

EXPERIMENTAL RUINS



TUESDAY 6TH JULY 2010, UCL DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

INVITATION

In this workshop, Gail Davies and artists Neal White and Steve Rowell from The Office of Experiments, invite participants to explore what constitutes an 'experimental ruin' within the fabric of our urban centres. We hope you will join this collaborative engagement between geographers, artists and others interested in the experimental geographies of science and technology.

The Office of Experiments state: 'we are aware of the effect of social, technological and scientific progress as a form of rapid geology in urban centres, with new sediments concealing old forms, as new systems and structures continually replace the old. This is the progressive effect of a technical and rational culture, the search for increasing traction on space and matter, as virtual spaces take the place of the indeterminate traces of human and animal life. Models replace organisms, simulators supplant laboratories, and movement of atoms are integrated into networks of bits. To explore experimental ruins is to engage with the range of knowledges, materials and sites relating to such developments and their histories. From experimental practices, to standard research methods, from archives to archaeology, from conspiracy theory to hard scientific fact, we want to use this material to explore the realities and myths that are the remainders of progress.'

The workshop will encompass discussion of the ways we might identify: the material traces of biological, technological, informational and radical experiments in London; the temporal and spatial imaginaries embodied in such experimental sites, whether open, closed, subterranean or aerial; the methods for encountering and expanding engagements around these spaces, and the stakes involved in doing so.

The workshop will involve talks, discussion and exploration between geographers, artists, historians of science and technology, and the archivists and archaeologists of contemporary history. The aim of the event is to contribute to ongoing discussions around the 'geographies of experimentation' and the nature of experimental aesthetics; shaping future forms of enquiry around these experimental remainders that are both collective and contested. We invite you to join us.

Gail Davies, Department of Geography UCL, Neal White and Steve Rowell, Office of Experiments

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CONTEXTS

This workshop is an event on the boundaries between two ongoing projects.

- The first context is the series of research projects exploring the geographies of science and transgenic life, by the Geographer Gail Davies, funded under the ESRC fellowship 'Biogeography and Transgenic Life' (Grant no RES-063-27-0093) <http://www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/transgenic-life>. Experimental practices and the changing geographies of science and technology are key objects of enquiry for this project using ethnography to explore the local and global issues in the production, circulation and regulation of genetically modified organisms. For this project, the workshop provides a provocation to the individual practices of ethnographic enquiry, seeking the basis on which such practices can be expanded to incorporate the experimental experiences of the larger constituent of publics affected by and interested in these changing geographies of experimentation.
- The second is the Dark Places exhibition and associated Overt Research Project by artists Neal White and Steve Rowell. The exhibition was commissioned by The Arts Catalyst and co-curated by Office of Experiments, John Hansard Gallery and SCAN in 2009-10 and the Overt Research Project website was publicly launched on 13th December 2010 <http://www.dark-places.org.uk/>, see also <http://www.o-o-e.org/blog/>. In their initial field research project for the exhibition Dark Places, The Office of Experiments focused attention on the rural landscapes of Southern England, documenting spaces in which large-scale scientific and intelligence facilities are sited, ranging from research centres to military proving grounds. For this, the second in an ongoing series of enquiries into the experimental spaces of science and technology, London becomes the setting, a space that requires a different method of enquiry.

Connecting the two is an interest in the sites of experimentation, the temporalities of experimental practices and the possibilities of fieldwork. The workshop staged a dialogue around different perspectives on the space/times of experiments, through discussion and exploration of 'experimental ruins'. For Gail Davies, it contributed theoretical contextualisation and experimentation with forms of engagement relevant to mapping the public interfaces of research on 'Biogeography and Transgenic Life'. For Neal White and Steve Rowell it provided a forum for

discussion and exploration of the means of extending the scale and involvement of the next stage of the Dark Places project. Workshop participants also brought many other issues to the day's discussion from the disciplines of geography, science and technology studies, art, history and archaeology. This report is a record of the day and brief exploration of outputs.

