

Artful Social Engagement: Long-term Interaction Design within an International Women's Community

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Computing Science

School of Computing Science
Newcastle University
January 2015

Abstract

Long-term commitments, a rich understanding of- and sensitivity towards- identities are considered of value for researchers working within technology design to support community participation. However, few studies have explicitly discussed how researcher relationships are built and how communities negotiate their technology use around identities over time. This thesis presents the findings and insights from a three-year long, in-depth participatory project at an international women's centre in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.

The thesis contributes to interaction design research, and experience-centred design more specifically within social care communities. The research demonstrates how interdisciplinary approaches, combining critical methodological perspectives from feminist postcolonial studies with narrative inquiry and speculative design, can be used constructively in complex and sensitive community contexts. The thesis outlines how such approaches contribute opportunities for the negotiation and celebration of diverse community identities using technology.

This is achieved through exploring how 'dialogical aesthetics', as articulated through socially engaged arts, can sustain conceptual resources and practical approaches to reflexively inquire into personal identities within communities. Through 'space-making' workshops, involving digital portraits and digital story making and through the design and use of a speculative photo-sharing device, the thesis provides insights into exploring and responding to identities, while engendering inspiration and resonance for sustainable future technical practices within a culturally diverse social care community.

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Publications

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Socially Engaged Interaction Design with Communities

Interaction designers are increasingly working in complex and diverse social care and community environments [Light et al 2010, 2011, Massimi et al 2011, Carroll et al 2001, 2013, DiSalvo 2009, McCarthy & Wright 2004, Wright & McCarthy 2010, Gaver et al 2012, Blythe 2010, Ploderer et al 2013, Durrant et al 2013]. In moving beyond design for the work place, home and family life, community-based design looks towards an ecology of technology, across co-located, online, face-to-face, mobile and networked devices. Community membership is considered to be of value for an enriched sense of self, supporting feelings of belonging, pride and recognition of familiar social ties. Identification with particular sensibilities is often highly valued, as are trust, reciprocity, accountability and care [Wetherell 2009, Gilchrist 2009, 2010]. Technology is a valuable resource in supporting relational connections and experiences between people both on and offline [Putnam 2000, Carroll et al 2001, 2007, 2013, Taylor et al 2009, 2010, 2013].

While research in the workplace has more commonly focused on ‘communities of practice’ [Wenger 1998], contemporary community membership and commitment is no longer considered to be bound only by kinship or specific shared contexts. Communities also orient toward common experiences, passionate interests and political agendas, to form organic and complex networks. Social media platforms are often considered useful in helping to maintain community ties and continuity of presence at a distance by supporting social bonds and providing bridges to explore, build and sustain community interest [Di Salvo et al 2013, Ploderer et al 2010, 2012]. How people self-organise, contribute, feel part of and extend their networks through communities using technology is increasingly of interest for interaction designers seeking to design for social connections.

Despite such positive connotations, communities can also be experienced as exclusive, restrictive or even divisive in maintaining longstanding biases,

hierarchies, cliques and social norms as communication moves between face-to-face and technically mediated communication [Putnam 2000, Carroll et al 2013, Wetherell 2009, Gilchrist et al 2010, Van House 2011, et al, Light et al 2013, Crivellaro et al 2014].

The more positive aspects of community have become appropriated into political discourse, as a desired state of being with others. Togetherness, cohesion and integration are promoted by organizations as societal goods, with a recognizable glimmer of nostalgia and hope for an alternative vision of groups coming together to co-operate through convivial action [Wetherell et al 2007, Gilchrist 2009]. For [people and] places in which it appears that a sense of community no longer exists, social breakdown and crisis are often described [Gilchrist 2009, 2010, Walkerdine & Jimenez 2012]. In the UK, government policy has focused on cultural diversity and immigration¹ as catalysts for such breakdown, associated with the failure of a coherent multicultural national identity and a lack of trust [Saggar et al 2012, Ahmed 2004]. Research and support for projects in partnership with charitable and government schemes have looked towards the arts and technologies to creatively engender greater understanding and stronger social ties to imagine alternative futures as part of social justice or community schemes [Askin & Pain 2011, Banks 2010, Gilchrist et al 2010, Light et al 2011, Taylor 2013, Wetherell 2009, Yuval-Davis & Kaptani 2009].

Motivation for Research

Unsurprisingly, researchers working in this area of technology design can find the research process challenging [Carroll et al 2013, Taylor et al 2010, Gilchrist et al 2010]. The time required to build relationships, the dynamic nature of community development, the different agents involved and the need to find ways of sensitively documenting and disseminating research outcomes between partners can often be at odds with more traditional data collection techniques and requirements gathering practices within user-centred research focused on commercial product design [DiSalvo et al 2013, Carroll et al 2013]. Research within areas of community informatics [Carroll et al 2001, 2007, 2013],

¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2011/apr/14/david-cameron-immigration-speech-full-text>

action research [Hayes 2011, Tacchi et al 2003, Banks 2010], participatory design [Bjorgvinsson et al 2013] and experience-centred design [Wright & McCarthy 2010] has produced insights into approaches for developing long-term community-based interaction design. In particular, such work has provided insights into the challenges of what it means to be a researcher working within communities, the researcher's own membership in such projects, the commitments and experiences which researchers bring to their projects that may be valuable or problematic, and the difficulties and benefits of engaging in such long-term design processes.

A rich understanding of, and a sensitivity towards, community identities is considered crucial for researchers working in such areas [DiSalvo et al 2013, Carroll et al 2013, Wright & McCarthy 2010]. Research within identity studies within the social sciences has developed rich vocabularies concerning community identities and the importance of affective relational understandings of connections and social capital [Gilchrist 2009, et al 2010, Wetherell et al 2007, 2009, Walkerdine 2012]. Yet few studies have explicitly explored how identities are understood and negotiated by researchers considering the emotionally complex experiences and investments associated with starting research relationships and being part of a community. Furthermore, despite a growing interest in diverse perspectives in design [Bardzell & Bardzell 2010, 2011, Borning & Muller 2011, McCarthy & Wright 2004, Wright & McCarthy 2010], understanding the socio-technical curation of co-located diverse cultural community identities has so far received little attention. In response I ask: *how can we design technologies in ways that are mindful of diverse community identities?*

The thesis contributes to the practice of community-based interaction design research within the specific context of a long-term research engagement with an international women's centre in the North East of England, the Angelou Centre. The Centre, a charity and community centre supporting education and social care, is run by and works with over 150 women each year who identify with their Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and refugee (BAMER) heritage, some of whom have experienced violence from their families and within their countries of birth. Taking a feminist post-colonial perspective [Gunaratnam 2003, Ahmed

2004, et al 2006, 2012], I argue that socially engaged arts practice [Helguera 2011, Kester 2004, 2005, Bishop 2012] as a particular mode of cultural and collaborative production can provide generative insights on the sensitivities, complexities and multiplicity of identities within the formative stages of building long-term design relationships. In particular, I highlight how such approaches can support opportunities where connections between people, technology and biography are made, encouraging an exploration of what diversity might mean while also nurturing learning. Working with this particular community through socially engaged arts practice in this long-term embedded way, encouraged ways of becoming familiar, testing assumptions and working through productive means of collaborating as identities were negotiated and explored. At the same time, I discuss how this approach also had its challenges in relation to technology design in the open and expansive way that identities were presented and discussed. This required sensitive negotiation of confidentiality and feelings of vulnerability between myself, staff and volunteers.

This thesis is written not from the perspective of a designer, but from my perspective as a practitioner with a background in socially engaged arts practice, who has collaborated on creative digital media projects with communities for over a decade. While collaborative making using technologies has been an important part of my own practice, the thesis outlines my process of becoming a researcher, learning how to translate, adapt and reflexively question socially engaged arts approaches in order to develop insights for community-based interaction design within a diverse multicultural learning and social care community.

Why Social Engagement?

In outlining an agenda for feminist HCI (Human Computer Interaction), Bardzell & Bardzell [2010, 2011] outline the importance of articulating researcher commitments when working with socially and politically engaged agendas that attempt to address civic and societal concerns. They point out that feminist positions within philosophies of science have argued for research perspectives that are particular and situated to address social injustices [Harding 1986, Haraway 1988, 1991, Suchman 1995, 2002, 2007, Bowker & Star 1999, Star 1999, Star & Strauss 1999]. Rather than HCI relying on scientific research

approaches that attempt to make general and objective claims of knowledge based on universal truths, Bardzell et al argue that HCI could adopt approaches that consider marginalized and peripheral perspectives to explore alternative values, such as dialogue, participation, empathy and care. I understand Bardzell's discussion of feminism within HCI as a commitment to acknowledge the researcher's role in taking responsibility for particular areas of study that engage with social concerns, while making a commitment to adopt approaches that most suitably explore those issues and concerns in a socially responsible way.

So what is socially engaged art and why look towards these practices to inform community-based design? First and foremost, I declare my self-interest, in that this is an area of collaborative and creative arts practice that I am familiar with, theoretically, conceptually and practically. As a contemporary mode of art production, socially engaged arts practitioners have a long tradition of working with communities to explore identities, belonging and engagement with social and political issues using collaboration and technology as integral aspects of interaction [Helguera 2011, Kester 2004, Bishop 2012, Askin & Pain 2011, Parr 2006]. These approaches have been greatly influenced by feminist arts movements and post-colonial cultural critique [Helguera 2011].

At the same time, socially engaged arts practice has also become an area of increased relevance within the social sciences due to its strong commitment to interdisciplinary and collaborative practice. More broadly, such practices involve artists engaging non-artists in the co-production of art and ideas around societal and politically sensitive issues such as community cohesion and belonging [Askin & Pain 2011, Parr 2006]. Socially engaged arts practices have already been influential within HCI and participatory design on research focused on sustainability and environmental issues [Jacobs et al 2013, DiSalvo et al 2009, Light et al 2009]. At the same time there has also been research that carefully considers identities in relation to indigenous [Klaveren 2012], immigrant [Bjorgvinsson et al 2010] and ageing [Light 2011b] communities, communities that are identified by researchers as those who are rarely engaged in discourses around technology development.

These artistic practices have moved away from the production of art objects for display within gallery settings, preferring more performative, durational and conversational based interactions, many of which take place over long periods of time. As an interdisciplinary practice, such work has built on social science research that considers identities as performed and constructed [Goffman 1959, Butler 1990, 1993, Gilchrist 2009, Wetherell 2009], not as something within the self, as a static entity, but as something that is negotiated socially in relation to people and unfolding experiences. The term 'dialogical aesthetics' [Kester 2004] has been used to describe such practices as a way of drawing attention to the importance of ongoing conversations and empathy to value difference and intersubjective relations between artists and communities as ways of raising questions and awareness about social and civic life.

In describing different design practices that draw on experience-centred approaches, others have also discussed 'dialogical aesthetics' to highlight alternative ways designer and user relationships might be configured [Wright & McCarthy 2010, DiSalvo et al 2009]. Such projects attempt to create space where researchers can move beyond taking the role of 'designer' as expert and 'user' as positioned only through their particular use of technology. Practitioners working in this space prefer to explore the unfolding nature of research relationships over time. Aesthetics here relates to an ethical responsibility that is felt towards others, in hearing, valuing and acknowledging that alternative perspectives exist, requiring accountability, flexibility and responsiveness. Design practitioners have built on these perspectives, emphasizing the importance of relational understandings of identities between designers and the family [Wallace et al 2013, Durrant et al 2009]. At the same time, these approaches have not been directly considered within larger social and community settings except for the work of Blythe et al [2010], Gaver et al [2011] and Durrant et al [2013]. This work too has involved arts practitioners working with communities to open up conversations and develop long-term meaningful research relationships, and highlights more complex relationships between 'communities of practice' within the work-place and communities bound by informal experiences and locations, connected through looser associations and network ties. However, there are still relatively few examples of such work and

therefore there only exists a limited critical and conceptual vocabulary to discuss diverse community identities beyond whole group identification.

Research Aims and Questions

The research is therefore motivated by two main aims:

- To extend and build on methodological approaches within HCI that focus on supporting identity, particularly in designing creative and expressive technologies for use within diverse community settings.
- To extend and build on the research practice of using technology in socially engaged ways within communities.

In meeting these aims I ask the following questions:

- How are diverse community identities expressed through the use of existing technologies?
- What methods of engagement can be used to support reflexivity and diversity for design research practices within community contexts?
- How can such methods of engagement be used to inform the design and evaluation of expressive technologies that support diverse community identities?
- How can the prototypes developed be used and evaluated to support diverse identity practices within communities?

Thesis Structure

Taking a chronological approach to the research, the thesis is structured across periods of time working with the Angelou Centre staff and volunteers on five studies, over a two and half year period starting in May 2011 and finishing in February 2014. The thesis begins with Chapter 2, an overview of current literature within the area of social engagement and interaction design. This is followed by Chapter 3, a discussion of the approach taken that expands on experience-centred design sensibilities combining socially engaged arts [Askins & Pain 2011, Bishop 2012, Helguera 2011, Kester 2004, 2005] practice and ethnography, with a particular focus on narrative inquiry [Clandinin & Connelly 2000, Chase 2003, Connelly & Clandinin 1990, Harrison 2002, Hones 1999, Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2000, Lyons & Kubler LaBoskey 2002, Phillion 2002] and sensory ethnography [Pink 2009]. In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I describe

the first three studies, which took place between May 2011 and February 2012, which included getting to know staff and volunteers at the Centre, followed by digital storytelling and digital portrait workshops. In Chapter 7, I describe how these initial workshops fed into the design of a prototype, the photo-parshiya, a digital photo-album. The design work and iterations of the prototype took place between November 2012 and August 2013. In Chapter 8, I describe how the photo-parshiya was then used in further workshops to explore future photo-sharing practices and to inform the development of a proposal for a 2 year heritage project with the Centre, which took place between September 2013 and February 2014. In Chapter 9, I draw together insights from the previous chapters and discuss how the approach which I have described provided inspiration and critical reflection, helping to build robust long-term relationships between partners. I also reflect on the limitations of this approach in terms of the amount of time required, alongside the theoretical and conceptual commitments made.

In *Chapter 2: What is Social Engagement?*, I discuss both current and foundational literature within HCI that highlights how social engagement has become an important aspect of research within interaction design, the arts and social sciences. While there has been some critique of arts-informed practices within HCI's third wave [Bødker 2006], I discuss how socially engaged arts practice highlights particular kinds of intentionality where artists approach and work with communities to negotiate agendas for social change. I argue that such intentionality is also present where designers explicitly acknowledge a specific social agenda or political commitment in doing research, while at the same time working towards a particular approach that connects with that commitment. I outline how social engagement is a form of design that has a dual purpose that connects designers' social and political commitments or sensibilities to particular approaches to doing design. This means a commitment to responding or orienting to, raising awareness of and attempting to tackle, issues of societal or civic concern (such as sustainability, environmental waste, violence against women, discrimination, mental health stigma) and acknowledging that the designer's position is not neutral in choosing to work with or initiating interest in such research projects. At the same time, designers attempt to conduct their research in a socially just way, by

being accountable to those commitments methodologically, and engaging with the research context and people in open, sensitive and inclusive ways that are mindful of the specificities of the relevant contexts and particular practices. I discuss these insights in relation to feminist perspectives on the challenges presented by essentialising identity categories, and how artistic and community photographic practices have worked with these perspectives.

In *Chapter 3: A Socially Engaged Approach*, I discuss interdisciplinary practice in design that draws from experience-centred ways of working which combine socially engaged arts practice and narrative inquiry. I describe the purpose of embracing an interdisciplinary approach within the thesis, to support practical ways of doing and reflecting that also connect with the ethos of the community with whom I worked as part of the research. In developing an interdisciplinary approach, I discuss the potential of additional conceptual and practical strategies used in socially engaged arts practices when working with communities that include developing intersubjective relations, but also understanding the role of affect, identity and complex social agendas. Drawing from narrative inquiry to document and reflect on the practice of socially engaged arts itself, helped in taking a more reflexive position, critically reflecting on commitments and assumptions about how and where theories of particular socially engaged practices could be useful. Furthermore, I highlight how drawing from narrative inquiry encouraged a recognition of changes over time, not only ‘*out there*’ [Taylor 2011] where the research took place, but within my own perceptions of what it felt like to know within research. I discuss how the use of an interdisciplinary approach helped to support a more situated understanding of my own assumptions, and how I, as a socially engaged arts practitioner, engaged with the learning and care community of the Angelou Centre around technology use and design.

In *Chapter 4: Starting a Conversation*, I present a series of snapshots in the form of a story that connects the ‘herstories’ of members of the community within the Angelou Centre and my own personal history through our initial research encounters and first introductions. These accounts are based on my own interpretation of information presented through policy documents, leaflets, a website and field-notes while being at the Centre over an initial period of 3

months as a volunteer from May to July 2011. In building on the narrative inquiry approach, I reflect on the interaction between the past and present, the felt and physical space. Here I introduce Rosie and Samiya, who work full-time at the Centre. The accounts that are presented are conglomerates of a number of different experiences, observations and connections made during this time to give a sense of how it felt to be there at the early stages of becoming part of a diverse learning and care community.

In *Chapter 5: Digital Storytelling and Crafting Stories*, I discuss the process of working with the Centre on a digital storytelling project, CultureShock, with a local museum organisation, TWAM (Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums), where volunteers created videos about their experiences of leaving abusive relationships and finding support at the Centre. Here I also introduce Alice, a museum outreach worker, Abida, Huzna, Saeeda, Zahrah, Nazlee and Faleha, volunteers based at the Centre. These workshops took place between September and November 2011. My role was to support women in the workshops, while at the same time documenting and reflecting on how the process was experienced by different members of the community. While the project was initiated to engage the group through empowering experiences of using technology, the women decided to explore difficult personal stories around experiences of domestic violence, which provoked tensions concerning different personal and institutional agendas and assumptions about technology use. While the staff (Rosie and Samiya) and the museum facilitator (Alice) emphasised a process of giving voice to personal experience, I felt particular contradictions in recognizing what I saw as the supportive aspects of '*invisible work*', of facilitation and guidance. Rosie, Samiya and Alice considered the stories as personal and spoken, underlining the importance for individual creativity, while at the same time highlighting broader societal concerns associated with gender, race and violence. What I saw, felt and heard were the push and pull of interdependent contingencies and social connections. For me, the stories highlighted how the personal and the individual were framed by multiple organizational agendas and performed into by the group through ongoing negotiations and interactions, qualities of which disappeared when DVDs were produced and circulated. Here the spoken word and the potential

for distribution was given primacy over the visual and embodied potential for storytelling.

In *Chapter 6: Digital Portraits Connected Self*, I discuss the process of adapting the digital storytelling approach to focus on the potential of visual imagery to provide a framework for discussions on experience and emphasise the making of new experiences through visual storytelling. The digital storytelling process had highlighted the relevance of, and the challenges associated with, sharing photographs more openly within the Centre to encourage reflections on experiences that were valued in very situated ways. For some, this was experienced as positive, as a way of moving on; others were more ambivalent, as it had raised questions about their future lives. While this appeared to be a valuable process for those involved, I was interested in what individuals now felt they valued more broadly in their lives and those things the group now felt they connected to as they were moving on. Using cultural probes as a starting point, I worked with staff to design a pack and workshop process in September 2011 and delivered workshops over a 4 month period between November 2011 and February 2012. This included asking volunteers to photograph the people, objects, experiences and places they felt were important in their lives at that moment in time. The group brought their photographs and discussed them with one another and created short video portraits with sound, words and music. This process highlighted more of the support mechanisms and value in informally sharing images and the importance of staying open to change as a way of curating and managing collective and personal expression within the community as situated and performed.

In *Chapter 7: A Socially Engaged Digital Artefact*, I describe the process of working within an interdisciplinary team of researchers, with Centre staff and volunteers to envision and develop a speculative prototype, a digital photo-album, the photo-parshiya². I describe how the Centre closed their doors from June to December of 2012 and moved into new premises and how staff began developing plans for a long-term heritage project, *BAM! Sistahood!* Our work therefore began to focus on how technology could build support for the *BAM! Sistahood!* proposal and the design of the prototype was a way of using

² The word parshiya comes from ancient Persian, meaning to share part of.

technology to reflect on photo-sharing practices within the Centre. In this Chapter, I discuss some of the material and technical decisions made in developing the prototype around socially connecting and curating photographs. Through the process of designing the prototype, we explored different ways in which privacy and relational sharing could take place through making the photo-album flexible and portable in terms of how and where it could be used. We also developed a set of wireless networked objects that could be embedded within a set of frames that we incorporated into jewellery and that could connect with the photo-album as an alternative to creating passwords. This was developed to encourage a small group of volunteers to reflect on the potential of alternative curating practices in relation to photographic collections within the situated context of the new Centre.

In *Chapter 8: Exploring Possible Futures*, I discuss the process of working with volunteers and staff to explore how the photo-parshiya was used as part of everyday activities and within photography workshops, in building support for the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project. In this Chapter, alongside Rosie, I also introduce Liliane a support-worker, and volunteers Jolie, Izzy, Nilah, Sarah, Zahrah, Ismat, Una and Salma. This Chapter describes the process of installing the prototype in the Auntie's room, an informal workshop and meeting space at the Centre, and how it was incorporated as part of everyday interactions, and also part of heritage and photography workshops within the Centre between September and December 2013. In engaging with volunteers and a support worker in designing and delivering workshops around the photo-parshiya, we considered how, for some, a speculative prototype enabled creativity, criticality and confidence in using technology, facilitating the exploration of diverse articulations of identities. I discuss the value of performing expert knowledge about the process of engaging and learning about technology and how insights were shared between senior staff, researchers and funders.

In *Chapter 9: Socially Engaged Design*, I discuss the potential advantages and challenges of developing research, taking a socially engaged approach within the specific context of my own experience as a practitioner and my understanding of particular practices. I highlight the advantages of staying open to different kinds of informal engagements and formal workshops with people

that allowed for complex understandings of competing agendas to be shared, but also serendipitous encounters, diverse relations and lateral connections to be made. Staying flexible, responsive and adaptive with such approaches to engaging the community with research was crucial not only as a way of producing or collecting data, but also as a way highlighting what people felt was valuable, and aspects of what I and others understood had changed over extended periods of time. The approaches taken also allowed for the social processes of engagement to be re-experienced and enfolded back within the community to be shared by others through documentation and photographs.

I discuss how such approaches are particularly suitable for the early stages of long-term community based design projects, where relationships are still being formed and identities are still being negotiated between researchers.

Furthermore, materials produced from these interactions were used as resources, both for design inspiration and for reflection within the community, to add further layers of texture and recollection about the research process.

The adverse effect of this openness is that it created uncomfortable experiences of 'not knowing', feelings of vulnerability, being overwhelmed, and a loss of control of the process, not only for me, but for staff and volunteers. There were often contradictions and tensions in feeling that I needed to be able to 'go with the flow', yet having to respond to the requirements and procedures necessary for ethical approval, research and planning schedules within the timeframes of two different institutional working cultures and within the busy day-to-day lives of staff and volunteers.

Narrative inquiry as an approach to support an understanding of social engaged sensibilities was also useful in offering guidance and providing insight into ethnographically informed documentation and analysis, encouraging a process that allowed me to think about design that could consider movement between space and time, felt life and physical space, the past, present and future.

Narrative inquiry has mostly been applied within formal education in classrooms that largely focuses on the written and spoken word. When variable amounts of materials, drawings, photographs, field-notes, videos, sketchbooks and objects were created, this led to further challenges in how to categorise, store, manage,

understand and analyse what had been produced for research, when engaged in the next stages of planning and sharing with different aspects of the community. This was also set against the need to manage feelings of accountability, responsibility, exhaustion and emotional intensity, while finding practical and rigorous ways in which to document a process so as not to detract from the social experiences of engaging within the group.

Some of these anxieties were felt because, as a new researcher, I was still learning how to do research. I was sometimes positioned as expert yet still felt as though I was learning some of the possibilities and constraints of both the field of interaction design and of the ebbs and flows of the Centre. Learning how to listen for what people were expecting and how to manage those expectations was crucial.

Contributions

The thesis contributes to current interaction design, particularly focused on experience-centred theory and practice, in designing for expressive technologies within culturally diverse and sensitive community and care contexts. The thesis makes this contribution in three distinct ways:

First, by extending experience-centred design approaches methodologically through providing a more nuanced understanding of socially engaged arts practice as a specific form of practice involving culturally diverse communities in the early stages of expressive technology development. In particular, the thesis contributes to an understanding of the practice of dialogical aesthetics as a mode of inquiry and the adoption of long-term intersubjective exchange to inform the initial stages of building relationships within communities where diversity is valued. This is achieved through an in-depth long-term study with an international women's centre in Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK.

Secondly, the thesis further contributes to the examination of how insights generated from dialogical aesthetic inquiry can be used to inform interaction design for situated technology use within culturally diverse social care community contexts. This is achieved through the design and deployment of a speculative photo-sharing device within an international women's centre.

Thirdly, the thesis contributes to interdisciplinary approaches that combine theoretical, qualitative and practice-based participatory methods in the design and evaluation of technical devices within culturally diverse communities. This is achieved through expanding evaluation methods to include narrative and sensory approaches to understand the potential of speculative prototypes and how they can enrich and inspire communities through and beyond their actual situated use, providing potential for resonance and inspiration for future potential practices in relation to negotiated group identities.

Chapter 2

What is Social Engagement?

Introduction

In this Chapter I discuss literature on socially engaged interaction design within HCI. I focus particularly on community photographic displays that are designed to support the negotiation of collective identities and modes of cultural expression. To begin, I consider areas of research I define as socially engaged interaction design practice, a field which is significantly increasing and becoming more sophisticated within HCI. The work I discuss has developed in relation to technology that is designed to support the expression and negotiation of identities around social issues such as education, social and health care. I argue that this work demonstrates a shift away from design practices that see technology as a means for the management and exchange of information or data and suggests concerns raised through HCI's 'third wave' [Bødker 2006] to consider aesthetics and experience [Dalsgaard 2008, Dalsgaard & Hansen 2008, Iversen et al 2008, Petersen et al 2004, 2008, Wright et al 2008] as well as social identities within and beyond the home [Durrant et al 2009, Durrant et al 2013, Wallace et al 2012, 2013, Bjorgvinsson et al 2010, DiSalvo et al 2013, Light 2011a]. Following this, I discuss a set of conceptual and creative arts practices described as 'socially engaged', that focus on raising awareness of issues of societal or political concern. Through this discussion I explore how HCI has recently embraced terms such as 'dialogical aesthetics' to acknowledge an alternative mode of cultural production that challenges notions of authorship in the context of intersubjective relationships [Kester 2004, 2005], ambiguity and affect [Bishop 2012] associated with aesthetic experience. I go on to discuss photography, as a particular media used within socially engaged arts practice, and consider its historical use within anthropology and its appropriation within material and visual practices by individuals, artists and artists working within communities. I conclude with a summary of the potential for a socially engaged interaction design practice that uses photography reflexively, as a method and material, in the context of supporting insights on the cultural expression of community identities.

Socially Engaged Interaction Design Practice in HCI

Interaction design as a discipline emerged from what has been described as HCI's 'third wave' [Bødker 2006], where interaction with technology no longer takes place just within the workplace, but extends into our everyday lives.

Technology is carried in our pockets and connects what we do in domestic, work and leisure spaces and increasingly frames how we present our selves [Van House 2011] and how we build and maintain communities on and offline [Ploderer et al 2010, Taylor et al 2010].

Bødker describes this third wave, with its emphasis on culture through aesthetics, emotion and pragmatic accounts of experience [ibid 2006: 2], as moving away from context specific approaches '*participatory design workshops, prototyping and contextual inquiries ... to study use as it happens*' to approaches that 'seek inspiration from use, e.g. through cultural probes.' She argues that this has created a significant shift towards favouring provocative, arts inspired design approaches that encourage limited '*commitment to the actual users*' [ibid: 6].

In an attempt to align a commitment to learning and collaboration within communities of practice that is emphasised in the second wave, with the conceptual and theoretical commitments to experience, emotion and aesthetics that defines the third wave, Bødker suggests three potential approaches. The first approach involves people in design projects to benefit users valuing their lived experiences. Secondly, she suggests using design-prototyping to help narrow the openness and multiplicity prompted by the ubiquity of experience-oriented technologies. Thirdly Bødker proposes that interaction designers consider how re-configurability and tailorability can build on existing mediators (objects and people) as well as configurations that encourage the co-operation of different users throughout the design process. While participation is seen to be a key socio-political element of Bødker's vision for a more integrated and inclusive third wave, she highlights that while some methods within participatory design offer insights into people's experiences, such methods also need some modification. Bødker's suggestions are made in light of increasingly interconnected forms of technology use, not anticipated in the initial work-

focused and emancipatory vision of participation in the first phase of participatory design. For instance, Bødker's emphasis on users as part of 'communities of practice' relate to particular hierarchies of participation, as people move from novice to expert users within the workplace [Wenger 1998]. For me, this is a limited view of participation when we consider forms of engagement that have developed through the growth of technologies that support communities to gather around shared experiences or interests, rather than specific, formal work or learning practices.

In this next section I discuss current interaction design literature within HCI's third wave, focusing specifically on research that responds to long-term investment and understanding of users, as well as the context, the lived and felt experience of users. I will discuss interaction design in communities that are not defined by shared practices associated with the workplace, rather I consider communities that come to be, or purposely come together, by way of offline associations and connections; through shared identities, experiences, space, interests, desires or concerns. While communities of practice provide some understanding of group memberships and learning, McCarthy & Wright [2004] have argued that current research has focused less on what it *feels* like to be part of community, the pleasures, the compromises and the challenges that social connection brings. The communities that I discuss within this chapter here, exist as or engage with highly emotive issues related to social cohesion, education and health care. They exist as part of informal community groups connected to institutional structures, as well as often integrating multiple and evolving individual and collective sensibilities and perspectives [Gilchrist 2009, et al 2010, Wetherell et al 2007, 2009].

Research within Community Informatics provides a useful starting point for community-based design that includes computational systems for individuals coming together to learn and share information socially, beyond the workplace [Carroll et al 2001, 2007, 2013]. However, practitioners have previously focused less on the cultural, emotional, political and aesthetic aspects of community identities. While researchers within Community Informatics advocate for a situated understanding of what constitutes specific communities, research within this field largely relies on too general a view of what political and cultural

assumptions working with communities can bring, and how such assumptions can inform particular research agendas.³

The term ‘community’, in and of itself can invoke both emotive and political associations with enriching, complex, uncomfortable and difficult experiences of being included and excluded [Gilchrist 2009, et al 2010, Wetherell 2007]. However, design which attempts to go beyond data as information, to frame technology and its use for its aesthetic potential [Wright et al 2008, Boehner et al 2007, Iversen et al 2008, Bjorgvinson et al 2010], is rarely developed outside of cultural institutions or the family home [some exceptions include DiSalvo et al 2009, Durrant et al 2013, Gaver et al 2011, Wallace 2012]. Furthermore, these experiential aspects of design are often foregone in community informatics in favour of design and analysis for communal and social infrastructures that fails to consider the role of the emotional and relational connections between people, which includes the researchers themselves [DiSalvo et al 2013].

I take the basic principles of Bødker’s argument (benefit to users, lived and felt life, design-prototyping, re-configurability and participation) to discuss a number of design methods outlined in current literature. I will describe how this work demonstrates a recent move towards reconciling aspects of the second and third wave of HCI, those of understanding context and situated use and aesthetic experience. I will explore how this shift draws both from the early political and critical principles of participatory design, influenced by feminist design sensibilities as well as the new commitment to the aesthetics of interaction in experience-centred approaches to design.

Socially engaged design at the margins

In outlining a feminist HCI agenda for research that is socially and politically engaged, Bardzell et al [2010, 2011] call for the use of feminist theory and

³ For example in the UK, discourse around the demise and need for community cohesion within society as a result of increasing migration and multicultural diversity has emerged within British politics and media representations, highlighting how our communities are increasingly in crisis [Ahmed 2004, 2006, 2012], which I discuss more specifically in Chapter 4. Government agendas such as the Big Society have advocated for ways in which volunteering and grass-roots schemes can support communities to be more resilient and self-sufficient. www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05883.pdf In addition the UK Research Council’s collectively have also invested in schemes such as the Connected Communities programme to explore how arts, culture, identities and technology might support community capacity building. <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Research-funding/Connected-Communities/Pages/Connected-Communities.aspx>

practice to explore how interaction design is conducted, including both the design and evaluation of interactive systems. Bardzell et al highlight how aspects of interaction design research already embrace familiar concepts such as *'agency, fulfillment, identity and the self, equity, empowerment, diversity, and social justice'* [ibid 2010: 1301], commitments already closely aligned with feminism. However, these concepts have been pursued in a *'piecemeal and ad hoc way.'* Bardzell et al underline how these commitments relate explicitly to the role of gender, how this has historically been grounded in feminist standpoint theory literature looking towards *'women's viewpoints and experiences'* as often omitted or marginalized in research. The inclusion of such viewpoints highlighted that women produced particular forms of knowledge that provided *'an alternative point of departure' to avoid 'one-sided accounts of social life, and generate critical questions'* [ibid: 1302] around bias and exclusions of particular voices and experiences. At the same time, they warn against essentialist thinking that suggests that women can only know and experience in particular ways. They encourage research that can both highlight marginal and underrepresented voices without reducing experiences to binaries of gender or essentialist representations of race or ability [Bardzell 2011: 678].

While feminist approaches to design in HCI research have always been important, more recently practitioners have returned to some of the core principles that have been influential in the field. Susan Leigh Star's work on boundary objects [1999] and Lucy Suchman's work on situated action [2007], have significantly influenced practitioners' notion of the importance of understanding categories of difference made between people and machines. While such work has since been expanded upon within Science and Technology Studies (for example see Mol 2008), Suchman and Star's work has remained significant in highlighting the importance of categories as actively co-constituted and maintained. Such categories support meaning through creating differences and exclusions that have socio-political, actionable consequences for how technology is used [Bowker & Star 1999, Star 1999, Star & Strauss 1999, Suchman 1995, 2002, 2007].

Drawing largely from anthropological traditions, Suchman and Star advocated for approaches that looked towards the margins, towards practices that had

become invisible, taken for granted or partially eroded, as well as approaches that explored hybrid spaces that embodied complexity, multiplicity or ambiguity. These strategies were proposed to uncover how differences and categories were potentially constructed. By shifting the analytic frame to the periphery, they highlighted an attempt to destabilize categories of difference or similarity as being naturalized or relating to singular truths. Turning towards the periphery or the margins as part of a process of destabilization, was suggested to create multiple other possibilities, diversifying interpretations, meanings and practices. These approaches were intended to be mindful of the informed choices researchers made in orienting themselves to particular areas and sites of study, epistemological commitments, methods and particular life experiences when producing knowledge. These early insights helped to support approaches that were developed within participatory design, initially around how workers, people often peripheral to discussions on technology design, could inform alternative computational systems that supported their skills and agency in the workplace. This early work acknowledged the '*invisible work*' that was often discounted in more procedural accounts of working practices [Star 1999].

Design that benefits users

In participatory design projects those involved are often perceived to personally benefit through the development of technology that acknowledges the particular embodied skills of users. Traditionally, within participatory design, social and collaborative skill was highly valued over the perceived rational logic of technology that was seen to mechanise and formalize person-centred activity in the workplace. Researchers involved in participatory design argued that their motivation was democratic, and responded to the desires of management to introduce technology to make work-flows more efficient. Trade unions and workers wanted some decision-making capacity in choosing and refining those systems that they would then use. In short the skills and expertise that workers had acquired through training and refinement, through apprenticeship and craft, were considered essential, but were often invisible aspects of work. Participatory designers traditionally worked to help draw attention to these skills and expertise [Ehn 1989, Greenbaum & Kyng 1991, Simonson & Robertson 2013].

Early practitioners describe how Trade Unions invited researchers to work alongside workers to support an articulation of tacit knowledge that was respectful of experience and practical competency, and worked towards ideas for future computing systems. The emphasis of design was on '*establishing, developing and supporting mutual learning between multiple participants in collective 'reflection-in-action'*' [Simonson & Robertson 2013: 2]. This '*mutual learning*' enabled an exchange between the researchers, who were gaining a greater understanding of the practices involved in particular kinds of work, and workers, who also learnt about future technological possibilities through working with the design researchers.

Design that benefitted users became much more than how users experienced their work through their use of a particular technology that supported and enriched their skill. Benefits to users within participatory design also came to encompass how the process and practitioners involved valued and respected the workers' embodied and situated expertise and the nuanced skills they held in specialist fields. Early accounts of participatory design engagements highlight the value of the methods employed, for example the mock-ups and prototypes used and how they had a lasting impact for those communities of practice with which researchers had worked. Crucial to this work was the democratic agenda, which was critical of cultural, political and economic values that aimed to prescribe '*formalized models of human activities*' or more rationalist disembodied accounts of people's working lives [Simonson & Robertson 2013: 4].

Although early studies that emerged from the co-operative design movement [Greenbaum & Kyng 1991], did not necessarily always result in usable, tangible or physical designs and services [Kensing & Greenbaum 2013: 29], the benefit to users and designers was assigned to the value inherent in the process of learning itself. However, there is little documentation and research around these particular learning experiences and this fact has led to more recent studies in how partners' perceive benefit through their engagement in long-term projects [Bossen et al 2012]. The agenda here differs from user-centred design, which has most often applied methods developed in participatory design to collect

data for use in mass commercial product development, rather than emphasising mutual learning and exchange between partners.

Similar principles are also reflected in the purpose and practice of 'action research' [Reason & Bradbury 2001, Hayes 2011], developed from the social sciences, and co-creation [Sanders & Stappers 2008]. Here knowledge and learning produced through design research is collectively fed back into localised changes through cycles of reflection around action. These approaches further create entangled relations that complicate who, what, how and to what ends knowledge, products and services are produced.

Lived and felt life of community identities

Participatory design research has developed within both community and charitable contexts, where roles between different actors, between management and workers, between designers and users can often be highly complex and intertwined. For instance, when discussing projects in community learning Weibert et al [2010], Schubert et al [2011], Carroll et al [2001, 2013] and Taylor et al [2009, 2010, 2013] highlight a number of different actors that work within and appropriate resources for different ends. Complex ecologies such as those described by Nardi & O'Day [2000] include technical infrastructures appropriated in relation to human values; identities, tasks and roles interchange according to shifting work patterns, volunteering, learning, fundraising, and responses to community needs, desires and opportunities. While each organization and community is very particular, researchers have described how technical infrastructure is pieced together, combining access to available resources, purchased and donated through project grants, charitable gifting schemes and partnerships mobilised across networks [Carroll et al 2013, Le Dantec et al 2008, 2010].

These accounts of technology use have highlighted the ways in which users actively co-construct their engagements with technology, and have informed approaches to design research that position the user as having imaginative and creative potential to appropriate technology through situated use. Similarly, approaches described in community-based participatory design highlight varied practices involving people and technology that extend more traditional notions

of communities of practice as part of a workplace. Creativity and expression is often valued in the development of partnerships with heterogeneous political, personal and collective commitments that emerge from, and are negotiated through, long-term processes of engagement [DiSalvo et al 2013].

In discussing socially engaged technology projects DiSalvo underlines the significance of making room for facilitating the creative expression of identities. In doing so, conceived benefits of a project might be less focused on a specific service and product, as is usually the case when *'tools and techniques are used to elicit creativity'* [2013: 195] in a design process. DiSalvo argues that these tools and techniques can still be valued when a less well-defined and ambiguous pursuit of *'creativity and creative expression'* takes place. For participatory design practitioners, DiSalvo argues this means asking *'towards what ends does creativity as purpose and creative expression as product work within a community context?'* [ibid: 195]. He highlights how creative expression is contextualized socially and politically to highlight how creativity challenges specific experiences such as the contested presence of immigrant youth identities [Ehn 2008, Bjorgvinson et al 2010], exclusion of elderly voices in sustainable technological development [Light et al 2009] and mobilizing environmental sensor networks in neighbourhoods [Di Salvo 2011], *'as a manner of engaging in meaningful public acts related to identity and politics.'* [Di Salvo 2013: 193]. Indeed community here is discussed much more in relation to a *'shared imaginary'* that might include a sense of shared identities associated with age, race, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, shared interests and practices rather than those forged through or necessarily associated with geographical location, physical proximity or shared work practices.

Through discussing this work DiSalvo highlights the transformative value of engaging with the arts as a means of enlivening, celebrating and inspiring *'collaborative imagination of the future'*. This, therefore, is less about the particular products or services that are designed in response to a community. In drawing from the work of Light et al [2009], DiSalvo describes how participation in design projects can encourage people to *'feel differently about themselves and technology'*. Creativity and creative expression within the project can impart

‘a sense of agency and confidence in participating [that] leads to an interest in the tools structuring society’ [Light et al 2009: 46].

Benefits to the user, as described in these projects, then expands more into how participants might feel transformed, rather than directly through informing how technology should be designed or configured through the process. What Light and DiSalvo discuss seems to extend beyond *‘mutual learning’*, into processes that involve an enriched sense of transformations articulated through the dynamic processes and products of engagement. How this is described by those involved suggests this is as much about how they feel transformed and changed through workshops and an understanding of technology as it is about acquiring knowledge through learning, although this too may also be part of the experience. Emotional involvement and investment is highlighted as being a valuable part of the process and of benefit in more tangential ways than through the direct influence of design decision-making for particular products and services as described in HCI and PD. Indeed, these projects highlight the value of providing opportunities for the expression of identities through novel media, in doing so *‘the use of computational media become a form of political action through which the desires and agendas of a community are explored’* [Di Salvo 2013: 200]. At the same time, DiSalvo also describes the challenges of documenting and analyzing these often complex engagements because of the long-term commitments required and the current, limited understanding of such complexities within the field.

Emotion and affect in community

Understanding emotional involvement, desires and imagination have become a significant part of user-experience design within HCI, focusing on opportunities for commercial product development. Preferring to draw from the complexity and unfinalizability of everyday life, working with the philosophical and pragmatist traditions of Dewey [1934, 2009] and Bakhtin [1984], McCarthy and Wright underline the importance of dialogicality in design, as a way for researchers and designers to engage with the lived and felt life of experiences as dynamically unfolding over time and responsive to intersubjective relations with others. Designing for experience, for the lived and felt life in this sense, has a combined aesthetic and ethical imperative which underpins approaches, or

ways of being when working with people [McCarthy & Wright 2004, Wright & McCarthy 2010].

In exploring technology as experience, McCarthy and Wright focus on the felt life of the individual in order to move social theories of practice away from essentialist positions that seek to describe *'behaviours, states or processes that can be modeled and implemented.'* [McCarthy & Wright 2004: 48] Their articulation of experience attempts to bring to life the felt experience of individuals interacting with others, materials, technology, objects, people, in situated practices. In drawing from discussions of communities of practice they problematize a concept of the social that is already pre-determined through bringing an understanding of the emotional individual in communication and interaction within and part of an ecology of socio-technical practices. McCarthy and Wright also discuss how while social studies of practice often present a communitarian view, articulations of identity are underexplored and diversity is limited to pre-determined categories and positions of participation [ibid: 43].

Bringing in critiques of communities of practice from within education [Hodges 1990] to describe different qualities of participation through discussions of identity and difference, they include *'non-participation, multiple identificatory possibilities, lags in participation, and conflictual moments of identification.'* [ibid: 47]. Drawing from Hodges, they highlight the *'discursive production of identities'* and the emotions that are invested through compromise and suffering in becoming part of, or not part of community. Furthermore they highlight the importance of looking beyond reason and rationality, in order to explore participation in communities as rich, complex and emotionally layered [Gilchrist 2009, Walkerdine 1998]. This, they argue moves out from the normative and controlling practices that traditional accounts of communities of practice may produce moving from the periphery to the centre, from novice to expert. Their intention is to develop understandings of what it feels like to participate in these communities as a way of informing design. They argue for approaches that align with ethnography in its ability to not only document specific practices, but to have the potential to also point to possible imagined futures.

In drawing from social science discourse on community, McCarthy and Wright, describe what others refer to as the emotional affect of bonding and bridging within community [Putnam 2000], imagination when invoking national identities [Anderson 1991], or migrant togetherness and belonging [Yuval-Davis & Kaptani 2009], negotiations and compromises felt when being part of communities [Wetherall 2009].

Design-prototyping

Ethnography in design has been used consistently to inform rich contextual inquiries. In this sense ethnography not only results in creating implications for design, but also points to broader concerns about how technology is understood within the wider contexts of people's imagined and desired identities, communities and cultures [Dourish & Bell 2011]. The study of particular technological artefacts, including existing and new prototypes in use, is also considered to be important aspect of ethnographic practice. In particular prototypes are useful for highlighting a more situated and critical position on how technology itself already embodies social theories that point to a network of intersecting ideologies that are involved in its production and use. *'It is not simply that social theories apply to technological artifacts, but instead that they are already social theories, crystallized.'* [Dourish & Bell 2011: 193]

Increasingly the role of designed objects, such as lo-fidelity prototypes, cultural and technology probes have also been developed to further provide inspiration and dialogue between designers and users integrated into ethnographic and design inquiry. The value of engaging with and trying out particular forms and objects has highlighted the different forms of knowledge produced through tactile and kineasthetic interaction with technology, and has led to greater insight into what people do, how they feel and how they behave in response to particular materials and forms of interaction [Sanders 2008]. The importance of *'doing'* rather than describing is considered valuable, especially in the context of participatory design where prototypes can highlight particular forms of *'tacit'* knowledge that might be difficult to put into words. While design-prototyping as proposed by Bødker is considered a productive means in which multiplicity and openness can be reduced, design research and those engaged in *'critical technical practice'* consider designed artefacts as important for opening up and

bridging between cultural, psycho-social and technical vocabularies [Agre 1997, Light 2011a, Dourish 2011].

Agre sees the value of engaging in interdisciplinary design practice to challenge assumptions on planned, rational and linear trajectories of interaction often assumed to take place between people and technology. This, he argues, creates a space for different perspectives, as a discomforting strategy that requires '*a split identity*' for the researcher involving both '*the craft work of design*' and the '*reflexive work of critique*', questioning the methods and process of design practice itself. This includes not just those who specifically focus on developing technical capacity such as engineers and programmers, but also questioning those approaches involved in social or cultural production itself, that is how design is conducted and how designers and ethnographers might understand and evaluate people's use [Dourish & Bell 2011: 205].

Few researchers explicitly align themselves with the position of criticality proposed by Agre, but I see similar concerns arise within HCI's '*third wave*' when focused on experience-centred approaches. Namely that technical systems can be designed for activities and experiences other than those that are pre-planned, pre-determined or straight-forwardly 'rational'. The vocabulary used to describe a critical technical practice suggests designs that support embodied [Dourish 2001], ludic [Blyth et al 2010, Gaver et al 2004], inquisitiveness [Dalsgaard 2008], slow, [Hallnäs & Redström 2001] reflective [Sengers et al 2005], ambiguous [Gaver 2003], dialogic [Durrant et al 2009, 2013], uncomfortable [Benford et al 2012] and enchanting [Wright et al 2008] interactions. These designs complicate the assumptions that designing for relations between people and technology should always be based on uncomplicated, usable, functional ease of use [Light 2011a]. Furthermore these practices also draw from additional philosophical, practice-led (product design, jewelry, theatre) perspectives that engage critically with issues of social interaction and techno-cultural representation or expectation within very specific contexts. Furthermore, such work has also started to be developed within social care communities such as residential care homes [Blythe et al 2010, Gaver et al 2011] and special needs education [Durrant et al 2013].

Taking the purpose of designed artefacts in a different critical direction, to focus explicitly on communities, DiSalvo describes the use of unfamiliar technologies as politically motivated to scaffold a mode of *'informed speculation ... to foster critical engagement, creative expression and technological fluency'* among those involved in community-based participatory design. This, he argues is *'more than applied solutions, or directives for future products or services'* [DiSalvo et al 2013: 194], where *'dramatic, affective artifacts, systems and events'* have the capacity to foster *'imaginative ability [...] to rethink what constitutes participation in contemporary society and what are the means by which participation is enabled and exercised [Ibid 196].'*

In drawing from Bruno Latour and Actor Network Theory (ANT), DiSalvo describes how *'democracy is acted out through objects [...] the products of design'* [ibid: 201]. In this sense designed objects can perform as political mediators, enabling multiple meanings [Latour 2005: 37] in community-based participatory design. Objects can become more than a means in which to test a hypothesis of use or usability issues. In borrowing from Latour, *'innovation'* [ibid: 80], where new objects come into being and come into use, is seen to bring *'controversies'* and *'matters of concern'* to the fore within and across social groups. Latour describes how innovative objects can have agentive potential within and across communities, providing a means of redefining and highlighting the mechanisms at work in maintaining group formation [Ehn et al 2008, Bjorgvinsson et al 2010].

Designed socio-technical artefacts are then considered important in community-based participatory design not for generating and testing ideas for products, but as a means by which people might understand the very mechanisms of social and political life. This is particularly new terrain for participatory design and HCI, creating challenges in how collaborative practice through designed objects are understood, described, analysed and communicated. Because of the complexity of working within communities and the changing dynamic of such, practitioners rarely include reflexive discussions from multiple perspectives or rich emotional accounts of the processes involved or the tensions created through matters of concern as they evolve over time [Ehn 2008, Bjorgvinsson et al 2010]. As McCarthy and Wright argue in relation to communities of practice

[2004], there are few individual perspectives that come through in these accounts that give a sense of what it feels like to be part of such projects, researchers often preferring to rely on communitarian and group accounting of experiences.

Re-configurability and participation

Further extending Latour's concept of the agential potential of the object, Suchman applies this concept to specific interactions between humans and machines to highlight the importance of personal biographies, connections and re-configurations of identities when people are interacting with technology. While her argument is politically focused, it is less targeted at social and group politics and more focused on the '*politics of redistribution across the human-machine boundary*' [Suchman 2007: 285]. While her initial research, focused on the clear differences between people and technology, and the problematic endeavour of creating artificial intelligence, more recently, when reflecting on accounts that clearly distinguish between humans and machines, Suchman argues it is '*how relations of sameness or difference between them are enacted on particular occasions, and with what discursive and material consequences*' those differences come to matter [Suchman 2007: 2]. For Suchman the boundaries between humans and machines, between people and objects are not fixed or naturalized, but can be imaginatively resisted and reconfigured through a commitment to empirical studies and design that illuminates how differences might be constructed, maintained and upheld through discursive, performed socio-material and situated action. The particularities of socio-cultural history and individual personal biography are considered important in such empirical work on how people, technology and identities come to co-exist. These histories for Suchman don't determine the action, but rather offer up opportunities for understanding technology and its use through reflexive accounting of experience and the study of particular effects of socio-material and technical interactions.

For Suchman current digital media and new media art is perceived as valuable for building on interaction that complicates distinctions between humans and machines. This work offers potential vocabularies and strategies for alternatives to design around the human-machine boundary that help to illustrate the

generative potential of problematising categories of difference and similarity between people and technology. Most importantly for Suchman, it raises more existential questions of *'what it means to be human'*.

'More than conversation at the interface, we need the creative elaboration of the particular dynamic capacities that these new media afford and of the ways that through them humans and machines together can perform interesting new effects. These are avenues that have just begun to be explored, primarily in the fields of new media, graphics and animation, art and design. Not only do these experiments promise innovations in our thinking about machines, but they also open up the equally exciting prospect of new conceptualizations of what it means to be human, understood not as a bounded, rational entity but as an unfolding, shifting biography of culturally specific experience and relations, inflected for each of us in uniquely particular ways.' [Suchman 2007:23]

These creative elaborations as discussed by Suchman don't just require interaction through the machine interface, rather they require *'engaged participation ... involving an autobiography, a presence and a projected future.'* [Ibid: 23] In this sense, Suchman underlines how it is not just through embodied physical action that someone might participate in an engaged way. Rather, through drawing on personal connections, experiences and aspirations that cut across time, attention is drawn to the blurring of boundaries between control, power and agency, often used to distinguish between people and technical objects. This also has implications for how identities assigned to particular roles such as user and designer considered to be pre-defined through technologies, design engagements and research encounters might also be brought into question.

In community-based participatory design, we see a similar set of concerns, but broadened to raise questions about what constitutes participation *'and what are the means by which participation is enabled and exercised'*. That is, community involvement through creative acts, such as design workshops or events help to shape *'the discourses and practices ... of techno-science'* [Di Salvo 2013: 196] and thereby *'participation in society'*, at the same time providing an opportunity *'to rethink what constitutes participation'* itself. Creative expression is seen as key in providing space for multiple voices and pluralistic points of view that

sustain democratic spaces for contestation and debate. The role of *'infrastructuring'*, building on Star's work [1999], is considered important for providing platforms where differences can be negotiated and discussed.

Yet in reporting such work, the cultural context, rich descriptions of complex design processes and individual experiences are rarely discussed. In effect this often creates somewhat rhetorical accounts of research that rely on theory and skim over what can often be much more dynamically complicated and messy processes. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, DiSalvo has highlighted the challenges of documentation, analysis and dissemination of research in the context of complex, long-term engagements. The more personal, emotional and political entanglements between researchers, designers, institutions and individuals are largely underexplored and become the *'invisible work'* [Star 1999] of interaction design within communities.

In the next section I turn to recent research into socially engaged arts practices. This field offers some important insights into creative intervention practices as well as processes of documentation, reflection and dissemination. The work I will discuss intersects with areas of art history and design practice. Furthermore, work within this field has begun to unpack historical and contemporary accounts of creative practice that involve socially and politically orientated collaborative making processes, in relation to feminist perspectives on identities and presentation.

Socially Engaged Arts Practices

Socially engaged arts (SEA) practice in HCI has developed specifically in relation to discussions on technology and sustainability [DiSalvo et al 2009, Light et al 2009, Jacobs et al 2013] community identities [Klaveren 2012] and in the field of experience-centred design [Wright & McCarthy 2010]. The presence of this emerging area of study, described in both art history and arts practice as the *'social turn'*, provides some critical insights into how aesthetics are being reconsidered in relation to people's experiences with art, technology and geography. The body of work mentioned above shows the potential for enriched understandings of combining critical reflexivity with discursive and making

practices in raising issues of societal concerns facing the future role of technology and its design.

This 'social turn' in arts practice has, in effect, shifted many arts practitioners away from the creation of highly crafted objects within galleries and museums, towards performance and collaboration informed by intersubjectivity, social interaction and duration. As a particular area of study, socially engaged art in its own right is often described as very localized and personalized set of practices that have emerged from a number of creative and artistic disciplines, educational theories and political trajectories. Some of these align well with theories and approaches discussed in participatory design that draw from John Dewey in highlighting the importance of creative inquiry and learning [Helguera 2010] and Bakhtin's notion of dialogicality [Kester 2004, McCarthy & Wright 2004, Wright & McCarthy 2010]. Practitioners and art historians have used a number of terms to describe such practices including participatory arts, community arts, participatory theatre, situational art, social sculpture, relational aesthetics, and social art practice. For the purposes of this thesis, I will refer to socially engaged art (SEA) to include practices that use these different terms, whilst recognizing their multiplicity in art form, artistic intentionality and process.

I draw from SEA specifically because it offers a number of rich vocabularies and a heightened awareness of critical documentation strategies. These attributes align with aspects of anthropological, social science, feminist and practice-based research approaches that engage with communities in creative, imaginative and generative ways, which are also aligned with experience-centred and community-based participatory design. In drawing attention to such practices within interaction design, my intention is to expand the ways in which to understand how communities can be involved in collaboration, in both highly constrained and more open ways, and in long-term engagements. Community involvement depends on specific kinds of projects, but includes developing documentation and dissemination strategies, not just as something to be done in addition to, but as part of the very practice of collaborating and working together and making research meaningful in different ways to those involved.

Dialogical aesthetics

The term '*dialogical aesthetics*' was developed by art historian Grant Kester [2004, 2005] as a way of characterizing and unpicking particular forms of cultural production that have emerged through direct community action or interventions. For Kester, this form of art work no longer exists as a set of physical objects, although objects may be part of such practice. Rather, the focus is on engagement with people through discussion and reflection in their homes, community centres, social housing groups, with local counselors, or people on the streets, as a means of creating localized change. Artists working in this way do so as an alternative form of collaborative artistic practice, where the art work produced is a form of communicative exchange [Kester 2004: 90]. Kester argues that this differs from an aesthetic sensibility that favours instantaneous shock and dislocation, presenting the unrepresentable and encouraging somatic experience as pre-discursive emancipation resulting in greater awareness of the social conditions of modern life. In referencing the work of WochenKlausur, Kester describes how their interest in '*challenging fixed identities and perceptions of difference ... as a decentering, a movement outside self (and self-interest) through dialogue extended over time.*' [Kester 2004: 85]. He describes their work as '*performative*' where '*the identity of the artist and the participant is produced through situational encounters*' rather than through forms of performativity associated with theatricality or spectacle.

