Shaping Deaf/Hearing alliances in the workshop's temporary space: a critical ethnographic account from a hearing researcher's perspective on the *Deaf Heritage Collective*

Marta Discepoli

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Abstract

The MRes thesis takes its area of research enquiry from a *Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) funded project, The Deaf Heritage Collective,* which aimed to create significant working relationships between Scotland's Deaf Community and the cultural sector. The aim of the MRes is to document and critically situate the *Deaf Heritage Collective* project and consider its process and impact. Written from the perspective of the project coordinator, the thesis provides an insider documentation of the project and its methodology, providing an important insight into the marginalized status of Deaf heritage in Scotland. The thesis *documents the project through ethnography and auto-ethnography and brings into focus* my own positionality of outsider-insider as one that has been developing and changing over the project's course, gaining, through the community, a deeper understanding for the need of Deaf-Hearing alliances (Ladd, 2003).

The thesis reflectively conceptualises the approach of the *Deaf Heritage Collective* project, which was developed through a series of workshops, designed as a unique temporary space where deaf and Deaf issues and relationships could be debated by representatives from social and cultural organisations. The thesis describes how the workshops were curated as spaces wherein participants engaged in provocative and participative design activities that extended the *"social action of heritage"* (Harrison 2010), through collaborative making as a mode of inquiry.

Informed by critical heritage and design's speculative capacity, the project's aim was to advance discussion about the content and infrastructure of Deaf heritage through collaborative design methods. Through a series of touring workshops, the project facilitated an *emerging space to consider the complexity of Deaf heritage, one that* transcended spoken and written English. The thesis will be of interest to both heritage researchers and practitioners interested in critical and collaborative approaches to community heritage.

Collaboration Statement

Funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE), the *Deaf Heritage Collective: Scotland's Hidden Culture* was a two-year interdisciplinary Networking Project, that aimed to advance the discussion around BSL and the BSL Scotland National Plan (2017) and the implications for the cultural sector. The PI was Dr Kirstie Jamieson, a lecturer in Design and Heritage at Edinburgh Napier University and the named co-researcher was Professor Graham Turner, Professor of Translation and Interpreting Studies at Heriot Watt University. I was formally employed as the Project Administrator for a period of two years and was provided with a funded MRes to document the project.

Ethics Statement

The Project Team was experienced in working with deaf communities and approached the project in such a way as to recognise deaf participants culturally rather than through the limited prism of disability. We therefore did not view our participants as more vulnerable than our English-speaking participants. We communicated issues of consent through BSL rather than simply through written English. This was done at the beginning of workshops. We also printed posters to communicate the use of photography, which hung on the venues' walls.

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Introduction

The MRes thesis takes its area of research enquiry from *The Deaf Heritage Collective*, a RSE funded project that ran from January 2018 to November 2019 through a series of workshops and events that aimed to generate a network of interested parties, to create a significant working relationship between Scotland's Deaf Community and the Cultural Sector. A broader aim of the project as to advance discussion around the BSL (British Sign Language) Scotland National Plan (2017) and the future of Deaf heritage in Scotland's public life. The project sought to bring about a network of relationships between Scotland's Deaf communities and cultural professionals with the aim of narrowing the gap between Deaf culture and mainstream cultural institutions. On writing this MRes, the project is complete and allows me to reflect upon its aims, methods and outcomes.

The Deaf Heritage Collective was at the outset a collaborative project between academics based at Edinburgh Napier University working in the field of heritage-design and academics based at Heriot-Watt specialising in the field of BSL, within the field of Translation and Interpreting Studies. This collaboration opened the opportunity to tackle the marginalised status of the Deaf community, framing it in a context that explored it as a cultural minority as well as a linguistic one. While deafness has historically been analysed from a medical perspective and (only in more recent years) from a linguistic one (Kusters, et al. 2017; Leith, 2017; P. Ladd, 2003; Padden & Humphries, 2005; Lane, et al., 2011; Stokoe, et al., 1965), the project's aim to advance discussion through design methods within a critical heritage framework, added a new layer to the exploration of Deaf culture; one that enacts and explores identities within the related social controversies within which they are both part and other. Approaching the complexity of Deaf culture through design methods enabled the project to reveal layers that would otherwise remain hidden by adopting traditional methods (Lury & Wakeford 2012; Denzin 2017; McKay and Bradley, 2016; Bradley et al., 2018).

It is imperative to both the project and the location to identify the distinct historical junction that made the project possible, that is the formal recognition of BSL as a language, with the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015, followed by the first BSL National Plan, in

October 2017. Given that the first objective of the Scottish Government is "*to make Scotland the best place in the world for people whose first or preferred language is BSL to live, work and visit". (Scottish Government, s.d.),* how public institutions respond to the mandate set by the BSL Act is the following step of this journey. It is this context that gave way to a reflection upon the need to create a sincere and open discussion between Scotland's cultural institutions and the Deaf community; a call to action at a critical moment when, as researchers we might ask questions that develop the language and practices of equality in the arts to extend conventional practices of access.

The research team aligned with principles of design anthropologies and critical design which, rather than offering solutions, often seek to reveal inequalities and complicit cultural and social processes that sustain excusive practices. The research team sought to raise awareness and develop discussions capable of challenging public understanding of Deaf heritage in relation to diversity and inclusion. As I will discuss further in the thesis, despite the formal acknowledgment of the Deaf community through the recognition of the BSL in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2016), the underrepresented status of Deaf heritage remains embedded in social and cultural infrastructures. Framed by design anthropologies and critical design (Gunn, et al., 2013; Dunne & Raby, 2013; DiSalvo, 2012) the research team identified Deaf heritage as a culture "at risk" and therefore our design approach sought to both problematize this cultural status and shift discussion towards critical, inclusive, and participatory heritage praxis.

The prefix of 'critical' that both critical design and critical heritage share announces their aim to unsettle taken for granted discourses (Mouffe, 2013), in the "understanding of the structural forms of power that sustain injustice and inequality" (Jamieson & Discepoli, 2020, p. 131) . It also places value on their disciplinary capacity to bring about change that privileges social justice and inclusive ideals. "The arguments that sustain critical heritage are both that heritage can expose and elevate stories of the oppressed and marginalised (Rose 2016), and that heritage offers the possibility of new beginnings (ibid.). In this way, while critical design – with its speculative and playful way to problematise the status quo and subvert categories of researcher/researched, helps us producing *"*a shift toward action that models alternative presents and possible futures in material and experiential forms*"* (DiSalvo, 2012, p. 119), so critical heritage "promises a certain future-making potentiality and summons what Burrows and O'Sullivan (2019) refer to as mythopoesis, or 'a people who are missing'. (Jamieson, et al., 2021). Therefore,

sharing a common provocative and multisensorial approach to ways of knowing, the projects team aligned with Schofield's call (2019) for the mutual engagement of critical heritage and critical design methods, to reveal the *"hidden, forgotten, unofficial and difficult heritage that appeals to researchers of both critical heritage and critical design fields"* (Jamieson & Discepoli, 2020 p.218).

In order to bring into being a network of Deaf communities, and cultural heritage organisations committed to promoting BSL in public life, the team's decision of naming the project *The Deaf Heritage Collective*, revels in its own methodological intention behind this choice. Although the Deaf Heritage Collective sits within this growing body of research, it also sought to reflect upon its own constitution and balance of power, something that is evident in its claim to be a 'collective'.

Learning from Marchart's notion of the agent emerging *"from the action as a collectivity*" (2018, p.142), the project sought to identify/create a *collective will* among the interested parties. Thus, in this context the choice to name the project the *'Deaf Heritage Collective'* expressed the aim to facilitate and build relationships that would *construct* heritage, implying the ethical responsibility to engage with issues of discrimination and inequality. The way the team engaged with participatory and (methods of translation as) dialogic practice (Connely, Translation Zone(s), 2007) balancing the different linguistic landscapes, reflects this attempt to develop a working network where participants could be in a position of equality and inclusivity, where everyone could freely express themselves.

Coming from the design field we endorse the notion for which arts and design can constitute a distinctive means of communication (InDialogue, 2019) able to generate dialogues among plural contexts within society. Increasingly the methodological emphasis upon participation and speculative co-production has evolved through community engagement projects where the focus is upon non-academic partners and the 'convergence of different types of knowledge' (Stuttaford et al 2012). Critical heritage with critical design, as well as art practice offers us a mean to "understand social interactions - providing an alternative historical record of social evolution" (Jones & Connelly, 2019).

Aims

The thesis that gives a tangible outcome to the MRes is a document of the *Deaf Heritage Collective* project in its *development, context, approach and aims*. As the author, I am necessarily implicated in all four of these aspects and there is therefore a duality of my role of researcher and project administrator. Working as a design team of two, the project called upon a great deal of dedication and time. The ability to now 'look back' upon the project provides a certain amount of distance, but at the same time I cannot separate myself from the details this dissertation describes.

When I first undertook Deaf culture as subject and focus to my study, my aim was to help raise awareness among the hearing, since despite the significant changes, in the general opinion deaf histories, lives and culture, remained invisible. By developing my MA project, also my ethical awareness grew, considering whether it was my place or not even entering this field and my relationship to it. As Leith points out, being the "majority of researchers into signing-deaf communities are not themselves deaf, there is a legacy of problematic and imbalanced research relationships between speaking-hearing researchers and signing-deaf research participants" (Leith, 2016, p.71), it is easy to develop problematic relationships, where *"*prejudice, mistrust, misunderstanding, unmet expectations, identity crises and pervasive mythologies*"* (Baker-Shenk and Kyle 1990, p.65) can be generated. I feel my positionality very close to what French refers to as "artist facilitator", one that requires a *"*reflexive approach; ensuring my personal opinions and preferences did not influence the group's decisions*"* (2017, p.26).

Embedded in the development of the project, while documenting it at the same time, I have synchronously analysed my complex position of insider-outsider (K. Rosner, et al., 2016) under multiple aspects: insider to the project, outsider to the Deaf community, or as a junior researcher in the academia and an outsider to the local context, being myself an Italian living in Edinburgh. In my case, my own positionality has been shaped and molded during the project, by my role initially and the relationships developed afterwards, leaving *me as* 'a hearing person with an occasional travel permit into deaf worlds' (Young and Temple 2014, p.3).

For this reason, and the different layers of analysis that can be drawn from the project, I decided to approach this dissertation by clearly dividing the methodology in respect to the Project methodology and the ethnographic research I conducted over this experience.

Structure of Thesis

The chapters that follow are intended to give an account of the historic context that announced new beginnings and cultural ground for Scotland's Deaf community, and to identify how these legal changes announced both institutional mandates for cultural institutions to reflect and rethink the categorisation of disability in relation to BSL. The thesis provides both a reflective account of the RSE funded *Deaf Heritage Collective* project, and the context that made it possible.

The dissertation begins with Chapter One and its exploration of Deaf heritage, as that which sits as a future-making potential in relation to Deaf identity and its futurity. It provides some necessary context to ways of considering a historic lineage, or ancestry of Deaf culture, how it is originated, and has been passed on, through the heritage idiom as cultural currency (Jamieson, et al., 2020). Moreover, Chapter One introduces a central argument of the thesis, namely why understanding deaf communities is key to understanding the relevance of involving deaf participants in the project. In fact, "Heritage from this perspective is attentive to the affective relations within communities and finds its significance in the self-identification, solidarity, support, and cultural transmission of the community" (ibid p. 6).
Only by understanding the personal connotations of Deaf heritage, can we contextualise the cultural trauma and negative effect of Deaf Clubs' and Schools' disappearance. The first chapter also explores the relation between Deaf heritage and activism before addressing the historic significance of the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.

Chapter One contextualizes the project in the broader socio-cultural frame of the legal change towards more inclusive heritage idioms and modes of cultural representation. It also captures the momentum that emancipatory design, self-advocacy and co-production has gained in the UK over the last five decades (French, 2017). Despite the social shift toward disability in the 60' (Oliver, 1981), we still suffer from the 'personal tragedy'

approach, for which disabled people are seen as victims that need to be cared for, through the provision of social services and welfare politics (Barnes and Mercer 1997).

While other cultural minority groups, have gradually been acknowledged by museums' attempts to recognize marginalization and hidden histories, the same interest has not been granted towards disabled group. For a long time, the main concern in museums remained on issues of access, thereby obscuring alternative possibilities for disability-themed content within exhibitions and displays (Sandell, et al., 2010). After discussing the recast of disability representations, Chapter One analyzes the revision of heritage, what it is and what it can do (Harrison, 2013) in its capacity to construct and deconstruct political realities and offering a new ground to rethink political conditions.

Following on, Chapter Two addresses the synergies of critical heritage and critical design in dealing with the wicked nature of Deaf heritage. It describes the project's approach in relation to critical design and critical heritage and how their confluence allowed for distinctly speculative and performative workshop activities. The emphasis upon the concept of emergences and plural realities is key both to critical design and critical heritage, and it reflects in the participatory methods both fields engage with. The meanings of 'emergent' in this context relate to the specific critical approach adopted by the team. In the course of the project, we used the term 'emergent to describe those contexts where there was no clear way of knowing where the project might lead; where the point was *"not knowing where it is going… but to go along for the ride, in mutual, open-ended, and yet limited entanglement*" (BillMaurer, 2005, p.4). Nevertheless, we acknowledged that the term 'emergent' is seen as problematic in relation to power where it can conceal more than it reveals and cloak systems and acts of power in an 'air of magic' (Corradini and O'Connor, 2010). Still, 'emergence' provided the team with a means of understanding micro-cultural change and the directional flows of discourses and events related to the subject of Deaf heritage. Emergence is also useful to discussions surrounding community dialogue and social change. For instance, Conrad et al. (2015) describe collaborative community practice of creator-researchers as that which provokes social change and nurtures "the emergence of new ways of knowing; interrogating the power dynamics associated with personal and cultural narratives" (p.xxi).

Moreover, design anthropology has increasingly applied principles of emergence as interventions (Akama et al, 2018) that seek to create moments of temporary change that

breach the *status quo* to reveal potential for social change. Emergence can also be usefully related to the critical heritage prerogative of questioning difficult and dark heritage. Here, 'emergence' can support community and postcolonial heritage practice that open "up the social space to new voices, affects and bodies, forging relations or "contact zones" between actors" (Knudsen and Kølvraa 2020 p.11). Heritage from this vantage point is concerned with future-making (Harrison 2013; Basu and Modest 2014). Zetterstrom-Sharp (2014) argues that the future-making capacity of heritage "is strategically applied to activate, or in Appadurai's words 'builds capacity for', future aspirations. Similarly, Bauer's (1940) concept of 'common destiny' (p.610) usefully dilates the futurability of heritage processes. Sharing this view to the future, critical design is characterised by a distinctly speculative future-oriented approach. Aligning with these future-oriented principles, the project sought to create "dialogue about possibilities" of Deaf heritage futures.

In Chapter Three the thesis focuses upon my own ethnographic position as both a project team member and an MRes researcher. Chapter Three discusses the complexity of this position of insider-outsider in relation to respectively: the project, the cultural context of Scotland and Deaf culture. The chapter also explores the interdisciplinarity of the project and the various areas of intersections such as the context of linguistic minorities a bilingualism and museum activism movements. By describing the participatory methods approach Chapter Three lays out the methodology of the project, identified through the two years' experience.

In Chapter Four, I turn to the specific workshops that took place over the two years, beginning with Glasgow, then Inverness, Edinburgh and finally Stirling, reflecting upon each of them in relation to the geographical context, aims, and participative modalities of each workshop. I describe every workshop through a detailed account of its three distinctive semantic spaces: Exhibitions and Displays/Presenters and collaborative activities. Within these specific spaces, the participants were drawn to collaborate into critical fabulations (Jamieson & Discepoli, 2020) materializing conditions for which the valorization of Deaf Heritage could be interpreted through shared discursive practice. The chapter presents the specific findings that emerged from the various activities, but also the obstacles and challenges in the making of the workshops, a process that itself over the two years was increasingly assessed to the collective will rather than the curatorial decision-making power of the individual organizer.

In Chapter Five, I reflect upon the project's aims and the workshops' conversations that developed and challenged preconceptions around Deaf heritage and deaf lives. The chapter also reflects upon the challenges the research team faced, and discussions developed, pointing out to the workshop's strength and limits.

Finally, in Chapter Six, I conclude by looking back at a project that in its name revealed its intention of bringing into being a network of interested parties. A *collective*, wherein collaboration and Deaf-hearing alliances could be forged, to action,to rethink and reshape the future of a critical heritage and a culture that can still be considered at risk, and too often regarded mainly under the social welfare aspect of access. Looking forward to what will come next, I gained a deeper understanding of the ethical responsibilities among heritage professionals, hearing academics and curators negotiating ownership and belonging in a slippery space where hierarchies are temporarily levelled, and collaborative dialogic practice is at play. Through my role as a project administrator, I developed a relational and reflexive approach to a research project that, particularly in its participatory asset, raises important questions on *inclusion* and authorship, or as French argues, concerning the individual versus the collective, author versus observer, 'real life' versus art, exploring how these pluralities can sit in relationship to each other (2017, p.115).

A Note to the Reader

At this stage in the thesis, it is important to highlight and explain a key distinction in the references to *deaf and Deaf*. The main convention in the deaf studies literature has been to distinguish from a lower-case *deaf* with reference to the audiological condition relating to hearing loss, without any reference of affiliation with the specific cultural identity of being instead *culturally Deaf* and part of the signing community. Being a *deaf* person does not necessarily mean being part of the Deaf community, in most cases, in fact, deaf people live and identify themselves in hearing-speaking community.

Nevertheless, I will adopt this terminology on the course of my thesis – referring to *Deaf* from a cultural perspective, in opposition to a more generic context when talking of *deafness* – it needs to be mentioned that this is only one among different conventions; it

has been widely under discussion and still comes with many controversies, as Leith explains:

> *It has fallen from favour as being too essentialist a way 'to decide who is "in" and who is "out" (Tijsseling 2015:49), masking the complexities of the community – indeed, scholar Kyra Pollitt says the distinction constitutes linguistic imperialism since the big-D/little-d distinction is only possible in English (personal communication). Other conventions exist and are also contested. The un-capitalised deaf is regaining ground, with Fenlon et al. applying it so as 'not to make assumptions about individual deaf people's identity'* (2015, p.169).

Chapter One

Deaf Heritage on the Horizon of Public Life in Scotland

The aim of this first chapter is to situate the project within a historic juncture and to map the legal change in relation to both cultural representation, heritage organisations and the Deaf community in Scotland. The chapter begins by situating the critical contexts for the MRes and describing the advent of a new Scottish policy context for a future Deaf heritage. It then addresses the claim, culture and identity of Deaf heritage and its relationship with Deaf activism before more fully considering Deaf heritage as future-making.

Critical Contexts for Mres: National and BSL Language as Minority

In September 2015 the Scottish Parliament voted unanimously to pass the British Sign Language (Scotland) Bill; a month later the Bill received Royal Assent and became the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. With a new BSL Act, the Scottish Government launched consultations with the Scottish Council on Deafness and National Advisory Group about the draft development across Scotland from the 1st March until July 2017. During this time, several events were set up in different locations to ask the BSL community for feedback and suggestions about the goals presented. The foremost objective, as it appears

in the Scottish Government website, was “to make Scotland the best place in the world for people whose first or preferred language is BSL to live, work and visit”. (Scottish Government, s.d.). After two years from the BSL (Scotland) Act, in October 2017 the First National Plan was announced.

> […] *It covers the Scottish Government and more than 50 national public bodies who are answerable to Scottish Ministers. It was framed around ten long-term goals (these relate to public services as a whole; early years; school education; post-school education; employment; Health mental health and social care; transport; culture, leisure, sport and the arts; justice; and democracy). The draft plan – which covers the period 2017-2023 – sets out more than fifty actions we will take over the next six years* (Scottish Government, s.d.).

In October 2018, exactly one year after the National Plan was launched, the fifty national public bodies were asked to respond to the BSL National Plan, presenting their own organisational-level plan, and their actions in relations to the ten goals identified in the National Plan. This context provides an important way of understanding institutions' understanding of the National Plan in terms of their individual and collective capacity to change cultural infrastructure, so that it might respond to the specific needs of the Deaf community. Looking at the horizon of public life in Scotland, our journey with the *Deaf Heritage Collective* started in 2018, pinning down both a lack and a pledge.

The Scottish context is key to the project's ambitions with the formal recognition of BSL as a language through the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015, followed by the first BSL National Plan, in October 2017. Nevertheless the Scottish Government took the commitment “to make Scotland the best place in the world for people whose first or preferred language is BSL to live, work and visit” (Scottish Government, s.d.) - placing a significant emphasis upon culture and public life. As discussed in the Introduction, Scotland's political identification of BSL as a formal language prompted the project researchers to explore the response of cultural and heritage institutions.

Despite the fact that the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015, and the subsequent BSL National Plan provided a context wherein BSL and Deaf identity was registered through the recognition of language, it is important that we acknowledge the slippery position of deafness between language diversity and disability. It is after all this slippery space of identity that many in the cultural sector found difficult to negotiate. The disability aspect of deafness is formulated from a medical point of view and categorizes deafness as a deficit that is apt for a curative and medicalised approach. Therefore, representation matters are

intricately ‘bond with the broader struggle for disability rights’ (Sandell, et al., 2010, p. 4). Deaf people do not deny their hearing impediment however they sit in a particular position within the context of disability. As Lane puts it ‘Deaf people are aware that when together or in signing context ‘there is no impediment but when they are with other ethnic groups, the impediment is based on language’ (Lane, et al., 2011, p. 53). For this reason, deafness relates both two a disability group, but also to a minority ethnicity. Humphries explains explain some of the controversies in fitting deaf people in one specific group:

> *"Disabled" is not a label or self-concept that has historically belonged to Deaf people. "Disabled" is a way of representing yourself, and it implies goals that are unfamiliar to Deaf people. Deaf people's enduring concerns have been these: finding each other and staying together, preserving their language, and maintaining lines of transmittal of their culture. These are not the goals of disabled people. Deaf people do know, however, the benefits of this label and make choices about alignment with these people politically (*Lane et al. p. 53).

Unlike other minority groups, for whom there have been engagement attempts by museums to include hidden histories and experiences in their programming, disabled groups have not been discursively addressed culturally. Still, the main concern in museums remains aligned with issues of access, thereby obscuring more creative and cultural possibilities for disability-themed content within exhibitions and displays (Sandell, et al., 2010)

Today, heritage is known in both its tangible and intangible form and is required to fulfil more than the reductive touristic aims of producing a “single dominant, national narrative” (Harrison, 2012, p.141). Since the 1972 World Heritage Convention galvanised the need for universalising representation and pastoral ownership of heritage, it has increasingly developed as a professionalised process as much as a thing. When we think of minority heritage, we might be inclined to consider those groups whose cultural values remain unrecognised, or whose practices do not fit with the agendas of trans-territorial organisations like UNESCO. Disability as heritage is certainly an awkward fit in this regard. However, the latest debates about the spectrum of intangible cultural heritage may offer pluralised routes of identification. The adoption of a Convention of the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage (2003), and the 2005 Convention on the ‘Protection and Promotion of the diversity of cultural expression’ (Ibid.) allows us to make important connections to language and experience, which are crucially identity-affirming in the Deaf community.

Access to the spaces of heritage-making and the top-down grand narrative of museum pedagogy has been challenged since the 1970s when the focus shifted from disability as dependency, invalidity, and tragedy to a more social approach. The twentieth century gave rise to a counter-narrative to universalising cultural narratives and placed emphasis upon the political role of museums as a generator of identity and central to the cultural representation and discursive construction of disability and disabled lives. It is this critical context that the *Deaf Heritage Collective* sought to develop.

It is important to recognise that disability activism has recently made in-roads in terms of representation and inclusion within the culture and heritage sector. Recent articulations of deaf people are evident in Museums and Galleries in the UK where the expression "Disabled and Deaf people" is taking root (Museum of Liverpool "rethinking Disability"). Deaf people still are to be included in the disabled category, but they are not subsumed by the category of disabled.

> *What material might exist in museum collections that related to disabled people's lives and histories? Why, at a time when museums were increasingly concerned to research and present 'hidden histories', was disability rarely, if ever, considered*? (RDR, 2009).

This shift includes an international spectrum of engaging initiatives and exhibitions aimed at representing hidden histories and lives of the same target audience, "designed to better reflect community diversity within the museums 'narrative repertories and in turn, to increase level of visitations of under-represented groups" (RDR Sandell, 2009 p.11). Nevertheless, as we learn from Sandel and Dood (2009), in terms of disability-related narratives, the museums have been slow to respond, despite the new equality legislations of the last two decades and compared to others minority groups.

The usual 'inclusive' conventions for the disabled are largely associated with physical access, and are mainly referred to as 'visitors' (Delin; 2002), which provides a clear insight to what this might generate:

> *The absence of disabled people as creators of arts, in images and artefacts, and their presence in works reinforcing cultural stereotypes, conspire to present a narrow perspective of the existence of disability in history* (2002, p.84).

How might we contextualise this absence today? Disability and the lives of disabled people across the world are missing from the display cabinets and interpretation boards

in our national museums. If change is in the air, we might find it in the slogan 'Museums are not neutral', but we will struggle to identify deaf or disabled curators, heritage professionals or museum outreach staff. The mantra 'Museums are not Neutral', began as the title given to a campaign launched in 2017 by the museum's practitioner Tanya Autry and Mike Murawski Director of Education & Public Programs at the Portland Art Museum. The campaign critically addressed the lack of historicism and reflexivity that continues to underwrite the sector's claims to neutrality. As Autry (2017) explains, the campaign *"*exposes the fallacies of the neutrality claim and calls for an equity-based transformation of museums" (Murawski & Autry, 2018). The movement, started as a discussion on Twitter, and was developed on branded t-shirt #museumsarenotneutral Raising over $5,000 for the Southern Poverty Law Center, and other organisation engaged on social justice (Autry, 2017).

