground* (1999)



Fig.X View from Bothy Terrace



Fig.XI Underground gardens with Underground Gallery



Fig.XII Visitor Centre corridor