'In dialogical practice, the artist, whose perceptions are informed by his or her own training, past projects, and lived experience, comes into a given site or community characterized by its own unique constellation of social and economic forces, personalities, and traditions. In the exchange that follows, both the artist and his or her collaborators will have their existing perceptions challenged; the artist may well recognize relationships or connections that the community members have become inured to, while the collaborators will also challenge the artist's preconceptions about the community itself and about his or her own function as an artist. What emerges is a new set of insights, generated at the intersection of both perspectives and catalyzed through the collaborative production of a given project.'
[Kester 2004: 95]

Kester here highlights the importance of the identity of the artist within these interventions as bringing particular experiences to the process itself. The artist's history then comes to bear on projects, while at the same time their role and identity is also reflexively questioned and unfolds as a result of such

engagements with communities, who in turn come to experience potentially different insights through working with the artist. Whatever happens as a result of these interventions, such work relies on multiple possible understandings of community identity, not just those held by individuals, but by all those involved in potentially different ways. Kester describes how creativity and ability to listen become valuable skills to challenge power, identity and ethical tensions within particular artistic projects. Models of active listening are proposed as integral to a dialogical aesthetic that engages those involved with an ethical communicative responsiveness and responsibility to '*identify with the perspectives of the others*' [Kester 2004: 113]. Kester differentiates between this form of dialogue and a form of public debate that relies on argumentation, agonism and spoken discourse rather than conversational forms of discussion and understanding that embody more emotive, nonverbal, gestural and empathic forms of communication.

However, Kester also recognizes that listening is not just a neutral or passive act and can be associated with very particular socio-cultural expectations and tensions. He guards against the notion that artists can speak for others, particularly where there are perceived social and cultural differences. Reflecting on similar discussions within feminist discourse, he highlights how sensitivity is required. While much feminist discourse has encouraged diverse others to speak, with an emphasis on '*othering*' [Spivak 1988], the emphasis on speaking others has obfuscated the role of the listener and their role in shaping how the speaker responds, and thereby in actively framing the interaction. Spivak highlights how the positioning of others in communicative exchanges, where some form of translation is necessary, may not be enough for the listener to understand particular nuanced meanings associated with subtleties of colloquial words and local dialects. At the same time Spivak argues that often the listener is in a greater position of power to disseminate knowledge more widely, making such work available for others. Schweikart [1998] also describes the asymmetrical relationship that occurs through research where the speaker is particularly present, but the researcher is in a position of powerful silence, engaged in the process of listening and reporting. Schweikart outlines specific cultural examples where this imbalance often occurs where listening becomes associated with particular forms of power. She describes how while active

listening is often presented in feminist literature [Belenky et al 1986] as a desirable mode of engaging with people in research, in some cultures this can, in and of itself, create an asymmetrical power relation connected to existing community practices, informing how people might behave and respond.

Intersubjective relations

Wright and McCarthy [2010] have expanded on Kester's dialogical aesthetic in their discussion of particular design projects where communicative exchange was an important and valuable part of the process. Like Kester, they build upon notions of dialogicality [Bakhtin 1984], active listening [Fiumara 1990] and feminist epistemological positions developed by Mary Field Belenky [1986] that have developed from social science research. In discussing digital jewellery [Wright et al 2008], they highlight the significance of relational communication between people and the value of connected knowing that informs, enfolds and enriches identity as well as a sense of personhood through empathy. In the projects described, Wright and McCarthy argue that communication in this context isn't about fixing identities, but is about embracing creativity and openness to others through dialogue that is '*both emergent and transitory*' [Wright & McCarthy 2010: 52]. The design of digital and interactive artefacts becomes part of that dialogue, a mode of response to particular conversations and discussions with individuals and communities.

Working with a dialogical aesthetic foregrounds communication that is particular, unique, and specifically relational. In Wright and McCarthy's discussion, people bring their autobiographies, their presence and their potential futures, and each of these elements are socio-culturally and materially situated, at the same time also open to change. A dialogical aesthetic then is an approach, a way of working in which practitioners and those involved appreciate the process of engagement from different centres of value, and where multiple possible meanings can emerge as a result of a particular process.

Dialogicality can often be understood to emphasise verbal, written or spoken communicative exchange, particularly in research, which often disseminates findings through reports and papers. However, examples described by Wright & McCarthy highlight a more designerly approach suggesting potential for visual

and material dialogues to take place through crafted objects and images such as '*cultural probes*' [Gaver 1999, 2004, Wallace et al 2013]. The original motivation for the development of probes was to find a way of negotiating the perceived differences between researchers and participants, while at the same time diversifying a design vocabulary to expand forms of communication across differences in culture, age and status. In SEA practices, however, there are different strategies used to engage wider audiences in dialogue, often in order to challenge particular fixed perceptions of similarity and difference.

Negotiating difference and the politics of identities

Examples of SEA practice as described by Kester have included individuals or groups who may be described as, or experience the effect of marginalization and oppression. These experiences are often associated with the categories of race, gender, sexuality or class and the representational politics of similarity and difference discussed in social science, particularly those engaged with feminist epistemologies [Ahmed 2004, hooks 1994, 2010]. Artists working in these contexts are often considered as 'outsiders' to the communities within which they themselves are working, requiring practitioner negotiation of precarious positions between funding bodies, institutions, communities and individuals [Kester 2005]. Such tensions are inherent in all manner of research, public engagement and community-based participatory projects [Banks 2011], indicating that the researcher is not always in a position of power, but can be prone to vulnerabilities and uncertainties, incomplete understandings through a '*recognition of contextual, contingent and ambivalent forms of knowing*' [Gunaratnam 2003: 21].

However, as Kester points out, SEA practices can suggest potential strategies to mobilise '*the capacity to think critically and creatively across disciplinary boundaries*', encouraging people to '*think in uncommon ways*' [Kester 2004: 101], thereby potentially challenging what might be perceived as dominant positions of hierarchy and structure. This position on dialogical aesthetics could be considered contradictory; in one sense there is the value of practices that promote long-term engaged relational and empathic listening, practices more often associated with the humanistic perspectives on counseling and diplomacy. On the other hand, there is the perceived value of artists as having the capacity

to bring other perspectives and points of view from outside the everyday social and political contexts in which projects exist, whilst also having some understanding of the contingencies involved. While Kester describes this in terms that are embodied through particular artists and projects, it highlights the potential of a mutable practice that might mobilise different strategies for different affects. Strategies that move between - and potentially adopt - multiple positions that involve concurrently listening and actioning, being creative and critical, while being mindful of when and where these strategies are being invoked for particular ends.

Reflexivity in socially engaged arts practice

Kester describes a number of projects where artists' reflexivity and their role in cultural production and change making processes, focus around issues associated with race and gender. He highlights that many of these projects maintain a high degree of '*paternalism*', where artists speak on behalf of the community, bring critical insight or seek to improve particular situations. This, he argues positions the arts as orthopedic, communities as somehow having a deficiency that needs to be rectified. Projects that seek to address particular issues can be made better through creative expression and collective self-awareness raising Kester believes are misguided. Kester sees these challenges arise from reduced commitment of artists and funders to work through long-term engagements that reduce communities to homogenous groups of individuals. He traces development back to funders and organizations who manage cultural production that essentialises community in ways that polarizes and simplifies the specifics of how communities come to exist, and through what means artist practitioners form relationships with people beyond the commercial gallery based system. In this sense, he highlights the many different forces at play and the agencies that serve to influence, define and refine particular ways of working beyond those that might be immediately present within descriptions of particular projects.

Despite Kester's insightful commentary of such practices and his nuanced accounts of particular art works, I believe there are three important aspects of his argument that require further consideration in the context of HCI. There is often a lack of multi-voiced perspectives of the agents involved in his discussion.

Firstly, due to the art historical context in which Kester is operating, the work he describes has often already taken place and his discussion is therefore conducted through a re-reading of texts and conversations with the artists involved. Secondly, there is little acknowledgment or reflexivity regarding the important role of his own position in the discussion, as well as the role of technology in documenting, circulating and distributing the work to wider audiences. Neglecting these aspects means that Kester fails to address the subsequent meanings this wider distribution creates. While his emphasis is on the everyday performativity of interaction that takes place between artists and communities, Kester misses an important aspect of performance, how it exists within art discourse through a symbiotic relationship with its documentation and subsequent circulation, and how this inflects future understandings and experiences of the work. Finally, he does not consider the particular socio-materialities of documentation through technologies, and therefore misses how aspects that might come to exist as legacy, through objects such as photographs, books, websites, films, sculptures, resonate or serve both the artist and the communities within which they exist, beyond the particular time-frames of the documented interventions themselves.

Aisthesis

Looking beyond Kester's initial framing of dialogical aesthetics to notions of aisthesis, Claire Bishop adopts a different reading of SEA that takes a more antagonistic understanding of socio-material production of community identities through a reflexive use of technology and media production. She highlights the value of re-considering aesthetic experience through its ability to maintain a space for affective, ambiguous and contradictory engagements through particular kinds of circulation, involving multiple kinds of audiences. For Bishop this differs from a position that includes ethics as part of identity politics and social histories, to a position where the political and potential for change is embedded through the experience of particular kinds of art work that move beyond the rationality offered through explicit political discourse and argumentation.

Bishop offers a vocabulary, which considers particular artworks in relation to their socio-political histories, informed through materials, cultural imaginaries

and artistic approaches. Like the projects that Kester describes, Bishop highlights long-term engagements, while at the same time focusing on the particular modes of cultural production, the agencies involved, and how the projects are conceived or align with values of those people who participate. Bishop's accounts, like Kester's, are mostly retrospective, but through engaging with archives, we get a sense of how Bishop understands these projects through their initial development, the political and cultural policies involved, the tensions and challenges as they unfold, the spaces between rhetoric and what is documented, the particular individuals and groups central to and on the periphery that made things happen. Bishop offers a more reflexive accounting of events and projects, as she presents them through her understanding of archival materials and a consideration of how the projects become meaningful in the context of her expertise in contemporary art history. Bishop does not, therefore, attempt to give an exhaustive or finalised account of what the works she discusses are or what they mean.

Most importantly, Bishop gives an account of the particular materialities that create the archives she discusses, following the traces of artists' projects and the resulting actions, some of which constituted political reform of government services, commercial organizations, or simply sought to change how the media represented particular aspects of British history by creating alternative kinds of archives and public memory. For much of this work the importance of documentation is a key factor, how things are documented, stored, distributed and displayed in the public sphere. Bishop often refers reflexively to the use of visual technologies such as photography and video, and this is key to her argument. However, similar to the limitations of Kester's discussions, she does not include the voices of those communities that are involved in the projects. Their voices are subsumed into, and become, the art work itself, but their identities are not necessarily part of anything other than what the artwork frames as their experience, as mental health service users, for example, or as miners fighting the closure of the mines. In this sense, while Bishop provides useful insights in how the relationship between the materialities of documentation and performance can be integral to the participation of an art work, there are limits to how the identities of those involved might be configured beyond the frame of the artwork itself.

Reflexivity and difference within HCI

There are similar concerns of how projects and identities are framed within research and design practice within HCI in development and cross-cultural studies [Light & Anderson 2009, Bidwell et al 2008, 2010, 2011, Winschiers-Theophilus et al 2010, Wyche et al 2008, Reitmaier et al 2009, 2010, 2011, Frohlich et al 2009] where experiences between researchers and participants may be considered significantly different. Critiques from post-colonial computing have, however, highlighted a lack of self-reflexive accounting where communities are described as being '*out there*', a form of exoticisation and othering that creates a sense of distance and defamiliarisation in order to provide insights and inspiration [Irani et al 2010, Taylor et al 2011]. Providing more critical perspectives, Irani and Taylor highlight the importance of understanding assumptions that might inform how the research is framed, what methods are used, how technology is being positioned and how research relationships are built. Drawing on postcolonial theories of how otherness is constructed through defining and essentialising differences, they argue against impositions of particular approaches to design that carry with them or build upon generalizable, rational ideals of technological determinism to solve global problems.

While practices outlined in participatory design and action research offer insights into researcher reflexivity and positioning, a more critical approach has been taken in the context of long-term design with communities in rural Africa and Australia with Bidwell [et al 2008, 2009] and Winschiers-Theophilus [et al 2010]. Their ongoing, long-term research with rural communities has highlighted assumptions that can often be made concerning the universality of participation as perceived in research as a democratic and empowering will to work together. Winschiers-Theophilus highlights such assumptions within participatory design as problematic in cultures that are underlined by nuanced community hierarchies and relational decision-making processes. In addition, the means by which communication is valued and understood can often be at odds with models of written and abstract symbolic representation. Participation comes to be understood as a very particular practice within the communities that Bidwell and Winschiers-Theophilus work with. Critical and reflexive approaches are

taken to understand the ways in which particular modes of communication are questioned through taking multiple different perspectives. Their research methods therefore include a number of researchers that have some knowledge of the communities, share some cultural commonalities, including vocabulary or language, and some who do not. The researchers outline their cultural and linguistic position and understanding, and how this might inform any subsequent interpretation they form or understanding they gain of the research encounter.

Practitioners working with value sensitive design (VSD), where design of technology is developed through building on human values, is often conducted in developing, multicultural contexts or with groups often considered to be marginalized. Values in this sense refer to '*what a person or group of people consider important in life*' [Borning 2012: 1125], have also argued for greater diversity in attempting to avoid universalistic accounting of the theory and practice of such approaches. Borning argues that VSD could benefit from a feminist realignment, learning from research methods and critiques of science by including cases that provide peripheral views, that is, those ordinarily ignored or excluded in research, to diversify the existing VSD approach and its impact. Furthermore, Borning argues for the inclusion of a diversity of voices in VSD, indicating an important contribution that highlights the role of the researcher / designer and their position and stake in the research.

Global migration and identities

Many of the socially engaged arts projects that Kester describes are developed in European and American societies and have come to exist through centuries of global migration. Both historical and contemporary, migration of people has had a significant impact on the cultural diversity of societies and has informed a global re-configuration of how communities are connected technologically. Some have argued this is not just through geographical space, where different cultural values and communities might come to exist together in one place. Rather geographical connections are accompanied and mediated through commodities and electronic media that bring together both modern and 'traditional' sensibilities and practices [Appadurai 1998]. Cultures and identities therefore become hybridized [Bhabha 2005], multicultural [Hall 2000] and

transnational in the diversity that such migratory flows create, between nations, people, materials and media [Lindtner 2012]. Appadurai and Hall both argue that it is only through day-to-day practical interactions that we can start to account for the shifting nature of such relations, histories and identities. To date, however, less work within HCI has been done to understand how technology enables connections in more localized ways, between diverse communities who exist within particular geographical areas. Some of these issues have begun to be explored by Schubert [et al 2011] and Burrell [2008] in discussing migrant uses of technology within host countries.

Within the more international context of migration, the idea that designers work to traverse cultural boundaries, becomes less relevant as a way of conceptualizing community identities that are clearly bounded through discreet national or cultural associations. As Light has argued, there is no core of identity that universalizes nations, cultures or people, as this would be problematic and sits uncomfortably with a colonial disposition that seeks to create stable categories and naturalise particular behaviours associated with race, gender and ethnicity. Identities are always being worked on and worked out relationally to others [Light 2011a]. At the same time Bidwell and Winschiers-Theophilus usefully highlight that, within particular communities, forms of engagement and participation may already be in operation that differ from those originally considered by designers and researchers who are working within such a community. Thereby, it is necessary to be respectful of particular existing localized hierarchies and structures.

In further responding to recent proposals on a feminist HCI agenda by Bardzell and Churchill [2011], Light highlights how it is potentially dangerous to develop a stance to design research that is *'timeless and universal'*, especially in approaches to cross-cultural design, where cultural, social, regional, national differences might be considered fixed. Light argues that it is through promoting design that is *'spaceful, oblique and occasionally mischievous'*, that challenges the status quo of systems that have traditionally focused on *'digital tools that control processes, manage tasks and enable searches, where the primary purpose is instrumental'*. I would argue, that many technologies to support identities are still very much based on an organizational paradigm, inflected with

pseudo work practices [Sengers 2005]. Light introduces the notion of ‘queering’ as a tactic in which designers might engage in more oblique practices of development. Drawing from Agre’s concept of a ‘critical technical practice’, which develops through a ‘split identity – one foot planted in the craft work of design and the other foot planted in the reflexive work of critique.’ [Agre quoted in Light 2011a, p. 433], Light suggests a bringing together of the two;

a practical naughtiness based both on craft and reflection. It is a space-making exercise, using the means available at the time. And while critique is clearly one tool; hullabaloo, parody and inversion may also have their place. Its endgame is not an analysis to inform design, but an ongoing application of disruption as a space-making ploy and, thus, as a hands-on method. In a truly queered context there is no final arrival point, but an absence of dogma and a mutability that allows new truths, perspectives and engagements to emerge through a refusal to accept definition. [Light 2011a: 433].

While this might be a useful subversive strategy used in the practices of design, within the social sciences, others have argued for different approaches that aim to respect and recognize particular essentialist identity practices that can be both experienced as inclusive and exclusive within community.

Reflexivity and difference within social science

Working with race, ethnicity and gender from a feminist post-colonial perspective, Yasmin Gunaratnam highlights the importance of adopting a particular stance to reflexivity that requires an ‘analytic doubling’ ‘that is capable of working both with and against racialized categories, and which is able to make links between lived experience, political relations and the production of knowledge’ [Gunaratnam 2003: 23]. This process both seeks to acknowledge categories and boundaries of difference and how they can be articulated and re-affirmed through research encounters, as well as drawing out connections or similarities between experiences, requiring both ‘historical particularity and plurality of racialized difference’ [ibid: 22].

Gunaratnam describes how her own perception of selfhood is articulated through her history, her ongoing negotiation between memories of her early Sri Lankan childhood, her families Singhalese, Indonesian, Scottish and Tamil descent and her growing up and working in England, experiencing racialised

differences. In this sense she sees her identity as not the same as anybody else. At the same time, she highlights the potential for connecting to others through multiple registers, associated with personal experiences. For Gunaratnam, the point is not to flatten out identity to a set of common humanistic or cultural traits and values, instead her approach describes situating these understandings in a wider socio-political context. As experiences and particular identities are made sense of, researchers and those involved in research might restrict or constrain particular understandings of identities through articulating particular categories that may appear fixed. At the same time, Gunaratnam highlights how resistance, agency and solidarity might be formed through such definitions, as is described in the work of bell hooks [1994, 2010] and Mohanty [2003], and that these too are important to recognise as potentially significant articulations of identity and selfhood. The role of research, in this context, is then to disentangle, momentarily, the entanglements of categories, socio-cultural histories and experiences. This is not, however, to provide a causal link or an explanation as to why people behave or respond in particular ways based on cultural or racial identities, but to explore potential traces of how individuals, as part of communities, make sense of and express connections between differences and similarity and how researchers also connect with these particular understandings.

Cultural Expression and Community Identities

In this section I turn to how community identities have shifted from those bound by geography or particular societal concerns to online and offline interests, experiences and desires. I trace this through particular uses of technology to articulate cultural expression and community identities that link early ethnography to present day vernacular media and user-generated making cultures.

Ethnographic photography and film

Ethnographic and anthropological uses of photography and film have long highlighted their dual relationship to experience; in particular photography's ability to reproduce '*miniatures of reality that anybody can make or acquire*' and to also be '*as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are.*' [Sontag 1979: 4]. Christopher Pinney has described how the introduction

of photography and film into anthropological practice in the mid 1800's as part of colonial exploration brought about a significant shift in how cultures and people were documented, classified and thereby perceived to be known. The introduction of visual technologies distinguished between the practice of a person writing about cultures as interpretation, to one of documentation that pointed to a verisimilitude and verifiability of being there and bearing witness. Photography and film became important for establishing ethnography and anthropology as rigorous fields of study by providing forms of visual evidence through what was perceived to be an objective form of scientific and technical apparatus [Pinney 2012].

At the same time, Pinney argues that such practices also changed the way communities understood themselves and technology in relation to European colonisers. Pinney describes how aspirational, traditional and mimicked modes of visual representation began to suggest that communities appropriated certain practices as a result of the introduction of photographic technology. Drawing from Michael Taussig's alternative envisioning of technologies as an invoking of power through mimicry of the other as a means of control [Taussig 1998], Pinney suggests that photography and film also came to be used as mystical and spiritual symbols, as ways of negotiating otherness, through individual and community identities. In describing particular photographic studio practices in India and Africa, Pinney describes how forms of aspirational and idealized imagery both parody and explore visions of alternative realities in relation to traditional and contemporary life, using backdrops, props and techniques such as montage, sculptures and double exposures [Pinney 2003].

Artists' photographic practice

Similar approaches can be seen in the performative photographic and video work of the 70s and 80s by artists such as Jo Spence and Cindy Sherman. Both Spence and Sherman engage in strategies of dressing up, mimicry referencing cinematic, vernacular and art historical representations of women, and often subvert particular modes of expression to make viewers aware of the constructed nature of photography. For instance Sherman's work in the 70s recreated famous film scenes by dressing up as actresses and re-staging the scenes from films such as Psycho. Taken as a series of images as a homage to

cinematic spectacle, these were often displayed together in galleries. Sherman is always central, both familiar and strange to the viewer through the references to films she imitated, but also in the familiarity of her features in every scene. She has continued to work in this way, reconstructing historical scenes parodying renaissance painting, clowning and studio make-over studios. Portraying women as the central figure, she explores how the body and scenes can be structured as fantasy, parody and sometimes grotesque and excessive caricature [Reckett & Phelan 2012].



Figure 1: Cindy Sherman, **Untitled # 474**, (2008)



Figure 2: Jo Spence **Circa 1959, I** (1985) Part of a photo-therapy series of photographs created collaboratively with photographer Rosy Martin.

Jo Spence similarly deconstructed and reconstructed her own family histories through the re-staging of encounters with family photographs. After years of being a studio photographer staging family portraits, Spence turned the camera on herself, re-staging her own family identity through dressing up and performing particular familial roles of herself and (m)other. She developed this practice, later describing it as a form of photo-therapy, recognizing the value of photography in both referring to implicit and explicit gendered desires and aspirations, losses and forms of mourning for the self. The photographs produced are intimate visual dialogues between self and family, both connected to and perceived as something other than family portraiture [Spence 1995].

More recently artists using photography to explore their contested cultural identities such as Shirin Neshat, Pushpamala, N. in collaboration with Clare Arni have created performative photographic enactments that re-stage aspects of identity in relation to race, nationhood and colonialism. The focus of such work is to bring attention to the construction of race and gender in turning the camera on the self to stage spectacular and destabilizing renditions of women's experiences. Their photographs are intended as questions to specific cultural tropes of production and consumption of imagery. This relates both to the history of photography as a technology of documentation and colonial control, and photography as a creative rendition and imagining of global flows and fractures as experienced through exile [Pinney 2012].



Figure 3: Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni: **Lakshmi**, from the series *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs* (2002-3) manual photographic print on metallic paper; 27 2/1 x 22 3/4 in, collection of the artists.



Figure 4: Shirin Neshat **Unveiling** (from the *Women of Allah* series) (1993) ink on gelatin silver print 59 7/8 x 39 1/4 in. (152 x 101cm.)

Community media and expression

These photographic approaches can also be seen in work Kester describes by Lorraine Leeson, Susanne Lacy and Steven Willets, though here the artist acts

to scaffold or facilitate others to engage with particular performative or photographic acts. Indeed such practices have greatly informed participatory techniques such as photo-elicitation and photo-voice [Reason & Bradbury 2001, Coetzee et al 2008, Clover 2006, Frohman 2005, Usurp Gallery 2012] as contemporary ethnographers and anthropologists continue to use photography to understand people's experiences albeit in more reflexive and participatory ways. The democratization and accessibility of technology, in particular the proliferation of photography and video media which has been appropriated into the '*cultural struggle for political and representational autonomy in a seemingly post-anthropological world.*' [Pinney 2012: 11], has meant many communities and individuals continually express ideas to wider publics. Many ethnographers and artist practitioners now work closely with communities, to make sense of and to collaboratively support the presentation of issues through photography [Schneider & Wright 2010, Pink 2009, 2012].

Online and offline community identities

Community media practices such as digital storytelling [Bidwell et al 2010, Burgess 2006, Couldry 2008, DiBias et al 2010, Ekelin et al 2008, Freidus & Hlubinka 2002, Frohlich 2009, Gyaback & Godina 2011, Kidd 2010, Lu et al 2011, Lundby 2008, Ohler 2007, Reitmaier et al 2009, 2010, 2011, Sahwney et al 2009] have further expanded the ways and means that technologies have been used expressively by communities to interpret collective and individual identities. Furthermore, such identities have been supported through online platforms that help to broadcast and create discussion about particular topics of interest [Ploderer et al 2010, 2012]. These platforms have often been developed as part of action research and activist approaches to developing participatory ways of engaging people in accessible and vernacular forms of cultural expression that can raise awareness of particular social issues [Dimond et al 2013] or build communities of people interested and engaged in technological and sustainable innovation. Design for co-located photographic expressions of identities have also been important within HCI, for supporting negotiations around photography [Durrant et al 2009], sustaining community connection [Carroll et al 2013, Taylor et al 2009, 2010, 2013] and further

building connections between diverse individuals within a shared social care communities [Gaver et al 2011].

Considering theories of performativity discussed by feminist theorist Judith Butler [1990], Van House analytically discusses online communities in social network sites to understand how identity is performed and constrained through the particular uses of technologies. Through the naming of different identity categories, structured through the use of social network sites, Van House suggests that there is some value of boundaries and categories which can enable resistance and negotiation in this context. Drawing from Suchman [2007] and Haraway [1988, 1991], she highlights how agency is configured more relationally, in response to others, objects, people and infrastructures. The performativity she describes is not just being part of a self-conscious act, as proposed by Goffman [1959] as a way of presenting myself to others, but that which is also unconscious and is formed through cultural norms and dispositions that are re-enacted and repeated. Van House describes how gendered and racialised enactments take place through the use of photography on social network sites, and how photography has become one of the most popular way of presenting self online.

She argues that the way in which Facebook operates supports social comparison, which is important for re-affirming social norms. In doing so, Van House also argues that Facebook supports practices that are more socially acceptable amongst large groups over practices that depart from what are considered acceptable forms of online constructed self-representation. Therefore, despite multiplicity and heterogeneity being supported through the varied ways in which identities might be categorized through social network sites, by using Butler to interpret how the self is presented online, Van House underlines the significance of the constraints that are both explicit and implicit in the context of social networking. The explicit constraints are used to structure the site, the less explicit emerge to become socially accepted and perpetuated through collective and social use through the practice of inscription and re-inscription that are played out over time.

The significance of the history of vernacular domestic photography as predominantly presenting positive social events, rather than those associated with work, death or illness [Spence 1995], further supports a sense of self that is often upbeat, confident and assured. As Van House also notes with respect to gender, women and young girls are more prolific in uploading photographs to Facebook than men and boys. In addition, there are particular associations implicit in how women, predominantly those who are agents of their own online visual identities, perpetuate images of self that re-affirm particular forms of attractiveness. Facebook, as described by Van House, therefore continues to uphold normative cultural and societal values concerning how women should look and present themselves to others.

This follows a particular problematic concern found in feminist discussions of both vernacular and mass media photography, that of the potential recursive ideal of the constructed visual nature of women's identity. We see echoes of Butler's arguments here outlined through a discussion of visual practices, but as Van House also highlights, Butler's definitive positioning of such constraints, as the subject only ever being able to operate through discursive and institutional power, also presents a somewhat limited view of people's agency within online social networks.

Light's [2011a] discussion of Butler is, however, much more generative and suggestive of the multiple and varied ways in which design might consider alternative identity practices. She develops the notion of troubling and the subversive practices of parody that might also constitute another type of overt performativity that is as much about mimicry, caricature and excess as it is about repetition and affirmation of social norms [Butler 1993]. Light argues that design strategies favour '*design for human diversity at the expense of machine capabilities*', where designers can '*act as saboteurs, where plurality and heterodoxy are employed as guerilla tactics to keep a space for divergent identity, and with it resistance to fixed notions of gender or assignment of roles.*' [Light 2011a: 434] She outlines a number of sensitizing positions and actions, including '*making trouble*', '*thinking obliquely*', and '*obscuring*'. She describes how these practices are a way of moving on from formalized '*goals to design good mappings between the layout of controls and what is controlled*',

'efficiency and effectiveness requirements for products and services' [ibid: 434] that maintain the common ideal of rationalist causality often implicit within commercial models for interaction design. Light argues that the latter are antithetical to the notion of identity as mutable and always open to change.

Summary: Supporting Diverse Community Identities

Communities are complex ecologies and networks of people. Increasingly studies within HCI's third wave explores how communities come together beyond the workplace to support at a distance, co-located and face-to-face interaction between members. The turn to experience has meant an alternative emphasis on understanding people's use of technologies, that has moved away from a focus on task bases analysis and contextual studies as the main forms of research inquiry. Within community-based research, where understanding identities are important in relation to participation in design and with technology, I have focused on literature from within HCI, art history and social sciences to reflect how identities are articulated within research and creative practice. From this I highlight key considerations for interaction design as part of experience-centred approaches for designing within social care communities. These include 1) Benefits of participation 2) Approaches to socially engaged practice and space-making and 3) Value of prototypes as informed speculation.

1) Benefits of participation: Benefits of participation within design have extended beyond the appropriate development of technologies that suitably fit the needs and desires of users. While Bødker [2006] advocates for alternative approaches to participatory design that reflect more contemporary practice, she questions the role of the arts in supporting inspiration rather than meaningful engagement. However within contemporary applications of participatory design, as described by DiSalvo et al [2013] and Light et al [2009], communities are seen to benefit from arts-based practices that support processes of mutual learning, feelings of transformation, experiences of creativity, building confidence and competence in developing a vocabulary to discuss technological change. At the same time, researchers have highlighted how these experiences are also difficult to document throughout long-term research projects, common within community-based design because these practices are still little understood [Carroll et al 2013, DiSalvo et al 2013]. Understanding

aspects of the design process, and these experiences associated with participation are key for further exploring how identities are negotiated within communities to inform design practice. This perspective will inform a key aspect of the research in engaging with particular members of the community.

2) *Approaches to socially engaged practice and space making*: Socially engaged arts is a particular form of creative practice focused on active listening, empathic, emotional, and gestural forms of communication [Kester 2004]. Within HCI, these practices have largely been discussed within the context of environmental sustainability, but Wright & McCarthy [2010], have highlighted the potential of '*dialogical aesthetics*' to inform reflexive intersubjective researcher-designer relationships with communities. In taking this aspect of the research forward, the thesis will focus on approaches that support exploration of identities within community and through research by responding to the '*historical particularity and plurality*' [Gunaratnam 2003] of experiences that I, as a researcher and participants bring. At the same time, in further drawing from Gunaratnam, I will seek to listen for and support a practice that draws connections collectively between experiences within the community.

This will be achieved by drawing from strategies within socially engaged arts that highlight a mutable practice, one that moves between acts of listening, but also catalysing ideas through practice [Kester 2004], while paying attention to the different agencies at play. Furthermore in drawing from a critical technical practice, and the '*split identity*' [Agre 1997] of the researcher-designer, moving between acts of making and critique, I will develop '*space-making*' practices [Light 2011a] through workshop sessions, to further trouble notions of identities that suggest fixed categories of selfhood. By focusing on the use of photography, I will also be mindful of the particular histories associated with visual presentations of self, particularly associated with gender and race. I will therefore work with collaborative and participatory engagement within the research through approaches that explore photography as developing alternative realities [Pinney 2012].

In bringing this literature together, however tensions are suggested in working between empathic listening and catalysing action [Kester 2004], between

space-making for both specificity and plurality of identities [Light 2011a, Gunaratnam 2003] and working between reflexive criticality and making [Agre 1997]. In this sense such tensions highlight the important role of the researcher-designer of working between insider and outsider perspectives, continually negotiating relationships within communities. Such tensions need to be considered in relation to a localised responsiveness, while recognising how different sensibilities and guiding principles might be called upon and questioned as the research progresses.

3) *Value of prototypes as informed speculation*: Rather than develop prototypes to close down the design space as proposed by Bødker [2006], I will seek to develop a prototype as a form of speculation in raising questions and further supporting dialogue within community. In particular the prototype will be used to problematise and open up discussion on singular defined identities and what it might mean to participate in community when using technology ‘... *to foster critical engagement, creative expression and technological fluency*’ [DiSalvo et al 2013: 194]. In taking this aspect of the research forward, I will consider how the artefact becomes a potential mediator for multiple meanings, ‘*controversies and matters of concern*’ [Latour 2005: 37]. Furthermore the prototype will be evaluated against its potential for engendering ‘*imaginative ability*’ for future practices, while ‘*crystallising social theories*’ [Dourish & Bell 2011: 193], in negotiating a future through embodied, engaged and dialogic participation.

Chapter 3

A Socially Engaged Approach

Introduction

In the previous chapter interaction design approaches taken in HCI research with socially engaged aims were discussed. In particular these projects focused on humanist and ethical concerns for collaborating with communities within health, care and education. Researchers engaged in such collaborations face significant challenges when working with emotional and cultural sensitivity around understanding technology use and developing insights for design. In the previous chapter, examples of experience-centred design and socially engaged arts practices highlighted a connection between aesthetics and ethics articulated through engagement in creative acts of making, doing and reflecting on experience. These practice-led approaches that focus on the aesthetics and ethics of technology design within community-based contexts highlight a nuanced understandings of participation and the specific kinds of relationships established between practitioners and communities. This is particularly relevant for community-based design with socially engaged aims where cultural diversity is an important consideration in the design of products and services.

This chapter outlines my epistemological position describing an interdisciplinary approach developed to engage with the dynamics of aesthetic and ethical concerns in design approaches to community-based interaction design. The methodology has been developed specifically to understand the contingencies of design for media sharing in a sensitive multicultural community learning and care context, that of an international women's centre. The methodology is rooted in feminist praxis and takes an interdisciplinary and experiential position to partial and situated knowledge construction (Bardzell et al 2010, 2011, Haraway 1988, 1991), while also acknowledging the construction and interdependence of difference, connection and historiography in diverse multicultural societies (Gunaratnam 2003, Ahmed 2004, 2012, hooks 2010). To this end, the methodology is underpinned by a range of approaches to design that are situated primarily within experience-centred sensibilities, but incorporate perspectives from socially engaged arts practice and ethnography.

Experience, Aesthetics and the Ethics of Design Practice

Experience-centred design

Experience-centred design holds a particular position in HCI research that recognises both the aesthetics and ethics associated with experience. 'An experience' as defined by Dewey [1934] is characterised by a bracketing of significant events that are fulfilling and meaningful, distinguishing it from the buzz of everyday life. Extending this further McCarthy & Wright [2004, 2010] include '*dialogicism*' as a recognition of the consummation of self through engaging with others and the emotions associated with the everyday unfolding nature of experience.

Designing for aesthetic experiences has become an important aspect of HCI research for interaction focused on pleasure, play and leisure. However, at the core of pragmatist philosophy [Dewey 1934, Iversen et al 2008, Petersen et al 2008] is also an ethical commitment to recognizing and designing for the '*richness of human experience with the wide variety of new technologies and media that are available.*' (Wright & McCarthy 2010: 2). Aesthetics in this sense is understood through everyday encounters as '*immediate and directly fulfilling*' but also coloured with a '*struggle to achieve the sense of fulfillment*' (McCarthy & Wright 2004: 18/19) characteristic of an experience. In engaging with the emotional and volitional quality of aesthetic experience, a dynamic tension between self and other is described which focuses on a responsibility for recognizing and valuing the other as both '*simultaneously aesthetic and ethical*' (McCarthy & Wright 2004: 67).

McCarthy & Wright describe this process as '*dialogue*', not just in the sense of a verbal conversation. Although oral and written stories are considered a significant aspect of making sense and sharing experiences, they also highlight the value of being open to hear other voices, multiple and potentially conflictual, that might occur through a design process. Significant for the methodology here is how dialogue between self and other is understood through ongoing encounters rather than in static representations of situations, individuals or groups of users. In developing practices within experience-centred design, dialogue between self and other occurs across many stages within a design process, between researchers and participants in the process of informing

design, between researchers and the objects and materials used in design and between designed objects and participants as they are incorporated into the lived and felt worlds of participants and provide points of connection with others. This is particularly significant for community-based design with socially engaged aims, as it highlights the contingent nature of social groups, not as consistently unified with a singular voice, but as multiple individuals connected by ongoing discursive relationships with others.

Designing through dialogue and cultural probes

In attempting to gain insights and inspiration on what *the 'richness of human experience'* might look like for others, what I attempt to do in this thesis and through this methodology is focus on the design of processes and approaches that facilitate relationships and forms of social engagement between researchers and participants around technology use. In exploring the cultural probes, as an example of such an approach that brings people together with materials and objects in dialogue, there are also particular strategies described by practitioners.

The use of probes within HCI has been greatly contested [Boehner et al 2007] and yet at the same time re-appropriated in many different ways since they were first discussed [Gaver et al 2004, Wallace et al 2013]. Their contested nature is primarily due to what is often seen as a misunderstanding between approaches taken in design practice [Boehner et al 2007, Gaver et al 2004, Mattelmäki & Battarbee 2002, Wallace et al 2013], social sciences and a design engineering tradition more familiar in the context of system requirements gathering.

For the purposes of this methodology, the practice of probe design and use, as discussed by Gaver and Wallace, will inform a methodological commitment to dialogue in design. By embracing the subjective, that of the researcher designer and the participants involved, both practitioners articulate their design and use of probes as an empathic rather than taking a user requirements gathering approach. This informs a process of iterative adaptation that brings into dialogue the researchers' own practice, history and understanding of participants' own practices and history as potentially different centres of value.

In considering the adaptation that takes place in relation to the particular history and sensibilities of the researcher / designer, Gaver and Wallace clearly articulate how their own particular professional experiences as designers inflect on the process of designing the probes. This also includes a conceptual reference for Gaver, drawing from the aesthetics and themes of psychogeography of the city discussed within Situationist International and Dada. For Wallace, this is more closely related to jewellery, notions of the technologically mediated body, adornment of the body and craft.

In reflecting on my experience and background in socially engaged arts practice, I am less concerned with starting from the same conceptual frames that Gaver and Wallace describe, although their research practice has been significantly influential. In taking a feminist post-colonial perspective, I acknowledge that I require different conceptual and practical lenses to develop strategies for community-based design in the context of an international women's centre, where this research takes place. In this sense I situate the probes as much more integral to socially engaged practice that is performative and associated with everyday learning [Helguera 2011, hooks 2010]. Thereby my development of the probes, as an example of dialogue in design, serve not as artefacts used to develop insights for the future development of particular interactive artefacts or products. Rather my approach to probe design and use is positioned as an approach to creatively engage participants in dialogue, with me as a researcher to raise questions about the use of technology as part of a social learning and care environment. This is achieved by using probes as part of a long-term workshop process that evolves over time, a form of engagement most commonly developed by socially engaged arts practitioners when engaging groups and individuals in dialogue.

Socially Engaged Arts Practice

Situating the social through creative action

Socially engaged arts perspectives have provided insights within HCI on collaborative workshop practices, closely aligned with participatory design and

action research. Example projects have incorporated creative practice into research around sustainability [Di Salvo et al 2009], environmental sensing [Di Salvo et al 2010] environmental education [Jacobs 2013] indigenous cultures [Klaveren 2012], aging populations [Light et al 2009] and immigrant identities [Bjorgvinsson et al 2010]. The use of arts practices here have been used to problematise a tendency for technological solutionism and determinism often adopted in response to contemporary societal challenges and innovation. As described in Chapter 2, this small but expanding body of work within HCI embraces perspectives from arts and creative practice to ask if technology can alleviate such problems within the complex lived and felt everyday experiences of people's lives. The intention of such work is to create more playful re-imaginings of the issues and possibilities associated with social change, in turn re-purposing and re-configuring the technology to offer alternative spaces and ideas for discussion.

Socially engaged arts practitioners have a rich tradition of developing workshop practices within communities using technology [Di Salvo et al 2009]. Practitioners draw from a loosely defined set of ideologies and sensibilities that intersect with areas of activism, community capacity building, contemporary performance art, and ethnography [Helguera 2011, Bishop 2012, Kester 2004, 2010]. Drawing from time-based and performance art practice, technology often plays an important, yet largely under-explored role in presenting, documenting and distributing work in this domain. Technologies, in their many forms, are consistently used as tools for creative expression, critical debate and further dissemination and promotion of projects within projects. From exhibitions in galleries, performances in festivals, to community action and archiving, with the aim of effecting localized or policy change, protests to bring people together to problematise negative media representations, technology has consistently played an important role for such artists.

At the same time, socially engaged arts projects do not have a long tradition of documenting and discussing workshop practices, and so such processes have been little explored in depth. In drawing from the pragmatist philosophy of Dewey [1934], Helguera [2011] usefully describes how practice could be shared more clearly by focusing attention on the kinds of participation that take place to

include; descriptions of the experience from different perspectives of those involved, understanding the role of the location, who instigates the action and the documentation process. Significantly for this methodology, he describes different kinds of participation that are being constructed and negotiated or that might emerge through a process including nominal, directed, creative or collaborative action, which might take place at different points in time and are constrained by different practicalities.

Dialogical aesthetics

Focusing more explicitly on dialogic engagements, Kester [2004, 2005] situates socially engaged arts practice in the context of art history, proposing dialogue as a separate regime to art making that goes beyond the rarefied art object presented in galleries and museums. He describes how a '*.... dialogical aesthetic suggests a very different image of the artist; one defined in terms of openness, of listening and a willingness to accept dependence and intersubjective vulnerability.*' [Kester 2005: 158] Drawing from a feminist epistemology he describes such approaches as '*connected knowing*' [Belenky et al 1986], an approach that is much more focused on conversational and accumulative understanding supported by maintaining ongoing connections to others, with the ability to bring together both critical and experiential knowledge. These connections are developed between artists and collaborators, but also reach out to wider publics in challenging negative and dominant narratives on issues associated with marginalization and discrimination.

Contradictions, aesthetics and ethics

While Kester's position is useful in providing a vocabulary to describe an aesthetic of social engagement, his discussion often suffers from a lack of engagement with aesthetics at the cost of more ethical considerations that rely on rational discourse [Bishop 2012]. Furthermore, Claire Bishop, from an arts historical perspective, argues for greater consideration of emotional and affective aspects of experiences as important for understanding the impact of socially engaged arts. Bishop considers affect important in aesthetics, achieved through suspending ethical reasoning. The '*undecidability*' of aesthetic experience, she argues, is sustained through creating uncertainty and acknowledging contradictions that exist in social situations that lead to 'a

questioning of how the world is organized' [Ibid: 27]. Opportunities for *'undecidability'* are constructed through combining carefully curated and more open experiences for participants and spectators. This allows for the potential of multiple, sometimes contradictory interpretations to take place and co-exist alongside one another. Such considerations are important in the context of community-based socially engaged design in HCI, suggesting ways of engaging practically through different forms of embodied and experiential presentation of materials including performances, exhibitions, festivals, and broadcast media.

Bishop suggests that creating such art requires clearly envisioning work to explore *'a complex knot of social concerns about political engagement, affect, inequality, narcissism, class and behavioural protocols.'* [Ibid: 39]. This demands navigating the complexity of socially engaged practice rather than relying on or only listening to the *'good soul'* of ethical reasoning that might be most frequently described in such work. At the same time, practitioners and critics alike have argued that a vocabulary within the arts has struggled to account for social engagements in the complexity with which they might be experienced and from the many perspectives of those involved [Hjorth & Sharp 2014]. Ethnography has been considered a related set of sensibilities, able to draw from a much longer tradition of documentation in producing research materials to improve understanding of what takes place through workshop practices [Helguera 2011].

Ethnography & Design

Ethnography and design tensions in HCI

The practice of ethnography, combining a number of qualitative research approaches to data collection and analysis, has a long tradition in HCI research to specifically engage researchers in the lived and felt lives of their participants' worlds [Dourish 2011, Crabtree 2009]. The rich and qualitative nature of ethnography has however prompted debate within the HCI community about its relevance and use in helping inform innovative and complex design insights for products and services in socially responsible ways [Blomberg & Karasti 2013a, 2013b]. This is of particular relevance when there are interdisciplinary teams and different experiences between those who seek to understand users and their use and those who seek to design for and with them. This divide has

highlighted a particular tension within research in how ethnography can be seen to provide implications for design, thereby losing its specificity, richness and criticality in what is eventually developed [Dourish 2006].

As designers are increasingly being asked to work in challenging and sensitive contexts, designing technology around discourses of social innovation and responsibility [Grimpe et al 2014, Bjorgvinson 2010], often without prior knowledge of the complexities of what is involved in engaging people in design, some have argued it is not enough to bring designerly inspiration to increasingly complex social situations [Norman 2010]. While advocates of rich ethnographic practice have argued for the importance of such work to critically problematise and complicate simplistic reductionist conceptions of the user and their daily practices [Dourish & Bell 2011], there are also challenges to understanding how practitioners mobilise such insights within the design of products or services for social rather than purely commercial ends, as ethnography was originally conceived of as a practice of close observation, not necessarily one of intervention.

Practitioners of participatory design have long used ethnographic practice to challenge assumptions on the benefits of technology use in the workplace and the home, where the dominant discourse can be efficiency at the cost of recognizing the practical skills of users. PD practitioners have also taken a political stance in researching the everyday practices within communities and how those communities might envision future use, despite this not always resulting in actionable outcomes [Ehn & Bannon 2013].

Within HCI, ethnographers have also increasingly turned to action research as a form of design research to combine ethnographic insights into interventionist strategies for localized and realizable changes [Blythe et al 2010, Bidwell et al 2011, Hayes 2011].

In drawing from ethnographic research for socially engaged community-based technology design, I draw from two specific aspects of qualitative research; narrative inquiry and sensory ethnography. These provide different lenses on aspects of experience to understand socially engaged arts workshop practice

and technology use. Although narrative inquiry and sensory ethnographies are not specifically defined by their authors as having a particular feminist agenda to qualitative research, many aspects do resonate with feminist sensibilities as discussed in Chapter 2. These connect specifically to accounts of research that are fully situated within the researcher's own experiential position in relation to the inquiry, the close connection to historiography, a commitment to reflecting on cultural assumptions and taking multiple perspectives, while acknowledging the contingent nature of knowledge production, peripheral and marginal voices.

Narrative and the Senses in Ethnography

Narrative inquiry

Listening to and telling stories are often considered integral aspects of ethnographic research, both a means of data collection and analysis [McCarthy & Wright 2004, Bruner 1984, Turner 1986]. They are a way for researchers to understand particular aspects of culture that are expressed and shared amongst individuals within communities [Bruner 1984, 1986, 1991, Turner 1986, Clifford & Marcus 1986] and a way for researchers to share their constructed '*partiality*' and truthful fictions to wider audiences. Truth within narrative inquiry relates to how meaning is made rather than how facts or information is communicated. Meaning therefore pertains to coherence, probability, fidelity and events that make sense or are resolved within a story [Bruner 1986]. Stories have also been understood as important for discussing marginalized experiences associated with race and gender and also as powerful testimonials for social justice agendas, seen to give voice to difficult experiences for those who feel excluded, or for culturally and politically sensitive topics [Reissman 1993, Chase 2003, Frank 2010].

Moves towards transnational and multi-sited ethnographies [Marcus 1995, Lindtner et al 2012, Irani et al 2010, Dourish & Bell 2011] within HCI describe a global landscape where migration and international flow of products connect people and families across many cultural, political and socio-material spaces. The approach for this thesis further builds on these transnational approaches to ethnography, explicitly drawing on a narrative inquiry approach situated within multicultural institutional practice [Chase 2003, Hones 1998, Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2000, Lyons & Kubler LaBoskey 2002]. The research of Clandinin

and Connelly [1990, 2000] and Phillion [2002] is particularly relevant, focusing on stories to weave together the individual, social, institutional and political frames of experience that coalesce in practices of multicultural education.

Clandinin and Connelly consider the creativity and situated knowledge of teachers as providing valuable insights into the practices of education. The specific focus on stories, they argue, encourages exploration of what is experienced by researcher and teacher in conversations with practice, rather than on policy and theoretical constructs of what should happen within teacher practice. In this sense narrative inquiry seeks to open up discussion on what is often seen as the '*invisible work*' [Star 1999] of skilled teacher practice [Lyons & Kubler LaBoskey 2002]. Here stories are considered as the means in which teachers and the researcher both make and share meaning from their everyday experiences. Stories are imaginative social re-constructions of experience and narrative is considered the means by which stories become socially meaningful, shared and analysed. Stories also then become important through researchers reflexively sharing, learning and creating forms of continuity between the fragments of experiences that are understood through situated exchanges of meaning making.

In drawing from Clandinin and Connelly's work, this provides perspectives that move away from purely theoretical and objective accounts of practice to an understanding of practitioner skills and knowledge as socially shared. In this sense stories are not considered as windows on reality, but rather poetic, evocative and imaginative resources [Hones 1998] that reflect transformations in which people make sense of and share perspectives of particular experiences [Phillion 2002]. Subjective and collaborative knowledge-based constructions are considered key for producing richer and more complex accounts of experiences of teaching and learning, particularly relevant within culturally diverse institutions. Furthermore as part of this process, researcher assumptions on culture, race, ethnicity and education are explored through autobiographical reflections of past experiences and expectations. The analytical framework proposed by such work suggests paying particular attention to tensions, moral, ethical dilemmas and aesthetic moments of fulfillment or struggle that occur [Connelly & Clandinin 1990]. This includes

understanding the tensions that arise through the production of research texts in the '*midst of uncertainty*', created through engagement with the complexity of lived experience rather than abstract categories of identities [Clandinin & Connelly 2000: 144].

While many of the disciplines that draw from narrative approaches to qualitative research have highlighted the everyday nature of sharing stories as a common way to communicate experience [Chase 2003], Clandinin and Connelly also highlight that the sharing of stories is only possible through specific kinds of relationships developed between storytellers and listeners and that these relationships only develop over time. In this sense, stories are highly situated and localized rather than abstracted pieces of information without a teller or listener. Within the narrative inquiry research context, the kinds of stories shared are enriched through close and long-term relationships characterized by care [Clandinin & Connelly 2000: 145].

The position of the researcher is key to the inquiry, whether acting as a participant immersed within the action, often acting as volunteer or as observer shadowing classroom activities. This provides opportunities for an auto-ethnographic accounting of experience, alongside the voices of other practitioners who collaborate through interviews, lesson plans and discussing reflections on student output. As the inquiry develops over time, researchers take on different roles and voices, as critical observers and reflective practitioners, who intellectually and emotionally, through the senses, critically engage with the inquiry [Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2000].

Sensory Ethnography

While narrative inquiry has remained largely language based, more contemporary ethnographic practices have continued to evolve, increasingly working with mixed interdisciplinary methods in an attempt to accessibly engage audiences and understand diverse societal challenges such as environmental sustainability, community cohesion and local action [Pink 2009, 2012]. These approaches have also been further influenced by arts based practice [Schneider & Wright 2010] and used to open up other forms of cultural expression especially in areas of multicultural communication around sensitive

issues such as immigration and sex trafficking [O'Neil 2011]. Furthermore, sensory approaches to understanding experience attempt to confront the challenges of linguistically expressing ideas and feelings while harnessing the power of engaging with visual, tactile or symbolic materials to explore affect and emotions in inclusive and sensitive ways. Such techniques help to make research available to a broader audience than those directly working within an academic context and acknowledge the wider multi-media resources often available to partners involved in research.

Advances in digital technology have also expanded the tools available to ethnographers and participants in collaborative research contexts. While this has increased the role of visual, aural and textual media used in ethnographic research, it has also informed a sensory return to the embodied nature of knowledge and understanding produced through ethnographic accounts in the process of creating rich multi-media documentation. Visual technology tools have been used by ethnographers for many years, but the analytical approach to understanding their value as sensory reminders and evocations of experience offers a potential set of resources for designers to engage in discussions around practice that is grounded in multi-sensory understandings of materials, images and action rather than relying solely on verbal articulations of particular experiences. As Pink describes,

'Research findings that are based solely on participants' verbally reported practices cannot facilitate an analysis of their actual practices of how these are performed, and experienced and involve specific ways of knowing in practice.' [Pink 2012: 41]

Pink discusses how this '*knowing in practice*' is not just informed by how participants might articulate, move through, or act in their environment. Knowing in practice often involves the researcher's own sensory engagement and understanding of the situated environment wherever that practice takes place. Inclusion of an auto-ethnographic reflection of a researcher's own historical practice in relation to the area of study also helps to position the researcher in conversation with the experience of place and within the action. Through engaging in sensory ethnography, researchers are encouraged to invoke their own experiences to dialogically and empathically understand and be open to the potential of different articulations of experiences from others. Pink considers

this a useful strategy in structuring the initial stages of designing research and research for design practice, when engaging with people reflexively and collaboratively [Pink 2012]. She describes this as having a 'heightened sensory awareness' underpinning an ethical commitment to design for the contingent nature of lived experience and its complexities [Pink 2009: 59].

Using a sensory ethnographic lens in this methodology compliments narrative inquiry in understanding socially engaged arts based approaches in providing further understanding of representation, ethics and reflexivity grounded in ethnography. Drawing from sensory ethnography also makes room for sensory experiences to be recognised by paying particular attention to the tacit ways bodies feel, understand and know in and through the world. These approaches highlight ways of using digital media to reflect on, understand and report on embodied sensory experience with the potential to share with others. Bringing sensory ethnography and socially engaged arts based research together offers a dynamic positioning which moves between what is already there and the potential of an alternative vision that taps into emotional, symbolic and metaphorical worlds.

Data Collection and Analysis

As anticipated with an interdisciplinary methodology, data collection and analytic approaches are diverse and include a range of materials that were produced by different people involved in the research at different times. Data collection and analysis was done in two parts, which I will describe here as Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Phase 1 of data collection and analysis was done between May 2011 and June 2012 and included being involved as a volunteer getting to know the Centre during digital storytelling workshops. These workshops are discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. While data was collected during the design phase that I describe in Chapter 7, the analysis of this data was conducted through focus-group discussion and fed back into the practical development of the BAM! Sistahood Heritage Project and will not be discussed in depth within this thesis.

Phase 2 of data collection and analysis was undertaken in response to the deployment of the photo-parshiya in the Centre and took place between September and February 2014 and will be discussed in Chapter 8.

Phase 1 Chapters 4, 5 & 6: Data collected in this first phase included field-notes from meetings and workshops, meeting notes, leaflets from the Centre, website content, written stories created in the workshops by individuals in the group, photographs brought to the workshops, videos of digital stories and portraits, written field-notes of the workshops and audio-recorded and transcribed interviews. The interviews lasted 40 – 90 minutes and were documented through audio recordings with Rosie, volunteer co-ordinator, Samiya, outreach worker at the Centre, and Alice, facilitator for the digital storytelling workshops.

This data was then physically structured chronologically [Polkinghorne 1988, 1995] in a timeline and closely read to mark out details about the environment and the spaces we were working in, the props such as technology and objects that were being used and the people involved. The role of individuals, specifically whether they were taking the lead in collective or individual action or working to support others, was also noted. Aesthetic moments of fulfillment or struggle, moral and ethical dilemmas that were raised through the research, and felt by me, or discussed in the sessions or within interviews were then marked out as particular scenes [Connelly & Clandinin 1990]. These scenes were then unpacked to flesh out the details of the particular environment, who was working together, what props and materials, both digital and material, were being used and how individuals used and spoke about their experiences of technology. Within the data I also looked out for references to those who were not present in the Centre, such as volunteer family members, and how they were also discussed in relation to technology use beyond the Centre. I then created narrative trajectories through the workshops from the perspectives of each volunteer in order to gain different points of view to gain alternative understandings of the workshops. In attempting to bring the different perspectives into dialogue with one another, from this analysis I synthesized these experiences by producing a set of anonymised statements from different points of view that helped to illustrate what I understood individuals, including myself as either volunteer, facilitator, or staff member, had valued or had found

challenging during the workshops. These statements were then shared with volunteers and staff to further clarify what they felt were the important aspects of learning that they wanted to see taken forward in any future workshop practices involving technology in the Centre [See Appendix A for further detail].

Phase 2 Chapter 8: Data collected as part of the deployment of the photo-parshiya included field-notes from each session, meeting and planning notes for sessions that were discussed on a weekly basis with the support worker, Liliane, photographic sequences and sketchbooks produced by volunteers, videos of discussions sharing photo-practices within the group, written reflections on the experience of taking part and post-workshop audio-recorded and transcribed interviews with two volunteers Nilah and Jolie, support-worker Liliane and volunteer co-ordinator, Rosie.

Analysis of this data again consisted of placing the printed material in a timeline and looking more closely for moments where criticality, creativity and confidence with technology [DiSalvo et al 2013] was being explored around use of the photo-parshiya. From these moments, I further expanded on the notes and materials to consider the environment and context, volunteers and others who were involved in these moments, either as taking the lead or supporting others within the interaction, while paying particular attention to moments of emotional fulfillment, struggle, moral or ethical dilemmas discussed in relation to the artefacts use. [See Appendix C for further detail].

Summary: A Socially Engaged Approach

The development of the methodology was motivated by a desire to further expand an understanding experience-centred design research practices specifically in the context of sensitive community social care settings. In particular I have drawn from socially engaged arts as an approach to working within communities that brings together concerns for the ethics and aesthetics of practice through ongoing dialogue with others. My motivation in choosing to draw from this particular area of arts practice is the emphasis on collective workshops to explore how community identities might be negotiated around photographic technologies through practical '*space-making*' exercises [Light 2011] as part of a '*critical technical practice*' [Agre 1997, Dourish & Bell 2011].

In further drawing from literature within socially engaged arts practice as a form of dialogical aesthetics, '*intersubjective vulnerabilities*' [Kester 2005: 158] and '*complex social knots*' [Bishop 2012: 39] also provide a vocabulary for expanding the discussion on researcher identities and relationships, reflexivity and participation as described in Chapter 2. In drawing from socially engaged arts literature, I combine this vocabulary with an approach to '*cultural probes*' that supports empathic social connections within community. In particular, I position the probes as a way of practically exploring a feminist postcolonial approach to design that considers '*historical particularity and plurality*' [Gunaratnam 2003].