PROGRAMME

11.00 Welcome and introductions

11.30 Gail Davies Biogeography and Transgenic Life: An ethnography of experimental practices

For more information see <http://www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/transgenic-life>

The Office of Experiments introduces the Overt Research Project: Practicing experimental ethnographies

For more information <http://www.o-o-e.org> and <http://www.dark-places.org.uk/>

12.45 Lunch

13.30 Roundtable discussion

14.30 Experimental geographies: A site visit

16.30 Reflections and closing discussion

17.30 Close

The workshop was, and still is, open to different forms of intervention, interpretation and discussion. The following questions guided the development of the workshop. We list them here as a prompt to thought.

- At what point does an experimental site become a ruin or a ruin an experimental site? Is it possible to perceive or document the transition from one state to the next? What are the implications of artistic interventions, archiving, archaeology, enthusiasm, or exploration as different forms of engagement with these processes of transition?
- Should society preserve, restore or memorialise experimental ruins? In what contexts, and with what implications, does repatriation, reinterpretation or redaction follow the end of experiments?
- Can you think of a site, in London, which could be considered an experimental ruin? The OOE is compiling a list of potential sites for inclusion into an Experimental Ruin online database, and seeking contributors and/or experiment participants.

CONNECTIONS

The introduction by Gail Davies mapped a series of connections between the two projects around the spatialities, temporalities and collaborative practices of experimentation. These are outlined below, followed by related reflections from the presentations by Neal White and Steve Rowell and roundtable workshop discussions.

EXPERIMENTAL CONNECTIONS 1: SITES

'A lot of the research grew out of systems for risk assessment studies after World War Two. There was a triumvirate of key institutions, Harwell in England, Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the Jackson Laboratory. They were trying to develop ways to assess the risk of safe levels of radiation or chemicals, so they were not only alert to deviance or mouse mutations, but they were actually watching for them, and so those three institutions really built the whole field of mouse genetics.' (Genetics Researcher, interviewed as part of the Biogeography of Transgenic Life project USA 2009)

The first workshop theme is around the sites of experimentation. There is a growing interest in the spaces in which science takes place, and the similarly the spaces that science generates. The introduction raised questions about what it means to locate and connect such scientific sites, through academic writing, but also through the practices of mapping, photography, exploration, narration and art. Such accounts can be by scientists themselves (as above), but also by the diverse publics that live around, experience, work in, contest, or conversely remain ignorant of such spaces. Attention to the geography of sites is, on the one hand, a way of situating knowledge practices, and drawing attention to the articulation of people, animals, materials and epistemic dispositions that forge experimental practices. But they also tell more uncertain stories of change, entropy and the events that change the meaning of such sites over time and over space. As arguments around the laboratorization of society grow alongside issues of secrecy and access, a key question for the workshop was the extent to which it is possible to use an engagement with the changing sites of experimental practice to amplify aesthetic, personal and political responses to the increasing scope, but often inaccessible infrastructures, of military, industrial, technological and scientific practices.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Many experiments are designed for so called 'controlled conditions'. Neal White's project 'Clean Rooms' symbolised the irony of taking away of the world (physical, emotional) to say things about the world in the process of experimentation, drawing out the artifice of experimentation.
- Such 'ideal'/ artificial/controlled experimental conditions may be a thing of the past. The move from the experiment separated off in laboratories towards the experiment with no boundaries results in 'the world as laboratory'. It has become difficult to make a clear cut separation between scientific and social experimentation. Examples from the work of the Center for Land Use Interpretation (CLUI) gave weight to this view of the 'world as laboratory': humans intervening in the landscape, often unaware of 'unexpected' consequences.
- Such artwork raises questions around access to experimentation. Who is allowed to experiment with what? And under what conditions? It was pointed out that the science/art boundary is also reflected in different institutional attitudes towards health and safety. Artists may have had more health & safety leeway than scientists, who tend to be burdened with more responsibility/answerability/risk prevention, but this is also changing.
- Discussion raised the point that 'experimentation' outside the natural sciences is frequently seen as a moment of challenge and radical departure, whereas, within the sciences, experimentation is more likely to be understood as a process of following an established process or set-up, leading to incremental contributions to knowledge. The problematisation of 'experimentation' thus links to the problematisation of 'creativity' in productive ways, with relevance for understanding the differences between artistic and

scientific notions of experimentation and the ways these come together in art-science engagements. Negotiation of this boundary is also important to geography/art collaborations, which are sometimes experimental but are also often about negotiation of different understandings of 'experimentation'.

