

‘Cwestiwn arfaethedig ar gyfer Ymchwiliad Annibynnol’: ‘Beth yw arwyddocâd ymchwil a sut ydyw’n llywio proses o greu’r artist? / **‘Proposed question for Independent Inquiry’:** ‘What is the significance of research and how does it inform the artist’s process of making?’

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The artist’s process of research / Proses archwilio’r artist

Introduction

In this independent enquiry proposal, I will explore the subject of the artist's process, specifically, the artist's methods of researching prior to the physical making of an artwork. I will question what inspires an artist to make artwork, how an idea is triggered and how these ideas are developed. The three key words I will examine in the context of the artist's process of research are 'objects', 'sketchbooks' and 'site'.

I will consider whether objects (specifically the everyday object) consciously or subconsciously conjure an idea. I will go on to discuss the effect objects have on various artists and how these feed into their process of research. I will also explore the importance of a sketchbook to the artist and how its use prior to the process of making influences an artwork. Finally, I will question how and why a site stimulates an artist.

The aim of the enquiry will be to understand how an artwork comes into existence.

Objects

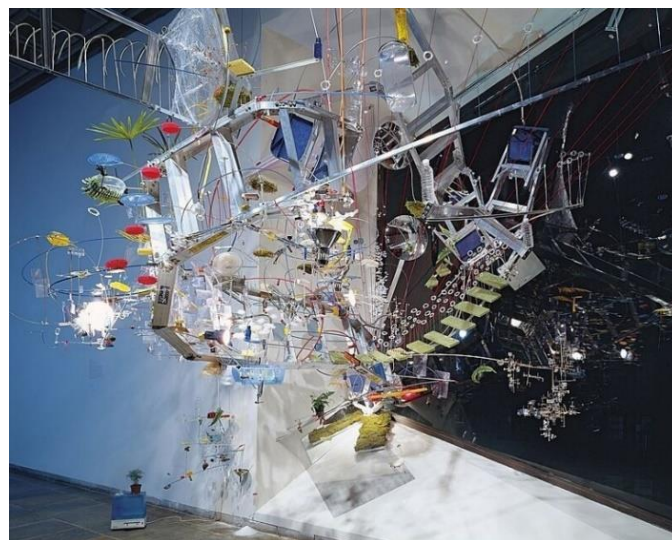
The first key word I will discuss in the context of research is 'objects'. What is an object?

According to the Compact Oxford English Dictionary, an object is "a physical thing that can be seen and touched." (Soanes and Hawker, 2008, p. 698).

We are surrounded by objects. We see them at home, in the street, in the office. We live with objects and they are a part of our everyday lives. We couldn't ignore them if we wanted to.

Many artists use objects as part of their work. Examples are Anselm Kiefer, Ai Weiwei and Marcel Duchamp. Kiefer includes old clothing and books in his sculptures, Weiwei uses bicycles and stools as part of his installations and notoriously, Duchamp turned everyday objects into artworks.

How significant therefore are objects in the artist's research? Sarah Sze states, "You know, we start with objects as the point of reference and my work, I think of the relationship between objects." (Sze, 2014). This suggests it's from objects Sze gains ideas for her work.



Sze (2000) *Strange Attractor*

She sees that even the most ordinary thing can be used as a material in her sculptures.

These objects such as matchsticks, candles and measuring tapes. It could be said that Sze uses objects in her sculptures like Rodin used clay and Michelangelo used marble.

Rachel Whiteread has collected numerous objects over the years. These include a piece of the Berlin wall, toys, fossils and meteorites. Referring to these kinds of objects, she states,

“They are all just objects which I’ve picked up and had in the studio for decades and never really known why I had them.” (Whiteread, 2017). The above indicates the interest or even obsession Whiteread has in objects and that collecting them is a part of her practice.



Whiteread (2010) *12 Objects, 12 Etchings*

Whiteread sees potential in the ordinary. She makes us look at things we possibly take for granted. She gives objects new meaning. In her work *12 Objects, 12 Etchings*, we see the importance, value and intrigue of ordinary objects to Whiteread. She expresses this when she says, “I kind of like the way these things get a place in the world. They are not sort of museum quality objects but they are things which have just been made by people and they kind of give it a knife.” (Whiteread, 2017). These objects are ones which would be