In developing an interdisciplinary approach to interaction design, my motivation to draw from narrative inquiry and sensory ethnography is to support the qualitative documentation and analysis of workshop engagements. As discussed in Chapter 2, this is motivated by the challenges discussed by practitioners within HCI and participatory design in struggling to document workshop practices over long-term projects thereby providing limited insights on their transformative potential [DiSalvo et al 2013]. Therefore drawing from ethnography is motivated by the desire to explore ways of documenting such practices, through qualitative approaches that have a richer vocabulary for articulating forms of practice than those described within socially engaged arts, but are also similarly aligned [Helguera 2011]. Furthermore narrative and the senses provide ways of reflecting on experience as both attending to ethical and aesthetic sensibilities that align well with sensitivities required when working with social care communities. A sensory lens also provides a further ethical commitment to paying attention to how bodies make sense of experience holistically [Pink 2009].

Narrative inquiry in particular highlights techniques for engaging analytically with multiple voices to be explored within and between individuals over time to attend to experiences of tension and transformation in research. Narrative inquiry is therefore used here to highlight experiences of the researcher, volunteers and facilitators involved in the Centre and in workshops through autobiographical and storied accounts, in dialogue. This creates further

opportunities to account for change of those involved as different '*centres of value*' [Light 2009, McCarthy & Wright 2004, Wright & McCarthy 2010]. I have focused on an approach to support dialogue using stories and the senses as a lens on community experience of technology use and design to also tease out some of the emotional contingencies associated with community-based interaction design within social care.

The implications of adopting such an interdisciplinary approach for interaction design are that this necessitates engagement with social science, design and analytical methods that require translation to communicate ideas with the different partners involved in the research. This includes volunteers and staff, who have different experiences of social care and have different cultural backgrounds and histories. Furthermore in developing insights for the design of a digital artefact, the insights require working with programmers and engineers, who also have different disciplinary backgrounds and personal histories.

The methodology outlined here also suggests tensions that may require researcher negotiation between power and vulnerability [Kester 2004, Gunaratnam 2003], working between empathic dialogue, contradiction and agonism [Kester 2004, Bishop 2012]. This is implied by working with dialogical aesthetics as a form of social engagement in the context of social care communities. The implications of the approach suggest a potential uncomfortable and uncertain space, how in being attentive to ethical dilemmas, working with emotional ambiguity generated through creative practices, may need to be adapted and developed in relation to the specific social care community. This is particularly relevant for social care contexts and creative workshop delivery where significant complex life disruptions and challenges may be experienced by participants within their day-to-day lives. This may affect how regularly someone can emotionally and physically engage with the process and how workshop engagements might need to be sensitively supported so as not to cause harm and disruption.

Chapter 4

Starting a Conversation

'My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.'
Maya Angelou

Introduction

In this chapter I outline my process of getting to know a multicultural community learning and social care organisation, the Angelou Centre, through on-going conversations as a way of initially building relationships. This chapter serves as a foundation for the chapters that follow in taking forward the discussion in Chapter 2 on feminist and postcolonial perspectives on interaction design, and the methodological commitments outlined in socially engaged arts practice and narrative inquiry as discussed in Chapter 3. In this chapter, I now put these epistemological and methodological positions to work, not as a conceptual exercise, but to highlight how I brought them into being through practice and an embodied process of building research relationships. I do this through describing my own experience of the shifting and negotiated roles I enacted in the early stages of developing the research. Roles that included becoming an apprentice, participating in and delivering structured workshops, but also the important role of learning to just be, and patiently waiting.

In doing so I outline the early stages of practically developing a space for understanding the existing and future role of technology through socially engaged arts approaches woven into part of a particular diverse multicultural learning and care community. Part of this involves engaging with the socio-political and cultural backdrop of the Angelou Centre where the research takes place, which formed my initial understanding of how technology was part of an ecology of existing practices between staff and volunteers that largely focused on office management and training. At the same time, there was an interest in developing future projects that involved volunteers in being involved in creative heritage projects using technology. The approach was therefore driven by moving between the space of what was already there and listening out for hopes and aspirations between staff and volunteers.

Developing a Situated Approach

As discussed in previous chapters, socially engaged arts practice has gained much traction within the social sciences and within HCI over recent years. Approaches developed by practitioners are often done so through building on prior expertise and personal experience, rather than applying a particular set of methods. In developing a socially engaged arts based approach, I focused less on commitments to specific methods, but rather attempts to respond to unfolding situations through ways of knowing and doing that were connected to particular places and people's histories.

At the same time, I recognise there has been a distinct lack of documentation and reflexive analysis within socially engaged arts in research, with its roots in practice, rather than qualitative or social science research [Hjorth & Sharp 2014]. Working with a narrative inquiry approach, with its focus on understanding practice, and multiple ways of doing and knowing within multicultural learning communities [Phillion 2002, Clandinin & Connelly 1990, 2000] provided a way of understanding practice within community. With my particular emphasis on community identities, I also drew from a feminist postcolonial position [Ahmed 2004, hooks 1994, 2010, Gunaratnam 2003] to consider how an approach that encouraged a 'reflexive analytic doubling' helped connect my experience to communities where cultural diversity is important. At the same time, this approach required being attentive and mindful of occasions where essentialist perspectives on identity might be adopted and articulated.

In looking towards the early stages of building research relationships within community-based design, this chapter focuses on an account that weaves together field-notes and recollections based on the initial personal experiences of spending time at the Centre. This included my reflection on being part of a community informatics research project (also a multicultural women's project) in my early career as a freelance practitioner and how this connected to becoming a researcher within the context of a Computing Science department, alongside an account of the 'herstory' of the Centre.

This chapter is therefore structured through a composite story of one of the many meetings with Rosie, the Centre co-ordinator, to discuss a future plan for

research. In drawing from Clandinin and Connelly's approach to narrative inquiry [1990, 2000, Phillion 2002] in bringing these accounts together, I invoke a metaphorical 'three-dimensional narrative inquiry space' [Clandinin & Connelly 2000: 50]. Clandinin and Connelly describe this approach focusing on the movement between *interaction*; between the personal and the social, *continuity* in moving between past, past and future, and *situation*, the specific places and environments where interactions and a sense of continuity is situated. In describing the doing of narrative inquiry, they highlight the movement between research texts in four directions: inward, 'the internal conditions, such as feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions' and outward, towards the environment, and the temporal dimensions of 'backward and forward' in time.

Timescales and Ethics

This chapter covers a specific period of time between May and August 2011, which was dedicated to getting to know the Centre as a learning community, and refining the initial stages of the research. This included meetings with Centre staff, running workshops and consultations with learners to inform the most appropriate ways of working within the community that suited the holistic approaches adopted by the Centre (a brief outline of those early meetings and sessions is provided in Appendix A) and highlights how meetings began in February, with police checks, references and volunteer training needing to take place before I was able to take part in activities at the Centre. This was followed by my taking part in workshops, events and meetings that took place between May and July, which informed the planning for ethical approval. This was to ensure the plans were realistic and informed by a process that was grounded in staff and learner experiences alongside the contingencies and day-to-day realities of working at the Centre. This was particularly important because of the emotional, political and cultural sensitivity that was required, where some of the women that came to the Centre, were accessing legal aid and counselling support for their experiences of trauma and violence and the associated uncertainties they faced concerning their immigration status.

Being Within a Narrative Inquiry Space

In the following section, I develop an account that attempts to give a sense of the experience and feelings of being in and part of the Centre. This has been developed from specific field notes that draw together a number of experiences, feelings and encounters as I met with staff and women for meetings and workshops as a way of getting to know the community. Some of this material draws from recollections, since through revisiting the notes and in the process of recounting experiences, other images, feelings and connections have been made. During these first stages of research I recall often feeling incredibly confused, overwhelmed and over stimulated with so much going on all at the same time. When I re-read these notes, I was amazed at how little I had captured of the feelings of being there.

It was more specifically when I engaged with notes and evoked the sensory and material nature of the Centre [Pink 2009] that I started to find a vocabulary for describing the experience of being there. Therefore this following section is not an account of a specific day or time, although it does draw from specific field notes and documentation, this section is a combination of fact and fiction, both grounded in the embodied and messy material and acoustic realities of the Centre, filtered and interpreted through memory and worked into an imaginative response to how it sometimes felt to be there. In constructing such an account, from fragments and partial understandings, I attempt to respond to both specific events, while providing more of a narrative overview of the spaces where the action took place. In also drawing from Pink [et al 2013] I also highlight how such approaches, of walking through space are valuable in encouraging awareness of the material and spatial contingencies of technologies and how they effect and weave into everyday practices. This approach is akin to other ethnographic accounts within HCI, such as those provided through vignettes [Orr 1996]. In focusing on a sensory account, I attempt to weave together a more embedded description of experiences emphasising the relevance of understanding that develops spatially between people and things that constitute place-making practices [Dourish & Bell 2011]. Through this account, I also position myself reflexively through specific interactions and connecting particular past experiences from my own personal sense of history and connections to multicultural learning and technology. I have also written this

account within the historical present, to evoke the liveness of the experiences. Recollections are however, written in the past tense.

Becoming a researcher

In October 2010 I'm still in the early stages of a PhD in Computing Science at Newcastle University. I'm just about getting to grips with what it means to be a researcher trying to reconcile what I know through experience of being a practitioner over the past decade, and what I'm reading in research journals and listening to at conferences. I repeatedly find myself questioning what I'm seeing and hearing, most of it doesn't make sense and most of the time I feel utterly lost. This is apparently quite normal when doing a Ph.D., but what I'm really confusing by are the incredibly clean and linear accounts of people's experiences and use of technology. I can't seem to hear or imagine who the people are that the researchers are talking about.

In hearing these accounts, it reminds me of my experiences of working between a community informatics and social science department of a university in 2005, engaging a group of first generation Pakistani and Afghanistani women who have come to settle in the UK. Since the events of 9/11 took place in 2001, those who identify explicitly with Islam and more generally those who are considered racially, politically or religiously different are increasingly under scrutiny from political agendas and the media [Ahmed 2004]. The political desire for integration and cohesion, within diverse multicultural communities has given way to the realities of complex community identities, that connect to many social, economic and political migrations to the UK [Gilchrist et al 2010, Wetherell 2007, 2009].

As part of a contract to work on the project as a freelancer, I was part of a team, which included, a social science researcher, a community informatics researcher and a social worker. The project, funded by the EU, was seeking to look at the role of online representation in supporting community health and well-being for immigrant women, however it turned out to be a little more complicated. We started to work with a small group of around 15 women who attended weekly sessions at a local community centre. The group was led by the social worker who brought the group together over several years to prevent

isolation and promote intergenerational connections in communities. As somebody who came from India in the 60s, she valued the importance of connecting with others and the importance of women having opportunities to broaden their horizons outside of the home. She welcomed the project as she saw this as a chance to reflect on the group achievements, what their hopes for the future as a form of community consultation and legacy for a project that had been running for several years. It became clearer as the project developed that the social scientist, was more interested in how women were using their mobile phones and wanted to learn more about their perspectives on global communication strategies. The community informatics researchers were keen for the group to have an online presence.

I worked with the group each week using photography, video and group discussion, to explore aspects of the women's lives. Despite the project meeting the initial aims that the social worker hoped for, it was clear relatively early on in the process that the group were not that interested in going online as part of the weekly meetings. The set-up of the community centre meant computers were tucked away in a formal classroom upstairs, away from the social space close to the kitchen where the group met every week. In discussing this with the group, they weren't that interested in coming to the sessions to learn IT or spend time on a computer, so it became unclear of the benefit going online had for the women in the context of what they already did, which was focused on socialising.

Myself and the social worker suggested to the researchers that we use technology that fitted with this more informal approach that the group had developed over the years, and use the technology, photography and video, to engage the group in reflection on and celebrating their ongoing commitment and support within the group. A compromise was met and we worked with the group towards a book that described something of individual experiences of coming to the UK, settling and their future hopes. The book was eventually printed and translated made available online as a PDF.

These are the kinds of experiences I don't hear when people are delivering research accounts as I start my Ph.D. I don't hear about the ongoing

negotiations, the different agendas and the compromises that take place in trying to make research happen within communities. I also don't hear the connection to political agendas, global events and historical relations that form the backdrop to how and why the research is being funded. I don't hear about the ongoing work that goes into ensuring the technology makes sense within the context of different agendas and different spaces. I don't hear the different ways in which technology is used to create content to communicate with multiple different audiences and publics. Yet projects like the one I just described have been part of the research landscape for a long time. This was partly why I was confused when researchers, in designing projects and developing technologies were describing clean accounts of long-term participatory engagements with communities and not accounting for the entangled relationships and agendas that they were often clearly involved in negotiating and creating.

Starting a Conversation

By January 2011, I've decided I want to work with communities who have come to the UK from a non-EU country. I'm interested in how technology becomes part of aspirations for the future, how it is used to sustain global family ties and at the same time create opportunities for new identities and connections within new communities in the UK. It's the movement between these commitments that I'm interested in, rather than coming at it from one particular perspective. I've been in touch with and met a number of organisations across the North East and North West. One of them, The Angelou Centre, who I have contacted several times by email and have spoken to on the phone, is a women's charity about a mile away from the University who are just about to start developing arts workshops and so they are interested in the work I've been doing over the past few years as a practitioner and now as a researcher. I've spoken to Rosie, the Co-ordinator for the Centre. She has described how in the longer term, they're interested in developing a heritage and education programme. She seems keen and interested to explore what they could do with digital technology in the future.

Carrying on the Conversation

In June 2011, and even though the weather should be hot, it's a cold grey day as I walk from the University, to meet Rosie at the Centre. We're meeting to discuss the next steps for the research and planning for future workshops. Over the last month I have been shadowing staff and consulting with volunteers on the kinds of art and crafts activities they want to get involved in and looking at what technology gets used. It's 8.10 am and I walk up the hill from the towering blocks of the university buildings, through leafy parks and into an area about a mile west from the city centre. The street already appears busier than the rest of the city I have walked through so far. The international food stores, catering for students, restaurant owners and families in the area that spill out onto the pavement, are already filling up with early morning radio and shoppers filling bags and trolleys with vegetables, packets of crisps, bottles of fizzy pop and tins, while market traders are shoving past people, singing while manoeuvring large boxes to get their early morning international deliveries out onto the shelves.

I turn the corner onto a quieter stretch of the road where there are fewer shops and more houses. I head for the top of the street where there is a 3-story building with pale blue doors and roller shutters that cover the windows. There is a pale green, cream and peach sign, with a Savannah mountain, sunrise and landscape that says *The Angelou Centre*. The roller shutters that cover the window suggest there is no one in yet, but I press the buzzer on the door anyway. The sound is shrill and piercing, 'BBBBBUUUUUUZZZZZZ'. Normally I would only do this for a short amount of time, as there is usually someone sat next to the door or at reception. But today I do this for longer than usual, in the vain hope that someone will hear me if they are in. If someone has already arrived, and they are working at the top of the building, then I need to make sure they hear me.

It's around 8.30 am now, which is the time I have arranged to meet Rosie, so I stand and wait in the cold damp grey morning and watch the early morning traffic to see if she is arriving in her car. This gives me chance to step back and take a look at the building. It looks old and more domestic than built for business or community purposes, except there are two large windows on either side of the door that fills up the entire front part of the building. The door is glass and is covered with decorative patterns that have been hand painted with red

and gold glass paints. I imagine this is to provide some privacy so that people can't look directly into the offices because of the sensitive nature of some of the work they do. When the shutters are up, the windows too have a mirrored plastic covering to prevent people being able to look directly inside and I wonder whether this is so women who come there feel comfortable to learn, rather than feeling as if they are on display. There are a set of three smaller windows, on the first floor and three dormer annexes with smaller windows on the second floor in the converted attic.

No one has appeared so I give the buzzer another long buzz and decide to send Rosie a text.

Hiya r we meeting today? Have 8.30 am in diary - no-one seems to be here??? Thanks Rachel

I put the phone back in my pocket and hear somebody coming down the stairs and grappling with the latch. It's Barbara and she opens the door and greets me with a big smile and lets me in. I tell her that I'm meeting Rosie, but she says that she hasn't arrived yet, so I sit on the comfy blue sofas to the right of the door and wait, as Barbara explains that she has come in early to finish off some paperwork. She asks if I want a cup of tea, but I say no and that I'll just wait on the sofas. She asks if I mind that she heads off back upstairs and I reassure her that this is OK.

It is rare that I am here this early in the morning and it is rare that there are so few people around. As I sit on the chair next to the door, my back is facing the window, this is the window I was previously looking at from the outside and there are large green draping plants on the window ledge that tickle my neck when I sit back. In front of me is a grey reception desk with telephone, laptop, card folders, stapler and pen holder. The table appears to be wedged uncomfortably in-between three tall brown metal filing cabinets, two on the right and one on the left. At the back of the desk on the wall there are photographs of all the members of staff from the Centre with a description of their roles in a large display board type frame with red felted fabric and Velcro that holds the photographs in place. These photographs sit alongside colourful hand-painted signs with flowers that say welcome in Urdu, Hindi, Bengali and Arabic. To the right of me is a set of glass doors, behind which is the computer room. This also

doubles up as a conference and party room. When the room changes its function like this the computers are ingeniously folded away into wooden desks.

I recall an Eid⁴ party celebration I attended a few weeks back, where instead of computers, the tables were covered in plates and bowls of dishes made by volunteers presented beautifully and I was encouraged to try and give feedback on each dish as I tasted them.

There are posters on the wall with a map of the world, inspirational quotes from famous black women and leaders plus testimonials from women who have attended courses at the Centre and describe how they have achieved skills and confidence. The colours of these posters reflect the colours of the sign on the building on the outside. There are also policy documents posted on the wall that include guidelines on how to respect equality, diversity and formal complaints procedures.

To the left of the desk is a notice board that is busy with leaflets and flyers to promote opportunities for women who come to the centre to go on trips, attend courses and get information about what is going on in their local area. Below this is a blue soft fabric chair and small matching table with a glass top and this is also scattered with bigger information leaflets.

Next to the chair is an archway into the kitchen and a small social space with 6 more blue fabric chairs. The chairs are positioned opposite one another with small light grey coffee tables in the centre. There are several boxes full of arts and crafts materials that move between the kids clubs that run on Saturdays and the arts and crafts workshops I've been helping with on a Friday. The boxes are stacked precariously on the floor next to the external wall and window and next to a stack of plastic chairs that sits in the corner of the space. There are bright African and Malaysian prints of abstracted faces that are framed and hung up on either side of this social eating space. The kitchen is separated from this comfortable sitting space by a hatch-like structure and archway that contains a cooker, fridge, sink, microwave and cupboards and is small and fairly cramped when there are more than 2 people in there. But it is

⁴ Yearly Islamic religious festival to celebrate the end of a month of fasting for Ramadan.

also a sociable kitchen too as when people often make cups of tea or heat up food they lean across the hatch and talk with others who might be sat on the comfy chairs. Although this room can often feel quite cosy since it is comfortable, it is easy to sit and talk with people more intimately than in the reception as I've taken part in meetings where staff and women have faced one another, or sat closely together to talk more privately.

To the left of the reception desk is a green wooden door that leads up to the stairs, and to the left of this door is a pale tiled sign that says the Angelou Centre 1993-2003. It looks as if this is a 10 year centenary community celebratory display created from recycled tiles and I am reminded of the history of the Centre and that they are coming up to a 20 year celebration. Over the last few months I have been told and read about parts of the unfolding 'herstory' of the Centre.

The Angelou Centre 'herstory'

While I'm attending meetings and workshops over the first few months of being at the Centre, staff often describe how they established the Centre in 1993. This was in response to a growing need for greater skills, training, and community welfare support for Black and Minority Ethnic women in the region. Particular areas of the North East had experienced long sustained migration of families from South Asia, primarily from Pakistan and India since the 50s. While the North East had a relatively small ethnic minority population in comparison to other areas of the country by the late 80s, the socialist politics associated with the working class economics of mining seemed to create activist fervour and a vibrant backdrop for regular protests of injustices felt within the region. A group of young social, community health and care workers and those involved in charitable community work from BME (black, minority ethnic) backgrounds started protests in 1989 to highlight the lack of specific tailored support available for BME women in the area. This was felt specifically in cases of domestic violence where women's experiences within social services and the British judicial system did not sensitively recognise the cultural complexities of abuse beyond the relationship between victim and perpetrator [Hajdukowski-Ahmed 2009, Sokoloff & Pratt 2005]. Social workers were frequently attending cases that not only incorporated physical violence, but also emotional and

financial abuse, alongside coercive control that impacted on women's long term mental health and well-being. Further abuses through extended family networks, often involving particular infringements of human rights, trafficking, domestic slavery, born out of ambiguities of spousal immigration status ensured women often remained dependent on abusive families for daily resources, financial and emotional support [Thiama & Gill 2010].

By 1993 this group of feminist activists had developed enough financial resources and political impetus to establish a Centre and charity in an immigrant area of the city, that would ensure BME women were in more control, working alongside social services providing more directed support they felt was more tailored for women with diverse cultural backgrounds. This included taking a holistic perspective not only recognising the importance of welfare support but also the important role of education in ensuring women could develop their professional skills and become financially independent. This approach also relied on training and education for the next generation of community advocates and social workers. In addition, Centre staff and board members also worked towards informing future social welfare policy and practice and making changes within the local community by raising awareness of some of the challenges many of the women in their neighbourhoods were experiencing.

While this was the formal narrative that was often described to me, staff also sometimes described the more personal ways the work was both meaningful and challenging for them. While making cups of tea, I would hear hints of how this work could result in tremendous amounts of pressure while working on domestic violence cases in particular. They described how they could sometimes become the target of malicious verbal attacks and harassment where perpetrators attempted to derail legal cases and court proceedings. Staff sometimes received home visits from respected members of the local community wanting to intervene in court cases and have police charges of violence dropped. They also sometimes received anonymous threats at home and at work.

What I learnt was how staff skilfully managed how to work almost under cover within the neighbourhood leveraging community networks carefully, negotiating

their visibility and particular levels of confidentiality and anonymity. Often this required staff to pretend they were not involved in, working on specific domestic violence cases at all. At the same time they campaigned tirelessly for greater visibility of domestic violence issues, nationally, regionally and locally within the community to promote greater discussion and awareness, at the same time protecting the very particular identities of staff and women involved.

The Centre have predominantly worked with South Asian women over the past 20 years and the majority of staff who work there identify with Pakistani, or Indian heritage. However more recently, their work has included those who also identify with Arabic, African and Eastern European identities across the region. From 2010, they received funding from the Ministry of Justice to develop a programme of counselling, social and legal support for women leaving, managing or working to change abusive relationships [House of Commons 2008, United Nations 2012, Chaplin et al 2011]. Part of this programme is encouraging those affected to attend courses and workshops to ensure ongoing social connection for those feeling isolated through opportunities for self-development as part of their commitment to 'empowering women to achieve their potential'.

Back to the Meeting

I feel my phone vibrate in my pocket, there's a text from Rosie.

Sorry! Running Late. On way now!

It's only a few minutes later that Rosie is buzzing at the door, before energetically and apologetically bouncing into the main reception. We head up to her office through the green door beside the reception desk and through another green door that slams shut, with a large bang behind us as we climb the carpeted stairs up to Rosie's office.

In coming to meetings and organising workshops with Rosie, I have started to get to know her and how she likes to work. On several occasions she has described herself as a bit of an 'alien', by this I think she means that she has an unusual background, her father is of African descent, her mum white British, she grew up in a small rural community in the northern hills in a place well known for its interesting combination of farmers, makers and artists who all

share a sometimes desolate but also culturally vibrant and often isolated landscape. Her family are originally from the North East, strong female academics and teachers and while she has stayed in the North East, she has travelled as a musician. A single gay mum, she often describes her previous work in terms of being an activist, squatter, musician, DIY maker and community development worker.

When meeting with Rosie, we often compared our different backgrounds in growing up. I was born in inner-city Manchester, a vast post-industrial city, as a white working class child, in a largely white-working class neighbourhood, among Jamaican, Irish, Vietnamese, Pakistani and Polish families. I went to an all girls' school, where a third of the class had dual citizenship and had gone to University and worked in Nottingham and London. I had found it strange when I moved to the North East of England and felt there was very little cultural diversity, especially when living in northern rural areas, similar to the places where Rosie described growing up.

In our informal conversations and meetings, Rosie and I connect with these places and people where we have been in our pasts. There are a few friends in Newcastle that we share and we often get excited about our interest in feminist art, literature and electronic music when we have time. But we also disconnect over our vocabulary on multiculturalism and politics. Rosie doesn't appreciate the use of terms such as 'multiculturalism' and 'diversity', as she believes this masks a political agenda to both eradicate particular cultural differences through a benign acceptance of diversity, while promoting anti-immigration propaganda. I felt that the use of the terms multiculturalism and diversity highlighted this uneasy tension we have with the terms and draws particular attention to a complexity of issues.

Rosie opens the door into her office. The office is small and cramped with two office desks pushed up against the wall, one behind and one opposite the door. A large window looks out onto the street and the road below and a Victorian cast iron fireplace sits at the far corner of the room. There are children's drawings and photos of Rosie's daughter in her school uniform on the walls in front of Rosie's desk that contains her computer and telephone amidst files and

paperwork. She has a fluffy embroidered fuchsia pink cushion on her office chair, which is pushed up against the fireplace amongst large sheets of flip chart paper that have been rolled up and stored on the floor. She grabs the other chair that is tucked neatly underneath the desk and gestures for me to sit down.

The buzzer downstairs starts to buzz almost as soon as we get into the room and Rosie moves in and out of her office several times to press the buzzer on the wall next to the door outside to let whoever is downstairs in, before sitting back down in the chair. We start to discuss what's next in terms of the research. We've already delivered a number of arts-based consultations and Rosie has set up a cooking club, which I have been involved in as a way of understanding a little more of how the Centre works while we write the ethical approval application. We discuss the past few weeks and I describe how many of the women refer to staff as family and to the Centre as a home, at the same time, I describe how I have found it difficult to build trust and have sometimes found it awkward in encouraging women to discuss ideas and participate. In being the newest staff member at the Centre, Rosie describes how she feels it does take time. She highlights how many of the women that come to the Centre experience many different kinds of oppression and racial abuse within their communities and can be nervous around new people. Rosie describes how the new immigration policies are also creating a lot of pressure for women who have uncertain citizenship status but don't have access to education and this is being felt in the Centre.

So we start to make a plan for September. Knowing that things will take time I suggest I work with some volunteers on the digital storytelling project that Rosie has arranged with the local museum service. I feel confident that I can offer more insights in this area both by taking part and observing some of the processes involved to make suggestions on how this might be developed within the organisation in the future. I'm also curious how this could work as part of a design process, in engaging people in making stories. I also describe how I think this might be useful to help inform the design of the research I would like to do with a much more visual perspective on stories. Rosie thinks this would be useful too as she wants to develop a much larger heritage project using

technology to encourage women to create their own narratives about their experiences. She's interested in how these processes might engage women who don't necessarily have English as their first language. There's also interest from some of the volunteers in putting some of this content online as they have just started developing a website.

While we're talking there are several more buzzes on the door and members of staff climb the stairs to their offices on the same floor and the floor above. Some of the staff pop their heads around the door and say hello asking us both how we are. The phone starts ringing once we hit 9 am and email notifications also start to ping onto Rosie's computer, to which she starts to turn her head around, I presume to check whether it is urgent or not. She says she thinks it would be a good idea to have a look at the other Centre, the Roshni, where workshops can take place. She wants to take some photographs while she remembers and goes into a locked drawer where she pulls out a clear wallet with what looks like rough scraps of red paper. She grabs one of the pieces of paper and unfolds it and inside is an SD card, which she pops into a camera on her desk and plugs into the computer with a USB cable. This launches the camera software where she attempts to download pictures to a secure server, but the software shows an error message and won't allow her to do this.

I'm just about to get up and help, when there is a knock on the door from Samiya, the outreach worker, looking at finding some refuge accommodation for a client who has just left her partner. Rosie asks if I mind if she does a quick ring around. I say no problem and ask if she wants me to leave while she has this conversation. I'm aware there may be confidential details disclosed, but she says it's fine, but I still feel slightly awkward being in the room and listening to the conversation. I look out of the window and try and block out the sound.

Once Rosie has finished on the phone she looks back at the computer and asks herself what she was doing. She stares at the screen for a minute before taking the mouse and clicking through folders to find the photographs she had just downloaded. She copies these photographs onto a folder on her desktop before transferring them to the secure server. She then suggests we go and have a look at the Roshni Centre where there might be some free space for the digital

storytelling workshops. She explains that there will probably be very little space to run these within the main centre. The training room and the computer room are already fully booked in the week, but the Roshni Centre, across the road might be available. We head out of her office and I notice the training room on the right is now filling up with ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students as we pass them coming up the stairs. We say hello as we head down the stairs.

The reception entrance is now transformed into a busy and bustling space as women are sat chatting on the blue fabric chairs, on mobile phones, or quietly waiting. There are now two women behind the reception desk, Saeeda and Prya. Prya is talking on a landline phone in Bangali while she stands at the edge of the desk and Saeeda is typing on a laptop computer next to her. There are women in the kitchen area, taking young wriggling children out of prams and buggies and taking their coats off before heading to the top of the building to take their children to the crèche. There are women also arriving at the entrance, being buzzed in and heading into the computer room for a class on Microsoft Word.

The quiet chattering of Urdu reminds me of being a teenager and going to my friend Fazana's auntie's fabric store. Fazana and I played with family and teenage girl expectations and conventions, navigating what was considered both cool and acceptable through the norms of urban teenage fashion, and for her through Muslim modesty and the lifestyles that were admired on the streets, in magazines and in the clubs. We would make the most of our own clothes and experimented with our school uniforms, we had nose piercings and added fabric embellishments purchased from Fazana's Auntie's fabric and jewellery store in Cheetham Hill, the Asian fabric capital of the North West, where we would visit in the holidays or after school. We would drink hot sweet and milky cardamom tea in the back of the store while listening to conversations slip in and out of Urdu and English.

Rosie begins talking to some of the women on the sofas to ask how they are and what they're up to. They respond by telling her that they are fine, but they're waiting for a meeting with Samiya and they're not sure if she has arrived

yet. Rosie asks Saeeda when Samiya is going to be free. Saeeda who is typing away busily on the laptop, tells her that she has buzzed Samiya and she is on her way. While Rosie is engaged in this conversation, I notice that one of the women, Huzna, who has been coming to some of the arts sessions is sat on the blue sofas. She says hello and I ask her how she is. She says she is OK and has had a good weekend with her kids. She explains how she was with Rosie at a singing workshop. As she is telling me this, she reaches inside her bag and pulls out a small mobile phone and starts to press the buttons. She turns the phone around and she shows me a tiny photograph on a screen, I can just about make out that it is her, but she explains that the photograph is from the weekend at the workshop, she is with her children. Huzna calls Rosie over to show her the photograph, and she leans in to take a look and they chat briefly about how they had a good time during the workshop.

Rosie and I head out of the door, and we're back on the street again. We turn right and right again and walk down the back alley of the centre and the houses. It's bin day and all the green plastic wheely bins are strewn haphazardly and expectantly in the alley, some are so full their lids are open as if they are yawning lazily with a mouth full of food as they wait for the bin truck to pick them up and empty what's inside.

The Roshni Centre faces us as we get to the end of the alley. It's an old Victorian terrace, a domestic property, three stories high that sits on the road that runs parallel to, and behind the Centre. Rosie uses her keys to open the grand Victorian door, which sets off a noisy BEEEEEEEEEP before an alarm is set off, she rushes in, switches the lights on, heads for the cupboard under the stairs and types in the alarm code. The Roshni feels cold and dark and has both a domestic and institutional feel. There is a leaflet stand to my left, with a few lonely looking pieces of promotional leaflets for projects and stairs leading up to more darkness. To my right is a small glass hatch, which makes it feel like a doctors surgery. At the front of this hatch is a ledge where there are piles of letters and leaflets that look a little crinkly as though they've been there for years. I can just about make out an office beyond the glass hatch, with chairs, tables and cupboards.

Rosie explains that they are trying to sell this place and move the whole centre into one property down the road, so this place isn't ideal, but for now it provides an extra bit of valuable space for workshops and meetings. She opens the door into a room that's beyond the office and flicks the light switch and the fluorescent tubes flicker into a green tinged glow that lights up a windowless room. She shows me how she has been using this space for extra workshops. This space too feels as if this is set up, just like a doctors surgery. There are green soft chairs around the outside of the room with dark brown wooden veneer coffee tables in the middle, with thin grey hardwearing carpet on the floor and small wooden wall mounted cupboards. At the end of this room there is another door that leads onto an industrial kitchen, with large metal appliances and a preparation table in the centre of the room.

Rosie describes how there is another space that we could use too, upstairs in the attic, so we climb the two flights of stairs, passing two toilets, a library and a disused crèche and another office. Once we reach the attic room at the top of the building, this is a much lighter and airy space, in what feels like a huge maze of a building. There are tables and chairs in the middle of the room, a computer that looks broken and office furniture. There are cupboards near the door, which have sewing machines and fabric stored in them. The space looks as though it could be tidier and set up more like a learning space and Rosie and I agree that we should arrange a time to do this before September, before the digital storytelling workshops begin.

Connections and Reflections on Technology Use

In these initial stages of getting to know Centre staff and volunteers, technology was mainly experienced as being used within fairly standard work practices, education and training. As this account and my field-notes often highlighted, the workarounds that staff engaged in while supporting women's immediate and social needs and the flexibility required for various technologies to work together within the particular multi-functional spaces of the Centre alongside the various interruptions associated with the social care tasks could create challenges but also opportunities for ingenuity. The computer room was a good example of this, where the technology needed to fit in with other more social kinds of activities. In particular this highlighted how spaces shifted from training;

where the technology was central to group activities as part of formal learning, to partying; where the technology was packed away and became invisible when group social activities were taking place.

More personal technologies, such as mobile phones, were also used to draw me and others into and support conversations about previous activities and events at the Centre. This created smaller and more intimate acts of technology use and sharing based on the particular relationships volunteers had with Centre staff and the kinds of activities they were already involved in.

What I have attempted to do in this account is highlight how this first stage of getting to know and starting a conversation, highlighted how different configurations of the technology, desktop computers, laptops, mobile phones, landline phones and digital cameras, were woven into the material and social practices of these initial meetings. I did not attempt to foreground these interactions, but often considered how the technology was part of the periphery, part of the background landscape amongst and within the particular situations that staff and volunteers were involved in. Here technology was negotiated around face-to-face communication, confidential conversations and multi-lingual exchanges, where information and data was stored between, for instance locked cabinets and secured servers.

While an indepth study of the work practices of the organisation could have been valuable, at these initial stages, I felt it was more appropriate to get to know staff and volunteers through the more everyday interactions as I was meeting people and technology in a broader range of specific situations. Furthermore this helped write the ethical approval application procedure and work with staff and volunteers on refining specific ideas that we too wanted to work towards. This helped to highlight the more future oriented focus of Rosie, in her desire to work with technology and what she was hoping to achieve through this process. This was specifically more oriented towards more creative practices such as digital storytelling as part of the longer-term aim of developing a heritage project.

Myself, staff and volunteers, actively sought to make connections throughout these first stages of building relationships in order to be more cognisant of how we could make sense of our own particular perspectives. In attempting to draw connections, we drew from our own interests in art and culture, and our affiliations with friends in our extended networks. Rosie and I actively made sense of these through peripheral and more incidental conversations that were often lively and rich. Here we drew from and articulated past experiences and knowledge in making and weaving these connections together. At the same time our interest in and connections to perspectives on multiculturalism and diversity could be different, while recognising my own experiences and understanding of issues around immigration, were often based on a relatively limited and distanced perspective through reading literature, friends' experiences at school and university and the relatively safe perspective of my own secure British citizenship. At the same time my previous experience of working with similar social care communities was sometimes used in discussions to highlight how I also recognised some of the complexities of negotiation around research agendas, I needed to acknowledge the different perspectives and experiences of staff and volunteers working on and part of immigration cases and my own particular position as a researcher.

In the next Chapter I explore how technology was also leveraged as a creative resource by connecting to an existing heritage and archiving project through engaging in digital storytelling.

Chapter 5

Digital Storytelling and Crafting Stories

'When you are in the middle of a story it isn't a story at all, but only a confusion; a dark roaring, a blindness, a wreckage of shattered glass and splintered wood; like a house in a whirlwind, or else a boat crushed by the icebergs or swept over the rapids, and all aboard powerless to stop it. It's only afterwards that it becomes anything like a story at all. When you are telling it, to yourself or to someone else.'
Margaret Atwood, *Alias Grace*

Introduction

In becoming involved with the Centre, and in discussing their interest in digital storytelling, I began reading literature and looking at online digital storytelling projects⁵. Predominantly digital storytelling combines both a process that works towards the production of a short video, usually of 2-4 minutes long shared online or within local communities. Within media studies literature, digital storytelling is frequently described as a vernacular and democratic form of media production, often involving a group process where a short story is recorded as a voice over, and edited with a series of photographs to create individually authored video sequences [Briggs 2012, Burgess 2006, Couldry 2008, Kidd 2010, Lundby 2008]. Discussions of digital storytelling projects often describe a participant-led agenda for groups who come together to develop their ideas for a story, write, edit and audio record individual scripts, choose images to accompany audio recordings, edit these together in a video and share these completed videos online or within particular communities [Lambert 2008]. Practitioners and researchers, describe a desire to create more democratic forms of digital media content, outside the monopoly of large broadcast media institutions to *'challenge the public broadcaster's construction of a unified, homogenous, national identity by addressing the diverse tastes and interests of ethnic, racial and cultural minorities that are often ignored, silenced or otherwise misrepresented by national broadcasters.'* [Howley 2010: 2]. At the same time there have been many digital storytelling projects established by and within large institutions such as the BBC and museums to create alternative

⁵ <http://storycenter.org>

community media content, particularly for broadcast, archives and exhibitions⁶ [Kidd 2010].

The values and associated practices of digital storytelling, connect to the wider concerns expressed by practitioners engaged in community media projects, with a particular emphasis on the emotive power and empathic potential of shared stories [Burgess 2006, Bidwell et al 2010]. The specific principles that connect digital storytellers together and set them apart from other forms of community and participatory media production, focus on the inclusive nature of storytelling. Everyone tells stories in their day to day lives, but not everyone has access or the technological means to share their stories in a contemporary media rich society. The broad aims of digital storytelling are often described in terms of providing access to the technical, practical and creative resources available to the broadcast industry to enable ordinary people to document and share these stories, locally and internationally within their immediate community and wider public [Burgess 2006, Couldry 2008, Lundy 2008]. The specific purposes of a digital storytelling project are often described in terms of raising awareness or developing a shared understanding of local political issues or personal perspectives in health and social care. Some projects focus on cross-cultural understanding or to give voice to particular diverse communities, supporting creative digital literacy education [Briggs 2012] or developing innovative participatory media content for broadcast or institutional purposes [Kidd 2010].

Within the HCI literature, the convergence of increased access and availability of both fixed and mobile technologies within and outside of the home, learning institutions and communities, has further propelled interest and innovation in the development of digital storytelling as both a method of engagement and inspiration for digital media applications. Studies of everyday storytelling that occur around co-located photo-sharing in the home and community has offered insights into how families and groups make sense and meaning through visual and material form within situated social interactions [Durrant et al 2009, Frohlich et al 2002, Taylor et al 2009, 2010]. The empowering processes associated

⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/audiovideo/sites/galleries/pages/capturewales.shtml>
<http://www.cultureshock.org.uk/home.html>

with digital storytelling have been considered valuable to provide insights into the production of narratives as an approach for participatory design [Ekelin et al 2008]. Furthermore the potential to engage groups in authoring story-based media content has underlined the important aspects of storytelling to support collaboration [Di Blas et al 2010], learning [Gyaback et al 2011, Ohler 2007, Freidus et al 2002, Stanton et al 2001] intercultural exchange [Sawhney 2006], archiving and celebration of cultural heritage [Bidwell et al 2010, Lu 2011, Shen 2002]. Multiple applications and participatory platforms, including those developed for desktop computers [Landry et al 2006], public screens [Frohlich et al 2009], mobile phone [Reitmaier et al 2009, 2010, 2011, Bidwell et al 2010] and tabletop technologies [Lu et al 2011] have been developed to scaffold storytelling activity using digital media.

Despite what appears to be a prolific interest across media studies and HCI around the potential of digital storytelling as a socio-technical empowering and democratic process, few have engaged with existing literature on the study of stories in the social sciences that consider the relevance of institutions, facilitators and researchers as actors within the process. For example, there is little mention of the long tradition of the politics associated with storytelling, authorship and subjective voice within feminist theory [Belenky et al 1986, Chase 2003] collective and social meanings of stories [Frank 2010, Cruikshank 2000], stories as cultural expressions of and reconstructions of experience, [Bruner 1986, Clandinin & Connelly 2000], stories as sense making, self making and imaginative constructs [Bruner 1986, Polkinghorne 1995].

In reflecting on my own acts of storytelling I would often consider who I was telling, where and why in a very situated way and so I was interested in how this would play out within the digital storytelling process, that embraces both a local and global agenda. I also considered the role that institutions might play in these processes when researchers were discussing the sometimes highly emotive, creative, cathartic and ethically complex projects enabled through digital storytelling [Briggs 2012, Kidd 2010, Thumin 2008]. Yet there was also little research on the role of facilitation and institutional framing in the practice of digital storytelling itself although more recently Clark et al [2014] and Couldry et al [2014] have begun to discuss these aspects more explicitly.

Planning and Delivery of Workshops

In planning for the workshops, I met with Alice, a digital storyteller as part of the local museum service, Samiya, the outreach worker at the Centre and Rosie, the Centre co-ordinator who was developing ideas for a much longer-term heritage project. They arranged a visit to a local museum in May, where digital stories were being shown, to introduce the project and show the group some examples of what could be produced. Over 30 women and their children attended, and although I couldn't make it, many of the women in the Centre told me in passing how they had enjoyed the visit. While this visit to the museum was initially intended to recruit a small group to take part in the digital storytelling workshops in June and July, the logistics of arranging meetings and organising dates around holidays meant that workshops were postponed until the new term started again in September.

In the meetings I attended, with my theoretical understanding of the digital storytelling process and my experiential understanding of the Centre, I was somewhat sceptical of the democratic and empowering claims being made. I did not, however want to make too many suggestions or make this perspective explicitly felt in case I put people's backs up as I still felt I was building relationships and learning how to be a researcher. I was conscious of sounding like a know it all in being associated with the university, which felt different to being a freelancer. I therefore felt I needed to keep an open mind to see what would happen in the workshops, while recognising that my role would not be neutral in being part of supporting, participating and observing the digital storytelling process. I discussed this with the team to consider how best to document the process and suggested doing this through field-notes so as not to interrupt the sessions too much and to develop some understanding of the practice, by supporting the volunteers who came to the session. Samiya was to recruit volunteers through offering the workshops to those who she thought would get the most out of the sessions and would also have the time. A total of 6 workshops were arranged with Alice to be run every Wednesday between 11am – 2pm and to include lunch, transport costs and a crèche for those who had children. The number of workshops arranged was based on the standard delivery package Alice often organised with groups to develop a digital story.

This was usually 3 successive days, but at the Centre, volunteers often found it difficult to do full days because of the need to pick children up from school, and attend other courses and so it was agreed that sessions should be split into 6 half days instead.

In the meetings different motivations for the workshops were discussed. Alice felt it was important to have some representation of domestic violence and women's migration experiences in the museum archives as part of the digital stories collection, since there was little representation of these narratives in collections or online. Samiya was keen for volunteers to be involved by extending the existing time they spend in the Centre alongside the opportunity to make sense of experiences through creative activities. Rosie was keen to understand how the workshop process would be inclusive for ethnic minority women in light of developing a heritage project for the future. I was interested in getting a better understanding of what was involved in the practice of digital storytelling, as it sounded very different to the kind of processes I would develop as a practitioner. I was also interested how this might be suitable as an approach for people to create their own stories for inspiration within experience-centred design. At the same time, although this was not expressed, I needed to be critical of some of these expectations since after ten years of working on similar projects, I had started to question the taken for granted aspects of relying on technology to empower and encourage social change.

These different motivations were expressed, (or not) in meetings and informal discussions as we planned for the sessions, however while this account appears to create a relatively clear picture of these divergent motivations that drove the planning, it took several months to understand these and move towards an approach that attempted to fulfil these loosely aligned criteria. From my own understanding within the meetings, what held this divergence together was a collective belief that those who came to the workshop would benefit in some way, despite the fact we did not necessarily articulate what we thought that benefit would look or feel like.

Workshops and reflecting on the process

Workshops took place between September and November 2011. There were 6 volunteers, Saeeda, Zahrah, Faleeha, Huzna, Nazlee and Huma who attended and each produced a 2-3 minute video that included an audio voice recording of their story and photographs to accompany the story. Not every individual came to each weekly session, and once the 6 scheduled sessions had been completed, an additional 6 sessions needed to be scheduled between December 2011 and February 2012 to ensure those involved could complete their stories as planned. This included running 2 additional sessions with those who hadn't finished their stories, a group session to review stories and make final changes, a session to discuss consent, anonymity and embargoes on digital content stored in the archives at the museum, a session to do final checks on the digital story and burn DVDs and a final session to share and reflect on the completed stories in the group. I further interviewed Alice, Samiya and Rosie about their perspectives on the workshops and discussed this with volunteers who also provided further feedback.

Learning from the Process

In reflecting on the digital storytelling workshops in the context of the Centre, we, all felt, it was much messier and more complex than what we had originally anticipated, albeit this was felt and experienced in many different ways. The delivery plan had been based on a standard digital storytelling process; that was to start with group exercises to build confidence and trust in working together, to show examples of existing work, to develop ideas for stories, to write, edit and share stories in a group, to record a voice over, choose photographs and edit the footage together into a video and to share and reflect on this within the group. What this plan hadn't anticipated was the additional time needed for a diversity of needs and interests. More specifically the sensitivity required in working with particular diverse linguistic and digital literacy levels and the decision, for most of the volunteers, to re-count their difficult experiences of abuse as part of their digital stories. This created a number of emotional, practical and aesthetic challenges in relation to the technology and within the social dynamics of the group.

What follows is a discussion of the particular tensions observed and particular assumptions discussed within the group workshops that were taking place each

week. These tensions occurred around different perceptions of the value of technological access, the importance of creating safe spaces, performing stories and anticipating multiple audiences while negotiating anonymity. In focusing on these particular themes I bring together different perspectives from individuals involved, in dialogue with my own interpretation of the unfolding situation.

I start with Saeeda's written script for her digital story, which was written and edited over two weeks and then audio recorded as part of making a digital story. The story is followed by a more procedural account of each of the workshop sessions constructed from my field-notes and written in italics. This is followed by a critical reflection that brings together different perspectives of the workshops into dialogue with one another. The account that follows is an interpretation of my sense-making, in dialogue with Saeeda; volunteer making a digital story, Alice; digital storyteller facilitator from the museum, Rosie; Centre co-ordinator developing a heritage project and Samiya; outreach worker as we took part in and reflected on the workshops.

Saeeda

My Life in the UK

When I lived in Pakistan, I spent seven years with domestic violence.

I have three children, seven years with domestic violence.

All hope is gone and I think this is what life is like.

I didn't want my children to learn from my experience and do domestic violence to their wives.

In Pakistan I don't call the police, but in UK, again I experienced domestic violence and I had the chance to call the police. Then I lived six month in refuge. This was the first time I tried to change my life, when I lived in the refuge. It was a very good time someone supported me to do lots of things. They supported me when I had to talk to lawyers, call social services, how to apply for my own visa.

Someone supporting me was a blessing time.

Social services helped with food, accommodation, travel, everything.

With three children everything I need, especially moral support.

When people are behind you, you feel stronger.

I was crying when I left the refuge, but I had to start my own life.

I was a brave woman and I had to do things for myself.

I attend many courses and I have started work as a volunteer in the Centre I feel that I can now help other women if they need the help, I'm ready to help.

I think if a woman tries to change her circumstances she can.

Nothing is impossible.

Woman is very bold.

What's in it for me? Valuing access to technology

The first session started in the Roshni Centre, in the downstairs workshop space, with seats around the edges of the room and coffee tables in the middle. When introducing what was involved in the process of making a digital story, Alice started with a description of the different technologies involved. She set up a data projector, a Macbook laptop, a set of speakers and the microphone on the coffee tables in the small downstairs room in the Roshni Centre and showed the group the equipment they would be using. The response from Saeeda and Huma was to question what they would get out of being involved in making the digital stories, what skills in particular they would get and why they were going to be using Macbooks rather than PCs, which they were already familiar with. Alice responded by saying that the sessions would be useful for improving skills in communication and presentation, aligning this much more with a productive transferrable job based skill.

Once the volunteers had left the session Alice and I talked about how she felt the value of making a digital story was much more based on spending time with people and learning how to express particular ideas through stories. In this conversation we both agreed that it was often awkward trying to justify that the experience of being involved in the process of making the stories would be beneficial and what that might be because it was often so personal.

When I later asked Alice about how she felt as we started the workshops, she described how she understood why some of the women questioned what was in it for them and re-collected how she found this quite challenging to work with.

'... so at the end of the first session, when I sort of realised, I think that it was going to be more challenging than I thought, yeah (laughs). And I think there was one particular group member who erm, she wasn't disruptive, I wouldn't go as far to say that, but she was quite, well 'what's in it for me?', which is a fair enough question, but was more interested in erm what skills she was going to ..., 'how is this going to get me a job?' sort of thing...'

Alice acknowledged the different ways that individuals had expressed their interest in skills and more tangible outcomes such as getting a job. As I saw volunteers at other sessions throughout the week, Saeeda and Huma described themselves as technically very competent and so wanted to use the sessions

as a chance to build on those skills too. In particular, they described how they were keen to get jobs. They both had university degrees from Pakistan, and had had good jobs there but were struggling to find work in the UK. Language, their impending immigration status and the time needed for being involved in complex legal cases against their husbands, were all recognized as barriers. In the wider context of working within the Centre, I also recognized how there was an emphasis in how staff, promotional literature and posters, highlighted the importance of women working towards skills for employment, to achieve greater financial independence.

In the first few weeks, I felt some tension between how at least some of the volunteers described how they wanted to use the technology and how in organising the workshops, Alice had approached the workshops from a very different perspective. In a discussion with Alice, I asked her to reflect on what she saw the value of using the particular technologies we had used in making the stories. Alice highlighted she felt that the combination of the specific technology (hardware and software) and the process *'opens up knowledge of new technology that perhaps some of them might not be familiar with or have used before'*. She saw this in terms of the democratic potential of providing access to more specialist kit and skills.

In further reflecting on the workshops with other members of staff, I asked Rosie the same question, she too highlighted the importance of allowing for more democratic access to technology by encouraging women to also *'allow themselves time.'* Rosie expressed excitement in what she felt was the, yet to be realised democratic potential of the digital. In particular she felt there were many opportunities in using digital technology to communicate the views of marginalized and minority groups and women in particular, as a form of testimonial *'you can have people themselves in the most basic way saying this is what happened, this is only part of the story, but this is what happened'* as a way of disrupting grand historical narratives.

'I think it makes it more accessible if you have any kind of oppression, even if you ... like women's culture and ideas and stuff is, its legacy and it's the historicity of movements and how they get obliterated [...]'

In listening to these different perspectives in our conversations, I heard many of the rhetorical arguments made within literature on the democratic potential of digital storytelling. Yet what I heard less of was the specificities of how people felt this would be enacted in practice, or a discussion of the potential for more cathartic and therapeutic [Kidd 2010, Thumin 2008] aspects of the practice that I felt was also emerging.

Performing stories: Importance of creating a safe space

By the second week of the digital storytelling sessions, I was surprised how Saeeda announced to the group she knew exactly what she wanted to make her story about. Everybody else seemed to be more ambivalent about what they wanted to focus on, but Saeeda seemed very confident. She described how she wanted to make a story about strong women at the Centre, in particular Samiya, the outreach worker, she wanted to be like Samiya. Saeeda described how she wanted to become a strong woman like the women she was volunteering with. She decided she was going to work on this at home and the rest of the session was spent looking at photographs that Zahrah, Huma and Saeeda had brought in to share. These included their wedding photographs and the time they had been spending together at the Centre, on trips and days out.

When I saw Saeeda later on in the week she told me how she had written a script for her digital story at home. I discussed with her how I was surprised by how quickly she knew what she wanted to make her story about. She described how she had become a good ‘story-maker’, like everybody in the group, as she had learnt how to make up stories within the wider community, to her family, neighbours and even to some of the women at the Centre about why she wasn’t with her husband. At the same time she described how she also had to remember, which story she had told, and to whom, to keep up appearances. She described having to carefully distance herself from gossip and from those who couldn’t understand. She said that she appreciated being in the sessions where she could ‘talk freely about my circumstances without being judged’, as she was also spending time with women who had had the same experiences, and she felt as Alice and I were white British women, we would also understand. ‘Talking and doing things together’, informally outside of larger learning classes was also considered important where she could have time to relax.

I started to see how Saeeda was describing an astute critical awareness of whom she was communicating with, mindful of the consequences of being judged and making clear distinctions between different communities she was part of as she moved between them. It highlighted for me that she was aware of the distinctions in how she might be perceived by me and Alice, as different, and by other women in the centre, which highlighted both a recognition of difference, which she was responding to via a situated performativity within particular social contexts. While Rosie and Samiya often highlighted the importance of creating safe spaces for belonging and trust, and Alice discussed the authenticity of the storyteller's voice in relation to past experience, I began to hear much more of Saeeda's story as a leaning towards a future, a shifting sense of a new self as she started to take on the role as supportive volunteer and where she saw her future in light of her past experiences.

Anticipating Audiences

In the third week, Saeeda gave her script to Alice to read out loud. Zahrah, Alice and I suggested making some small changes to the story to create what Alice described as a better flow. Alice asked her if she was ready to record her story, but she said she wasn't that confident to do that yet, so Alice suggested she take a microphone home, plug it into her computer and have a practice. I worked with Zahrah on writing her story.

In the fourth week, I continued to work with Zahrah on scanning her photographs for her story. Saeeda returned the microphone and explained to Alice that she hadn't been able to work out how to use it with her computer and described how she had rehearsed reading the words at home. Alice and Saeeda decided to record the story using a laptop and microphone in the attic room where it was quiet. After recording her story Alice suggested Saeeda planned which photographs she should use to accompany her voice over, but Saeeda said she didn't want to use any photographs of her or her children in the story, if used outside of the Centre and in the museum.

In discussing the recording of the stories with Alice after the session, she described to me how she was taken aback at the way that Saeeda appeared to

dramatically change her voice *'when I pressed record, her voice just completely changed. It was sort of like 'this is my Queen's English' voice.'* Alice perceived this to be a strategy for anonymisation, but when I discussed this with Saeeda later that week, she laughed and described it as *'just trying the voice out'*.⁷ Although we didn't get chance to discuss this further, I also wondered whether Saeeda, in recording her story, anticipated the larger publics of an institution such as a museum, and may have become self-conscious about her English speaking and accent. I also considered how self-conscious she might feel in speaking in front of Alice and myself as confident native English speakers.

In relation to my understanding of her perceived role as a *'story-maker'*, this enabled me to recognize her as a creative *'maker'*, rather than teller of stories. This helped me consider how Saeeda was beginning to try out and make this new role for herself, at the same time as also considering the Centre and museum audiences that her digital story would be accessible to. In my previous conversations with Saeeda, she had made me aware of her choices of what and who she would share particular versions of herself and how she felt she responded within particular social contexts. I saw the digital story as part of that role, as she started to consider a broader and more anonymous public. Her voice and stories were becoming part of a new role she was performing through the technology, which I interpreted as supporting a shift in her awareness of whom she was potentially performing these identities for.

Distributed authorship and ownership

In the fifth session Alice uploaded the voice recordings completed so far onto laptops and imported them into iMovie, before coming to the session. She started to discuss ways for the group to start bringing the scanned photographs they already had into iMovie. Zahrah and Saeeda talked about wanting to make two versions, one where they used photographs of themselves, and one not of themselves that could be shown in the museum. They described how they were concerned about being recognised beyond the Centre if the work was shown online or in the museum and so Alice discussed anonymisation strategies such as blurring out faces. Saeeda said that they had had hard lives already and didn't want to make it more difficult by bringing trouble on themselves. She

⁷ I was also reminded here of the 'telephone voice', when people change their tone and diction when on the phone.

explained how their voices are ok, that people would not necessarily recognise their voices and what they describe, but if there are pictures as well, this would make it more clear who they were. Saeeda said that even blurring things out could highlight details that somebody might recognise. Alice suggested there might be a way of making the stories available after a set amount of time so the stories were kept within the museum and not shown, but then after an agreed amount of time the museum could use them. Saeeda said that she was still unsure about this.