Bearing in mind this high-profile campaign and the subsequent Black Lives Matter movement, which made rights-based demands upon museums and heritage sites, museums were reminded of their political and social mandate, not just as reservoirs of historical artefacts, but also sites can be trusted and have the power of contextualize our history. During the pandemic crisis of Covid-19, at a time when high vulnerability and social inequalities were raised, the unjustifiable 'public execution' of George Floyd, ignited protests that with historically charged gestures of tearing down statue, representative of a *history of injustice,* come to interrogate the Museum sector (Cole, et al., 2020):

> *As evidenced by many of the international sites of conscience, we only need a few examples of a horrific past to carry the history of injustice. While we can speak to the power of a room full of shoes worn by those who died in a holocaust museum, or the skulls that stand as a monument to the victims at the Choeung Ek Genocidal Center, also known as Cambodia's Killing Fields Museum, the statues in question here do not stand as witness to the victims. Rather, they are the clean-scrubbed homages of their intellectual descendants to honor their cruel ancestors. These objects were tools of a fictional history of conquest, made permanent with metal and stone, erected decades post-mortem to the events they supposedly memorialize* (Fraser, et al., 2020, p. 296).

Museums, are then called upon to interrogate themselves in order to reinvent a more equitable cultural landscape and to critically reflect on the biased foundations our institutions are built on (Cole, et al., 2020).

This political and social mandate of museums and heritage organisations is key to the *Deaf Heritage Collective's* aims. Certainly, the prevailing increased criticality surrounding museums' role provides a further politicised relevance to the discussions around the BSL Act, and its relation to cultural policy and practice in the cultural sector in Scotland. Should we understand this call to arms as a reflective change in the understanding of the ethical role of museums? Is it a move towards the historicist museum, or is it just about inclusion and access? As Murawski argues:

> *Museums have the potential to be relevant, socially-engaged spaces in our communities, acting as agents of positive change. Yet, too often, they strive to remain 'above' the political and social issues that affect our lives — embracing a myth of neutrality* (2021, p.4).

There are many issues that affect minority groups in the everyday life that the museum might support, (taking from the BSL Act, let's think of mental health, employment, public transport etc…). But how might museums support marginalised groups in meaningful ways? In Janes and Sandell's (2019) edited collection *Museum Activism* the authors present a compelling case for the museum as both future-making and ethically-bound to social justice. In their aim to historicise their own commitment to an activist position, the editors describe the timeliness of their aims;

> *Only a decade ago, the notion that museums, galleries and heritage organisations might engage in activist practice – marshalling and directing their unique resources with explicit intent to act upon inequalities, injustices and environmental crises – was met with widespread scepticism and often derision. Seeking to purposefully bring about change beyond the walls of the institution, through support for standpoints informed by moral, ethical and scientific rationales, was viewed by museum workers, sector leaders and external commentators alike as inappropriately political and partisan* (Janes and Sandell 2019, p.xxvii)

This commitment to action provides new expectations from our museums and heritage sites. Although voices such as this are far from mainstream, the Museum as Activist movement has shifted the argument from inclusion to *action.*

<u>Critical Contexts for MRes: Activism and the Politics of Representation</u>

Reflections like this, offer a route to the authentic inclusion of disability and seem to be developing slowly in the UK through projects like *Buried in the Footstones* (RCMC, 2006) which rethinks disability representations (UOL, 2009). This project, now over ten years old, set the scene for a new framework of considering disability in museums; one

that challenged dominant representation of disability as 'other'. *Buried in the Footnotes* (2006, RCMG), *Rethinking Disability Representation in Museums and Galleries* (RDR) was an experimental project, which ran in the UK between 2006 and 2009. Initiated by the University of Leicester, the project saw the partnership of disabled practitioners and activists working alongside the research team to create experimental narratives in nine museums across England and Scotland[1].

Every one of the exhibitions was different from the others, focusing on a particular aspect of disabled people's lives, but at the same time the common aim of the project, was to find new possibilities through which to reframe disability by building "socially purposeful narratives". A critical and innovative feature of the project was the engagement of a "Think-Tank" of arts practitioners and disabled activists. As Sandell says, the whole project was "shaped by the notion that museums can counter prejudice by reframing informing and enabling societies' conversations about difference" (2007 p. 173).

The analysis and studies conducted through visitors' response and feedback (through comment cards, focused group and interviews) outlined significant themes that are key in considering the way in which visitors think and respond when confronting with disability.

1. A social Political understanding of disability
2. Impairment as a Tragedy: a hegemonic and persistent discourse
3. Heroic survivors and other stereotypes
4. Authenticity, agency and Authority (personalisation of the topic of disability).

The analysis of visitors' data from the nine exhibitions, showed a new way of thinking about disability, even though in many cases, in the general opinion there was still a considerable emphasis upon disability from a medical view. At the same time, it set ambitious aims in terms for museums as activists. Perhaps most importantly, this project

[1] RDR was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fun (HLF) and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), with contributions from the University of Leicester and the nine partner museums. All members of the project's Think Tank; staff at the nine partner museums (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service, Glasgow Museums, the Imperial War Museum, London, Royal London Hospital Archives and Museum, Stamford Museum, Tyne and Wear Museums, Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, and Whitby Museum); Maureen Finn, Cassie Herschel-Shorland, Siobhan Edwards; CLMG, SHAPE, Martyn Hale, Kath Landthaller, colleagues in the Department of Museum Studies; the Centre for Disability Studies, University of Leeds; University of Leicester, MA Museum Studies and Art Museum and Gallery Studies students 2007-2008; University of Leeds, MA Disability Studies students, 2007-2008.

provides a milestone in the shift towards more representation of disabled lives in museums. As Sandell concludes:

> *The evaluation revealed considerable evidence of the capacity for museums to offer new, progressive and egalitarian ways of understanding disability. It is only through more self-conscious approaches to representation, grounded in genuinely collaborative practice with disabled people, that museums can begin to tap their potential to contribute towards broader social changes* (2010 p. 110).

Today, across the museum sector there is a growing wave of thinking that is bringing disability issues and disabled people into the realm of cultural discourse. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (Dec. 2006) provided a new emphasis upon the politics of representation, recognising "the crucial importance of 'promoting positive perceptions and greater social awareness toward disabled people" in order to foster respect for the rights and dignity of disabled people". The convention also laid out for the first time the criteria for which, in the development of public policies and programmes on disability matters "should be consult with disabled people and their representative organisations." (Dec, 2016 [Article 8, 2a(ii)])

> *On top of these legal obligations there is a clear moral perspective. Can you imagine a project entitled Rethinking 'Women's Representation in Museums and Galleries' that was led by men? Traditionally excluded groups – such as women, black and ethnic minorities, children, older people and those of different faiths – are increasingly evident in images of 'the public', and there is a growing awareness that each group should be consulted on the content of those images. Disabled people must be part of this list; images must be included and the content debated* (Sandell, et al., 2010, p. 14).

These developments are key to thinking about the ways in which disability like multiculturalism has brought about more complex definitions of what heritage might be and who might claim heritage and with what implications as to their culture identity and rights. This revision of heritage redefines both what it is and what it can do (Harrison, 2015).[2] This critical approach challenges museums as places where agency and activism can be enabled, supported and sustained through curatorial practices that reconcile identity politics and self-representation and collections. Such a context necessitates that researchers of museums and heritage seek to develop new collaborative and interpretative

solutions to re-presenting disabled people through their own voices and experience (Chynoweth et al., 2021).

In his analysis, Sandell (2019) reflects upon the project *'Talking about…disability and Art'* (Walker, 2007) as an example of such interpretation strategies. By using the fine art permanent collection of the Birmingham Museum, eight paintings were selected (all related, at different levels, with disability or disability experience) to create a trail in the museum with a specific audio-commentary to accompany it. Six different disabled artists were involved with the museum staff to provide diverse interpretation of the same works, and visitors could freely choose what to listen to: painting description and background (provided by the curator), interpretation (provided by the six disabled artists) or a personal story from one of the disabled artists inspired by the paintings. This example shows how many different, unexpected and unconventional readings of the same collection can operate through interpretative changes, by promoting participation and empowering the community to promote a critical and authentic re-telling and re-curation of museum's displays.

Similarly, Delin (2002) challenges the conventional view in museum of war and conflict, appealing to " the medical model of disability [which] looms large amongst curators in museums, assuming a natural link between medical collections and material culture and the disabled people" (Delin, 2002: 87; in Dodd, 2209 p. 70). The target was to *humanize* instead of *medicalize* and reinterpret the view on war-disabled beyond the typical stereotypes of "national sacrifice" or "heroic victims". The outcomes, curated by the Wellcome Trust (London) and the Deutsches Hygiene Museum (Dresden) in the *War and Medicine* exhibition (2009) was an investigation of stories, beyond the war, after hospitalizations, hidden stories about the military medical bureaucracy. his also offered an opportunity for a more political discussion upon the presence/absence of disabled body in the War Museums.

Inclusive co-production methods are also part of the path that led to Scotland's BSL (Scotland) Act and National plan of 2017. The journey to a formalised legal status and renewed linguistic landscape saw the involvement of a dedicated advisory group and consultations *in* and *with* the deaf community over a two-year period. However, in the context of the early days of the *Deaf Heritage Collective* project, as the team surveyed Scotland's cultural sector with some expectations drawn from the context described

above, we were surprised to discover a scenario where professionals often did not have a deep knowledge of the deaf community.

This historic moment "revealed a lack of engagement between Scotland's cultural institutions and its Deaf communities. A lack, which in structural terms meant a lack of equality and a lack of access to cultural space, resources and experiences of public life" (Jamieson & Discepoli, 2020 p. 119). A further backdrop to the status of BSL in relation to heritage and museums is provided by the Museum as Activist movement, which provides a way of considering the intersections of heritage and citizenship and the responsibility of critically engaged museum and heritage sites in dismantling injustices and fostering encounters between diverse social and cultural groups. Heritage from this standpoint, is well-placed to develop cultural democracy. This is why, in its pursuit to tackle the marginalised status of the deaf community, the project was structured as a series of touring workshops, bringing the conversation to different areas in Scotland in order to reveal the actual local representation of deaf culture, BSL provisions and cultural resources. In this sense Scotland's specific demographic of deaf communities provided an interesting sensitivity; we were not only talking about a marginalised culture, but rather marginalised communities within that culture. By developing a series of touring workshops, we hoped to capture the differences of human geography and population spread between, for example, Scotland's central belt and the highlands. The four cities selected were Glasgow, Inverness Edinburgh and Stirling.

Given the momentum BSL is gaining thanks to a political legitimization on a national level in Scotland the project takes place in a particular *Kairos*, a favourable time, to establish itself as a place of advocacy of Deaf representation through the critical lens of the marginalized and the minority. The following paragraphs identify two key contexts for the MRes and *The Deaf Heritage Collective* namely 1) BSL and Minority Language and 2) Deaf Culture and Disability Activism in the cultural sector. The suggestion is not that these are the only contexts within which Deaf Cultural Heritage might be understood, but that they provide the most immediate frames through which it can be understood in the UK context of heritage.

Critical Contexts for the MRes: The Advent of a New Scottish Framework

Among the ten goals of In the BSL Act is the 7th goal ("Culture, Leisure, Sport and the Arts") which represents the areas of cultural and heritage spaces, practices and professions. It states,

> *BSL users will enjoy fair and inclusive access to Scotland's culture, leisure pursuits, sport and the arts and will have every opportunity to share their own Deaf culture with the people of Scotland*" (Scottish Government, s.d.).

This quote provides an important insight into the prevalent language of inclusivity and access, but also points to a more porous relationship between Deaf and hearing communities. To consider how institutions might revise the cultural sector to ensure "every opportunity to share their own Deaf culture with the people of Scotland" (Scottish Government, 2017) goes far beyond the conventions of the disability discourse. Nevertheless, despite the prevailing optimism in relation to the formal recognition of BSL in Scotland deafness still suffers from the stigma of being invisible in society, and is mainly considered from a medical perspective and mainly referred to as a category of disability.

Questions of categories are important to the way in which national public bodies formally respond and through the MRes research this thesis describes, I aim to reveal the developments beyond the medicalised categories and so chart the recognition of the cultural aspect of deafness. Based on the MRes research to date; in particular the experience of participating in academic conferences as well as formal and informal discussions about the BSL Act, there is still poor deaf awareness and understanding of the mandate of the BSL Act both in terms of the formal recognition of BSL as a language and the community that use it.

As part of my initial research journey at this crucial historic moment, I also attended various meetings (an AGM of the Scottish Council on Deafness [SCoD] - newly named deafscotland) and the National Plan announcement and celebration last year in Edinburgh. By regularly attending BSL events and conference I gradually became increasingly entangled in the BSL world in Scotland, a complex positionality which is more comprehensively discussed in Chapter Three. As a hearing researcher involved in a Deaf cultural research project, I became aware of the significant gap in understanding the

cultural aspect of BSL. The context within which this research takes place is suffused with the legacy of medicalised categories that continue to influence how, where and when deaf people are imagined to participate in society. It is useful to refer to the work of Lane et al. (2011) who explore the shifting distance between the categories of 'Deaf' and 'disabled'.

> *Conceived as a 'lack' of one's sense exceeds the medical deficit, rather the term handicap is a definition that belongs more to the social sphere. Some disability advocates maintain that the gap between Deaf and disabled is narrowing as, in recent years, people with disabilities have to a degree forged a group identity and a disability culture– 'artifacts, beliefs and expressions'—to describe their life experiences. However, it is difficult argue that disabled people belong to an ethnic group, the sense of belonging, the distinctive culture and language are not fundamental to the experience of being disabled. Moreover, transmitting the fruits of shared experience is not the same as the transmission of language, history, and culture across the generations by ethnic groups such as African Americans, Native Americans, and…* (Lane, Pillard, & Hedberg, 2011, p. 42).

There are many linguistic and cultural parallels between the Deaf-World and ethnic groups that push us to ask why the Deaf community has been denied this classification. George Veditz (Padden & Humphreis, 2005) probably described the first hint of a Deaf Culture when in 1912 not yet having the vocabulary defined themselves and the community to which he belonged as the "people of the eye" (Padden & Humphries, 2005). Taking this statement as a starting point, Padden and Humphries highlighted the feature of "seeing" as a central core for deaf people, not just as a given feature, but as a result of their ways of interacting with the world in certain ways, that they defined "cultural".

Deaf people refer to themselves as a minority and also as an ethnicity (Lane, 2011; Ladd, 2003) and today we can reference it as such if we begin to consider what ethnicity means and how this might relate to deaf communities. In *Deaf Ethnicity and Ancestry*, Lane Harlan and Pillard (2011) enquire into "whether the concept of ethnic groups applies to the Deaf-World" (p. 1), providing several examples based both on internal and external boundaries. To reinforce the idea of a Deaf minority, we can identify many shared practices within the deaf world: Deaf Visual Arts, Deaf clubs, Theatre and performing art, Storytelling and folklore and Sport. For instance, the great role of SL theatre and poetry in entering Sign Language into the public sphere would be worth mentioning, as is the importance of sport and clubs for socialization.

From this view, we can therefore understand the relevance of the 7th goals and how through their formalization in a national Act, they instantiate Deaf culture in relation to the wider "Culture, Leisure, Sport and the Arts". Situated between the short-term consumer culture of the spectacle, cultural policies exist in the present and suggest possible futures, it is the medium to pass on our culture. Thus, it is such a policy language that allows to move toward the claim of what is culture and to think in terms (in the specific case) of Deaf Culture. Both the BSL National Plan and the Culture Strategy Consultation (Scottish Government, 2018) supported this cultural claim and opened up new ways of thinking about Deaf culture and deaf lives.

Deaf heritage and Deaf activism

If we consider Deaf culture, we are confronted by a different set of circumstances. Paddy Ladd pioneer and Deaf activist is a scholar at the University of Bristol and author of a significant academic argument for Deaf culture and Deaf identity, namely "Understanding Deaf Culture, in search of *deafhood*" (2003). In 1998, he was awarded the 'Deaf Lifetime Achievement' by the Federation of Deaf people. In his book, he offers a guide to explore Deaf culture and the Deaf world, presenting a provocative and deeply engaging argument for the necessity of the cultural concept for understanding deaf collectivities (Edwards, 2003), pointing out the value and contribution of deaf culture also for other academic disciplines. In 1990, he coined the word 'Deafhood' to refer to deafness, an ontological identity that transcended the medical oriented terminology and reflected the experience of deafness.

The definition of deafhood as it appears in the author's glossary is particularly useful at this point:

> *The term 'deafhood' was developed in order to begin the process of defining the existential state of Deaf 'being-in-the-world'. Hitherto, the medical term 'deafness' was used to subsume that experience within the larger category of 'hearing impaired', the vast majority of whom were elderly 'hard of hearing' people, so that the true nature of a Deaf collective existence was rendered invisible. Deafhood is not seen as a finite state, but as a process by which deaf individuals construct that identity around several differently ordered sets of priorities and principles, which are affected by various factors such as nation, era and class. In his work Ladd then, explored Deafhood from different contexts describing it not as a 'monolithic concept'. Having said that, from this*

> *perspective, Ladd also argues, that the essential reality of minority cultures is affected and connected by the level of 'oppositionality'(Ladd, 2003 Glossary).*

The concept of *deafhood* provided a different way of understanding the experience of the deaf self, one that creates distance from impairment and disability, and refers instead to a processual and relational affirmative becoming. To belong to the Deaf community is more than just sharing a disability, it is the sharing of society's views of people with a disability and as discussed above, in this sense it is a shared identity; a shared sense of self. To truly allow Deaf people to have the opportunity to share their own Deaf culture, it is paramount that the interested institution in primis will have this change of perspective of what is the actual subject.

Deaf heritage as future-making: Deaf cultural transmission

> *For us, the term culture allowed us to move away from what we and our colleagues believed was a debilitating description of deaf people as having specific behaviours or ideas about themselves or others that were the consequence of their not being able to hear. We cringed at scientific studies that tried to match degrees of hearing loss with specific social behaviours, suggesting an uncomplicated relationship between hearing loss and behaviour. We argued instead that being deaf, the specific and particular way of being, was shaped powerfully by shared histories. They started then analysing what they defined than 'the promise of a culture'* (Padden and Humphries, 2005 p.3).

The promise of cultural recognition through the BSL Act in many ways galvalnized and celebrated the shared identity and practices of belonging that deafhood describes. The formal status of BSL was an affirmation of more than a language; it affirmed the practice of the language and the nuanced codes and rituals that come with linguistic communities. By association, the BSL Act affirmed both a cultural community and provenance. The Act's invocation of Deaf heritage is more complex, largely because, as Leith explains, in the Deaf world heritage as a concept has a strongly diachronic element (Leith, 2017); due to the horizontal lines of transmissionin, this diachronicity has a different resonance (Jamieson, et al., 2021):

> *For example, to be considered traditional in the Deaf world, a story must be felt to resonate with the personal: a traditional story is one that says something that is felt to be authentic about the experience of being deaf in a hearing society and, crucially, of discovering one's culture. (ibid p. 4)*

So, in Edinburgh, as in the case of other cities, in Deaf communities which we have records of since the 18th century at least, people tended ‘to come from the side’. Leith explains in her attentive account how this phenomenon originated because of the impossibility in many cases of a vertical and domestic transmission, since only a minority of deaf people come from Deaf families, leaving the horizontal lines of transmission to the personal experience. Thus, in the Deaf world, the cultural currency has been brought into being by the ‘*heritage idiom’*. She explains:

> *For many hearing people, this is a challenge to their assumptions about what heritage ‘is’: it would be rare, for a brief story about a hearing person’s educational experience a mere decade ago to be framed in terms of heritage. However, from a deaf perspective, the personal experience of a young deaf person from a mainstream school meeting a deaf adult for the first time or a deaf person discovering the local Deaf Club is a seminal moment in feeling part of Deaf culture.*
>
> *Heritage from this perspective is attentive to the affective relations within communities and finds its significance in the self-identification, solidarity, support and cultural transmission of the community. This is not block-buster heritage, but heritage as memory, identity and belonging. Importantly to the context of this conference Deaf Heritage is also a claim to an identity and to cultural spaces that have been disappearing from our cities and towns since the late 20th century (O’Brien et al 2017). Such a disappearance of Deaf cultural space has had a negative impact on ‘the process by which Deaf individuals come to actualise their Deaf identity’ (2003:xviii), a process Paddy Ladd refers to as Deafhood*[3] (ibid p. 5).

In this way because of its horizontal transmission, Deaf Heritage does not follow a linear generational transmission, which explains the fragility of an identification process between Deaf individuals, and the legacy of a Culture that is in danger and easily invisible in the public realm.

BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 and the Dawn of Cultural Inequality.

In the wake of a response to the National Plan (2017) we are witnessing the development of a changing cultural landscape and the sense amongst the Deaf communities of Scotland that change is possible. As a result of what Agamben (1999) might refer to as ‘potentiality’, that which lies as yet unrealised; it is a threshold that is pregnant with possibilities. This potentiality in the aftermath of the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 is certainly

[3] *Deafhood* presents an ontological claim to community heritage and is part of a wider cultural argument for the widespread access of “sign language learning and knowledge and deaf socialisation” for every deaf person. (Kusters and De Meulder 2013 p. 428).

key to the reception of the Deaf Heritage Collective by both the Deaf community and the curators and cultural workers with whom it seeks to create a conversation. The term potentiality as it is formulated by Agamben is useful when we consider the Collective's aims to create a network that enables or as Nussbaum (2011) would say 'create capacity'. For Agamben (1999) it is more complex "to realize that things did not have to and do not have to be the way they are…..[to] restore "possibility to the past, making what happened incomplete and completing what never was" (Balskus 2010 p.179).

Perhaps if we think of both Nussbaum's (ibid.) emphasis upon equality where she says "If people are considered as citizens, the claims of all citizens are equal" (p.31) and Agamben's insistence that we need to play with our current reality to push at potentiality then we begin to arrive at how the Deaf Heritage Collective might creatively create potentiality and what I am calling enabling networks. This area of enquiry is important to both the context of the MRes and the playful approaches that the workshops take.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has contextualized the aims of the thesis in relation to the *Deaf Heritage Collective* project, and the backdrop that made it possible. The BSL (Scotland) National Plan, provides a new Scottish policy context for a future Deaf heritage. However, behind the premise for cultural inclusion in the public sphere, lay unresolved issues of powerlessness and under representation. In the first chapter I have highlight the horizontal transmission of Deaf Culture (Jamieson, et al., 2021) pointing to the relevance of BSL as the means of cultural transmission (Kusters, 2013) and explored the factors for which we can relate to as a culture at risk.

Looking at the wider context of museums as places of agency to rethink disability and representation, this chapter has drawn parallels between Deaf activists and museum's activist movements, such as the Birmingham Exhibition "talking about…disability and Arts", or "Buried in the Footnotes, from the Museum of Liverpool (Sandell, et al., 2010). Through examples from other minority contexts, the chapter has illuminated the complex layers of identity within which Deaf heritage sits, as both a disability and minority (Murawski, 2021) indigenous culture.

The need to move beyond a medical approach to disability, and claim a space for a social and emancipatory model (Sandell, et al., 2010) is aligned by a further context, namely the recent emphasis upon the Safeguarding, protection and promotion of diversity and cultural expression (2005). This expanded view of heritage makes certain claims for Deaf identity possible. The project this thesis describes sits on a new horizon of political and cultural change, allowing for reflecting on the future-making capacity of heritage. At this historical junction, I can therefore link the *Deaf heritage Collective* to its claim to forge deaf and hearing alliances to rethink how Deaf heritage can be preserved and passed on to future generations, and how it might generate more awareness of deaf lives both current and past.

Chapter Two

Critical Heritage meets Critical Design: The Project Methodology

The aim of this chapter is to present the approach and methods that structured the *Deaf Heritage Collective* project and to situate those methodological choices within the academic contexts that informed the project's aims, namely an interdisciplinary approach enabled by critical design, critical heritage and linguistics (Dunne & Raby, 2013; Harrison, 2013; Ladd, 2003). The chapter begins by introducing the collective's approach to designing a future-network and the importance of trust in negotiating the power structures of the heritage sector. The chapter then situates Deaf heritage in design terms, as a 'wicked problem'. This is an important conceptualisation because it brings into focus the social and cultural meanings, categories and experiences of deafness and Deaf identity.

The chapter then moves on to discuss the workshop as a method and considers the ways in which the project's workshops were curated. Following this, the chapter reflects upon the positionalities of design and linguistics in relation to the methodological choices. This discussion leads to a further consideration of future-making and the potential of networks to prefigure the potential of future heritage and support the aims of speculative design.

Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of the project's methodological paradigm and the benefits of bringing together participatory workshops and critical design.

Introduction

The aim to create the right conditions for a network of deaf people and cultural professionals was informed by the performative and future-making framework of both critical heritage and critical design. The team saw imagining a future-network as very much the realm of speculative and critical design (Marchant, 2015; Barbalet, 2009). Building the connections of a future-network, that could sustain mutual trust and understanding was approached as a design process; Clark argues that *trust gives designers the permission to design* (2029: p.3) Interestingly, Clarke & Briggs, make a point not only about design and trust, but also about the dynamics of distrust; a point that goes to the heart of the deaf community's cautious, even sceptical view of hearing researchers (see Leith 2015, Ladd, 2010). The potential for disengagement, misunderstanding and miscommunication was always a great risk in our aims to work with Deaf people, who often report "feelings of powerlessness and apathy in relation to the [research] programs and activities of hearing people*"* (Baker-Shenk and Kyle, 1990: 66).

Design Approach to Wicked Problems

In order to grasp the complexity of Deaf heritage as *more than* either a category of historic values, or indeed a professionalised categorising process wherein selectivity is always at play (Hafstein, 2008), this chapter argues it is more useful to consider Deaf heritage through the lens of 'wicked problem' (Rittel and Webber, 1973). The description 'wicked problem' came in response to Simon's (1969) reductive and simplistic conceptualisation of design that presupposed that a design 'problem' is graspable and identifiable from the outset of the process. Rittel and Webber (1973) termed this 'tame problem solving' and suggested instead that the problems designers seek to resolve are typically more 'wicked', inasmuch as they often cannot be immediately formulated (Rittel and Webber, 1973).