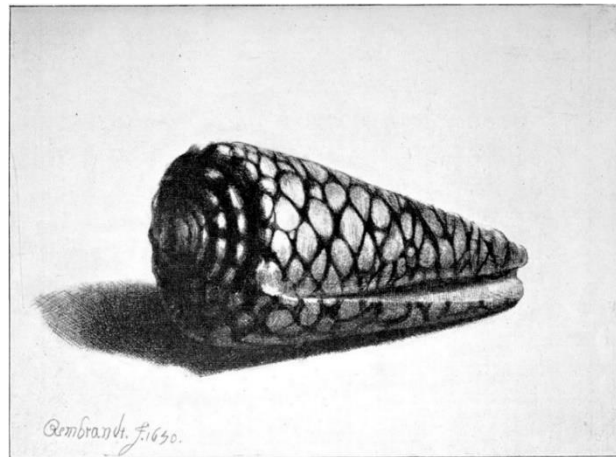
overlooked. They are arguably unimportant. Whiteread however, makes the objects more precious and valuable than they are through the process of etching them. She spends time on these objects, studying and exploring them through a meticulous printing process. She states, “I decided to do a printing process in a very sort of old fashioned printing process to try and explore what the objects are really.” (Whiteread, 2017). More importantly, however, her aim is “to give authority to some of the more forgotten things.” (Whiteread, 2017).

Not only does Whiteread depict objects as they are, she changes the perception of certain ones, through giving them a contradicting title. Her sculpture *Untitled (Pink Torso)*, which is a cast of the inside of a hot water bottle, plays with the viewer’s mind through giving it the title ‘torso’. As a result, this makes the viewer question what he/she is looking at and consider the object in a different way.



Whiteread (1995) *Untitled (Pink Torso)*

When thinking of the etching of ordinary objects, Rembrandt van Rijn's etching/drypoint of a shell comes to mind.



Rijn (1650) *The shell (conus marmoreus)*

In a similar way to Whiteread, Rembrandt collected objects. One of the rooms in the Rembrandt House in Amsterdam is full of items from around the world collected by Rembrandt. These include armoury, skulls, shells and Greek busts. He clearly had a fascination with 'things' and these were possibly used as inspiration for his paintings and etchings.



Can it therefore be said that objects are an essential part of the process prior to making artwork? Whiteread, when referring to objects says “I realised they were as much a part of my process that comes before making a sculpture as the drawings are themselves.”

(Whiteread, 2017). This statement concludes it can be.

In my own practice, everyday objects have recently been the main source of inspiration for creating artwork. Objects fascinate me – they have a past, a history, and a purpose that can be reinvented. And I can relate to Theaster Gates when he states that, “Objects have inherent power.” (Eler, 2019). I see as much in a bed sheet, for example, as I would in a painting by Diego Velázquez.

Sketchbooks

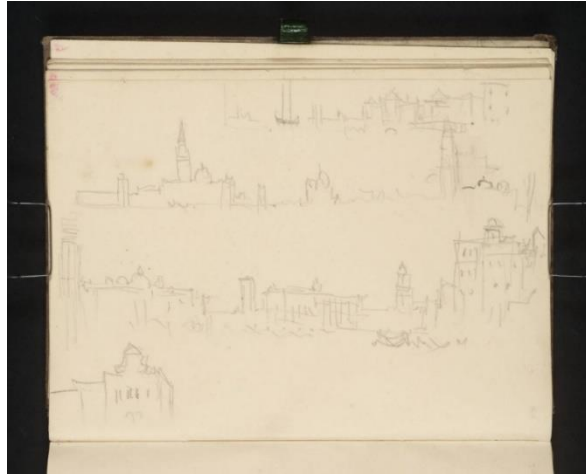
One of the vital tools of an artist is arguably a sketchbook. A sketchbook is a means for an artist to express thoughts and ideas and is also a place for private experimentation. Ivan Vartanian (2011, p. 9) states that a sketchbook or notebook “is meant as a place of work-for solving problems, jotting an idea, figuring a sequence, determining a position, shaping a phrase.” The sketchbook can be a secret place for the artist – a means of recording things that can be hidden from others. It can also reveal far more than the work itself – unravelling what’s inside the artist.

It must be noted, however, that not all artists use a sketchbook. The painter Francis Bacon denied that he made any drawings prior to the creation of his paintings. Paul Black and

Calvin Winner (2015) state, "Bacon claimed that he never did preparatory work, didn't draw, or make sketches before beginning work on one of his visceral creations." Despite this, on the whole, most artists use a sketchbook in some shape or form. Antony Gormley (2019) says that sketchbooks for him are "an extension of the brain", suggesting that it's through his sketchbooks he thinks, questions and reflects.

