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Curatorial and the *Mise-en-Scène*

The Curatorial as a form of Research in Contemporary Craft Practice

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Abstract

This research explores contemporary craft curatorial practice as a dynamic form of inquiry. It positions the curator as an auteur and the exhibition as a site of knowledge production. By examining how curatorial direction transforms craft into material storytelling, the research draws inspiration from film theory, specifically the concept of mise-en-scène. Central to the study is the concept of kaino-craft, a methodological approach that integrates performance, innovation, and collaboration to reframe craft as an evolving, participatory field. Drawing on scholars such as Bjerregaard, Niedderer, and Adamson, this research explores the concept of curatorial-as-research and its role in expanding the discourse of craft. Ultimately, the essay contributes to a deeper understanding of how craft exhibitions act as platforms for transformation, experimentation, and the production of new knowledge.

Introduction

Contemporary craft curatorial practice has emerged as a dynamic mode of research, providing a reflective inquiry into the transformative impact of curatorial and performance elements on the field of crafts. While drawing inspiration from the works of Niedderer et al. (2006), Sheikh (2013), and Bjerregaard (2020), this research investigates the intersection of curatorial practice and craft, examining the evolving role of curator as *auteur.*

This paper is informed by my doctoral research project *Curatorial / Performance / Crafts: A Shift in Contemporary Practice* (Manopoulou, 2022) which is situated within the contemporary realm, emphasizing a live investigation rather than a historical exploration of craft. The study sought to understand how curatorial engagement with makers in research-based projects shapes and influences the field of crafts. Central questions address the implications of curatorial-as-research in crafts, its contribution to enriching the field, and its role in pushing the boundaries of craft practice.

Mise-en-scène, a concept traditionally associated with film theory and theatre literature as the art of 'setting the stage,' encompasses the arrangement of space, light, movement, and atmosphere to shape meaning and emotional effect. Within craft curatorial practice, it defines an approach that transforms exhibitions from neutral presentations into directed, performative environments, where spatial, material, and sensory dimensions become integral to interpretation. Unlike conventional display methods of use of white walls, static plinths, and a focus on preservation, *mise-en-scène* enables curators to act as *auteurs*, creating immersive experiences that engage viewers as participants rather than observers.

Specifically, this paper approaches the *mise-en-scène* curatorial process as has been denoted by textiles scholar Professor Lesley Millar. For example, the exhibition *Lost in Lace*

(Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, 2011) curated by Millar, featured installations by twenty international artists exploring lace as both structure and architecture. Millar's curatorial intention was to present overlapping layers that enabled audiences to experience texture, depth, and movement through space rather than a single fixed point of view.

Through such curatorial set ups, *mise-en-scène* redefines the exhibition as an expressive, experiential form of knowledge-making. Moreover*,* aligning the notion of *mise-en-scène* closely with the art of direction, it explores the transformative impact of film style, as articulated by Gibbs (Gibbs, 2002:59). Drawing parallels to the filmmaking process, the essay likens the director's transformation of a script into a film to the role of the *auteur* curator in shaping an idea into an exhibition, an impactful visual / material storytelling.

This essay poses a critical question: What does *mise-en-scène* bring to craft exhibitions, and how has the role of craft curators evolved to resemble that of *auteurs* in shaping the narrative of craft displays?

The integration of performance within craft curatorial practice, alongside the broader development of curatorial roles, has given rise to new inquiries. This essay investigates how curatorial-as-research creates meeting points for the intersection of craft and performance, fostering collaborative practices and pushing the boundaries of traditional craft discourse.

Drawing from Glenn Adamson's notion of craft as an active, relational concept, this essay explores the transformative impact of curatorial and performance ideas on the field of craft. The term 'craft' is viewed in two dimensions: as 'studio crafts' encompassing various craft disciplines, and as a process providing precise control, rooted in thought, tacit knowledge, skill, and material.

Theoretical concepts from Peter Bjerregaard's *Exhibitions as Research: Experimental Methods in Museums* (2020) play a key role in shaping this argument. Bjerregaard frames exhibitions as 'knowledge-in-the-making,' challenging the conventional view of exhibitions as platforms for presenting established insights. Here, the curatorial is understood not simply as a presentation of research findings but as a research process in itself, contributing to broader knowledge production within the field of craft.

In the context of my doctoral research project, I presented the term *kaino-craft* to introduce a model that serves as a conceptual framework for examining contemporary craft practice that is innovative, research-driven, and socially engaged. *Kaino-craft* defines a trend wherein creators integrate performance elements or incorporate performative aspects into their work.

Liddell and Scott in the Greek-English Lexicon (s.d.) stated that the prefix *Kainos*, in Greek *καινός*, means novel, new in quality (innovation), fresh in development or opportunity, something not seen before. *Kainos* has a distinct difference from the word *neo (νέο)* which means young. *Neo* primarily is seen as a temporal adjective and *kainos* as an adjective of quality. Drawing from the Hermann Cremer lexicon (1872) which best stated the argument for this distinction. Cremer remarked that *neo (νέο)* does not, in and of itself, supplant the old, but merely excludes it, whereas *kainos* (καινός) actually calls the old into question in a qualitative manner. Cremer concluded that an object may be *kaino (καινό)* without always being *neo (νέο)*.