Despite the importance of authorship and ownership being discussed as one of the main goals of a digital story, I started to see a much more complex picture of authorship and ownership emerging. Alice was providing and managing the technology as it is brought back and forth between the museum each week. She was recording the voice-overs with volunteers, downloading them, editing them and importing them into iMovie. In doing this, I recognized how this underlined a more distributed picture of authorship in generating digital stories while ignoring the management infrastructure of some of the steps involved. I also started to notice how Alice was working within a particular digital format, developed to create broadcast quality stories for archiving and exhibition. While I didn't necessarily see this as a problem, projects always sustain some form of a compromise between the institutional demands of the organization and creating space for expression. However I didn't hear any acknowledgement of the framing of these activities in relation to facilitation or institutional agendas within what Alice, Samiya or Rosie want to achieve within the project.

After this particular session and the discussion around anonymisation, I discussed with Alice how the recorded story should be enough for the museum archive, considering the circumstances and concerns expressed. Yet Alice insisted that without the images to support the recorded voice-overs, they couldn't go into the archive, as they wouldn't be a digital story. I was shocked to see how inflexible she was in relation to the particular wishes of individuals in the group and highlighted to her how this created a contradiction in the democratic aims of digital storytelling if there was in fact no choice in what a digital story could and couldn't be.

I started to consider how with Saeeda's story, both the words and recording of the words, suggested she had potentially worked out a strategy to create something that was both personally and socially meaningful for a number of publics, but also anonymised and could work for both the local community of the Centre and a broader public. This was based on her own personal judgement of what she felt was needed to uphold her memberships within those different communities, family, Centre, neighbourhood, museum audience.

I started to wonder about the values discussed around digital storytelling, with the literal emphasis on 'voice', on the spoken and written story, as the driver for a particular model of participation. This model appeared to trade off a vernacular authenticity in relation to a particular kind of 'spoken' authorship, whose verifiability, for Alice, was supported by the personal nature of the photographic image that accompanied voice. Yet what I started to see in this approach taken was the emphasis on 'voice' at the cost of considering more complex understandings of visual images. In Saeeda's case the personal story coupled with personal images contained a risk as it revealed something about her. Something she felt she would be judged for by very specific members of her community, beyond the Centre. That is, she was concerned about being judged about particular people she imagined the story could be seen by. It is the very act of being seen to be speaking publically, beyond the Centre, about the unspeakable, domestic violence, something she had experienced and felt was taboo, within the Asian community, where she felt she would be judged, that caused her some concern. This was also potentially problematic and in conflict with the perception of a new self that she had written, and was in the process of becoming, a supportive volunteer, to be of help, be strong, be bold, to be able to make change and be in control of changing people's circumstances.

Negotiated Anonymity

In the sixth session Saeeda brings photographs of Samiya, the outreach worker, showing photographs of her at work at the Centre. She brings these to add to her digital story. In helping her to scan her photographs, I ask her whether she has asked Samiya if this is OK. She reassures me that she has asked Samiya and that she has given her permission. She scans them into the computer and

uploads them into iMovie and starts to drop them into a video sequence. In this final workshop, she edits her story with help from me and Alice but doesn't finish it as she runs out of time. At the same time other volunteers in the group interrupt her and ask for her help, as Faleeha and Zahrah also haven't quite finished. Saeeda also tries to help them in structuring their digital story with their own photographs. Alice tells everyone not to worry, and that she will finish the digital stories and bring them back in the next couple of weeks.

Alice arranges another session with staff and volunteers, but I am no longer able to attend this session as I have other research meetings to attend. Alice finishes off the videos at work and returns for a meeting two weeks later with Samiya and the volunteers to review the videos. Samiya is not happy that her photographs have been used in Saeeda's digital story as she is worried about how other women in the Centre will view her and her reputation if they think she too has experienced domestic violence. Other anonymisation strategies are discussed and Saeeda agrees to use her own photographs and Alice will blur faces for use in the archive.

When myself, Alice and Samiya reflected on this in our discussions, there was a recognition that what had happened was an unfortunate miscommunication about what the photographs of Samiya were potentially being used for. At the same time I saw that there was much more complexity in what Samiya and Saeeda both felt was at stake in preserving anonymity and control in the sense of their own identities. Samiya and Saeeda expressed how they were closely connected to a strong sense of their self in the photographs and the fear that this story, the authenticity of voice, alongside the verifiability of photographs, would create a disjuncture, between different selves, that could be misinterpreted and misunderstood. In discussing this with Alice after the workshops, from a practical perspective we agreed that we both should've picked up on the fact this may have been an inappropriate use of Samiya's photographs. Alice described how

'[...] I felt really bad for [Saeeda] because she'd told ... yeah the story wasn't quite finished and she'd used, she wanted to use images of Samiya as a ... because she saw her as a strong woman erm and because the story wasn't quite finished it didn't quite flow properly [...]

This feeling '*bad for*' was also tied into how Alice felt Saeeda had worked hard, how Samiya was critical of the story and a consideration of how this could've been handled more sensitively. My recollection and notes from this session also describe a stressful workshop where several women wanted help with their own videos all at the same time. In the distributed nature of bringing the videos together, I felt there was not a singular author with the experience, skills or knowledge to make an informed decision with Saeeda that would have meant her anonymity was specifically considered and maintained more sensitively, in light of her particular concerns. My questioning of Saeeda suggests that I had picked up on this, but I did not follow it up. On reflection I felt I didn't want to undermine Saeeda's confidence and decision-making capabilities when she was producing her digital story. She had been self-motivated to go and get these photographs herself and had, I felt, she had consistently worked hard in all of the sessions and supported others.

I also drew an alternative interpretation of the story, not as one of just about the experience of domestic violence, but one of Saeeda potentially wanting to communicate her respect and admiration for Samiya, in this literal sense of making the digital story and becoming like her. However, when seeing the digital story, Samiya didn't consider this alternative reading, but only felt that the story would be perceived and read by others, to be about her own experience of domestic violence. In our reflections afterwards, I asked Samiya what she felt like when she saw Saeeda's digital story and the use of her photographs.

'Yeah it was my story yeah and everything you know, the way that the story was told that it was my story and I thought god if that story goes out, it will be like ... (she gasps and pulls a shocked face as she's talking) well we didn't know that [about] Auntie, everybody knows Samiya, Auntie Samiya and it was like oh my god.'

In her description she highlighted how she felt that 'it was my story', but if it was shown in the wider public domain, this would change people's perceptions of her. In this mistaken identity, her role as a respected long-standing member of the care and cultural community as familiar and wise elder, 'Auntie Samiya', might be questioned. Her identity changed in relation to how she might be now perceived as a victim or survivor, a secret she may have kept from those who respect her within her community.

In our final discussions of the workshops between myself and volunteers I asked the group what they felt about how the sessions had gone. Saeeda explained;

'We want to use the latest technology, cameras, computers, software, but we need time to learn how to use it ... sometimes we want to work independently because sometimes our minds are different. We don't want any interfering from other people. Sometimes this disturbs our thinking. Sometimes everybody needs advice. I want to make decisions myself, but asking for help is OK.'

Saeeda emphasised the importance of temporality associated with working independently and the temporality of 'difference' in what volunteers wanted to achieve and do. While other members of the group did not necessarily agree with her position exactly describing how they had valued the experience of working with each other, Saeeda described how the group, 'we' did not want 'any interfering from other people', while at the same time feeling there was some security in being able to ask somebody for help and support should it be needed.

Critically Reflecting on Practice

The process of engaging in digital storytelling in connection with the particular relationships at the Centre, were complicated for Saeeda in her negotiation of different communities, and in the transition into a new imagined future. Although Saeeda had been particularly pro-active in making her digital story, in later discussions she described wanting more autonomy in the process, than the rest of the group who described their experiences more positively. I did not get chance to talk to Saeeda more personally about how she felt about this particular experience once the workshops were completed as we reflected on the whole set of workshops at the end of the process within the group. I was concerned she might not want to talk about it in the context of the Centre, or with me who was also implicated in the making and complexity of her story and the story surrounding the making of her story.

I therefore recognize that what I have presented is only a partial view of the practice, as experienced and recounted by me and in dialogue with those specifically involved. I will now present some further critical reflections on the

specific practice of digital storytelling as the process unfolded within the Centre. I recognise that other digital story practitioners and projects would no doubt have different and similar stories to tell that are not necessarily reported within the literature. Furthermore each of the volunteers involved also produced their stories in slightly different ways, based on their previous experiences and confidence in group situations. In concluding this chapter I focus on what I felt were the main concerns raised on how the process was described and experienced over time and what was produced. This includes a consideration of the work involved in crafting stories, the tensions felt between interpretative ambiguity, truth and purpose of stories, and the role of anonymisation.

Whose involved? The invisible work of crafting stories

In drawing from my own experiences of running similar workshops, and in critically reflecting on and discussing the workshops with staff and volunteers, I began to see two kinds of access being enacted. One towards creative expressions in how the stories were created, edited and then subsequently recorded and the second was much more about the physical access to specific technological kit. These were both facilitated and managed in particular ways through Alice, who had developed a particular way of doing the practice of digital stories around a particular institutional frame, funding criteria and her own political agenda. I had also been there as a presence, asking questions and working with the group to support story making, helping and discussing with staff how the project was developing from a research perspective. Staff were also discussing the experience with volunteers to see how digital storytelling could work as a practice that they might adopt in the future.

There was a commitment, articulated in developing the project, to the idea that digital stories in particular acted as testimonials of specific experiences of minority experiences, that had been excluded from archives. This resonated with a feminist perspective that valued voice and authority as valuable resources for identities, and to make stories available as cultural resources for learning. However Berns et al [2007], have argued in the case of domestic violence, that the experience of contradiction can mean individuals prefer to borrow from '*formula stories*', those repeated within support organizations and within the media. Berns argues that those who have experienced abuse, '*are*

more exposed to a greater range of narratives' and might be 'challenged by the complexity of trying to harmonize a narrative of the self.' [ibid 241], developing some form of continuity. Berns outlines the importance of drawing from other sources beyond those associated with the position of victim or survivor. I felt that with Saeeda, that her story was deeply entwined with the story of the Centre and staff, the strong women she was moving towards and working with. Even though there was no explicit encouragement from myself, Alice or staff to make the story about domestic violence, this was the identifiable connection that had brought the volunteers together.

I felt that a commitment to the political rhetoric around storytelling sometimes resulted in a contradiction in the lack of recognition of a particular personal position. A general commitment to creating and sharing stories, did not however, acknowledge the subtlety and specificity of making stories and their relevance for the individual within the wider social group, where stories would go, who they would be seen by and for what purpose. In making a plan for a general approach, the subtle interplays between who was involved in making digital stories, the decisions that had gone into framing the use of technology, was overlooked in meetings as were many of the particular details of what was involved in making the digital stories. Details such as where the individual was in relation to their experiences of violence and what individuals were thinking about in relation to their future lives. Also how volunteers wanted their story to be perceived by others, how they were moving between past, present and potential futures, and how institutional framings and personal commitments were constantly being negotiated through the words that were written and spoken, but also the visual practices involved in combining words with images to produce a video that could navigate a number of different spaces. However the commitment to archives, to secure the stories within a particular institutional frame, created a limited range of possibilities of what the digital stories could be. Furthermore it also masked the significant interpersonal work that went into the whole process of creating a video that was felt to be coherent, flowed and made sense when shared outside of the community.

Interpretative ambiguity, truth and purpose in stories

I perceived everyday spoken stories that we tell and share as particular socio-cultural interpretations of experience, that are often enfolded back into people's everyday lives [McCarthy & Wright 2004, Bruner 1984, 1991]. I also felt, that stories point to particular future intentions and actions in the world, they can move people into action through their evocative and emotive potential [Frank 2010, Clandinin & Connelly 2000]. In this sense, and in hearing the stories that were crafted in the sessions, I heard how volunteers creatively and confidently moved between past, present and future aspirations, imaginatively articulating their relationships to others within the context of the Centre. My understanding however, was largely at odds with what was often expressed by Rosie and Alice, as the desire for stories to be used as evidence of excluded or marginal experiences. At the same time it was also important for me and others to acknowledge these particular and multiple different perspectives in what the stories were more broadly expected to achieve, as it helped us understand the dynamic tensions around technology use and the multiple potential purposes of storytelling.

In working between the space of three institutions, social care and community, museum and research, the particular stories produced were stories that all connected to experiences of domestic violence in different ways. For some it was enough to feel that they had told their story and discussed this with others beyond staff at the Centre, as therapeutic and as a form of catharsis in working through an understanding of a new self. But for some it was important that they made their stories from start to finish and that those stories were seen as theirs within a community that understood, that of the Centre, but also anonymised for others, a museum audience, that might not understand their situation in the same way. However the format of the workshops, and discussions between staff, myself, Alice and volunteers did not necessarily initially acknowledge the multiple kinds of value that could be placed on the various different aspects involved in creating digital stories through the practice itself. This became much clearer when reflecting on and discussing perspectives with volunteers.

Working with a particular external institution, that of the museum, stories were reified, no longer just part of everyday talk, but potentially translated into something seen to have greater value, as a historical testament to experience.

Stories were considered to be important as expressions of historical verisimilitude, often reminding me of the feminist discourse on sharing stories of experiences that have been silenced or unheard [Belenky et al 1986, Spivak 1988]. In this sense the democratic potential of creating stories of marginal experiences through digital storytelling was considered important for fulfilling personal and institutional agendas from staff and Alice, even though this was at a more general level rather than a detailed discussion of what was involved in the practice. I felt that democracy and associated modes of participation were often seen as taken-for-granted aspects of the experience of digital storytelling, perceived to be enacted through the broad commitments of making technology available, making the stories and then making those stories available to wider audiences and for the wider community. And yet this diminished the more subtle elements of much more localized participation and negotiation that I often felt I had observed and experienced as taking place between people, volunteers, facilitator and the technology.

General, situated and everyday anonymisation

The discussions and various workarounds that Saeeda had adopted when working towards a socially acceptable means of anonymisation, highlighted for me, the more polyvocal ways in which many of the volunteers were making sense of their experience in relation to different versions of self, and others they imagined would see the videos. Considering Saeeda's approach to writing and recording her story, she anonymised this through creating a general story that others could connect to and understand. Furthermore, through the use of her voice she also appeared to further disguise how she sounded, although she did not suggest that anonymisation was one of the reasons she used 'Queen's English'.

Furthermore, I saw Saeeda's change of voice, as a kind of performance, as she was moving towards a different future, and trying out a new sense of self in relation to the past experiences of abuse. As Wiles et al [2010] discuss, anonymisation is often considered an important aspect of research practice when working with individuals and groups considered vulnerable. Yet the use of visual methods in particular, designed to be inclusive, can also create significant challenges. Tensions around anonymisation can arise when the

value of recognition and self-worth are also considered important aspects of developing inclusive visual approaches. Wiles argues that processes such as blurring images and marking faces to anonymise individuals, can be perceived as undesirable or a contradiction within such projects. However, Wiles argues that discussing these issues can present opportunities for all those involved to have more of a say, opening up spaces for alternative practices to be considered. In this sense the everyday anonymisation practices that Saeeda had put in place were important for her, but were considered not appropriate within the wider aims of digital storytelling and archiving within the museum. While a more sensitive approach was acknowledged as being necessary, this also required more time and planning from the beginning to consider in relation to the specific individuals involved.

Conclusion

The practice of digital storytelling, as understood and negotiated between the different partners involved in this process, surfaced some complex emotional challenges in relation to the anticipated consequences of being associated with experiences of domestic violence. Situated sharing of media content that purposively identified individuals within the immediate community of the Centre was considered valuable for those involved. Being able to speak to and within part of a community, and to use the storytelling process as a means to explore this connection to community also raised many challenges when content could be moved beyond the Centre into another public institution, such as that of the museum.

At the same time, the process also highlighted opportunities for enriching and fulfilling experiences associated with the co-construction of stories within supportive group environments around technology. The potential of digital content moving between different public institutions also created particular risks for those involved when considering their wider social networks and who might see this particular material. The fear of being recognized and judged as having had experiences of violence, but also of being seen to speak out about experiences of abuse within other communities that volunteers were also members of, however, was also considered problematic in the context of producing content within the framework of the museum institution. Particular

anonymisation strategies were considered and put in place by the volunteers, but these implicated others through the use of particular photographs, further highlighting the risks of identifications with what were considered shameful experiences. This sometimes undermined the skills and perceptions of the volunteers who had worked out individual strategies in how they could reconcile the tensions between these different communities in what they had written and spoken about. However it was through the use of photographs to accompany voice that highlighted particular tensions around possibilities of identification with specific experiences of abuse. In this next Chapter I discuss an approach I called '*Digital Portraits*', developed to focus on visual storytelling as an alternative to starting with written texts. Moving away from a literal understanding of voice as words, to explore how self might be more tentatively explored through making connections to the things that volunteers valued in their lives.

Chapter 6

Digital Portraits Connected Self

'In all societies the course of life is structured by expectations about each phase of life, and meaning is assigned to specific life events and the roles that accompany them. When expectations about the course of life are not met, people experience inner chaos and disruption. Such disruptions represent loss of the future. Restoring order to life necessitates reworking understandings of the self and the world, redefining the disruption and life itself.'

Gay Becker [1999: 4]

Introduction

In the previous chapter I outlined how practices around digital storytelling had emphasised written and spoken words associated with voice and story. I argued how this emphasis on words appeared to be at the cost of considering how visual images could accompany stories in more sensitive ways. In thinking more specifically about how identities could be explored through visual presentations, I started to work with staff to design a workshop process, to consider alternative practices of technology use that built on the experiences of the digital storytelling workshops. The focus of these workshops explored more explicitly the complexities of anonymity, disclosure and feelings of vulnerability that had surfaced in the digital storytelling workshops. We called these additional workshops 'digital portraits', to distinguish them from the storytelling process, and to underline the focus on the tradition of portraiture as a visual and symbolic presentation of the self in process [Sontag 1979, Spence 1995]. In Chapter 6, I focus on the delivery of these workshops and the alternative versions of identities that were explored through photography within these sessions.

Reworking Understandings of the Self

The digital stories presented highly crafted versions of self within the community, which made sense within the context of the Centre. However, in listening to more expanded versions of the stories, that surrounded the more crafted digital stories, what I also often heard was disappointment in a '*loss of the future*' [Becker 1999: 4] and a questioning of how individual women, such as Saeeda had arrived at particularly difficult situations. In the digital stories of Zahrah, Nazlee and Huzna, they all described how they had been excited by the

prospect of being married, coming to the UK and becoming wives, mothers and professionals. Although Huma and Saeeda's stories did not articulate this, their wedding photographs and informal discussions on their expectations before coming to the UK were filled with the hope of a new future in an affluent country and of becoming part of a Western Asian British family. When things didn't turn out quite as expected, I heard descriptions of confusion and uncertainty on what to do next. Individuals raised questions to one another, to myself and Alice on how to make sense of, and take action towards, a complex future that they hadn't originally anticipated. Although individuals did this in very personal ways, I began to reflect on how the process of sharing could be used as a form of regaining continuity, through reworking and redefining self, as is often discussed within narratives of illness [Becker 1999, Frank 2010]. While volunteers were also having counseling and therapy, many of them often openly expressed how they did not like going to these sessions. Therefore any process that we designed should not be, or feel like therapy.

I began to look towards research literature within social work around domestic violence to see if there was a similar discourse emerging there. In finding research specifically on violence against South Asian women, this described extended family networks of abuse, not just involving a husband, but also fathers and mother-in-laws, brothers and sisters-in-law, aunts and uncles [Thiara & Gill 2010] I had also become familiar with this in some of the individual stories shared in the group. Research more broadly on immigrant women experiencing abuse also pointed to the social taboo of leaving relationships, which could also lead to further loss of close family friends [Hajdukowski-Ahmed 2009, Sokoloff & Pratt 2005]. Much of this research however focused on the immediate threats of violence against women leaving the relationship and did not reflect on the longer-term challenges of rebuilding a sense of self, relationships and futures in light of what has been described as loss of identity, shame, dignity and an ability to trust others [Abrahams 2010].

In considering research within HCI that explored gender based violence and the potential role of technology, I felt that women were often positioned as victims of continued abuse, either through lack of access to particular information about technology [Southworth et al 2007, Perry 2012], or through a lack of

understanding in how their technology was being tracked by their partners [Dimond et al 2011, Massimi et al 2012]. Technology use within these studies was positioned as problematic as it enabled a continuation of emotional abuse, albeit at a distance from the perpetrator.

There were few studies within the social sciences that highlighted the potential use of technology to build and sustain existing and new supportive relationships after experiences of domestic violence. And yet there was a growing body of work around creative use of photography and video in supporting communities of women, as part of their self-development and social justice campaigns, in reworking alternative understandings of the emotional and long-term negative impacts of violence and the importance of building supportive networks [Frohman 2007]. Therefore, rather than continuing to focus on how words as written and spoken stories were relevant for a potential process of forming continuity, I was interested in how images could also become of value within a process of 'reworking understandings of the self' [Becker 1999: 4].

With staff and volunteers, we discussed ways of encouraging reflection on what the women felt was valuable in their lives, at that moment in time, and how photography could be used as a way of exploring these ideas. I suggested the use of a portrait pack (figure 5), based on a cultural probe idea, to encourage reflection on existing supportive connections and relationships that volunteers were making now that they were in a process of making sense of and re-building their lives. The packs were designed over several weeks and consisted of a velvet bag, a portrait frame, a small sound recorder and 20 tokens that asked the group to photograph people, place, sensory experiences and objects that they valued and wanted to share within the group. In these discussions, volunteers and staff were still interested in making a product, as part of the learning process. We therefore also focused on producing a collage and video as part of the digital portrait workshop process, focusing primarily on visual presentations accompanied by sound or words. As in the digital storytelling workshops, the group did not want to be video or sound recorded and so field-notes were taken when possible in the session or directly after a session had concluded.



Figure 5: Digital portrait pack and inspiration tokens

Running Workshops

We ran 10 formal, weekly sessions for 2 hours per week between November 2011 and February 2012. The individual weekly sessions included (1) *Introductions*, (2) *Generating ideas*, (3&4) *Sharing and discussing photographs*, (5) *Creating sequences*, (6) *Reflecting on progress*, (7&8) *Editing sequences, adding sound and words*, (9) *Finalising videos* and (10) *Celebration and reflection*. Each of the sessions was accompanied by additional meetings with centre staff prior to and during the sessions. Staff were also regularly meeting with individuals throughout the week and encouraging anecdotal feedback on progress.

In addition there were individual meetings with volunteers that also took place between January and February, as we finalised videos and discussed how they wanted to make their work anonymous within the wider context of the research. Since the group had attended previous workshops on digital storytelling, they had received information sheets about the project 2 months prior to us starting the process. Consent forms were signed before workshops began and we revisited the consent forms when all videos had been completed. Not all individuals could attend each session, sometimes arriving late or having to leave early to meet with staff to organize counseling, meetings with social services or lawyers, or to organize childcare provision; aspects of which remained confidential during the research. Lunch, crèche and travel expenses were provided for each session.

Each of the volunteers produced a 2-5 minute video using photographs that were already part of an existing collection they had at home, or new photographs that took as part of the session. For their videos, Huzna, Faleeha, and Huma accompanied their photographs with words and music, with Nazlee only including sound and Saeeda and Zahrah including words and some special effects. Only Huzna, Huma and Nazlee created collages, the rest of the volunteers were not interested in taking part in this activity.

Different Perspectives on Making Digital Portraits

In the following section I will discuss how, in making the digital portraits with the group, I recognised that starting with images as the impetus for creating social connections encouraged other aspects of stories to be explored. In the portrait sessions, there was less emphasis on each individual going through exactly the same process as one another. Although we all started with the introduction to the portrait packs, I tried to remain flexible and responsive to each person as the weeks unfolded. This created opportunities to develop more personalized and imaginative reflections on experience and concepts of anonymisation and privacy. For instance, while the volunteers continued to refer to their past experiences, I encouraged them to also focus and explore the things, people, objects, sensory experiences and places, they felt they valued in their present lives. For most of the group, this also included what was felt to be important to continue and build on in the future.

For instance Saeeda and Zahrah worked together on one portrait, using their existing collection of photographs to reflect on and discuss their supportive friendship. Huma used photographs of bare winter trees as a metaphor for her feelings of sadness that turned into hope and Nazlee used her own photographs of birds to discuss her desire for more time for relaxation. Faleeha used photographs of time spent playing and getting to know her sons while Huzna used photographs of being a teenager and her time in the refuge to describe positive social experiences. At the same time, the approach also created challenges, in the additional time that was needed to fulfill this flexibility and the vulnerabilities this also sometimes created between myself, staff and volunteers, who wanted a completed product to finish off the sessions.

For this chapter, I will focus on three perspectives where I understood that we, both volunteers and I, were drawing on other storytelling forms, more than giving voice to particular experiences through words. These include (1) The importance of understanding visual stories for their embodied and performative potential, (2) The use of metaphor and mimesis and (3) The value of stories as ongoing exchange and reciprocity. At the same time there were challenges in documenting the practice of making and sharing stories, through narrative inquiry, because of the sensitive nature of what was discussed and the challenges of writing about practice when engaged in challenging emotional work [Moncur 2013].

In the following section I outline three of the five digital portraits that were created in the sessions. This includes '*Friendship*', by Saeeda & Zahrah, '*Last Leaf of Hope*' by Huma and '*Birds*' by Nazlee. I introduce each of these by first providing the script they each produced for their digital stories to provide some contextual background as described by each individual woman. These scripts are then followed by the writing that was produced as part of the digital portraits and the anonymised image sequences that were edited together for their videos⁸. I then provide an account of how each portrait was made collaboratively, followed by a critical reflection on the approach.

As Saeeda's digital story was the emphasis of the previous chapter, I start with Zahrah's digital story, followed by their digital portrait on '*Friendship*'.

⁸ The videos are included in Appendix A of the thesis.

Zahrah

Married Life in the UK (digital story)

I was born in Pakistan. When I was seventeen my mum died and after that I looked after my sister and brother and stopped my study. My sister and brother went to school and college and all day I was at home working. This time was difficult for me. I spent so much time at home on my own.

My father was a very strict man. He didn't allow me to do anything or meet family or friends. If I wanted to do more in my life I had to wait until marriage.

One day a marriage proposal came and I dreamed of the many things I would be able to do, but after marriage was a horrible experience. My husband was a very controlling and conservative person. My husband locked me in the house when he was out at work.

I faced domestic violence for two months in the UK. I didn't know how to call the police. One day when I was crying my husband beat me very badly. There were lots of bruises and bleeding from my face. This was a normal routine for me.

My neighbours called the police and that time I was pregnant. My husband knew I was pregnant, but he said he didn't like kids. My neighbours explained what had happened to the police and they also interpreted for me.

After this the police moved me into the refuge. The first day (at the refuge), I was very upset, but on the second day, they introduced me to staff and my manager. When I feel labour pain it was a very difficult time for me, but the manager of the refuge, supported me. She was like an angel. She spent all her time as my birth partner.

Now I am a mother of a beautiful daughter and I live for two and a half years in a refuge. I don't know how long I will live there. I suffer my whole life for my daughter, to make my daughter's life easier and a very happy life not like me.

Saeeda and Zahrah

Friendship (digital portrait)

We met in (refuge name) 2 years ago and felt freedom for the first time in our lives. When we first got there we were in the same condition. We sat and shared our problems.

Saeeda is very loving and helpful and I (Zahrah) can talk to her any time I have a problem. I would feel lonely and quiet without Saeeda being around and feel she is special in every way. She is always there when I need her.

Zahrah is a very supportive friend for me (Saeeda). She makes me feel strong when we are together. If I'm in a difficult situation I share it with her and when I lose my confidence, Zahrah is there to pick me up and tell me it's OK.

(See Figure 6 for photographs from their digital portrait)

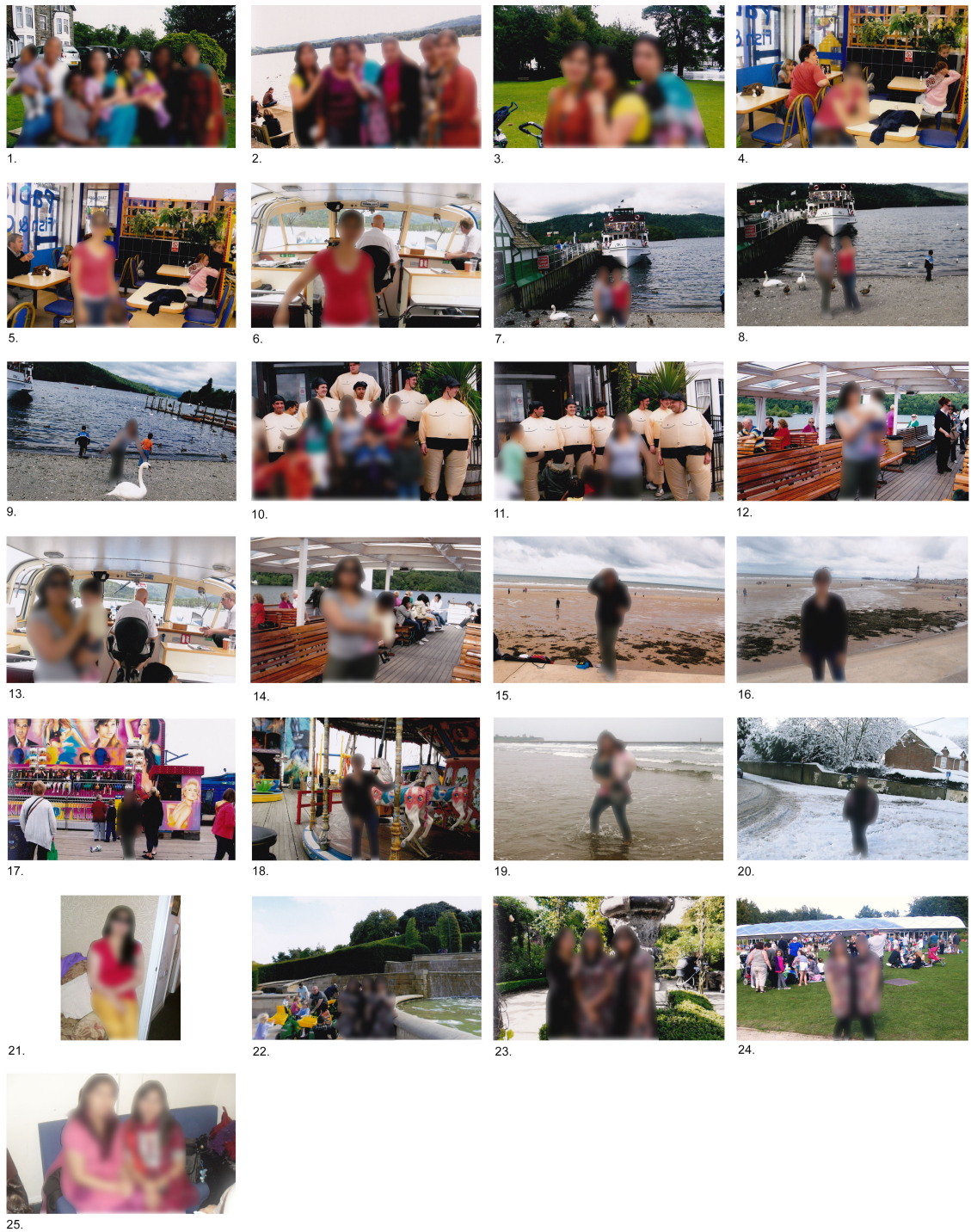


Figure 6: Photographs chosen and shown in sequence for Saeeda and Zahrah's digital portrait

Making Saeeda and Zahrah's digital portrait

In the third week of the digital portrait sessions, Saeeda and Zahrah brought in some photographs they had already taken and had curated in their photo-albums. They had announced in the previous session that they had wanted to make a video about their friendship together with Zahrah saying that they wanted to move on from talking about their experiences of the past. They each brought exactly the same photo-albums square; pale, pastel pink, padded fabric with pale blue corners. Each page contained photographs of the same outings together, but the pictures were from slightly different angles. They had taken photographs of one another, almost in identical places and poses. I asked them to choose 20 photographs, and they sat together at the table and chatted in Urdu, animatedly flicking back and forth between pages, pointing and comparing particular images, and pulling photographs out of the sleeves. They collected together 25 pictures of specific days out they had recently been on with the Centre, Blackpool, the Lake District, Alnwick Gardens, Seaham and a more recently an Eid party that they had attended. As part of this collection Zahrah also chose 3 photographs where she was on her own in and around the refuge, where she still lived. When the session was coming to an end, Saeeda asked that I look after the photographs for them and I suggested we scan them into the computer for the following week.

In the fourth session Zahrah and Saeeda arrived and explained how they were focused on getting things done. We started the session by sitting together around a laptop computer at a desk and I showed them how to scan each of their images by setting the images up on the scanner and pressing the button. They worked together on this, while I helped Huma to download and review the photographs she had taken on another laptop, as she wanted to work away from the rest of the group. Once Zahrah and Saeeda had finished, Saeeda said that they wanted to write some words. We found some paper and a pen and they started to write ideas down for their friendship video, but after a few minutes they called me over as they did not know what they wanted to say.

I sat down between them and spread their photographs out on the table and asked them why they had chosen those particular images. They explain how these are images of good memories, so I suggest they write about those.

Saeeda says that she doesn't want to do this and they want to talk about what their friendship means. So I start by asking Zahrah about why she likes Saeeda. She talks about how she is kind and loving. I ask her in what way and she talks about how she gives her advice and makes her laugh and listens. I ask how she would feel if she didn't know Saeeda. She said she would feel lonely and really sad. I ask Saeeda what she likes about Zahrah, she talks about being able to laugh and have a good time, good listening and she doesn't judge. I ask what she would do or how she would feel if she didn't know Zahrah. Saeeda laughs and jokes and talks about how they will get married and then have a family with four children and they both laugh about this.

In sitting between them and having all their photographs in front of me, I've noticed that some of the images show them both wearing the same outfit, a flowery summer dress and that they have also arrived today in the same coats, and have the same photo-albums. I ask them why they are wearing the same dresses in particular photographs. Zahrah tells me a story while she laughs about how they went shopping together and bought the same dress and organised when they should wear it for a day out. I ask if wearing the same dress is to communicate something to other people or just for one another. Saeeda talks about wanting to let other people know that they have had the same experiences and that they have come from the same place. They talk about their journeys to this point having so many similarities; where they were born, where they moved to, where they have arrived at today, the situation with domestic violence and leaving their husbands. I jot down words and phrases as they talk and suggest they use these to write something. At the same time I've noticed Huma walking towards us looking as if she needs help and so I get up to leave and suggest they carry on working together to describe their friendship.



Figure 7: Detail of photograph 24. in Zahrah and Saeeda's photographic collection as part of their digital portrait. This detail is to highlight what I saw as striking in the repetition and mirroring within the collection of photographs they chose to bring together to make their digital portraits.

In the fifth session I suggested that they take the photographs they had chosen to create a timeline sequence in the order they wanted their images to appear on a video. There's a mirroring and repetition in the images, in the places and the poses that Zahrah and Saeeda have taken and so I suggest to them that they structure their text in the same way. When they have completed this they discussed special effects and how they wanted to include the effect of turning pages as if this was their joint photo-album. We spent the rest of the session editing the sequence together and finding the special effects.

Conflicts of being and describing the experience of friendship

I found it interesting, but not unsurprising, that Zahrah and Saeeda, although confident about what they wanted to make their digital portrait about, were more tentative about what they wanted to say about their friendship. While this wasn't explicitly articulated within the sessions, I understood and felt this as the tension between the experience of being in the friendship and how this differed to a description of a friendship. As the friendship was also still relatively new (they had known each other for just over 2 years) I felt that they were still working on, and taking part in, being friends; doing things together and working on a narrative that bound them to similar histories of geography and experience. In calling me into their discussion and in writing and reflecting with them (i.e. having somebody external to the friendship), potentially helped clarify and articulate appreciation for one another in a safe way. At the same time I also felt

that Zahrah and Saeeda were asking me to show them what I was interested in. Rather than just wanting me to listen to what they said, they potentially wanted to engage me in a dialogue and exchange ideas to consider what others might also think was interesting about their friendship.

This was also a tricky situation to be in, since I also recognised my role as facilitator and researcher could be perceived as one of power and that I needed to tread carefully, to avoid diminishing confidence in individual abilities and providing too many suggestions and ideas. While this process of getting an outsiders view was an important aspect of developing digital stories, as discussed in the previous Chapter, it seemed as though the experience of friendship was potentially harder to tell, as it was so present and still being worked on. In this sense I saw the presentations of their photographs and our conversations about their friendship as a way of playing with, performing and trying out relational identities within the context of the Centre and the research.

In the following section, I describe how aspects of this process developed with Huma, first presenting her digital story and then her portrait before discussing the workshop process we engaged in together.

Huma

Life at University (digital story)

I was born in Pakistan. I spent my whole life in a small city, home, a very protected and dependent life. When I completed my college life I got admission to the subcontinent's oldest university and Pakistan's top university, the university of Punjab, Lahore. It is a historical place, also well known all over the world. It is a light of learning for students.

Lahore is very far from my city. When I went to university I was very frightened, but I started the learning time of my life, with new spirit. I got lots of new friends, which belonged to different areas and cultures of our country. I spent a happy time there with my friends. I started an independent life to manage my problems and my happiness myself. So it was the learning period of my life in every aspect, which gave me the idea how to spend a life independently.

I love my university it gave me education, confidence, enhanced my abilities, lots of friends with happy memories and chill time and also helpful teachers. Many times when I am alone and sad I think about that golden period of my life.

Now all of our class fellows talk to each other on Facebook, because all of them are settled in different places, different cities and different countries and when we are talking on Facebook we share the golden memories of our happy time and also share the new experiences of life, which we are facing now after university life, so it is a good platform to talk each other. I can't forget my university life until I am alive because I love my university.

Last Leaf of Hope (digital portrait)

When in darkness, very hard to manage life

There is the last leaf of hope, everything will be OK

When it falls down, we are also broke

But a new horizon of hope is alive in us

All joys of life will come, we will be happy and smile again



Figure 8: Photographic sequence for Huma's video

Making Huma's digital portrait

After the third week of working within the portrait sessions Huma decided she was going to create a video about nature. She wanted to use a tree as a way of expressing tragedy and sadness, which, she said is how she felt at the time. She described how she was inspired to do this after we had discussed potentially using nature as a way of expressing ideas. She wanted a singular tree and a green leaf that would turn yellow and fall off the branch. She was very clear with her idea, but was also very self-conscious of expressing these ideas within the group and described how she had been discouraged by other volunteers from expressing how upset she was about her circumstances, saying how she felt that she might be laughed at. She brought her camera with photographs of trees into this third session and downloaded them onto a laptop. As they were downloaded onto the laptop she told me how unhappy she was with what she had taken. She described herself as a perfectionist, in that she wanted to take the perfect set of shots, and for the weeks that followed she returned with many more images of trees and sunsets taking a total of 126 images by the sixth session, just before the Christmas break.

Because of what she wanted to make in terms of an animation, I worked on this independently over Christmas to make sure what she wanted to achieve could work. After Christmas I met with Huma individually at the Centre, where I showed her the animation and she suggested making the leaf I had animated much smaller and we worked on this together on the laptop. In the seventh session I printed all the photographs she had taken and asked that she choose the photographs she wanted to use, to create her video sequence, and write some words to accompany the images. In writing the text her trajectory became much more about a transition from tragedy and sadness to more positive experiences.

In the eighth session, we sat together on the sofas in the workshop space with the laptop on Huma's knee to organize the image sequence and to work on which parts of the writing would go with each image. We also made changes where words didn't quite make sense and finally connected the printed photographs and words in Final Cut Express. In the final celebration session Huma decided she was happy to show everybody her video. I asked her why

she had changed her mind and she said she felt much more positive about the future.

Negotiating metaphors, transitions and trust

Throughout the process of making the films, Huma frequently described how she felt self-conscious about what she was creating. In some instances, she described to me how the Asian psyche does not appreciate expressing sadness in such ways. While it seemed as though Huma used the process of taking pictures to discuss how she wanted to find the perfect photograph, she also wanted to create a very particular video about her particular situation and how she felt at the time. This, she felt, however marked her out as different, since the intention was initially to express sadness, something she was consistently aware of how she might be judged within the group. In discussing this with me, the process of expressing sadness, even digitally, became something that made her feel vulnerable and it was only through me, who she perceives to be different from the others, that she wanted to initially express those ideas to.

Similarly, in the process of creating a digital story, Huma created something that was different to the rest of the group. It was not about her experiences of abuse, but about her experiences of University. When we started the digital portraits project I realised that Huma was the newest and youngest volunteer at the Centre. She had no children and had only been in the UK, for 6 months when she started coming to sessions. In our informal conversations, she often highlighted her difference to many of the women who came to the Centre and often attempted to connect with myself and other facilitators' by discussing experiences of University.

Throughout the process Huma appeared to trust me in the process of making a digital portrait and I often felt responsible for encouraging her to try things out, which made her feel vulnerable. I constantly tried to re-affirm this trust through complimenting her on the success of what she achieved each week. I did this because I was also genuinely impressed with how she had come up with the idea and was self-motivated to work on the project a little each week. At the same time, the explicit nature of the metaphor and how this related to her feelings, also suggested this made her feel vulnerable in relation to how she felt

she might be judged as different within the group. The optimist in me saw Huma changing the ending of her film so it could be more suggestive of hope; her feeling better about her situation and deciding to show this to the others too. However, I also wondered whether her decision to create something about hope rather than sadness, was part of the social obligation of being part of a community; trying to connect and being part of the group.

Tracing Huma's process through her use of technology for me highlighted different ways she used metaphor across time, in an attempt to illustrate transitions in her emotions and how she felt towards the group. But rather than think of these emotions as internal and specific to Huma, she used visual and textual metaphor to make her emotions generic and recognizable to others, eventually changing the tone and trajectory of her video from sadness and tragedy to hope and joy. In particular the process highlighted Huma's complex negotiation of social contingencies and relationships, realised in the specific context of her individual sense of self and her feelings of vulnerability within the sessions, with an awareness of how appropriate, or inappropriate she felt it was to express sadness.

In the final account, I discuss Nazlee's portrait as an exploration of her experiences with, and appreciation of, birds. Similar to Huma, Nazlee used visual images of nature as a metaphor to express ideas about relaxation. Again I start with Nazlee's written digital story followed by the visual sequence, since she did not create words, but made a soundscape that she developed as part of her digital portrait.

Nazlee

Marriage Time (digital story)

When I was married I had a nice life. My husband brought me lots of presents and food and I thought that this married life would be good. I had a daughter and came to the UK in 1994 and after that my husband is different. I see him totally change.

There is no more love. He keeps me in the kitchen. When guests come, he tells me that I can't see them, I can't say hello. My health visitor says I should learn English, but my husband says he will teach me, but he doesn't. He orders me about, telling me to bring food, bring clothes. I wonder what I can do. If I don't do things properly, he smacks me and swears at me.

I meet with my auntie one day and I tell her everything. My auntie says that this is wrong and I have to take a step. My auntie gives me lots of hope but I am still scared.

One night my husband smacks me before he goes out. My children almost see the fighting and the crying. I get really angry and lock the door and decide I will never let him back in.

The police are called and they take him to prison and I move to a refuge. They give me lots of help and they are like a family. With my kids, it is very cramped, with six of us in a room but eventually I get my own home and this makes me very happy.

Eventually my husband tells me that he is sorry. Now he takes the kids to school and helps with the shopping. He loves the kids and the kids love him. I see he has totally changed. But I have changed too. Today I go to the Centre for courses. There I have met Prya, Samiya and Usma auntie who are all really nice. I joined the group and enjoy spending time with people and making new friends. I don't feel lonely and stressed anymore.

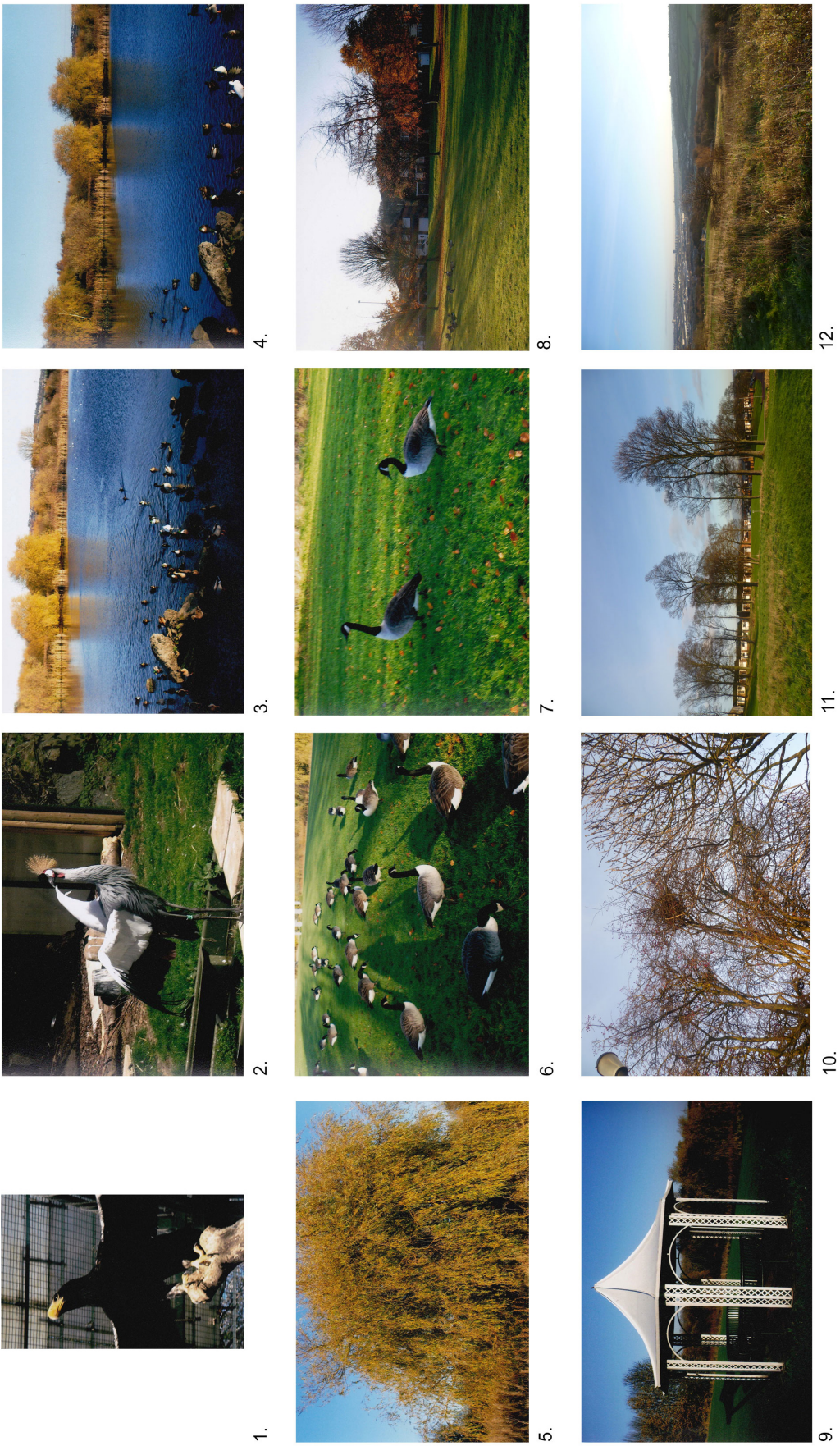


Figure 9: Nazlee's sequence of photographs of birds for her digital portrait.

Making Nazlee's digital portrait

In the third session Nazlee arrived just as we were all ready to start packing up. She said that she had missed the bus and so was a little flustered and hot. At the same time she seemed excited because she had a large bag full of photographs. She sat with Huzna and started to lay each one out, talking about what each photograph was quietly with Huzna in Urdu. I asked her to choose twelve photographs and we start to scan them into the computer. Huma helped her with the scanning showing Nazlee how to do it herself. As this was happening Nazlee decided to show me a picture of two Canada geese following one another. She described how the one in front was Huzna's husband and the one behind was Huzna and he was scolding her and she has her head down. Huzna and Nazlee both laughed at this as we continued scanning her pictures.

From the 17 photographs she brought to the session, over half of these photographs were of birds. I was surprised by the high percentage of bird photographs and asked her why she had brought so many to the session. She explained that she loved birds and described how she loved to listen to and watch the birds on her way back from taking the children to school, as this was a quiet time just for her. She asked if she could record their sounds and did an impromptu and animated imitation of the birds she passed on her way home from dropping the children off. As she imitated the birds, she wriggled in her seat, flickering her eyelashes, while pretending to chatter like a bird, which made everybody laugh. After she had finished, I show her how the sound recorders on the portrait packs worked.

In the fourth session Nazlee returned to say she had tried to record the sound of the birds, but that it hadn't worked. After recognizing that recording good quality sound of birds might be too complicated for the kind of recorders we had, we decided to go online and search for sound recordings of birds instead. Nazlee didn't know the specific names of birds so she described them to me, again imitating the birdcalls, describing their shapes and where she has seen them before. We searched for these birdcalls, found recorded sounds online, downloaded them and put them on a pen-drive for Nazlee to listen to at home. While initially listening to these bird-calls, Nazlee described how this reminded her of being younger in Pakistan.

In the weeks that followed Nazlee created a sequence of images from her printed photographs and marked out where she wanted the particular sounds to go. We worked on the computer together to add the sequence of images with the sounds and created a DVD that she took home.

In the final celebration event, Nazlee described how she has shared both her digital story and portrait video with her children at home. She described how she saw the videos as working together as a kind of progression, from past experiences to her life now. She explained how it had helped her discuss her difficult experiences with her children and helped to explain how she wants to enjoy more relaxing time in the future. When watching the video in the final session, Faleeha complimented Nazlee on the video, explaining how she enjoyed watching it and wanted for a copy for herself.

Sharing experiences, exploring associations

Nazlee's experience and her use of bird images and sound in creating a digital portrait, appeared to be meaningful in different ways throughout the process, as she engaged both with and beyond the community. When she first came to the session with the photographs of birds, she described these in the context of time for relaxation and time for self, as they prompted recollections of particular experiences. At the same time she used the same photographs and a particular image of the birds, to make a joke and reflect on Huzna's relationship with her husband. Later on, she also used a discussion of the birds within the photograph to enact what hearing and seeing birds, on her way to dropping the children off in the morning, felt like for her. This impromptu performance was more giddy and entertaining, rather than relaxing, as Nazlee imitated the birds and made everybody laugh. Finally in creating a soundwalk with birdcalls, this, she said reminded her of being younger in Pakistan. In producing a DVD, she used this as a way of describing how she wanted her future to be more relaxing.

In this sense, the photographs of the birds did not necessarily carry any intrinsic meaning for Nazlee, but worked as providing triggers for recollections and ways of connecting her own experiences with that of others. She did not always use

the birds explicitly as metaphors, but more as prompts for extending her interaction with others at home and as being part of the group.

In the following sections of this chapter I will pull together reflections from making the digital portraits within the group and some of the challenges in understanding the particular practices involved. In particular I focus on the role of visual storytelling, to support metaphor, performance and reciprocity within community. I conclude with reflections on making time for plurality of experiences and the challenges of documenting practice within this particular context.

Visual Stories: Making Use of Metaphor, Performance and Reciprocity

Frank argues that, while as researchers we often work with words to understand stories, stories can also be understood as collections of images [Frank 2010: 105]. In listening to and working with volunteers, on their digital stories in the previous chapter, I felt that we had not paid enough attention to the images and the work that the stories were doing within the context of the group and the Centre. This was particularly problematic in relation to the assumption; that using personal photographs to illustrate stories of abuse would be appropriate for all the anticipated audiences. This also prompted concerns about being identified beyond the particular community of the Centre.

Other visual arts and community practices have used photography as starting points for group reflections and discussions of experience for personal and public display [Spence 1995, Frohman 2007, Coetzee et al 2008]. I explored, with volunteers, alternative ways of making and sharing stories starting from images, that encouraged further consideration of the most resonant values and practices. The focus was not on the assumed collective value of giving voice to experience as testament. Rather, in discussing the sessions with volunteers in relation to what had been produced, what was highlighted was opportunities to use metaphors, performance and reciprocity as valuable ways of exploring experiences within community.

Metaphor as bridge

The use of particular visual images, by Huma and Nazlee, appeared to be experienced as enriching metaphors to communicate past, present, desired feelings and experiences for the future. While each contained a storied form, closer to prose, and an audio-visual soundwalk, the use of visual metaphor appeared to act as a bridge [Lakoff & Johnson 1980] within and beyond the group in an attempt to communicate some aspect of affect within experience. These bridged appeared to potentially evoke a sense of what the experiences of sadness and relaxation might feel like and communicate this to others as a form of sharing and connecting. Rather than seeing these as expressions of the self from within, the use of metaphor here, I felt, was a social act of sense making. Both individuals used specific, but also recognizable, environmental resources available and relevant to them which were resources that had sparked their imagination. In Nazlee's case, the portrait appeared to create direct opportunities for discussion and reciprocity with others in the group and with her family. Her use of metaphor, for instance also resonated with Faleeha, who recognised the desire for beauty and relaxation associated with Nazlee's particular experiences.

I initially thought that Huma and Nazlee's use of metaphor was a potential way of working with visual anonymity that had been such a challenge within the digital storytelling sessions. However for Huma, this was more complicated in that while she could anonymise her contribution for a wider audience, the emotive and individual nature of the digital portrait she produced made her feel vulnerable in the context of the Centre, other volunteers and staff, who she described might judge and make fun of her in a way that she felt that I wouldn't. Therefore the use of a familiar and strong metaphor such as a tree with no leaves indicating sadness and loss, was also eventually changed to present a portrait that was much more about feelings of transition and hope, which Huma eventually said she felt much happier about sharing within the group. While Huma described her decision to do this was because she felt it reflected her life experiences, I also wondered whether there was also a sense of social obligation and compromise in wanting to still feel part of the group [McCarthy & Wright 2004, Hodges 1990].

Performative enactments of selfhood

Photography and storytelling as performative acts also became important features to consider within digital portraits. What was being enacted and brought into existence, and circulated through the creation of digital content, was relevant for understanding the value of sharing within the community. For instance, it was clear that Saeeda and Zahrah had built a strong friendship, in bringing the photographic albums that were both the same, their wearing of similar clothes and their collection of similar photographs of the same shared days out. The discussion of why this was important for them highlighted an embodied and relational performance towards each other and to wider publics. While an analysis that took a particular gendered approach to performativity [Butler 1990 1993, Van House 2011] might describe this in terms of performing gendered social norms, what Saeeda and Zahrah described in the workshops was how their similarity was played out as a form of support, to sustain an ongoing connection around how they had made sense of their experiences together. These experiences of performing similarity were also described in terms of being playful [Light 2011a]. Some of the photographs also created a visual kind of trouble for me, in the mirroring of self that was created through the materials brought into the workshop, such as the photo-albums and the clothes referred to within the photographs themselves. I wondered whether this heightened performativity was also a way of obfuscating feelings of vulnerability, as also described in the conversations we had and in text that they wrote. Performativity in this sense was enacted through visual, material, embodied and linguistic affirmations of connection, through similarity, as being part of particular friendship, but not necessarily part of community. I also recognised that these ideas were, of course, communicated to me and within the wider group context and there were limits to what I felt I could see and was obvious, on the surface, as similarity rather than acknowledging the specificity of their individuality.

I also felt that there were other forms of performativity that also connected with how individuals were using the digital cameras and photographs as a form of rehearsing towards a future, that they wanted to sustain. In a much more prosaic sense, the various acts of looking, photographing, sequencing and sharing images suggested various ways that volunteers were using the opportunity to reflect on, and prepare for, their future lives.

Frank argues that all storytelling is a form of performance, in considering audiences and understanding the emotional effects stories can have in instigating action [Frank 2010]. While the portrait process did not focus on stories in particular, we did create visual sequences that moved individuals in the group to communicate other aspects of experience within their own wider families beyond the Centre. For Nazlee she used this as an opportunity to communicate with her children how she wanted more relaxation time, Faleeha used her portrait to share with staff at the Centre as a form of appreciation, to let them know of her achievements in spending time with her sons. Huzna used the portrait process as a way of reflecting on what she wanted to continue within her future, for her own sense of fulfillment, and Huma as a way of anticipating desirable change for a more hopeful future.

Challenges and Limitations: Plurality and Documentation

Time for valuing plurality

In the previous chapters I drew from Gunaratnam's notion of a 'reflexive analytic doubling' in attempting to make connections between my own experiences and those of staff and volunteers. However, in developing the digital portrait process, I felt it had also been important to reflexively and carefully consider difference in its particularity to each individual. The life experiences within the group, as had been discussed within and around the process of creating digital stories, and the multiplicity of different concerns raised in relation to technology and future aspirations, had also taken additional time. Yet this had helped me to identify, even if momentarily, ways that I could recognise and value different and very specific individual perspectives, as they were being articulated and shared within the context of the Centre, towards one another and towards me.

Despite my recognition of each individual as different to one another and different to me, it wasn't always possible to fully respond to individuals in a way that I felt was always appropriate, to respect the specificity of their personal and varied experiences. There were always masses of constraints on time; other things that individuals needed to do, other commitments towards affiliations within the group and towards staff and research that needed to be fulfilled. In this sense there was a lot of compromise and negotiation, with each individual,

on what I felt was achievable within the institutional and personal time-frames, in relation to everything else that was also happening within the volunteers' lives.