The artist most renowned for his use of sketchbooks, perhaps, is J. M. W. Turner. Turner carried a sketchbook with him wherever he went. Ian Warrell (2014, p. 9) says, "he never left home without at least one book in his pocket." The purpose was "to record and develop their chosen subjects, the things seen on their travels, or to work through their fantasies" (Warrell, 2014, p. 9). The sketchbook's chief purpose was, however, far greater and "They were, in fact, absolutely essential to his mode of operating." (Warrell, 2014, p. 9). This suggests that without his sketchbooks, Turner would not be able to function creatively. They were crucial to his practice.

The content in the pages of his sketchbooks ranges from incredibly delicate drawings and studies to paintings that are arguably final pieces. All these were ways for him to document and respond to what he saw, and gain inspiration and ideas for his larger works on canvas. The sketchbooks are a way for us to see the "circumstances of many of his celebrated compositions." (Warrell, 2014, p. 8).



Turner (1840) *Views of Venice from the Canale di San Marco near the Ponte della Veneta Marina, Including Giorgio Maggiore, Santa Maria della Salute, and the Campanille and Basilica of San Marco (St Mark's)*



Turner (Year unknown) *Venice – Maria della Salute*

When looking at the above two images – one containing drawings in one of Turner's sketchbooks of views of Venice and the other of a large oil painting on canvas of Venice by him, we see how moments from a sketchbook would eventually be realised on to canvas.

Sketchbooks for Turner were not only ways to gather inspiration from what he saw, but were a means for him to develop these inspiration and ideas.

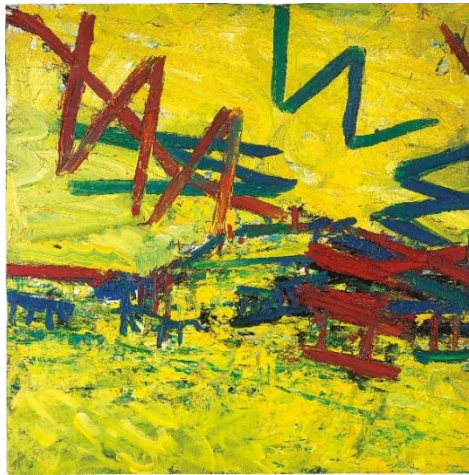
A sketchbook is fundamental for my process of research. It's used to record how I feel, draw what I see and experiment with ideas. It also acts as a guide, providing suggestions and helping me to decide the direction I should take with my work. It would be impossible for me to function without it. The sketchbook also allows me to visualise work that would be physically impossible for me to produce in terms of scale, material and location. These thoughts can be kept to myself, with no one else seeing them.

Lle

Y gair allweddol olaf y byddaf yn ei ystyried yng nghyd-destun ymchwil yr artist yw 'lle'. Mae 'The Compact Oxford Thesaurus' yn diffinio 'lle' fel "location, place and position." (Waite, Hollingworth and Marshall, 2008, tud. 762). Cyfeirir at 'lle' yn rheolaidd yn y byd celf, yn enwedig ym mhwnc safle benodol (site specificity) lle caiff gwaith celf ei ddylunio'n neilltuol ar gyfer lleoliad penodol ac sydd â chydberthynas â'r lleoliad ("designed specifically for a particular location and that has an interrelationship with the location") (Tate, 2020).

Ond beth am y syniad o le fel ffordd o ysbrydoli? A yw lle yn ysbrydoli artist ac yn tanio syniadau? Mae Llundain wedi bod yn destun gwaith Frank Auerbach ers degawdau. Mae lleoedd fel Mornington Crescent a Primrose Hill wedi cael eu paentio ganddo dro ar ôl tro. Yn ôl gwefan Tate, "The park at Primrose Hill in north London has been one of Auerbach's principal subjects". (Tate, 2020). Mae wedi dychwelyd i'r un lleoedd i baentio drosodd a throsodd. Nid ydynt byth yn peidio â'i ysbrydoli a rhoi syniadau ffres iddo. Yn wir, dywed

Auerbach, “I’ve worked with London, I’ve drawn London and I’ve gone back to draw it again and again and use it for my painting and I’ve become fonder and fonder of it.” (Auerbach, 2015). Gellid ystyried ei awydd i fynd yn ôl i baentio’r un pethau yn arferiadol. Ac eto, er gwaethaf yr ‘arfer’ hon, wrth edrych ar y paentiadau hyn, ni allai neb ddadlau bod ei ymatebion yr un peth. Mae pob ymweliad â’r lle yn unigryw – bydd yr amodau bob amser yn wahanol a bydd y darluniau’n adlewyrchu hyn.