Since the early stage of the project, we were able to contextualise Deaf heritage as a 'wicked problem', not only for its lack of representation in the public sphere, but for all the hidden complexities that coalesce to exclude the category of Deaf heritage:

1. Linguistic access/ interpreters
2. Access to heritage infrastructures
3. Involvement/participation in public organisations
4. Education
5. Cultural domination
6. Medicalisation of deaf lives
7. English-dominant language networks

From the perspective of the research team, thinking about Deaf heritage as a 'wicked problem' necessitated thinking about the diverse agencies, professions, policies, and funding streams that contribute to the lack of opportunities, spaces and values that could be attributed to Deaf history, artefacts and buildings. In the early stages of devising the project methodology, we were aware for example, that access and English were inextricably bound, and presented barriers in a wide variety of ways.

In the early stages of the project, 'wicked problems' of access were identified across the sector; we came across many heritage professionals including curators and designated community outreach roles that had a responsibility to respond to inclusion and access, that did not know where to start in their aim to address the lack of personal and institutional knowledge of Deaf culture. Even in the best cases where institutions reached out to engage with deaf professionals, the English level of Deaf BSL user was a significant influence in whether a deaf person would be included in projects and consultation. Essentially deaf people's proficiency in English was a deciding factor in their inclusion in institutional-level conversations. These complex interrelated experiences of exclusion are often regarded by the hearing world as easily solved by a generic assumption of "booking an interpreter", or using "written English". Access to spoken English-dominated spaces presents a 'wicked problem' for deaf people, that is recursively embedded in the culture and exclusivity of cultural organisations. Still today, despite a growing participative and collaborative emphasis within institutions, the execution and decision-making behind policies still rely on hearing professionals.

Wanting to include deaf people to collaborate remains in many cases an idea, that presents difficulties in its actualisation, due to the poor access deaf people have to a certain level of education.

Access is only ever partially addressed by the provision of BSL interpreters as a basic requirement, but the provision of BSL Interpreters is bound up with a national shortage of professional BSL interpreters. This shortage is further compounded by the geographic spread of BSL interpreters largely in the bigger cities. A further 'wicked problem' that would impinge upon the project workshops, is the entanglement of interpreters in the success of events, such as those we planned to tour across Scotland.

Moreover, a less noticeable difference between spoken languages and sign languages, is intercultural communication (Mindess, 1999) due to a different cultural and embodied modality. It is commonly understood that deaf people are much more direct, and in some cases, the social regulations of how their language is used can be very different: in fact those used to deaf culture know that not only the language, but also *the way* deaf people communicate is different, since to such a *linguistic world* also corresponds a different way to culturally approach communication, as Turner observes "different cultures may not only use different languages systems, but they also, in a definitive sense, inhabit different worlds" (1990: pp.14-15).

As a 'wicked problem' Deaf heritage presents a paradox and contradictions at the very core of the access issue. If we conceptualise Deaf heritage and its lack of provision as a 'wicked problem', we then need to investigate the broader social world within which Deaf heritage is missing. This design practice approach to thinking about Deaf heritage is similar to the way in which Schon (1992) considers how designers construct

> *T]he meanings of their situations, materials, and messages, but also the ontologies on which these meanings depend. Every procedure, every problem formulation, depends on such an ontology: a construction of the totality of things and relations that the designer takes as the reality of the world in which he or she designs*"(p. 138).

In this context, the key to understanding the value of design lies in the design thinking process of repositioning (Buchanan 1992) and reframing a specific problem. In order to allow new meanings; the peculiarity here is that in this field "de-construction also implies re-construction" and this synthesis, operated through prototyping and testing, as Jon

Kolko argues, is the one that allows the 'magic of design' (2010) in producing new meanings and innovation, providing new, tangible solutions: The *Deaf Heritage Collective* team promoted the use of design in relation to Deaf heritage for its integrated approach, which is not about discovering the "one true answer", but rather embraces the values of the "reframing process" (Dorst 2015; Kolko 2010). The act of reframing negotiates multiple and interrelated 'problems' and and perspectives and accounts for the "plurality of ideas and concepts, with all its uncertainties, risks and dead-ends" that according to the authors, "is the key to tackling wicked problems" (Ney & Meinel, 2019, p. 35). Consequentially, from a design perspective, the aim to test this methodological capacity to reframe through critical design, was a key aim of the research team.

Critical design celebrates methods that are disruptive, antagonistic, and sustained by critical intent; in its design vocabulary it can dispose of a range of different art and material forms to create dialogues and narratives that helps us think of future possibilities (DiSalvo, 2012). The purpose of critical design as Dunne describes it, is to stimulate discussions and with its "tactile media, it provides incentives for developing ways to articulate agonism, through design, to better understand, describe and analyse, the political qualities of such work" (Disalvo, 2012). According to Dunne and Raby, critical design can offer a shift towards action, proposing and prototyping "alternatives that highlight weakness within existing normality" (2013, p. 35). In this way, critical design enables designers to unpack complex and abstract issues, and so reveal hidden assumptions and misunderstood realities.

From the early stages of the project, the aim was to curate a series of participative events that could bridge different audiences and different linguistic communities. The ambition was to curate a collaborative space for dialogue between the hearing and deaf community, which took the 'wicked problem' of Deaf heritage as its focus. From a design perspective, Davis (2010) argues that "collaborative teams are more likely to create innovative solutions than focused groups of like-minded people since varying opinions and sources of expertise can lead to valuable insight" (p. 6536). In our case, this possibility gave us the opportunity to pursue alternative ways of collectively thinking about Deaf culture, heritage and public life.

The capacity of collaboratively deliberating heritage is recognised by cultural heritage scholars interested in capturing community voices. In her paper "from the ground up",

Rachael Kiddey (2017) illustrates how cultural heritage methodologies can be tools for empowerment and, by incorporating a wide range of methodologies drawn from ethnography, anthropology, archaeology, sociology, and cultural geography, cultural heritage practices are used to document the 'social value of places environment' and, in this case, communities. Describing the *Homeless Heritage Project*, carried out across the two cities of Bristol and York between 2010 and 2014, she introduces the scenario of contemporary homelessness as one that constitutes a both a 'physical heritage' and an intangible one rich of memories, myth and folklore, that is nevertheless a 'difficult' one, that has largely been neglected and ignored by heritage scholars and as in the case of Deaf heritage, one that demanded to be acknowledged within a frame of injustice and oppression (Jamieson & Discepoli, 2020, p. 129).

> *In fact, difficult heritage, are those realities that are 'recognised as meaningful in the present but that [are] also contested and awkward for public reconciliation with a positive, self-affirming contemporary identity' (Macdonald 2009, p.1). and as Macdonald points out are subject to the threats of developing in disruptive ways that can open up further social divisions* (ibid.).

Therefore, as for the *Homeless Heritage Project* case study, in her intent to build an authentic record, Kiddey provides an interesting case study of a project whose premise was to develop either organically or "not at all". Building from the ground a *team* of people willing to work with (interestingly, she chose to refer to the homeless people that got involved in the process not as participants or respondents, but as "colleagues"). Starting from a direct approach, this Archaeology and Heritage project was developed through six phases of fieldwork, starting by direct approach and ranging from ethnographic surveys, collaborative mapping, Audio recording and filming, Excavation and post-excavation Exhibitions and presentation of findings.

Although the value and impact of collaborations with vulnerable communities needs to be approached and understood in a sensitive way, the outcome of this particular project not only produced an authentic account, but the homeless-colleagues also shared their positive experience of feeling meaningfully included. The conclusion of the project is one example of the importance of including marginalised heritage perspectives, not only to validate and acknowledge Homelessness in this case as a "specific mode of cultural production"(Kiddey, 2018, p.706), rather than an anomaly in the modern society and un unwelcomed social problem.

> *By presenting contemporary homelessness as heritage to a wide variety of audiences, within and beyond academia, the Homeless Heritage project took initial steps towards demonstrating how cultural heritage methodologies can usefully humanise real-world social problems, violence and injustices and bring these to the direct attention of those in positions of influence (ibid. p. 706).*

This case study offers interesting reflections that make the shift from Authorized Heritage Discourses (AHD) towards a new critical approach; one that locates cultural heritage practices as a significant methodology to more inclusive courses, recharting futures where social policies are better designed and rooted in real-world experiences (Kiddey, 2018 p. 705). This example helps us understand how critical heritage and critical design offer powerful allegiance to museums and heritage sites intent on widening participation in heritage-making. Each offers new possibilities for democratizing practices, supporting marginalized people's involvement, and shifting the focus from passive or therapeutic clients to activist 'community of purpose', with decision-making powers true collaborative making.

Taking The Deaf Heritage Collective On The Road

In order to engage with geographically dispersed deaf communities, the collaborative ambitions were formulated as a series of touring workshops wherein members of the Deaf communities, cultural hearing professionals and academics could participate. The national reach of the team's ambitions was directly related to the national emphasis on BSL that the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 brought. At the beginning of the project, we were aware that deaf populations were highest in Edinburgh and Glasgow, but we were also aware of Deaf Schools and Clubs beyond Scotland's largest cities, where resources and infrastructures were likely to be very different to urban cultural spaces. The decision to take the project to Glasgow, Inverness, Edinburgh and Stirling was informed by a wider commitment to regional inclusivity and to avoid the pitfalls of urban-centric heritage research.

Workshop as Method

According to Ørngreen and Levinsen (2017), workshops are best understood as a spatial and social arrangement of groups of people who have come together to form a

temporary community and gain new knowledge through creative problem-solving. The authors argue that as a method, workshops allow researchers to iterate, refine, and moderate their thinking. Interestingly, given my own dual role as both project co-ordinator and researcher Spradley (1979) describes a third role of the researcher, that of a "*research instrument*" (p.56, original emphasis). According to the author, researchers can be understood as a research instrument when they participate in the workshop and ensure that other participants feel comfortable and safe in the workshop space. Spradley's (ibid. p. 56) emphasis acknowledges the design processes 'behind the scenes' of the workshops where an array of co-design and curatorial activities sustained roundtable conversation, provoked debate, and made connections between deaf lives and heritage discourse. Furthermore, Spradley's (ibid. p. 76) view of the researcher as a *research instrument* places the researcher reflectively inside the ideological and spatial set-up of workshops.

The *Deaf Heritage Collective's* design approach to enabling conversations complexly straddled communicative, creative and mundane tasks. In this way, the workshops necessitated the researcher perform multiple roles (Ørngreen and Levinsen, 2017), in the blurred contours of still being a sort of tourist, an event organiser, a designer, a mediator, research and the go-to person for complaints on any issue with any of the above mentioned. Most importantly, as *research instruments* in the design and facilitation of workshops the team sough curate activities that would kindle and maintain a translingual awareness. Despite the privilege of power that the team's status as researchers brought, it was our intention to problematise the relationship between researcher (hearing) and researched (deaf). This aim figured strongly in the design of workshops, the choice of speakers and the format of visual conversation. As Omer (2018) argues

> *While one can argue that as academics, our primary sphere of influence should be knowledge generation, it is difficult to consider knowledge as disjointed from the material conditions, which govern the lives of those we seek to learn from, even improve. Why should a binary be maintained between a "material" intervention such as direct resource transfer and knowledge production?* (2018 p.75).

The aim was to schedule presenters able to promote a certain balance of heritage content and lived deaf experiences, and to remain sensitive to the more pragmatic (and less academic) aspects, like ordering catering and imagining how interactions would be granted over breaks and networking moments.

Workshop Structure: Curating temporary spaces for deaf heritage futures

In the context of the project's aims to bring together different groups to consider the status and future of Deaf heritage in Scotland, the workshop offered a unique temporary space where issues and relationships could be staged and debated. As Meyneil (2019) argues,

> *Everyone who has ever taken part in a Design Thinking workshop will know that space plays a key role[...] Social spaces are no less important to Design Thinking. In order for Design Thinking teams to innovate, they require a suitable social space that corresponds to their physical innovation space. Just like the physical space needs to support team creativity and autonomy, the social space needs to enable 'team-based integrative thinking'* (p.74).

For the Deaf Heritage Collective research team, the *suitability* of the space to which Meyneil (ibid.) refers, was aligned to our aim to curate workshops as a distinctly social spaces where coffee and biscuits, lunch and afternoon breaks deliberately staged a time and space for formal and informal connections to be formed. Every workshop followed a similar structure, presenting a series of talks and participatory activities, where there was a clear connection between the presentations delivered and the following participatory activities.

Design considerations were complexly interwoven with the subject of Deaf heritage itself, and necessarily included planning how **language, venue, activities, themes and the documentation of the events** would support bilingual and bimodal interaction. Each of these five workshop components are discussed below in relation to the aims and approaches of the project team, while the focus on the specific approach of every workshop and its outcomes are discussed in the discussion Chapter.

1. Language

Planning a BSL/English workshop

<u>Aims</u>

The aim was to create a social space and because the workshops were necessarily bilingual and bimodal a minimum of four interpreters had to be guaranteed. Given that the wicked problem described above, was explicitly connected to deaf people's access to and participation in heritage, we wanted to create a temporary deaf-oriented space, without clear precedents. By creating such a space, we wanted to point to the experimental nature of the workshop and show how the linguistic challenge could be negotiated

The project team saw the workshop as a space where the convergence of different types of *participation* could be tested, and where multi-modal exchanges could be supported by an expanded linguistic landscape (made possible by interpreters, collaborative making activities, speculative design frameworks and provocative probe kits).

> *We wanted to create a participative space where spoken English was not given primacy. This demotion of spoken English was important if we were to create a space where Deaf participants felt comfortable and genuinely part of the discussion. Although we acknowledged that we would have to rely upon BSL interpreters at each table, we aimed to transcend the reliance on interpreters by focusing on the collaborative activity of making things that imagined distinct Deaf futures* (Jamieson & Discepoli, 2020, p. 121).

<u>Approach</u>

The curation of a playful series of workshops designed to bring together D/deaf participants and heritage professionals could not have happened without a team of BSL–English interpreters Considering the workshop's settings, had to consider how to cover not only keynotes and presentations time, but also the collaborative mixed-tables (with would have an average of 8-10 participants), break times and semi-structured interviews taking place during the day, and also allowing the necessary break for interpreters, with should be granted every 30 minutes. This meant being able to guarantee at least four interpreters in each workshop. The team soon realized that even following these simple guidelines it is not straightforward. In fact, besides the fact that interpreters are not easy to afford, the main problem went far beyond finances, as for example the general shortage

of trained interpreters in Scotland and their suitability for the specific field and contest of application. As Jamieson notes:

> *Most interpreters work primarily in community settings, such as interpreting doctors' appointments or parents' evenings, and, in Scotland, there are a limited number of interpreters who have the skillset and the confidence to work in high-stakes 'conference' settings where academic language and complex ideas are likely to be used, and where the interpreter is conspicuously placed in front of a large audience with few or no opportunities to clarify meaning for themselves or ensure understanding between interlocutors* (2021, p. 11).

2. Venue

Aims

Conversations can have different connotations according to *where* they take place, for example shouting in a room is not the same as shouting in a square. Given the marginalised status of the deaf community, the choice of space was already going to be a vehicle of a certain message. Thinking critically about the connotations of cultural spaces took time. We were not accustomed to thinking about the fact that theatre spaces, or conference venues might signify a distinctly authoritative and oralist agenda. In this phase of choosing venues across Scotland, visiting them with a critical sense of potential venues with a view of how they would be perceived and whether they were inappropriate either in their design or symbolism for deaf participants. As part of this process, we became acutely aware of our own *hearingness*. According to H-Dirksen Bauman (2008: viii–ix) this awareness affords a "critical perspective through which [...] [to interrogate] the phonocentric ideologies in the world in which […] [we are] raised".

Approach

Where we could, we chose venues that, albeit in different ways, we hoped would be meaningful to the deaf community, having a key relationship with it, whether it be by legacy as in the Glasgow workshop, or historic novelty, as in the Inverness workshop. One of the main challenges was to identify affordable, available and suitable venues.

Our aim of building dialogue, bridging communities and bringing deaf heritage into the public sphere, was inextricably connected to the disappearance of Deaf Space in the UK. Where we were able to use a Deaf Space, such as Deaf Connections in Glasgow, we did

so, but we could not approach the issue of identifying a suitable and affordable venue without also recognising and responding to the lack of formal Deaf space in Scotland. We were aware of the widespread closure of deaf clubs over the last few decades, and how this drastically and negatively changed the way deaf communities come together. We were also aware of the negative impact the closure of Deaf Clubs on inter-generational social space; there they had offered a unique social setting for deaf youngsters to meet and learn from older generations.

We wanted to identify places that would be easily accessible and, in strong retaliation with the marginalised status of the Deaf hidden culture, part of the mainstream cultural sphere. For such a reason, although I first considered 'venue' and 'theme' as two different parameters, I realise it makes more sense to approach them together, as any place hosting the workshops, was chosen in correspondence with the theme (if not, becoming itself the motive behind the day narrative).

We curated workshop spaces to make them both social and provocative. By approaching the workshop as a designed space, we developed ways in which we could set the conversation's critical tone and curate moments of encounter and moments of collaborative deliberation. The workshops became a series of suggestive environments, organised around three different semantic spaces: 1) the presenters' area, suitable for clear visibility, considering the set-up of *presenter- screen and clear lines of sight for the BSL interpreters. 2)* a wide seated space for the audience/participants to discuss activities and at the same time allow room for interpreters to join or leave the conversation with any disruption. 3) a separate or adjacent space for exhibition displays and installation that addressed workshop themes through the exhibitionary language of heritage and museums. Besides having visual content in the language of design and museum, all exhibition's displays were curated paying particular attention to the visual delivery of contents, including the use of iPads and screens, in order to avoid using purely English interpretations.

3. Activities

The "Workshop language"

Aims

Although we acknowledged that we would have to rely upon BSL interpreters at each workshop table, our aim was to transcend the reliance on interpreters by creating a temporary space where ideas and experiences could be shared, focusing on the collaborative activity of *making* things that imagined distinct Deaf futures. We decided to create a series of activities that could unfold over the course of a few hours, to visualise and actively debate the potential of heritage organisations and museums in representing Deaf peoples and their culture.

The language of workshops supported by co-design speculative activities was fundamental to creating debate and developing new connections and understanding between participants. More eloquently than words, cultural probes contributed to producing a third communicative ground and discussing a deaf culture's 'wicked' aspects, making them more visible and tangible and offering a concrete perspective of how futures can be imagined and reshaped. The activities also produced interesting data that, that can offer different and open-ended discussions.

Our aim was to create a visuocentric environment and conversation, in opposition to the audio centrism that drives the mainstream society approach (Eckert & Rowley, 2013). In this sense, all the collaborative activities that sought to debate Deaf heritage and its marginalsation were designed so as to participatively visually reflect, communicate and construct new ways of understanding Deaf heritage. Similarly, each workshop was spatially framed by exhibition displays that performed a visual conversation about Deaf heritage. In this way, the visual space of the workshops can be understood as "material means", part of the design and co-design process, that function as "communicative *artifacts* (Manzini, 2016, p. 52). We hoped that by making visible what is not visible; infrastructure, Deaf space, Deaf curators, Deaf cultural funding streams and Deaf arts networks through prototyping and probe kits, participants would be able to experiment and give form to a set of interrelated issues, for which design could materialise its conditions Knutz et al, 2019) and unpack the 'wicked problems' of Deaf heritage.

Approaches

Over four workshops participants creatively opened up a space to reveal the contingency of dominant culture and the ideology of heritage classification. Though the materiality of probe kits, a method that "encourage[s] subjective engagement, empathetic interpretation, and a pervasive sense of uncertainty as positive values for design" (Gaver, et al., 2004), participants created different narratives according to the themes. In response to provocative probes and props, participants collaboratively rethought aspirations of the yet to come. Each activity brought into sharp relief the absence of Deaf culture in public life, provoking discussion and in many cases heated debate about what should be done to resolve the problem.

4. Themes

Aims

We sought to create a balance and correspondence between the presenters'talk, the exhibition displays, and the participatory activities, so that the conversation would flow, and questions would resonate throughout the day. The main themes focused on some of the 'wicked problems' described in the previous chapter; a lack of Deaf space, cultural representation, funding systems and infrastructure, education and career. As the project progressed, every workshop was in some way informed the precedent; outcomes providing arguments for the next theme.

Approaches

Every workshop was articulated through a theme that can be understood to the light of the above-mentioned interrelated wicked problems. In our attempt to materialise the conditions of Deaf heritage we agreed that the themes should exist across the three semantic spaces described above, namely the presenters, workshop activity and

exhibition display. Understanding the intended experience of these connected semantic spaces is key to understanding how the prevailing theme came to define the day. To clarify the interconnectedness of the three semantic spaces, I have outlined each workshop's theme, activity and exhibition below.

1st Workshop:	**Glasgow**
Venue:	**Deaf Connections**
THEME:	*Is it hidden Heritage*?

1) Semantic Space of Workshop:	**Activities** – Co-Design Deaf Museum; Deaf Bingo
2) Semantic Space of Exhibition:	**Display -** *Deaf Heritage Trail; Deaf Humans of Scotland; A Deaf Monography; The vanishing of St. Savior*
3) Semantic Space of Speakers:	**Presenters** 1. Introduction by Graham Turner – Heriot Watt University "*BSL National Plan – the Scottish horizon"* *2.* Mike Gulliver, University of Bristol: Deaf Heritage: *St. Saviour* *3.* Lilian Lawson, Deaf History Scotland: *Deaf Heritage in Scotland* *4.* Kirstie Jamieson, Edinburgh Napier University: *Heritage as Praxis*

2nd Workshop: **Inverness**

Venue: **The Town House**

THEME: *Good practice & BSL Infrastructure*

Building BSL Infrastructure, Mapping changes

1) Semantic Space of Workshop:	**Activities** - Co-Design BSL Infrastructure; Co-Mapping Change
2) Semantic Space of Exhibition:	**Display -** *From Inverness to Donaldsons': Tracing Archives: mirroring experience*; Deaf History of Scotland (DHS) and The National Library of Scotland - Historic Environment Scotland: Our BSL Practice
3) Semantic Space of Speakers:	**Presenters** – 1. John Hay, MBE, Deaf History: *"Francis Humberstone Mackenzie, Deaf First Baron Seaforth (1754-1815)"* 2. Tania Allen, Deaf Creative: *The Alba Cats Collective*. 3. Christopher Sacre, Independent Deaf Artist: *My Practice*.

3rd Workshop: **Edinburgh**

Venues: **Code Base & Traverse Theatre**

THEME: *Spaces for possibilities*

1) Semantic Space of Workshop: **Activities** - *Collective Budgeting; Whose job?*

2) Semantic Space of Exhibition: **Display -** *Fragments, a Deaf artists* Exhibition; Solar Bear; *Glasgow People Transparent; The Cabinet of Curiosity,* online Call for entries.

3) Semantic Space of Speakers: **Presenters –**

1. Kirstie Jamieson (Napier University): *Introduction*
2. Ellen Adamas (King's College London), *BSL and Cultural Spaces: The British Museum*
3. Phyl Meyer And Naomi Waite, Inclusion Scotland: *Meaningful Employment in the Arts*
4. Meg Faragher and Trudi Collier: *The National Portrait Gallery: Two perspectives;*
5. Hellen Trew, Clair Clark, *Creative Scotland: Opportunities and ambition*

4th Workshop: **Stirling**

Venue: **MacRobert Arts Centre,**

THEME: *Enter Through The Gift Shop*

1) Semantic Space of Workshop: **Activities-** BSL Discovery Kit/Mapping BSL Networks

2) *Semantic Space of Exhibition:* *Display - The Museum of Deafness showcase of projects from Design Master students; Deaf Youth Theater Group (DYT) at Solar Bear; Self-curated exhibition from Deaf Artists young talents exhibition; Performance from a deaf Actor (Intern at the Macrobert AC*

3) Semantic Space of Speakers: **Presenters**

1. Kirstie Jamieson Napier University*, Introduction*
2. Avril Hepner, British Deaf Association (BDA), *Deaf Roots and Pride*
3. Julie Ellen, Artistic Director and Peter Dobre, *Internship: a year at Macrobert Arts centre*
4. Ella Leith, *Deaf Heritage as Future Making*

Positionalities of Design and Linguistics

The three semantic spaces outlined above (Workshop, Exhibition and Speakers) combined process and content in such a way as to articulate and debate linguistic identity through design, and to perform a more inclusive multimodality through a balance of BSL and English presenters. The resonance of design thinking, and more broadly creative and participatory methods are increasingly evident in the discipline of linguistics. Authors Adami, (2017), Wendy Gunn, Ton Otto, and Rachel Charlotte Smith (2013), have sought to describe the methodological changes in what they describe as the era of super-diversity, multimodality and multilingualism. In this context, there is an increasing alliance of creative methods in applied linguistics.

In our research journey, one of the project's aims was to draw connections with corresponding inquiries from different fields that could inform the project. We soon identified parallels with projects focusing on multilingualism and identities, such as studies of and with bilingual people, or other critical ethnic minorities, like refugees. In particular, we became involved with the *Bilingualism Matters* project in Edinburgh, led by a team of academics from Edinburgh University (Sorace, 2016). The project explored bilingualism, in light of children's linguistic and cognitive development in respect to both heritage and community language.

Situating the *Deaf Heritage Collective* between design, heritage and linguistics was made possible through our participation in conferences such as the *Creative Inquiries* in Linguistics and *the In-dialogue symposium 2019, both of which* enriched our understanding of the interdisciplinary context to our aims and methods (Jones & Connelly, 2019). Aligning ourselves with some of the more creative linguistics research helped us contextualise the Deaf heritage project from a different angle. Moreover, the interest expressed by the *Bilingualism Matters* team helped us raise awareness and empathy of BSL users as a cultural minority rather than a disability.