- As an alternative definition, experimentation was seen as a method to intervene in potential futures, contrasting with methods which are more observational or analytical in character. This definition sees experimental methods as a challenge to what is considered a 'research method'. Further contestation of established research methods was seen in the notion of 'unpredictability' which is often associated with experimentation. These discussions linked to the next theme below.

EXPERIMENTAL CONNECTIONS 2: TEMPORALITY

'The expression "laboratorization of society" does not mean that society is reduced to one huge laboratory, but that at different spots laboratories are implanted that frame and pre-format possible actions. This movement is continuous, for not only are new spaces of action opened up by the installation of new laboratories, but those already in place are replaced by new laboratories that make the earlier ones obsolete. Laboratorization is an interminable undertaking, always starting again' (Michel Callon, 2009, p. 67).

The second theme around temporality, links both to the wider notion of an experimental space and to the complex temporalities within the experiment. Concepts of experimentality and experimentation have emerged as key concepts in the contemporary social sciences, both as an object of enquiry, but also as means of engagement and analysis. There has been a year of events on experimentality in Lancaster. Experimentality point towards the historical emergence of a mode of social experimentation, in ways which might shape or frame social contexts, as Callon suggests. There are also a growing number of blogs, events and papers around experimental geographies, many by workshop participants, indicating openness to new forms of collaboration and experimentation with forms of writing and research¹. The notion of an experiment is thus complex, pointing both towards the limitation of possible actions, but also openness towards experimental outcomes. Hans Jorg Rheinberger's (1997) work on the history of biology talks about how experimentation involves an oscillation between what can be held constant in experiments, what he calls technical objects, and what forms the focus of current inquiry, that is epistemic things. This, he says, allows experimenters to simultaneously hold on two forms of the future - one open and one closed. Epistemic things are necessarily underdetermined; they embody what one does not already know; they are 'absent in their experimental presence' (Rheinberger, 1997: 28); 'graspable only in the moment of emergence'. Technical objects in contrast embody concrete futures; they are the instruments and inscription devices with given standards of purity and precision, whose stable linear temporalities allow researchers to make sense of the immanence of epistemic things. Careful attention to the changing cartographies of experimentation thus becomes one way of rethinking relations between site, temporality and materiality. These concepts have been central both to recent practice by the Office of Experiments and the analytical work on the Biogeography and Transgenic Life project. This linked to the second key question for the workshop. What is at stake in thinking through the complex temporalities enacted in the wider social contexts of experimentation, and what does it mean to archive the remainders of obsolete experimental forms if laboratorization is a process of always starting again?

¹ For a selection of blogs see <http://merlepatchett.wordpress.com>, <http://experimentalgeographies.wordpress.com/>, <http://www.michaelgallagher.co.uk/experimenting-with-geography>, <http://engaginggeography.wordpress.com/2-seminars/creative-public-geographies/>, <http://experimentalnetwork.org/>

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Discussion of temporality in the presentations by Neal white and Steve Rowell revolved around the 're-emergence of unexpected things' and the capacity of objects to influence the outcomes of experiments adding unpredictability to practices of experimentation. Examples were Roman Signer's experimentations with 'time-sculpture' which reveals the forces/energy of things/events & changes they give rise to.
- Secrecy was linked to temporality in both presentation and discussion. The secrecy that surrounds many sites of experimentation, particularly military developments, was shown to produce odd displays and manifestations. Listening posts (e.g. Teufelsberg, Berlin) served as examples where such 'secret' technology was hidden in plain sight, but were also examples of how former spaces of secret experimentation become disused and re-appropriated by publics, in this case, by artists. Brian Balmer cited work by Masco who describes secrecy as 'wildly productive'... 'creat[ing] not only hierarchies of power and repression, but also unpredictable social effects, including new kinds of desire, fantasy, paranoia and – above all – gossip'
- In discussion most debate around ruins focused on the built infrastructure, rather than patterns of scientific progress and abandonment. It began with the question of whether current city development tolerates ruins. As city space is valuable, disused spaces are often rapidly developed for new projects. Yet, this itself has a temporality, as the recent recession halting development has demonstrated. The discussion of city ruins led to the question at what point a site becomes a ruin, or whether 'disused' or 'abandoned' may be more appropriate.
- It was also pointed out the humans are not the only experimental actors, but that for both the fabric of city centres and also the experimental practices of science, nonhuman agencies and materialities are central to the changing practices of experimentation.