The research argument posits that *kaino-craft* signifies a profound understanding of materials, skill, and intellect. Beyond being a descriptor for certain contemporary practices, *kaino-craft* is conceived as a methodology that enriches the field, enabling craft to be consciously applied to meet contemporary requirements. As a conceptual agenda for contemporary craft, *kaino-craft* embraces Collaboration, Experimentation, Innovation, and active Participation, shaping the trajectory of craft in the modern context.

In particular, *Collaboration* brings together specialists and disciplines to generate new techniques, processes, or forms, while *Participation* engages the public as active participants within a shared social space. *Experimentation* involves repeated testing of concepts, materials, and approaches while consciously managing risk, whereas *Innovation* represents the qualitative development that produces new knowledge.

Audience engagement lies at the heart of this research, reflecting the curatorial as a dynamic mode of inquiry. Drawing on Bjerregaard's concept of exhibitions as 'knowledge-in-the-making,' visitors are positioned as active participants rather than passive observers. This engagement is deliberately shaped through *mise-en-scène*, which provides the stage for interaction between craft, space, and audience, while the *kaino-craft* criterion of Participation defines these co-creative, socially engaged experiences.

This essay contends that the curatorial, as a methodology, is collaborative and collective, often being manifested in various forms such as discussions, exhibitions, books, or actions. By examining the concept of *kaino-craft*, the essay questions the alignment of theoretical insights with the practical manifestations of craft, considering the serendipitous nature of its occurrence in unexpected places.

The subsequent sections of this essay investigates the curatorial as research, the role of *mise-en-scène*, and the curator as an *auteur* shaping the narrative, elevating craft exhibitions to an art form. This exploration aims to contribute to an understanding of the evolving landscape of contemporary craft curatorial practice and its impact on the field.

Makers' Tale craft curatorial project

The examination of the curatorial project *Makers' Tale* at Salisbury Arts Centre (2020-2021) reveals the evolution of new knowledge and emphasizes the significance of exhibitions as a form of research. Inspired by the presence of craft within historical buildings, the project views the building as a time capsule, asserting that the craft within it remains authentically situated as intended by the makers. The paper advocates the notion that craft practice is an ongoing journey, adapting and transcending to meet the evolving needs of each society.

Makers' Tale exhibition was a result of the collaboration between Salisbury International Arts Festival 2020, Wiltshire Creative, and the University for the Creative Arts (UCA), Farnham, in association with Salisbury Cathedral. The exhibition explored the movement of ideas between disciplines, the relationships which arise from disciplinary crossovers, as well as the passing and advancement of skills, through creative media such as sculpture, light work, textiles, music, ceramic, metal, and sound.

The project shed light on how individuals challenge established ideas and preconceptions, offering insights into the creative process. It underscores the curator's role, particularly as a craft curator, in engaging people by sharing the thinking process through practice. It reimagined the curatorial process, employing *mise-en-scène*, and introduced new frameworks for interpreting craft and curatorial models, emphasizing the agency of objects and revealing alternative models of relationality.

Within the discourse of *kaino-craft*, I identified as an *auteur* curator, facilitating the realization of ideas or proposals into exhibitions. The *Makers' Tale* exhibition exemplifies *kaino-craft's* four criteria: Collaboration, Experimentation, Innovation, and Participation.

Makers' Tale was the outcome of collaboration with the ceramic artist Mirka Golden-Hann, head of visual arts at the Salisbury Arts Centre. Golden-Hann was approached in early 2019 with an exhibition proposal. The interest to work with her was twofold. Firstly, the Salisbury Arts Centre itself is an interesting site housed in a deconsecrated mediaeval church, St Edmund's, a Grade II listed building taken over by the community in 1975 and since then serving as a community arts center. And secondly, the intention to collaborate with Golden-Hann was based on her approach to ceramic practice. Golden-Hann incorporates digital technology into presenting her works and installations, often collaborating with artists and professionals from other disciplines to expand and challenge ceramics' broader historical context and tools.

Salisbury City on the Move

The curatorial concept for *Makers' Tale* was framed by the theme of the Salisbury International Arts Festival 2020, 'Salisbury: City on the Move'. Its core idea, 'the movement of ideas,' was inspired by the octocentenary of Salisbury Cathedral, marking the laying of its foundation stones on 28 April 1220, an act of faith, strength, and craftsmanship. *Makers' Tal*e explored the movement of ideas, relationships across disciplines, and the transmission of skills through various creative mediums, emphasizing the persistence of craft knowledge in modern creative industries.

The exhibition showcased present-day learning of craft skills within the historical context of skills sharing, highlighting the role of the Cathedral's Works Department as a repository of knowledge since 1220.

Craft scholar Professor Simon Olding, in the foreword of the exhibition catalogue, stated that there are many ways of looking at craft practice while there are myriad opportunities to engage with its physical and sensory outcomes, noting that craft in a moment pivot from the present to the deep past. He continued by saying that putting to one side the idea of craft as a means of creating the solid unique object, we could consider it to be a companion to sound and movement, a means of gracing time (Olding, 2020). In this sense, craft is neither static nor one singular thing, but rather a companion and a bridge.

The project highlighted that the workshop is analogous to the university studio, as both are places of learning through materials, places of thinking with silence or ritual music in mind, and the interplay of the past and the present (Figure 1). The works of the students featured in the exhibition are experimental and radically engaged with both traditional and contemporary methods and materials.