However, if on the one hand, it is key to acknowledge parallels, on the other hand, it is important to highlight the differences in dealing with a multilinguistic/multimodal

scenario, compared to that presented by the aims to create a multi-lingual collaborative space with BSL users and English speakers.

Chapter One discussed and considered the context of deafness as a minority culture and ethnicity. Aware of the role of Linguistics and Interpreting Studies in deaf communities (Lane, et al., 2011), the project team had to negotiate our very unique position, presenting collaborative practice through design's creative and dialogic practice.: Our approach coheres with DiSalvo's (2012) synthesis of design as both critique and awareness raising. He contends that "design can produce a shift toward action that models alternative presents and possible futures in material and experiential forms" (DiSalvo, 2012, p. 119).

Having to engage with a mixed language workshop community in a way that did not privilege the colonialist language was particularly challenging, especially if we consider, not only the professional sector, but also the academic territory, as a 'discursive landscape'. Moreover, creating connections among English/BSL speaker audiences needed to be vehicled and articulated carefully, conscious of the fact, that while deaf people are used to interacting with the hearing world on a daily basis, the same cannot be said for hearing people (Leith, 2015). We wanted to maintain a balance of participation and encourage participants to interact with each other.

Reflecting on critical design's playful paradigm, we decided to create an environment where collaborative play could facilitate debate through shared practices of making (Jamieson & Discepoli 2020). Design, is action-orientated and this normative character, can unfold possibilities for interaction, as practice. In short, design creates capacity for action experimentally (Disalvo, 2012). Through such an experimental and playful approach we asked participants to prototype Deaf heritage futures; giving form and materialising the conditions (Matthews & Horst, 2008) of Deaf heritage as a wicked problem. Furthermore, through the particular layout of semantic space described above, (physical and dialogical) the workshops were able to create multiple linguistic spaces, in relation to participant interaction. Dealing with participants from two different cultures, where their linguistic space was mediated to various degrees, we suddenly realised how we were creating a third, temporary one. At a first glance one could imagine the three spaces like such: Sign language | Spoken English | translated/translingual.

Hence, if we acknowledge different linguistic spaces, we need to consider the multiple and layered conversations that have, or might have taken place: do we have a clear frame of the conversations that took place? Is our only grasp from a hearing perspective reliable? Surely, these questions would be better answered if, besides a hearing researcher a deaf researcher had also been assigned a role in the project. This was a point that haunted the project in many ways. Our outsiderness to Deaf culture, BSL and heritage was always present. Clearly, in the case of minority research fieldwork, many researchers conduct their investigation in the community language (Aijazi,2021), yet the publishing outcomes and distribution of research findings produces and contributes to hierarchies of expertise usually printed in English, and distributed through English-speaking channels of authority.

The project team wanted to create a participative space wherein spoken English was not given primacy. The team felt that this demotion of spoken English was important if we were to create a space where Deaf participants felt comfortable and genuinely part of the discussion (Jamieson & Discepoli, 2020, p. 121). Although we acknowledged that we would have to rely upon BSL interpreters at each table, our wider aim was to transcend the reliance on BSL interpreters by focusing on the collaborative activity of making things that imagined distinct Deaf futures.

Having drawn parallels with multilingualism and projects that focus on translingual and bilingual communities, the team did not forget that BSL users occupy a specific ground, for which a history of language deprivation still has an impact on deaf communities' socio-political context, and for many deaf people access to higher education is still restricted due to an ongoing crisis in deaf education (O'Neill et al. 2014).

Early in the research journey, the team met with Ella Leith, whose own positionality and reflexive account, gave us an insight into the problematic power dynamic of working with deaf communities. She says,

> *I have been institutionally supported, funded and lauded for my 'ground-breaking research' into storytelling practices within the Scottish Deaf community. […] I was acutely conscious that doors opened to me that did not open to my colleagues on the committee, and that much more prestige was attached to me-as-researcher describing their lived experiences, than there was recognition of them as experts about their own and other deaf experiences* (Jamieson, et al., 2021, p.7).

Ella’s reflective account is revealing. It illuminates the complex linguistic context of the project, Ella’s story and indeed her support during the project encouraged the team to recognise that it would be superficial to simply assimilate the BSL linguistic landscape to any other foreign language, without remembering that BSL as a formalised language is still relatively young. It was not until 1965 that the first sign language dictionary of its kind, “A Dictionary of American Sign Language on linguistic principles” was published (Stokoe, et al., 1965). Indeed, previous dictionaries on signs had been published, but always as a translation from a main spoken language, such as from English to Signs,

Critical Heritage, Critical Design V Authorised Heritage Discourse

It is important to contextualise the project’s methodology in relation to the disciplines and interdisciplinary connections that inspired and informed the workshops’ themes and activities. Critical Heritage provides the ground for a community approach and participative methods (DiSalvo, 2012). Key for interdisciplinary critical heritage studies (Harrison, 2012) is the claim that heritage is called upon nowadays to represent a complex and different variety of values and realities: diversity, plurality, postcolonial and multicultural pasts and identities. In fact, the latest debates from the World Heritage Convention, go beyond the Safeguarding of intangible Heritage, openly calling for an engagement in *promoting* the diversity of cultural expression (WHC 2005). Embracing Harrison’s view then, today’s critical approach, attempts to *rethink the ‘representative’ models of heritage*, pulling away from ‘canonical” practice (Discepoli, 2017). Heritage from this point of view, needs to be responsive to counter-claims and shoulder a new requirement of representation that does not claim to create fragmentation, but rather to represent the value of complexity.

Future-making capacity of Critical Heritage and Critical Design

Whose stories are collected, remembered and celebrated and whose are forgotten?

(DeSilvey & Harrison, 2020, p.3)

Both critical design and critical heritage are oriented towards change. They tackle their own elite conventions as disciplinary origins that can be subverted and made to work in the pursuit of social justice. Critical design and critical heritage share both a disruptive and future-making capacity: Future-making is not solely aligned with design, it is also a priority of critical heritage scholars who nowadays are increasingly charged with the responsibility of creating narratives "representative of all ways of being human", working in the public interest, and adopting practices that can enhance the sense of ownership, turning Heritage practices from being reflective to answer political questions that originate from the past but strive towards different futures (DeSilvey & Harrison, 2020, p. 5).

This current redefinition of a critical approach to heritage and its practices of representation, according to DeSilvey and Harrison, promotes a shared-authority model of "heritage management" (2020) and increasingly draws attention "to the fact that cultural heritage is less about 'the past' and far more about, as Audrey Horning puts it, 'how the past is actively remembered' (Horning 2013, p. 97). This emphasis characterized the *Deaf Heritage Collective's* approach; it is an approach that, as Smith suggests, has a processual nature, able to highlight the changing of cultures, places, and people, into a discursive frame (2006). Through debate and collaborative making participants were able to re-evaluate significance and meanings, into an *actioning of heritage.*

In its aim to bring forth more democratized processes that challenge the traditional roles of expert and stakeholder, critical heritage has extended the application of participatory research methods to consider mythopoesis; the people who are missing. "Only it does this indirectly, by making people aware of the consequences their present actions and lifestyle have on future; by emphasising their own responsibility and capability to improve their lives; by pointing out ideological constraints that influence the people's perception; and generally, by promoting critical thinking" (Jakobsone 2017 p.4).

Influenced by critical social theory critical design is often associated with the practice of making things that do *not* solve any problem. Instead, objects are often designed in order

to bring problems into sharp relief [4]. Nonetheless, Critical design retains design's over-arching aim to change a situation towards a preferred outcome.

> *Only it does this indirectly, by making people aware of the consequences their present actions and lifestyle have on future; by emphasising their own responsibility and capability to improve their lives; by pointing out ideological constraints that influence the people's perception; and generally, by promoting critical thinking* (Jakobsone 2017 p.4).

Bringing critical design into conversation with critical heritage introduces two approaches that share a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (Gadamer, 1960). Prefixed with a capitalised 'C' they weaponize critique to "call foundations into question, denaturalize social and political hierarchy, and even establish perspectives by which a certain distance on the naturalised world can be attained" (Butler 2008 p.2). Each approach works towards revealing the processes and invested interests behind social and cultural values. They are in many ways perfect bedfellows facilitating as they do, an understanding of what "might be changed, in its own thought, through the practice of acknowledging what is foreign to it" (Foucault 1985 p.9).

Smith (2006) contends, 'there is really no such thing as heritage' (p.11) instead she insists that it should be thought of as a process. Such an emphasis reflects the approach taken by the *Deaf Heritage Collective.* The social and processual nature of the project brings into relief the *social action of heritage* – people, places and values that are brought into a discursive frame, transforming and re-evaluating meanings and significance. In many ways, it is this *actioning* of heritage through critical design that underwrote the team's aims and approach. In the context of the *Deaf Heritage Collective* project, Critical Heritage and Critical Design provided a symbiotic framework through which to engage participants with complex ideas by "facilitating the creation of imagined futures and providing the tools for acting on those imagined futures" (Le Dantec 2016 p.30).

The team adopted a view of the future as that which is not empty. In particular, Deaf futures especially in Scotland post BSL Act, are loaded with fantasies, aspirations, plans

4 Critical designers clearly state that they rather identify problems - both existing and yet to come - and ask questions instead of providing answers. They acknowledge that critical design is problem finding instead of problem solving (Dunne & Raby, 2013, p.vii). Although critical design projects sometimes also offer utilitarian solutions, these are all speculative, and the situations, in which they are meant to be implemented, are mainly fictional. Jakobsone 2017 p.3)

and fears, The team sought to provoke and problematise possible futures, and to map them across historical legacies and categories related to Deaf culture and deaf lives in a hearing society. The *Deaf Heritage Collective* wanted to summon future environments, infrastructures, peoples and things that would provoke conversation and realisation about prevailing deaf realities and the limits to claiming and performing Deaf heritage.

Figure 1Probe kit Object detail - From the last workshop activity 'Mapping BSL networks in Scotland'

The Language of Future-Making: Boundary Objects

The team decided that the use of collaborative activities could allow participants to generate new ways of thinking about BSL in relation to the public life. The collaborative process itself allowed speculative dialogues, conveyed by tangible probes and material:

> *"We consider the challenges of an interlingual and intermodal project and the role of expressive models, bingo, building blocks, and cardboard props in generating new ways of thinking about the relationship between BSL and public life. Provocative objects such as model museums and life-size cardboard figures acted as 'boundary objects' (Wenger 2000) that revealed hidden, oppressed, and contradictory relations. In so doing, design methods elicited 'mutually transformative' (Back 2012) narratives in a playful and open-ended format. We argue that these methods represent new ways of showing and telling that encourages playful intersubjective engagement, empathetic interpretation, and uncertainty as positive values" (*Jamieson and Discepoli 2019).

In considering the socio-material aspect of co-design in relation to the workshop context, we know from recent literature in co-design (e.g. Gaver; DiSalvo, 2012; Dunne & Raby, 2013; Kiddey, 2018; Sanders and Stappers 2014; Gaver et al. 2004; Visser et al. 2005; Mattelmäki 2006, 2008; Brandt, Binder, and Sanders 2012), that probing contributes to facilitate empathy and communication. For their very material nature and particular relevance in our bilingual and bimodal context, the language-objects help participants stakeholders and researcher create interactions and establish relationships, while sharing and shaping future ideas.

In his argument on co-design in probes, Kuntz analyses probing as a co-design technique that materializes conditions for collaborative dialogue; encouraging for the need to delve deeper into the practice of probing and its *communicative role of materiality in speculative design* (p. 143, 2019), he identifies and highlights three main perspectives on materiality:

1. *materiality as a process of doing and negotiating meaning;*
2. *(ii) materiality as a configuring of relations and networks and*
3. *(iii) materiality as distribution of power, citizenship and roles of identity.*

> *Materiality as 1) process, 2) configuring of relations and 3) distributive of power is played with and played through in each of the four workshops. Through materials, participants creatively revealed the contingency of dominant culture and the ideology of heritage classification. In response to the materially provocative probes and props, participants collaboratively rethought and remade aspirations* (Clarke, et al., 2019 p. 7).

The figure illustrates a particular case, from the collective's last workshop, where we brought probes into a reflexive and co-exploring activity (see Chapter 4. Mapping BSL Network) that echoed all the previous collaborative probe kits (in the case of the pictures, this refers to the BSL infrastructure activity, see Chapter Four). This way, shifting the role of participants from the subject rather than object of the research (Akama, 2018), as in something that I refer to as meta-probing[5]; the probes created a dialogue around the previous activities through which we negotiated meaning to create speculative futures, to analyze how the sum of these could dialogue together. Referring to the II and III meaning of materiality according to Kuntz (2019), I could also note how in this activity more than

[5] *Meta* – that refers to itself, (of a creative work) referring to itself or to the conventions of its genre; self-referential – *Oxford Dictionary*

others, a different reconfigured relationship and confidence was observable amongst the participants (most of whom had attended all the workshops), who knew exactly what they were dealing with, in strong opposition to for example the original BSL infrastructure activity, where participants looked at the brief and the design team with suspiciousness and skepticism.

Chapter Summary: The Project Paradigm: Participatory Workshops and Critical Design

This chapter has contextualized the project's method in relation to the interdisciplinary aims of critical design and critical heritage. The chapter has also presented the future-making aims of the participatory workshops, understood through the lens of design, as embedded in ideas and ideals of collaboration and creative practice (Rosner, et al., 2016). As argued above, workshops are increasingly gaining momentum, emerging as a comprehensive expression for co-design and research. By bringing people around the same table the workshop creates a temporary site field where the disruption of categories of 'deaf' allows for the construction of new practices. Prompting participants to make and to play, allows participants to movie away from the notion of "knowing" toward the notion of "doing" (Rosner, et al., 2016). The above chapter has described how, over the period of two years, collaboration between the diverse communities of curators, academics, deaf artists and Deaf activists was both the methodological ambition of the project and the basis of the networking process.

The chapter has presented the structuring logic of the workshops through three semantic spaces of the workshop described above (identifying the Workshop (activities), Exhibition (display) and Speaker (presenter)) as inter-related social and processual spaces wherein the specific themes of the event could travel throughout the course of the day (which usually ran from 10am - 4pm). The above paragraphs have argued that through various iterations and modalities, these three semantic spaces sustained the momentum and curiosity of participants encouraging and provoking them to consider and contribute to the debates. By curating these semantic spaces, the team aimed to create an environment and atmosphere of dialogue; one, where participants saw themselves as part of both the problem and solution.

The chapter has sought to outline the Deaf Heritage Collective's approach and methodological argument. In this way, the chapter identified more than the workshop methods, it shows the ways in which subject, scope, participants, disciplines and methods are entangled in the project aims.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The aim of this chapter is to present the research methods that supported the gathering of research materials and experiences as part of the MRes this thesis describes. As described in the previous chapters, the *Deaf Heritage Collective* project ran over two years through a series of participatory workshops and events that aimed to generate a network of interested parties (Deaf community, Scotland's cultural sector, and the academic).

The ethnographic research that I conducted took part within a wider framework of community-based participatory research (CBPR), which is discussed at the end of this section and more fully at the end of the chapter. This chapter begins by introducing ethnography, not as a singular method, but as that which offers a plurality of relationships where culture and cultural meaning can be observed, made and remade. Geertz, the grandfather of ethnography asked that researchers develop "ways of thinking that are responsive to concrete matters and ,'deep diversity'" (2000, p.224). It is ethnography's ability to engage with 'deep diversity' that allows for its adaptability and plurality across diverse disciplinary settings.

The chapter begins by discussing this adaptability of ethnography and the pluralised ethnographies it makes possible. It then moves on to discuss autoethnography and its relation to my own approach and *the Deaf Heritage Collective* project, before elaborating

upon ethnography and cultural minorities. The chapter then turns to the subject of ethnography within both heritage research and design research drawing parallels between the two distinct disciplines. These connections lead on to a discussion of ethnography and the facilitator/artist before considering the implications of critical ethnography and ethnography of the future**.**

The chapter then turns to consider the subject of the academic ethnographer and their parachuting arrival into a minority community. Following this, the chapter then discusses the positionalities of design and linguistics since these are the two disciplines from which the project was borne. Before concluding on its relation to community-based participatory research (CBPR), the chapter addresses the notion of researcher duality and argues for an understanding of the flow of positionalities across the duration of the research project.

Ethnography and Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR): Positioning the research

> *[The workshop reflects] the participant observer's inside-outside view by making visible both the multiple partial views and situated locations of practitioners from within the actual practice (emic) as well as it integrates an overall account of work as it is edited according to the fieldworker's outside, analytic and synthesized view (etic). Furthermore, it embodies the two perspectives of observation and intervention in which the fieldworker engages by including clips meaningful from the point of view of both practice and design* (Karasti 2001, p.217).

Moving on from the *Deaf Heritage Collective's* methodology outlined in Chapter Two, I now address the ways in which these events presented a methodological challenge to my ethnographic documentation, pointing out the atypical and situational analysis they make possible. Indeed, as Kapferer argues, events should not be looked at (as often happens) as illustrative examples that necessarily support or endorse *the general ethnographic accounts within which they were nested* (Kapferer, 2010, p. 4). Instead, workshop spaces should be recognized as disruptive interventionist spaces that can unlock new dimensions and potentialities in the realities within which they operate. Interestingly, in debating workshops as transformative spaces, Hales (2013) refers to case studies that took place in Denmark, in 2008, on waste handling where the ethnographic scenario was set as the main research field. He describes how documented material can serve as new

ethnographic material. From this perspective, workshops are created as a stage, where both researcher and participants *make sense* of the material created in the scenario of the designed events where "lived life meets the imagined artifact" (Hales, 2013, p. 184). This is a particularly useful way of understanding both sense-making and the reciprocity od researcher and participant.

Ethnography and autoethnography: Positioning the researcher

Ethnography was the subject of a major crisis in the 1980's, when the impossibility of objective and neutral representation of human life was increasingly acknowledged among researchers. The seminal books "Writing Culture" (1986) and "Anthropology as Cultural Critique" (1986) revealed ethnographic methods as inescapably political, and always also a mode through which to re-create the realities that ethnographic researchers set out to describe. The idea of an objective stance from which to view and understand human life was deconstructed, and followed by a range of increasingly collaborative scholarship, including performance approaches, participatory and action research methods that seek to co-produce knowledge, and engage people emotionally through other media than conventional academic papers (for example presented at the 2012 Victoria, BC, Public Ethnography conference, http://publicethnography.net/home). The ethnographic researcher was the subject of a critical academic questioning, one that brought about a demand for increasing reflexivity and modes of recognising researchers' positionality.

According to Gluckman (1949), ethnographers should make thoroughly evident their own positioning, including the sociological and personal factors involved in their own access and situating in the action of the event (Kapferer, 2010) . Such an approach, Akoma (2018) argues, imposes a significant ontological shift situating researchers in a web of interrelatedness. This web of interrelatedness is a particularly useful way of thinking about my research journey. As project administrator and MRes researcher I was eembedded in the development of the project, while documenting it at the same time; it can be said that from the beginning I occupied a complex position in relation to the subject. I am embedded in the development of the project whilst I am documenting it in the "ever-shifting" boundaries of my insider-outsider status. This imposes upon me a certain conscious reflexivity in relation to my pursuit of an ethnographic methodology; it

is firstly auto-ethnography and then critical ethnography, as the reflexive ethnographer Wendy Luttrell (2000) recommends.

Critical Ethnography

Critical Ethnographic research is a methodology that has a particular focus on the social aspects of specific groups (McIlroy & Storbeck, 2011), as such it promotes the representation of groups in their own terms. This representational power is fundamental to critical ethnography and in the development of representational capacity the community under analysis becomes the subject rather than the object of the investigation (Ladd, 2003, p. 272). These principles of critical ethnography not only intersect with heritage and museums's core challenge of enabling empowerment, rather than patronizing, but they also raise arguments about my responsibilities as a researcher and my contribution to the academic environment.

As Ladd (2010, p. 267) argues, if academic research is aimed to the betterment of society, we are then obliged to examine the extent of our contribution, reflecting upon whether we are striving for empowerment, or still promoting 'empowerment-lite' (Lynch, 2011, p. 6) solutions. In this way, critical ethnography *"offers an opportunity to reconceive our theory and praxis"* (Ladd, 2010, p.272). Therefore, to support a critical and reflective relationship with the aim of the project an auto-ethnography was identified as a reliable tool in "turning the ethnographic gaze inward on the self, while maintaining the outward gaze of ethnography, looking at the larger context wherein self-experiences occurs". (Dezein and Incol 1997, p.227).

Ethnographies: The Multiple Modes of Ethnography

Since the late 20th century, ethnography has enjoyed a renaissance and an expanded field. It is used as an appropriate method in subjects that range from cancer care (Buiting et al. 2018) to military relationships (Mohr et al. 2019) where it facilitates a deeper understanding of cultural contexts and relationality. Ethnography has shown itself to be useful in a wide variety of contexts, particularly in the recent interdisciplinary context of implication, which has redefined a renewed engaged ethnography, that "could not be developed through a single-disciplinary endeavour.

The development of ethnography through its application across diverse disciplinary settings has seen a move away from an "anthropology at home" for which anthropologists tended to travel abroad to study different cultures as a way of unsettling assumptions and knowing anew what could not otherwise been learnt from within their own culture. An "ethnography at home" subsequentially justified, could instead not advance a real discussion on fieldwork not encountered *yet.* Such concerns contributed to the development of a new ethnographic sensibility toward participants and the notion of doing ethnography *with them* rather than about them (Ingold, 2010, p. 16). This new sensibility towards participants is key to the approach and aims of the *Deaf Heritage Collective* project.

Akama (2018) describes the new sensibility as an ethnography that confers

> *"the capacity to look beneath the surface of what is visible and verbalise, in collaboration with research participants and partners[...] In this sense disruption is concerned with breaking through the surface, disaggregating what we think is happening*" (p. 49).

What we have is a range of hybridized methods that cut across ethnography and design, with a relatively high practical value, yet with limited foundation in terms of their status as research methods. With the notion of design interventions, we seek to contribute to the repertoire of inventive methods that explore the happening of the social, as introduced in *Inventive Methods* (Lury & Wakeford, 2012).

<u>Design + Ethnography + Futures</u>

Particularly key to the ethnographic shifts described above, is the interdisciplinarity of its contexts, especially in the various newer design fields, where an increasing emphasis is placed upon qualitative studies and collaboration. In fact, the methodological triad of Design + *Ethnography* + *Futures* can be seen to be moving towards a critically-oriented concern with human-design assemblages. This represents a move away from what Gatt and Ingold (2013) describe as more predictive and prescriptive approaches to future-making in ethnographic methods, The authors are keen to emphasise how "traditional social research can restrict participants' and researcher's 'understanding" (Akama & Pink, 2015, p. 553). Increasingly in design practice, the ways in which designers apply ethnographic methods, is moving away from the temporality of the ethnographic past

(Gunn, 2012), Moreover, through co-design and audience engagement, ethnography has increasingly moved into the realm of future studies.

It might seem an obvious point, but it is one that needs to be emphasized in the context of this chapter and the argument for both my methodology and that of the *Deaf Heritage Collective;* design has always been future-oriented, Recent design anthropology literature (eg. Halse, 2013; Gunn, et al., 2013; Ney & Meinel, 2019; K. Rosner, et al., 2016; Akama, et al., 2015; DiSalvo, 2012; Binder, 2016) has inspired a view of ethnography that engages not only with the present, but also with the emergent, This approach translates into an ethnography that is reframed and moves away from the predictive/prescripted approach of traditional user research.

In her intent to pursue a new *sharpened* sensitivity to design's role in generating new understanding and future possibilities, Akama (2015) argues for the need to displace existing knowledge, in favor of 'mutual learning', problematizing the contingent and contradictory of future making of certain context under investigation (Akama, 2015) . Addressing the useful dichotomy of participatory design and design anthropology, she points out to their shared aim to "enable social change, by intervening in existing realities" (Akama, 2015, p. 132). The author identifies a common disruptive method of *interventions 'as a method for change'* (ibid. p.132). The author makes an important connection between design anthropology and participatory design; both share a common objective to enable social change by intervening in existing realities such as those of the deaf community, or indigenous and minority cultures that are often conflicted contested and contingent.

In *Ethnography of the Possible*, Halse (2013; Gunn, et al., 2013) enquire about the limits of conventional ethnography and how to extend its methodologic gaze in a way that is future-oriented and deals with the imaginative and possible. The author raises important and timely questions:

> "*how can ethnography be part of [...] transformative actions themselves? What does it look like when imaginative issues are actively brought from beyond the horizon to a point where their contours can begin to be articulated and contested?" In his argument, he connects this future-oriented ethnographic approach with the concept of the imaginative from contemporary anthropological discussions* (ibid. p. 181).

While historically the conventional focus of anthropology was on *people out of time*, the recent challenge from authors such as Rabinow and Marcus (2008) argues for a new anthropology that deals with the contemporary and the possible (iGunn et al, 2013). These authors metaphorically compare research to a design process, where the knowledge production is characterized by the process of collaboratively making and critically experimenting with materials and relationships. Embracing this view, Hales maintains that if we think of anthropology as that which takes the imaginative as the object of its enquiry, how do we *'ethnographically qualify the imaginative'* (2013, p. 181)? These enquiries strongly relate to prevalent critical design practices (and particularly to collaborative methods), commonly known for their specific way of dealing with the potential and often "non-existent" object of discussion.

In design, we are indeed accustomed to playing around with the idea of *what it might be* and *what it might look like*, through prototyping, co-creating, or speculative activities, as in the case of the four *Deaf Heritage Collective* workshops presented in this thesis. Par excellence, in design the object of exploration "belongs to the realm of imagination, *lies beyond* the point where it can be fully articulated" (Gunn et al, 2013), where the emphasis is in the *making and* the critical discussions brought about. Therefore, when dealing with the speculative realm of possibility and anthropology of the imaginative, we are made to reflect on an ethnography able to document and describe what is not yet.