EXPERIMENTAL CONNECTIONS 3: THE SPACE/TIMES OF FIELDWORK

'The current messy baroque genre finds its depth offstage not in the space/time of fieldwork, which still gives it traditional authority, but in the archive, in historical material, or accounts that pre-exist it. What I am advocating is to return this source of entanglement with material to fieldwork itself more so than to historical sources, given the interest of anthropologists in working in the contemporary and the temporality of emergence into near and unknown futures. ... The engaged reflexive subject, who cannot be a mere informant or subject of research, but in some sense, must become involved in its intellectual work and scope; the multi-sited arena of fieldwork as networked knowledge sites the ethnography of which is both thick and thin, and is patterned by very politicized relations of collaboration; and ultimately the inclusion of reception itself as an object or site of fieldwork—these together constitute an ethnographic baroque today that would move us beyond what the exemplary ethnographic textual form has come to in its past messiness.' (George Marcus, 2007)

A third set of connections emerge from the overlapping times/spaces and narratives of fieldwork methodologies that are central to the discipline of geography and increasingly to the practice of art as research. Many at the workshop were involved in different ways with fieldwork, in different sites, for different audiences, and with different ways of knowing, or not knowing, of asking and answering questions, and narrating and visualising

fieldwork. These can perhaps be framed under what Marcus identified some time ago as an experimental moment in the human sciences (Marcus 1986) and are also increasingly in dialogue with each other. This workshop is thus only one of a series of events exploring dialogue between geography and artistic practice (for example see also <http://engaginggeography.wordpress.com/>), but it both extends and focuses this conversation through intersection with work on the sites and temporalities of science.

These prior conversations have already begun to build space to consider what these practices on the borders between geography, science and artistic intervention might be, including collaborative methods of archiving and mapping, experimental forms of fieldwork, and different research practices engaging wider publics. Such collaborative practices can be considered as ways to respond to Marcus's more recent call to shift from rendering field work through messy narratives, which undo the determinisms found in prior academic texts, instead inserting them into the politicized relations of collaboration through which such fieldwork takes place in the first instance. Simply put, complex narratives for academic audiences are insufficient; the injunction is to explore alternative forms of involvement for the outcomes of research within the intellectual work and scope of fieldwork itself, in ways that acknowledge it is multi-sited and intricately networked knowledge sites. Thus for this workshop as well, presentations and narrations were not enough. A key part of the workshop involved an experimental and collaborative exploration of a nearby site, which might be considered an experimental ruin, the old Middlesex Hospital, pictured at the front of the report.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Discussion raised the question of the merits of different modes and forms of experimentation. By doing 'nonsensical' or self experiments, artists challenge what is considered an experiment. There is a double challenge here: experimentation taking place on the boundary of 'rationality' and 'serious play', and experimentation taking place in 'inappropriate' spaces. The extension of experimentation to domains outside the scientific also gives rise to questions about the inequality of access to experimentation as well as opening up questions about experimentation as artifice.
- The building and setting up of temporary structures was used as an example of how artists are attempting to resist the control of spaces and events. The work of the CLUI could also be perceived as form of experimental intervention/resistance/provocation in the sense that their practices question ideas of how to engage with certain (secret/industrial/non-public) landscapes.
- The trip to the abandoned Middlesex Hospital site in the centre of London prompted much discussion. A subsequent focus was on the sensory engagement with ruins. Many participants gave accounts of different sensory engagements with industrial ruins, in ways that sought an engagement with the



particularities and materialities of that place, often holding off judgements about purpose or seeking knowledge of past activities on sites. In this way, sensory engagement was perceived as an individual encounter and form of sense-making.

- However there was a further mode of engagement that stresses the potential for the collective engagement and documenting of sites, including using visual methods of recording and mapping skills that can be distributed to constitute more collaborative forms of experimentation and practice.