Makers' Tale focused on creative crossovers and explored ways to consider the process of making for the purpose of expanding the exposition of craft knowledge. It questioned craft knowledge, space, agency, and community through the lens of performativity, demonstrating the increasing value of craft skills in diverse practices. The exhibition invited the public to perceive craft as a continuum.

The project was structured around three interconnected strands, each exploring the movement of ideas, disciplinary exchange, and the development of skills through creative practice. Featuring UCA students, tutors, alumni, and a commissioned music composition, *Makers' Tale* examined the exchange of craft knowledge within the university studio, drawing parallels with the Cathedral's workshop and highlighting the relationships between students and makers.

Figure 1

Mason Yard, Salisbury Cathedral Works Department. Photo possession of the author.



The first strand featured second-year students from UCA's School of Craft and Design, who integrated the exhibition brief into their professional practice module, creating new works that revealed how making, thinking, and material agency inform one another. The second strand brought together UCA tutors, alumni, and a PhD candidate with existing works that aligned with the *kaino-craft* methodological criteria, innovation grounded in material experimentation and technical expertise. The third strand, *Plangency*, a commissioned sound piece by academics of UCA's School of Film, Media and Performing Arts, translated the Cathedral's acoustics into an electronic composition, extending the exhibition's sensory and conceptual impact.

Through collaboration with its diverse participants, the project developed the curator's practice and embodied an exhibition as research approach, enhancing the dialogue between education, craft, and interdisciplinary inquiry.

UCA School of Craft and Design: Students

The first section of the exhibition showcased the works by UCA students. Following discussions with tutors, it was determined that the *Makers' Tale* theme would be most suitable for second-year students. This decision was guided by the belief that, at that stage of their academic journey, students would have acquired the essential skills and knowledge from their first year, making them well-equipped to respond to the given brief. Furthermore, dedicating this project to the second year allowed the students ample time to engage with it, thereby, granting sufficient time for the forthcoming demands of their third year, which is mainly focused on course completion and dissertation work. *Makers' Tale* was designed to be an integral part of their professional practice module.

The curators presented the projects to both students and staff, encouraging them to express their interest in participating. The presentation aimed to capture attention, generate enthusiasm, provide a clear explanation of the brief, and establish key milestones. An integral part of the project involved a visit to Salisbury Cathedral, where students explored the Cathedral's archives and workshops. This exposure to historical techniques and making processes aimed to validate their contemporary methods. Specifically, during the visit, students and staff explored the Cathedral's vestry textiles collection and observed the craft practices in the Works Department, not for cataloguing and documentation, but to deploy and pose questions in multiple dimensions.

Their responses exhibited a wide range of potential meanings, allowing for open interpretation. Diana Harrison, UCA Senior Lecturer in Textiles, emphasized the significance of this experience for international students, providing a unique insight into UK culture by witnessing hidden sites of the Cathedral.

The exhibition featured work by BA (Hons) Textiles students Charlotte Bull, Katie Sims, Lizzie Lovell, Wendy Irving; alongside BA (Hons) Ceramics students Eleanor Cocking and Jaime Dunlop. Their responses demonstrated an understanding of the act of making as a vehicle for rigorous research processes. Their approach supported the creation of new work, viewed as embodied research and creative innovation.

Making, in this sense, was approached as a broad concept, encompassing both material and conceptual practices. To illustrate the curatorial intentions, two examples are presented. Charlotte Bull, BA (Hons), is a textile maker and designer who creates handwoven textiles. For this project, Bull was inspired by the Cathedral's stained-glass windows, exploring how light diffuses through their exceptionally rich colours. Her practice combined hand-dyed and painted textiles inspired by choreographed dance movements, using performance to inform the shaping and layering of the cloth. Her process included dripping indigo dye onto delicate wet silk, allowing the colour to bleed organically into the fibres, a direct reference to the gestures of dance. Laser cutting was applied to create precise marks and openings, transforming the surface and allowing light and movement to interact dynamically with the material. Bull also experimented with *leno twisting*, a weaving technique in which pairs of warp threads are twisted around each other, producing open, airy textures that echo the architectural and visual qualities of the historic building (Figure 2). The resulting two pieces capture the interplay of light, colour, movement, and texture, reflecting both her conceptual investigation and material experimentation.

Bull's work was decided to be displayed above what used to be the altar of the church. The curatorial decision was to create links between the past and the present as well as between the Arts Centre and Salisbury Cathedral, exposing the movement of ideas. The coloured light from the stained-glass windows flooded Bull's cloths. The cloths hanging opposite the windows seemed to be coloured shadows in the air. The coloured transparent cloths replicated an architectural element which linked the mediaeval stained glass to contemporary craft. In this way, the master-makers from the gothic days of Salisbury Cathedral practice crossed paths with the contemporary maker and the intangible essence of her cloths of many colours. The cloths substitute the legends once depicted, on the mediaeval stained-glass window creating a transitory window for new tales to be created.

Figure 2

Charlotte Bull Proposal for Makers' Tale project, 2020. Photo possession of the author.



Moreover, Katie Sims BA (Hons) textiles explored the possibilities of a composition assembled from individual, unique, handmade components. For *Makers' Tale,* she was inspired by the act of passing on skills she witnessed at the Cathedral's Works Department.