Interestingly, in their conceptualization of uncertainty as a technology, Akama and Pink (2018) reframe the use of ethnographic methods as a technology of the imagination embracing recent views for which ethnography acts "as a technology of the anthropologist's analytical imagination" (Sneat et al, 2009, p.24). Thus, if the new anthropological emphasis is strongly connected to co-design and participatory methods and an ethnography of the possible deals with what is not yet, this contemporary anthropology of *here and now*, is apt to deal with the *emergent* status of what *is*, as the present is always in a state of emergence (Otto, 2016). Therefore, when co-designing, as researchers and designers we re-situate ourselves in the interrelatedness domain of emergence, experiencing the ontological shift The authors suggest tools to advance solid arguments for rethinking the emergent quality of photography, or blended practices of lens-based media (Pink et al, 2017).

With regards to my own experience as ethnographer of the workshops I found that photographic and video material were amongst the most informative data for documenting the project, not only because video captures what is before the camera, but also for its conceptual quality that relates to the emergent status, of the perspective of the person/participant behind the device. For the four workshops, we asked four different photographers to visually document the days' three semantic spaces and capture the themes and outcomes. Over the course of the project, we employed two hearing and two deaf photographers. This data in itself offered us a reflection on the very diverse material produced.

Networks and the Parachuting Academic

It is widely acknowledged that Deaf communities are often cautious and even mistrustful of the research agendas of hearing academics (Jamieson, Discepoli and Leith 2021) . As the majority of researchers who venture into Deaf communities are not themselves deaf, there is a legacy of problematic and imbalanced research relationships between researchers and research participants, 'fraught with problems, prejudice, mistrust, misunderstanding, unmet expectations, identity crises and pervasive mythologies' (Baker-Shenk and Kyle 1990:65).

> *There can be strong ambivalence about non-deaf people, including interpreters and learners, entering Deaf spaces, due to the scarcity of sign-dominant environments where deaf experiences are the norm. Fieldworkers have negotiated the boundaries set by Deaf people with varying degrees of sensitivity. In short, Deaf people often report 'feelings of powerlessness and apathy in relation to the [research] programmes and activities of hearing people'* (Baker-Shenk and Kyle 1990, p.66).

When inside the community-based participatory research (CBPR), the power and responsibility of researchers as knowledge-brokers is complex, but this is particularly true of any attempt to work with Deaf communities "who have differential access to community knowledge, resources, and sources of power" (Cross, Pickering and Hickey, 2015). As researchers, we occupy a privileged position, mediating and shaping the participatory process. This privileged position was often felt by the team as a burden that could be lessened by including more participants in the planning and content-development stages of the workshops. This level of inclusion was by no means straight forward, and often involved asking for 'help' rather than assuming a democratic relationship. The most obvious challenge in aiming to create more equality in the

development, design and hosting of workshops was economic; members of the team were paid by either the university or from the project's budget. There was limited scope to pay deaf participants, which meant that requests for help were uneasily squared with the privilege of a paid researcher identify. Still, where possible we actively recruited deaf participants as photographers, researchers, speakers and artists.

<u>Researcher Duality: The Flow of Positionalities</u>

At this point in the chapter it is important that I discuss my positionality of outsider-insider, as one that has been developing and changing over the project's course. Initially, my knowledge of the deaf community in Scotland was mainly theoretical, but as the project workshops developed my relationship with participants changed: my relation to and with their culture and language re-oriented my status as outsider and parachuting researcher to someone both more familiar and more sensitive to Deaf issues. As the project developed, so too came a new feeling of "inclusion". This shifting relationship with the community helps me understand my multiple identities and continually shapes my accountability. Indeed, in the dichotomous position of insider/outsider, there are both challenges and benefits. As an outsider (to the Deaf community) I can rely on my situated views and a certain neutrality, while as an insider (to the project I am documenting) I can gain a deeper understanding of the community dynamics within the project (Merton 1972).

When inside the community-based participatory research (CBPR), Muhammad argues that the power and responsibility of researchers can be described as 'knowledge-brokers'

> w*ho have differential access to community knowledge, resources, and sources of power, and therefore in a twist of the dynamics, may have both less (in terms of decisions making) and more (in terms of access to information) power then outsider researchers*" (Muhammad, et al., 2015, p. 1049).

From a design perspective, it is interesting to consider this power and responsibility in relation to that of a curator, who like the researcher occupies a privileged position, having her impact in mediating and shaping the CBPR process. It covers the space "in between" the community and academic team of principal investigators and staff "working on the hyphen" (Fine 1994, cited in Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013, p. 366)

of this relation. There is a further way in which this position might be drawn closer to a design approach, if we embrace the complex role that French refers to as an 'artist facilitator'(2016), we begin to get closer to the researcher positionality that best describes my fluctuating identity as a researcher, participant and artist.

Ethnography of the facilitator/artist

When describing the position of the 'perceiver transforming while being transformed by their interventions and surrounding conditions' Akama (2018 p. 6) shows a sensitivity to the duality of documenting and participating in workshop spaces. Hence, when entering the co-design space of the workshop, this process of disruption and transformation, also applies to the 'instigators' (ibid.) or facilitators documenting the workshops, creating an opportunity for scaffolding activities that 'that fostered intentionality instead of intentionality and creating opportunities for uncertainty and the possibilities that would emerge from it' (2018, p. 51). As I have experienced in the Collective workshops, this can surely create some degrees of discomfort, design expectations fall, especially if understood to the light of what the authors refer to as an anthropological reflexivity that interrogates the creators/designer's or artist facilitators' own positionality and mostly their accountability.

Delving deeper into the ethnography of the facilitator and finding a parallel between curator/Designer Researcher with French's analysis of *"art as advocacy" (Jade, 2016)*

> *When embarking on this project I was interested to know what the action of curating could tell me about the action of self-advocacy, and if by bringing the two into dialogue there were practices and discourses which could cross over and move in between. What emerged through the curation of* Auto Agents *were questions of autonomy and authorship, and furthermore, the individual versus collective, author versus observer, 'real life' versus art. But rather than advocating for one over another, we wanted to explore how these polarities can sit in relationship to each other* (ibid. p. 115).

This not only captures the subject of the academic ethnographer and their parachuting arrival into a minority community, but also the notion of researcher duality and argues

for an understanding of the flow of positionalities across the duration of the research project.

Chapter Summary

The Chapter has explored the approach and research methods applied in the documentation of this project this MRes documents. The chapter began by discussing this adaptability of ethnography and the pluralised ethnographies it makes possible arguing that ethnography should not be understood as a singular method, but offers instead a range of positionalities through which to research *with* communities and to perform the act of brokering knowledge and thereby shifting from a passive to active research role in social and cultural change.

Chapter Four

Touring Deaf Heritage Workshops: Findings

This chapter aims to summarize and critically reflect upon the four different workshop experiences and the way in which every workshop developed a particular theme. In so doing, the chapter considers the team's status as outsiders to Deaf heritage and the critically motivated intention to co-produce *ways of knowing* Deaf Heritage. The chapter reflects upon how this aim was embedded in the dialogical assets and semantic spaces of the workshops, which facilitated a collaborative attempt to democratize and test heritage-making processes.

The chapter begins by developing an analysis of the *socio-materiality* (Clarke, et al., 2019) afforded through the workshops' design, before turning to the ways in which tangible barriers to inclusion in Scotland's public life, were collaboratively understood. Throughout the chapter, the aim is to reflect upon the ways in which speculative and critical design (SCD) supported an understanding of the political complexity of Deaf heritage.

Curating Counter Narratives at the Glasgow Workshop

Workshop One*: Deaf Connections, Glasgow*
Theme: *Is it hidden Heritage?*

Hosting the first *Deaf Heritage Collective* workshop in Deaf Connections in Glasgow was a deliberative attempt to situate the discussion around Deaf heritage in a Deaf space. It is useful to consider the choice to locate the first workshop in this community space as a metaphoric *acknowledgement.* Originally known as a traditional custom used by American Native and non-Native people to pay recognition to Indigenous Peoples, land *acknowledgements* are still used and have developed not just as forms of politeness, but as a sincere declaration of intents and an "important step in creating collaborative, accountable, continuous, and respectful relationships with Indigenous nations and communities" (National Museum of the American Indian, 2017).

For the team, in respect to deaf people as original representatives of the cultural territory we entered into *their territory*; a cultural space to which we were foreign. It was important to reflect on the fact that we were outsiders and that initially, had no actual contact with the deaf community. We were hearing academics with a background in both design and heritage; yet, we promoted a project with a curious name and a 'collective' claim that nobody knew anything about. Interestingly, most deaf participants assumed we were linguists involved with Interpreting Studies. Coming from a design department, and Napier University, where Deaf culture and BSL had no links allowed the team a certain novelty and even confusion in the early days.

To approach the community and break the ice we needed to locate ourselves in a Deaf space, wherein our non-expert BSL status could frame our aims and participatory ambitions. The first venue, Deaf Connections in Glasgow, provided such a cultural and historic resonance that university halls and mainstream arts organisations could not. Deaf Connections was a space where deaf people felt comfortable. Importantly, it was a deaf-led space where multiple Deaf agencies held their clubs and office space. Deaf History Scotland occupied an office in the basement of the building, where its unauthorised archives lay in boxes, unprotected, un-curated and unvalued by mainstream heritage organisations.

We decided to start our journey from this building and introduce ourselves by knocking at the community doors. Locating the event at Deaf Connections, helped to set a certain tone, reversing the wider power-balance of deaf and hearing people and places. It also allowed us to invite hearing curators and cultural workers *into* a Deaf space. The venue choice was particularly significant for the community, especially, as discussed in Chapter

One, in relation to the disappearance of Deaf Schools and Deaf Clubs. To give some context, *The Glasgow and West Scotland Society for the Deaf*, was officially relocated in Gorbals in 1990, changing its name to Deaf Connections. Since that time, 100 Norfolk Street has been an important beacon for community projects, community gathering and festivals, beside establishing many deaf clubs and be headquarter to Deaf History of Scotland and the British Deaf Association in Scotland. With its unique legacy, Deaf Connections stood as one of the last Deaf hubs in Scotland[6], a place charged of history and memories. The first venue choice of Deaf Connections helped the team contextualise the project *in* the community. Every workshop had its own challenges, but the first event was key to introducing both the project and us.

The main theme for the first workshop-launch was indeed *Deaf Heritage*. Reflecting on the physical space choice, the venue can be seen as a provocation and invitation. The underlying idea was to start a conversation about what Deaf Heritage is, and could be in a building that was fundamentally part of it. It might sound pretentious coming as we do, as outsiders to a historic deaf hub, to discuss the value and importance of Deaf Heritage, but holding the first event in a hearing-oriented venue such as the National Museum of Scotland would not have adequately positioned the project, or our positionality. For example, hosting the first event in an academic environment, however suitable in terms of layout and costs, would have sent a very different kind of message. To have some degree of credibility and set a collaborative tone, we reached out to the community's cultural space.

1st Workshop:	**Glasgow**
Venue:	**Deaf connections**
THEME:	*Is it hidden Heritage*?

[6] Following severe financial difficulties, Deaf Connections closed August 2019, just a year following our workshop. Witnessing what this meant for the community and in particular DHS that urged to find a place where to relocate its rich archives, once again showed us an example of how things move in the community, through the community collective and supportive effort. With very little notice, Deaf action set up to temporarily host DHS and most deaf people volunteer helped to facilitate the moving.

The event Invitation stated:

DAEF CONNECTIONS' WORKSHOP

"Is it Hidden Heritage?"

When Deaf people are mentioned, the default position in the cultural sector is to think about access and inclusion. But what if Deaf lives were the heritage? For over 500 years, the Scottish Deaf community has lived creatively expressive, visual lives - virtually unnoticed amongst the hearing. Those 500 years have bequeathed to the nation a rich heritage that is both tangible and intangible. This rich heritage has now been recognised in the BSL (Scotland) Act. The Act gives us a mandate to act, to recognise and promote BSL heritage in Scotland, but it also represents a challenge. In the midst of current debates about minority heritage, and about the interface between tangible and intangible heritage, how do we understand, describe, interpret and celebrate a heritage that we have typically ignored? How do Scotland's cultural institutions represent the buildings, language, culture and bodies of the Deaf community? What does Deaf heritage 'do' to our understanding of Deaf culture, or to the BSL (Scotland) Act's mandate to recognise and preserve it?
During the first of our four collaborative workshops we explored the future of Deaf Heritage in Scotland in relation to the National Plan and its relation to the cultural organisations that typically shape heritage discourse.

Figure 2 Glasgow Workshop Invitation (Deaf Heritage Collective, 2019)

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The Day's Schedule:

Deaf Heritage Collective

20th April @ Deaf Connections, Glasgow

Schedule

10.00 - 10.30	Registration
10.30 – 11.00	INTRODUCTION *Graham Turner*
11.00 - 11.30	DEAF HERITAGE: St SAVIOURS *Mike Gulliver*
11.30 - 11.45	COFFEE
11.45 - 12.15	DEAF HERITAGE IN SCOTLAND *Lillian Lawson*
12.15 – 1.00	**BINGO WORKSHOP: IDEAS GENERATING SESSION** *Will Clark*
1.00 - 2.00	LUNCH
2.00 – 2.30	BINGO *Will Clark*
2.45 - 3.15	HERITAGE AS PRAXIS *Kirstie Jamieson*
3.15 - 3.30	COMFORT BREAK /COFFEE
3.30 – 4.10	CURATING DEAF HERITAGE (COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOP) *Kirstie Jamieson*
4.10 – 4.30	REFLECTION & FILM SHOWREEL (UPSTAIR)

Semantic Space of Deaf Connections Exhibition

Displays

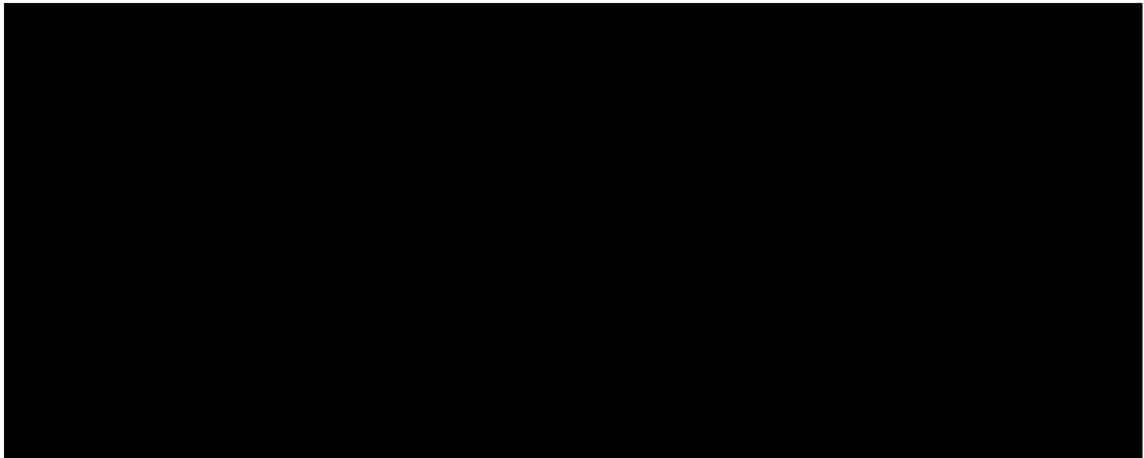

Figure 3 The Pictures shows the Glasgow Workshop environment

Deaf Humans of Scotland

Inspired by the documentary portray of strangers "People of NY", "Deaf Humans of Scotland" (Clark, 2017), by a Glaswegian Deaf photographer and Filmmaker, who sought to produce a series of Deaf portraits to tell the stories of deaf people through their everyday lives and so to represent the lived experience of the deaf community.

Deaf Shadows

Opposite to Clark's work, and in contrast to the themes presented another display told the story of the lives of historical deaf people, of whom much lies in the shadows and has been lost due to a lack of preservation strategies and funding. These famous Deaf characters were presented as black vinyl silhouette to metaphorically hint at all the unknown deaf people whose lives have been lost in history.

A Deaf Monography "Edinburgh, 1762: Tracing John Philip Wood's life";

This exhibition stood as a cameo among the historical figures, to recall the journey of an important life that walked through the city of Edinburgh. Informed by the Deaf Historian John Hay, and traced on an XVIII century historical map of Edinburgh city centre, this exhibit illustrated a visual account and reconstruction of the life of a well-known deaf author and financial figure of the time.

"Face Me" Deaf Heritage Trail

This exhibit presented a speculative interpretive project that took place in the centre of Edinburgh, in the form of guerrilla interventions, re-using the now obsolete red phone boxes as interpretation beacons which sought to raise awareness of Deaf heritage (and its exclusion) in Edinburgh.

The Vanishing of St. Saviour

This exhibit was informed by the research of geographer Dr Mike Gulliver. It told the story of St Savior's Deaf Church (est. 1925), which was the only purpose-built church for Deaf people to have ever been constructed. The exhibition narrated the vanishing of the building due to a lack of funding[7]. Old furniture installed in a dark evocative gazebo echoed the heavy history of a place that isn't there anymore and denounces the lack of museum space where such objects and memories should be archived and displayed to be brought back to the collectivity.

Figure 5 Deaf Humans of Scotland display (DHS)

Figure 4Deaf Shadows display, positioned opposite to DHS

[7] St. Saviour was sold in 2014 and subsequentially demolished for real estate.

Since Glasgow was the first workshop, the theme was to *introduce* the audience to the *idea* of Deaf Heritage[8], The main purpose of the exhibition in display was to point out to Deaf experiences and lives hidden or lost, revealing them to the public to contribute enhancing deaf people's sense of belonging, to that history and culture.

In particular, in different ways, these displays carried a meaningful narrative about the false dichotomy between tangible/Intangible heritage, for instance this is seen in the people's stories from John Hay, or Will Clark's project versus the shadows of the past or a building that *"was there"* but doesn't physically exist anymore (if not in unarchived and scattered objects of memories), versus something speculative, like the Face me heritage trail, representing what "*isn't there yet"*, a critical intervention that draw toward the idea of possible futures.

Overall, as a semantic space the exhibition distributed various narratives of a difficult heritage; yet, starting from the neglected, or untold stories, the team sought to show the potential of reimagining Deaf heritage in its richness through the open-ended lens of critical design. The exhibition also aimed to anticipate topics from the presenters and the speculative activities that would take place on the day.

Semantic Space of Deaf Connections Speakers

Presenters

1. Introduction by **Graham Turner** – Heriot Watt University- Professor of BSL and Interpreting studies, "BSL National Plan, the Scottish horizon"

2. **Mike Gulliver,** Geographer, University of Bristol: Deaf Heritage: St. Saviours Church -

[8] Despite today we can witness to a wide use and declinations of "deaf heritage", I remember when we approached the conversation it was perceived as something the community was not fully sure where to locate or what belonged to it.

3. **Lilian Lawson**, Deaf History Scotland: Deaf Heritage in Scotland

4. **Kirstie Jamieson,** Edinburgh Napier University: Heritage as Praxis

Three of the four presenters came from academia except for one, from *Deaf History Scotland* organisation. Despite all the academics being hearing two out of three presenters were English speakers who were fluent on BSL, one a BSL linguist and the other a geographer of Deaf spaces. The third presenter was a BSL user and senior staff member of Deaf History Scotland. Therefore, except from the team introduction all the presentations where held in BSL.

> *"The day began with an introduction from myself on the uses of heritage and the provocation of what it might be and do outside the discourse of tourism. The presentations from the two academics sought to identify the problem of Deaf Culture as existing on the margins of public life and at the same time highlight the opportunity brought about by the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. These presentations balanced the reality of unfunded community heritage with the potentiality of recognition and funding brought about through a legal mandate. The third, a Deaf presenter who shared her experience of managing DHS archives, which had received no formal support to preserve and display Deaf Heritage. Her images showed a basement of materials that belonged to Deaf History Scotland largely through donations and bequeathed family items. The stark reality of the precarity of Deaf stories, objects and spaces was emphasized when the presenter recounted instances of clearances of schools, homes and unofficial archives – where the destination of Deaf heritage was most often a skip"*(Jamieson, et al., 2021, p.13).

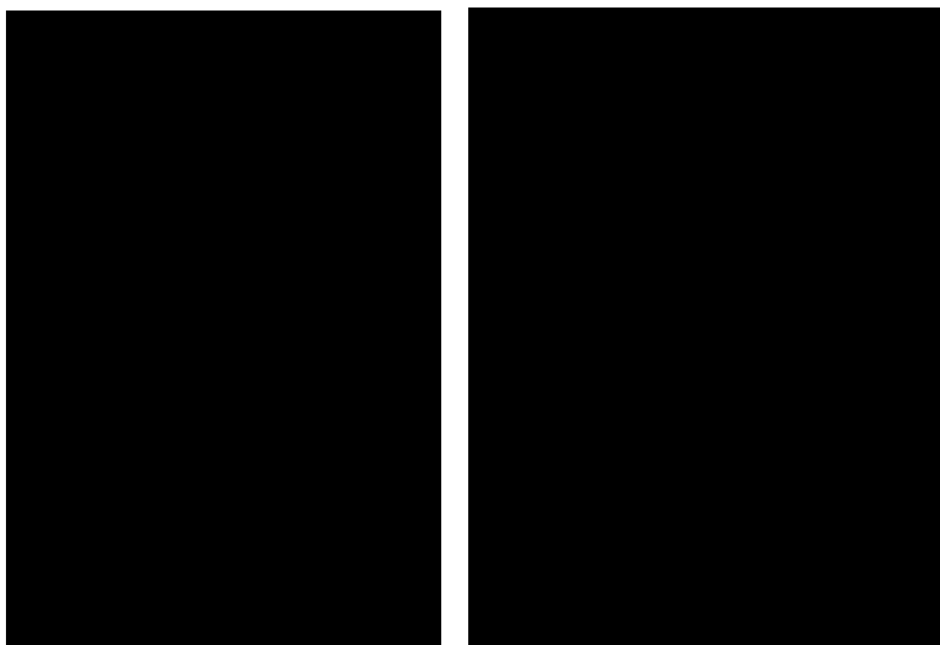

Figure 6Deaf History Scotland Archives

Semantic Space of Deaf Connections Workshop

Activities: Deaf Museum & Deaf Bingo

Figure 7 Bingo Cards, from one of the mixed language tables

It is worth explaining the choice of Deaf Heritage Bingo. As a design tool, the game of bingo can be interpreted in a more critical way (numbers replaced by words), and we can find a few references of it in The Black Bingo or The Feminism Bingo. In another way, Bingo was also a particularly relevant choice in the case of a deaf audience, as we quickly found out that bingo is in fact an actual piece of Deaf Culture (indeed, we learned in the Deaf Connections space where the event was taking place, every week deaf people still play bingo, and as a testimony of this a big electronical screen to call the number stand out in the room).

Participants formed discussion group/teams at every table; and in every group there were deaf and hearing participants, both English speakers only or with various levels of BSL, where every table was facilitated by a BSL Interpreter. The Bingo card was designed to be completed by each mixed language table – who first had to discuss and agree how to complete the card. Combining then both the critical than the cultural aspect of such a game, we decided to give it a participatory twist and asked participant to write their own words for the bingo, having a table discussion. The conversation in each table opened sensitively interesting discussion windows.

When each table had completed their card, they were put into a bowl and words were 'called' by one of the deaf participants. What emerged was the various conceptualisations

of 'Deaf heritage' in the room. Definitions ranged from conventional terms such as culture, storytelling, tourism and history to terms we would more readily associate with difficult heritage, namely oppression, freedom, oralism, identity, equality and rights. Some of the words that emerged from the game of Bingo were in fact, "discrimination", "rejection", "stereotypes", "resistance", "barriers". Playfulness and its materiality in Bingo offer the opportunity of 85visualizing ideas and talking about a certain topic, however sensitive sometimes.

The second activity of the first workshop took the form of what we refer to in design as a design probe, which came as a box of museum models and a scale model of an intersection of a typical museum space. A probe kit was given to each mixed language table and the brief asked each table. Since Museums play an important role in terms of identity and trust, after the presenter's discussion on the rich yet critical status of Deaf Heritage (in the community archives states, as well as the disappearance of community sites), the probe kits itself posed a critical question, by directly confronting the audience with the non-existence of a Deaf Museum in Scotland opening a concrete opportunity to consider how, museums might play a role in Deaf futures.

The questions upon which the activity inquired very directly stated:

What will the Future Museum of Deaf Culture look like?
What will it show and how it will be curated?

Figure 8 Brief for the Collaborative Curating activity, showing the Museum Probe Kit

> *"The roundtable discussions that followed were intense and revealed divisions as to how Deaf heritage should be narrated. The process of collaboratively making the museum provoked discussion and dissensus around a number of points; the importance of telling the story of oppressive oralist schools and expressing the lived experience of oppressed children (now grown up). Participants developed an aesthetic language to capture the difficult narratives of their propositional Deaf museums"* (Jamieson & Discepoli, 2020, p. 125).