NEXT STEPS

The main aim of the day for the wider groups of participants was to proliferate opportunities for conversations and unexpected connections. These are still ongoing and mostly informal, but the key ones known to organizers are listed below.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS, BLOG POSTS & RADIO PROGRAMMES

- Davies, G (2010) Where do Experiments End? *Geoforum* Volume 41, Issue 5, Pages 667-836
- Hawkins, H (in press) 'Dialogues and Doings: Sketching the Relationships between Geography and Art' *Geography Compass*
- Ingram, A (in press) Experimental Geopolitics *The Geographical Journal*
- Last, A. (2010) Mutable Matter Blog. <http://mutablematter.wordpress.com/2010/08/26/update-experimental-ruins-public-engagement/>
- Gallagher, M (2010) Personal Blog. <http://www.michaelgallagher.co.uk/archives/292>
- White, N (2010) Office of Experiments Blog <http://www.o-o-e.org/blog/?p=4>
- Both Neal white and Gail Davies have been interviewed for the Radio Programme Art as Research – produced by Armin Medosch broadcast on 13th of December 2010. <http://apasfftp1.apa.at/oe1/programm/0000C00E.MP3>
- Angela Last has both been involved in collaborative discussion to produce a series of art-science-geography related radio programmes for Resonance FM.

BUILDING FURTHER COLLABORATIONS

- The workshop developed some specific proposals for the ongoing work of the Office of Experiments in London, including sites such as the artillery testing sites (Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, now Thamesmead), gunpowder factories and the hidden spaces of experimentation (Herne Hill plant laboratory), where there

are histories of techno-scientific experimentation, but also ongoing wider experiments in terms of land reclamation and urban planning as these sites are recuperated.

- There are two further collaboration conversations related to the Biogeography and Transgenic Life project. Both are with artists not present at the event, but who were contacted through wider the artistic and geographical networks present.
 - The first, with Helen Scalway (Royal Holloway) is exploring practices of diagramming as a means of opening up spaces and relations emerging in the organisation of contemporary mouse genetics to public consideration. The aim here is through conversation to develop further understanding of the nature of experimental space in both the work of Gail Davies and Helen Scalway, and produce some artworks to run alongside the final text of a book on this project, and for a small exhibition.
 - The second, involving Richard Pell (Carnegie Mellon) is a conversation which has developed around the role of his work at the Centre for PostNatural History in archiving genetically modified organisms. At the moment, this is an informal conversation, sharing expertise and resources around the histories of genetically modified mice, but there is future potential for a more formal collaboration.

PARTICIPANTS

Brian Balmer, Department of Science and Technology Studies, UCL: Brian Balmer's research interests focus on the nature of scientific expertise, and the role of experts in science policy formation, particularly within the life sciences. His specific interests combine historical and sociological approaches and include: policies for biotechnology and genetics; military technology and arms limitation - particularly the history of chemical and biological warfare; the role of volunteers in biomedical research; science policy and the sociology of science. He is currently working on a book on secrecy.

Angus Boulton, www.angusboulton.net: British photographer Angus Boulton was born in 1961 at York and trained as a geographer and geologist. He began photographing Berlin in 1998 on a DG Bank art grant, which resulted in a book and exhibition entitled *Richtung Berlin* (2000). His Berlin photographs were the starting point for a larger project, investigating the legacy of the Soviet military in the former East Germany. In 2005, he was awarded an AHRC fellowship at Manchester Metropolitan University to research historical narratives in photography and film. His work has been exhibited widely in Europe and resides in a number of public collections.

Gail Davies, Department of Geography, UCL: Gail Davies is a geographer, with research interests in the geographies of science. She works ethnographically, to explore the situated, embodied, institutional and ethical dimensions of knowledge practices in the life sciences, with a particular interest in the permeability, or otherwise, of the boundaries between expert understandings and other forms of knowing nature, biology and animals. Substantive projects have explored the practices of natural history filmmaking, urban nature conservation, organ transplantation, and functional genomics. These aim to create and reflect on the potential of public engagement processes, the media, art, and ethnographic research to create spaces for ethical debate around the future of biology. Such interventions draw attention to the potential of undecidability, emergence, and promise in experimental scientific and social practices. She is currently tracing the changing conceptualization of

experimental space in post genomics and the shifting locations of 'global science' through the changing use of mice as model organisms.