Particularly, her inspiration to create a jesmonite blocks installation came from the Cathedral's Stonemasonry Yard, where cut stones are laid out in the yard. Sims was caught by how each stone was unique and handcrafted. With the intention to demonstrate the act of sharing and the transfer of skills, she combined modern and traditional materials and processes, such as papermaking, felt making, indigo dyeing, rust dyeing, and jesmonite casting to create blocks. Furthermore, she experimented with wrapping and unwrapping the blocks, playing with ideas of concealment, and contrasting surface textures. The outcome had a minimalist aesthetic which went beyond the surface detail and asked questions about textiles, what is considered textiles and the very act and process of textile making (Figure 3).

Sims' sketchbook was displayed next to her work revealing her thinking process, for the audience to develop an understanding that thinking, making, learning, and knowing are related with the agency of materials themselves.

The intention was for the visitors to experience how the maker draws inspiration from textile as material and how this knowledge is applied. The makers' experimentations with textile techniques through sampling, wrapping, as well as unwrapping and testing ideas contributed to an enhanced understanding of the opportunities and challenges of contemporary practice.

Sims' experimentation demonstrated ways in which textile thinking informs the development of new materials, or alternative use of materials. Her work revealed a conceptual mode manifested in the act of making and highlighting transferable insights from both process and outcome.

The student-maker's inspiration from the transfer of skill, as she witnessed it at the Cathedral's Stonemasonry Yard, highlighted tacit knowledge, where memory served as pathways for unconscious thought, fantasy and creating meaning. It is through the maker's 'praxis' that this silent, tacit knowledge was made visible.

The decision to include the student's sketchbooks in the exhibition revealed the creative process showing prototypes, ideas, and concepts, partly formed in searching for knowledge that would enable further iterations until a solution emerged. The notes and sketches on the pages were seen as visualization of thinking.

Figure 3

Katie Sims Proposal for Makers' Tale project, 2020. Photo possession of the author.



Situated outside of the university studio and located within a site which provides an alternative way of learning, the students' work illustrated the interpretation of this thinking, and the exchange of ideas and knowledge.

Despite the resultant works not abiding much physical evidence of the Cathedral they are clearly related to it through its consideration and assessment of the architecture and materials evidence in the stories of the students. These works were situated within *kaino-*

craft discourse through the critical viewpoint evidencing its contribution to the field of practice.

The students' showcase of ceramics and textiles works identified relationships between the two distinct practical disciplines, illustrating their shared traditions, skills, and histories. Through dialogue, knowledge was generated from the position of personal experience, tacit knowledge as well as the discourse with the tutors.

UCA School of Craft and Design: Tutors, Alumni, and a PhD Candidate

The second section of the exhibition showcased the contributions of UCA tutors, alumni, and a PhD candidate, featuring the creative works of textile PhD researcher Peta Jacobs, metalworker Manuela Kagerbauer, ceramicist Michelle Shields, and glass metalwork maker Cara Wassenberg.

The selection of these makers was guided by the concept *of kaino-craft*, emphasizing elements of novelty and innovation while also recognizing a profound understanding of materials, techniques, and skills. For example, Peta Jacobs, a UCA PhD candidate, at the time, was chosen for her application of textile thinking to challenge perception and explore shifting views relative to viewpoint. In her PhD research, she investigated the paradox of immaterial substances, drawing inspiration from László Moholy Nagy's *Light Vision* (1917) question, *'Space, time, material, are they one with Light?'* Jacobs incorporated textile thinking into her making process, using techniques like unravelling, braiding, interweaving, and folding to connect scientific and philosophical thought with her art practice (Jacobs, 2022).

For the *Makers' Tale* project, a photograph series titled *Light Dance Ensō*, was included capturing the dance of sunlight through dichroic film. These photographs were displayed in the former church's altar area, depicting shapes and colours drawn with light, and embodying the sacred symbol of *Ensō* from Zen Buddhism. The photographs not only paralleled the colours and light streaming through the stained-glass windows but also conveyed sacred symbolism shared by the photographs and the glass.

In addition, Michelle Shields, ceramic artist and UCA Technical Tutor in ceramics, was invited for her experimental approach to ceramics, particularly the application of digital processes to enhance the materiality of clay. The *Makers' Tale* exhibition featured her research project, *Soft Developables,* where a robotic arm was utilized to mill structural toolpaths into wet clay, resulting in soft hybrid developable forms.

Figure 4

Glaze experiments of Michelle Shields in 2022, using the dust – waste - from Salisbury Cathedral Stonemasonry Works Yard. The material works as a flux in glazes. Photo possession of the author.



Originally planning to include a 3D printer in the exhibition, logistical complexities led to alternative ideas. Shields agreed to create new work by 3D printing a ceramic body using dust collected from the Stonemason Works Yard. This innovative approach aimed to repurpose stone dust, transforming it into a useful material when mixed with clay and porcelain. Although disrupted by Covid-19, Shields resumed her experimentation in February 2022, exploring the properties of porcelain when mixed with other materials and experimenting with glazes using dust from the Stonemasonry Works Yard (Figure 4). Her ongoing research project aims to further understand the properties of porcelain and its application in 3D printing.

UCA School Of Film Media and Performing Arts: Plangency

The third strand was the commission for a new music composition to reflect the concept of the exhibition, the movement of ideas. Dr Harry Whalley, UCA reader in Music Composition & Technology and Akira Brown, UCA Lecturer in Music Composition & Technology, composed *Plangency,* a new music piece which captured the unknown and unnoticed sounds of the Cathedral, and was influenced by the sounds of the making process.