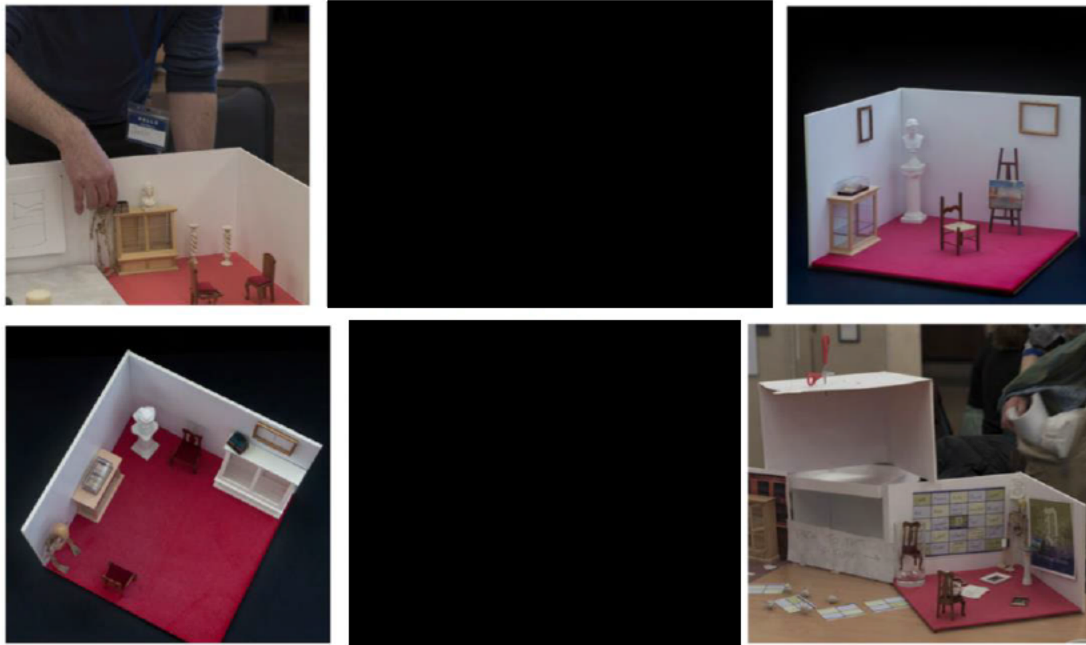

Figure 9 Museum Probe Kits – participants and outcomes

A common factor we were able to identify in all the probe kits, was the use of the space in an actual design of a Deaf-Space, where objects, walls and chairs were thoughtfully assembled or positioned, in a non-hearing fashion (es for example the chairs sitting opposite to each other es in Fig. 10).

Figure 10 Model from one of the collaborative tables, showing dispositions of objects according to deaf assets

However, something meaningful that needs to be noticed, is how the most activist and radical interpretation of the museum, came from the older generations sitting at the table. Of course, if we contextualise the fact the older generations are still the ones coming from deaf clubs and residential schools, this does not surprise more than it emphasises the urge to preserve and include Deaf Heritage for the new and future generations.

Figure 11 One of the Collaborative Museum outcomes

> *The Deaf Museum was attacked and defaced not to destroy the possibility of a future Deaf Museum, but to materially communicate the multi-faceted power of museums to both exclude Deaf lives, and communicate the lived-experiences of oppression. By scoring the walls of the model museum and inserting scissors into the model, the future museum designed by participants narrated a difficult heritage; one that demanded to be acknowledged within a frame of injustice and oppression.* (Jamieson & Discepoli, 2020, p. 129)

Our finished Museum of Deaf Culture. Showing the past on the left, with lack of representation; the path to the future with spiky inequality balls and the glass ceiling in the centre; and the museum of the future on the right **#DeafHeritageCollective**

Traduci il Tweet

1 10 20

Some pictures of the **#DeafHeritageCollective** museum we made today. Follow th Save o the future and smash the glass ceiling.

Traduci il Tweet

3 11

Figure 12Participants' tweets from the day

Furthermore, moving around the tables, what I could note was the process of discussing and making taking negotiated among Deaf and hearings. In the case of picture 11 for example, we can see the scissors breaking through the ceiling of Oralism and oppression. This symbolic gesture and installations fall into a much deeper connotation, if, as we notice from Fig. 11, we pay attention to the multipolicy of "scars on the ceiling". To stress the outcome as the result of a collaborative process, every participant around the tables contributed to metaphorically 'smash the glass ceiling'.

Evaluating the workshop's success

Despite the team's concern about low numbers of attendees, the Glasgow workshop was a success, with nearly 50 people attending the event, he majority of whom were deaf. Although in Deaf Connections, we were hosting the workshop, the truth is that the Deaf community hosted us, the majority of participants were indeed Deaf: and the space was more familiar and meaningful to them than us as researchers. Furthermore, this first event allowed us to identify sensitive concerns expressed by older Deaf participants (those most accustomed to using the building for various clubs), namely the lack (or little engagement) of younger generations with Deaf Connections. The issue of Deaf space was something that since the first event, informed the project and helped us develop future conversations.

Playfully Revealing the Gaps at Inverness Workshop

Workshop Two: *The Town House, Inverness*

Theme*: Good practice & BSL Infrastructure*

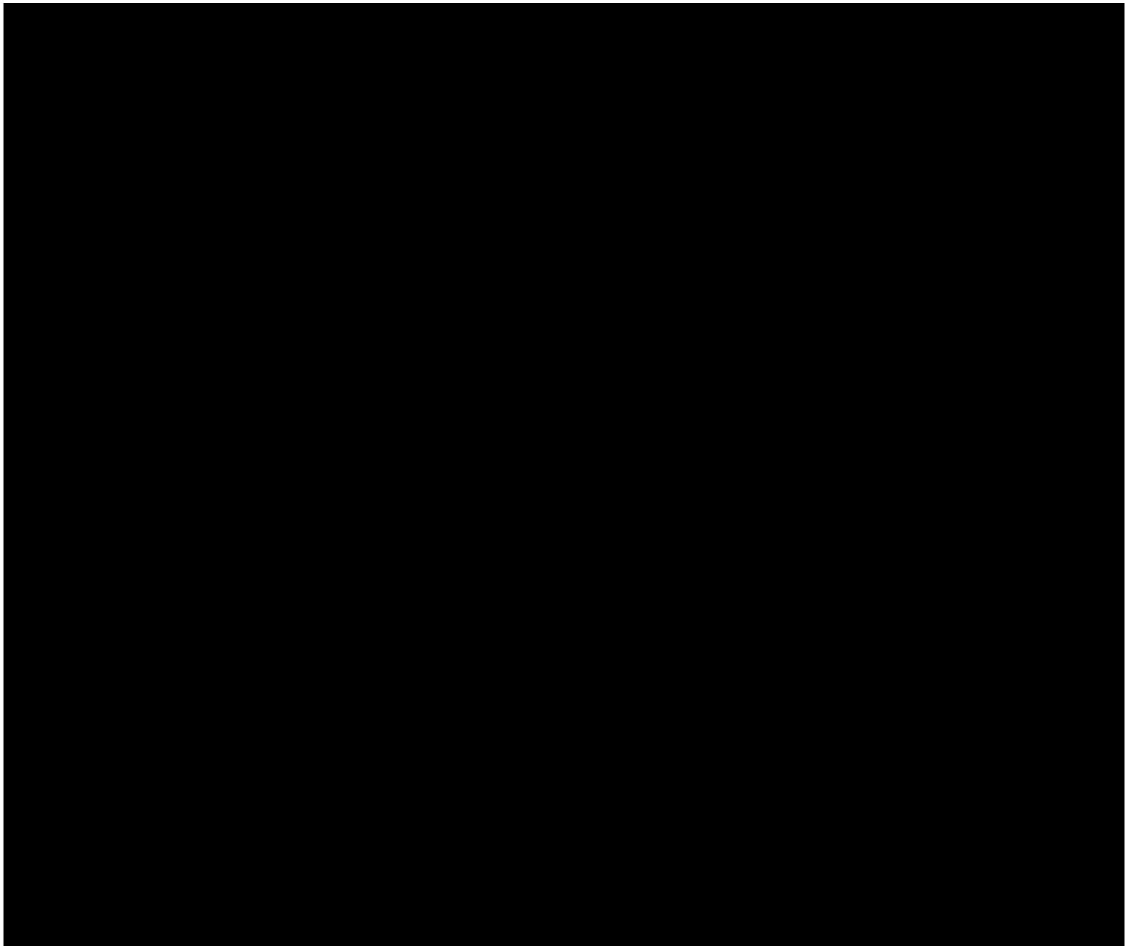

Figure 13 The Inverness Workshop, Inverness Townhouse

The Inverness Townhouse

Compared to the Glasgow venue, the Inverness workshop took place in a very different environment; located in the High Street of Inverness. The municipal building provided us with a grandiose space, which made for a historic location for the conversion ahead. While the original aim was to hold the Inverness event in the Eden Court Arts Centre - a central cultural hub in the northern Scottish capital, the Townhouse and its historic civic role in the city provided a suitable backdrop to debate the scarcity of BSL provisions and BSL infrastructure in Scotland.

Bearing in mind the touring nature of the project, we anticipated it would be a challenging event as we went from the more populated and busier Scottish Central Belt, where indeed the deaf community has a stronger presence, to Inverness, in which even on a geographic

level, there is a clear sign of fragmentation. Nevertheless, the logistics behind the second workshop and the challenging planning experience was an essential part of what informed the discussion taking place and allowed us to "critically examining the power dynamics that shape the "local" and how the "local" can equally be a site of exclusion"(ethnography of collaboration). Thus, it is key to provide some context to the organisational challenges we faced by going north and to a less connected Scottish city; not least of which was a national train strike that made it even harder for people to reach us, including some presenters and Interpreters.

2nd Workshop: **Inverness**

Venue: **The Town House**

THEME: *Good practice & BSL Infrastructure*

<u>*The event Invitation stated:*</u>

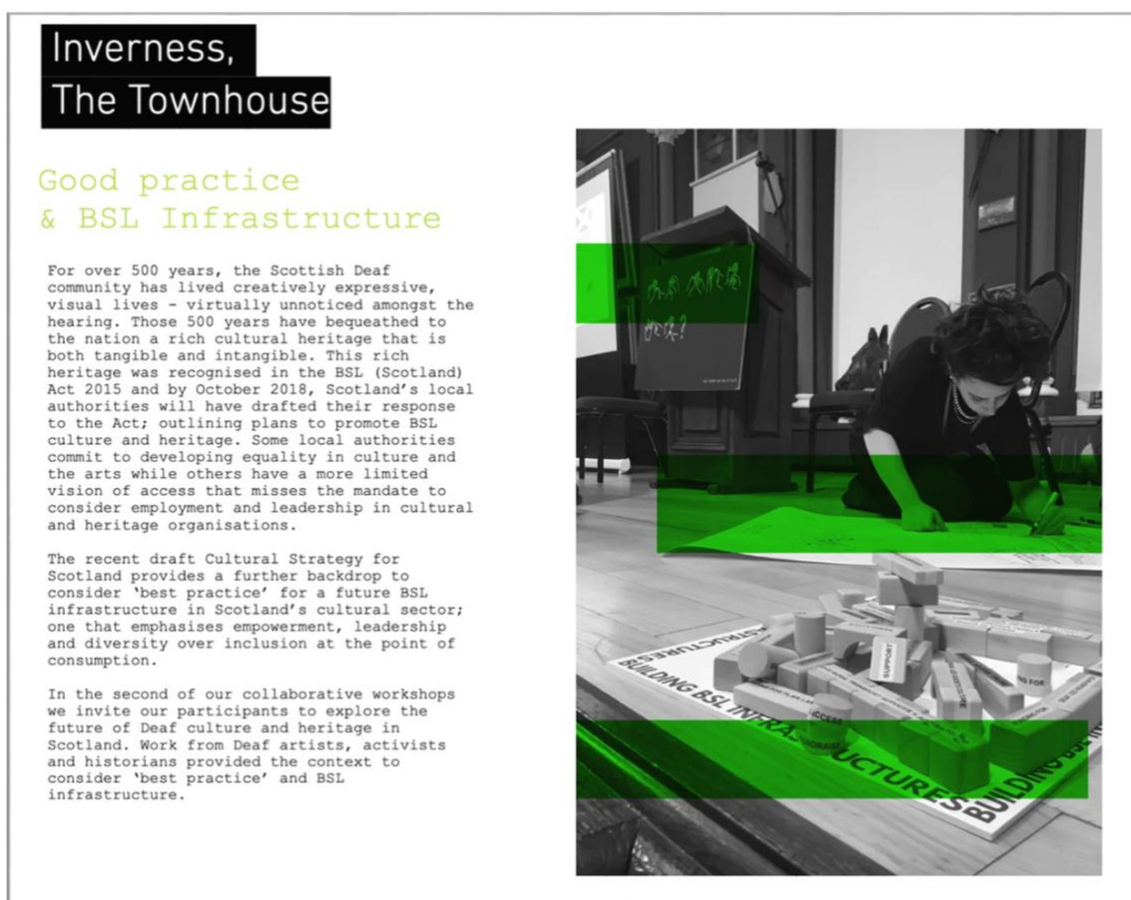

Figure 14 Inverness Workshop Invitation (Deaf Heritage Collective, 2019)

The Day's Schedule:

Deaf Heritage Collective

2nd November @ Town House, Inverness

Schedule

10.30-11.30	**REGISTRATION AND COFFEE**
11.30-12.00	**INTRODUCTION**
12.00-12.30	**John Hay:** *Francis Humberstone Mackenzie, Deaf 1st Baron Seaforth (1754-1815)*
12.45-1.15	**Tania Allen:** *The Alba Cats Collective*
1.15-2.00	**LUNCH**
2.00-2.45	**Collaborative Workshop:** **BSL Infrastructure**
2.45-3.15	**Christopher Sacre:** *My Practice*
3.15-3.45	**COMFORT BREAK**
3.45-4.30	**Collaborative workshop:** **Mapping Change**
4.30-5.00	**Wrapping up**

Semantic Space of Inverness Townhouse Exhibition

Displays

Figure 15 Aesthetic of the Semantic space of the Exhibition at the Inverness Workshop

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From Inverness to Donaldsons: Tracing Archives: mirroring experience*; Deaf History of Scotland (DHS) and The National Library of Scotland*

Compared to the first workshop, displays of the second workshop's exhibition had been informed by some of the sensitive topics that emerged from the conversations developed in Glasgow, for example the lack of funding and proper archive resources for Deaf History Scotland. Spending months going through the archives of both the National Library of Scotland (NLS) and Deaf History Scotland (DHS) the team developed an exhibition that would reconnect to the discussion on archives and memories, but also show narrate the even more fragmented realities of less centralised areas of Scotland, making Inverness part of the storytelling.

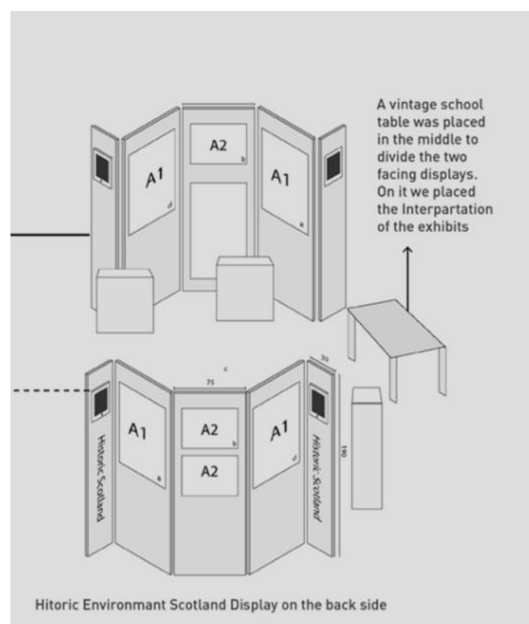

Figure 16 Sketch showing the layout of the DHS and NLS exhibition's display

When we first approached DHS, the archives had received no formal support to preserve and display Deaf heritage. Compared

to the tedious and careful process of going through the NLS archives, in DHS we were confronted with a basement of materials that belonged to the charity archives largely through donations and bequeathed family items. The stark reality of the precarity of Deaf stories, objects and spaces was emphasised when compared with the authorised official archives from NLS: the materials had same historical value, yet not the same recognition.

Therefore, as main part of the Inverness exhibition, two archive's displays opposite each other, aimed to raise questions upon the reality of unfunded community heritage against formal mainstream heritage.

Title and interpretive panel for the NLS boards:

From Inverness to Donaldson's

'Cultural memory is not found,
instead it is made, formalised
and curated in the archive'.

The National Library of Scotland is the guardian and institutional system that conditions preservation and access for the Donaldson's' School archives, from which this exhibition is drawn. Such stories are accessible because of the ways in which documents are carefully assigned to cultures, spaces and times." (Deaf Heritage Collective, 2019).

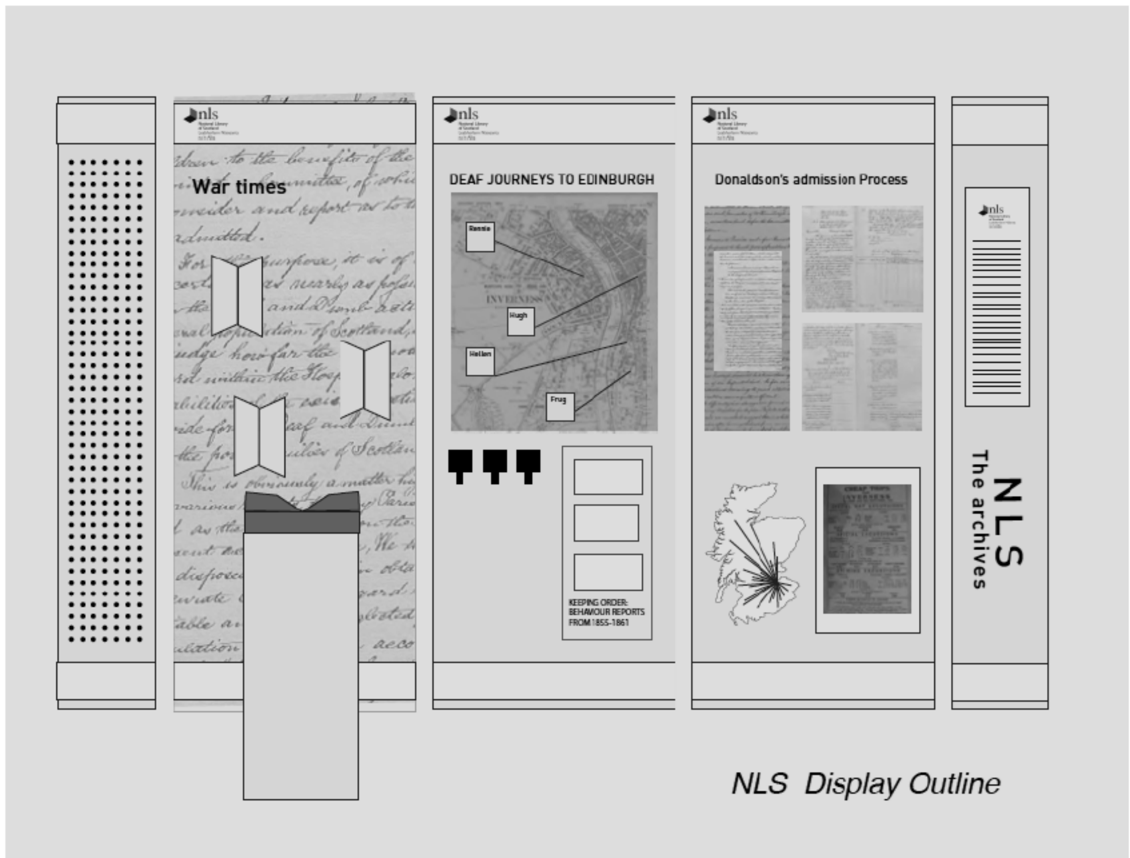

Figure 17 From Inverness to Donaldson, NLS exhibition display, sketch

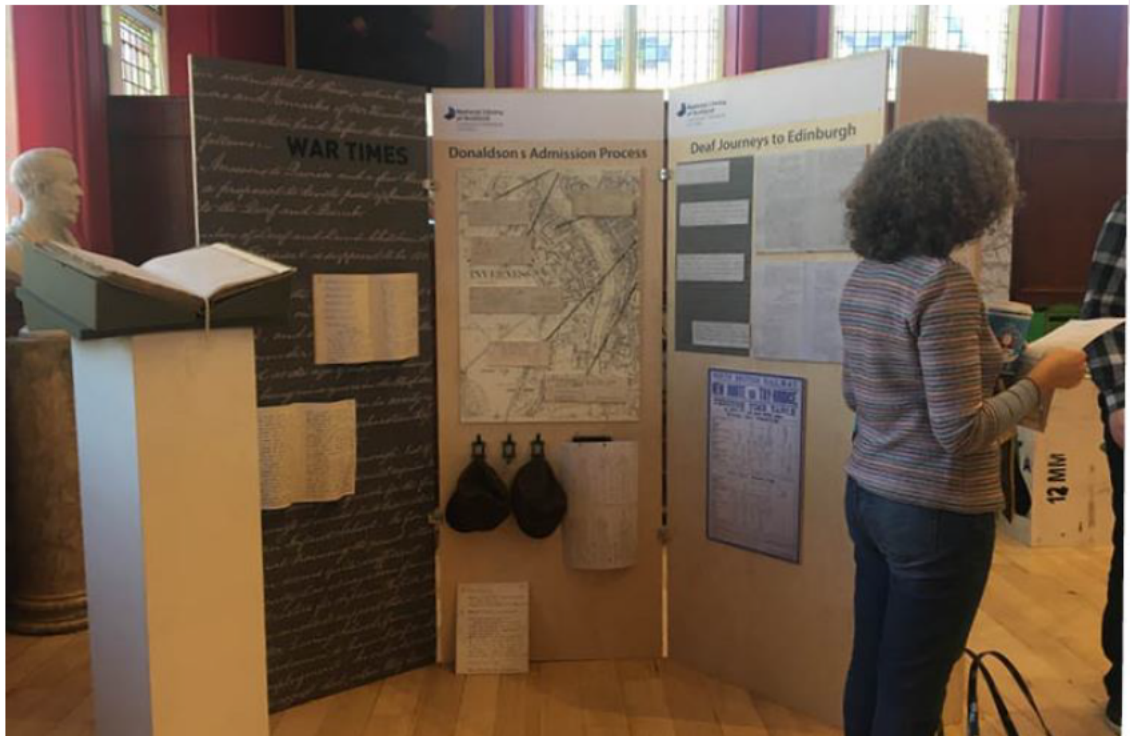

Figure 18 NLS exhibition display

Title and interpretive panel for the NLS boards:

Salvage: to save from loss or destruction

When displayed,
belongings have the function of
witnessing the existence of cultures.

Deaf History of Scotland has functioned as a repository of belongings from the Deaf community for ten years. Documents, photographs, personal collections and institutional memorabilia sit side by side in the basement of Norfolk Street, Glasgow. Unfunded and un-curated these materials have not been privileged as a formal archive, yet they are a testimony to Deaf lives, spaces and language".

Figure 19 Salvage, the curated display of DHS Archives. It is important to note that most of the items displayed where kindly lent by community member of Glasgow, making their belonging available for the small exhibition

Semantic Space of Inverness Townhouse Speakers

Presenters

1. **John Hay, MBE**, Deaf History: *"Francis Humberston Mackenzie, Deaf First Baron Seaforth (1754-1815)"*,

2. **Tania Allen, Deaf Creative,** Deaf Producer and Artist: *The Alba Cats Collective***.**

3. **Christopher Sacre**, Independent Deaf Artist: *My Practice.*

With a Deaf historian, a Deaf artist and a practitioner, the presenter stage at the Inverness workshop represented the most "Deaf-led", among the Collective's workshops. Having spoken of Deaf horizontal lines of transmission, John Hay (also author of *Deaf Edinburgh*, 2015, *Deaf Glasgow,* 2019 and other numerous publications and achievements), represents what in the community could be referred of a piece of living heritage for the community. His presentation was key as he presented a monography from the past, of an eminent Deaf character, that among many achievements also acted as machinates in the artistic field. His presentation opened up the scene for the other two presenters that both gave their unique experience of being Deaf Artists or Creatives in contemporary times. While Tania Allen presented her experience of setting up a collective of deaf artists in Scotland, with personal battles against exclusive systems and a lack of Deaf awareness in the sector. Christopher Sacre, with his unique position as an independent artist and facilitator presented 'My Practice', which was a particularly meaningful account of deaf identify and Deaf Arts, He occupies a unique position, one that is unbound from any labels of belonging. As profoundly deaf, and raised in a mainstream environment, and coming only to BSL and deaf community as an adult, he refers to himself as an 'artist', rather than a deaf/Deaf artist (in strong opposition for example with the Alba Cats arts group that based the collective's name and brand on their Deaf Identity). Interestingly, Sacre's practice is based on collaboration and inclusion, whether with deaf, disabled or hearing groups. The presenters offered three very diverse stories, all of which contributed to unfold meaningful reflections on the role and challenges faced by of deaf artists, to the light of the infrastructures with their gaps and opportunities.

Semantic Space of Inverness Townhouse Workshop

Activities

BSL Mapping change/ BSL Infrastructure

Our second workshop provided an opportunity to develop an activity that responded to the concept of BSL infrastructure, which had emerged through discussions with various Deaf participants. It seemed a useful way of thinking about the requirements and networks currently missing, but necessary to create a more level playing-field in Scotland's cultural sector.

Taking the conversation on BSL infrastructure and the needs of it in relation to the specific time and space, we invited participants to draw a line reflecting on how we could collocate and mark the progress made in Scotland in 10 years following the first BSL Bill developments. We invited participants to fill long paper sheets with timelines, notes and sketches on what had changed and what had not, and imagine future possibilities of change. As time capsules the collaborative maps can be understood as something to look back at in the future, to analyse again a change.

For the following activity, participants were provided the *BSL Infrastructure probe kit:* children's' wooden bricks, paper, and a Dymo machine.

Figure 20 Building BSL Infrastructures, one of the visuals used to introduce the activity to the participants

In the case of the BSL Infrastructure, probes participants were asked to collaborate to consider levels of priority, as well as how elements of a proposed infrastructure might be related through processes and geographies, to create narratives that could trace relationships among *people and thing*, resources and their speculative potential.

<u>*The brief stated:*</u>

'The Scottish Government commit to a long-term aim that is ambitious in its remit to change lives of BSL users and place Scotland as the best place in the world for BSL users to live and visit. However, in practical terms Culture and the Arts have little by way of infrastructure; how will lives be changed and how will careers in the arts be enabled?