Tim Edensor, Department of Geography, Manchester Metropolitan University: Tim Edensor teaches Cultural Geography at Manchester Metropolitan University. He is author of *Tourists at the Taj* (1998), *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (2002) and *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality*, and the editor of *Geographies of Rhythm* (2010) and co-editor of *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Creative Economy* (2009). He has also written widely about tourism, class, rurality, football and mobilities, and is currently pursuing projects on landscapes of illumination and urban materialities. Tim has also authored two websites on ruins in the UK: *British Industrial Ruins* http://www.sci-eng.mmu.ac.uk/british_industrial_ruins and *Spaces of Dereliction: Industrial Ruins in the UK* http://www.sci-eng.mmu.ac.uk/industrial_ruins/

Michael Gallagher, University of Edinburgh: Michael Gallagher is a social researcher based at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. He also has a creative practice as an experimental musician and sound recordist. Current and recent activities include, amongst other things, managing an ESRC training and networking project exploring experimental audio, visual and site-specific practice in human geography. This includes an online forum to create an international network for experimentation with audio, visual, and site-specific methods in social and cultural research: <http://michaelgallagher.co.uk/experimental-methods-network>

Bradley Garrett, Department of Geography, Royal Holloway University of London: Bradley Garrett is a Ph.D. candidate in Social and Cultural Geography at Royal Holloway, University of London supported by a Reid Studentship until 2011. He holds a B.A. in History and a B.S. in Anthropology from the University of California, Riverside and an M.A. in Maritime Archaeology from James Cook University in Queensland, Australia. His interests focus around visual methods, materiality, memory, heritage, cultural geographies, place-making, sacred landscapes (real or virtual), visual methods and existential philosophy (usually with phenomenological influences). He is currently conducting ethnographic research about urban exploration (UrbEx); the exploration of normally uncharted areas of urban environments.

Priska Gisler, Bern University of the arts: Priska Gisler is Professor and Head of the research department "Intermediality" at the University of the Arts, Berne and, research fellow at the Collegium Helveticum, a laboratory for transdisciplinary research at the Federal Institute of Technology, ETH Zurich. Trained as a sociologist/historian she has been working in the field of Science and Technology Studies for many years. Her interests are focused on practices of collecting and exhibiting, biological materials and notions of personhood, the politics of mediation in respect to scientific knowledge, and the discursive production of legal norms and social problems.

Muki Haklay, Department of Geomatic Engineering, UCL: Muki Haklay is a senior lecturer in Geographical Information Science (GISc) at UCL department of Civil Environmental and Geomatic Engineering. His research focuses on public access to environmental information, participatory mapping, citizen science, and lay user interaction with geospatial technologies. In the last decade, he successfully carried out many participatory mapping projects, including the extensive 'Mapping Change for Sustainable Communities' where six communities in London developed a Web-based community map through a participatory process which he led. He is recognised as a leading expert on Volunteered Geographical Information (VGI), Citizen Science and participatory mapping. He has been researching the OpenStreetMap project, a volunteer enterprise to map every country worldwide, since its inception, and provided rapid analysis of it shortly after the Haiti earthquake in 2010, which helped NGOs and responders. He recently received a national Higher Education Social Enterprise Development Award for his community mapping work. He specialises in interdisciplinary research since his joint B.Sc. degree in Computer Science and Geography, and continuing throughout his career, most recently as a C.I. of EPSRC grant 'Towards

Successful Suburban Town Centres' working with experts in Geography, History and Architecture; and C.I. of EPSRC grant 'Bridging the Gaps across Sustainable Urban Spaces' where he collaborate with colleagues in Environmental Engineering, Computer Science and the Built Environment.