In each session, I became aware how I was making nuanced decisions 'on the fly' that drove the process towards some form of what I felt would be a satisfying conclusion. As facilitator, I was in a position of control and power, with a plan that I negotiated with the group each week. Sometimes this felt awkward, as a white British academic with no direct experience of domestic violence, and I was sometimes concerned of the harm that I might do. Although I was often guided by staff and volunteers, I, at times, felt vulnerable in making decisions, when I did not always fully understand what the consequences might be, and what I felt I could and could not offer in terms of my expertise and understanding.

Documenting and analysing practice

Videotaping or sound recording the sessions may have been a useful strategy to help with documentation and reflection around how the group were coming together and using the technology. However, the sensitivity of the context, and my commitment at this stage to build relationships within this particular community, were, for me, considered more important in taking more tentative steps in understanding how technology was being explored for future practices. In this sense, it was important to find appropriate ways to document practice, through the research, that was sensitive to the social context over time.

Recording all the sessions, for me, felt like it would have been an intrusion undermining what the volunteers were willing to write and speak about in public. However in writing field-notes and initiating informal conversations, in order to analyse the materials that were collected, I had to move between different perspectives of those who had been involved. This involved working on the movement between interaction, continuity, and the situation [Clandinin & Connelly 2000: 50], between the inside and outside, moving across multiple periods of time. But unlike most of Clandinin & Connelly's work, which relies predominantly on ethnographic field notes and written stories, I was also working with different media and between different uses of technology, how stories were made and shared, and by whom, and how they were put into

circulation. Working with a narrative inquiry approach brought these different aspects of time, place and perspectives and media into dialogue with my own experiences. At the same time this moving between spaces and times, different perspectives, voices, media and technologies also became quite complicated, with all that was also practically going on with the planning and delivery of the workshops themselves. Sometimes, I wanted something specific to grasp on to that was safe and stable, even if this was only for a moment. In focusing so intently on the movement within and between other people's stories, trying to understand the interactions and the movements between us and the technology, I lost a sense of my own continuity and story within the research. Feelings of accountability and responsibility towards each of the volunteers involved, after spending a long time listening to their stories and the sensitivity I felt was required to take care of them, meant that I also began to develop an emotional attachment and concern for their futures that was difficult to detach from my own [Moncur 2013].

Conclusion

In developing and reflecting on an alternative workshop process, developing digital portraits within the Centre, the process and products of digital portraits produced were useful in highlighting other qualities of stories that were not explored within the digital storytelling workshops. This included the valuable use of metaphor, to explore feelings of sadness through using a recognizable form to structure emotional lows and highs, loss and hope. In addition the value of mimesis; that of showing, giving somebody else a sense of an experience rather than telling them about it, and the role of embodied performance in taking and sharing photographs. In this sense, while stories can not necessarily be seen analytically as mimetic reflections of experience, photography is often perceived to be a direct reflection of a particular event- a way of saying I have been here. Visual storytelling, through images, supported recall of primarily positive experiences, of being there, but also supported a way of exchanging and reciprocating, reaffirming community ties and identities and most significantly in supporting recognition and appreciation within the group.

Despite opening up different qualities and vocabularies for visual storytelling, I experienced the documentation and reflections on practice as particularly

challenging, as it required so much movement between different aspects of experience over time. In highlighting the unfolding and unfinalised nature of the many different experiences that were discussed, interpreted and created as digital presentations of self to communicate and share within the group, I felt a sense of loss of my own continuity of self in bringing different perspectives into dialogue with one another. At the same time it seemed important to understand the unfolding nature of these research encounters as inherently social and dynamic experiences within a community that wasn't sitting still.

In the chapter that follows, I further work with these findings to collaborate with interaction designers, programmers, engineers and furniture makers, to develop a bespoke photo-sharing prototype for use within the Centre.

Chapter 7

A Socially Engaged Interactive Artefact

Introduction

In Chapter 7, I discuss the approaches taken to develop a socially engaged interactive prototype, the photo-parshiya; a digital photo-album, as a response to the formative studies discussed in previous chapters. The prototype was designed to support social connection through making and sharing photographs and creative acts of making jewellery at the Centre.



Figure 10: The photo-parshiya digital photo-album. Top: The photo-parshiya on its base with necklace next to and connected to the right screen, where it is enlarged. Bottom: The photo-parshiya as a book closed and open.

The prototype can be held like a book, is portable and acts as a static double touch screen display that sits on a bespoke crafted base. The physical and interface design was developed to support the ecology of interactions associated with uploading, storing and displaying collections of digital images in groups. The left screen shows a public collection of photographs. The right screen connects to a set of 6 hand-made necklaces made by women at the Centre. When the necklaces are close to the book, the screen displays their presence and proximity through the gentle motion of large and small globes that represent the necklace designs. When the necklace is close for a sustained period of time, the globe on the screen is enlarged and when touched, a locket appears where photographs can be stored or transferred to the left screen. The word parshiya is an ancient word meaning to be part of something, a family, collective or group.



Figure 11: Connecting: A wireless accelerometer is embedded in a jewelry piece such as a necklace. When the necklace is within a 50 cm range of the book, the icon on the right screen enlarges. When pressed it opens to show the inside of a locket.



Figure 12: Uploading: When the locket is open an SD card or USB can be inserted into the base and images will appear at the bottom of the right hand screen.

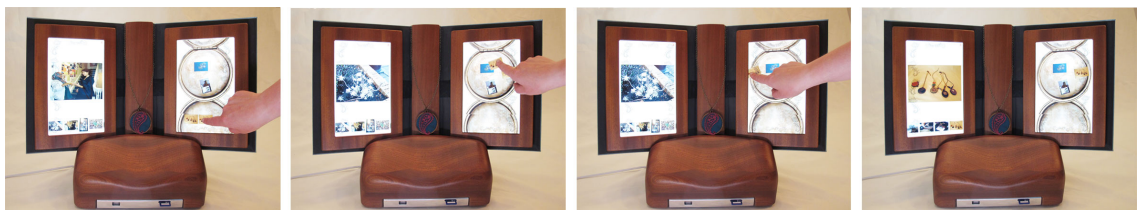


Figure 13: Sharing: When photographs are loaded on the base they can be moved into the central area of the locket and be kept here, or transferred to the left hand screen for public view.

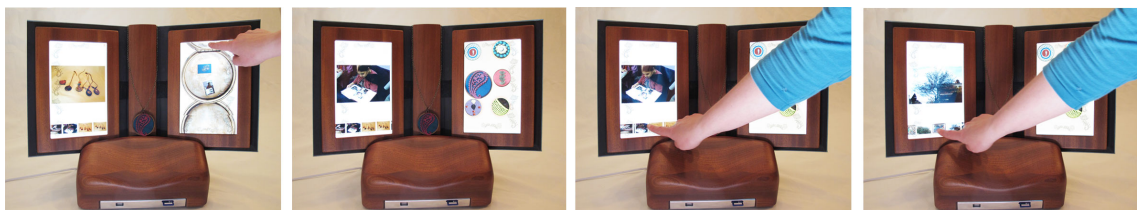


Figure 14: Scrolling: When photographs are on the left hand screen they can be scrolled chronologically. If a collection of photographs have already been created they can be retrieved by connecting the jewelry piece to the right hand screen as above.

As a socially engaged arts practitioner, my interest, alongside the interests of the Centre staff and volunteers, was around exploring a different configuration of technology that could further support workshop practice and the use of technology in the Centre in enriching ways. In doing so, this Chapter outlines the collaborations with additional practitioners, researchers at Culture Lab; Paul Dunphy, an interaction designer focusing on security and privacy, Dan Jackson, programmer and engineer, and David Angus, a commercial furniture designer from Raskl design. Their expertise and insights were brought together while also working with staff and volunteers at the Centre.

This Chapter includes three phases that took place between July 2012 and August 2013 described here as *refining concepts*, *testing ideas* and *fine-tuning form and interaction*. Together these phases moved from insights developed from the qualitative studies discussed in previous chapters and into ideas for physical, material and digital interactions.

Refining Concepts, the first phase, took place between July and December 2012, moving between qualitative data, technical possibilities and the future plans of the organisation. During this phase, staff also moved premises, re-organised their structure, and made plans for funding proposals.

Testing Ideas, the second phase, took place between January and April 2013. Workshops were conducted with learners and volunteers at the Centre and at a local craft gallery to inform aesthetic and sensory interactions with materials, physical forms and photographic presentation. In these sessions we tested and discussed ideas based on the photo-album book form, wearables and social interactions around artefacts, materials and presentations of photographs in the Centre.

Fine-tuning Form and Interaction, the third phase, took place between June and August 2013. Here we moved from developing cardboard and paper prototypes of interaction towards an interactive book, that could store and display photographs. We also developed wearable brooches that could be personalized by individuals and house electronics that could connect with the interactive book. We designed the prototype as part of a workshop process to engage

groups in taking and sharing photographs in rich and personally meaningful ways.

Developing A Design Rationale

The first stages of the process began by clarifying the core values and challenges of technology use, that were documented within the qualitative research data and analysed alongside discussions with staff and learners from the Centre. While there were many challenges and problems that had emerged from the use of technology, within the earlier formative studies described in the previous chapters, it was not my intention to develop technology that attempted to solve these problems. In taking an experience-centred design approach, I focused on ways that the design team could conceptualise the design space as opportunities for thinking differently, supporting and enhancing the potentially enriching aspects of technology use and experiences at the Centre. At the same time we had to be mindful of the practicalities of developing ideas for a particular environment, while considering the sensibilities and values of staff, learners and volunteers as they were articulated now. Also, how they were being discussed in relation to possible futures and the proposed *BAM! Sistahood!* Heritage project, which staff were working towards.

The core potential opportunities that were identified with women and staff included technology use, to support face-to-face social connection and learning, supporting embodied expressions of relations and to support the communication of experiences to others.

Social Connection & Learning: Previous workshops had highlighted the importance of encouraging social connection between women, through the technology, as a way of supporting both formal and informal learning at the Centre. Learning here was understood as both formal courses, but also more informal opportunities to engage in social events and be part of a wider learning community, to prevent isolation and loneliness. The women's continual engagement with the Centre often relied on strong social bonds, established and maintained over long periods of time, with each other and other staff members.

Embodied Expressions of Relations: There were aspects of experience, and the women's relationships with other people and things, that had been discussed as enriching when describing these to one another in the digital portraits workshops. These experiences were sometimes difficult to articulate through the use of the technology alone. Technology worked best when it supported and supplemented bodily communications within the group; providing an occasion to think through or re-enact a particular experience that the technology had failed to directly capture, but had helped to invoke, prompting performative retellings of experiences.

Communication of Experiences: In crafting particular experiences through the use of technology in previous workshops, individuals also felt there was value in being able to use technology to *communicate* ideas and *feelings* they felt were too difficult to express to family members or friends. The women explored this through the creation of videos that expressed these complex emotions and future desires to their families. ,

Core potential challenges that were identified included issues associated with diverse digital, visual and media literacies and how these were inflected with the future needs, desires and concerns around upholding privacy and anonymity.

Digital Literacies & Interests: Tensions arose in previous workshops around using particular commercially available technologies (including digital cameras, sound recorders and Apple Mac laptop computers), which brought to light the different skills, expertise and interests of individuals, highlighting a diverse range of experiences and desires associated with technology use.

Visual & Media Literacies: Some of the group had been comfortable and confident in their use of visual images and audio to express complex ideas about their personal narratives and aspects of their lives they felt were valuable. But others were less confident and preferred to work in pairs to support each other in generating ideas. The use of printed photographs had helped to support idea generation and sequencing for telling and expanding on stories independently and in the group.

Privacy & Anonymity: Concerns were also raised around issues relating to privacy and anonymity in how and where the images were shown, and to whom. This further highlighted issues associated with empowerment; connected with the control of the images, where they were stored, how they were shown and how attributable to particular individuals the images might be. This was further dependent on where the women were in terms of their relationships with family members. Also, how they envisioned their potential future lives and the imagined consequences of someone identifying particular aspects of digital media both within the community and online. This also related to the women's sense of cultural identity, values associated with family and community and concerns about being judged if leaving their husbands.

These core opportunities and challenges described above were considered important when moving from a design rationale to initial ideas within the design team, but also for staff and learners at the Centre. Alongside this there were also core experiences that I felt had been important in understanding experiences of the Centre, from the initial orientation phase I described in Chapter 4. Here, learners had frequently discussed how the staff and community were '*like a family*' to them and provided much needed cultural understanding, social support and encouragement. At the same time there were cultural tensions around respect and hierarchies, associated with relationships with older family members, that meant group participation and decision-making was challenging and deferred to more senior staff. Alongside other women, I had also experienced long periods of waiting, interspersed with chaos when staff, volunteers or learners needed to be in court, or assist in finding refuge accommodation, clothes or food for a family who were leaving an abusive situation. These were often experienced as lags in connection, where I was on the outside of the situation, with only a partial understanding of what was happening in people's lives. There was also a commitment from staff to encourage women to be safe and healthy, creative, expressive and confident in celebrating cultural values as a source of pride, to build solidarity and personal connections with one another.

Alternative Critical Configurations of Technology Use

The possibilities and challenges discussed, in moving ideas for the prototype forward, were also aligned with my critical sensibilities towards technology use and design. Such criticality was not directed towards the artefact as the product of a critical design proposal. My criticality was aligned more closely with both the notion of a 'critical technical practice' a practice between craft and critique [Agre 1997, Dourish & Bell 2011, Light 2011a] and the importance of personal biography and experience in engendering critical thinking and reflection on identities and exclusion [Ahmed 2012, hooks, 2010].

In this sense the design of the photo-parshiya was positioned around three alternative visions and aspirations for technology use that I had identified within my existing institutional research community, the HCI research community, and the community of staff and women learners at the Centre. This was to acknowledge that in developing the photo-parshiya, the process and product were inextricably intertwined in connecting different types of knowledge [Haraway 1988, 1991, Mol 2008] and forms of empathic communication for different purposes [Kester 2004], while responding to the particularities of what had come from the previous long-term research encounters.

In engaging with my existing institutional research community to inform the design of a prototype, I wanted to focus on how the design process and the photo-parshiya prototype itself could support alternative understandings of a care and learning community, that celebrated its diversity in making change. This was to purposively move away from positioning the community as a unified 'deficit model' group, needing technical help to achieve their aims. Rather, I saw them as an interdependent and dynamic group with a multiplicity of needs, desires and possible futures.

In engaging with and responding to the HCI research community, I further wanted to highlight the possibilities for alternative configurations of photo-sharing practices, particularly within a multi-cultural learning and care community. While there were now many projects in HCI that had moved towards the design and use of technology that supported creative storytelling and expression in learning environments, as discussed in Chapter 5, there were still few that highlighted the evocative potential of technology use and

storytelling as a performative act. This was an important step in moving away from an informatics based approach, to community-based design that also highlighted some of the tensions that can emerge around issues of control and empowerment on sensitive issues concerning community identities and expressive technology use [DiSalvo et al 2013].

In engaging with and responding to the Centre, the photo-parshiya prototype was envisioned as a way of encouraging staff and women to both identify with technology, while offering a way of reflecting on the practice and possible future use of technology that moved away from the procedural management of information associated with their day-to-day work. The prototype was also envisioned as a means in which to bridge communication and identification between the younger generations of staff and volunteers who were more proactive in their use of technologies, such as photography, and more senior members who wanted more control over how the organisation presented itself to others.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Light [2011a] has argued that a critical technical practice is valuable when working on technology design around identities, where workshops and conversations are framed as 'space-making' exercises. This allows not for design focused on making products, but on more discursive practices that encourage alternative framings of identity which can offer occasions for identities to be negotiated rather than assumed. This is particularly salient in the context of developing expressive technologies that support how individuals perceive themselves through their relationships with others and within communities considered to be marginalised. Light argues that such 'space-making' exercises are valuable in understanding how people can also imagine and play with a sense of who they are and who they want to be, not as a single category that is imposed or simplified.

What follows is a description of the process of working on designs, developing concepts, testing ideas, refining form and interaction, towards the development of a prototype. The process did not include all perspectives from staff and volunteers at every stage, but rather built on concepts cumulatively as the design progressed. Artefacts, materials and presentations of ideas were

therefore often used to mediate and discuss ideas across and between those involved at different stages of the process. I describe these here as a series of ‘space-making’ exercises, as conversations and dialogues, in an attempt to draw together the different perspectives of those involved in the process of design, while being mindful of the empirical, conceptual and theoretical concerns of the research.

Refining Concepts

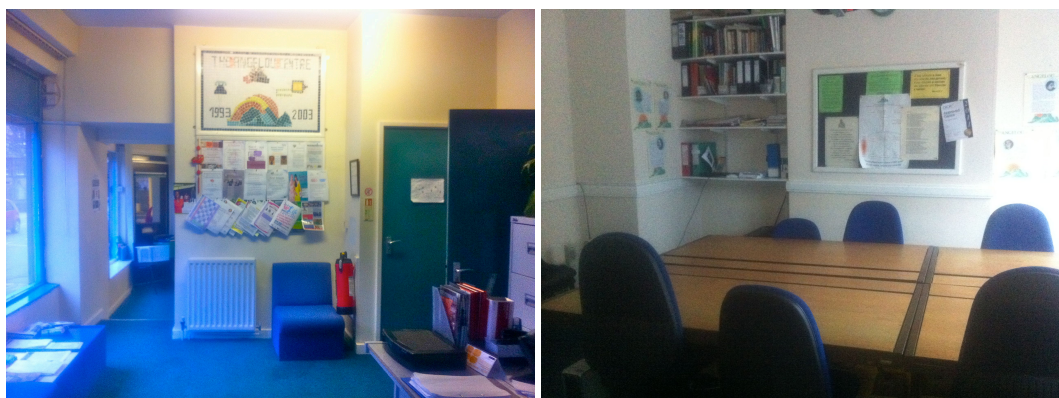


Figure 15: L-R: Centre entrance and reception area, computer room and training room from the old building. At this stage we knew we were no longer designing for this particular location, but these images helped to act as placeholders, anchoring ideas to a particular set of constraints and understandings of how spaces were actually used by staff and learners.

From July 2012 Centre staff closed the doors of the old building and began packing to prepare to move premises. In this interim period they wanted to focus on the move and re-organising the new building, and so research was de-prioritised until October when they would begin to review their schedules. In this interim period, drawing from the conceptual, theoretical and practical insights developed from the qualitative data, I began to sketch ideas that focused on supporting social interaction in the learning and care environment of the existing Centre focusing on photo-sharing. These developed into 3 main ideas, the picture-chair, the tea-time-table and photo-threads⁹, ideas which developed from the existing infrastructure and materials of the Centre, before staff moved premises. Each of these designs focused on the creation of personal objects, relating to women’s sense of self and identity to connect with screens to inform the interaction.

The new centre

⁹ See Appendix B for design sketches

In returning to the Centre in October, staff were still working on the re-organisation of their new spaces. Volunteers had started to return to the Centre after the summer holidays and were further helping to re-organise and unpack. Learners and course facilitators had not yet returned but were due to come back in January. In meeting with Centre administrator Rosie, although the spaces were still being organized, it was clear that the initial ideas that had been sketched would require some significant reconsideration, as the spaces were now very differently organized and would continue to evolve as the community settled in.

In sharing the initial concepts for a prototype with Rosie, she was interested and excited by all of the proposals, seeing their relevance for the Centre. However, her main focus at this stage was how any technology design could support the development of a new funding bid, the BAM! Sistahood heritage project, to support heritage learning and celebration of BAMER women's contribution to the social, cultural and historical landscape of the region. The prototype design, therefore, also became entangled in the process of envisioning the project and the subsequent funding bid.



Figure 16: The Auntie's room is situated downstairs between the computer room and the kitchen, this room functions as an additional training room, waiting area and informal social space for women and staff. The room sits at the heart of the building and it is named after the Aunties, a group of retired women in their 60s, 70s and 80s who donated a building to the Centre, which was sold to pay for the new building.



Figure 17: Centre: Exterior of the new building in January 2013. Clockwise from top left: Inside the new building; downstairs computer room, corridor entrance to kitchen, and art room. Bottom left to right: administration office, counseling room, and waiting area on landing.



Figure 18: When the staff first moved into the Centre, there was very little on the walls except policies and procedures on a notice board in the Auntie's room (above) and the main corridor from the entrance heading towards the toilets, included fire safety signs, notices for courses and a batik fabric print from the old building.

We began to discuss the possibility of running workshops in January when learners would be returning for courses. We did this in the Auntie's room, which at this stage was discussed by Rosie as both a social and learning space. At the same time, I also noticed there was an interesting tension in the dominance of administrative policies and procedures that was promoted on the walls, which

jarred in relation to what I imagined social and learning spaces could be like. In response, I felt some urgency to explore how creativity and expression through social technology use within this space might work. This was further discussed with Rosie and helped to clarify earlier concepts, in light of the new building infrastructure and the new plans for the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project.

Choosing technologies

In imagining the initial concepts, picture-chair, tea-time-table and photo-threads as physical things in the new space, I felt that they would dominate too much, because of their size. My main concern was that this would potentially override any meaningful social connection between people, if the focus was too much on a large, flashy piece of technology. Bringing together the idea of learning and the way in which the photo-album had been an important aspect of social connection for women re-writing their lives after periods of abuse, as described in Chapter 6, I began to re-consider the particular form and interaction around a book. This offered a much richer metaphor for learning and authoring, a way of structuring the sharing of experiences into something potentially meaningful. A book could be a much smaller structure and could be flexible if moved around. The idea for an interactive book, or a photo-album also responded to the future development of the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project that Rosie had identified, where the documentation and sharing of women's heritage in the region was largely missing from both institutional archives and families to share with younger generations.

In discussing these ideas initially with Paul and Dan, tablet displays were considered a useful way of developing and supporting a book form and associated interactions. In bringing together some of these initial ideas from the earlier concepts, on how to create more personalized spaces for sharing, where privacy could be discursively negotiated in more meaningful ways, we did not want a complicated authentication system such as passwords, as this would feel too procedural and work-based. We wanted an approach to interaction that individuals and groups could connect with, that was more visual and tactile, based on our previous insights drawn from the research.

RFID was initially explored, but abandoned because of the emphasis on purposeful and physical contact to make the interaction and felt too reductive in creating a binary on or off, input and output connection. Bluetooth technology was also trialed, but abandoned, because interaction could only work around connection and disconnection, rather than offering alternatives, an in between, or a third space to create some uncertainty, ambiguity and opportunities for anticipation and play. Paul and Dan suggested the potential of an alternative technology, the WAX, an accelerometer based wireless system that could be programmed with tablet displays to detect different distances and timings for connections and disconnections between devices.

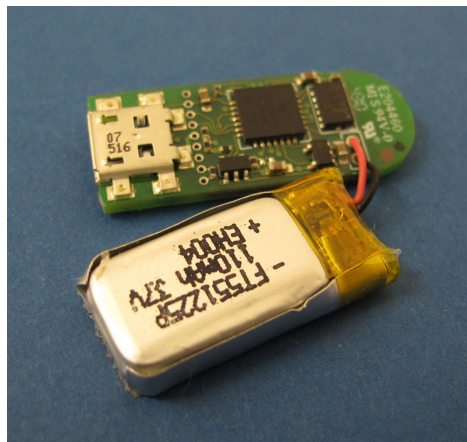


Figure 19: The WAX device transmitter, approx 30mm x 10mm x 5mm

Understanding signals

In discussing interaction around the WAX, I developed ideas based on a wearable object to house the electronics, a brooch, scarf or necklace with the wax embedded, that could be used to connect to the tablet displays and could be personalized using different patterns and materials. I initially conceptualized the interaction as specifically directional, so if somebody was wearing an object with the WAX embedded, they would face the tablets embedded in the books, and the devices would respond. Yet in discussing, with Paul and Dan, the kinds of interaction and signal that the WAX was capable of, they highlighted the signals were omni-directional; transmitted out to create more of a doughnut shape, emanating out in a series of loop shapes 360° around the device. Signal strengths and distances could be affected by architecture and materials, particularly metals that could change the direction or reduce the effectiveness of the signal. In further constraining the design space, an understanding of the signal as omni-directional, helped to highlight the variability of connection and how this would not provide an immediate, on or off, near or far connection. We

discussed how practically this could mean there would sometimes be short time lags when the signal would not be picked up and so the screen would not necessarily respond immediately. This resonated for me as this somewhat reflected the experience of being at the Centre, that volunteers and other learners also described when waiting for courses and staff meetings. We considered the scenarios for this pausing and waiting as offering a 'third-space' of interaction between connection and disconnection to allow for ambiguity, uncertainty and anticipation to be played out.

Testing the Ideas

Planning participatory workshops

In November, after refining the initial concepts developed in response to a design rationale, the idea for a digital photo-album and a set of wearables to connect to the tablet displays was discussed as a possible idea with Rosie. We further worked on the plan to run workshops exploring these ideas in January. The workshops needed to do a number of things as part of the process. First of all, we asked the question of how a learning group could socially connect around objects, making activities and sharing photographs using different technologies. Secondly, we decided to introduce the sketchbook at this stage as a way of individuals documenting the process in their own way, but also to understand if the book concept had value for a group of learners. Thirdly, we wanted to understand some of the aesthetic and sensory preferences around objects and materials. Also, Rosie was now writing the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project proposal and was interested in consulting with groups on their interests and stories of migration and family life. Between November and December 2012, I worked with Rosie to finalise a programme of workshops, which were promoted within the Centre for women who were attending other sessions or accessing services.

Developing design template

In continuing to move the ideas forward I focused on the design of a brooch, which could house the electronic accelerometer and could be developed in the workshops, using patterns taken from objects from home that we planned to ask women to bring along as part of the sessions. To start the process, I made a series of mock-up brooches to test the idea and some initial materials.

Drawing from patterned fabrics used in previous workshops, I had already developed some initial design insights from patterns, textures and materials combining museum artefact reference material from Iran, India, Pakistan and Nigeria from the V&A collection of textiles in London, Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums in Newcastle. This was a small but growing collection of international textiles and clothing from their ethnographic collections, and jewelry and textiles from the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. Visiting and drawing from these collections for inspiration highlighted the way in which the objects and fabrics on display were not everyday artefacts, but often commissioned or given in exchange as exemplary, novel, extra-ordinary and exotic. The curatorial descriptions highlighted that some of these artefacts had also been specifically made in response to colonial encounters with European traders. In response to this I drew and traced a series of shapes and played around with their form with paper, wood and air-drying clay to further develop these ideas into physical forms.



Figure 20: Patterns developed from fabric collections in museums to move towards a design structure that could house the WAX electronics. Going from traced patterns from fabrics and natural forms using paper and then wood.

Workshop sessions

In January 2013, we ran 10 weekly workshops for 2 hrs each, over 3 months with a group of 8 women, Kinah, Razeena, Sabeen, Nilah, Mahalia, Faridah, Khaleda and Martitia. Individually they each described how they had moved from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Nigeria to the UK, living here for between

1-6 years, having moved with their husbands and family who were here on work or education visas or were already British citizens. Their ages ranged from 23-65 years old, 5 of the group had between 1-3 children aged 6 months to 40 years old. Some of the group already knew one another and had been coming to the Centre since they moved to the UK 6 years ago. Others were new to the Centre and did not know anyone. The eldest woman in the group, who was 65, also had grandchildren and attended regular sessions with the 'Auntie's Group', an over 60s club for retirees. There were 3 volunteers that also came to the sessions, Charlie, Sophie, and Sheila. Charlie had been volunteering for just over two years and Sophie and Sheila were new volunteers who had just moved to the region and were interested in working with the Centre. They both had previous extensive experience working, training and researching in international development contexts in India and Canada. Additional researchers from Culture Lab, Clara Crivellaro and Bettina Nissen, also joined us for particular sessions to assist with making and visits to the museum.

The focus of the workshops was to consider how the group socially connected around objects, making activities and sharing photographs and how sketchbooks could be part of this process. In week 1, I introduced the project and individual women introduced themselves and their interests in coming to the workshops. I introduced objects that I had brought from home that were important for me and encouraged the group to bring their own objects for the following week. On the 2nd and 3rd weeks, we focused on discussing objects that individual women had brought from home, encouraging women to bring precious objects to share with each other. In these sessions women also described what the objects were and why they had brought it, followed by drawing each others' objects and then photographing them. In weeks 4 and 5, we turned the shapes from the photographs and drawings into cut out paper designs and assembled these into patterns. In week 6 we visited a contemporary craft gallery to explore objects that the group were interested in and in weeks 7, 8 and 9, we developed the designs in different materials including paper, plastic, Perspex, leather, wood and fabrics, using laser cutters, cutter plotters, and 3D printers while selecting and printing photos to frame and show in the Centre.



Figure 21: Workshop documentation: Top L-R: Information sheets about the project with invitations to take part and bring objects from home and sheets to encourage reflection on what creative activities women liked to take part in. Middle L-R: Group discussion on objects from home, close-up photograph of spoon and mats brought from Nigeria to decorate the house in Newcastle and sketchbook for documenting progress and ideas. Bottom L-R: Museum gallery visit photographing in the gallery, handling craft objects and framed photographs from workshops hung up in the Centre.

The entire process was documented through photography, some taken by the group and others by researchers and volunteers. Photographs were printed and included in sketchbooks alongside drawings and experiments working with different materials. Individuals then chose 8 photographs to print, frame and present in the Auntie's room. I worked with volunteers to develop a set of questions and in a final celebration event in week 10, the frames were hung and we each brought food to share and celebrate the work we had achieved. We discussed the questions to understand how workshops had supported social connection between objects, making activities and sharing photographs. The museum visit was video recorded and the final session was recorded on audio and transcribed. Following on from the workshops, a document that brought together quotes and findings from the workshop was put together to discuss with staff, volunteers and women to further clarify some of the points that had been discussed.



Figure 22: Framed photographs in the Auntie's room.

Overview of outcomes

Data collected during the workshops included photographs, field notes, video and an audio-recording of our group discussion in the final session. These were collated into a document, in response to the questions put together by volunteers, alongside photographs that illustrated some of the answers. The document was presented to staff and volunteers and used as the focus for further discussions to provide insights in how the group had connected through objects, making and photos. In addition, ad-hoc conversations from staff in response to the sessions and the installation of the photographs were also included. I present here a brief discussion of the outcomes from the session.

Individuals expressed overall how they had enjoyed the sessions as they had appreciated socializing with new people, learning about different cultures and the images and objects they had seen and made in the group. Learners from the sessions also highlighted how photographs taken had helped in sharing ideas with one another. They felt that they were able to communicate more easily to others at home about the process of being involved, describing how they wanted further opportunities to share with family members who were in different parts of the country and the world. The importance of being involved in making something and learning something new was the source of great pride. Technology here played an important role in offering opportunities to try and learn something new, especially when able to show to others and was also highly valued by individuals in the group. At the same time there were clear tensions felt by volunteers who sometimes felt more could be done to support

women in connecting with others they didn't know through conversation. Tensions were also expressed by learners who sometimes felt frustrated that they were often doing the same things each week. They wanted more control to adapt designs in their own way.

Workshops developed within the centre had a specific output, that of a long-term visual and photographic exhibition of the work that had been developed over a 3 month period. Thus, we were able to engage in activities and discussions that helped identify different perspectives and concerns from those directly involved, from learners and volunteers to staff members and other women coming to the Centre, who engaged peripherally with the content and what was produced. In developing these workshops, objects and photographs of objects were useful in gently suggesting alternative perspectives of similar experiences of the sessions and how these could be understood individually within and outside of the group, beyond language, to create a much more material-discursive and affective space for contemplation, discussion and reflection. Research insights were discussed across many different individuals, often with very disparate agendas and motivations for coming to the sessions or for sharing the space with the photographs. The insights developed in response to each individual were not as rich as those gained through more focused workshops with smaller groups of women who already knew one another in the storytelling and portrait workshops as described in Chapters 5 and 6. At the same time, the approach was a useful exploratory strategy for bringing together a more polyvocal account of how the photographs were developed and displayed over a specific period of time and what they invoked in relation to meaning making for different people involved in a participatory process within the Centre.

In terms of informing the design of an artefact, the workshops helped to foreground the relevance of both objects and materials from different parts of the world. These were both familiar, but also more abstract and ambiguous and offered temporary moments of resonance and imaginative contemplation for those involved in workshops and those who appreciated the objects through looking at the photographs installed at the Centre. This helped to further provide inspiration for the design of the form of the artefact to consider the symbolic

nature of the patterning and textures of particular materials alongside the smooth surfaces of the technology.

Fine-tuning Physical Form and Interaction

With a much clearer idea for how the new spaces in the Centre now worked as a social and learning environment, in developing the idea further with Paul and Dan, we worked on scenarios that incorporated these ideas into the design of the concept of the digital photo-album. In May I discussed the design with Rosie as a further development and how this might be used in the Centre. She felt this aligned with the overall aims of the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project she was hoping they would receive funding for. The focus and purpose for the use of the artefact was outlined as supporting women in socially connecting to others through objects, materials and photographs. This would be achieved through making a piece of jewelry, that would connect to the digital photo-album that would help to support the storage and sharing of photographs. We planned the deployment for its use for September 2013.

Designing for interaction around photographs

In designing for group social interactions around photographs, I was keen to move away from standard forms of photo-displays that separated uploading, storage and display. In continuing our experience-centred design approach, Paul and I were both keen to consider the interaction from the point of taking a photograph, through to storing and viewing the photo on screen as part of one activity. We chose to make the artefact so as not to connect to the internet and focus on co-located sharing as part of the commitment to provide a secure and safe space for the group to share their images and organize the photographs chronologically, so as to encourage organisation that reflected the passing of time. We therefore chose to include two ways that photos could be uploaded, via USB and via SD card, based on what the Centre staff and women were using for photographic documentation of events.

Using the metaphor of the locket, as a semi-private storage space, we created an upload area on the right screen that could retrieve 20 of the most recent images. From there, photographs could be flicked into a larger locket space, where the photographs could be moved around, re-organised, pushed to the left

screen for larger public viewing, or deleted by moving off the screen. Some of the design of the interaction included henna designs as overlays.



Figure 23: Early screen designs

Designing for framing, making, presence and proximity

Interaction between the screens embedded in the book and with the jewellery embedded with the WAX, focused around three states of presence, 1) not present, 2) present in room, or 3) present and close. In order to acknowledge these states in a way that responded to an understanding of the Centre, we focused on interaction with the screens that displayed this visually. The visual representation on screen would directly relate to the jewellery designs that women made and, in doing so, we anticipated would be easy to relate to. When the jewellery was present in the room the screen representation would move in a circular motion, almost like a dance, and start to glow and blush and when very close the globe would enlarge. The distances and time-frames for each interaction, and trading this off against battery life and efficiency, was worked on consistently over the course of the development phase. When a necklace was no longer signaling to the book, because it was out of range, the screen globe that represented the necklace would stop and stay still.

We designed a number of cases to embed the WAX into and design a form that individuals could easily personalize in a session, or take home and complete themselves. I developed a frame that was easy to laser cut and could house the electronics if used with fabrics, could then be fashioned as a necklace, key-ring or brooch. I sourced fabrics from India and West Africa to use with the frames.

Designing for embodied physical form

Cardboard and wooden prototypes were developed to house the tablet displays and the base, initially to test the overall weight and size, plus interactions with angles of the tablets when docked on the base, and when being carried or moved around. Using these as starting points I worked with David Angus at Raskl Design, to choose wood and work up a design that developed the artefact as a bespoke piece of furniture. We chose Sapale wood, a West African wood, to encourage a material connection for women who were from areas of West Africa where the wood is grown. In working with the wood as a material, David developed frames for the tablets and the base, creating a more abstract form for the base than had initially been developed through the cardboard prototype. This gave the design of the book coherence in visually connecting the base and body together. We chose Indian silk to bind the book on the outside so as to provide the feeling of luxury and materiality that connected with the furniture of the Centre.

Imagining the photo-parshiya into place

The finished prototype can be held like a book and is designed so it can be portable and moved into different spaces at the Centre. At the same time, it can be docked on a bespoke crafted base and acts as a static double touch screen display. The interface supports the ecology of interactions associated with uploading, storing and displaying collections of digital images in groups. The left screen shows a public collection of photographs and the right screen connects to a set of 6 hand-made necklaces made by volunteers at the Centre. When the necklaces are close to the book, the screen displays their presence and proximity through the gentle motion of large and small globes that represent the necklace designs. When the necklace is close for a sustained period of time, the globe on the screen is enlarged and when touched a locket appears where photographs can be stored or transferred to the left screen.

The photo-album was given the name parshiya in both using a word that derives from a particular etymology of participation as a form of exchange and to be part of something, a family, collective or group. At the same time the word was used as a reference to migration of ancient words from different parts of the world that had no specific connection to contemporary cultures in Asia, Middle East or Africa.

We envisioned the prototype to be installed in the Centre in the Auntie's room as the main space for social activities around learning. Our experiences of this space now highlighted there would be a number of possible uses where individuals would either be uploading and sharing personal content or would be browsing or watching photographs.

First of all we imagined there would be a core group of 6 volunteers who would use it to creatively express showing photographs about their cultural heritage or what was happening in the Centre. They would create their own pieces of bespoke jewellery that would connect to the book. Through the week they would take photographs of things happening in the Centre, and in their everyday lives and upload them to the book to share with one another. There would be some pictures that they were not sure about and so would store them in their personal collection until they had decided what to do with them. They might show these photographs to friends or staff they were close with, but not necessarily to everybody at Centre. When other friends or visitors came to the Centre, volunteers would use the jewellery to access their collection to share and describe to others what they had been doing. They would also take the book into other sessions and show staff in other parts of the building when they missed events or workshops. In starting this process off, we also planned for workshops around using the photo-parshiya so individuals could get used to the interaction, critically reflect on and discuss their personal and collective experiences of using the prototype.

Alongside this staff, visitors or social groups coming to the Centre would browse the collection of photographs by scrolling through the group collection on the left screen. Some people who were waiting in the Auntie's room would sit and look

at some of the photographs and recognise some of the places and faces that were shown. When other women arrived they would discuss the photographs that they had just seen and how this related to their own lives.

In discussing the photo-parshiya with the Centre staff, I started to describe and position the prototype as speculative, as developing an opportunity for those involved (staff, volunteers and learners) to speculate and imagine a possible alternative future with digital technology. This was not just as a proposal, or fictitious scenario to imagine alternative futures. Rather, in our planning with staff, we began to discuss the prototype and its use within the community to '*foster critical engagement, creative expression and technological fluency*' [Di Salvo 2013: 194] through embodied use within group activities informing the development of the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project.

Conclusion

In developing an interactive prototype, the photo-parshiya, in response to a socially engaged practice, this chapter has highlighted the many different types of space-making practices that took place between myself as a practitioner researcher, and designers, staff, volunteers and learners at the Centre. In developing insights and designs in response to earlier qualitative research and to the old space, initial concepts had to be re-evaluated in light of new spatial configurations as the Centre moved into their new premises. Being responsive to the interests of the organisation and the learners involved here helped to re-adjust expectations and ideas, in relation to the social-material-discursive arrangement of spaces and people over time, as they made sense of existing personal objects, making experiences and presentations of their ideas and use of technology in relation to one another.

The workshops became vital in highlighting how the new space was being used within and beyond its use as a formal learning environment and how it offered opportunities for social connection using objects, materials and technology. For instance, social connection here did not just occur through the connections made towards one another in the group. Social connections through objects highlighted how individuals were connecting through recalling personal experience and performing experiences to show one another how these objects

were used. Furthermore how objects also connected to families and friends, and significant social events within the women's lives was also an important consideration.

In making patterns and designs for brooches that drew on these experiences, diverse practices were documented and appreciated within the sessions, although the desire to learn and gain new experiences and have more control over the designs sometimes meant individuals became bored. Technology, such as cameras, photo-printers, 3D printers and cutter-plotters helped to highlight the potential value of re-writing and improving on skills, providing opportunities to reflect on experience through sharing photographs with one another initially through sketchbooks, but also through the exhibition in the Auntie's room. Photographs of what was produced in workshops were further shared in the Auntie's room as a source of pride and ownership, with those who were not involved in workshops, and further provided a space for them to imagine and start conversations on how they found the photographs meaningful for them.

While these insights did not directly influence the formative concept of the book, it did help to clarify and refine ideas on the final interactions of the interface and designs of jewelry that could be made and shared within sessions. Furthermore in highlighting the relevance of both explicit and more abstract forms, representation and experiences with materials, highlighted opportunities for considering the specific choice of materials within a multicultural care and learning environment, to encourage identification and opportunities for expertise to be shared which could guide decisions about interactions between physical and digital forms.

Furthermore in naming and framing the photo-parshiya as a speculative prototype, its planned use was positioned in the context of critical engagement, creative expression and technological fluency, as a device to imagine alternative futures through situated and embodied practice.

Chapter 8

Exploring Possible Futures

'Keeping an open mind is an essential requirement of critical thinking. I often talk about radical openness because it became clear to me, after years in academic settings, that it was far too easy to become attached to and protective of one's viewpoint and to rule out other perspectives. [...] Therefore critical thinking does not simply place demands on students, it also requires teachers to show by example that learning in action that not all of us can be right all the time, and that the shape of knowledge is constantly changing.' [hooks 2010: 10]



Figure 24: The photo-parshiya in use in the Centre. *Top*: Discussing different ways of sharing heritage in the BAM! Sistahood! project. *Bottom Left - Right*: Discussing photographs in workshops, sharing photographs uploaded onto photo-album and trying out brooch ideas in workshops.

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss how the photo-parshiya was used both practically and conceptually within the Centre to fulfill different agendas, including the future plans of staff and volunteers and my own research. This final empirical study took place between September 2013 and February 2014 as the photo-parshiya became part of heritage and photography workshops, celebration events and interviews that encouraged reflection on its use. The photo-parshiya was framed and discussed with Centre staff and volunteers as a speculative prototype, as something to inspire imagination and participation for those involved at the Centre. In this chapter I present a partial and situated understanding of particular perspectives on the experience of sharing photographs with the parshiya as discussed with volunteers Nilah and Jolie, our support worker Liliane and Rosie the Centre administrator and *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project co-ordinator. I focus here on the opportunities for social experiences with the photo-parshiya in the wider learning and care community of the Centre when anticipating a potential future with technology.

The aim of this final study was to use the photo-parshiya as a speculative prototype to inform future practices at the Centre. The intention was not to use the device to close-down certain avenues of inquiry [Bødker 2006], but to enhance creative and experiential forms of interaction design and provide opportunities for reflection. The use of a prototype was a response to the challenge of bringing disparate partners together to reflect on future practices and stimulating mutual learning and imagination [Blomberg and Karasti 2013b: 99]. During this engagement, Rosie and Centre staff were applying for funding to develop the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project, seeking to encourage the documentation and celebration of 70 years of Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee women's heritage and cultural contributions to the North East. The project was due to be delivered between 2014 and 2016 Hence, this final photo-parshiya study needed to fit within a more longitudinal plan associated with the *BAM! Sistahood!* project, enabling future practices to be imagined, tried out and reflected upon.

In this sense, the study was not a traditional design deployment, testing photo-parshiya usability and functionality. The aim of photo-parshiya use was not to

'field-test the technology' as a kind of technology probe, or to gain further insights 'understanding the needs and desires of users in a real-world setting' [Hutchinson et al 2003: 17]. Rather the speculative prototype use was developed to be mindful of and open to processes of change and imagination as it unfolded over time. The emphasis was therefore focused on relational forms of understanding and mutual learning about the value of digital photo-sharing within the specific context of the Centre for staff, volunteers and learners, to understand how technology might support localised knowledge and practices that could be later adapted.

I positioned the photo-parshiya as a speculative prototype to '*foster critical engagement, creative expression and technological fluency*' [DiSalvo 2013: 194] within the specific context of the Centre. Di Salvo [et al 2008] characterises critical engagements as '*experiences that bring about the reflective analysis and interpretation of issues*'. Di Salvo defines further creative expressions as '*imaginative and resourceful representations of problems or possible interventions into the conditions of a problem*' and technological fluency where people are not expected to become engineers, but are '*comfortable with and capable of utilising the products of engineering beyond familiar uses*'. Di Salvo argues that '*taken together*' they '*begin to form a public rhetoric: they constitute the activity of discovering, inventing and delivering arguments about how we could or should live in the world. The artifacts or systems conceived or created become rhetorical by their persuasive intentions and capabilities and how they inform and/or provoke a response from or a dialogue with others.*' [DiSalvo 2008: 41]

While Di Salvo offers a useful frame to understand the potential role of speculative prototypes in the context of community-based design, he focuses on the political purpose of the form. The purpose of the photo-parshiya within the context of the study was not to use the device as a form of '*public rhetoric*', '*representing problems*', or '*delivering arguments*'. I was concerned that positioning a speculative prototype in relation to problem framing could run the risk of the artefact being considered as a solution, treating communities as somehow having a deficiency that needs to be rectified through the assistance or use of technology. Rather I focused on a form of '*critical thinking*' as

proposed by bell hooks [1994] in creating spaces for reflection on personal experience in relation to societal structures, in this instance in relation to experiences of photo-sharing technologies. The focus of this study therefore sought to explore the opportunities a speculative prototype might provide in creating flexible occasions for dialogue about technology use and design across the many different individuals involved at the Centre to highlight divergent agendas and interests.

In this sense my interest was in how a speculative prototype could help to facilitate dialogue that might be understood relationally. In describing '*dialogical aesthetics*' earlier in Chapter 2, I highlighted an alternative form of engagement with communities that focuses on more processual and conversational forms of cumulative knowledge and understanding. Communication here is not just language-based but might embody more emotive, gestural and empathic forms of communication and listening, requiring an ethical communicative responsiveness and responsibility to '*identify with the perspectives of others*' that draws from a feminist epistemology of '*connected knowing*' [Kester 2004: 113], whilst also recognising the '*complex social knots*' [Bishop 2012] that such work engenders.

The focus of this dialogue was targeted towards the specific purpose of using an alternative photo-sharing prototype, the photo-parshiya, to encourage creative expression, critical engagement and technological fluency through understanding the social connections and identifications within the community to imagine and try out possible future practices. More specifically, the aim was developed to further respond to the different agendas of a) *volunteers*; expanding their skills, digital competencies and social networks, b) *staff*; extending their current project work and realizing the future potential of a proposed heritage project and c) *research*; encouraging discussion and understanding the role of using speculative prototypes to understand future community-based practices.

As this was the final study in the thesis, the photo-parshiya and associated workshops served to clarify earlier concerns on how taking and sharing photographs to support expression of community identities was both valued and

constantly worked upon through the ongoing negotiation of very specific relationships and personal experiences. At the same time the study aimed to open up and suggest possible future directions for those involved in long-term engagements with the Centre.

In this final study, I focus more closely on how Centre staff, volunteers and learners used and engaged with the prototype and its associated practices as a means of contemplating future plans in dialogue with me as a researcher and with each other. The use of the photo-parshiya in workshops and events served to encourage reflection on both overlapping and divergent interests situated in past, present and future ideas. Rather than attempt to align these possible future directions into one specific and clear narrative trajectory, this final study highlights the significance of actively looking for and creating opportunities for divergence within multicultural community-based design.

Designing an Approach

Planning began in May 2013, with Rosie and additional staff including a support worker Liliane, who was recruited in September. The prototype was installed in September to de-bug, and gather initial responses and complete final tweaks to the interactions. Workshops ran between November and December 2013, with follow up discussions with individuals, staff and volunteers in January and February 2014. The workshops ran alongside the research and development phase of the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project. Some of the heritage project also focused on the use of digital technologies and the photo-parshiya was used within these workshops too, as I will describe later in this Chapter.



Figure 25: Installing the photo-parshiya in the Auntie's room at the beginning of September to test the wireless network and do the final de-bugging of the system. The photo-parshiya was used in the Centre until December.

Situating our approach

The approach was supported through my own interest in bell hooks and her commitment to an '*engaged pedagogy*' [1994]. That is to encourage excitement and pleasure in learning, while stimulating intellectual and critical engagement with personal and collective '*herstories*' that seek to question race, gender, sex or class bias [Ibid: 7, hooks 2010: 8]. For hooks, this is made possible through negotiating feelings of fear, vulnerability and risk in order to share thoughts and ideas to '*participate mutually in the work of creating a learning community*'. '*Engaged pedagogy*' for hooks, '*emphasizes mutual participation because it is the movement of ideas, exchanged by everyone, that forges a meaningful working relationship between everyone in the classroom.*' [hooks 2010: 21].

hooks' commitment focuses on the significance of autobiography and narrative as a way of exploring personal experiences in relation to societal structures. Having developed narrative inquiry as an analytic approach to collecting and analysing data in the previous chapters, I therefore also returned to such an approach to help find ways of facilitating opportunities for stories of selfhood to be shared and discussed within the group using the photo-parshiya. This approach also provided a way of understanding how and in what ways stories were told around its use.

Rather than focus on a particular method, we built an integrated workshop approach to respond flexibly to the needs and abilities of those women who wanted to contribute. Based on my own, Liliane and Rosie's previous experiences of running workshops in and outside of the Centre, we recognized that it was important to encourage social group activity as part of any sessions and this needed to be developed in connection to the schedule of other weekly courses to accommodate for crèche facilities, transport and available space at the Centre. Co-ordinating this alongside Lilian's busy work schedule was also another factor in workshop planning

Scheduling

The timetable we developed had four main aims that framed activity for each session. This included social group formation, engaging in existing photo-sharing practices, engaging in alternative photo-sharing practices, and reflecting on each of these throughout the process. These were timetabled over

20 hours, across 5 weekly sessions with 2 additional sessions in between. Flexibility for additional sessions was also factored in with elements that could be completed outside of the scheduled sessions if individuals wanted to do more or missed a session due to other commitments. A follow up one-to-one meeting was also scheduled outside of the timetabled session with each individual in the group to discuss any final thoughts or feelings they had on the sessions and the technology once timetabled activity had been completed. Additional time was also planned with staff members to discuss their own perspectives on the process.

Designing packs

In supporting group and individual reflection, we moved away from specifically designed probe packs, as described in Chapter 6, to something explicitly supporting documentation of reflection on the process. In building on the previous workshops briefly discussed on Chapter 7 as part of the prototype design phase and understanding the relevance of sketchbooks, we decided to make bags again as a way of keeping materials together and to make it easier for the group to carry their work with them between home and the Centre. Rather than use the same fabric for all the bags, a range of fabrics purposefully associated with African or Asian symbolism and patterning were employed. These were chosen to reflect some of the discussions around the global history of particular fabrics, ideas that were also being developed for the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project¹⁰.

Pack detail

The pack included a range of digital and material objects, including a digital camera, a sketchbook, a pen-drive, laser-cut shapes to create the digital brooches, glue, scissors and pens if people wanted to take their materials home and work on additional aspects there. Photographs and additional paper resources were also included as the sessions progressed, but these were

¹⁰ In particular we discussed the history of Hollandaise Wax, fabric that is often associated with traditional African clothing and identity. This fabric bears subtle traces of its history, originating from Javanese Batik techniques developed in the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia. These processes were adapted, industrialised and commercialised by Vlisco, in Holland in 1846. After exporting to and then losing the market in Indonesia, the company exported to areas of predominantly West Africa from the 1870's and adapted different patterns to suit demand. Similarly the paisley pattern, has a long documented global history that connects Persian and South Asian religious and botanical symbolism. The patterns have been appropriated around the world including in France in the C17th, Russia and Europe in the C19th and America and UK in the 1960s.

introduced as part of each session rather than included in the packs at the start, so as not to overwhelm the group and iterate on some of the design of the resources as the weeks progressed. Examples of ideas on how to make some of the brooches were also used to start a discussion in some of the sessions, but not distributed as part of packs.



Figure 26: Packs included a bag, sketchbook, camera and brooch frames. Example brooch, necklace and keyrings used to start conversations with women about what the project would involve, during recruitment.

Recruitment

There were already volunteers interested in being involved due to their ongoing commitment to the Centre and their interest in photography, technology and craft. As the timetable and approach was being developed, we also discussed with those who expressed an interest the kinds of activities we would be running to gain their initial feedback and responses, sharing with them the photo-parshiya. Once the timetable was agreed between staff, we included this within the information sheet with translations in French, Arabic and Urdu. The information sheets were given to volunteers who had already expressed an interest in October, a month prior to the first workshop taking place.

Using the photo-parshiya

I now present an outline of some of the ways in which the photo-parshiya was used during its installation over a four month period drawing from field-notes. I

will also discuss two narrative journeys from Nilah and Jolie, volunteers at the Centre, and my understanding of their experiences of workshops and use of the photo-parshiya in dialogue with me. Finally I present an account of a discussion between Liliane the support worker, and Rosie, the *Bam! Sistahood!* Heritage Project Co-ordinator and myself to understand some of the value and challenges of using the photo-parshiya.

Throughout the study the photo-parshiya was used in different ways; a) informally as part of the Auntie's room day-to-day activities b) as part of the BAM! Sistahood heritage sessions as organized by Rosie, c) as part of the planning and preparation for more formal photography workshop sessions and d) as part of the workshop sessions organised for volunteers. In this section I will briefly highlight its initial informal use in the Auntie's room, its use in planning for photography workshops and its more focused use in the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project. I will then go on to discuss perspectives on its use within the photography workshops. I discuss its use here through informal conversations and within focused workshop sessions that offered opportunities to explore how the prototype was both positioned and experienced as a way of documenting, reflecting on and sharing a process of learning and ways of considering alternative futures.

Global ethics of electronics and usability

Liliane's experiences of growing up in the Democratic Republic of Congo among historical and contemporary conflicts gave her a particular perspective on colonial histories, imperial rule and mineral resources associated with commercial technology production. In her spare time she campaigned on issues associated with mineral extraction from DRC, specifically Coltan production, which is often unethically and dangerously extracted from mines, sold to fund militia warfare and exported to China to be processed for electronic components such as capacitors for small circuits used in mobile phones [Kibert et al 2012].

When introducing the brooch design with the photo-parshiya in preparing for the sessions with Liliane and Izzy in September, unsurprisingly Liliane questioned where the materials for the electronics had come from. I didn't know and this

sparked a discussion about the relevance of recycling, second hand and hand-me down technology, rather than buying new. I explained the process of developing the electronics in the lab and the different processes this involved. While engaged in this discussion there was also a concern about the brooch design and its ease of use to charge it up and both Liliane and Izzy discussed a complete re-design of the hardware. I agreed that this current design wasn't ideal, and explained how we could only do this if we felt the brooch design was tested and considered a good design idea, but the time scales for this were much longer than we had for these workshops.

Providing distractions and collective recollection

Throughout its deployment between September and December, the photo-parshiya was regularly observed being used by children and parents waiting for staff and friends in the Auntie's room. For example two young girls aged under 5 had just left the crèche after their mum had been in a course and they were waiting with their mum to see a member of staff who was in a meeting. The girls sat next to the photo-parshiya on either side, one on the left scrolled through the photographs, and the other pressing the globes on the right, giggling and chatting quietly to one another. Their mum said that she appreciated there being something to entertain the children and give them something to talk about and play together while they were waiting around.

When other young children were also in the Auntie's room, I sometimes brought examples of the necklaces out for them to play with and wear. One young girl, Zahrah's daughter who was a toddler when I first started volunteering at the Centre, was now a chatty and energetic 5 year old. When she knew how the necklaces worked, she began shaking one of the necklaces next to the right hand screen shouting '*wakey wakey*' and giggling as they started to move and get bigger. When we added a photograph she dragged the photograph from the right screen to the left screen. When it appeared on the left screen she began looking behind the screens shouting '*it's magic, it's magic*', while she showed her mum.

On several occasions, when checking whether the photo-parshiya was charging before I left the Centre to go home, I also frequently saw a group of young

teenagers playing with the photo-parshiya in the late afternoon after school. Some of the photographs that had been installed by Nilah were of trips that they too had been part of, so they told me where the photographs had been taken and where and what they were doing on those days. Later on staff described to me how the teenagers were meeting their mother after she had had mental health problems and left their father. These meetings were the only arranged contact times she had with her children, and staff described how she often found them difficult. They described how they felt that the photo-parshiya had sometimes helped to alleviate the tensions associated with these meetings and encouraged the children to show their mum what they had been doing at the weekend.



Figure 27: The photo-parshiya in the Auntie's room where children and parents played with it scrolling images and using the early brooch designs to trigger interactions.



Figure 28: The Auntie's share their own non-digital photo-album with the heritage group and with each other in November and Izzy photographed them showing us their photographs. The following week one of the oldest Auntie's brought a collection of her personal photographs to show women who were involved with the *BAM! Sistahood!* Project her journey coming to the UK when she was 18, with her eldest daughter and photographs taken at work at her local fabric shop through to her 80th birthday party.

While the elder group of Aunties, who attended weekly informal sessions at the Centre did not use the photo-parshiya, it became part of their weekly meetings as part of the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project, prompting their involvement in a wider discussion about photographic collections. The Auntie's group in

response brought their own photo-album in to share with each other and other women coming to the Centre. The Auntie's appeared less interested in looking at and using the photo-parshiya, but showing everyone that they had many photo-albums that they had collected of their time together over the past twenty years. Izzy photographed the group with their albums as they shared them with one another and those attending the heritage sessions. The following week, one of the Auntie's group, now in her 80s, brought in a series of photographs of her life story, including when she first moved to the UK when she was 18 and had her first child, time with her late husband and some of her working when she owned her own fabric store in the local area.