Auerbach (1968) *Primrose Hill, Summer*



Auerbach (1954/55) *Primrose Hill*

Cafodd Llundain effaith debyg ar Leon Kossoff, a ddefnyddiodd y lle hwn yn rheolaidd fel testun ei baentiadau a'i ddarluniau. Dywedodd am Lundain, "always moving – the skies, the streets, the buildings..." (Norman, 2019, tud. 11). Gellid dadlau bod Llundain yn fyw iddo – bob amser yn newid ac yn esblygu ac yn wir, mae ei weithiau'n ceisio dal y newidiadau hyn. Dywed Andrew Dempsey (2019), "He's been painting a London that is changing because London changes all the time. When we look back at what Leon's London subjects were over the years, you can see he's captured a London that hardly exists any more." Gellid dadlau bod hyn, wrth gwrs, yn wir gyda phob lle gan fod popeth yn newid gydag amser. Mae adeiladau'n heneiddio ac yn dirywio, mae tirweddau'n datblygu ac yn newid yn dibynnu ar dymhorau, tywydd a golau. Nid oes unrhyw beth yn gyson ac yn barhaol.



Kossoff (1962) *Willesden Junction*

Mae Kossoff yn dal ochr ddiwydiannol ac adeiladu Llundain trwy ei ddefnydd o baent priddlyd, bron yn fwdlyd a'i farciau dwfn a thrwm. Bron na ellir clywed adeiladau'n cael eu codi, deunyddiau'n cael eu torri a thraffig yn mynd heibio wrth edrych ar ei baentiadau.

Yn yr un modd â sut yr effeithiodd Llundain ar waith Auerbach a Kossoff, gafaelodd Sir Benfro ar yr arlunydd Graham Sutherland. Dywedodd sut y cafodd ei swyno gan “twisted gorse on the cliff edge... the flowers and damp hollows... the deep green valleys and the rounded hills and the whole structure, simple and complex” (Flynn, 2012).

Beth ydyw am le sy’n gorfodi artistiaid fel y rhain i’w baentio?

Mae ymateb i le wedi chwarae rhan sylweddol yn fy ymarfer i. Yn fwy diweddar, mae’r lleoedd hyn wedi cynnwys gerddi, llwybrau troed, mynyddoedd a thir diffaith. Yn anfwriadol, mae archwilio’r lleoedd hyn wedi newid cynnwys a chyfeiriad fy ngwaith ac wedi arwain at gynnwys gwrthrychau newydd ac annisgwyl, gan gynnwys cerrig, glaswellt, graean a thywod, yn fy ngwaith. Mae hyd yn oed dogfennu’r gweithiau hyn yn fy llyfrau braslunio wedi newid o ganlyniad i’r lleoedd a ddewiswyd.

Casgliad

Yn y cynnig hwn, archwiliwyd ffyrdd y mae artistiaid yn cael syniadau ar gyfer creu gwaith. Trafodwyd yn fyr rôl gwrthrychau, eu harwyddocâd a’r effaith y maent yn ei chael weithiau ar artistiaid. Gwelwyd y gall eu pwrpas a’u potensial, ethseteg a hanes ysgogi ysbrydoliaeth, syniadau a darnau newydd. Roedd hyn yn amlwg wrth ystyried defnydd Rachel Whiteread o wrthrychau cyffredin. Aethpwyd ymlaen i drafod sut y gall llyfr braslunio fod yn arf sylfaenol i’r artist gael ysbrydoliaeth, gwneud camgymeriadau a chreu syniadau ar gyfer gweithiau ‘gorffenedig’. Ystyriwyd y ffordd y defnyddiodd J. M. W. Turner ei lyfrau braslunio a sut yr oedd y rhain yn ffyrdd hanfodol iddo gyflawni ei amcanion. Yn olaf, archwiliwyd sut y gall lle

ddal gafael ar arlunydd a'i orfodi i ddefnyddio'r lleoliad hwnnw fel ffynhonnell o bosibiliadau cyffrous.

Rwy'n ymwybodol mai crafu'r wyneb yn unig o ran proses ymchwilio'r artist a wnaed yn yr ymholiad hwn. Gellid archwilio llawer mwy o ran syniadau, ysbrydoliaeth ac arfer. O ganlyniad, rwy'n cynnig y cwestiwn canlynol ar gyfer fy ymholiad annibynnol – 'Beth yw arwyddocâd ymchwil a sut ydyw'n llywio proses o greu'r artist?' / 'What is the significance of research and how does it inform the artist's process of making?'.

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