The inspiration to commission a music composition derived from *Woven Space* (2017), a piece by composer Helen Grime, responding to the work of basket maker Laura Ellen Bacon. The performance I attended on 26 April 2018 was held at the Barbican by the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. *Woven Space* titled after a site-specific woven installation from willow twigs was installed in Chatsworth Garden in Derbyshire from 2010 to 2015. Grime echoed Bacon's work by weaving sonic fragments and melodic shapes into tapestries of sound that coalesce, disperse, and reform as the textures alternately thicken, lighten and glare through the score's movements.

Plangency was conceived by the reverberation of the Cathedral, bringing together seemingly disparate elements, such as craftsmanship, place and materials, and presenting their indispensable connections through sound. Whalley, in the exhibition catalogue, wrote that the structure of Salisbury Cathedral is astonishing in many ways 'be that through scale, age, craftsmanship or historic and religious significance' (Whalley, 2020:47).

During the interview on 12 October 2021 in Farnham, Whalley reflected on the project and his experience composing and performing *Plangency*. Whalley started by describing the process creating the composition:

> We started by creating a loud noise like the bursting of a balloon. This sound has every frequency and so we can measure with microphones how the sounds decay over time. This 'impulse-response' can then be used to recreate the reverberance of

> the Cathedral. We also measured the particular resonances and found some really interesting results which will be worked into a new composition [...] The amazing history of Salisbury Cathedral includes makers from so many disciplines, textiles, metal, wood, glass and of course stone. Together, they have created a living monument that stands still and quiet. Yet, it is never really silent.
>
> The building is made from the actions of craftspeople, the noises of these actions are not just embodied in the building itself, but also in the structure, designed to amplify and shape those sounds within it. Our commission attempts to bring these ideas together through the use of measurement, technology and the traditional. It is a collaboration between composers, artists and students of today, with those who have worked on this building throughout the centuries. (Whalley, 2021)

He continued talking about the launch event and the performance by cellist Anna Menzies held on 22 September 2021. He explained that himself and Brown, who designed the electronics, were intending to transplant the acoustics of the Cathedral into the Arts Centre. Whalley described the process of decision-making and risk-taking by saying that they could not be sure how their idea of transplanting acoustics would work, as there was no opportunity for a rehearsal in the Arts Centre before the launch event and the only rehearsal they had was in a much smaller space. Therefore, they had to make decisions on the day and adjust their planning based on their knowledge of their materials and tools.

Whalley explained the process of collaborating with Brown, claiming that composers usually find it difficult to collaborate and tend to work alone. It is notable that for Whalley it was the first time he had worked with another composer collaboratively to develop a music piece. He stated that, apart from having enjoyed the process, it was also a learning curve. Whalley's statement aligns with the research argument, considering the exhibition as research and the *auteur* curator who identifies and creates opportunities for the development of new insights and knowledge.

The composition had a musical structure that came from the notes, but the shape came from the rehearsals ahead of the event. Whalley continued talking about the different stages of composition: a. pre-composition and discussions; b. notes writing and recordings going into the Cathedral; and c. the composition and rehearsal.

Figure 5

Plangency panel view as part of the exhibition. Photo possession of the author.