Imagining and experiencing intergenerational sharing

The photo-parshiya was used to facilitate discussion within the *BAM! Sistahood!* Heritage project in providing an example that showed how potential heritage materials, such as fabrics could be connected to digital content. For example, Rosie used it in her sessions to encourage the group to imagine alternative ways that young people might interact with objects, creating links for sharing heritage in more engaging ways for things like exhibitions. In particular she highlighted how connecting specific objects with videos, audio files or layers of history could highlight where something had come from, revealing particular aspects of global history and trade. The group also highlighted how individually they struggled to keep together all their photos due to the different devices they all now had and the amount of moving they had had to do over the past few years. Some of the group were concerned about how they would pass things to their children when they were older and making sure their children knew something about their mothers countries of birth.



Figure 29: The BAM! Sistahood heritage group discuss how the photo-parshiya could be used in sharing heritage with their children and young people in the community.

At a celebration Christmas event, as part of the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project in December, young people tried on and played with the brooches and necklaces, interacting with the photo-parshiya to open and close the lockets on the screens. They soon became bored of this and wanted to do more with the tablets, exploring how they could play games, but continued to wear and show-off their jewelry to each other and their mothers during the party. Volunteers such as Una wanted to be photographed with the photo-parshiya, showing other guests at the event how the photo-parshiya worked and the photographs she had taken on display and in her sketchbook. Board members from the Centre commented to me on how confidently she did this and how she described the process clearly so they too could understand the process of taking and sharing photographs. Liliane also showed her friends at the event how it worked and how it had been made by women, with wood from Africa. Her friends commented on how surprised and amazed they were that women could make such things that were technical and so beautiful at the same time.



Figure 30: Zahrah set up the necklaces she had made to display these next to the photo-parshiya as part of the party. Usma asked her friend to photograph her next to the photo-parshiya as part of the display and Nilah took this photograph of Usma talking to guests about her photographs.

Members of staff also used it to share with other members of their team what projects had been taking place at the Centre. Just before Christmas, the manager Uma suggested Izzy and I show the board members, as part of their monthly meetings what we had worked on as part of the project. Izzy described how she had done a lot of work and learnt about different kinds of technology designs that had challenged her and she wanted to learn more about working on ways to combine electronics and fabrics in the future. At the end of January when Rosie was presenting information back to the funders, she organized an event at Newcastle University to share the findings from the research and development phase of the *BAM! Sistahood!* project. The photo-parshiya was used here as part of a showcase to demonstrate how technology could be integrated with different materials to showcase women's achievements and create a particular kind of archive of a process over time.

Photography workshop sessions

8 women attended 7 sessions and a follow up discussion after sessions had been completed. Some of their names have been replaced with pseudonyms at the request of the group and include Jolie, Nilah, Zahrah, Izzy, Sareen, Ismene, Servat and Usma. Some were long-term volunteers and some were new to the Centre. Their ages ranged from 26 – 38 yrs and their countries of birth ranged from the Democratic Republic of Congo (1), Pakistan (5), Algeria (1) and India (1). Participants also each expressed strong commitments to religious faiths including Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Individuals had been resident in the UK for between 2-16 years, having left their countries of birth due to marrying British citizens, seeking asylum or seeking work. 3 of the 8 women had university degrees, and 7 out of the 8 were attending courses at the Centre or at a local college. The group had varying levels of confidence and competence in English speaking, listening, reading and writing. This presented some challenges and tensions in the group when the majority of the women were Urdu speakers and sometimes preferred to talk among themselves in smaller groups supplemented with help from a translator.

Not everyone could attend each session, or could often only attend part of a session due to other work, training, learning and family commitments. This led to additional ad hoc one-to-one and drop-in sessions throughout the week.

Paper resources were also developed to enable individuals to take materials home and work on aspects in their spare time. There was a diverse range of digital competencies and experiences with photography and computers, from novice users to those who were much more confident and experienced in certain areas of technology use in their work and home life. This reflected the diversity of groups who often attended sessions at the Centre in that differences, individual knowledge and skill, is respected and considered a valuable resource that can be shared [Tett 2006].

What follows is a brief account of my understanding of the different perspectives on the photo-parshiya, including Nilah and Jolie's experiences of the workshops and the photo-parshiya use. This is followed by my reflections on a group discussion with Rosie and Liliane in February where we discussed the potential value and challenges of its use. (see Appendix C for further detail on each session, examples of ethnographic field notes and example sketchbook)

Making Sense of the Photo-parshiya

Nilah: Supporting confidence and appreciation

Nilah has been part of the Centre for 6 years and I have known her since I started volunteering in 2011, although I got to know her more since the Centre opened again in January 2013. She attends many of the classes and helps with children's activity sessions on a weekend and school holidays. She has three children who also come to the kids club and regularly visit the Centre. I have heard her several times describe herself as a housewife, even though now she is separated from her husband. She has often described to me informally how she likes to stay busy to keep her mind healthy, helping out with events, doing arts and crafts courses and supporting other women who feel lonely and want to get out and meet others. She has also described to me how she feels social support was important for her when she first came to live in Newcastle and wants to help others who have been lonely too. She often tells me about other women she has met that she helps give advice to, about where to shop, and encourages them to meet up with other women from the community and make new friends.

Nilah has discussed with me and in groups how she is very proud of her culture and heritage as a Muslim woman and feels this is important within her day-to-day life. In our first session in conversation with Jolie, she described how '*my scarf is my identity*', how this was for her an important part of being a Muslim woman. In the *BAM! Sistahood!* sessions she also described how wearing her scarf for her is a sign of respect for her culture, but also for showing others how she expects to be respected. At the same time she discussed how this is sometimes challenging when encouraging her children to respect Muslim traditions and her faith, especially as they get older, but she recognised that they did not want to uphold the same beliefs as her and had very different experiences of growing up in the UK.

On several occasions Nilah described how she didn't have much experience of using technology before she came to the UK, describing how in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, where she had previously lived, women are rarely encouraged to use technology. She now has a mobile phone and an iPod and has also been taking computer classes at the Centre, since the computer at home was mainly used by the children.

Her experience using the photo-parshiya in sessions highlighted what appeared to be a shift in confidence, enabling her to use technology more widely at home and in the Centre. I noticed this during the second week we'd been running sessions. Nilah had been reticent to use the computer to transfer her images and print her photographs as she seemed under confident to do so and was also pushed for time. She had started off only with a few photographs, but a week later, she had laughed and described how she was, '*crazy about taking photographs*' and was taking the camera and documenting herself and others at different events. The following day she asked if she could come in to start uploading her photographs to the photo-parshiya if we helped her as she was unsure how to do this. As Liliane and I showed her how, we sat in the corner of the room, facing the photo-parshiya. She placed her necklace on the wooden base and pressed the screen where her necklace was moving, and I said she needed to wait for her necklace on the screen to enlarge, before she could open her collection. When this happened, she plugged the USB stick and her photographs appeared one by one. Liliane showed her how to flick the images

onto the screen and then flick them onto the left hand screen. As she did this herself, transferring her photographs from the right to left screen, she shrieked *'Oooh, Look! No tension. I can pass this to my neighbour'* and started to laugh as she leaned in to transfer the rest of her photographs. I asked her about this experience in our reflection in January:

Rachel - and can you tell me what it is like when you - you said some quite funny things when you first started putting the pictures over, from one side to another.

Nilah - I am very confused because when we er put it in my hand (necklace), all the pictures come in this side so I am very confused.

Rachel - So confused?

Nilah - yes so why is it not open automatically? Then you tell me everything and then I am OK! (laughs) Because I don't know too much about erm electric things. It is my new experience in the UK. In my past I don't know about mobile, laptop, I never use a laptop or mobile – (mobile phone rings) excuse me - hello.

When I asked if Nilah would like to use the photo-parshiya in the future, I presumed she would be too nervous to do so, based on what she had previously said. Instead she said she wanted to take it home and display her photos *'I'd put it in there (drawing room) and everybody come to see my work and, and appreciate me (laughs).'* The experience of being appreciated by others for the work she was involved in at the Centre was also described in additionally rewarding ways in the context of the celebration events too where she felt she had also had a positive experience.

'[...] we show all of our work and food as well, we make dishes, each person and arrange a small party, in the Newcastle College gallery and er a lot of people come and see our work and appreciate both of them (work & food) saying you are doing some very good work.'

When writing a reflection on the process in December, Nilah described how she had been surprised *'to see the new technology and science inventions'* and that she felt she had *'improved my confidence and my learning about new things.'* In discussing this with her again in January, Nilah also elaborated on this by describing how she felt the sessions had *'helped a lot, the digital things all together, work together, computer, mobile, camera, memory stick and memory card, work together, very amazing [...]* If you know everything you think that is

OK, if the people learn new things they are excited and when they learn new things they are more confident and skill comes out (laughs).'

This new-found confidence she described reminded me of how I saw her on several occasions showing people how to use the computer to look at all the photographs that had been taken during the sessions. At the beginning of December, when I was preparing materials for the following session, Nilah dropped by the art room. She mentioned how she had started to upload and organise her own photographs on the computer at home by herself now, which had surprised her children.

'I took my camera home and put it in the laptop to put the pictures there. My daughter said Mum you're getting too clever, but I told her, I wanted for you to show me how to do this, but you were too busy. I remembered how we did this here and I try it myself. My other daughter, she's like 'wow' mum, you've learnt a lot, you can do this.'

In January where we reflected together on the sessions, I mentioned this earlier discussion we had had and she commented *'my second daughter she said, why are you learning more and more, stop it and stay at home, I say no (laughs).'* She described how she had started more courses because she had been so excited by her experiences of learning, *'(laughing) I love it, I love it. That's why I join Newcastle College to work.'*

Jolie: Showing off

Jolie was part of the Mamas Rise Up group that Liliane ran and was interested in coming to the sessions to improve her knowledge of digital photography. Like Liliane she was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo and had arrived in the UK 13 years ago with a 1 year old daughter. She now had two daughters and worked as a translator and interpreter for the magistrates, crown courts, police and social services on a freelance basis. She also ran other businesses including an event decoration service. Liliane liked to call her jolly Jolie because she said she felt that she was always happy, smiling, joking and laughing. She said she was fairly confident at using computers and used a mobile phone for international calls, and two smart phones, one for business and one for home use.

Jolie was constantly busy and struggled to come to the first two sessions as she had to go to do some translation work at the last minute. We re-arranged a time for her to come along on a Friday instead. On the first Friday she worked with Nilah and discussed how her own sense of African identity was connected to her roots, which gave her strength. Her daughters however, did not want to share this sense of a Congolese and African identity, preferring to see themselves as British, something she joked with them about. In the second week she brought her youngest daughter with her and while her mother downloaded and discussed the photographs she had taken, her daughter created a necklace using African fabrics for her sister and herself using the frames and materials from the workshops. During the weekend, Jolie photographed her daughter wearing the necklace.



Figure 31: Photograph taken by Jolie of her daughter wearing the necklace

In the third session in the morning when she was downloading these photographs onto a computer, she mentioned to me how sad she often became in the winter as it reminded her she had not been able to return to the Congo since she came to the UK. In the afternoon Jolie made her own necklace with help from Nilah and Liliane and posed for her own photographs, which prompted a lot of laughter and giddiness in the group.





Figure 32: Session 3: 18th November; Sharing photos and making jewelry. Above: Nilah, Ismene, and Jolie making necklaces in the session. Below: Liliane and Nilah photograph Jolie as she dresses up with the fabrics and poses with her new necklace.

The following week, when Jolie arrived, I commented that while I couldn't pay for her to go to the Congo, that if she looked online for photographs from the Congo, we could superimpose the photos of her onto a background of her choice. She found photographs of her grandfather's restaurant and the ministry of mines near where she used to work and we sat together using Photoshop to cut her out of her photographs and paste her onto these different backgrounds.

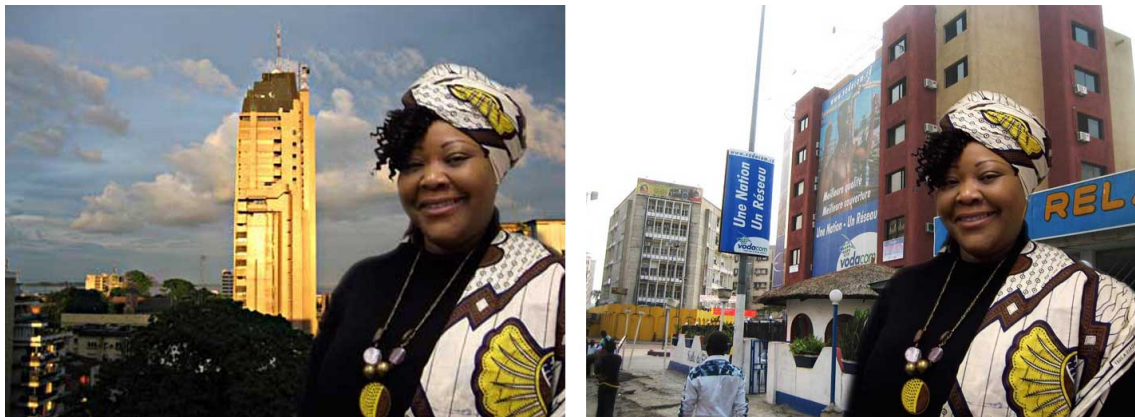


Figure 33: Jolie's photographs wearing her necklace with the Ministry of Mines and in front of her grandfathers restaurant in the Democratic Republic of Congo. When we met in January to reflect on her experiences of the workshops she described how she liked it because *'it's my city and it's like being home, but not really being there.'* She uploaded these photographs onto the photo-parshiya.

In the session that followed, we printed out the photographs and she included them in her sketchbook. When discussing existing photo-sharing practices, Jolie had also described how she shared photographs at home using her family photo-album with her daughters. She described how every month she brought her family album out, with her ancestors; grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles and shared this with her daughters so they did not forget the people that had been important for her in her life.

I immediately saw a correlation between Jolie's description of her own photo-album use and how I could envisage the use of the digital photo-album. In our first session in November, she had described her desire and the challenge she

faced in sharing cultural practices with her daughters at home as they weren't particularly interested. I thought this could be a way of engaging her daughters in an appreciation of family life. But in asking about this in our discussion in January, Jolie saw the album more as a frame and as a practical way of saving space and showing photographs that had been stored away somewhere else.

Rachel - Do you think this sort of thing would be quite useful for discussing different ... you know you've talked quite a lot about your, where you come from and ...

Jolie - yeah, because it's a nice storage you know because sometimes you want to put the same picture at home, but you don't have the space to put it out and this would be a nice way to store all your like old pictures and talk about it sometimes because sometimes you want to put picture like same picture at home, but you don't have all the space to put the picture up, and this would be a nice way to store like all your old pictures and talk about it sometime, because sometimes you want to share erm like your childhood memories with someone or your children, you have to go under your bed get it all back and carry it it's like hard you know, it's a lot of hard work and it's like one by one, by one, and telling the story, but yeah, it would be a nice way, because you can't have all the picture frames in your house, otherwise there would be no space anymore.

I thought she might consider using the album as a way of talking to her daughters about experiences of growing up in DRC more explicitly and it felt too leading to ask her anymore questions in relation to such envisioned use. Jolie appeared to envision the album as much more of a 'showing' technology as also discussed when asked what she would like to do with the photo-parshiya.

Rachel - So if I was to give you this now, what would you do with it?

Jolie - er I'd store all my photographs - it's like a digital er frame, honestly I would take it to my house and my pictures would just go ... (giggles) I won't say no, I won't say no I would say yes, I would be happy to have it, I would put all of my nice pictures on it and you would go into my house and see it - (laughs - breathless with laughing) - it's like watching TV - yeah.

Rachel - but your own TV?

Jolie - oh yeah

Rachel - and would you use the necklace, the necklaces that you made? Would you use those for anything?

Jolie - yeah, the necklace you can, while if it's got the attached for this and you can use it when someone comes yeah, to show off oh yeah (giggles)

Rachel – (laughs) to show off?

Jolie - yeah to show off - I'm so technical you know, I'm modern, (giggles) I'd just show off yeah, so I would do that, but you can wear it as well and it goes well with any dress (laughs).

Taking photographs was considered important for Jolie and her family to help broaden their horizons. Her eldest daughter in particular wanted to try out modeling and fashion, but also wanted to have a go at photography and so had been using the digital camera from the project to work on those skills too. The photographs that had been taken and printed in the session had also sparked off conversations between Jolie and her daughter about further opportunities for her daughter to try out some of the techniques and ideas through access to further education. Jolie described her relationship as being 'close' to her daughters and highlighted how this was often unusual in the Congo if a woman worked, since child-care would be done by the extended family. Certainly many of the photographs that Jolie took and shared in the session were of her and her children doing things together. If there were no children actually present in the images, when describing how the photographs had been taken, her daughters were often there helping her with the shot. These photographic actions and subsequent discussions between mother and daughter appeared to enrich the relationships between them, especially for the older daughter who had found common ground and an occasion to discuss these opportunities of her potential career interest with her mother.

In conversation about the photo-parshiya

Working on a project about digital technology design for women excited Liliane because she felt it would empower women. Liliane's activist stance on the proliferation of technology, particularly in funding mineral abuses in the Congo, highlighted an astute understanding of the global effects and processes of mineral extraction and its increased use in developing mobile technologies for an ever growing market. However she often relied on others to help with her use of technology. In early discussions with myself and Rosie about the project, she often expressed a lack of confidence in using the technology itself and a desire to learn more for herself and for other women she worked with. She explained how she was concerned that she would need to be an expert in

digital photography and while she knew how to use a digital camera, she also felt she still had a lot to learn.

Liliane's day-to-day access to technology was limited to the use of a standard mobile phone for international calls and a smart phone for her contacts in the UK. She had inherited an iPhone 3, with a smashed screen, which she used for a camera, the internet and her email. If she needed to work on written documents she used the city centre library since her computer had broken a few years ago and she hadn't quite got round to replacing it. She had lost many of her own photographs on that computer and now carried everything she had on a pen-drive that she used to back everything up.

Sometimes she became frustrated in our debrief after the sessions when she felt she wasn't able to learn alongside the group or take her own photographs because she was so busy with her other work and supporting others. In a written reflection of the project Liliane described how she had wanted to be part of the sessions because she wanted to learn *'more about digital cameras'*, but felt she hadn't quite achieved this. She also *'wanted to do a sketchbook but struggled with time.'* She felt frustrated by this as she was *'supporting the women in the use of technology as I was discovering them slightly at the same time as them'* and also felt challenged by *'the use of some of the technology as a first timer'*, frustrated at *'not really using some of the tools efficiently by the end of the project.'*

In our final discussions together we reviewed the workshop process and discussed our insights with Uma, the Centre manager. Liliane expressed how she hoped the project would *'lead to more prospects for women from this group first and then every woman'*, but also wanted to see more direct opportunities for women to take the skills they had learnt onto the next step and use them to build their careers and future education. She described how she felt this needed more affirmative action in making projects like these available for immigrant women where qualifications and skills are essential for greater independence, specifically integrating skills into other courses and projects that were taking place at the Centre. In discussing this with Rosie she described how

'... for me it's about milestones you know and it's like part of the heritage as well. And Uma use a word, though we just talk about self-confidence and self-esteem, and things like that, she say empowering, so they felt more empowered, they felt more empowered at a level of skills and knowledge maybe and er the other side of it is earning a living or er just achieving something for their life. It was like we er, we work with women and we like knew the best who was like getting new information, producing work on time and things like that.'

This made her think about the ways in which individuals could put their new skills into practice.

'So [...] I was just thinking, ... I know that you're doing a lot of activities, those activities need to be recorded so when you're doing that you're behind the aspect of photograph and music and things like that, from that core group tried to find a way to give another, like one or two women a chance to just go further and then becoming, kind of like volunteer for the Centre, just like taking pictures.'

Rosie agreed that this would be a great way to make sure those skills didn't disappear. She felt that women would *'be asked to take photos and do certain things and get involved in certain activities in the Centre and will be appreciated for those skills.'* She had already recognised how those who had been involved were already actively documenting what was happening on a regular basis in the Centre. For Rosie, however, it was much more than the specific skills. While she hoped that the photo-parshiya project would help to provide further insights into how technology could be developed sensitively for the use of women at the Centre, and those with diverse communication needs, and for the longer-term *BAM! Sistahood!* project, our discussion highlighted how she also felt the group had benefitted from the sessions through having a *'creative space'* to invest in, to be able to trace a process and find a language to communicate ideas.

'I think what was probably to me, I know that there's probably going to be a focus on the technology side, but what I saw that I think is probably them taking the time out to do something creative and really invest themselves in it. That doesn't ... I haven't ... I don't see that happen very often in the Centre and stuff, so I think that, in fact I was observing it from the outside. Achievement, I would say that's the biggest achievement that they gave themselves the creative space to get involved in something, you know to engage in something in work, but to really invest themselves in their ideas and their thoughts. And you could tell that by the end of the project, they were talking through, even at the event, the celebration event, when they were talking through what they'd been doing, it was very ... they could trace back every single step. It was very logistical in a way, but it was also a creative sort of ... they could trace back a

creative journey as well as I took this photo here, and here and here, yeah.'

She highlighted how this was in the context of particular technological and linguistic barriers that she felt the women faced in their lives in being *'completely excluded from anything digital'*, seeing the significance of the technology opening up opportunities for learning through providing access.

'I think it's very subjective isn't it because from our (the Centre) viewpoint we can say well that's not the main thing, that's not the main thing that the women got out of it, but however for the women, just even opening up that whole world where it's great for them because they can actually access this stuff because access isn't about learning skills, access is about being able to do and experiment within the form. [...] I almost think it [technology] becomes a metaphor for learning, you know like for opening up another space and so digital is an easy way to do it.'

While I did not entirely agree that individuals were excluded from material access to technology, I did recognise that there were particular perceptions that might prevent women from using and becoming more confident with the technology. In this sense, aspects of accessibility were considered important by both Liliane and Rosie in how the technology and workshops were presented. For instance there were specific elements of the project and technology that had excited Liliane such as *'making brooches'*, the *'photo-album piece and use of technology'* and she was surprised by *'the way digital photography was combined with art and craft'* and *'how quickly women got used to the new information'* that was presented and discussed in the sessions. In celebration events both as part of the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project and the end of the photo-parshiya project Liliane became a confident advocate for the photo-album, showing others how it worked and describing how it had been designed and made by women, using wood and fabric from Africa. She later described in our discussion in January how this technology had been made *'accessible'* for the group through the design and the actual workshop process itself. She felt she had seen a transformative process as the group had been building on something each week working towards a showcase.

'because it's like, you know, like giving another [way, another] outlook of digital. Your USB in the brooch or in the pendant, they've never seen that before. They made the pendant they choose and they work on becoming part of what women will do - beads, like sitting and talking and they can be like the chain building them from

a craft session. It was given to the technician to put the USB, so for them, like they say WOW! To be part of that chain and produce that thing and produce that piece of work for them it was like ... and it was like session after session it looked like no connection in-between, but on that day [celebration event], they realised themselves what they had achieved and they realised that it makes sense now and from the table when it was done it was like OK I can explain. They had a completely different ... even the way they carried themselves was completely different, because when they used to come to the Centre they were late and they were saying 'sorry' and apologetic like you know the thing like that. So you know really like 'I'm making progress'. And on that day they all look the part, I cooked these dishes, it's not about the dishes but it's about your work there, it was like beneficial to the whole process and for them it was like something they will have in their mind and heart for a long time.'

Similar to Rosie, Liliane also recognised the value of process and achievable progress. While she suggested that sometimes the fragmented nature of what we were doing each week did not make sense, the celebration event, in bringing it all together, helped to transform what she saw as a sense of self and pride.

In response to the question of what she would like to take forward in the future from the project, Rosie described how she felt the project fed into the heritage sessions, but also *'as a core, at a very pragmatic way, kind of core skill building [...] a base for them to move onto other stuff'*. In relation to technology she highlighted how she felt volunteers and learners wouldn't be as *'frightened to get involved in digital technology'* *'there's a confidence [...] the women seem really comfortable just to come in and get on with stuff, which is good, that's the way it should be.'* It sometimes felt as if the photo-parshiya disappeared from our view in our discussions, so I asked if she felt there was a value in the photo-parshiya. Rosie described how she felt the value was in the way that individuals...

'... took ownership it wasn't like it was this really difficult mass produced thing from Microsoft that all these techy boys understood really well and other people understood and they (the group) didn't understand and because they put ... were part of the process it developed, even in just like simple ways, in terms of like the choice of materials or you know the way that, I mean I know that it was pretty much set out how, you know how the technical side of it, but it was, it was obviously really well explained to them, how it, how it functioned

how it worked, how they would contribute to the way it looked I mean it was theirs I mean it's just a tool really isn't it, so it's important, really important for them to see processes like this, this is a tool that they can adapt and use in the way that and they shaped it and you can tell that they felt ownership of it when they were describing it and saying, you know I, I got, I got told about 15 different times how to use it (laughs), you know what I mean like because, but that was, but that was actually because 'I know the process, I know how it works and I know how to do it' and it's like a lot of pride in that so I think that's very important, also there's a side of it having something that's been part of your development with the women beforehand so it's knowing, it's knowing how – it's identifying the needs of the women that we're working with but also the things that have resonance [...]

In discussing the perceived value of the photo-parshiya, Rosie highlighted the importance of the continued development and relationship building, the importance of knowing, from continued workshop engagements that led to the design of the object and the women's valued contribution. She highlighted that although the photo-parshiya had been made from outside of the community, she felt it was clear how it had been influenced by and connected to the sensibilities of the group, in being able to support processes of making, encouraging ownership and particular kinds of involvement that not only aligned with specific needs but was also meaningful in its appropriation and adaptation within the Centre.

Discussion & Conclusion

In using the photo-parshiya as part of a workshop to ask how the group wanted to share their photographs in the future and how the prototype could be used within community-based design, the artefact helped to highlight divergent interests, sensibilities, tensions and perceptions around photography and technology use. The ideas of critical engagement, creative expression and technological fluency that had initially fueled the inquiry highlighted a much more heterogeneous set of everyday concerns relating to digital technology design and use expressed by staff and volunteers. What emerged was a set of much broader concerns relating to social connections, underlining specific relationships to personal biography, global histories and trade connected to technology production, visual presentations of gender and race, young people's use of technology and commitments to digital literacy and access to technology. Privacy, a concern discussed in previous chapters, was described and acted

upon in very particular ways throughout the workshops. In this sense privacy was managed within the group and no longer emerged as a significant area of concern although discussions highlighted how individuals trusted or didn't trust others within the Centre.

In focusing on four specific perspectives from Nilah, Jolie, Liliane and Rosie within this final Chapter, I have attempted to highlight the ways in which more intimate discussion created alternative spaces for speculation, using photography and more embodied and performed interactions. By focusing on how individuals within the group were engaging critically in relation to personal experiences, offered a rich area for re-thinking identities within community based design as multiple and divergent, rather than collective and unified. This differed from the authoritarian voice of public rhetoric described by Di Salvo [et al 2008, 2013] and highlighted a potential space where ideas and identities were still being worked out within the group in response to past experience, unfolding situations and new relationships [Gilchrist et al 2010].

For instance, Liliane's critical engagement towards technology often highlighted a weaving together of several interrelated concerns, associated with her own experiences of the geo-politics of mineral resources, women's digital literacy and the visual representation of African identities. These were not always discussed in large groups, but in more informal discussions highlighting the more intimate ways in which critical engagement might take place over time as mutual learning and understanding [Phillion 2002], where assumptions can be challenged and risks can be taken [hooks 2010]. At the same time, there were often compromises expressed by Liliane between a commitment to social justice, the compulsion to act and the messy realities of engaging with issues such as digital literacy for diverse groups of adult women learners. Sometimes this emerged in discussions between myself and Liliane when there were particular ideal ways in which we both wanted to work and we were squeezed for time, negotiating between how we imagined we could work, the hope for equality of time spent with each volunteer and the practical logistics that came to bear on our own and women's lives during the sessions.

The critical stance taken by Liliane towards the materials of technology and mass-production and raising awareness of its associated geo-political connections were often discussed and experienced against much more practical everyday realities such as Izzy's concerns for usability and ease and Rosie's concern for greater digital access. In these moments of conversation, the global sites of technology production and consumption were truncated and brought to bear on our mutual learning of different scales of technology manufacture [Dourish & Bell 2011: 88]. Rather than highlighting the challenges of imposed western models of knowledge production in post-colonial computing as described by [Irani et al 2010, Taylor et al 2011], discussions in planning for the workshops highlighted concerns for an understanding of the more distributed connections between sites of extraction, production and consumption globally that are associated with particular materials and issues of social and ethical sustainability.

I often saw Liliane's struggle in reconciling the desire for greater technological fluency in using digital photography in the context of the workshops and her own socio-political commitments. Some of this was channeled towards social justice and raising awareness, given the potential for image and broadcast media to make a difference in campaigning. At the same time, Liliane often also described how she felt she did not have time to invest in herself as she was always so busy supporting others to fulfill their needs; children, colleagues, clients, learners, group members. The constant busy-ness that she experienced helped her empathise with those in the workshops and helped communicate the importance and value of purposeful action and change for both me and in discussion with other Centre staff.

Similar purposeful action and change was experienced by volunteers during the workshop process, although this was slightly differently intoned. Nilah expressed feelings of change in becoming more confident to come into the Centre on her own and use the computers, the photo-parshia and work with others. Nilah also expressed additional confidence in trying out technology at home in different ways and performing the new found knowledge to others at public events. This was described as a source of pride in feeling appreciated by others in the work she had achieved. There was a clear sense of her own

agency in feeling more technologically fluent in different aspects of her life, providing social connections to other significant people and those she enjoyed spending time with at the Centre. The experience also contrasted with her previous experiences of feeling digitally excluded.

Technological fluency for Nilah was supported through the use of technology in creative and expressive ways including taking and sharing photographs and making necklaces. It was however unclear if Nilah had expressed any kind of critical engagement with the technology until I heard her talk about how her children had responded to her learning. Her commitments, as she saw it, were not necessarily always appreciated by her children, but were appreciated by others. She continued to want to learn as she felt this was important for her own sense of self and to set an example for the children. But what I saw in Nilah was an astute critical defiance not to conform to how her children wanted her to be. This defiance I saw as not just in response to her children, but also based on her own previous personal experience of having very little access to technology as she matured into womanhood in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Nilah believed both of these countries, did not encourage women to be technologically fluent and actively prevented women having regular digital access.

The photo-parshiya as a socially situated and engaged design worked to open up further areas of inquiry, whilst providing inspiration for future ideas for Centre staff to take forward to progress the development of their heritage project. Photographs taken and used as part of the research were also used to share with funders and highlighted the alternative use of materials to engage different audiences with socio-cultural and political histories. More specifically as a speculative prototype, it provided occasions for volunteers and support workers to perform newly acquired technical knowledge that was embodied, felt and communicated at a local, intimate and personal scale. Rather than developing opportunities to create public rhetoric and argumentation, the artefact enabled a more conversational and performative situated mode of exchange.

Chapter 9

Socially Engaged Design

'It is important to do good, to make life better than it would otherwise have been. But what it is to do good, what leads to a better life, is not given before the act. It has to be established along the way. It may differ between lives, or between moments in a life. But, while it is impossible to ascertain in general what it is good to do, this does not mean that everyone has to figure it out for herself. The task of establishing what 'better' might be involves collectives.'
[Mol 2008: 75]

Introduction

I began this thesis with a question; **how can we design technologies in ways that are mindful of diverse community identities?** As outlined in Chapter 1, this question was motivated by two main aims. The first was to extend and build on methodological approaches within experience-centred design in HCI that explore diverse identities in social care and community settings. The second was to develop insights on design research practice using technology in socially engaged ways [Bardzell et al 2010, 2011, Wallace et al 2012, Durrant et al 2013, Gaver et al 2011, Wright & McCarthy 2010].

Through the development of a long-term, embedded and socially engaged design process with the Angelou Centre, I have explored alternative open and creative ways of working with photography in order to explore questions of identity and technology use. In particular drawing from the theory and practices of *'dialogical aesthetics'* to frame my approach, I have worked with ethnographic methods, based on narrative and the senses. This has supported multiple perspectives on the process of developing research relationships within the Centre and with research colleagues. To further expand on these perspectives, I have also drawn from feminist postcolonial theory to further develop the vocabulary of *'dialogical aesthetics'* to explore how connections and differences are negotiated through the design process in relation to specific and diverse collective identifications.

In this final chapter I return to my four research questions in exploring diverse community identities, developing approaches for engagement and design and using prototypes for diverse community identities.

- *How are diverse community identities expressed through existing technology?*
- *What methods of engagement can be used to support reflexivity and diversity for design research around identities within community social care contexts?*
- *How can such methods of engagement be used to inform interaction design for expressive technologies that support diverse community identities?*
- *How can prototypes developed be used and evaluated to support diverse identity practices within communities.*

In answering these questions, I also provide considerations for future interaction design researchers to reflect on ways of supporting co-creation, sustaining and caring in community, and supporting intergenerational learning..

Reflections on an Approach

1. Exploring diverse community identities: How are diverse community identities expressed through existing technology?

In the first part of the research in Chapter 4, I explored how existing technology was already being used in the Centre to consider how identities were expressed within the context of a particular social care community. This required me to work through connections and articulations of my own identity, in relation to the historically specific individual and collective identities articulated at the Centre and the future desires and needs of volunteers and staff. In choosing to draw from an interdisciplinary set of practices situated within socially engaged art, I chose a long-term embedded interaction design approach, as informed by '*dialogical aesthetics*'. The focus of such an approach positioned aesthetics as a form of communicative exchange '*as dialogue extended over time*' [Kester 2004: 85] to challenge '*fixed identities and perceptions of difference*'. This perspective also echoed feminist research on identities within HCI [Light 2011, Bardzell & Bardzell 2010, 2011, Harrison, Tatar & Sengers 2011] and within the social sciences [Gunaratnam 2003, Ahmed 2004, Wetherall 2009, Yuval-Davis & Karpani 2009]. From these perspectives, studies of community identities are described as being *performed* and *produced* through particular communicative encounters where practitioner identity and experience are also considered an

integral part of identity practices. In this sense taking a socially engaged approach highlighted how understanding diverse identities, as expressed through technologies, also required accounts of research practitioner identity and experiences to provide more relational and reflexive positioning of the research.

In this Chapter, I reflected on HCI literature on community-based approaches to design through reflecting on my own past experiences of working with communities, I felt there was often little discussion of these formative negotiations and relationship building when describing the early stages of research. At the same time researchers often clearly highlighted the significance of understanding identities to inform how people may or may not engage and participate in the research, design or use of technological artefacts [Carroll et al 2013, DiSalvo et al 2013]. In Chapter 4, I described this through the formative experiences and sense making developed through emphasising first person narrative and sensory ethnography in learning about the community at the Angelou Centre. This included discussing my initial commitment to work with an organisation supporting women who identify with their black, asian, minority ethnic or refugee status. The choice was based on previous professional experiences as part of a community informatics research team within informal social care and learning. This further highlighted the importance of responsive and adaptable working through dialogue to build and negotiate productive relationships around particular interests in technology use and visual presentation of identities to understand different agendas at play.

As I described in that chapter, these initial stages of building relationships within the community highlighted how collective identities were expressed through the technology institutionally, and also through more subtle material and embodied ways which were experienced more locally between people within the Centre. For instance many of the women who visited or volunteered at the Centre took photographs and shared these with each other, staff and me in informal ways on mobile phones. Staff and volunteers also engaged in photo taking and sharing at particular events. Photos taken by staff were stored on secure servers within the Centre, curated and shown within public presentations. These images however were never visible within the day-to-day visual and material

ecologies of the Centre, but stored away more privately. In more future oriented discussions, there was also significant interest in volunteers developing creative media skills and for staff to run projects that engaged themselves and volunteers in using technology more creatively to explore and develop a stronger sense of particular identities through heritage and creative arts. These discussions around presentations of identities as constituted through particular relationships and moments in time also connected to and resonated with my own previous experiences as a practitioner of socially engaged art with similar communities.

Developing an understanding of community identities through an approach informed by '*dialogical aesthetics*' therefore not only highlighted the accumulative nature of identity as based on the historical specificity of the community but also the plurality of individual experiences. Developing such an understanding also relied on being open to discussions of future desires and aspirations as explored through particular encounters and recognition of different potential life trajectories that could be explored through technology.

As described in Chapter 4, these formative stages of the research process were invaluable to be able to write realistic ethical and research proposals, to build trust and to develop particular workshop ideas to engage a wider group of volunteers. This also required shifting the initial proposed research interest away from using technology to support transnational connections with international families towards concerns around the use of technology to build co-located community identities, digital skills and infrastructures.

2. Approaches for engagement: What methods of engagement can be used to support reflexivity and diversity for design research around identities within community and social care contexts?

In Chapter 2, I described concerns raised by Bødker [2006], on how arts based approaches within HCI's third wave have potentially distanced researchers from people's use of technology at the cost of design that responds to inspiration and provocation. In light of today's more complex ecologies of technology, Bødker describes the importance of involving people in design, while also considering

forms of participation, other than those developed by the participatory design community in the workplace.

In response to this I offered alternative perspectives and described how arts and new media showed potential for ‘engaged participation’, involving people in interactions that invoked a sense of biography [Suchman 2007, Wright & McCarthy 2010]. I also drew attention to how socially engaged arts has developed in response to providing critical perspectives on environmental sustainability [DiSalvo et al 2009, Light et al 2009, Jacobs et al 2013], while more generally highlighting the value of emotional and affective associations made in response to these particular issues. At the same time socially engaged practices has not connected with interaction design research within social care communities.

I also described how within social sciences research building on socially engaged arts practices have helped provide sensitive insights on difficult experiences, such as illness, ageing, bereavement and mental illness [Gunaratnam 2007, Parr 2006], while highlighting the messy materialities and feelings of belonging as experienced when part of community [Askins & Pain 2012]. I further described how ethnographers have adopted socially engaged arts practices to reflexively explore and experiment with experiences of collaboration and human expression [Schneider & Wright 2010, Hjorth & Sharp 2014, Pinney 2010, Pink 2009].

In responding to Bødker’s discussion of the problematic nature of arts-based approaches within HCI’s third wave, I argued that there could be a more specific role for socially engaged arts approaches in interaction design, particularly within social care communities. This was articulated as providing a more nuanced understanding of the methods of engagement and practicalities of the relational work involved within social care communities to enrich people’s experiences through technology use [e.g. Brown et al 2014, Massimi et al 2010, 2011, Wallace et al 2011, 2012, Blythe et al 2010, Gaver et al 2011].

To explore this potential, this was achieved by developing an approach to ‘dialogical aesthetics’, I focused on methods of engagement within the

community that actively sought to encourage a sense of engaged participation through biography. This was achieved by drawing from practices of storytelling as framed by narrative inquiry, sensory ethnography and cultural probes used within exploratory '*space-making*', creative workshops within the community. Digital storytelling, digital portraits and design workshops, all served to engage volunteers in creative acts of making, creating opportunities for discussing stories and visuals that invoked multiple kinds of biographies in diverse ways. This approach to multiple forms of making, was purposively to engage us all; myself, volunteers and staff, in the ongoing negotiation of our own participation within community, rather than on a research practice that framed the community as pre-existing, static and singular. This was achieved through developing workshops that supported a variety of ways women could participate. At the same time as a researcher, I listened for opportunities to adapt and respond to specific changes that were happening and being discussed at the Centre, and within the women's lives.

While Kester describes how the practice of dialogical aesthetics brings about the '*intersubjective vulnerability*' of the practitioner and their identity, these '*space-making*' workshops often highlighted more complex vulnerabilities for all those involved. As I described in Chapters 5 and 6, such vulnerabilities were discussed by volunteers in relation to the perceived risk of particular kinds of visibility within multiple communities as part of and beyond the Centre. This resulted in spending time as part of the research negotiating systems of power and expectation between different institutions, the Centre and the university, and the specific relationships built through the research. In turn this encouraged a recognition of 'historical particularity *and* plurality' of multiple differences [Gunaratnam 2003: 22] as something that was essential to explore as a resource rather than fixed and managed as a problem.

While practitioner openness and listening have been described as important elements of '*dialogical aesthetic*' practice [Kester 2005: 158], written plans and sharing of documentation became invaluable for working and orienting towards an understanding of routines [Light & Akama 2012], finding practical ways of preparing for and managing such vulnerabilities. This was not just possible through adopting a particular approach, but also in finding ways of

understanding my own sense of engaged participation in relation to the specific community. This was valuable in adapting and critically questioning the tacit assumptions embedded within rhetorical and theoretical accounts of particular approaches to socially engaged arts practice and building trust with staff and volunteers. This required ongoing practical sense-making through discussions, planning and reflecting with staff and volunteers in ways that felt suitable within the context of the Centre. Sometimes this required reduction and focus in taking insights forward and sharing understandings.

This helped to develop greater insights on the potential for understanding the contingencies of community identities as constituted through specific relationships between people and with technology, not as something inherent within the self, the group or the technical artefacts in use such as mobile phones or computers. Small steps and sensitivity were required in recognizing that volunteers might not always be interested in coming to the Centre for exactly the same purposes or wanted to be connected through shared national or religious identities.

While practitioners and historians of socially engaged arts practices highlight the feminist and post-colonial perspectives taken by artists [Helguera 2011, Kester 2004], in working with this particular community, I also looked towards more community-specific research that discussed multicultural identities [Gilchrist et al 2010, Wetherall et al 2007 Gunaratnam 2003]. These approaches moved away from understandings that are based on the binaries of similarity and difference to avoid essentialising identity and naturalizing race and difference. This is also echoed within HCI [Bardzell 2010, 2011, Harrison 2011, Light 2011a]. As I described in Chapter 2, Gunaratnam in particular, highlights that drawing on connections in experiences between people is valuable to move beyond fixed boundaries of race and gender. At the same time, she asks that researchers also listen out for identities being essentialised into single well-defined categories to reflect on the consequences this might have for our interactions with others through an approach she describes as *'reflexive analytic doubling'*.

In drawing from Gunaratnam's approach to research with multicultural communities, this has helped to draw attention to moments when I have made assumptions connecting group members to one another through particular experiences, national identity, gender or shared purpose. This has often been unintentional and yet has clearly helped clarify my research process and also when communicating this work to the wider research community. Generic categories of identity, such as 'minority', 'migrant', 'multicultural' or 'diverse community', helped me take a position, if only momentarily, knowing that I might have to work with multiple understandings of the individual. This also helped me hear how Centre staff and volunteers sometimes expressed a form of 'strategic essentialism' [Spivak 1988, Mohanty 2003, Bowker & Star 1999] around one another that included and excluded, invoking a particular activist heritage (e.g. black, women, minority, African, Asian, victim, survivor, immigrant) to create moments of social bonding, capacity building and recognition.

At the same time these categories were sometimes also described as negative and could be experienced as exclusionary, particularly if decisions were made based on the assumption that individuals all wanted the same to achieve the same goals. As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, expectations of what could be achieved through digital storytelling and the digital portrait process were articulated very differently within the group. Individual expertise in different elements of the process, including the use of digital technology, also highlighted complexities in how individuals wanted to increase their skills and be part of a social group with different centres of value. In developing digital stories potential audiences and other communities beyond the Centre, were considered. This challenged conventions of standard anonymity practices relevant for the whole group. It also complicated the desire for everyone to give voice to their experiences in the same way as it raised questions as to where and by whom their voices would be heard, to what ends and at what personal cost in speaking publically about experiences of abuse. Some felt it was important to provide more open access to technology, some felt the digital products should be used as campaigning tools to evidence the emotional challenges faced by women who had experienced abuse.

All positions were felt to be important for specific individuals within the group. But as a whole, there were complexities with anonymisation and privacy that could not be reconciled with just one approach, requiring additional time and negotiation to work through the specificities, which hadn't originally been anticipated. This was key for the development of the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project in developing strategies for how participatory media content could be created and how visibility within community, could be negotiated as part of the process. This was not just about technical skill or creative expression, but also about the practicalities of '*space-making*' and more importantly *creating time for reflection* on the presentation of self and identities, and a sense of what was made suitably visible to different types of audiences (for instance from trusted others to an unknown public).

These experiences were also further bracketed by my own feelings of discomfort as I became aware of my own position of power and powerlessness when perceived only as a white British academic. Sometimes discussions with individuals in group sessions were initially difficult and uneasy, as I felt there was sometimes a lack of trust, given away in a moments glance or in a physical posture. I sometimes felt marked by my whiteness and difference, as I couldn't always connect with experiences associated with national, global, racial or activist identities as they were being described. I had to very quickly acknowledge the limits of what I could know and what I couldn't and what resources to draw from, within my own experiences and from other research in order to make sense. Sometimes being considered not part of the community, as '*friendly outsider*' [Hayes 2011], as a white British woman from the University, was also valued as women believed I would not judge. Sometimes there were assumptions made about my privilege or expertise, as a white female academic and artist in a Computing Science department, which I too needed to negotiate and find ways of gently challenging.

While identity boundaries of difference are described as inherently bound to power [Bowker & Star 1999, Gunaratnam 2003, Light 2011a, Spivak 1988] they are also a way of creating safety and stability for moments where we have tried to make sense of complicated situations from different perspectives. Boundaries associated with personal '*herstories*' have also been important and

useful in actively drawing disparate parts together, even if momentarily, to create moments of safety and security. The time spent in planning and delivering workshops and attending meetings during the research has highlighted the importance of what is needed to keep the boundaries fluid through a person-centred approach and working this out '*along the way*' [Mol 2008: 75], to be mindful of what is involved in encouraging trust and recognition of risk taking [hooks 2010] within social care communities around identities.

3. Approaches for design: How can methods of engagement be used to inform interaction design for expressive technologies that support diverse community identities?

In drawing from storied approaches within narrative inquiry, the stories produced in workshops with volunteers were useful to directly inform the design of an interactive artefact within the community as described in Chapter 7. Yet my analysis and understanding was often messy and complex in making space conceptually and practically for diversity. There were many stories produced by volunteers within the workshops. It felt difficult to present these in design meetings in a respectful way without reducing experiences to sound bites. I was also concerned about colleagues becoming overwhelmed and seeing volunteers as the same, as victims rather than active creators and individuals. I managed what I considered an appropriate amount of material that could be shared in design meetings. In doing so, while drawing from the work of narrative inquirers to guide my approach and understanding, I needed to tailor this to the specificities of the social care design context.

In moving from the earlier workshop practices to the design of an interactive artefact, I worked on creating connections, bridges and translations between my experiences of being at the Centre and my understanding of the experiences and expertise of my colleagues and what I felt they could understand and work with. Mindful of not wanting to speak for others [Spivak 1988], I relied on a process that involved the sharing of multiple different stories through using visual materials from workshops as props, fragments of quotes, maps, photographs, to generate discussion and share stories within the team. In addition I also looked towards physical forms of interaction in furniture, fabrics, and architecture that could generatively build examples of how privacy could be

negotiated physically. These stories were told and examples used as tentative steps towards developing a prototype not to resolve problems, but to speak to concerns and future possible aspirations raised by the research. In approaching this aspect of the research through the practice of dialogical aesthetics, I worked with programmers over several months to listen to what was possible and encourage a sense of care in the decisions we made. This also involved listening to how programmers and engineers, made sense of the stories and made their own biographical connections to the materials that I presented.

The emphasis on stories however sometimes created a limited focus on words and the chronological structure of time to create causal connections through sequences and scenarios. I often had to fight with what I sometimes felt to be a causal imperative to tidy and secure all the threads of the community experience in neat locations where I could tell the story that I had imagined I wanted to tell all along. I attempted to move away from a problem to solution-focused narrative trajectory, where I helped the community to define their technological needs and design a device that perfectly facilitated greater social connection helping achieve a logical set of aims. At the same time this was challenging when computing programming relies on so much detail and specificity for specific interactions. In working interdisciplinarily, communicating the challenges of organising and running sessions where multiple different complex social interactions were taking place sometimes proved difficult. It has been one thing to do the practice and another to describe or give a sense of coherence to what has been going on within the practice, when multiple threads, and experiences have often been happening concurrently. Through the integration of artisan craft design, computer hardware and bespoke software, this introduced a series of significant real-world constraints that needed to be negotiated collectively in relation to the design goals. This required talking about the practice in ways that tried to connect the design team to a particular place that was constantly evolving.

In this sense I found the chaos experienced within community-based design aligned poorly with the production of clean, smooth narratives as proposed by design scenarios, or personas, to produce a defined set of requirements. Long-term interaction design within social care and community contexts suggests

alternative configurations of stories to include multiple evolving narratives as they might occur over time. Whereas the ethnographic focus of narrative inquiry has encouraged a more concentrated practice of reflection on existing practice, in designing prototypes for research encounters that are not quite there yet, and therefore not quite nameable or tangible, other alternative forms of communication when working with collaborators, across disciplines and languages needed to be considered. This included performing aspects of the embodied experiences of being there and the temporal aspects of women's lives in the Centre in more discursive ways in design meetings.

This was also achieved through highlighting how the potential futures of those at the Centre could also be precarious. For many of the Centre volunteers and staff, the future could involve the possibility of attending more court hearings, potential deportation from the UK, or being ostracised within community, having children removed or even the possibility of the closure of the Centre, if funding is not sustained. While research approaches which focus on speculative design [DiSalvo et al 2013] promote the value of rhetoric to highlight critical concerns within communities, I have found this difficult to put into practice as the sole approach to communication within the context of the Centre in light of people's more pressing concerns of uncertain futures. I have found it more valuable to think about how stories are explorative, tentative, evocative, imaginative and playful in providing moments and opportunities for reflection, relief and escape. Furthermore it has been important to consider the value of the unfinished potential of story, of what might be to come as imaginative fiction and fantasy that is also grounded in some familiarity of the day to day experiences of the Centre as resources for design.

The socially engaged design approach taken, as informed by '*dialogical aesthetics*', didn't just involve designing an artefact as a result of a set of interviews and stories with people, who, as a researcher, I decided were all potentially somehow connected because of their class, age, race, gender, or circumstance. The design of the artefact was developed to suggest a more difficult proposition, that was to ask the question of how the community *imaginatively saw themselves as being diverse and connected* and how moving towards a future could *sustain divergence and connected plurality*.

4. Prototypes for diverse community identities: How can prototypes be used and evaluated to support diverse identity practices within social care communities?

Developing the photo-parshiya prototype in response to concerns and aspirations raised in the first stages of research did help to close down some of the initial ideas and clarify the impetus to move towards the development of the *BAM! Sistahood!* Heritage project proposal as described in Chapter 8. At the same time, in working with the photo-parshiya over a four-month period, we were able to draw in many other community members that were less involved in the first stages of the research, and develop new relationships with funders and partners. Using the photo-parshiya in these contexts supported moments where volunteers performed more specialist knowledge of particular cultural practices, personal experiences of being at the Centre, or of the technology itself as it was adapted and tailored to the interests of the individual.

Developing individual insights from workshops around the photo-parshiya, moved individual understandings of community-based interaction design beyond creativity, criticality and technological fluency as abstract concepts towards practical goals to be worked towards collectively. These have included insights on understanding and nurturing particular relationships, creating spaces and opportunities for biography to be shared, encouraging associations between things and people, celebrating learning, appreciating participation, creating opportunities for performance and play, whilst recognizing both the value and challenges of broad identity categories as understood within community. These considerations do not just focus on what the technology can do, but suggest ways the technology might be reconfigured and further tailored within communities to explore identity-oriented perspectives supporting emotional and affective aspects of being in communities.

Future Work

In developing an approach to community-based interaction design within a social care contexts while drawing from socially engaged arts practice, a number of challenges were raised. Some of these challenges are being addressed in the next stage of the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project was successful in receiving 2 years of funding to continue a more dedicated

programme of activities. The project will seek to primarily use open source tools to document and celebrate 70 years of black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee women's heritage in the North East of England.

<http://www.bamsistahoodproject.org.uk>. My role is to further support the tailoring of these open source tools to consider the ongoing sustainability of digital resources within the project. The photo-parshiya is also being maintained and further developed between us and used at the Centre for the duration of the project to explore alternative spaces for archiving and sharing.

In planning for the ongoing nature of these existing partnerships and in reflecting on the limitations of my research approach, for future researchers working on community-based interaction design within social care, I have identified three particular considerations. These include 1) Ways of supporting co-creation, 2) Sustaining and caring in community, and 3) Intergenerational learning. While this list already aligns with existing HCI research within community-based design, I am adding further texture to reflect on how an understanding of diversity within group identities can further enrich these insights.

Ways of supporting co-creation

In preparing for future work in community-based design, an understanding of the emotional contingencies involved in developing relationships, participating in and being part of a community from multiple different perspectives would be useful to further consider. Understanding the practice within has been useful for highlighting tensions and complexities but understanding practice as more polyvocal than this thesis has necessarily always allowed for, would be important for future research. While perspectives from staff and volunteers at the Centre have been invaluable, team-based approaches for community-based design within social care contexts, could further enrich perspectives for practice.

Stories have been useful in this regard for establishing ways of documenting and reflecting on practice that were commensurate with the ethos and interests of the Centre. However, while stories are considered an everyday part of how people make sense of experience, most people don't spend their days writing or telling stories as a profession. Acts of making, crafting and sharing stories

require many complex social skills and when working on co-created content, as found with digital stories, not everybody necessarily has the confidence or feels comfortable to share. Managing tensions and complexities of voice, authorship and experiences required further work in understanding how this plays out in community-based research, but also more widely within HCI that claims the overall empowering potential of stories.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I found, like Connelly and Clandinin [1990] that volunteers in the workshops often needed ways in, to frame and start off with a story when creating something that they felt authorship and ownership of. While there is a taken for granted assumption that everybody tells stories, this can undermine the creative ingenuity and work that goes into crafting stories, to make sense of the chaos as an active process of 'engaged participation' [Suchman 2007]. When experiences are complicated, complexity might be managed through a formula story, or not turned into a story at all and avoided [Berns et al 2007]. This was particularly important in understanding descriptions of challenging emotional experience that might bring back feelings of fear, shame and loss [Abrahams 2010, Reissman 1993], creating vulnerabilities and responsibilities for tellers and listeners. Not all stories make good companions [Frank 2010] and it takes time to work out the stories we want to live and breathe with, particularly when lives drastically move away from the narratives we sometimes hope for in imagining a future [Becker 1999].

Finding supportive ways to encourage co-creation, creativity and risk when people might feel nervous or vulnerable is a much longer-term research endeavour than creating opportunities for people to tell their stories. Having multiple approaches to scaffold and start to make and craft different perspectives and ways of feeling comfortable in sharing stories could be a good way forward. In this sense examples of 'cultural probes' can be useful in highlighting how people might be invited to engage with particular questions and acts of creativity. In community and group contexts, there might be more of an emphasis on deciding what a good or 'better' story is, what coherence means, how to create flow, tempo and movement, as something that is negotiated rather than decided a priori. While making people comfortable might

be a taken-for-granted aspect of doing qualitative research interviews with stories, within communities considering the social negotiation and relations between people within groups is also an important aspect of how stories are told and shared and requires greater consideration of the social contingencies in understanding how stories come in to being and become suitable companions to live with.

This suggests the potential value of developing projects for teams to bring additional perspectives within community-based design. Finding ways of doing analysis that is inclusive and works within the context of social engagement that becomes integral to the work of doing community-based interaction design, also suggests further consideration for co-creation within research [Banks 2011]. Furthermore the interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of interaction design research also raises questions about what constitutes valuable knowledge within the context of the different publics that are involved. Making space for these kinds of issues to be raised collectively in the process of doing research, could also provide ways for groups to critically reflect as part of a design process. Translation is one way of describing the processes of moving between the different spaces of research institutions and communities, considering vocabulary used in the movements of different objects, materials and documents that are left as material and immaterial digital traces of these interdisciplinary processes [Suchman 2007]. Studying more closely the discursive nature of what is shared and created together and what takes place between partners as boundary objects could be of further benefit to understanding the value of community-based design [Light 2009b].

Sustaining and caring in community

Research within responsible and social innovation has outlined the importance of paying attention to the ongoing maintenance and care of technical systems as a common concern [Bjorgvinsson et al 2010, Grimpe et al 2014, Kibert et al 2012]. The importance of acknowledging that the process and product will not be perfect and discussing how research products and researchers are not infallible, to therefore build time for contingencies and tweaking, seeing mistakes as opportunities for learning, might involve a different approach to research that focuses on much more longer-term partnership aims. Taking care

of research while taking care within community may mean sustaining relationships and technology through an ongoing and '*persistent tinkering in a world full of complex ambivalence and shifting tensions*' [Mol 2008: 14]. The challenge is how to negotiate this in relation to institutional, funding criteria and ethics procedures that encourage protocols for carefully planned specific research practice.

Furthermore if considering the importance of care, considering the often invisible ecological and social impacts of resources of the technology itself, such as the consequences of mining and years of extraction from particular countries also could be considered. The global geo-politics of trade in materials that often becomes invisible in the design work we do is also connected to increased access to technology and its reduction in cost [Kibert et al 2012]. This can create imbalanced economics and corrupt schemes in other parts of the world. Issues associated with raising awareness of fair trade schemes and the sharing resources, repair and recycling are already common themes within HCI. Yet at the same time not yet fully developing in research that engages with issues that intersect with community. Designing for and beyond human life-spans where much longer-term sustainability and environmental issues of how we are implicated, both as researchers, consumers and users, to these larger global concerns through the technology is of increased interest within HCI [Dourish & Bell 2011].