Questions remain unresolved as to how the government will create more meaningful opportunities in the cultural sector, but you may be able to offer insight as to what kind of BSL Infrastructure will work. This is your chance to work together as a group to identify and build a BSL infrastructure' (Deaf Heritage Collective, 2019).

Figure 21 One of the outcomes from the 'Building BSL Infrastructure' activity - Participants in this case, used combined gypsum blocks to show the distribution of resources and powers, portraying a processual making of infrastructures

Discussions taking place in each table focused a lot on the different distributions of resources and services, mostly in relation to geography and population distribution. Increasingly we saw participants getting involved in planning and composing building blocks into complex structures of power and alliances that could challenge access and equality issues. In a speculative design thinking process, by debating views and conflicting ideas, the abstract notion of a BSL Infrastructural system (which at the start of the day, did not even have a sign-noun) started taken shape around the tables according to every participant discussing and identify where to start from and with what priority. 'Collaboratively *building a BSL infrastructure with blocks simulated a certain agency and developed a useful 'what if' space to orient discussions about the relationality*

of Deaf heritage to governmental power, Scottish cultural organisations and 'public things' (Jamieson & Discepoli, 2020, p. 127)

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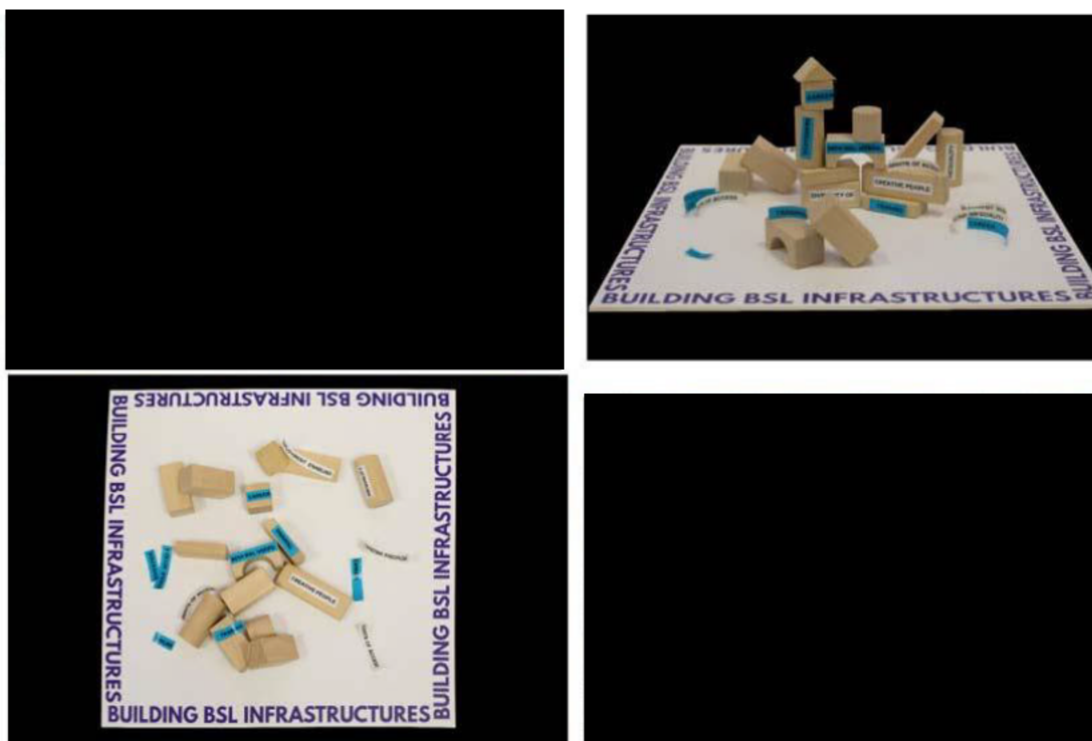


Figure 22 Building BSL Infrastructure, collage of pictures from the Workshop's collaborative activities. From Top left: participants at work, models examples, and participatory discussion on one of the final outcomes

<u>Evaluating the workshop's success</u>

Despite the difficulties, of organising the workshop in a decentralised and more rural part of Scotland (a train strike and the luck of two interpreters and one presenter), the success of the workshop was a testament to the participant engagement and the willingness to keep developing the conversation. We were moved by the help and collaboration of Deaf creatives in the circumstance, as for example Christopher, who was not originally scheduled as a presenter (but he was instead supposed to present in our 3rd workshop).

Furthermore, the lack of two interpreters was the most concerning issue, and we decided to present this to the audience as the uncomfortable yet concrete reality around the gaps of BSL infrastructures, which helped in the development of critical and honest debate around it. Indeed, as there were no sufficient interpreters to cover break times and activities, in accordance with deaf creatives we decided to openly address the issue, by introducing this as another activity that we named *Voices Off:* throughout the day during

the activities time and break participants were asked to collaborate and mediate their conversations, in whatever way, without relying on English. This proved to be a great opportunity to test collaboration, the hearing BSL speakers attending put their linguistic skills to help mediate conversations, as well as Deaf participants and English speakers made their effort to actively contribute to the conversations. Months later, nearly at the end of the project, I remember asking in an interview one of the participants that had attended all the events which had been her favourite activity among all workshops, she still remembered the *Voices off* as the most striking and impactful one.

Staging Mythopoesis at the Edinburgh Workshop

Workshop Three: Code Base & Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh
Theme: *Spaces for Possibilities*

The Edinburgh workshop was the only event to be hosted in two different venues: the CodeBase community hub and the Traverse Theatre. Once again, the process and barrier of the organisational journey informed the main contents and made us, as a research team, reflect the implications behind the struggle to find the "right place". Indeed, the non-existence of this ephemeral *right plac*e is what led the team to the conclusion of approaching the issue of creative spaces and provided the ground for a workshop and an exhibition as two distinctive moments of the day. Instead of the usual exhibition display and dressing of the workshop room, we decided to give relevance to deaf creative's works, in a place that would enhance it as both a celebration and a critical reflection on the lack of a Deaf Creative hub.

We found there was not a suitable Deaf space in Edinburgh for social gathering, the only one being the historic headquarters of *Deaf Action*, which unfortunately, due to size and layout, did not suit our needs. Furthermore, being the case of Edinburgh, a city of festivals and cultural events, we decided to enter the mainstream territory, bringing Deaf Culture to the general public. In fact, we simultaneously curated the workshop space in CodeBase, a renowned community hub, to then move to the cultural hub of the Traverse Theatre,

giving more space to deaf creatives, and creating an actual public exhibition of deaf artists in the heart of the city centre.

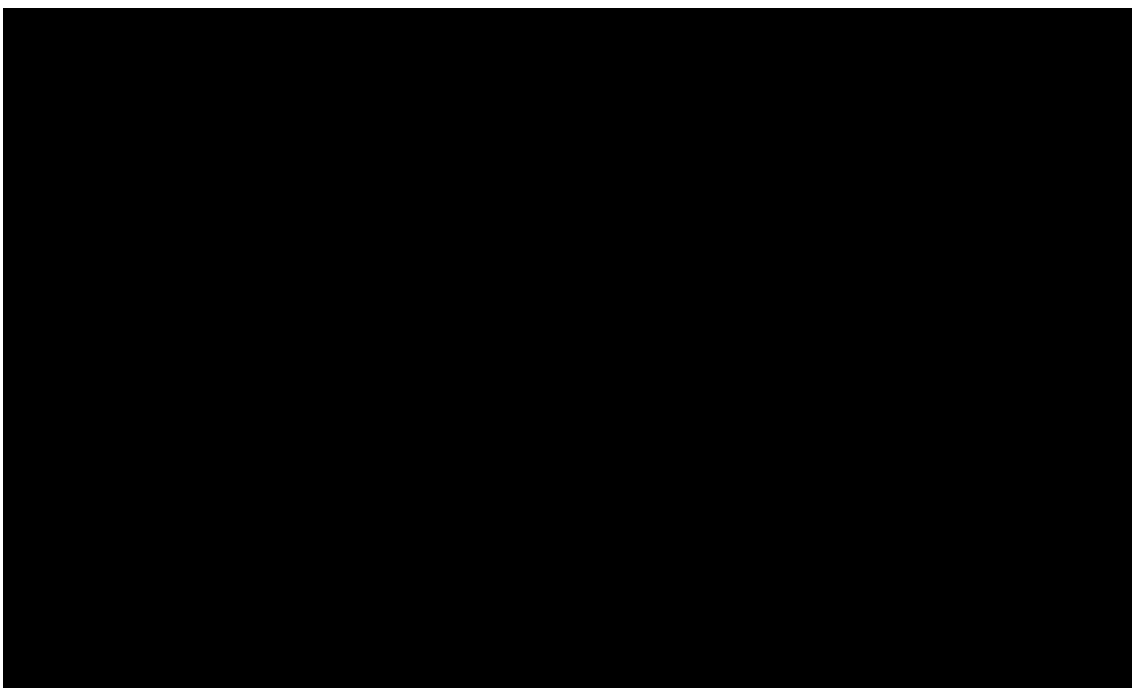


Figure 23(CodeBase workshop, On the background, hanged on the wall, , some of the cultural strategy points, later discussed in the collective budjeting activity)

Known for being an affordable, big space, with great technical facilities and co-working space, Codebase, is one of the UK's largest technology incubators, which among other creative circles and start-ups, also hosts Creative Edinburgh headquarters. Bringing the *Deaf Heritage Collective* workshop to this Edinburgh venue was meaningful, most especially concerning the day's theme, that focused on tackling the lack-of-space for deaf artists and Deaf culture, but also, the exclusion of the deaf community from Edinburgh's main cultural scenes (as this was probably the first time, the deaf community was invited to attend an event in that specific hub).

Interestingly for our purposes, the Traverse Theatre, presents itself as 'Scotland's new writing Theatre', a champion venue for stories and storytellers. The Theatre is a registered Scottish Charity and has been active in Edinburgh since 1963; since its beginning as a theatre to these days one of its main ambitions is to promote communities and local voices. Interestingly, when we approached the space, discussions with the event manager led us to identify this theatre as a potential venue. So, like in a famous Italian play of *Six characters in search of an Author* (Pirandello, 1921), we sought to have an exhibition in the Traverse that could work as a pilot, for both a theatre with no community and a community without an established social/cultural place. For this reason, the Theatre staff

was happy for us to leave the exhibition on, beyond the duration of the event, leaving it on display for the whole weekend.

Furthermore, having two venues in Codebase and the Traverse Theatre contributed to creating two distinctive moments: different from the previous workshop in Glasgow and Inverness where participants might feel tired at the end of the day, moving away from one space to another one announced as the evening exhibition (with a friendly drink reception), allowed everyone to enter in a more relaxed space, where conversations and reflection on the workshops would flow. We know that all day workshops can be tiring, but as opposed to our previous event, this particular format encouraged participant to stay longer, creating the opportunity for an actual social gathering, where participants decided to stay over time, in a spontaneous continuation of the day.

In respect to the venue choice, many were the positive feedback received by the participants and the artists that partaken in the exhibition[9]:

> "*It has lovely space and good walls where people can stand and have a look. Lovely lights and colours. I think it is good and deaf friendly. Good space for drinks, bar, gathering and people can browse. I hope to see more events like this. I want to see more deaf people and hearing people. Codebase is great because more hearing participants are involved in mixing and networking with deaf people. We need more opportunities for deaf people to network with hearing professionals"* (Artist Participant, 2019).

[9] It is important to note that while the exhibition would last only for the duration of the workshop, in this case the exhibition remained in place for the whole weekend, and even the initial skepticism of the Traverse staff towards the layout and space dispositions (upon which we had to compromise, according to both the health and safety strict measures, and the artists requirements), turned into excitement and engagement. Importantly, we need to note that the Theatre stuff tried to accommodate all our needs, also in terms of offering us a workshop space where to prepare panels and exhibition's material, that needed to be painted or customised.

Figure 24 Collage from the Traverse Fragments Exhibition, Edinburgh

3rd Workshop:	**Edinburgh**
Venues:	**Code Base & Traverse Theatre**
THEME:	*Spaces for possibilities*

The Event Invitation stated:

Edinburgh, CodeBASE'
WORKSHOP

"Spaces for
Cultural Participation"

In 2018, the Deaf Heritage Collective debated the possible futures of Deaf culture and the need to invest in a BSL infrastructure across Scotland's cultural sector (one that reflected the rural and urban demographics of deaf communities). The recent publication of responses to the draft Cultural Strategy for Scotland provides a further backdrop: an emphasis upon community-led, minority and linguistic cultures gives us a great deal to consider.

We hope that you will join us for a day of discussion and debate. Following the workshop there will be an evening reception and exhibition of work from deaf artists at the Traverse Theatre (from 5pm-7pm)

As from the findings of the culture strategy consultations, key aims included community ownership, valued artists and creativity, in occasion of the workshop we decided to organise a separate exhibition "Fragments" to tackle these key aims and create a space for creative expressions.

Furthermore, we decided to create a special brief as an open call to deaf creatives around Scotland: The Cabinet of Curiosity was a call for entries for Deaf creatives to submit a miniature installation. A cabinet's drawer for each artist, as a metaphor of spaces and possibilities.

What Should heritage Do?
lack of equality
SPACE

Figure 25Edinburgh Workshop Invitation (Deaf Heritage Collective, 2019)

The Day's Schedule:

Deaf Heritage COLLECTIVE

5th April @ CODEBASE Edinburgh

10.00 - 10.30	Registration
10.30 – 11.00	Introduction *Kirstie Jamieson*
11.00 - 11.30	BSL and Cultural Spaces: The British Museum *Ellen Adams*
11.45 - 12.15	Collaborative Workshop: Roles and Responsibilities
12.15 – 1.00	LUNCH
1.00 - 2.00	Inclusion Scotland: Meaningful Employment in the Arts *Phyl Meyer and Naomi Waite*
2.00 – 2.30	BSL @ The National Portrait Gallery: Two Reflections *Meg Faragher and Trudi Collier*
2.45 - 3.15	Creative Scotland: Opportunities and Ambitions *Helen Trew*
3.15 - 3.30	COMFORT BREAK /COFFEE
3.30 – 4.00	Collaborative Workshop: Responses to The National Plan
4.00 – 4.30	What's Next? *Kirstie Jamieson and Marta Discepoli*
4.00 – 20.00	*Reception and Exhibition at The Traverse Theatre "FRAGMENTS"*

Semantic Space of Edinburgh Traverse Exhibition

Displays

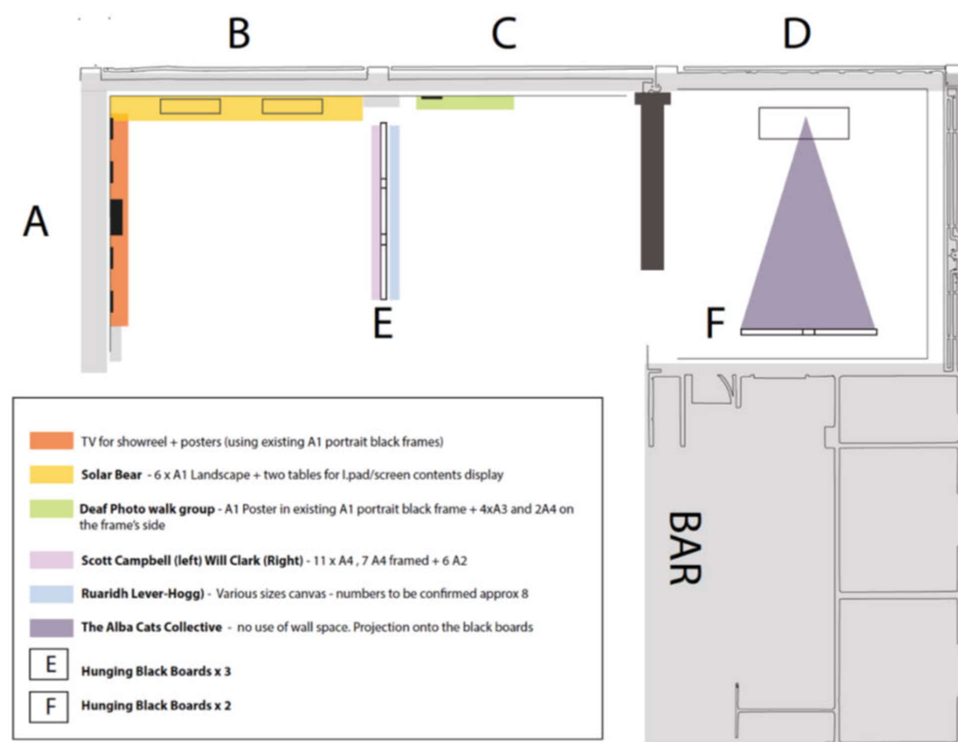


Figure 26Traverse Theatre Exhibition Plan

Fragments

This was the only exhibition that was organised and advertised as a stand-alone event. Organised in 2019, the recent publication of responses to the draft *Culture Strategy for Scotland*, provided a further backdrop: an emphasis upon community-led, minority and linguistic cultures giving us a great deal to consider.

From the findings of the consultations, key aims included community ownership, valued artists and creativity. We decided to title the whole event “Fragments” hinting to these key aims the event proposed to address and create a space for creative expressions. Furthermore, we curated a separate brief, proposing an

exhibition within the exhibition. With a group of Deaf activists, we launched an open call to Deaf creatives around Scotland: The Cabinet of Curiosity.

Scottish artist featured Scott Campbell - Solar Bear; Glasgow People Transparent

Produced by Solar Bear, the work of Scot Campbell, a deaf-born Glaswegian Photographer aimed to portray the city of through the lens of five deaf people, by telling their stories and experiences on Deaf Clubs, Deaf Schools, rivalry, family and travel." The aim of the exhibition was to celebrate the diversity and magic of a city within the city.

Semantic Space of Edinburgh Code Base Speakers

Presenters

1. **Kirstie Jamieson** (Napier University): *Introduction*

2. **Ellen Adamas** (King's College London), *BSL and Cultural Spaces: The British Museum*

3. **Phyl Meyer And Naomi Waite**, Inclusion Scotland: *Meaningful Employment in the Arts*

4. **Meg Faragher and Trudi Collier**: *The National Portrait Gallery: Two perspectives;*

5. **Hellen Trew, Clair Clark**, *Creative Scotland: Opportunities and ambition*

All the presenters of the Edinburgh Workshop came from the cultural sector, so in this frame and for the above specified layout of the day, to the light of debates around the consultation on the Culture Strategy for Scotland, they shared their experience of working in some of the main institutions in Scotland. Presentations brought to discussions issues of employments and access, but most importantly also negatives and positive experiences

of training and opportunity as in the case of Claire (young deaf designer and artist) internship at Creative Scotland or the collaboration between Mag and Trudi (Deaf facilitator) at the National Portrait Gallery.

Discussions led the assembly to consider the importance of involving community members, that also leads to a felt engagement from the community, as proven by the community response to the BSL guided tours at National Gallery (planned with Trudi's collaboration) or in the dedicated British Museum projects brought into being by a deaf academic. These reflections revealed also the key difference between deaf-led initiatives, opposite to hearing-translated programs, tangible in the strong engagement and response from the community to these initiatives. Furthermore, Deaf participants involved with cultural organisations, could share their experience of learning, pointing out to the importance of developing professional skills in order to have Deaf professionals, yet the scarcity of traineeship.

> *I realised for the first time how much research I had to do and I have been doing lots of research. My background is that I have been teaching deaf and hearing people for many different things. This experience has benefited me* (Interviewee, 2019)

The presentations ignite strong debates, questioning the limits of access and, again, a wicked problem, the one of *involvement/participation in public organisations*, was addressed. In fact, there being a lack of deaf professionals in the cultural sector and the paucity of proper training in the field and dedicated funding available, contributes to create the vicious circles for which deaf-lead projects are still far from being achieved on a regular basis.

<u>Semantic Space of Edinburgh Code Base Workshop</u>

Activities

Discussing the lack of deaf professionals and of dedicated professional to an institutional level that are responsible for the inclusion Deaf Heritage in the public sphere, In the third workshop, we developed the theme of infra-structure further by asking participants to consider how the infrastructure developed in the previous workshop would be organised, and by *whom*. We asked participants to consider what type of person might head this infrastructure and what their roles and responsibilities might include. Each table was presented with a 5ft cardboard silhouette that had been painted with blackboard paint, allowing participants to write and draw her/him into existence.

By the third workshop, the recurring theme of absence coalesced around issues of Deaf spaces and employment opportunities. Despite the attendance of Deaf historians, researchers, and artists none of the Deaf participants were strategically placed to support the inclusion of Deaf culture in public life. We chose to symbolise the absence of a BSL arts professional by way of a 5 ft cardboard cut-out that stood above the seated participants. The cardboard cut-out symbolised a potential professional identity, an ambition and source of income for Deaf participants. The cardboard figure oriented workshop discussions towards issues of presence, absence and otherness in the culture and heritage sectors. (Jamieson, et al., 2021, p. 126)

<u>*The brief stated:*</u>

> *'Meet your new participant. She's ambitious and keen to impress. She just needs some direction! Each table will create the job that is needed in cultural organisations to ensure equality and creative opportunity (not just access). Use drawings, diagrams or text to bring her to life'.*

One of the main points identified, was the language factor, and that more people coming from the community needed to be involved at a professional level.

Some of the participant opinions recorded over the discussion in Codebase:

Participant, group 1:

> *"They need to have knowledge about BSL, Deaf Culture and community. They need to have the skills to work with the deaf community. To be able to liaise with organisations and museums. They need to have the skills to network and reach to the deaf community."*

Furthermore, discussion over salary and income inequality, so one of the main points was defining the income of the "BSL officer" it was defined by the majority of participants

Participant, group 2:

> *"This person needs to have good planning skills. To be able to challenge them. The wage should be at around 35,000 to 40,000 a year. Thank you".*

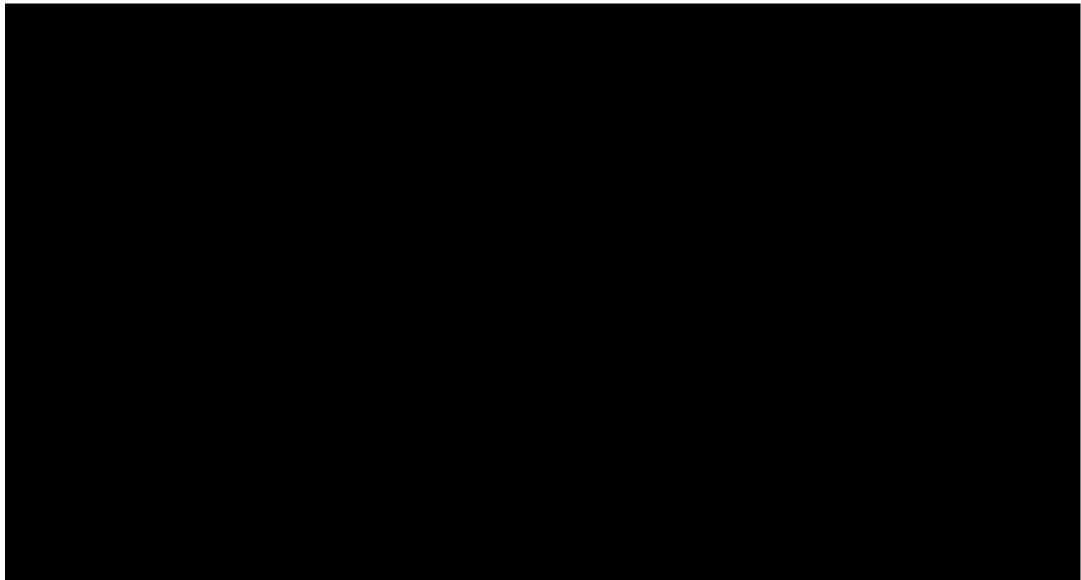


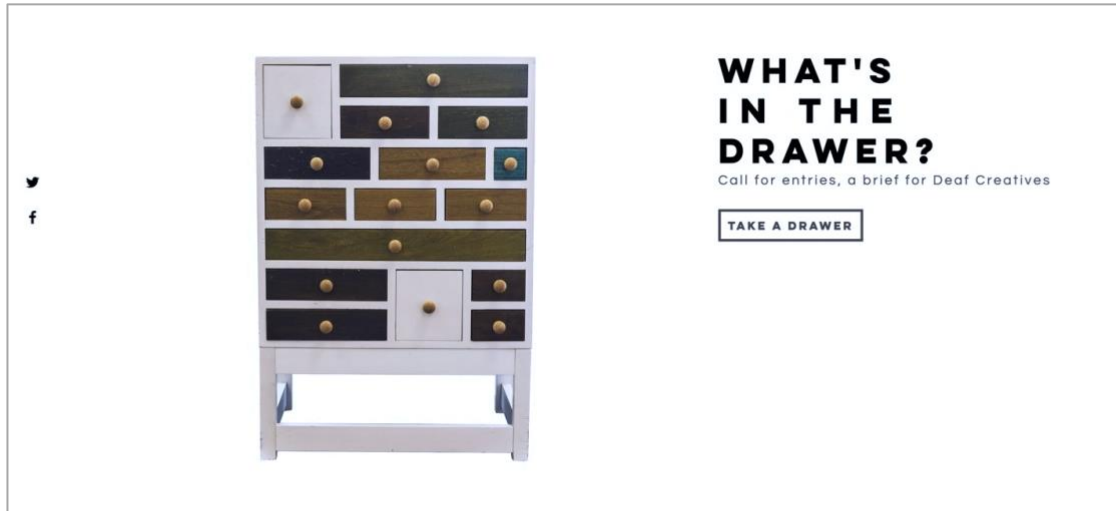
Figure 27 Discussion on the Role and Responsibility activity, at Codebase, Edinburg

Figure 28 Role and Responsibility, outcome detail

Evaluating the workshop's success:

Reflecting on Cabinet of Curiosity

The *Deaf Heritage Collective's* call for artists 2019 sought to explore the significance of space to creative expression. Deaf creatives were asked to submit a miniature installation; curating the small space of one of the drawers.