Andrew Harris, Department of Geography/Urban Laboratory, UCL: Andrew Harris' work falls into two main strands: critical perspectives on the creative city and explorations of vertical urbanism. The first investigates how symbols, practices and networks associated with the visual arts have become increasingly important in negotiating power in the post-industrial metropolis. This research combines a concern for cultural landscapes and aesthetics with an exploration of the economic and political dynamics of contemporary urban restructuring. He uses this focus to consider how spatial articulations and exclusions associated with the creative city have been implicated in asserting discourses and practices of 'neoliberal' urbanism, and instigating new waves of inner-city gentrification. He also uses this perspective to chart new directions and possibilities for cultural interventions in the contemporary city. He has undertaken work on these themes across several case-studies in London, Mumbai and Buenos Aires. He is also expanding his geographical focus from the inner-city to consider creative practices and visions associated with the suburbs or urban fringe. The second strand focuses on the three-dimensional geographies of contemporary cities. He is currently undertaking ESRC-funded research on the construction of flyovers and skywalks in Mumbai. This considers how the visions, materials and practices associated with these elevated infrastructural projects play a constitutive role in new political performances and relations of power. He is also developing work on tall buildings in London, and has been awarded a Beacon Bursary for a web-based project entitled 'Tall tales'.

Harriet Hawkins, Department of Geography, University of Bristol: Harriet Hawkins's research focuses on the geographies of creative and cultural practices. Informed by cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary research her work brings together the cultural geographies of creative practices (mainly visual arts practice) with the geographies of the creative industries and thinks through the value of creative practices as a geographical research and dissemination method. Alongside academic publications, her research has both practice led and knowledge transfer strands. She has produced the artists' book 'insites' in collaboration with Annie Lovejoy and is also working with art galleries, with artist-led organisations and in a policy environment with arts governance organisations. She is currently part of a collaboration between Institute of International Visual Arts (Hoxton, London), Tate Britain and The Royal Geographical Society around the theme of 'creative mapping'. Her PhD research was based around analyzing geographies of contemporary art works based around rubbish, waste and ruin.

Julian Holloway, Department of Geography, Manchester Metropolitan University: Julian Holloway's primary research interest is how theories of practice, embodiment and affect can be utilised to make sense of space and place. The key area in which he has pursued this interest is the geography of belief, religion and spirituality, and in particular the New Age and Spiritualist Movements. More recently, this interest has extended into areas of spectrality, monstrosity and the cultural geography of haunting and ghosts, as well as other occult and paranormal phenomenon. He has longstanding interests in countercultural and psychogeographical interventions in the city.

Alan Ingram, Department of Geography, UCL: Alan Ingram works in political geography and geopolitics. His research currently focuses on two main areas: governmentality and security in global health and rethinking geopolitics via an engagement with art practices. His writing on art and geopolitics is featured in the new catalogue for the Borders exhibition cycle that ran at Gemak in The Hague.

James Kneale, Department of Geography, UCL: James Kneale's research interests are in cultural and historical geography and concern the represented and material geographies of popular culture, largely in the UK and US. He

has two main areas of interest. The first concerns literary representations of space, particularly in non-realist genres (science fiction, horror, ghost stories, utopias, etc). As well as editing a collection on geographies of science fiction with Rob Kitchin, he has written about William Gibson, H. P. Lovecraft, M. John Harrison, Arthur Machen and Algernon Blackwood and is currently interested in Maureen Duffy, Iain M. Banks and Kim Stanley Robinson, amongst other writers. The second concerns historical and contemporary geographies of drink and drunkenness. He has published on nineteenth- and twentieth-century constructions of drink as a spatial problem, and on the parallels between historical and contemporary policy, popular and medical discussions of binge-drinking.

Angela Last, Department of Geography, Open University: Angela Last is a research student working on experimental methods of public engagement around nanotechnology. Her project is about the relations between the space we can sense and the processes at the scale of atoms or molecules. Using the example of public engagement with nanotechnology she points to the differences between policy-orientated and sci-art engagement in their approaches to matter. Her 'Mutable Matter' project tries to bring public engagement with nanotechnologies and recent interactive sci-art exhibitions into dialogue with each other through a series of art practice based interactive 'experiments' which allow people to talk about and playfully explore the relations between those two scales. <http://mutablematter.wordpress.com/>

David Perrett, Professor of Bioanalytical Science Barts & the London School of Medicine, Queen Mary University of London: Although both a teacher and active biomedical researcher for my day job, my interests relevant to this "experimental ruins workshop" can probably be traced to my upbringing in a coal mining community in Yorkshire. For nearly 40 years, I have been involved with industrial archaeology in London and elsewhere via the Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society (GLIAS). My interests include stationary steam engines especially related to London, the development of the market hall and Working Class housing. I have just completed a two year Presidency of the Newcomen Society; the International Society for the History of Engineering & Technology which is based the Science Museum South Kensington. For my presidential address I developed a study of the history of images of people at work based on the George Dodd's 1843 book "Days at the Factories" about work in London. This lecture I have now given in some ten venues around the country.