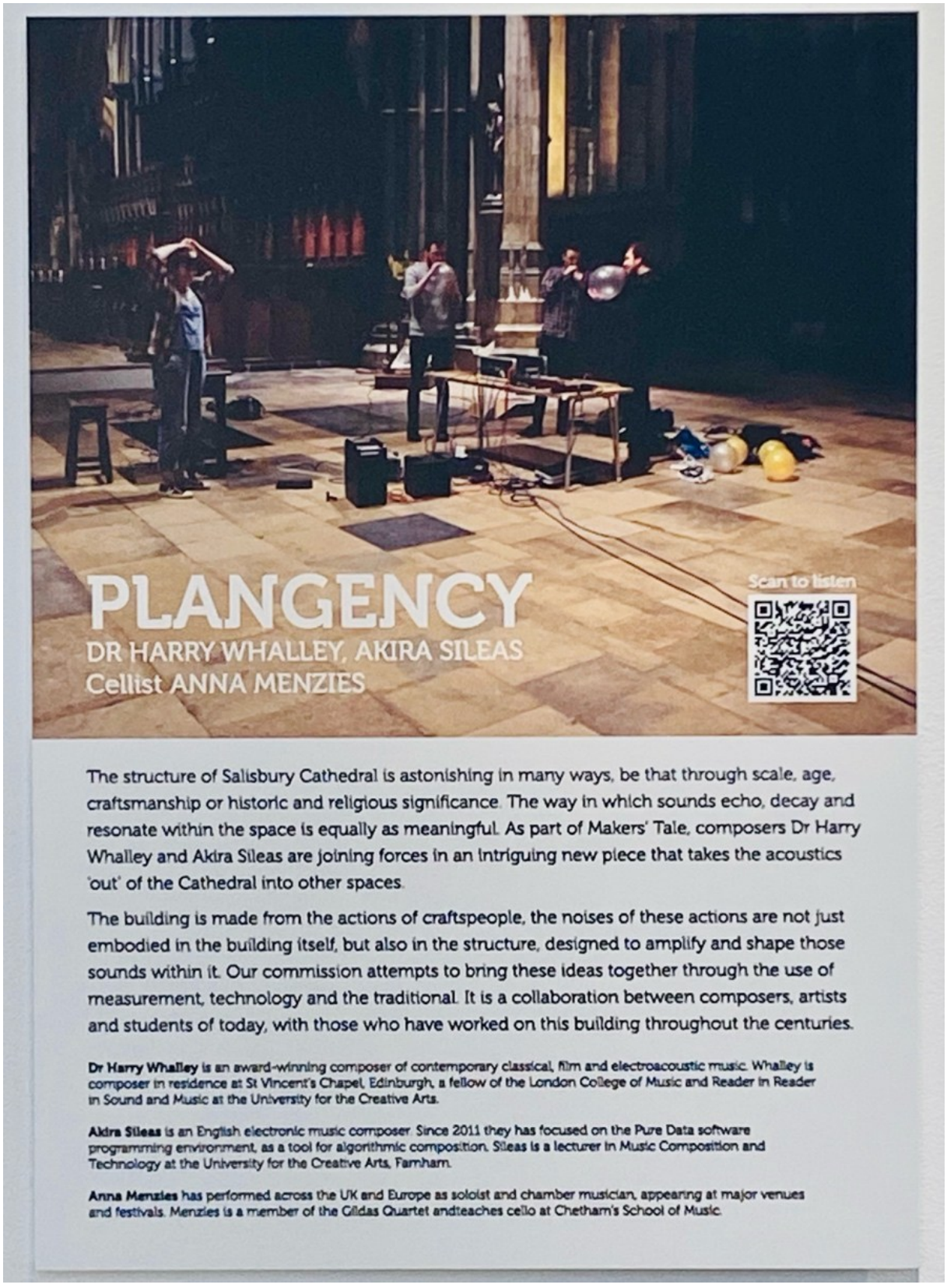
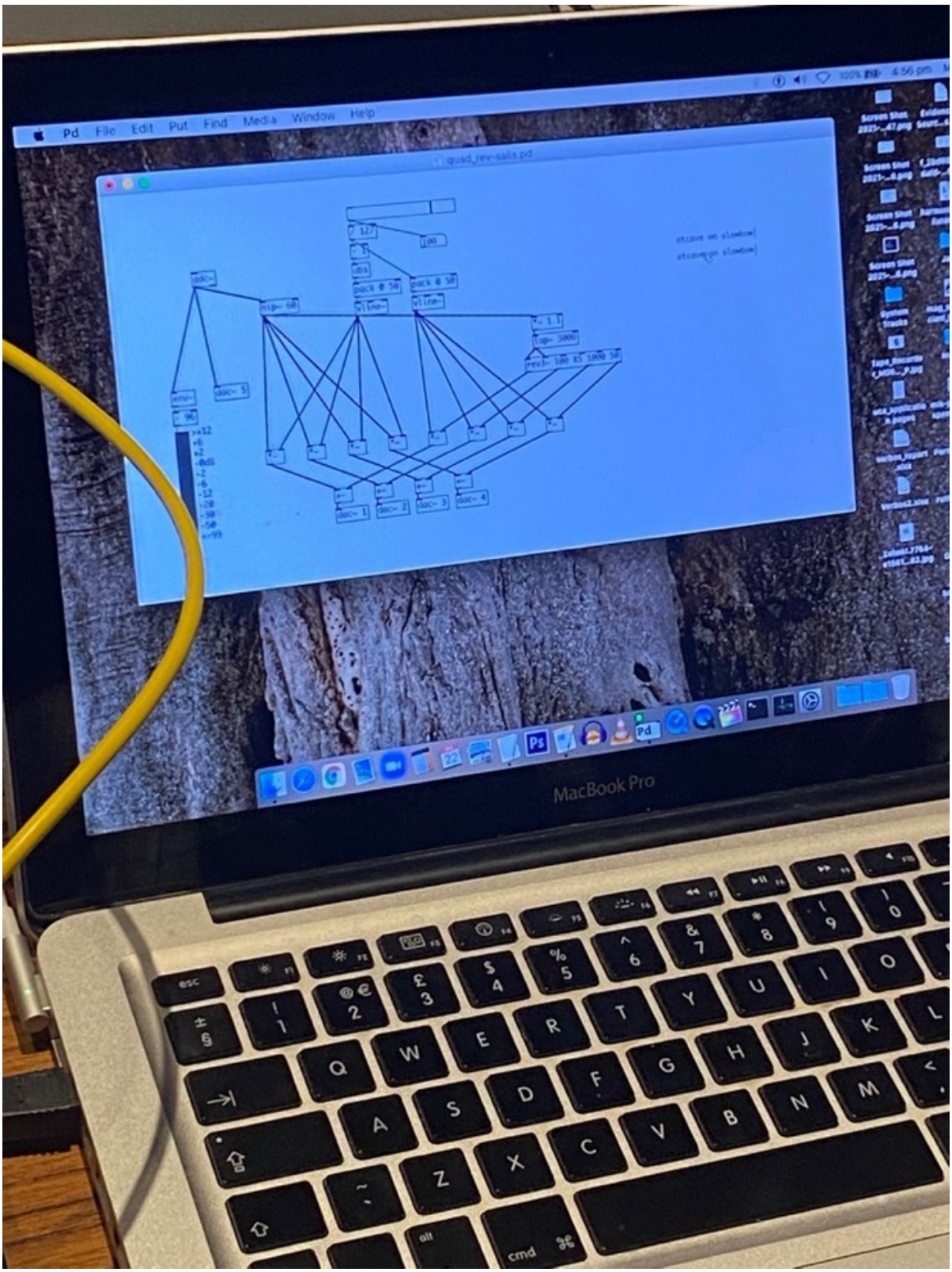


Figure 6

View of the screen showing the design of the electronics, to transplant one space into another. Photo possession of the author.