Intergenerational learning

Also connected to issues of sustainability, the importance and value of learning has been a significant aspect of the research within this particular community. Learning with and around technology use has shifted over the duration of the research from desktop computers to tablets and smart phones through increased access and reduced costs. At the same time, concerns around digital literacy within the group, use of cameras and sharing images with families, getting better at using software, were often raised. While DiSalvo [2013] has highlighted the value of creativity over literacy in using technology, many of those coming to sessions felt that learning skills from one another was also important. At the same time there were informal intergenerational learning practices both observed and discussed throughout the research, which raised a

question for how communities can bring together the skills of different generations to make the best use of the technology. Within the *BAM! Sistahood!* heritage project research connecting the skills from a younger generation of women with the older generations and vice versa will be explored. The potential challenge is to do this in ways where the particular skills and knowledge from individuals are valued and respected, rather than undermined or replaced through technology. The purpose would not necessarily be to teach skills so each individual becomes proficient, but hopefully where groups can meet somewhere in between and innovate around different kinds of knowledge and particular skill that each individual might bring.

Conclusion

In this concluding section I will pull together some of the lessons learned from my extended involvement with the Angelou Centre of value to experience-centred interaction design generally and in particular, interaction design researchers seeking to work with issues of identity and community in social care settings. I will highlight some of the practical opportunities and challenges and how these have been addressed in this thesis. These are outlined as 1) Dialogical aesthetics as an approach to extending empathy across multiple relationships involved in the research, (from users to team members), 2) Working with narrative complexity and 3) Learning how to be open to other perspectives.

Dialogical Aesthetics as Extending Empathy

The practice of dialogical aesthetics, as articulated within the thesis, was not just about listening and empathising with potential users. Dialogical aesthetics was also a more general practice attuned to respecting differences while working with many others involved throughout the design process. As reported in Chapter 7, because of the particular difficulties of synchronising research and particular design interventions with the on-going complexities of Angelou Centre life, the private and personal nature of the women's experiences as well as language barriers, made it difficult for the software development team to spend time at the Centre. Yet, much of the research literature in experience-centred interaction design, and dialogical aesthetics emphasises processes such as connected knowing [Belenky 1996], empathy [McCarthy & Wright 2010],

perspective taking [Kester 2004], are a result of users and designers sharing experience.

Sharing stories are often considered to be the most natural expression of human experience [Wright & McCarthy 2005], and storytelling features centrally in this thesis. However, as described previously, stories in and of themselves are no guarantee that accounts of experience will be easily shared, relying on the particular relationships between researchers and communities. This is particularly pertinent in the context of social care where difficult experiences might be expressed.

My role as someone who moved between the Angelou Centre and the design team was crucial in encouraging understanding across different '*centres of value*' [Wright & McCarthy 2010]. There was a dual ethical responsibility felt towards the women, to present the complex stories of loss, abuse vulnerability and hope, in a respectful way in design meetings, while also ensuring the design team didn't become overwhelmed with the weight and complexity of experiences. In this sense it was important to avoid individuals being reduced to sound bites for discussion and comment and avoid the stories becoming reified. At the same time, I needed to take care not to present significant detail as to invoke sympathy, powerlessness and immobility in the team. In this sense it was important to put into creative design dialogue aspects of the women's experiences that showed multiple aspects of selfhood that they considered were meaningful. The challenge was to find ways in which experiences from the Centre could connect with the design team that allowed for responses from designer developers.

In order to fulfill these dual responsibilities, I chose to create connections, bridges and translations between my own experiences of being at the Centre and my understanding of the personal experiences and expertise of my colleagues. As mediator between these spaces, in this specific situation, the researcher thus engages empathically with both parties and needs to work with both sets of experiences in order to create the dialogical spaces in which people's experiences can be responded to. As mentioned previously my own knowledge of the expertise, personal situations and life experiences of my

colleagues was the starting point for creating this dialogical space. The sharing of multiple personal stories and the presentation of visual materials from women's workshops were used as fragments of experiences, that created a space in which the team could begin to discuss their responses. More practically using the materiality of furniture, fabrics, and architecture also helped us as a team to think generatively about how privacy could be negotiated in embodied and personalised ways rather than just managed technically.

Working with Narrative Complexity

The openness and complexity of day-to-day life in communities such as the Centre makes it difficult to create simple singular clean-cut narratives. This is exacerbated when a research project extends over several years as communities evolve and adapt, presenting further challenges for data collection and documentation. Narrative approaches such as those discussed within experience-centred design [Wright & McCarthy 2005] have acknowledged the complexities of documenting human experience as narrative, but there have been few attempts to acknowledge these complexities in terms of practical approaches to experience-centred design, particularly within social care communities. In keeping experiences alive researchers working in these complex contexts have to be sensitive to multiple timelines and perspectives, multiple voices, evolving and entangled narratives. In this thesis, narrative inquiry has proved a valuable tool for managing such complexity while maintaining the reflexivity that is necessary for working in social care contexts. At the same time narrative inquiry also shows promise in being adaptable for smaller scale design studies in providing analytical tools for documenting and reflecting on practice taking account of multiple perspectives.

It is often said that design is about the '*not quite yet*', that design takes the past and the present and transforms it into a future that realises 'imaginaries' [Dourish & Bell 2011]. Such an understanding of interaction design takes it beyond conventional models of responding to needs and requirements. It asks us to find ways in which people can be supported in moving beyond their experiences of the past, the now, towards realising their aspirations for the future.

In this three-year long engagement with the Angelou Centre, there have been many stories that have been told, and many time lines have become entangled in often fragmented and even contradictory narratives. An important learning experience here is that this is not a problem for experience-centred design. It is the stuff of it. But there are over-arching narratives that can be discerned, and interaction designers need to be attuned to these. Within this thesis, this has included examples of weaving together personal and institutional stories, how designers might reflect on and describe how they orient towards the research, how they build relationships within communities and how they make sense of experiences in relation to their own historical particularity. In working with other people's stories, it might include designers reflections on how they orient towards personal and temporal aspects of experience, whether engaging with the past and present, or future aspirations and hopes in getting to know individuals within communities. It also includes engaging with historical particularity and narratives of future hopes associated with technology within institutions.

Learning to be Open

Experience-centred design, and approaches that draw from dialogical aesthetics, teaches us that every situation is different and what is learned has to be creatively localised to new situations. In this sense it is not possible to generalise approaches, but to suggest ways of transferring and adapting lessons learnt to these new situations. Ultimately, as Mol so profoundly states in the epigraph to this chapter, *'The task of establishing what 'better' might be involves collectives'* [Mol 2008: 75], rather than presuming we know what *'better'* means a priori. What carries over to new situations, as interaction design research moves ever outwards, into ever-challenging contexts is not techniques or methods, it is sensibilities, attitudes, critical and reflexive ways of designing [Light & Akama 2012]. If there is one lesson to be learned, to paraphrase bell hooks', that an essential requirement for socially engaged interaction design is to maintain a subjective position of *'radical openness'* (see epigraph to Chapter 8, p187). A position, which is attuned to the risks of attachment to one's own perspective at the expense of others'. At the same time, it is also about acknowledging that our own unique position and perspectives can also be of

value. This attitude of radical openness is a strong foundation for constructing a shared aspiration for our futures with technology within social care communities.

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Appendix A

(Accompanies Chapters 4,5 & 6)

Timetable of Events: Outline of sessions and Meetings with Staff, Facilitators, Volunteers and Groups

Example of annotated field note

Example of annotated interview transcript from Alice

Example of Value & Barrier Statements Annotated

DVD

Audio Recording of Digital Stories

Digital Portraits

Timetable of Events

Outline of Sessions and Meetings with Staff, Facilitators, Volunteers and Groups
15 months March 2011 – June 2012

Date	Session	Who was present	Brief Description & Purpose
16 th March 2011	Meeting Research	Rosie (Centre Co-ordinator)	Meeting Plan research agenda and volunteering schedule
16 th May 2011	Women's Cafe	Organised Group (10-15)	Shadowing Take part in women's café session to shadow facilitator practices
18 th May 2011	Women's Cafe	Organised Group (10-15)	Consultation with group about arts, crafts, heritage and making activities
23 rd May 2011	Women's Cafe	Organised Group (10-15)	Consultation with group about arts, crafts, heritage and making activities
4 th June 2011	Meeting Research	Rosie (Centre Co-ordinator)	Feedback Observations and consultations and plan for arts sessions
6 th June 2011	Women's Cafe	Organised Group (10-15)	Shadowing Take part in women's café session to shadow facilitator practices
20 th June 2011	Women's Cafe	Organised Group (10-15)	Facilitation Take part in women's café session to support facilitator practices
24 th June 2011	Arts & Heritage session	Volunteers (6-8)	Facilitation Start developing ideas with volunteers on arts, crafts and heritage
27 th June 2011	Women's Cafe	Organised Group (10-15)	Facilitation Take part in women's café session to support facilitator practices
1 st July 2011	Arts & Heritage session	Volunteers (6-8)	Facilitation Trying out collage techniques
4 th July 2011	Women's cafe	Organised Group (10-15)	Facilitation Take part in women's café session to support facilitator practices
8 th July 2011	Arts & Heritage session	Volunteers (6-8)	Facilitation Trying out printing techniques
11 th July 2011	Women's Cafe	Organised Group (10-15)	Facilitation Take part in women's café session to support facilitator practices
15 th July 2011	Arts & Heritage session	Volunteers (6-8)	Facilitation Trying out embroidery techniques
18 th July 2011	Women's Cafe	Organised Group (10-15)	Facilitation Take part in women's café session to support facilitator practices
19 th July 2011	Meeting Research	Rosie (Centre Co-ordinator)	Meeting Plan for ethical approval and research design
22 nd July	Arts & Heritage	Volunteers (6-8)	Facilitation

2011	session		Design ideas for textile banner
29 th July 2011	Arts & Heritage session	Volunteers (6-8)	Facilitation Choosing materials for textile banner and group reflection on sessions
18 th Aug 2011	Meeting Research	Rosie (Centre Co-ordinator)	Meeting Plan for research including digital storytelling and digital portraits
1 st Sept 2011	Meeting Research	Prya (Support Worker)	Meeting Planning for ethical issues associated with research
8 th Sept 2011	Meeting – Arts & Heritage Research	Rosie (Centre Co-ordinator) Zoe (Volunteer) Charlotte (Volunteer)	Meeting Planning and feedback on previous arts and heritage workshop sessions
14 th Sept 2011	Meeting - Digital Storytelling	Samiya (Outreach worker) Rosie (Centre Co-ordinator) Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator)	Meeting Planning for the digital storytelling workshops
16 th Sept	Arts & Heritage Sessions	Zoe (Volunteer) Charlotte (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Arts and Heritage sessions registration
23 rd Sept	Arts & Heritage sessions	Zoe (Volunteer) Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Arts and Heritage: session introduction to drawing
30 th Sept	Arts & Heritage sessions	Zoe (Volunteer) Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Arts and Heritage: session drawing
5 th Oct 2011	Digital Storytelling session	Samiya (Outreach worker) Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator) Huma (Volunteer) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Observation & Facilitation Introduction to digital storytelling
6 th Oct 2011	Meeting – Research	Prya (Support Worker)	Meeting Feedback on digital storytelling sessions and planning for digital portrait sessions
7 th Oct 2011	Arts & Heritage sessions	Zoe (Volunteer) Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Arts and Heritage: session drawing techniques
12 th Oct 2011	Digital Storytelling session	Samiya (Outreach worker) Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator) Huma (Volunteer) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer)	Observation & Facilitation Introduction to the digital storytelling project. Alice shows some examples of DS created at the museum. Warm up exercises and early ideas are discussed.

14 th Oct 2011	Arts & Heritage sessions	Zoe (Volunteer) Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Zoe leads session on drawing faces
19 th Oct 2011	Digital Storytelling session	Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator) Huma (Volunteer) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer)	Observation & Facilitation Alice shows more videos from the museum collection in the sessions. Volunteers start to write their stories and discuss ideas. The volunteers bring photographs from home of trips they have been to at the Centre and of their wedding photographs.
21 st Oct 2011	Arts & Heritage sessions	Zoe (Volunteer) Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Zoe leads session on confidence in drawing and mark making with charcoal
2 nd Nov 2011	Digital Storytelling session	Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator) Huma (Volunteer) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Observation & Facilitation Volunteers start to write stories and share their stories in the group. I act as a scribe for some of the volunteers who prefer to share their story and have somebody else write it down for them.
4 th Nov 2011 Morning	Arts & Heritage sessions	Zoe (Volunteer) Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Zoe leads session on drawing people
Afternoon	Digital Portrait Session	Prya (Support worker) Samiya (Outreach worker) Charlotte (Volunteer) Huma (Volunteer) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Facilitation Introduction to the digital portrait project. The volunteers are the same as in the storytelling project.
4 th Nov 2011	Meeting – digital storytelling	Samiya (Outreach worker) Charlotte (Volunteer)	Meeting Discussion on volunteer progress
9 th Nov 2011	Digital Storytelling session	Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator) Huma (Volunteer) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Observation & Facilitation Volunteers start to record their stories and edit their stories and scan photographs into the computer to organize their story sequences.
11 th Nov 2011 Morning	Arts & Heritage sessions	Zoe (Volunteer) Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Zoe leads a session on pencil drawing and mark making with different pencil types
11 th Nov 2011 Afternoon	Digital Portrait Session	Charlotte (Volunteer) Huma (Volunteer) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Facilitation Volunteers discuss their ideas for their digital portraits.

16 th Nov 2011	Digital Storytelling session	Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator) Huma (Volunteer) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Observation & Facilitation This is the final session that has been organized for the volunteers to complete their digital stories. Most of the group have recorded their voice overs and scanned photographs and are starting to put these together, but some are still choosing their photographs and scanning their photographs. Work with iMovie and arrange their sound recordings and photographs.
18 th Nov 2011 Morning	Arts & Heritage sessions	Zoe (Volunteer) Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Zoe leads session on drawing using pastels
18 th Nov 2011 Afternoon	Digital Portrait Session	Charlotte Swaddle (Volunteer) Huma (Volunteer) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Facilitation Volunteers bring photographs and discuss them with one another and start to scan them into the computer.
23 rd Nov 2011	Digital Storytelling session	Huma (Volunteer) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Observation & Facilitation Nazlee and Huzna have not written or recorded their script for their digital story although they have started to choose photographs. Alice organizes a session and then cannot attend so I work with them to write down their stories.
25 th Nov 2011 Morning	Arts & Heritage sessions	Zoe (Volunteer) Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Zoe leads a session on using negative space in drawing on coloured paper.
Afternoon	Digital Portrait Session	Charlotte (Volunteer) Huma (Volunteer) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Facilitation Volunteers start to create sequences from their photographs. Some of the group work on creating words to go with their photographs.
28 th Nov 2011	Meeting – Digital Storytelling Meeting – Digital Storytelling	Samiya (Outreach Worker) Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator)	Meeting Meeting with Samiya to update her on progress on the digital stories. Followed by meeting at the museum with Alice to discuss next steps to complete the digital stories
1 st Dec 2011	Digital Storytelling session	Samiya (Outreach Worker) Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator) Huma (Volunteer) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer)	NOT ABLE TO ATTEND THIS SESSION The group meet to share their stories with Samiya, but she is unhappy with one of them since some of her photographs have been used.

		Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	
2 nd Dec 2011 Morning	Arts & Heritage sessions	Zoe (Volunteer) Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Zoe leads a session on displaying the drawings that everybody has produced in the group.
Afternoon	Digital Portrait Session	Charlotte (Volunteer) Huma (Volunteer) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Facilitation Volunteer sequences their photographs to discuss different sounds, music and words to accompany their photographs.
9 th Dec 2011 Morning	Arts & Heritage sessions	Zoe (Volunteer) Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Zoe leads a discussion on what the group have got out of coming to the sessions and what they would like to see improved on in the future.
9 th Dec 2011 Afternoon	Digital Portrait Session Meeting – digital portraits	Charlotte (Volunteer) Huma (Volunteer) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)) Samiya (Outreach Worker)	Facilitation This is the last session before the Christmas holidays and so I discuss with each volunteer where they are up to with their digital portrait and what is left to do next. We arrange to meet for one to one sessions in January. Alice also comes to this session to arrange meetings with the volunteers in January. Meeting Discuss with Samiya plans for January for completing the digital portraits
6 th Jan 2012 Morning	Arts & Heritage session	Charlotte (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation Charlotte meets with learners and discusses plans for new workshop sessions
6 th Jan 2012 Afternoon	Digital Portrait Session	Huzna (Volunteer)	Facilitation I work one to one with Huzna on her video sequence. She puts her photographs into a sequence on the computer.
10 th Jan 2012	Digital Portrait Session	Huma (Volunteer)	Facilitation I work one to one with Huma on her video sequence, in particular an animation.
11 th Jan 2012	Digital Portrait Session	Nazlee (Volunteer)	Facilitation I work one to one with Nazlee on her video sequence and we discuss sounds to accompany her video
12 th Jan 2012	Digital Portrait Session	Saeeda & Zahrah (Volunteers)	Facilitation I work with Saeeda and Zahrah to check their final video and burn onto DVD
17 th Jan 2012	Meeting – Digital Storytelling	Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator)	Meeting Alice in the museum to discuss final plans for the digital stories to

			be completed.
18 th Jan 2012	Interview – Digital Storytelling	Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator)	Interview Alice discusses her perspectives of the digital storytelling workshops
19 th Jan 2012	Meeting – Digital Storytelling	Samiya (Outreach worker) Rosie (Centre Co-ordinator)	Meeting Samiya and Rosie to discuss final plans for the digital storytelling sessions
20 th Jan 2012 Morning	Arts & Heritage sessions	Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation and Facilitation Charlotte runs a session on jewelry making.
20 th Jan 2012 Afternoon	Digital portrait session	Charlotte (Volunteer) Huma (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Facilitation Changes are made to video sequences and additional words are added.
24 th Jan 2012	Digital Storytelling Session	Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator) Huma (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Observation Alice returns to original consent forms and discusses changes volunteers would like to make to the forms.
27 th Jan 2012 Morning	Arts & Heritage sessions	Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Charlotte leads a jewelry session
27 th Jan 2012 Afternoon	Digital portrait session	Huma (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Facilitation Music is chosen and added to the video sequences.
	Meeting – Digital Portraits	Rosie	
2 nd Feb 2012	Interview – Digital Storytelling and Digital Portraits	Rosie	Interview Rosie discusses her perspective on the digital stories and portraits sessions
3 rd Feb 2012 Morning	Arts & Heritage sessions	Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Charlotte leads a jewelry session
3 rd Feb 2012 Afternoon	Digital portrait session	Huma (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Facilitation Final checks for each digital portrait video is completed and discussed with individuals in the group.
7 th Feb 2012	Meeting - Digital Storytelling session	Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator)	Meeting Preparing digital content for storage at Angelou Centre
10 th Feb 2012 Morning	Arts & Heritage sessions	Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Charlotte leads a jewelry session
10 th Feb 2012 Afternoon	Digital portrait session	Huma (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Facilitation DVDs are burnt in the session and distributed within the group.
21 st Feb 2012	Digital Storytelling session	Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator) Huma (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Observation & Facilitation Alice meets with group to finalise DVDs for the volunteers.

24 th Feb 2012 Morning	Arts & Heritage sessions	Charlotte (Volunteer) Giada (Volunteer) Learners (10-15)	Observation & Facilitation Charlotte leads a jewelry session
Afternoon	Digital portrait session	Huma (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Facilitation We have a small celebration event where we bring food and share the digital stories and portraits.
28 th Feb 2012	Digital Storytelling session	Alice (Museum Outreach Facilitator) Huma (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Observation Alice meets with the group to finalise decisions on anonymity to include the digital stories in the museum collection.
2 nd Mar 2012	Interview – Digital Storytelling & Digital Portraits	Samiya (Outreach worker)	Interview Discussion with Samiya on her perspectives of the digital stories and portraits workshops
1 st June 2012	Interview – Values & Barriers	Samiya (Outreach worker) Rosie (Centre Co- ordinator) Saeeda (Volunteer) Zahrah (Volunteer) Faleeha (Volunteer) Nazlee (Volunteer) Huzna (Volunteer)	Interview Group discussion first with Samiya & Rosie, followed by volunteers, to reflect on the values and some of the challenges experienced in the digital storytelling and digital portraits workshops.

Example of annotated field notes

174. the bag again to see what is in there. They pull out the token

175. triggers and start to lay them out in front of them. I explain that I

176. would like them in this first week to take pictures or make

- 16 -

177. drawings of the things that are important to them and the

178. following week we will put together a self portraits. I say that

179. they might already know what these things are, but the tokens

180. with pictures and words are triggers to help them think or to give

181. them

182. ideas and inspiration. I explain that they don't have to take

183. pictures of all these things these are just there to give them

184. some initial thoughts.

Kachon

SOFAS

185. I talk to one lady about the texture one she has in her hand and

186. say this is about taking a picture of something that feels good or

187. something you might like to touch. Underneath this picture is the

188. sound one. I suggest that they might use the pen drive attached

- 17 -

189. to their bag to record sounds, songs or laughter or anything that

190. they like to hear. **MAKES CONNECTION**

191. you can sing a love song and she laughs. One of the women

192. start to tut and laugh back and she starts to speak in Urdu to

193. says that the women want to know what

194. the aim of this is. I explain, and in hindsight this felt a bit stupid

195. as the words came out of my mouth, but I start talking about

DISCONNECTION - DIFFERENCE

196. research again on how we're looking at stories and how people

197. talk about their lives and things they value and they nod.

SOFAS

198. I show them how the pen drive works and how it records sound.

199. They look at it with interest and play with it a little pushing the

200. switch on and off.

- 18 -

they want it to be. I said that there would be parts of the

Annotations:

- Orange sticky notes:**
 - "I think a great social anthropologist... because all the food and the... going along together... food... a space for the group to... and then they... the fact that... into the way... about... 27-05-12... Kachon"
 - "going to put the... Kachon - getting... the... the... 27-05-12... Kachon"
 - "they all sit... feeling... the... a chance to... 27-05-12... Kachon"
- Yellow sticky notes:**
 - "the technology... 27-05-12... Kachon"
 - "Pretended to record... becomes quite animated... that the women... 31-05-12... Kachon"
 - "I think a... 31-05-12... Kachon"
- Handwritten notes:**
 - Blue:** Embedded Fun, Dance, S, S, SQ
 - Red:** TENSIONS, SELF CONSCIOUS AS RESEARCHER
 - Green:** SOFAS
 - Other:** H, N, Z, S, H

Field notes were placed in a timeline and then each session was read closely. This was followed by marking out particular moments where social connection and tensions, details about the context, perceptions on technology and embodied expressions were described. These were then colour coded and labeled with additional detail on who was involved in those moments.

Alice

Culture Shock - Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

18th January 2012 - Settle Down Café

1. R - Sort of thing
2. A - ah the red light is on
3. R - the red light is on, I think it goes off after a little bit though, and you
4. can see the little bars, going up and down.
5. A - erm nice
6. R - (Laughs)
7. A - very exciting
8. R - (carries on laughing) It's not that exciting is it really?

9. R - so we're sat in Settle Down café in the middle of Newcastle and I
10. am interviewing or having a chat with, not interviewing it makes it
11. sound too formal. Having a chat with Alice from Tyne and Wear
12. Archives and Museums about digital storytelling and working with the
13. Angelou Centre. So Alice (laughs),

14. A - (laughs)

15. R - how did you get into digital storytelling then er way, way back.

16. 0.51

17. A - erm yeah well back in sort of 2000, early 2008 I think erm, the post
18. of project co-ordinator came up for the Culture Shock project which
19. was the big, which was THE big, A big erm digital storytelling project
20. which Tyne & Wear Museums as it was then erm got quite a major
21. grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for. It was a big in total, I think the
22. budget was something like £661,000 to deliver a big erm project in
23. partnership with Beamish, Bowes and Hartlepool to collect erm digital
24. stories from people across the north east region, to sort of try and help
25. erm collect the sort of diverse heritage of the region really because I
26. think, I don't think some people realize how diverse this region actually
27. is, it's not just white working class folk in their flat caps, n working in

Other influences on workshop process

Importance of support

Managing uncertainty

Value of process

Expectations of technology

Diverse agendas – diverse heritage –
partners involved

28. coal mines it's ...

29. 1.50

30. R – whippets ... (laughs)

31. A – There's a huge, huge range of different communities erm living
32. here and as part of our I guess our contemporary collecting policy at
33. the museum we're really interested in making sure that the collections
34. that we have are as representative of the communities that we, that we
35. serve I guess, because we are a local authority museum erm and just
36. so that in the future in the same way that we've got, you know the
37. Newcastle Story exhibition at discovery, which tells the history of
38. Newcastle, you know in a hundred years time, if the Discovery
39. Museum is still around and they wanted to do an exhibition about the
40. 21st century, how are they going to do that unless they collect stuff and
41. you might as well collect in the here and now while you've got the
42. people around you who can tell you about the objects and you can
43. make sure your collections, records are as, you know, up to date and
44. as accurate as they can be because I think the very nature of museum
45. collecting that, the way things were acquired in the past weren't, you
46. know perhaps always ethical, erm with explorers going out to you know
47. the developing world and stuff or if things weren't acquired in certain
48. ways so you've not always got the most up to date information. Erm, so
49. it's good to sort of be doing it now.

50. 3.11

51. A – so erm I mean in a nutshell, someone from the museum had gone
52. down to Wales, erm to a conference I think erm and introduced to this
53. idea of digital storytelling, came back absolutely buzzing about this new
54. technique that was developing, erm and there was also a big manifesto
55. erm published by an organisation called Culture Unlimited, erm also
56. called Culture Shock just to confuse things, erm which looked at this,
57. these ideas of intolerance and prejudice, and erm citizenship and how
58. through telling stories people can learn from one another and share
59. life experiences. I mean this is very simplistic of course it's much more
60. complicated than how I'm describing it, but erm they believed that

Recognition of a colonial past and
the nature of collecting – digital
storytelling – how it is different –
contemporary – representative of
communities – collecting

61. museums were in a really good position to help or perhaps start to
62. address some of those issues erm and I think people at the museum
63. thought well digital storytelling these ideas could work together quite
64. well so you know a bid was put together and erm when they got their
65. funding through the confirmation through and everything about sort of
66. April 2008 they then advertised and I thought why not. It was kind of a
67. natural progression I guess from the, because I was previously
68. assistant outreach officer and I was out in the field delivering outreach
69. working with excluded audiences on a whole range of ??? erm
70. workshops and projects and stuff erm and had a real interest in oral
71. history and contemporary collecting. I'd done a number of different
72. projects with ex-shipyard workers from Swan Hunter and contemporary
73. collecting with skateboarders and stuff so it was just something I was
74. really interested in and I think what I was saying to you yesterday about
75. everything I've learnt about objects, well not everything I've learnt, but
76. a lot of what I've learnt about objects has come from the people who
77. remember using them and they think it's ridiculous when I open up a
78. loans box and I bring out a flat iron that's rapped up in bubble wrap and
79. they're like what you doing, you know that's an everyday object erm so
80. yeah you know. And then when I actually got the job I was like, right
81. OK (R&A laugh). I've never project managed anything on a big scale
82. like this because it was massive and erm I knew absolutely nothing
83. about digital storytelling and then when I heard that we were going to
84. be using macs I was like Oh God, you know because as a lot of people
85. erm I've grown up with PCs

Recalling – fear of the
computer something new –
not familiar

86. 5.45

87. R – of course yeah

88. A – I remember doing my computing A level at school there we were

89. using erm Acorn Archimedes

90. (Both laugh)

91. R – I can't even remember what we were using

92. A – my god – but they were actually quite good computers in their own

93. way

94. R – in their own way, in their own time.

95. (Both laugh)

96. A - so you know I wasn't, apart from having an iPod, I wasn't
97. very Mac savvy at all, so that terrified me aswell to think Oh my
98. god I'm going to have to project manage and support staff in
99. using mac books when I knew nothing apart from myself, so
100. anyway, it all came out in the wash it was all fine.

Recounting novice nature of experience
with technology – leading groups – she
describes overcoming that fear

101. R – it was all fine ...

102. A – so yeah I project managed that pretty much from start to
103. finish minus six months in between for maternity leave, but yeah
104. that's er yeah.

105. R – That's how you got started.

106. A – yeah this fin... so the project finished in March erm and
107. through some extra funding that we'd er, that we'd managed to
108. bring in, erm I was kept on for this financial year to sort of
109. develop new opportunities, you know Culture Shock had been
110. such a big thing erm that was very focused erm on the aims of
111. the project and stuff, and you know and just been been
112. exploring new opportunities for consultancy and commissioning
113. through new project ideas as new technology emerges and stuff
114. you know and so that's been quite interesting so working with
115. people with dementia and using it as a training t..., using it as an
116. evaluation tool aswell, it's the sort of thing that people can use to
117. reflect on their experiences of something rather than writing a
118. rather dry evaluation report, yeah.

119. 7.32

120. R - Evaluation form

121. A – so that’s what I’ve been doing this year and the Angelou Centre

122. was one of those sort of new projects.

123. R – Right and what, like after doing... so you’ve done it for so,
124. like the Culture Shock was three years, so erm was there, as the
125. project kind of developed was there anything that you, did you
126. kind of understand the value of digital storytelling change in that
127. time? It’s probably quite a difficult question really

128. A - I think TWAM had never done digital storytelling before
129. this project. They’d done quite a lot of oral history and so when
130. Culture Shock happened, TWAM had never done digital
131. storytelling before and they were trying to, they were trying to ..
132. , it was the biggest one off project ever and I think the original
133. aim, the original targets were quite ambitious, erm so I think it
134. wasn’t until quite later on in the project, when we were kind of
135. getting into the process of it more. Erm we always recognised
136. that you would need to tailor the process, you know what we’d
137. been trained to deliver it very well, in a particular way from

138. someone from the BBC, er which was kind of modeled on the
139. Center for Digital Storytelling model, erm, but it was always, it it,
140. we always knew there was that flexibility ??? to adapt the
141. process to different groups. Some people within the digital
142. storytelling community are very particular erm about the process
143. and how projects, how things should be delivered you know and
144. what the finished product should be, but I think sometimes that
145. can be too prescriptive and you need kind of flexibility, because
146. you have to treat every participant as an individual and rather
147. than trying to rush them through a process, because you’ve
148. been told in the training that it takes four days of time, in reality
149. people’s lives sort of get in the way, not get in the way (laugh).
150. There are so many different external factors involved
151. and if you’re working with very, erm some quite vulnerable

Factors – targets – aims for projects –
wanted to focus more on the process

Relevance of process – flexibility –
adaptation to people

Other perspectives – expectations on
quality

Treating people as individuals –
recognition that things take longer

Aspects of people’s lives if they’re
vulnerable that you have to take into
account

152. adults and young people at times, then sometimes they might
153. not be in the right frame of mind to be able to take part in a
154. workshop so I think for me, erm personally erm I think the value
155. of the process changed quite a lot.

156. R – right OK

157. A – it wasn't just about the, because we had this ... er had this
158. ambitious target of a thousand stories, over the, the time period
159. and not to bore you with the details, but there were certain
160. things that happened within the sort of initiation setup which
161. pushed us up, pushed the timetable back so

162. R – right OK

163. A – erm things like recruitment and training and project setup
164. just took longer than was expected, because as I said to you
165. before, you know we'd never done it before.

166. R – and often these things do you know if it's a new thing and
167. that's ...

168. A – and I mean the HLF were fantastic, they were, they were
169. just as, erm they knew why we weren't going to reach that
170. thousand straight target, because we explained to them the
171. process, it was taking much longer with some groups. Also the
172. numbers aswell I think the original targets were to have erm ten
173. people in each workshop, which in hindsight was just too
174. difficult, unless you had, unless you had two members of staff,
175. you know, if there were two facilitators erm, then that's, then that
176. was doable. If it was just one person where it was more like 4-6
177. was a good number for one person to deal with erm, so yeah
178. I've kind of lost my trail of thought ... so yeah a thousand
179. stories, HLF were very supportive... I've lost my trail of thought.

180. 11.58

181. R – so you were sort of saying the value of the process became
182. much clearer

183. A – yeah, yeah and I mean obviously the end story was
184. important because we were all wanting to accession them into
185. the collections, erm but how somebody got to that end point was
186. just as valuable, particularly if you were working with people who
187. had had strokes and were finding erm speaking quite difficult, to
188. actually produce something with their own voice was really
189. significant erm as an example so yeah, I think for me it was the
190. process.

Accession into archives – seen to be
valuable – but also how somebody got
there – their journey in making
something - process

191. R – so how did your work with the Angelou come about?

192. A – erm Rosie actually got in touch with me, well got in touch
193. with the museum through the Culture Shock website. So there's
194. a generic cultureshock@ email address and she just sort of sent
195. an email saying that she was really interested in the Angelou
196. getting involved and everything and obviously the active Culture
197. Shock project had ended but I was still around doing legacy
198. work and I think, I just thought it was an interesting group to
199. work with. I don't think the museum had worked with the
200. Angelou Centre in any great depth for a while, I think we had
201. had contact with them in the past, erm and from the museums
202. point of view, because obviously if you're working in partnership
203. with people, you know both partners need to be getting
204. something out of it, it's not and when I say this it isn't a ticking box
205. exercise, but erm sort of working with Black and Minority Ethnic
206. groups erm is one of the targets of the outreach team because
207. they're traditionally seen as being not traditional museum
208. audiences erm and as far as stories that had been collected for
209. Culture Shock, particularly within Tyne & Wear, we'd worked
210. with the erm refugee service based in the Bigg Market and we'd
211. worked with some erm ESOL students from South Tyneside, but
212. compared to other groups represented in the coll – the stories
213. we'd collected we didn't have many stories in the collections

Sense that museum is
expected to work with BME
groups – not reaching these
audiences

Lack of group representation
within the museum – as
survivors of domestic
violence – interesting
objectifying – as group
identification

214. from people from that particular background so erm, I think once
215. we'd found out more about the Survivors group and the Saheli
216. group we erm, I knew just from my work with the history team
217. that we didn't have very much in the collections to represent that
218. sort of thing happening in society. Erm and I think our keeper of
219. history had said when she'd done a search for domestic
220. violence erm all that came up was I think one of those plastic
221. wrist bands

222. R – Oh really

223. A – that they'd bought from Top Shop or something when there
224. was some campaign. So there wasn't anything personal erm, it
225. was just this one object and I think that kind of demonstrates
226. how some individuals and some people's experiences can't be
227. represented through a static object. It's only sort of personal ...
228. sometimes it's hearing it from the horses mouth if you like. It's
229. the only way to really understand I think certain issues. It's all
230. very well having beautiful ship models on display in story of the
231. Tyne exhibition, erm but what did it feel. What was it like
232. working in the shipyards, what was it like, what were the smells
233. and sounds like of the shipyard, how did it feel getting up at
234. ridiculous hours of the morning and going to work, and the
235. camaraderie around, you know you're not going to get that from
236. a model of the ship or a photograph of a ship launch, so it's kind
237. of that was why we wanted to use digital storytelling as a way of
238. collecting those stories erm and because it's participant led,
239. aswell people have that sort of control over what it is that they
240. want to tell and how they want to tell it. So it's not us going, right
241. we want stories about this. It's not us saying tell us about stuff
242. that we want to know about, it's just tell us stuff. So yeah I had a
243. couple of meetings with Rosie and we kind of agreed that we
244. would do a taster session at the museum, where I would at
245. least, I would just introduce the concept

246. 16.55

Value of authority of voice –
horses mouth –
colloquialism – metaphor –
direct from someone who
has had that experience –
certain issues

Idea that voice can tell
people what it felt like
– not going to get that
from objects

Value of something
being participant led –
not institutionally
prescriptive – this is
what we want

Initial meetings about
DS – prior to project
happening –
negotiation between
museum staff and
Centre

247. R&A (Laugh)
248. A – so a group I was expecting, a group of you know maybe a
249. dozen people and erm yeah I can't remember exactly how many
250. people, I think there was about twenty women and about twice
251. as many children erm so it was erm, challenging it was good
252. fun, and they had enough workers on hand so the workers took
253. all the kids out into the museum and they ran amok, erm and
254. then I had some time with the women and then I think from that
255. taster we ran a second more formal taster in September I think,
256. did we start in September, was it September that we started?
257. I'm losing track of time anyway.
258. R – I don't know, maybe. It could have been October actually.
259. A – Something like that and I think we had 8 women there erm
260. and that, that eventually sort of whittled down to a core group of 6.
261. R – yeah, so erm, in terms of, was there anything that ... well
262. actually if you could er describe the process that you went
263. through with the women.
264. A – (laughs) If I can remember
265. R – yeah (laughs) if you can remember (laughs) it doesn't have
266. to be complete just the things that you ... that kind of stuck out
267. as sort instrumental in the stages
268. A – Yeah, I think with all digital storytelling projects you always
269. start off with kind of the story circle and I think, I think in
270. hindsight, perhaps the group found that quite difficult erm, I think
271. there was a, I think there was a little bit of a language barrier
272. and I think perhaps with some of the women erm and we didn't
273. have a worker from the Angelou Centre there or perhaps even
274. an interpreter might have been useful to be able to perhaps

Problems of language – not
planning for this

Physical objects – what could've
been used to help open up
discussions. Digital stories also
used to show examples – control -
choice – let's watch this one

275. explain more er complex erm issues erm, so we ran a few sort
 276. of activities, I didn't really sort of bring any physical objects as
 277. inspiration and perhaps again in hindsight that would have
 278. worked, that might have worked I don't know, erm but by
 279. showing them stories which I thought they could relate to and I
 280. just brought, I brought quite a few different types of stories along
 281. and they were able to sort of say let's watch this one, let's watch
 282. that one erm and because they are museum objects, they were
 283. inspired by the museum collections because they were seeing
 284. stories within our collections that's always my justification for not
 285. using real physical objects. But I saw someone's Culture Shock
 286. stories but are they not museum objects? Does that count? Erm
 287. so yes I think we spent much longer on the story circle and the
 288. script writing than we would normally, than you would normally
 289. perhaps do on a project and that, it goes back to, what I was
 290. saying before about the process and tailoring it to the group,
 291. that, that beginning part of the project where people are trying to
 292. thrash out what it is that they want to say and how they want to
 293. say it, er particularly if people aren't used to writing creatively
 294. erm, if you don't get that right you can have the best images in
 295. the world and you can record it in, using the most expensive
 296. equipment, but if you've got a crappy story that nobody wants to
 297. listen to or it's not told in the right, it's not engaging, it's not told
 298. in the right way, erm well it's kind of like well ... yeah, not
 299. what's the point, but just it makes it difficult to then produce
 300. something of of of quality, but then quality, what does quality mean here

Recognition of some of the challenges of writing stories – if you're not used to it. Sense of getting it right – first the words – the story

A clear sense of what a crappy story is here – but what does it mean to tell a story that isn't engaging?

...

301. 20.55
 302. R (Laughs)

303. A – Let's not go into that erm so yeah we er spent much more
 304. time doing that erm, there perhaps wasn't as much ... I'd have
 305. liked to have seen the group erm be more actively involved in
 306. the production of their stories themselves erm but I think, due to
 307. sort of time, the group had kind of had it in their head that they
 308. had this sort of end date of when the project was going to finish

Feeling group wasn't as actively involved as she would've liked

Timetabling – Alice feeling there was too much rush – some of the group wanted to finish – they had an end date – that's what had been arranged and organized.

Encouragement to be more active

Comfortable to take more control

309. and erm so we were kind of trying to sort of stick to that
 310. timetable and perhaps again it would have been good to
 311. perhaps have extended the project so there wasn't so much of a
 312. rush to erm get the stories finished. And again I think maybe ...
 313. maybe with an interpreter or somebody from the Angelou there
 314. to encourage the women to take more of an active role, perhaps
 315. that would have happened I don't know. Erm but that would
 316. have been you know an ideal that's what I would have liked to
 317. have seen happen but maybe, I mean you probably know the
 318. group better than I do, I don't know whether they would have felt
 319. comfortable taking that much control of the production or
 320. whether they were ... because they se... they were quite happy
 321. with sort of directing us which is still, that's having editorial
 322. control you don't have to sit in front of the computer until your
 323. eyes are square erm to feel that you've made the story yourself
 324. erm.

325. R - yeah, I don't know, I think it's probably different with different
 326. ... I got the feeling that er the two women that came at the end
 327. erm, theirs you know theirs was very rushed, and I kinda got the
 328. feeling that from asking them and chatting to them informally
 329. that erm, I think they partly didn't really understand what was
 330. involved because I think it's sometimes a bit difficult to
 331. sometimes understand a process like that might entail erm and I
 332. don't know whether with one of them in particular it felt like she
 333. wrote her script in Urdu and then her friend translated it for me
 334. erm and she got very sort of upset about that so I think she was
 335. potentially maybe waiting for the others to not be there aswell
 336. and she kept turning up late aswell. So I don't know I haven't
 337. sort of asked them about that in particular but I just part of me
 338. wonders whether ... and I asked her why she wanted to do it
 339. erm and she said, you know, she said to help other women and
 340. because she said she wanted something to give to the people
 341. that had helped her, but I think she was just struggling to know
 342. how to do it and you know just that trust, building up that trust
 343. probably with some of the women just took a bit longer, which

Alice trying to make sense of the
 process here - asking the question
 of whether they may have felt
 more comfortable - whether?

Using technology just part of the
 storytelling process

I felt there were many
 differences in the
 circumstances and ideas of
 what the volunteers wanted
 to say about themselves
 within the group that made it
 more difficult for some and
 easier for others.

I also think that they - the N&H I'm
 describing here - were still in the
 middle of deciding what to do -
 they still had regular contact with
 their husbands and I wondered
 whether they felt they might be
 judged if they said that in the
 group.

I mention trust here - as this
 is something that isn't really
 discussed - I think this is
 important more than the
 control over the technology

344. you can't and I'm not really sure at what point that trust was built
345. or it's very difficult to know I think and I think interestingly F is
346. now coming ... Oh I'll have to erase that ... she's coming to
347. other sessions now that she wasn't doing before so I think there
348. have been, yeah they are doing other things as a result of going
349. through that process, but I'm going to sort of discuss this with
350. them a bit more and see you know whether that's

351. A – whether that's sparked them on to given them more
352. confidence or whatever that is or

353. R – Yeah, but I have noticed a difference in erm that particular
354. lady anyway so ...

355. A – that's good

356. 25.08
357. R – so was there – this is probably a leading question and I'm
358. trying to work out best how not to lead (laughs)

359. A – Just say it

360. R – yeah were there points where you just ... I'm just going to
361. have to say it actually, where you just thought Oh my god what
the hell are we doing? (Laughs)

A – (laughs) nearly everyday. Yeah I think, erm it was a huge
362. learning curve for me as well because I'd, it seemed, when I said
363. it to one, the previous project that I did with people with
364. dementia erm me and another colleague were working on it and
365. I said, I said to her, you do realize that this is the first project that
366. I've actually delivered myself and she was like 'What!' and I was
367. like, I was the co-ordinator.

368. R – yeah, yeah of course

Sense of learning quite
quickly – huge – learning
feeling - learning

369. A – I took part in the training and I attended numerous sort of
 370. one off workshops within different projects to see how things
 371. were going, you know I'm nosey and that's the deliverer in me, I
 372. like to see what's happening and stuff, but I'd never actually
 373. facilitated a project from start to finish erm so this was only really
 374. my second project that I was doing myself erm, so yeah I did
 375. find it quite challenging because it was a little bit scary and it
 376. was kind of like, it was great having you there aswell as an extra
 377. facilitator, erm but it was kind of like me as the facilitator and it
 378. was like god I have to do this in particular after the first session I
 379. thought god, you know I've got to produce something at the end
 380. of this you know and I wanted to obviously make sure that the
 381. group had a good experience aswell, so at the end of the first
 382. session, when I sort of realized sort of, I think that it was going
 383. to be more challenging than I thought, yeah (laughs). And I think
 384. there was one particular group member who erm, she wasn't
 385. disruptive I wouldn't say go so far as to say that but she was
 386. quite, well what's in it for me, which is a fair enough question,
 387. but was more erm interested in erm what skills she was going
 388. to, how is this going to get me a job, sort of thing and I think she
 389. really kind of erm came through the process and she seems
 390. completely different sort of half way through towards the end,
 391. she as much more erm open and wasn't so obsessed, she
 392. wasn't so obsessed you know with getting a qualification,
 393. because she wasn't going to get a qualification at the end of it
 394. that wasn't the point, erm so that was good. I think perhaps it
 395. would have been good to have perhaps done some lead in
 396. sessions, so there was more of a chance for them to get to know
 397. me, because I was just a stranger coming in, you know and I
 398. wasn't expecting them to be ... they were going to be telling me
 399. quite personal stories and they didn't know who I was, I didn't
 400. know who they were erm
 401. 28.48

Feelings of responsibility –
 good experience and making
 something happen

Relevance of a good
 experience – process – but
 also recognition of the
 challenge of working with the
 group

Recognition that members of
 the group wanting different
 things out of the session –
 skills

Having a lead – staff
 member – somebody
 who knows the group –
 makes sense of it with

Awkward nature of
 knowing people's
 personal stories –
 without knowing them

402. R – I mean I knew some of them but not all of them .. so

403. A – so maybe even two or three taster sessions where we met
404. in a café and had a cup of tea or did some taster workshops at
405. the museum or at the Angelou or something like that erm you
406. know to sort of break them in and so we could get to know each
407. other erm perhaps would have been useful erm. There was one
408. group member who knew exactly ... she had, she had the title
409. and everything.

410. R – laughs

411. A - She knew exactly what she wanted to do and what it was
412. going to be erm and that's quite difficult to manage sometimes
413. when someone does have a set idea, which can be great in one
414. sense but can then limit them to be more open erm and I think
415. we've talked about this before I think the fact that they all
416. decided to tell their stories about their experiences of domestic
417. violence when I don't think we ever said right we want a story
418. about domestic violence. I think we'd used the words tell us
419. about, you know, you might want to, you know do something
420. about your life experiences erm which could have been
421. anything, so I thought that was quite interesting, erm and
422. perhaps just more erm more guidance and direction erm from
423. the workers at the Angelou as to what they were expecting and
424. how they wanted to use the stories because I think erm it wasn't
425. until later on when we, we showed the stories to one of the
426. workers that erm there were sort of obviously issues with
427. confidentiality because that I wanted to ... when I say I didn't
428. care, I do care, but when I say I didn't really care what
429. happened to the stories because as I have said before, for me
430. it's all about the process, if we never showed these stories to
431. anybody I wasn't concerned because not every project that we
432. do has to result in a sort of exhibition or display a public display,
433. it's being involved with the museum, finding out more about the
434. museum and finding out about what sort of facilities there are to

Importance of getting
to know – rather than
not know and be a
stranger

Specific idea –
somebody wanted to
focus on – limit of this

So openness – in this
situation – encouraged
– reflection on DV – as
this is the thing that is
most common to the
group – the thing that
binds them together

Uncertainty of issues –
what it was the digital
storytelling process
was dealing with –
could it do harm –
issues of
confidentiality –

She was sometimes
concerned though as she
made sure she had copies
and consent to store and
show them to staff in the
museum as part of training –
interesting – she appears to
want to seem quite relaxed
about the stories – but there
was a lot of work went into
getting these specifically
ready for exhibition
formatting

435. offer ... erm. But I think you know what they're having to deal
436. with on a daily basis can be so chaotic that with the best will in
437. the world, I mean erm Samiya the worker, you know had
438. said nearly every week, oh I'll be at the next session or you
439. know I'll come to the start or I'll come to the end and it never
440. happened.

Recognition that the
centre can be chaotic
because of what they
are working on

441. R – Yeah, yeah

442. A -erm, which is understandable because you know at the end
443. of the day erm if somebody comes in and she's just left her
444. husband or whatever, or if she's facing deportation or whatever,
445. then that of course takes priority over any workshop, but yeah
446. just a little bit more support would have been good I think.

Recognition of other
significant things that
are happening at the
centre – workshop not
a priority – but the
importance of support
– value of this

447. 31.58

448. R – definitely I often felt like that with them, but then I kind of
449. learnt that they do intend to come but ...

450. A – because it was just knowing we, because you know
451. sometimes erm particularly the woman I was talking you about
452. before, she was quite difficult in the first session. I remember a
453. couple of times, she tried to talk to us erm about things that
454. were happening to her and it was just not feeling able to support
455. her in the right way, because I didn't ... I've not got a erm social
456. work background or anything you know and that's why we
457. always try as much as possible to work in partnership with
458. workers, because we're not social workers, but we need to know
459. how to work with so many different groups of people, but we still
460. don't know the ins and outs of you know why you know
461. somebody and this isn't the first time it's happened and it
462. certainly won't be the last time but I think just erm having that
463. knowledge of where to direct her or what sort of thing to say to
464. her that wouldn't then turn into a counseling session which
465. you're not qualified to give.

Feelings of discomfort
not knowing if she's
doing the right thing –
not being a social
worker – not having
those skills to support
people – continuity –
importance of
partnership working

Other kinds of
support that
would've been
useful

466. R – yeah yeah, because that was particularly ... that was often
467. quite awkward wasn't it?

468. A – I mean I don't know whether she felt, I don't know whether
469. she felt more comfortable talking with us and this was me trying
470. to make sense of it, because she kind of used to wait until
471. everyone had left

472. R – Or would come early ...

473. A – Or would come early and I didn't know whether it was
474. because she knew that you were at the university and I'd been
475. to university and I was working at a museum that she kind of felt
476. more of an equal with us, because of her background and past
477. history, I don't know whether she felt more comfortable I don't
478. know I don't know why it was or what she was wanting us to say
479. or do erm ... and all I could sort of suggest to her really was to
480. speak to the guys at the Angelou ...

481. R – (umm)

482. A – because I don't know her background, I don't know her
483. situation, that she's in or she'd come from and what support
484. she's been offered so far, so I didn't then want to then go and
485. contradict what she's been advised by Angelou and go well if
486. you want to volunteer at the museum, you know I can ... if she's
487. not ready for that.

488. R – yeah, yeah ... was there ... I mean how did you ... when,
489. when the women started telling their stories either just through
490. writing them or when they told them and then they were
491. recorded and whatever how did that, how did that make you feel
492. that when you first started?

493. 34.47

494. A – I knew you were going to ask me that, how did you feel?

Recognition –
uncomfortable nature
of not knowing –
uncertainty – did she
feel more comfortable
talking to us – more
than others?

Alice questions –
did one of the
group identify
with us –
because of our
pasts – education
etc

Sense of not knowing –
I too could empathise
with this – not knowing
what was best – advise
or not?

495. R – How did you feel? (laugh) you can eat the piece of
496. chocolate cake first.
497. We'll take a short intermittent break.

498. A – I mean obviously I know that domestic violence happens,
499. but I did find it quite upsetting to know that ... when you look at
500. them and when they started telling you stories of you know, my
501. my face was covered with bruises and trying to imagine, trying
502. to be in their shoes, trying to imagine that happening to me, I felt
503. quite, not angry, well yeah maybe angry, yeah more just upset
504. that somebody could do that to another human being erm ...
505. and but also how incredible they are to have been at where they all
506. are now. I kind of think if that ever happened to me I I I wouldn't
507. put up with it, but then till it happens to you, you don't know how
508. you're going to react, if my husband ever laid a finger on me, I'd
509. chuck him out, I'd be out of the door you know bla bla, but I think
510. until you're in that situation you're never going to know how
511. you're going to react. It's kind of like if a burglar breaks into your
512. house and you've got a knife under your bed would you really
513. stab him. Until you're in that situation you don't know what's
514. going to happen erm so yeah I did find that quite difficult and
515. you know fortunately a colleague of mine at the museum heads
516. up the outreach team and we're quite good friends outside of
517. work, both with our children erm so I found it quite useful in
518. talking to her about it and erm it's just making sure you've got
519. those mechanisms in place back at the museum. We do have a
520. ... we do have a protection policy for vulnerable adults, young
521. children, children and young people. There is a procedure if they
522. suspect anything if somebody says something to you. It
523. happened on the previous project with the people with dementia
524. that through the story circles some quite serious disclosures of
525. abuse were revealed and you know, I just had to rely on the
526. workers following their procedures, but it ... I just made sure that
527. my manager knew that these disclosures had been made in the
528. session, so that if there were any repercussions. I mean this

Interesting empathic
move – stepping in
shoes – conflict in
feeling angry / upset –
cycles through how she
feels – me - another
Feelings of amazement
– where they are all at
now – impressed –
despite what has
happened to them

Back putting herself in
their shoes – I wouldn't
put up with it. This also
sounds like another
voice – she does a bla,
bla – kind of like –
that's what most
people say.

She switches to a more
formal language –
vulnerable adults –
protection policies –
procedures.

Why was it useful
talking to colleague
about it? Vulnerability –
listening to those
stories – she infers the
emotional difficulty –
not knowing – shifts in
perspectives in what
she describes
Seems like protection,
policies and
procedures – important
in case there are any
disclosures – not sure I
understand what
repercussions – for
them as practitioners /
organisation /
individual who has
disclosed – person
implicated?
Uncertainty of the

529. abuse would have happened you know 50 or 60 years ago, but
530. you hear of cases coming up all the time of people being
531. investigated much later on so I just wanted to make sure that
532. people knew that I knew and that I'd reported it erm, so it's just
533. making sure you have the right things in place at the museum I
534. think erm and that's why I kind of had the attitude of well if they
535. don't want to show their stories to anybody that's fine because
536. they were very personal.

537. 38.27
538. R – There's also that thing where some of them chose pictures
539. that were quite personal and some of them didn't quite
540. purposefully so there is that issue aswell.

541. A – I think yeah ... I was going to say something and its just
542. gone out of my head

543. R – sorry I

544. A – no no no it's fine I thought of it as you were talking but then
545. it went.

546. R – (Laugh)

547. A – but on that note I'm going to pop to the toilet.

548. R – Do you want to take this with you? (Laughs)

549. A – Don't minute that

550. 39.11

551. A – obviously not that important

552. R – (Laughing) Obviously a lie

By this I think she
means policies –
making sure the right
things are in place.

But she did want the
videos to be part of the
archive – even with
faces blurred out

553. A – yeah made it up

554. R – Ok so I wasn't there at the session where you showed them

555. to, all of the women came to that?

556. A – everyone all but one I think, no, no they all came in dribs

557. and drabs, that's why I thought just one ...

558. R – yeah yeah erm so Samiya was there at that, Rosie?

559. A – just Samiya

560. R – so what was what kinds of things did you discuss at the

561. session.

562. A – I think this is where more direction from the Angelou would

563. have been useful erm because I felt really bad for one of the

564. women because she'd told ... yeah the story wasn't quite

565. finished and she'd used, she wanted to use images of

566. Samiya as a ... because she saw her as a strong woman

567. erm and because the story wasn't quite finished it didn't quite

568. flow properly, but I think the worker was perhaps maybe a little

569. over critical of the structure and the content of the story and was

570. making suggestions which were, which is fine, but I felt they

571. were perhaps being a little bit too critical erm when you have to

572. remember that you know the group had never sort of done

573. anything like this before I don't think and the story wasn't quite

574. finished but was ma... and it's fine, we you know as part of the

575. process you do encourage constructive criticism and it was

576. constructive criticism, but I think it just could have been done

577. slightly more sensitively because she'd obviously been working

578. quite hard on this project working on her story for however many

579. number of weeks erm and maybe she didn't think anything of it

580. and thought it was fine, but I felt bad, I felt bad erm so that's

581. when I sort of came back at the end of the Friday session with

582. the group before Christmas to work with her to sort out, you

Places some
responsibility – lack of
direction from AC

Feeling bad – for the woman
that had been involved –
story not quite finished -
responsibility

Others being critical – then
this is fine – flitting between
knowing that being critical is
part of the point of group
reflection – but also feeling
like the Centre staff had
been over critical – not
appropriate for the process.

These points of clarity – very
adamant – not using particular
photographs – another option she
thinks – she becomes more
tentative – perhaps – could've
been.

583. know, to sort out the story which she was happy with and I think
584. once she knew, I think she was very adamant that she didn't
585. want to use any images of herself or her children, erm so
586. perhaps she was using images that perhaps were, that could
587. have been used better or erm, yeah we could have sourced
588. different images for her to use erm because you know, what
589. Samiya was saying was right, you know images of
590. Samiya were coming up erm, which made it ... which didn't
591. quite work in the context of what the audio was saying. And at
592. times you know, you could mistake erm Samiya for the
593. author, the author of the story. So that's fine but erm so yeah, so
594. she knew that other members, once she'd realized I think that
595. other members of the group had used personal stories and that
596. they could

597. R – personal images?

598. A – and you know we could sort out the confidentiality in terms
599. of fake names and blurred images out – so I think once she'd
600. sort of realized that, you know even though I'd sort of mentioned
601. it a few times ...

602. R – yeah yeah

603. A – it doesn't always, I think to experience it, you don't always
604. know what that means erm, I think she felt better about using
605. personal images so now the story flows much, much better.

606. 43.15

607. R – I remember her having those photographs and I said to her
608. have you asked Samiya about these and she said, yeah,
609. yeah I've asked Samiya about these and she might have
610. done, but there is such a difference isn't there between that kind
611. of distinction between seeing the pictures with the audio and I
612. know exactly which pictures erm and you know that

Disjuncture was felt between
audio and images in relation
to misidentification –
interesting though – this
would only happen if you
knew Samiya and Saeeda.

Finding out through looking
at what others were doing –
seeing other possibilities

I think here she is describing
the experience of the words
with images – making the
digital story – seeing it –
how something flows - story

613. unfortunately that particular woman was also helping other
 614. women aswell which is why probably hers didn't ...