David Pinder, Department of Geography, Queen Mary, University of London: David Pinder's research is concerned with urbanism and the politics of urban space. One strand addresses utopian visions of cities, especially through the ideas and practices of twentieth-century modernist and avant-garde groups such as the surrealists and situationists. As part of this he has recently been writing about radical mobilities within architectural and urban discourses of the 1960s, and the potential critical significance of reclaiming utopian perspectives in the present. He is also concerned with artistic practices and urban interventions, considering how cities may be critically explored through walking, mapping, and other spatial or psychogeographical practices. His publications include the book 'Visions of the city: utopianism, power and politics in twentieth-century urbanism', and a guest edited issue of the journal 'Cultural Geographies' on 'Arts of urban exploration'.

Steve Rowell, www.steverowell.com: Steven Rowell is an artist and researcher currently based in Berlin, working with photography as well as with audio and video recordings captured in the field. He examines technology and infrastructure on, beneath, and above the landscape, contextualizing the built and the natural environment, appropriating the methods and tools of the geographer and cartographer. In addition to his own practice, he collaborates with The Center for Land Use Interpretation (CLUI), SIMPARCH, and The Office of Experiments. As part of CLUI, Steve's work has been exhibited internationally at a range of galleries and museums including: The 2006 Whitney Biennial; Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture, New York; Yerba Buena Center for The Arts, San Francisco; The Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; The Barbican Art Centre, IBID

Projects, and Between Bridges, London. With SIMPARCH, his work has exhibited at The Ballroom, Marfa, TX and Year_06 Art Fair in conjunction with Frieze Art Fair 2006, London (among other locations).

Markus Schwander, www.markusschwander.com: Markus Schwander is a visual artist. He was born in 1960, and studied Art Education and Art in Lucerne and Basel. He has exhibited works of sculpture and drawing, including at the FRI -ART Fribourg (2006) and at the Villa Merkel in Esslingen (2007). The publication Abdruck, on Markus Schwander's Objects and Drawings was released in 2004 by Revolver-Verlag, Frankfurt / Main. Since 1999, he has been lecturer at the UAS Northwestern Switzerland, Academy of Art and Design in Basel. He is editor of the publication of the research project Owing Online Art <http://www.ooart.ch>

Nicola Triscott, The Arts catalyst, <http://www.artscatalyst.org>: Nicola Triscott is a cultural producer, working in the visual, interdisciplinary, and performing arts. She is the Founder and Director of The Arts Catalyst. In this role, she has built alliances internationally between artists, scientists and other experts, exploring science in its social, political and cultural context and expanding new territories for artistic practice. The Arts Catalyst has commissioned and produced more than 80 new artists' projects. Nicola writes and lectures widely in the UK and internationally on intersections between art, science, technology and society. She is a cultural consultant to the European Space Agency and co-chair of the International Astronautical Federation's Committee on the Cultural Utilisation of Space (ITACCUS). Nicola read physics at Imperial College and geography at UCL, and worked in arts policy, theatre production and art centre management, before setting up The Arts Catalyst in 1993.

Neal White, Office of Experiments (OOE), <http://www.nealwhite.org>: Neal White (Office of Experiments and Media School, Bournemouth University) works across media, and in no particular medium at all – creating projects with the Office of Experiments that develop collaborative, social and critical spaces using art methods and art materials. His work operates along the fine line between how art thinks and the effect that art has as a social practice. Neal White has been associated with 0+1, formerly APG, Artists' Placement Group, for several years. Maintaining that art has always pushed the boundaries of the possible in terms of models of social collaboration and networking, Neal White's work looks at how these models can engage with other kinds of knowledge producing structure. The Office of Experiments is a structure for experimental cultural practices.