Whalley and Brown's piece described the characters of the sound of the ambience of Salisbury Cathedral. The composers set the space in motion by transferring the sounds through the music to be experienced in the gallery space (Figure 6). The cello and electronic music, mostly in the background, spilled forwards at an initial climax and stayed involved, up to a point where the music became submerged and distant.

Plangency gave a sense at times of enfolding the listener through the cello, which maintained its swirling motion of lines upon lines, speeds upon speeds, through a central sequence in which the drive recedes into the distance for a focus on electronic elements. The cello performance expressed the energy of the Cathedral and craftsmanship with tones going forward at times and held back in reserve. At the end, the music was let to fly and disappear in space.

Mise-en-Scène

Makers' Tale exhibition found its home within the historical Salisbury Arts Centre, a Grade II Listed Building that once served as the Church of St Edmund. The curated works adorned the arts center, gracing its walls, suspended gracefully from mediaeval beams that adorned the ceiling and showcased upon plinths. Despite their connection to Salisbury Cathedral, the juxtaposition of these works within a deconsecrated church offered fresh perspectives and intriguing parallels with the iconic cathedral.

A particularly noteworthy installation filled what was once the church's altar, a space characterized by its stained-glass windows. In this space, the garments crafted by Bull for *Makers' Tale*, inspired by her Cathedral visit and the captivating stained-glass windows were chosen to be exhibited (Figure 7). Alongside them, Jacobs' *Ensō* photography series, integral to her PhD research project, also found its place. Both creations were deeply informed by the intricate properties of light. In the Middle Ages, coloured glass and precious stones served as visual spectacles within ecclesiastical spaces, encouraging congregations to transcend the material and experience the immaterial through the interplay of light and colour.

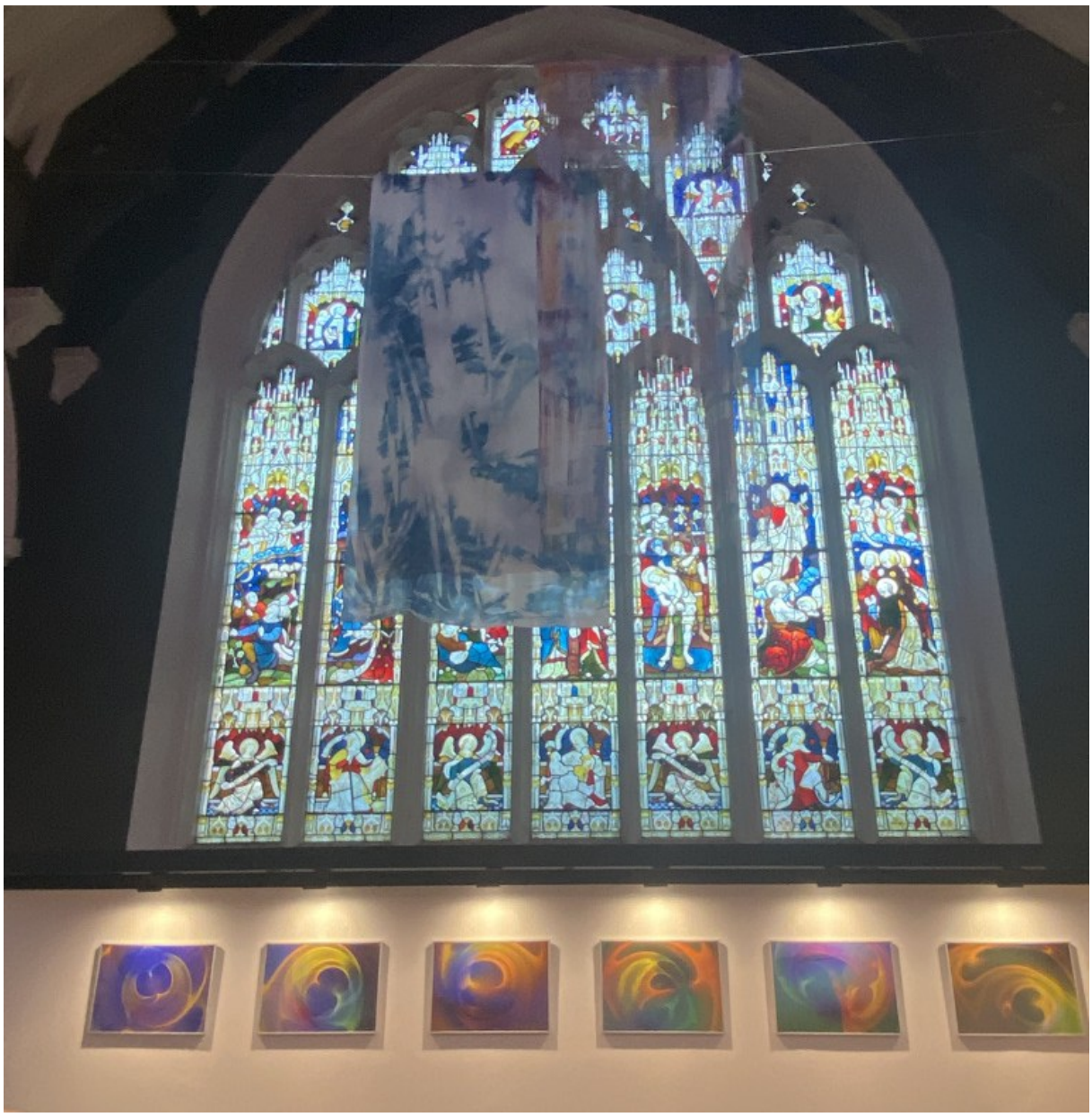
A parallel emerged between the mediaeval aura of the space and the contemporary art center. Within the exhibition space, formerly the altar, visitors became active participants in the *mise-en-scène*: stepping into a purposeful place resonating with spiritual significance. Positioned at the front, gazing upon *Ensō*, visitors were exposed to the manifestation of the artist at the moment of creation and the acceptance of their deepest self. *Ensō,* a Zen symbol embodying strength and elegance, served as the circle of life – a representation of the commencement and conclusion of all things, expressing the completeness or emptiness of the present moment. Both the photographs and the garments created an environment with devotional undertones.