615. A – yeah, she was acting as a translator, pretty much for other
 616. members of the group, so yeah exactly. I think the reason why
 617. her story wasn't as polished as the others were because she
 618. was helping everyone else.

619. R – exactly, and the others

620. A – and she hadn't had the time

621. R – yeah

622. A – and yeah, I think yeah

623. R – yeah so and some of them had also because they had left it
 624. so late, you know we'd had to do quite a lot of the work of the
 625. producing.

626. A – it brings up the question of to what extent does the
 627. practitioner or the staff member or the worker intervene in the
 628. creative content, the production of the story, erm I mean we do
 629. talk about it being a participant led process but to what extent
 630. and to what point should you intervene and go I really don't think
 631. that image works or erm you know, so if she was happy, you
 632. know, but then it's that idea of informed knowledge isn't it, if she
 633. was happy with what she had originally produced

634. R – yeah, yeah

635. A – should we have just left it at that, or but then, I don't know.

636. R – Yeah – It is ... do you remember she was quite harsh with Z

637. A – (laughs) done it again

Raising the question of who
 else is involved and who
 intervenes – informed
 knowledge – happy the way
 something has been
 produced – contradiction in
 calling it participant led –
 different forms of
 participation and support

638. R – done it again, wasn't she with you know

639. A – cut it, cut it

640. R – and you know it was, she was completely right and I didn't
641. feel like I could do that because it, kind of I felt like she needed
642. to go through it, telling it, read it a few times and edit it herself,
643. with and you know that worked out OK, but whereas some of the
644. women, you know me and Samiya did the editing because
645. there was just no way they were going to get it finished in the
646. time that was available erm so I'm going to talk to them about
647. that. I just wonder whether for some of them, the process was
648. more important than other parts ... some of the other parts you
649. know. I don't know whether for some of them the editing is
650. important or whether it is just the challenge

651. A – or being together as a group or telling a story

652. R – yeah, erm I mean in terms of the ... do you feel like the
653. technology is suitable for those means in a digital storytelling
654. process?

655. A – as in producing the

656. R – I mean in that particular context

657. A - when you're producing a digital story, as we identified at the
658. beginning, or just general storytelling digitally.

659. R – erm just in the process of using it, using the mac book,
660. using iMovie and iPhoto and using the microphone, is there, do
661. you think it works for that, in the way that it's used generally for
662. that context.

663. A – I think it works, I think it opens up knowledge of new

664. technology that perhaps some of them might not be familiar with
665. or have used before, er but I think people don't always have
666. access to that sort of technology, so they may although they
667. may have taken part in this process, is the barrier of I don't know
668. finances of being able to afford to buy not just a mac book, but
669. any sort of PC or laptop, or anything like that will prevent them
670. from doing it again, erm I don't know possibly, I think it's
671. something that we've, hopefully if the funding comes through
672. working with a group of young people from the Roma community
673. out in the West End in partnership with Children North East, as a
674. sort of follow on to the child poverty work that they've been
675. doing, now I know for a fact that they're not going to even
676. probably have PC laptops or a computer at home, that's why
677. we've spent a long time in the library erm where there is access
678. to computers and laptops and things.

The importance of thinking of access as
physically being able to access
something – she doesn't talk about the
conceptual or intellectual barriers -

Question of who the technology is for –
democratic – but expensive – costs

679. 49.38
680. R – They already spend a lot of time at the library or?

681. A – yeah – well, yes, though off the record there are some
682. issues with some of the staff at the library allowing them to use
683. some of the machines anyway erm, so no I don't know I think, I
684. was thinking about this on the walk to work this morning and
685. thinking you know, because we talk about this idea of citizen led,
686. participant led influence over the creation of new technology, but
687. who are these citizens that we're talking about and realistically
688. in the real world do people have easy access to technology

689. R – yeah, it depends what kind of level

690. A – I mean I work full time and I haven't got an iPad, I'd love an
691. iPad, but I've got a two and a half year old, I've got a mortgage
692. to pay. I've not got the disposable income, so if I can't afford to
693. have one what about other people, so I think perhaps more
694. needs to be done to make technology more accessible to
695. everybody because I don't think it is at the minute.

696. R – probably not (laughs) maybe, maybe in some sectors it is ...

697. A – So I think it can, it can work it's whether it's then
698. sustainable, but you're then maybe digital storytelling, because
699. they didn't take as much of an active role in the production of it,
700. maybe a different erm, maybe if it was more about the
701. storytelling ... then it could have worked better because it was
702. quite labour intensive for you and I to actually produce these
703. finished things in the end of which, I think they all look really
704. good, erm they've all been told in a way that they wanted their
705. stories to be told, but it, there was much more post production
706. time on our part to get them there. Perhaps I should have laid
707. the door down, no you are all sitting and finishing this and you'll
708. do it yourself.

709. R (laughs)

710. A – yeah I don't know

711. R – But then I think that's part of .. if you've got this is my feeling
712. anyway, if you've got a machine that does a very particular set
713. of things, as soon as you take it out of where it is usually used
714. the question is if people actually see the same way as the
715. computer allows you to see in a way. Just because things like
716. iMovie and iPhoto are structured on traditional photo editing and
717. video editing and before that film editing, so it's whether that's,
718. yeah, I don't think, I don't know the answer really, but my feeling
719. is that often it isn't generic enough to be used but then there is a
720. skill element in learning how to use it and understanding the
721. foibles, and you know recognizing that it isn't a perfect bit of
722. software.

723. A – no it's not at all

724. R – recognizing that it's not a perfect machine and that

Can be democratic – hope – but issues
of sustainability – not taking an active
role in production – value then in
storytelling
Labour intensive to finish the stories off-
post production – to finish them off

725. sometimes isn't necessarily clear or apparent because it is a
726. sort of commercial thing. So anyway, I think that's it, that was
727. great. I don't think there are any other questions.

728. A – is that all you need from me?

729. R – Is that all you need? You've bled me dry (laughs) I guess
730. there is one, I always like to ask this question was there any
731. surprises in the process, were there any points where you were
732. kind of points of surprise or points of reflection that made you go
733. kind of ooh, or excited about something that someone did or
734. said or made or ...

735. A – I think sandwiches were particularly good and your tea
736. making skills

737. R – They got better

738. A – They got better that surprised me

739. R – The sandwiches?

740. A – the wraps, yes

741. R – Ooh the wraps yes

742. A – sounds very British doesn't it, the sandwiches – erm I think
743. just

744. R – the rolls

745. 54.38
746. A – how the, how welcoming and open the women were and
747. how yeah, just how nice they were to me when they didn't know
748. me, they didn't know who I was erm, and I think Z (gasp)

749. R – (laughs) it's really hard isn't it?

750. A – I'll have to give you the fake names that they've given me
751. and copy this over Zahrah erm at the end of the last session I
752. think when she said well if you ever do anything like this again I
753. want to do it let me know sort of thing because I thought are
754. they just doing this because they feel that they have to, because
755. you know it had been sorted out or whatever, but that kind of
756. surprised me at the end actually when she said that erm and
757. how open they were to letting me show their original stories to
758. my team, nowhere wider, but you know I thought they might not
759. let me do that but they did and that was fine erm but I think
760. actually I was talking to Pete about it, when I met him last week
761. or whenever it was about anonymity and using their voice and
762. how that they didn't think that they'd be recognised by the sound
763. of their voice, whereas I remember watching, you know when
764. you listen to a DJ on the radio erm you know who it is as soon
765. as you turn the radio on you know who it is, so I found that quite
766. surprising and as you know Pete said you know did they realize,
767. did they understand, and I said well I think so

768. R – yeah

769. A – you know I did sort of say to them a few times, you know,
770. you don't have to read out your stories, we can get somebody
771. else to read your script, we can give you fake names, we can
772. blur your images out, erm and obviously a lot of them did have
773. their stories read out, I don't think for anonymity reasons I think
774. it was more because they didn't want to read them.

775. R – They just didn't want to read them

776. A – so I did find that quite

777. R – but then ... this is my train of thought, this might, but I
778. watched The Artist, the film The Artist, which is a very

779. interesting film to watch in relation to what we've just been
780. doing. So I'm not going to give you the punch line, but if you get
781. the chance watch that and then think about that sort of the voice
782. thing, erm because there might be something to do with, it might
783. be recognizable if they were speaking in Urdu and not if they're
784. speaking in English.

785. A – because one of the, when I pressed record her voice just
786. completely changed.

787. R – yeah yeah I remember you saying that

788. A – so yeah

789. R – So I've talked to Pete about that, the telephone voice and
790. you know

791. A – it was sort of like this is my Queen's English voice

792. R – yeah, yeah, yeah, so there's probably something in the
793. performative that's probably different to their maybe Urdu
794. vernacular, maybe I don't know. I mean this was something that
795. I, through sort of watching that film and through watching or just
796. kind of thinking more about and the process that I went through
797. in reading their stories and thinking about what that actually
798. meant for me to do that and how conflicted I felt in doing that,
799. but also that thing I had to do by treating it as a third person, you
800. know you're sort of then sort of pretending it was a sort of
801. fairytale, or pretending it was like, pretending I was like a news
802. reader or pretending I was a Radio 4, you know those sorts of
803. things that then erm sort of for me gave me meaning and insight
804. into why it might not be perceived as their voice in that sense, so

805. A – interesting

806. R – so yeah there are kind of interesting things about anonymity

807. and yeah and the sort of and yeah what gets produced, at the
808. end.

809. 59.17
810. R – did they talk about at all about, I've got two more questions
811. actually, about what they want to do with them now or ... do they
812. want copies?

813. A Yeah, they want copies of the original, which I'm going to
814. burn for them, probably tomorrow now.

815. R – did they talk about what they might want to do with those or
816. who they might want to show them to

817. A – er no I just think probably just that they've agreed for them
818. to be shown to other women from the Saheli group, but not the
819. wider Angelou group, because I think from what I gathered, just
820. because you go to the Angelou it doesn't mean you know who's
821. in the Saheli group and who isn't unless it is kind of discussed,
822. erm so they didn't want them shown to anyone but the Saheli
823. group.

824. R – yeah, yeah

825. A – I think Zahrah wanted them, wanted copies to sort of show
826. or just to keep I think, but no, they didn't really say what they
827. were going to do with them, erm and I was going to show them
828. the public ones before they were accessioned, to make sure
829. they're blurred and I've done everything that they wanted me to
830. do to them.

831. R – yeah, and so are the Angelou having a copy?

832. A - I believe so

833. R – is it a private copy or

834. A – I'm going to give them a copy of both because they've
835. agreed that the Saheli group can see the private versions

836. R – right yep, because I was trying to explain this to Pete, and
837. he said, Oh this makes sense you've been really vague about
838. this and I was like well yeah, because it's actually quite
839. complicated and I haven't seen you for a month to explain this.

840. A – so yes they're going to get a copy of the private version and
841. a copy of the public version. The copyright form that they've
842. signed only assigns Copyright to TWAM, so I'm going to have to
843. erm make it clear to Angelou that it's up to them to sort out their
844. own copyright. Whether that's a verbal agreement or whether
845. they need something written down I don't know what their
846. procedures are.
847. R – yeah yeah

848. A – Then I think, but this is a big and maybe I've been thinking
849. about this too much, I've always had this slight concern, I was
850. talking to you before, the digital storytelling process being
851. embedded in the organisation, because my concern is that
852. when I'm long gone, will people, if people don't understand the
853. process that somebody's gone through and the background that
854. somebody comes from erm, sto... you know, I worry and maybe
855. I over worry, that stories might be shown or used in the wrong
856. way, if people don't, if collections management records aren't
857. kept up to date, or people don't bother reading them and they
858. just burn copies off the network erm so, just to stop any risk of
859. ... because I've got a copy of the private version and really once
860. I've shown the stories to the team, I don't really need to keep
861. them and the public versions are going to be accessioned so we
862. don't run any risk of the private version being shown.

863. R – ever being released

864. A – in a public setting, but half of me, I can't bring myself to
865. delete the private versions, but I haven't got the right to show
866. them anywhere, but it's like – I can't do it, but I'm going to have
867. to do it at some point.

868. R – I know well I was ...

869. A – probably before the end of March and I'm going to have to
870. psyche myself up and just make sure that you know, because
871. what happens if the group ever want extra copies and what if the
872. Angelou either lose their copy or the copy gets corrupted erm,
873. so yeah I don't know what to do about that.

874. R – so is that because, so yeah, what is that about? Why do you
875. think it's so ...

876. A – that I don't want to delete them?

877. R – so yeah I understand why you don't want to delete them, but
878. why do you think it's important for them to still have that ability to
879. copy or be able to have the public and private versions.

880. A – I think if they, I think it's because it's something they've
881. produced and they should be proud of what they've produced
882. and if they ever wanted to watch it or show it to anybody, and if
883. the DVDs that they have get scratched or whatever then, it's a
884. part of them and they should have a right to it I guess.

885. R – So what did, sorry

886. A – it's alright I wasn't going to say anything else

887. R – (laughs) erm so what did your team - when you showed it to
888. them?

889. A – I've not showed them yet. I was meant to show them at the

890. next outreach team meeting, but it turns out that I can't go
891. because it turns out it's the same time as the WEA project, so
892. it's great, I'm not going to be at any outreach meetings between
893. now and the end of March, because it cla... there are various
894. things that clash with them, erm so I was just kind of wanting to
895. show them to the group as a sort of case study, lessons learned,
896. reflection thing because I don't, you know, I don't think, we've
897. not done an awful lot of work in this field, you know we've done,
898. someone who used to work with us, now no longer worked with
899. Aquiler in Gateshead, which I think I don't know whether it's
900. domestic violence only, it's a women's support for homeless
901. shelter sort of thing, but we haven't done an awful lot of work in
902. this area to come to show them, examples of projects working
903. with a group like this, but also to discuss some of the things that
904. we've talked about today that perhaps some people haven't
905. thought about, or if they were ever going to do a project, with
906. another similar group, things to bear in mind, like don't do that
907. again or do do this again.

908. 1.05.57
909. R – I mean how much of it, how much of it do you think is
910. understandable by telling people or is part of it that people
911. almost like you're talking about the digital storytelling process,
912. do you think there is a difference between people kind of
913. understanding or being told oh well these are the implications,
914. there are you know, but then when they go out and do it.

915. A – I know what you're trying to say, yeah yeah, like it's one
916. thing being told it's another actually practically experiencing it
917. and I think that's what I mean by going back to the whole, I don't
918. quite think the process is quite embedded within the
919. organisation because there are too few of us, who really
920. understand the process and even those people that who have
921. gone through the process don't either haven't experienced every
922. single thing that you could possibly experience with digital
923. storytelling or perhaps don't get certain parts of it, so yeah,

Limited group of people who have
worked with the process – experienced
at doing it

924. exactly exactly that. It's one thing knowing that it takes four days
925. worth of time erm really it's much more than that, but when
926. people hear that, four days, they say oh my god how long, that's
927. ridiculous, but it's like it takes time and if you can't, and this was
928. a big thing that we had with the er Culture Shock, getting people
929. on board to deliver the training so obviously and if you don't do
930. the training you can't deliver the projects because you don't
931. know how to do it and people were going well I can't commit to
932. four days training you know, but I really want to do this project. If
933. you can't commit to the training you can't commit to the project,
934. because that's how long it takes to deliver a project with
935. somebody, it's not a quick fix, you know we did run workshops in
936. a day, but that was with goodness knows how many members of
937. staff on board to take them through the process, but even then it
938. was a fairly superficial engagement because people were only
939. ever together for a day and they wouldn't necessarily work
940. together in a group in the way that we have with the Angelou.
941. And it goes back to what Pip was saying in her presentation at
942. the conference you know people keep going can we do it in
943. three days, can we do it in two days, can we do it in an hour,
944. can we do it in half an hour and I think you know Coming out
945. you can make things on your mobile phone ... but it's not about
946. the production of the story it's about everything that we've talked
947. about, about being together as a group, so yeah I agree that just
948. because they're told doesn't mean it'll go in until they're actually
949. there on the front line, facing an issue.

950. R - yeah, yeah that you're having to sort of work with ...
951. negotiate around. So it's been .. in the digital portraits that I did
952. after that, erm two of the women, whose names we keep saying,
953. they interestingly worked together and they did a thing on
954. friendship and their friendship, erm they basically just replicated
955. a similar process in a way, but they sort of worked together and
956. wrote a sort of number of sentences about their friendship and I
957. asked them questions and they wrote a few more and then they
958. kind of just handed it to me and just went you finish it. It was

959. kind of really interesting because they kind of like had all the
960. pieces and I don't know why they just kind of went you finish it,
961. but I think sometimes when you're in it, you can't really see,
962. maybe that overview, I think they said something about you can
963. kind of tell us about what you think about our relationship,
964. because it's easier for you because you can kind of see it and
965. we're sort of in it. So there's that kind of really interesting that
966. they and I think maybe they that is you'll be better at it and you
967. know there's something about that as well, but I just yeah, you
968. know something about their and you know when they've given
969. me all these photographs they've got these two separate photo
970. albums with pretty much the same photographs, but taken you
971. know of each other, so they gave me these photographs and
972. they all got scanned and of course they all got jumbled up and
973. then I almost had to piece them back together again as a
974. complete picture in a way, it was really interesting, but I think the
975. digital storytelling process, I think they wrote some fantastic
976. sentences about their relationship and what it meant to them
977. and I just don't think they would have been able to do that
978. before that process took place, you know what I mean, it's I kind
979. of think it has given them something, this one that they have
980. done it only about a minute long, you know it's not very
981. complicated, I don't know whether there's something about, they
982. said to me they don't want to so it about the past, because
983. we've done that now, there was almost a sense where by doing
984. the digital story they'd put something to bed, so obviously I'm
985. going to talk to them about that, but obviously this is just my take
986. on it, but yeah erm it is quite interesting how it might function in
987. that way.

988. 1.12.24

989. A – I mean maybe it's, I don't want to sound patronizing or
990. anything, maybe it's a confidence thing that they see or they
991. saw me and they see you as an expert and that they can't or
992. they could never aspire to, we're better at it than them, because

993. we've been doing it for longer

994. R - so I'm sure there is part of that aswell erm and how you get
995. around that as an issue is quite tricky

996. A - yeah

997. R - especially when you come with a mac and you know it's all
998. like, even though I know some of them wouldn't necessarily say
999. that but there's all that kind of potential of da da!

1000. A - yeah off you go

1001. R - but I think it was quite interesting the way they sort of, so
1002. yeah so the portraits were slightly different, one of the women
1003. has done this amazing little video about, just about kind of
1004. transformation really

1005. A - OK

1006. R - but it just doesn't have any pictures of her or anything like
1007. that and it doesn't have any words or anything like that so, but I
1008. think there's a kind of, there's another way in which the digital
1009. stories functions in the way that the women talk to one another
1010. or talk to me, so you know there is something that happens as
1011. part of that process.

1012. A - like relationship building

1013. R - and part of the telling it to somebody

1014. A - and maybe that's the point, not like a little gang or a little
1015. clik, we've gone through that process together and you know
1016. what I'm talking about.

1017. R - so there was a really interesting thing a few weeks ago,

1018. where as part of the digital portraits thing we were doing the
1019. sewing class and she had a headache and she didn't want to do
1020. it and so she got her pictures that she'd pulled together for her
1021. portrait and she started making up this collage and she was just
1022. kind of cutting pictures up and she had pictures she had one of
1023. the pictures of the refuge, but it has no people in it at all and
1024. she, somebody picked up the picture and said ooh that's a nice
1025. place, is that where you live and she said yes and then looked at
1026. me and erm it was a kind of look that

1027. A – and was this one of the women from the digital storytelling?

1028. R – so yes this was a woman from the digital storytelling and the
1029. woman that picked up a picture said is this your house it looks
1030. really nice, she wasn't from the digital storytelling group and so
1031. this woman said yes and then gave me a look

1032. A – and then gave you a look to let you know

1033. R – it was kind of like she said yes and it was kind of like we
1034. both looked at one another, because we knew it wasn't erm and
1035. then it was like that thing of like when you've got a secret and
1036. you know you're sort of bound in some way.

1037. A – yeah that's really interesting

1038. R – and you don't need to say anything and you know what kind
1039. of look it is don't you? And it's stuff like, nobody else would know
1040. what that meant and it was kind of really, I don't know I'm not
1041. describing it particularly well

1042. A – No I know what you mean

1043. R – it's a kind of weird because you're sort of bound.

1044. A – it's like when you hear a bit of gossip from work way before

1045. somebody else and then that person then says it and you've
1046. shared that. Being there when you hear something and two of
1047. you know it and somebody finds out much later and you kind of
1048. exchange looks.
1049. R – it's the kind of like you know something and you can't give a
1050. look that let's everybody else know

1051. A – but the person that you've looked at knows what they are
1052. looking at them for

1053. R – yes, yes

1054. A (laughs) There's a whole research thing on the art of looking

1055. R – the look, the secret look, so yeah there's this thing about
1056. this binding in a way, that you get from knowing what's
1057. happened.

1058. A – so that's kind of a confidence in, that obviously
1059. demonstrates that they're comfortable and happy in your
1060. company I guess.

1061. R – I guess so, I mean I don't know that look might have been

1062. A – don't say anything

1063. R – yeah yeah, but I think you kind of know when a look comes
1064. across the room don't you.

1065. A – like my Missus Goggins look when I look across the room
1066. over my glasses or the Eddy Izzard.

1067. R – yeah she didn't do that – right I'm going to stop the
1068. discussion now so thank you very much.

Values & Barriers

Comments taken from Alice, Rosie, Samiya, myself and volunteers, Saeeda, Zahrah, Nazlee, Huzna, Huma and Faleeha in black. These were presented back to the group to encourage additional feedback and reflection on different perspectives. Staff perspectives are in green, volunteers in pink.

The sessions provided time for the women and the facilitators to get to know each others' histories, build trust, relax and have fun.

Rosie & Samiya agreed with this
Huzna, Nazlee, Zahrah & Saeeda agreed - being together during the sessions was important - particularly Nazlee emphasised this.

In the sessions the women were encouraged to express and share emotions, transitions and life experiences previously not discussed in groups.

Both Samiya & Rosie Agreed, but Rosie questioned what had previously not been discussed - she suggested being clearer about that, so I have added 'in groups' in response to what Samiya discussed with me after Rosie had gone

Videos were used to share difficult and relaxing experiences with others at home and online.

Rosie disagreed with this - but Samiya agreed that Nazlee had done this with her family and this was a positive thing. She thought that this might be good for the other women to do in the future.
Nazlee also discussed how this had been positive to share with her family things she had found difficult to discuss in the past.

Technology has democratic potential that could be used by the centre to communicate widely about their work.

Rosie pointed out that this was only possible if process was also democratic and equal - technology wasn't enough.

The process highlighted a number of assumptions made by the facilitators about women's expertise and access to equipment.

Rosie didn't understand this statement so I explained and re-worded to make it clearer that me and Alice had both made assumptions about the levels of expertise and access to equipment prior to engaging with the women. Rosie agreed that this would be useful to consider in the future.

Lack of shared understanding of what would happen with the videos.

Need for group to familiarise with equipment and a desire to learn new skills.

Saeeda & Zahrah both described how they felt that they wanted to learn new skills with the technology, but didn't feel they had enough time to use the equipment that had been brought to the sessions.

Technology used was of high standard but required a lot of skill to use.

Saaeda & Zahrah - also felt this was important - enjoyed using new technology that was more advanced, but then struggled to use it because of the lack of time they had.

Nazlee and Huzna described how they were less concerned with the technology, more on being able to spend time together in the group.

Anonymity and what this meant practically across the different institutions and women's expectations was complicated to manage.

All volunteers agreed that this was a challenge in the workshops but felt this was sorted out eventually and they felt happy how this had been resolved.

Some translation help needed.

Rosie & Samiya agreed, but thought this was best done within the group rather than bringing another worker into the sessions.

All volunteers agreed that this was a good idea but also wanted to make sure they trusted the person - they agreed that most of the time they were happy for them to do this between themselves and support one another

Better finished products from digital storytelling expected.

Rosie argued women had no expectations from technology

Saeeda, Zahrah said they wanted to produce something that felt slicker and with music

Nazlee and Huzna were happy with what they produced and valued the support and time from facilitator expertise as they would not have ordinarily taken part and achieved what they did.

Confusion over what women were expected to do with the portraits.

Saaeda said she felt very confused by what she was asked to do with the portrait sessions at first with the bag and the tokens. Zahrah agreed, but Nazlee and Huzna described how they enjoyed using the bags to get ideas and had kept them. Nazlee described them as her bag of diamonds.

Uncertainty about how safe storage of videos at centre should be done.

Rosie suggested this was never an issue since digital files were stored on a secure server and physical files locked away.

Emotional support needed for some of the women.

Samiya agreed with this and said that some of the women would come to them after the sessions for support.

Different literacies - English, media, technical - meant working with women individually not always as a group.

Rosie agreed that this was necessary too.

Nazlee felt that this was important - but also working in groups socially was important too - being able to do both.

Appendix B

(Accompanies Chapter 7)

Design Concepts: Photo-threads, Pict-Chair & Tea-Time-Table

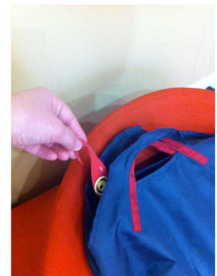
Photo-threads

Photo-threads is a set of embroidery frames, with fabrics and small display screens displayed on a wall. The screens display the patterns on the fabrics, until a piece of jewelry, containing RFID is passed over the screen and activates a short sequence of images, before returning to the pattern of the fabric.



Pict-chair

The pict-chair includes a number of seats that when sat on prompt a small projection showing a slide-show animation of images associated with that person. The images appear and fade over time across different areas of the wall while someone is sat down. If more than one individual was sat on the seat, the projection would show only images that had been chosen for public use on a sliding scale of privacy. Images are triggered by combining both the active use of an RFID on a key ring and a pressure sensor on the seat.



Tea-time-table

The tea-time-table is a table that stores photographs from staff and volunteers showing photographs connected with particular individuals. The table has distinct areas of clear visible interactive space where photographs can be seen, and other areas that are obscured with a physical pattern. Photographs associated with individuals are visible when their presence is detected through a wireless key-ring and can be further obscured by placing objects, such as tea-cups over the visible areas.



Appendix C

(Accompanies Chapter 8)

Workshop Overview Descriptions

Vignette: Research Text Session 3: 18th November

Example of Jolie's Sketchbook

OVERVIEW OF PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

November – December 2013

Session 1: 4th November; Introduction to the project

Our aim for this first session was to focus on *social group formation* to include activities that could encourage individuals to feel comfortable and confident in sharing and exploring ideas around photo-sharing. In doing this we focused on 4 key activities an ice-breaker, introducing project, discussing photo-parshiya and photography and exploring a collection of photographs taken by women or of women around the world. The photo-parshiya here was used as a way of introducing alternative ways that technology could be designed and used.

Ice-breaker and Introducing project: The first activities were intended to build social group formation using an ice-breaker and included writing our names, what we liked to take photographs of, and what we hoped to get out of the sessions on a small tag. These were then exchanged with the person next to us so that we could introduce one another to the rest of the group. In this first session only 3 of the group, Una, Izzy and Servat came and so we repeated the session on Friday for Nilah, Jolie, Ismene and Sareen. Individuals in the group came at different times, spread over an hour so we repeated this activity twice whilst having tea and biscuits. This was followed by introducing the aims of the workshops, the packs and outlining plans for the sessions, allowing time for questions to be raised and discussed within the group and for consent forms to be reviewed, discussed and signed.

Introducing the photo-parshiya: The next set of activities focused on *engaging in alternative photo-sharing practices* through introducing and discussing the use of the photo-parshiya and associated necklace, brooch and key-ring designs. Here we encouraged individuals to get to know the prototype and the interaction and playing with the brooch designs. This activity also focused on working in pairs to get to know the digital cameras and trying them out with a set of instructions to help switch between flash and non-flash, zooming in and out, focusing and framing. A homework activity was set asking the group to take 20 photographs about themselves, of places, objects, experiences and people to share in the group for the following week.

On the Monday session, I passed the necklaces and brooches around for the group to look at. Una and Sareen carefully handled the necklaces and passed them between one another. Izzy had already seen these before when we had been planning and discussing workshops with Liliane, so she was more interested in trying the cameras out. Una and Sareen also sat huddled together with the book on their laps, gently scrolling through the photographs on the screen and chatting in Urdu about the photographs.

In running the session again on the Friday, Nilah, Jolie, Ismene and Servat arrived at similar times in the afternoon and we shared lunch together before introducing ourselves formally within the group. Following this I introduced the research and passed the necklaces and photo-parshiya around the group. Ismene and Nilah became excited, showing the rest of the group the photographs, by lifting the book up. The photographs they showed were pre-loaded photographs of some of the art and craft work that had been done in the old building, including some of the work Nilah had made while being at the Centre.

Selecting and Discussing Photographs: The final activity was focused on *engaging in existing photo-sharing practices and reflecting on personal experiences* in pairs. The photographs were taken by women photographers or were of women around the world, and were discussed around a set of keywords to reflect different aspects of heritage that had been chosen by volunteers in the BAM! Sistahood project. The keywords included family & identity, culture, These photographs and words were discussed in the group and included within the sketchbook with short commentaries, why individuals had chosen the photograph and what personal significance the photograph had for them. Izzy was very quick to organize the photographs and quickly distributed the words to fit with particular photographs. But Una and Sareen had a different approach and wanted to go at their own pace carefully looking at each photograph in turn and quietly discussing them between one another. Izzy recognised one of the photographs of women protesting against the violence of the Algerian Civil War in the 90s and described how the photograph was taken close to where she used to go to university. She became animated in describing what the photograph was about and how the three women represented three different generations of women with different religions coming together to protest. The woman in the centre of the photograph, who was an elder, prompted a discussion between Liliane and

Izzy, where they recognised the respect shown to her, and how they found that very different and difficult to understand in relation to how to behave to elders in the UK.

In repeating the session on Friday, Jolie and Nilah animatedly discussed the photographs in relation to their family lives and their sense of identities in relation to their culture and children. Jolie in particular highlighted how she had fun with her daughters encouraging them to take part in activities related to their Congolese roots, but this was often a challenge, as they described themselves as British and associated much more with British culture. Nilah also recognized the same challenge, highlighting how her children sometimes did not want to take part in cultural festivities associated with Pakistani and Islamic faith.

De-brief: In reflecting on the workshop after the session, Liliane suggested there should be even more time spent on encouraging social connection within the group to allow for women to be late and still feel comfortable to get to know one another. We organized the session for the following week to include additional ice-breaker activities including working on a set of ground-rules and guiding principles that we started to work towards at the start of the workshop and ensured group sharing and discussion were integral to the remainder of the photo-based activities for the rest of the session.



Photographs taken by Liliane during the first session. Left – Right: Discussing photographs of international women photographers. An example page from Izzy's sketchbook from the first session.

Session 2: 11th November; Sharing Photographs

In the second session myself and Liliane continued to work on *social group formation* as the group hadn't yet all been together and Liliane felt that this was important and an ongoing part of the process of being part of and committing to the group. Una arrived early to this session and wanted to get started straight away as she had to leave early for her ESOL class. She downloaded her photographs of her route between home and the Centre, taking part in the BAM! Sistahood project and her ESOL class, onto the computer before the rest of the group arrived. She described some disappointment in not being able to find any mountains, like the ones in India, to photograph.

Nilah, Sareen and Izzy arrived just after 10 am and we introduced ourselves to each other, again using our name tags, and worked on a set of ground rules and guidelines for how we all wanted to contribute to the sessions and what we should expect from one another as part of a team. As part of this session the group went out on a trip, led by Rosie as part of the BAM! Sistahood project looking at local archives and ethnographic collections stored at Newcastle University. If individuals hadn't already taken photographs through the week, they were encouraged to take some as part of their trip. When the group returned we also took part in *existing photo-sharing practices* in showing each other the photographs individuals had been taking throughout the previous week. We did this by initially informally sharing the photographs on the camera screens followed by transferring them to the computers, printing the photographs out and including them in sketchbooks.

When Nilah returned from the trip she was reticent to download the photographs herself at first as she said she had never done this before and she was in a rush. Liliane and I showed her how to download the photographs onto the computer, how to choose 5 and then how to print her images to include in her sketchbook. She also arranged to return the following day so she could further try out the camera, download more photographs and include these in her sketchbook.

At the same time Izzy was already taking photographs as part of the BAM! Sistahood project and downloading these to the computers to share within the heritage sessions. For the photography workshops she decided she preferred to download images from the internet, showing aspects of Algerian culture that she felt were important to her and that she wanted to share with others. She did not want to share more personal photographs that she had taken within the group as she was sometimes concerned about other women in the Centre gossiping.

De-brief: In discussing the workshop session with Liliane, she highlighted how she still did not feel that the group were coming together as she had anticipated and so made suggestions for the following week to add an additional group activity using alliteration and an adjective alongside people's names to describe their character. This would be a way of highlighting the positive aspects of individual personalities to inspire and boost confidence. She also asked that more formal teaching of photographic techniques were incorporated into the sessions to give more concrete examples of how the group could improve and learn and also reflect on what had been achieved so far to consolidate the learning.

After the workshop: I arranged to meet up on Friday again with Sarvet in the morning and Jolie in the afternoon, since they had not been able to meet on Monday. Sarvet had struggled to find time to take some photographs as she already had a busy weekly schedule with hospital appointments and she preferred to start working on the brooch rather than taking photographs. Nilah, Zahrah and Izzy were also there for meetings with staff and so joined in with the making session, which soon also attracted other women who were waiting for their friends or staff members. The room soon became busy with 6 different women, and individuals helped each other stitch, glue, thread and clip together the frames with the fabric. When finished individuals excitedly helped one another put on, wear and pose in front of cameras and phones with their necklaces and brooches. Some women were less interested in being on camera and preferred just to photograph what they had been making. I brought the photo-parshiya in the room for the duration of this ad-hoc session to show those who hadn't seen it work before how the brooches and necklaces connected to the album, which sparked discussions around objects that had been made in previous workshops that had already been pre-loaded on the screens.

Later on in the afternoon when Jolie arrived, it was much quieter. She had picked her younger daughter up, Aurielle from school and brought her along to the Centre so she could take part in the session. She had taken 10 photographs throughout the week and explained how she had

just played around with different shots. I asked that she choose 5 of the ones she thought were the best. Her photographs included shots of the sky as it was going dark on her way home from work, and from her flat, taking her daughter to school, at home while playing and posing for the camera with her daughters. Because the materials from the previous session were still out on the tables, I suggested that Jolie's daughter make her own piece of jewelry while her mum worked on the computer. Aurielle excitedly chose beads and fabric for herself and to make something for her older sister. She chose Hollandaise Wax fabric, which sparked a conversation with her mum about how she liked these fabrics, which surprised her mum who said she rarely took any interest in this kind of thing at home.



Group discussions in session 2, Izzy using the computer to store and print off images downloaded from the internet and added to her sketchbook.

Session 3: 18th November; Sharing Photographs and Making Jewelry

This was the first session where the whole group came together. Una and Jolie both came early again to download their photographs onto the computers. Once everybody else had arrived, Liliane and I continued to work on *social group formation*, starting the session while drinking tea and coffee and encouraging each of the group to use a word to describe the person next to them in using the same letter as the initial for their first name. We followed this by re-visiting the ground rules and a description from each of the group on what they felt they had achieved so far, to encourage *reflection* on previous sessions. This also helped to clarify where people were in terms of the overall session planning and what each individual might want to work on with others. We drew up a plan of activities that individuals suggested they wanted to work on and complete by the end of the session.

Following this the group began to split off to do slightly different things. Sarvet went to find some flowers to photograph with another friend, as she hadn't yet taken any photographs throughout the week. Una left for her ESOL class and Ismene, Zahrah, Nilah, Jolie, Sareen and Izzy stayed in the session. For those left in the session we discussed formal qualities of photographs including composition, light, shutter speed and contrast and looked at the different formal qualities of the photographs taken so far in these sessions, trying out the cameras in different positions with different backgrounds. We downloaded any additional photographs that had been taken in the previous weeks onto the computers. Nilah had been photographing days out with the Centre and some of her craft activities at home, Jolie had been photographing a day out shopping and playing with her daughters. Ismene had photographs of her children and objects in her home, Zahrah had been downloading photographs about Pakistan, Sareen had photographs of objects in her home and Izzy had photographs of the previous session from Friday. She wanted to include these in her sketchbook but not on the photo-album.

After lunch, those who hadn't yet made jewelry were supported by others who had already made theirs. Again this prompted lots of laughter, giddiness and sharing of craft skills, as had happened on the previous Friday. Making and trying on jewelry and posing for photographs was encouraged by individuals within the group.



Session 3: 18th November; Sharing photos and making jewelry. Above: Nilah, Ismene, and Jolie making necklaces in the session. Below: Liliane and Nilah photograph Jolie as she dresses up with the fabrics and poses with her new necklace.

De-brief: In our reflections afterwards Liliane expressed concern about the translator in her approach to taking over the session and not translating all that was said and predominantly speaking in Urdu within smaller groups. For the final sessions we discussed ways in which to manage working with the translator encouraging women to support one another to understand and translate amongst themselves.

After the session: Una returned at the end of the day while I was on my way to a meeting with Rosie, planning for the BAM! Sistahood project. She wanted to create her jewelry piece and so I brought out the materials from the craft room so she could experiment. On returning to the Auntie's room from the meeting, Una had created two necklaces and arranged the boxes and beads into patterns on the table and photographed them in different arrangements.

The next day, Nilah came in to embed the technology into the necklace that she had made the previous Friday and she wanted to start adding her photographs to the photo-parshiya. While

making a cup of tea in the kitchen, she described how she liked to keep her mind busy by being part of courses and events at the Centre, discussing how she had become '*crazy about taking photographs*' since she had started the sessions. We sat down and I gave her the WAX to fix into the back of the necklace and the screws to fix it in and then she transferred the photographs she wanted to upload to the photo-parshiya onto a pen-drive from the computer and brought this to the Auntie's room.

She sat on the left hand side of the photo-album with the necklace in her hand, leaning into towards the photo-parshiya. Liliane sat on the right hand side of the album and I sat next to Liliane. Nilah leaned in and pressed the right-hand screen where her necklace icon was, but it hadn't enlarged yet and so I suggested she wait for a few seconds. Once it had enlarged she pressed the screen again and an empty locket case appeared on the screen. She pushed her pen drive into the base, and one by one the photographs appeared and beeped as they loaded on the bottom as a strip of images. She tried to move the first photograph from the base to the Centre screen by dragging, but found this didn't work, so Liliane showed her a flicking motion, which flicked the photograph into the locket. She tried again with the next photo and the next. She said she wanted them all on the left screen so people could see them all the time, but wasn't sure how to do that, so I got up to show her how to pass the photographs from the right to the left screen. She leaned in to press onto the photograph and as it transferred right to left screen, she shrieked '*Oooh, Look! No tension. I can pass this to my neighbour*' and started to laugh as she leaned in to transfer the rest of her photographs.

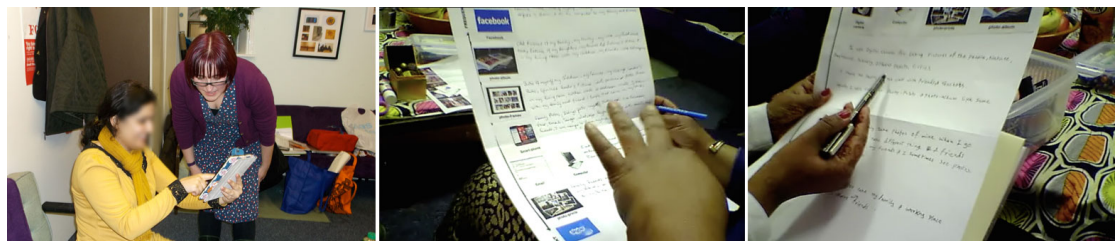
While Nilah was doing this Izzy came into the Auntie's room and also wanted to upload her collection of photographs she had downloaded from the internet. She rushed to the art room to get the brooch she had made on the previous Friday and waited for Nilah to finish. Liliane suggested that Izzy sit where she had been sitting so she could get closer to the screens. Izzy sat at the edge of her seat watching as Nilah finished transferring her photographs and closed the locket. Nilah sat back on the chair and Izzy leaned in more and waited for her brooch to get bigger on the screen by quickly waving the brooch left to right next to the book. When this happened she quickly pressed it and opened the locket and placed the brooch on the base, and then inserted her pen drive. Her photographs appeared and she started to flick them one by one into the locket and transferring them to the left screen. She asked why there were only so many of her photographs had appeared and I highlighted we had limited it to 20 photographs at a time, so the system wouldn't crash. She said this was too few and said they should be allowed to add more to the album.

Session 4: 25th November; reflecting on existing photo-sharing practices.

Liliane could not attend this session due to the other commitments with her additional job and so the session began with Jolie and Una arriving early as they both wanted to get some additional time asking questions about the cameras. Una also had a collection of images that she had been downloading onto a pen-drive from the internet that she wanted to print out to add to her sketchbook and to the photo-parshiya.

Once everyone had arrived we reflected on existing photo-sharing practices and sharing ideas within the group. This involved filling in paper based resources to consider the digital and material ways in which individuals shared their photographs with others and how. The group were each given a sheet of A3 paper with a scale that started with frequent and less frequent use. This was used to encourage the group to reflect on the most popular ways they shared photographs. In order to do this visually the group also had copies of photographs and symbols that included email, photo-albums, photo-frames, Facebook. The group presented their reflections to one another and discussed the differences in the formats, why, and where they liked to use them. Jolie in particular described how she had a particular photo-album she used once a month with her children to remind them of their ancestors who were no longer alive and family who were still living in the Democratic Republic of Congo who they didn't get to see so often.

After lunch each of the group discussed the photographs that were included in their sketchbooks from previous sessions. Some of the sketchbooks included images that had been downloaded from the internet and printed as part of the heritage project. Jolie, who had not been to any of the heritage sessions described how she liked these additional images that individuals had included in their sketchbooks. I remembered that she had previously spoken about not being able to go back to the Congo since she left, so I asked her if she wanted to search for some images on the internet. I explained that while I couldn't afford to send her there, that if there were images she wanted to include we could superimpose the photograph of her dressed up with the necklace taken the previous week, onto photographs from the Democratic Republic of Congo. She searched online and found photographs of the ministry of mines, of the okapi, a zebra horse hybrid only found in the Congo and her grandfather's restaurant. She gasped and laughed at finding a photograph of this restaurant and described how she would spend many nights after school hanging out with friends, sometimes working for her grandfather. She reminisced on how she hadn't seen this place for many, many years. For the remainder of the session we sat together in the art room, using Photoshop to cut around the edges of Jolie in her headscarf, taking it in turns I would show her how to go round the edges and she would have a go herself until she got stuck.



Group discussion and making videos on how photographs are currently shared between home and the Centre.

Session 5: 2nd December; Engaging with and reflecting on alternative photo-sharing practices. Liliane was sick at the start of this session and had to be sent home. In this session we *engaged with alternative photo-practices* through uploading photographs onto the photo-parshiya. We did this as part of a social activity with help from others in the group who had already uploaded theirs. Una and Jolie arrived early again and downloaded the last group of photographs that they wanted to include on the photo-album and in their sketchbooks. Once everybody else had arrived, I encouraged the group to start putting together a folder of images on their pen drives to upload any photographs they wanted to include on the album. I asked Izzy if she would help people upload their photographs to the album if they hadn't done this before, while I recorded some video. I asked if everybody was OK with this and explained that I would only be using this as a way of reminding me what was happening, and that this wouldn't be shown in public.

Izzy sat on the left hand side of the photo-parshiya and each of the group took it in turns to sit on the right hand side. All the globes on the right hand screen were dancing around and some of them had already become bigger. Sarvet sat down first and waved her necklace in front of the screen. Izzy laughed and said it wasn't working yet, because it couldn't smell her, she needed to get closer to the book, at which point Sarvet moved in closer and waved the necklace again. When her necklace icon enlarged, Sarvet pressed the icon and the inside of the locket appeared on the screen. She placed the necklace on the table and with her left hand inserted the pen drive. One by one her photographs appeared on the screen and she clapped and laughed with excitement. She then tried to move her photographs from the bottom to the centre of the screen and when this didn't work, Izzy stepped in and flicked the images into the locket space and showed her how to move the photographs to the left screen. Sarvet carried on doing this until all of her photographs had been transferred and when complete, Izzy asked Jolie if she wanted to do hers.



Izzy photographing Nilah uploading her photographs to the photo-parshiya and Izzy helping Sarvet upload her photographs to the photo-parshiya. The printed photographs produced from the sessions were shared within the group to give feedback and collectively choose photographs.

After the session: At the beginning of December, when I was preparing materials for the following session, Nilah dropped by the art room, where our workshops took place to say Hi and to drop some fabrics off that she had spare from a dress she had made. She mentioned how she had started to upload and organize her own photographs on the computer at home by herself as a result of coming to the sessions.

'I took my camera home and put it in the laptop to put the pictures there. My daughter said 'Mum you're getting too clever', but I told her, I wanted for you to show me how to do this, but you were too busy. I remembered how we did this here and I try it myself. My other daughter, she's like 'wow mum, you've learnt a lot, you can do this'.'

When discussing this with Nilah, I started to wonder how Nilah possibly felt the workshops were potentially having an impact on the way that she was relating to the technology and her perceived abilities to work independently outside of the sessions.

Session 6: 9th December; Preparation for Celebration Event

Liliane and I encouraged the group to get together on their own for this session and organize what they wanted to happen for the following week at the celebration event. The group decided on food they would each cook and bring to the event, including what and how they wanted everything displayed on the day.

After the Session: Nilah spent some time in the art room throughout the week and outside of the session with others showing them some of her photographs and supporting women to select some pictures of their own from a much larger collection taken from activities run at the Centre. On one occasion, I was in the art room preparing for the celebration event and Nilah came in with her friend Sofia. Sofia described how there were so many photographs of the children on the walls at the Centre and not enough of older women and mums like her as positive role models. They sat down at the computer and Nilah found her own photographs on the computer. She showed Sofia how to use the mouse and scroll through the images, '*Choose 5 of the best and we'll print them out here*'. This was also how I'd been framing the selection process so that we didn't get too overwhelmed during the sessions. '*How can I choose 5*', Sofia said '*they're all my daughter. They're all good.*' They both laughed and Nilah sat with her to show how she had chosen hers, pointing at the screen and showing Sofia how to click and drag photographs onto the desktop [*Field Notes 10th December 2013*].

Session 7: 16th December; Celebration Event

The final event for the workshops took place at Newcastle University in the Hatton Gallery, glass atrium entrance. Volunteers each made a food dish and displayed them alongside their sketchbooks, necklaces and the photo-parshiya. We invited researchers from Newcastle University, staff and additional volunteers from the Centre to showcase the research we had been developing over the past two months. All the volunteers from the group came that day except Zahrah who couldn't make it.

As we arrived in taxis from the Centre with bags of food, drinks, sketchbooks and technology, everybody involved appeared to be giddy and excited about coming to the University. Everyone quickly became busy and started to set up food and drinks, except Servat who seemed to become so excited she was sick as she realized she hadn't had any breakfast that morning. Ismene helped her with a drink of juice and some biscuits and she sat quietly while the rest of the group busily organized their sketchbooks and necklaces for display. At the same time while this was happening, Una and Sareen were photographing the group and laughing to each other, in between organizing their sketchbooks and adding the finishing touches to the display. Once everyone seemed like they were happy, everyone, including Liliane, started to take photographs of one another. Nilah and Jolie posed for their photographs together and Jolie danced across the floor, encouraging Ismene to join in with her.



Group organizing their sketchbooks for display at the Hatton Gallery and showing researchers and staff their work.

Just after midday researchers from the Computing Science department started to arrive. Izzy knew them and so said hello and started to show them her sketchbook, her photographs of Algeria. After a brief discussion about her sketchbook, she started to show them the photo-parshiya. She took her brooch and waved it in front of the screen while she explained about the technology inside. I had uploaded some photographs of Izzy into her album and so when she open it, she laughed and started to pass her photographs from right to left screen. The researchers leaned in to have a go themselves and Izzy explained to them how it worked and how she had been involved. The rest of the group joined in talking to the researchers, showing them their brooches and photographing each other, while they explained their own perspectives on the project. Researchers that spoke to me were amazed at how much technical information the group knew and how they interacted so confidently with the photo-album. Later on in the afternoon staff from the Centre also came to share the research with the group and volunteers proudly talked to Rosie and Umme to show them their sketchbooks and the photo-parshiya.

At 2pm, we started to pack everything away and call taxis. As it was our final session and it was Christmas the following week I said my goodbyes and gave them each a hug as they got into their taxis. I said I would arrange to meet up with each of them in the New Year.

De-brief: It was getting dark and cold after we had finished clearing all the plates and tables away and so Liliane and I went for a coffee for our de-brief. We discussed how nervous and excited the volunteers had been, how they had all dressed up. Liliane described how she was amazed at how confidently the group had discussed the project with researchers from the University. We were both exhausted from the day, but pleased that we felt it had gone so well and the volunteers seemed to have a good time as they spoke to researchers and Centre staff about what they had been involved in.

Vignette: Research Text Session 3: 18th November

The following vignette was taken from field notes and discussions with Liliane on Session 3, and worked on here to create a narrative account of this session to give a fuller example of one of the activities and how it unfolded over the day. into. The account given is intended to be a partial situated fragment [Haraway 1989, Clandinin & Connelly 2000, Phillion 2002, Gunaratnam 2003] from my own perspective enriched and supplemented through follow-up discussions with Liliane. This is in no way indicative of all the sessions, but is positioned here to give a sense of some of the social dynamics and the contingent nature of some of the interactions with digital photography and the design of the brooches that the group were involved in.

Session 3: Monday 18th November 2013

I had arrived at 8.30 am and Liliane just shortly after to prepare the space and get ourselves organized for the session, lay the table for teas, coffees and biscuits, and prepare lunch. We sat down with the plan for the day to go through the main points of what needed to happen to make sure we were both on the same page. We felt our main focus was on bringing the group together in the first instance as we hoped this would be the first time all of the women attending the sessions would come together. The past two weeks this had been difficult due to people cancelling and changing the dates and so coming on different days to catch up. The session today was due to start at 10am and run through until 2pm, but we started at 9.30am as Una and Jolie arrived early to ensure they were able to get the time they needed on the computers. But most of the group only arrived at 10.30 am and had to leave again at 11.30 am.

Una was one of the group who had to go and she said she would come back at 3pm, as she wanted to make sure she could get her necklace done like the rest of the group. In this brief time we had a recap on the project aims, introduced each other and our motivations, discussed the group ground rules that we had drawn up together last week and had a recap on what we had achieved so far. The room felt packed and sometimes it felt like we were going round in circles as women introduced themselves again and again as new women arrived. Some of the group who had been there on time started to get bored with this and started to do their own thing, sticking pictures in their sketchbooks and staying quiet. I didn't blame them, I started to feel impatient myself, but needed to stay focused and go at the pace of the group and try and bring everybody along, so I asked those who had appeared to zone out questions about their photographs in their sketchbooks, which worked to hold their attention and bring them back into the discussion for at least a short amount of time.

After 11.30 there was only Servat and Jolie in the session who stayed. We enjoyed some early brunch, Jolie hadn't eaten breakfast in her rush to get here early and announced her hunger once everybody else had left. Servat went to look for some winter flowers to take some more photographs outside of the Centre. Once we'd all had something to eat, we tidied everything away and then printed photographs and contributed to sketchbooks. I enjoyed this much quieter time with individuals as it was less manic and demanding and it was easier to attend to specific needs and issues as they arose. A new learner from the Centre wanted to join us, who had originally wanted to come to all the sessions, but she disrupted Izzy by interrupting her by asking her questions about how her mobile phone worked, so this felt like it was going to be problematic.

By 1pm most of the group that had originally left the session were back again to work on developing their necklaces. Nilah had finished hers the previous Friday and helped several of the other women with theirs, so I suggested she help Jolie who was struggling to work out how to bring her ideas together. Nilah sat next to Jolie on the purple covered comfy chairs and sorted through all the different fabrics we had available, asking Jolie which one she wanted to use. I asked Jolie if she had brought any other fabric that she prefer, but she said she didn't have anything in particular and hadn't brought anything to the session. She eventually pulled out a gold and brown Hollandaise Wax print from the box of materials at the Centre and talked about how expensive this material was, as she folded it onto her lap and then stretched a section of it out.

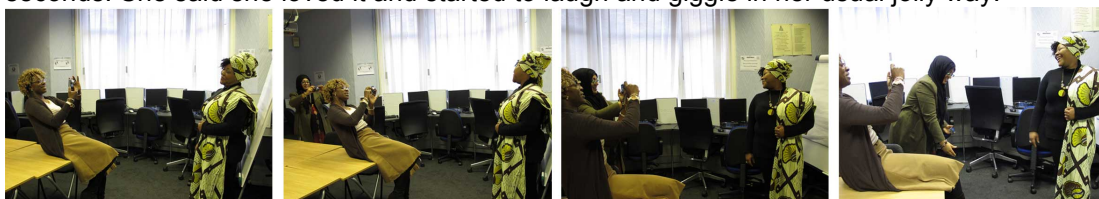
She carefully took the brooch frame and placed it onto the fabric to decide which pattern shape she would choose and then cut out a small square. She quietly said a few words to herself while she made the selection and cut out the fabric on the table, while keeping an eye on what else

others were doing in the room. Meanwhile Ismene was sat on the floor next to Nilah and Jolie while she was busy trying to find her own material and putting her idea together, while Nilah was helping her too. There was lots of laughter and chatter about the colours and the other materials that were available. Ismene was finding it difficult to choose and when she found a material that she liked she would try it in the brooch frame, add some beads and then change her mind and look for something different.



Nilah, Ismene Jolie and Liliane making necklaces in the session.

With help from Nilah, Jolie eventually finished her necklace after much hilarity and discussion. Nilah helped her try the necklace on and fix the length of the chain and once finished she turned and showed the group in the room.¹ Liliane suggested she use the same fabric to make a headscarf, so she cut a length and wrapped her bouncy curls into it and twisted it round into place. She took another long piece of fabric and threw this over her shoulder in a dramatic fashion as she laughed, and paraded around the room like a queen. The room started to fill with busy laughter as Jolie was encouraged by everyone to have her photograph taken with this new outfit. She carried herself differently across the room, almost regally, with Nilah directing her, turn this way, turn that while laughing with the camera and taking pictures, exchanging her camera for Jolie's and some of the other cameras from the group when she was asked. Liliane was doing the same, waving her hands animatedly to the left to tell Jolie to move around. Jolie, very calmly always complied with these demands with outbursts of explosive giddiness and laughter, when she did a cheeky off the shoulder smile. She seemed to be in constant motion and so did Nilah and Liliane as they snapped away, getting close up and far away, fiddling with the flash, switching it on and turning it off, zooming, framing and re-positioning, and showing Jolie. As far as I could tell Jolie definitely appeared to enjoy this attention and I asked her what it felt like to be a super star snapped by the paparazzi, as flashes were going off every few seconds. She said she loved it and started to laugh and giggle in her usual jolly way.²



Sequence of events as Liliane and Nilah photographed Jolie as she was posing with her necklace.

By 2.30 pm the room was silent again as everyone had gone to pick up their children. Jolie and Nilah stayed to help to tidy up, but then had to disappear shortly after to do the school run. Liliane and I tidied everything up and sat to debrief from the session at 3.30pm. I was aware that Una was late and would possibly not turn up and started to also think about the meeting I needed to be in with Rosie at 4pm. Liliane had written some notes on her phone about how the translator had been disruptive today and made it difficult for the women to speak English independently. She also felt that the new learner who had arrived late had been too disruptive towards other women and we needed to discuss a way forward with other staff.

¹ In February in our final discussion together Jolie described how she had struggled to make the necklace and was amazed at how skilled Nilah was with her hands.

² The same kind of hilarity, giddiness and laughter had erupted in an unplanned session the previous Friday, when learners and volunteers from the session and others, including daughters of staff and volunteers, had joined in and made their own necklaces and bracelets followed by an explosion of activity, wearing the necklaces, passing them from one to another for additional posing, followed by photo-taking. These photographs then subsequently were placed on the photo-album as, what I felt became a kind of reflexive visual accounting of the experience of being involved.

As we were discussing and deciding a plan of action for the following week, Una arrived at 3.45pm and sat with us. We needed to be careful about how much we said about our plans, so spoke as vaguely as possible about what we had previously discussed and I suggested we chat on the phone in the week. It was now 4.10pm and I was aware Una had come to have some time to do her necklaces and I needed to be in a meeting. Liliane was also rushing off to get some dinner before going on a late shift.

Aware of the time, Liliane and I said our goodbyes and I rushed into the arts and craft room to get the necklace materials and sat with Una to show her how they had been made with examples from the group. We tried the process several times together with different materials until she felt confident and then I went upstairs for my meeting with Rosie at 4.30pm. It was 5.30pm by the time I came back down and I should've had a Skype call at 5pm. The Centre was eerily quiet and I thought Una would have gone by now. What a wonderful surprise when I went into the Auntie's room and she had created two necklaces and a beautiful display from everybody else's work. She had just started to play with the materials until I came back down stairs and then started to photograph them too. She showed me the photographs she had taken and I suggested she get close up to the objects and patterns and she took a few more. The Centre was closing at 6pm, so we had to pack up as quickly as we could and return everything neatly packed in the art room.