Figure 7 *View of Charlotte Bull's installation. Photo possession of the author.*



Figure 8

View of the Installation, of the once altar exhibition space, featuring the works of Peta Jacobs and Charlotte Bull. Photo possession of the author.



As an *auteur* curator, bringing Jacobs' photographs and Bull's new works together, an intentional contrast between shadow and light, past and present was established. Within the Salisbury Arts Centre, the contemporary pieces assumed a ceremonial form, subtly alluding to mediaeval imagery. Particularly, Bull's work, harmonizing with the stained-glass windows of the building, transposed elements of Cathedral musings into poetic, sculptural narratives of their own (Figure 8).

The *mise-en-scène* offered a fresh perspective on textiles, whether viewed as cloth in Bull's creations or as a manifestation of thought and process in Jacobs' work. This juxtaposition of mediaeval and contemporary elements proposed a novel, poetic, and devotional harmony within the exhibition space.

Impact

Golden-Hann, Head of Visual Arts at Salisbury Arts Centre, acknowledged the transformative impact of the collaborative project for Wiltshire, one of the only two UK counties without a university. The partnership with UCA provided Wiltshire Creative with a direct link to an academic institution, introducing progressive practices to Salisbury audiences.

Salisbury Cathedral, a landmark, holds deep significance for city residents, symbolizing their sense of home. While Wiltshire Creative had a longstanding partnership with the Cathedral, mainly tied to outdoor programs and musical concerts, the *Makers' Tale* exhibition extended this collaboration. Through the music composition and content, the exhibition brought elements of the Cathedral to life beyond its physical location.

Makers' Tale with its storytellers conveyed a continuum of life and craft making by making space, place, and the creative process visible and audible within the exhibition. Relating to the format of *kaino-craft* and highlighting the use of the curatorial, *Makers' Tale* produced a novel insight into exhibition as research. Employing and adapting a curatorial model developed for *Makers' Tale* involved collaborative work with a co-curator to create a sphere of influence and mutual strength exchange, facilitating an in-depth examination of the craftworks. Furthermore, it sought to develop the notion of the *auteur* curator, responding to the unique site and location, aligning with the research methodology of *mise-en-scène* and exhibition as research.

The *Makers' Tale* curatorial process highlighted two key points:

a. The Significance of Craft: Emphasizing the prominence of craft to individuals and organizations, showcasing how this relationship could be articulated through the curatorial.

b. The Impact of Craft Curatorial Practice: Providing documented evidence of the impact of craft curatorial practice on audience engagement and interpretation.

This study illustrates that dialogue resonates in developing new narratives. The project employed this approach to foster ongoing exchanges between traditional and contemporary practices, creating a dynamic dialogue within the exhibition-making space.

Through the development of these new practices, the curator's role expanded, acquiring both knowledge and skills. A curatorial craft approach emphasized human skills, including mastery of technique and the ability to use multiple skills to control the making process from start to finish. Moreover, it required embodied knowledge, encompassing not only conceptual skills but also practical, tacit, and contextual knowledge.

Conclusion

This essay undertook an analysis of the role of the curator and *mise-en-scène*, emphasizing its function in establishing a dynamic site of exchange - a space where craftwork, site, and audience seamlessly converge. The term *mise-en-scène*, is where the craftwork unfolds, embodying the links of social, spatial, and critical contexts. This convergence engenders a political space within the broader cultural sphere.

The research process and outcomes of the curatorial model have laid the foundation for understanding the multifaceted layers of activity involved. The visual representation within this curatorial project facilitated an assessment of the diverse elements, providing insights into their varied impacts on practice through research and intensive engagement.

Makers' Tale, as a practical outcome, contributed to the discourse of exhibition as research with a focus on craft and resulted in the development of new types of knowledge and experience for the audience. A contribution to knowledge is the development of a model of craft curatorial practice as a study of movement in time and space through craft and the curatorial, articulated through *kaino-craft*; a term developed and theorised in my PhD thesis.

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