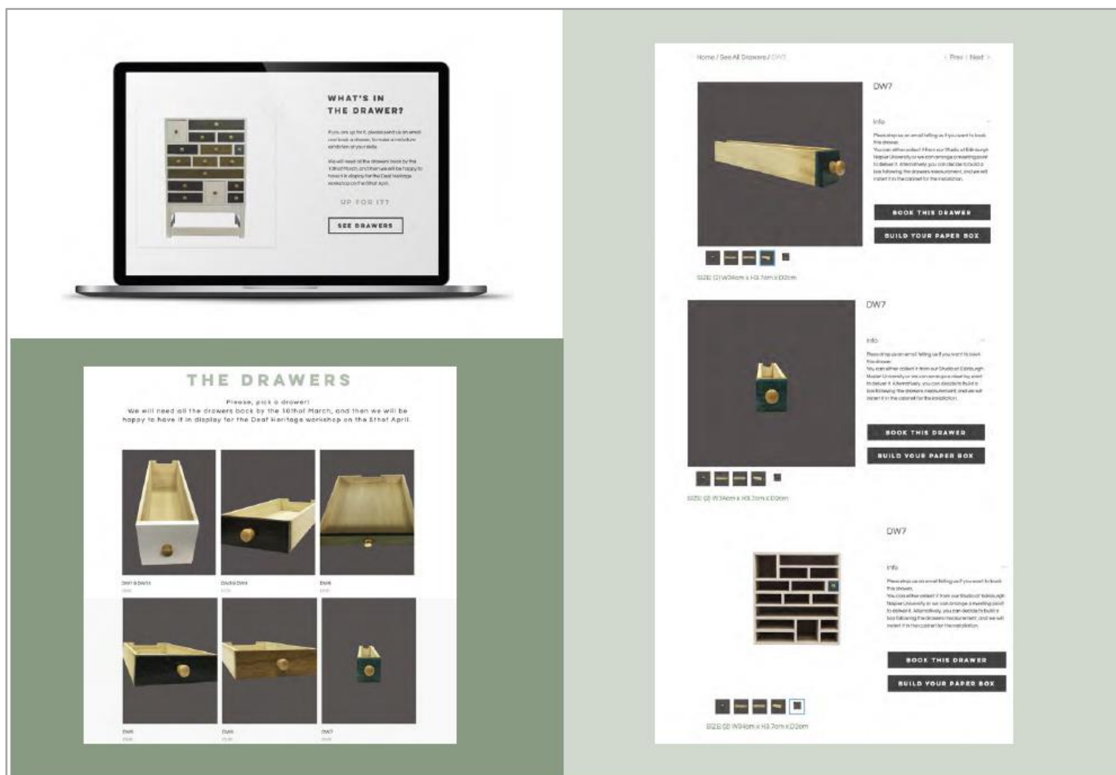


Figure 29 and 24 Cabinet of Curiosity home webpage

THE DRAWERS

Please, pick a drawer!
We will need all the drawers back by the 10thof March, and then we will be happy to have it in display for the Deaf Heritage workshop on the 5thof April.

DW1 & DW14
£0.00

DW3 & DW4
£0.00

DW9
£0.00

Home / See All Drawers / DW7 ‹ Prev | Next ›

DW7

Info –

Pleas drop us an email telling us if you want to book this drawer.
You can either collect it from our Studio at Edinburgh Napier University or we can arrange a meeting point to deliver it. Alternatively, you can decide to build a box following the drawers measurement, and we will instert it in the cabinet for the installation.

BOOK THIS DRAWER

BUILD YOUR PAPER BOX

SIZE: (2) W34cm x H3.7cm x D2cm

Figure 30 and 28 Cabinet of Curiosity, details

The project was intended as an ongoing process, so that for the exhibition due date (a month from the call) it was not easy to reach as many people, and as such there remained unoccupied spaces.

Rather than leave them empty, we wanted to consider the emptiness. It seemed an important opportunity to reflect upon trial and error, experiment, and cultural space, as well the benefits of failure.

In the interpretation we stated:

In design, we like to reassure ourselves that 'there's no such thing as failure', just unanticipated outcomes.

And so it is that we occupy the space.

Figure 31 Cabinet of Curiosity exhibit detail

FILLING/ THE GAPS / OF BSL / INFRASTRUCTURE

<u>Drawer D.w6. Moira's Story</u>

Moira's story is touching especially when thinking of the dynamics of belonging and 'fitting into' cultural norms and categories. As for Moira's case this exhibition gives us the possibility of exploring further the inclusivity/exclusivity balance around the notion of networks. We decided to share her story, and with the artist's permission we placed the interpretation for her work in a small drawer sitting next to her composition.

Moira studied Fine Arts at Gray's School of Arts in Aberdeen and has both an Honours and a Masters' degree from there. A sense of North is always present in Moira's work as is the notion of the fairy tale or the curious. The botanical assemblages and embroideries are part of an ongoing response to both her own garden and the wild landscape in which she daily walks, embracing a sense of memory, loss, and change.

<u>Moira's story, Drawer D.w6.</u>

> *I lost my hearing very suddenly about 7 years ago, they think auto immune related, but I haven't learned to sign, as everyone else around me would have to have learned too. So I guess I don't fit in or feel comfortable anywhere anymore.* (Interviewee, 2019)

This example opens an important case for us to consider. As there are no pre-packaged solutions to wicked problems, our view requires to be open wide on the various scenarios and different realities we are approaching. As there is not one kind of deafness (Sacks, 1990 feet al.), for us considering deaf heritage required sensibilities when also considering network's belonging or exclusion dynamics. Moira's represent one of the many people that feel stuck between two words, not coming from a deaf community, but having approached deafness as an adult. What I found particularly sticking from a research point of view, is the engagement power of design and creative practice. Since somehow, by telling us her experience of non-fitting and non-belonging, this person responded to our brief, as to something she could then fit and represent her[10].

Speculative Objects at the Stirling Workshop

Workshop Four*: Macrobert Arts Centre, Stirling*
Theme: *"ENTRY Through the gift shop"*

As the last of the collective workshops, the Stirling event, needed to be considered through a particular lens, thinking of the conversation and the two-year journey that took the collective to the final workshop point. Indeed, after starting in a deaf club, and then hosting the workshops at two mainstream public venues (an institutional and a cultural one), the team decided to further develop discussions around the theme of BSL infrastructures and BSL provision, pointing this time to an example of good practice.

The *MacRobert Arts Centre* is a theatre house and cultural hub located at the heart of Stirling University. It is an important venue in the Forth Valley and Scotland, not only has it provided yet another geographical example, but also a very different cultural

[10] On a similar note, an interesting discussion took place when organising the same event. I remember discussions in the research team regarding the presenters, in particular a deaf, non-signing Academic call to present her experience of collaborations between the King's college and the British Museum. The main point of the discussion was whether or not that presenter was suitable as the "right kind of deaf" person to represent the issues of Deaf identity in the museum.

scenario, sharing a campus space with a university and hosting both experimental live performance and a cinema showing popular films. The *MacRobert Art Centre* provided the team with the opportunity to explore and discuss the positive experience of Peter Dobre, a Deaf actor and dancer employed as Scotland's first British sign language director trainee (a one-year traineeship partially funded through Creative Scotland's Year of Young People fund).

In general, participants (mainly from Edinburgh and Glasgow), appreciated the accessible location, and contributed to widen the horizon of possible venues as a place to gather. Along the workshop another exhibition was organized, independently by a collective of deaf artists collaborating with the collective.

4th Workshop: **Stirling**
Venues: **MacRobert Arts Centre, Stirling**
THEME: *Internships and networks development / Enter Through the Gift Shop*

<u>*The Event Invitation stated:*</u>

Figure 32 Stirling Workshop Invitation (Deaf Heritage Collective, 2019)

WORKSHOP 4|

DEAF HERITAGE COLLECTIVE|

19TH JUNE
macrobert arts centre
Stirling

10.00 - 10.30	**Registration**
10.30 – 11.00	**Introduction** Kirstie Jamieson (ENG)
11.00 - 11.45	**Deaf Roots and Pride** Avril Hepner, BDA (BSL)
11.45 - 12.15	**Collaborative Workshop:** Mapping BSL Networks
12.15 – 1.00	**LUNCH**
1.00 - 1.45	**Internships: a year @ macrobert arts centre** Julie Ellen, Artistic Director (ENG)
2.00 - 2.45	**Deaf Heritage as Future-Making** Ella Leith (ENG/BSL)
2.45 - 3.15	**COMFORT BREAK /COFFEE**
3.15 – 4.00	**Collaborative Workshop:** Enter Through the Gift Shop
4.00 – 4.45	**What's Next?** Kirstie Jamieson (ENG)

Semantic Space of MacRobert Arts Centre

Displays

Figure 33 DHC Collective outcomes displayed in an 'silent protest' exhibition format, Stirling

Hidden or Denied

This project explores the uneven distribution of heritage through Deaf culture and its marginalisation in mainstream museum space.

Deaf culture suggests more than a language: it refers to practices, values, spaces and shared experiences.

In this exhibition we showcased works from two workshops we organised, one with an hearing group of MA students and a second group of deaf teenagers.

The brief stated: *HOW SHOULD WE CURATE DEAF HERITAGE*?

The Museum of Deafness

Showcase of projects from Design Master students and the Deaf Youth Theater Group (DYT) at Solar Bear.

Silent Protest: DHC Placards

In another section of the exhibition, we showcased outcomes from another collaborative activity on Role and Responsibilities (see below).

We wanted to evoke the feeling of a crowd:

Taking advantage of the mirrored wall our aesthetic aimed to suggest a silent march of campaigners with placards.

Self-curated exhibition from Deaf Artists young talents exhibition

Performance from a deaf Actor (Intern at the Macrobert AC*)*

Semantic Space of Deaf Connections Speakers

Presenters

1. Kirstie Jamieson Napier University, *Introduction*

2. Avril Hepner, British Deaf Association (BDA), *Deaf Roots and Pride*

3. Julie Ellen, Artistic Director and Peter Dobre, *Internship: a year at Macrobert Arts centre*

4. Ella Leith, *Deaf Heritage as Future Making*

Through the Stirling workshop we had the opportunity to explore Peter's experience and the changes his presence made in and to the *Macrobert Arts Center* environment. In a battle for inclusivity that goes clearly beyond the access point, the conversation was brought back to the focal point of young deaf people, and the need for traineeships, so to develop creative competences within the community

Activities:

BSL Discovery Kit/Mapping BSL Networks

In a fictional staging of a monopoly-like board game the *Mapping BSL Network* collaborative activity, as discussed in Chapter two, brought to the scene objectification of the previous probes, that created a reflexive dialogue around the previous activities discussed throughout the workshops. Participants were challenged to negotiate meaning in creating speculative futures, to analyse how the sum of our 'critical fabulations' could dialogue together in the wider context of their interconnections. With a felt sense of awareness and co-operation informed by the previous analyses, by positioning tokens, sketching and tracing connections, participants produced detailed maps that showed speculative coming into being of possible networks.

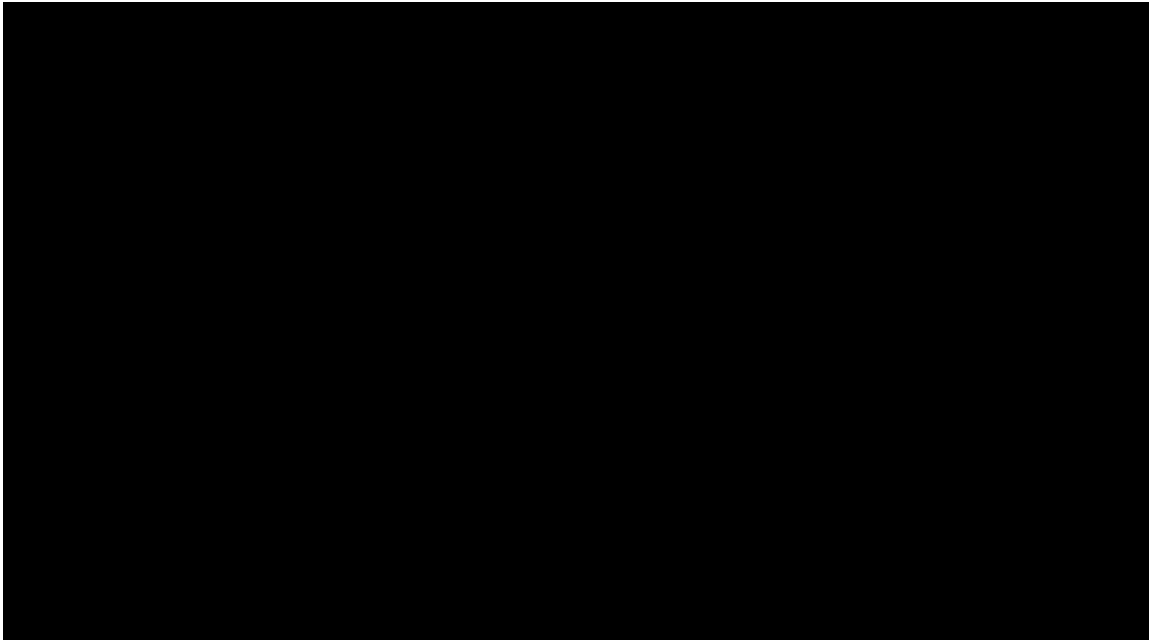


Figure 35 Collaborative Mapping BSL Networks, participants detail, Stirling Workshop

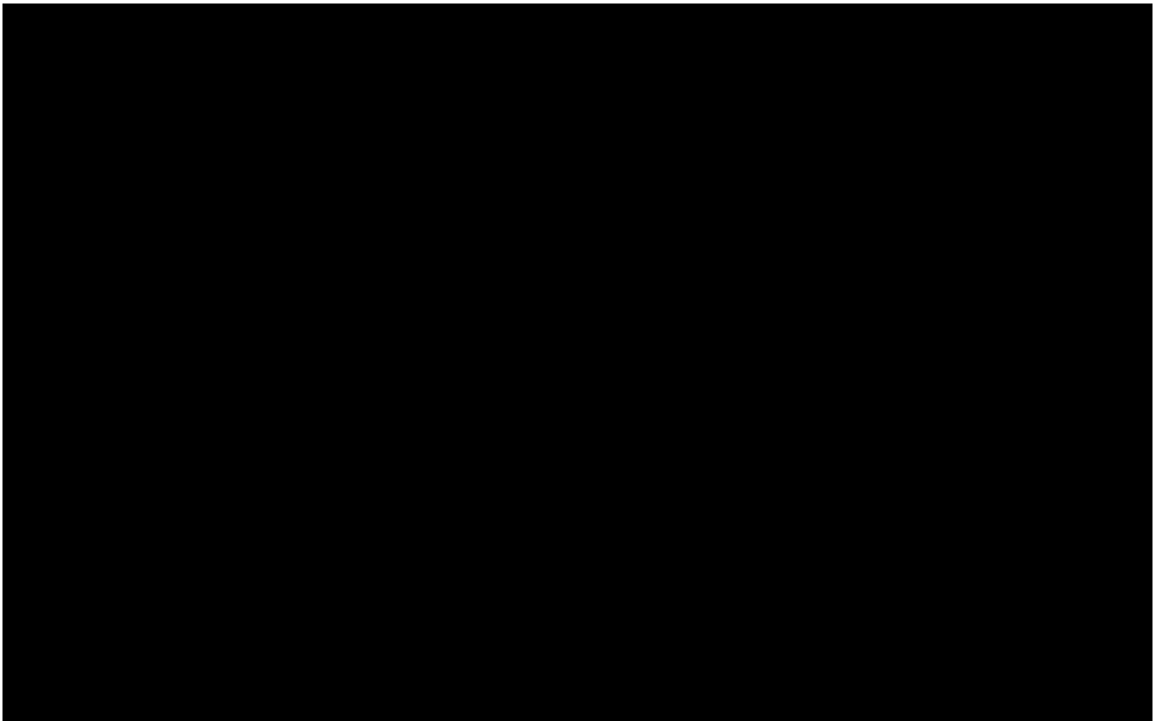


Figure 34 Collaborative Mapping BSL Networks, participants detail, Stirling Workshop

The second activity was presented under the playful asset of a discovery kit.
Co-design methods allow for questioning societal issues and recourses; in our probe kits activity, through material repurposing of objects of everyday life, our participants crafted potential merchandising that could tell the story of historical artefacts or quirky gadgets able to shed light on deaf awareness.

The Brief Stated:

> *'The gift shop is where we buy our over-priced souvenirs, Viking books, Archaeology DIY kits, tote bags and Egyptian hieroglyphic rulers. In this way, the gift shop supplements museums' educational aims through merchandise. So, we have provided you with a potential piece of future BSL merchandise – a BSL Discovery Kit for which you need to design the contents"* (Deaf Heritage Collective, 2019).

Figure 36 The discovery kit Collaborative activity - On the left brief presented to the participant - On the right images of participants during the collaborative activity

Enter through the Gift Shop was intended to refer on Banksy's film *Exit Through the Gift Shop* (2010). This activity aimed to develop conversation about the commodification and commercialization of cultural identities, languages, and history. Participants were given a box of materials to play with and design as many products as they wished. This activity provoked participants to consider merchandising Deaf Culture and in this way asked participants to consider BSL through iconic objectifications.

The outcomes were elaborated and, in most cases, playful, most of them highlighted fingerspelling features as a key way of introducing and presenting BSL to the mainstream public. Mostly (as shown also by the pictures below), they revealed a successful co-operation among participants, simultaneously prototyping and testing ideas among hearing and deaf.

"*As Deaf heritage workshop activities revealed, the gift shop offers the possibility of developing objects of relevance; speculative souvenirs that critically engage with difficult subjects (Kent 2009) and disrupt prevailing ideas"* (Jamieson & Discepoli, 2020)

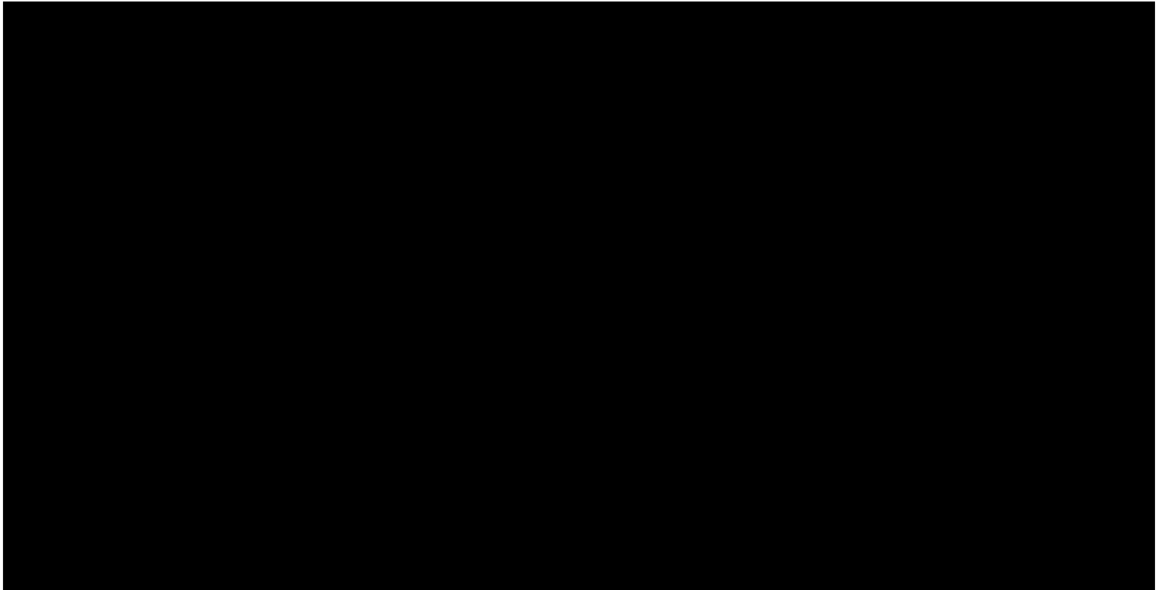


Figure 37 Participants discussing the activity outcomes at the Stirling Workshop

Evaluating the workshop's success

The Stirling workshop, having been the last, was surely the one that revealed opportunities for collaborative thinking, in a more reflexive way, made possible by the previous participatory experiences. In fact, as I mentioned in relation to the *meta-probing* actualised in the *Mapping BSL Networks* activity, so the whole semantic space of the exhibition turned around some of the main themes previously approached, as the *Silent*

Figure 38 Hidden or Denied display, Interpretation from the Design Master Students (2019), Edinburgh Napier University

Protest featuring the cardboard silhouettes from the *Role and Responsibility* activity, now exhibited as meaningful pieces of conversations made tangible.

Thinking of the process and executions of the Museum of Deafness, the outcomes coming from the DYI workshops and the MA students, showed how the two diverse audiences responded to the same activity the team had originally presented in Glasgow through the *Collaborative Curating*. In the case of the MA students, the engagement and welcoming research process, guided by members of Deaf History Scotland marked a sensitive moment, both in the way the organisations opened its door and in the way the hearing students, created a connection, getting immediately involved in the community, after initial mixed feeling of discomfort.

On the other hand, thinking of the *Collaborative Curating* activity taking place among the *Deaf Youth Theater Group*, interesting reflections on the different approaches to Deaf Culture from younger generations revealed a weaker sense of deaf identity and belonging to the community, symptomatic of the little opportunities provided for community engagement among young deaf people and the disappearance of places for gathering (Leith, 2016).

Compared to the radical approach we witnessed in Glasgow (where wallpaper and museum walls were significantly 'smashed'), the models from the *DYT Group* showed a less engaged and activist interpretation. As the team remembered from the DYT workshop day, for a few participants the idea of a Deaf Museum resulted as an oddity, and some ideas revealed views on a deaf heritage that was not acknowledged or much felt. The images above (Fig. 30) show an example of a museum scene and the funny story of a deaf man that was sent to the moon, but being deaf, died without bringing news.

Figure 39 Interpretation of the Collaborative Curating from the DYT Group

Behind this fictional tale, we can relate to understanding the importance of the conversation at the Stirling workshop. Through Peter's internship and awareness mission's experience and the *Deaf Roots & Pride project(2019)* inaugurated by the British Deaf Association, young generations engagement played a significant theme that needed to be addressed.

Chapter Summary

The Chapter has described and analysed the four workshops, in their unique and diverse settings. Over the project's two-year duration, workshops explored Deaf heritage, cultural networks, heritage-making and the infrastructure that supports heritage as social action and future-making. For the team, critical design provided the future-making potential to performatively bring into focus 'wicked problems' (Rittel and Webb 1973) and collaboratively imagine routes to inclusion and equality in the heritage industry.

Our approach throughout the four workshops was to mine design's propositional capacity and develop tactics of fictionalizing Deaf futures to provoke, antagonize and point to mythopoesis: a *people still to come*. Our approach to disruption chimes with the work of Levitas' (2013) who identifies acts of social dreaming as forms of speculative sociology that transcend reality and thereby provide a distinct vantage point that valorises the process of imagining and exploring 'the structural limits of what is thinkable' (p.120).

By provoking, antagonizing and probing, our participants brought into being the possibility and necessity of a space (the Deaf Museum), a system (BSL Infrastructure), a profession (an arts job) and commodities (Deaf Museum souvenirs). These four critical fabulations were brought into existence through props and probes that disrupted the prevailing context of Deaf heritage. In this way, we might see each of them, and all of them in their interconnectedness as a way of engaging with the wicked problem Deaf Heritage represents (Jamieson & Discepoli, 2020)

Chapter Five

Deaf Heritage Collective Workshops discussion

Through writing this dissertation and analyzing the workshops both individually and as a series of interrelated events, I have developed an account of the *Deaf Heritage Collective* which reflects upon its distinct methodological approaches. I argue that the interdisciplinary approach that brought together critical ethnography, critical design and critical heritage supported a synergy of deaf and hearing participant relationships. In the paragraphs that follow, I attempt to distil the findings to reflect upon the insights and methodological values of the *Deaf Heritage Collective* project. I have attempted to consolidate the main themes under the following headings; The Primacy and Prefixing of the Critical, Heritage-Making with a Wicked Problem, and Semantic Space of Workshop.

The Primacy and Prefixing of the Critical

As discussed in Chapter Three, my ethnographic approach has been conceptualised in relation to the possibility of pluralised and critical ethnographies. As project administrator and MRes researcher, I was complexly eembedded in the development of the project, while simultaneously documenting it. This shifting attitude shaped a conscious reflexivity in the honing of an auto-ethnographic and critical ethnographic approach. This reflexivity supported my research journey as I navigated a context, people, and place from which I could not readily separate myself (Luttrell 2000). Moreover, my critical ethnographic approach was closely aligned with that of the *Deaf Heritage Collective* namely, an ethical responsibility to address inequality and social justice in the heritage sector.

A 'critical' prefix was enacted through entangled attitudes, approaches and methods to working with Scotland's deaf communities. Throughout my research journey I took with me a 'critical' prefix; as part of the *Deaf Heritage Collective,* I shared an intent to attend to power in such a way as to reveal relationalities between knowledge, society and modes of action (Thomas 1993). Moreover, coming from a critical design background, I also shared with the collective an overarching aim to materially and visually represent deaf participants in their own terms. This critical emphasis took part within a wider framework of community-based participatory research (CBPR), which the *Deaf Heritage Collective* aligned with a ground-up approach to justice and change-oriented action.

As mentioned above, in my shifting positionalities with the *Deaf Heritage Collective,* I was informed by the overlap of critical design and critical heritage. In many ways, the common ground of these two disciplines shaped the project. As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, this common ground was cemented through the workshops' methodological emphasis upon collaboratively making and critically experimenting with materials and relationships (Gunn et al., 2013).

The criticality of critical design and critical heritage shares a *sharpened* sensitivity to their disciplinary role in generating new understandings and future possibilities for design and heritage respectively. They also share an interest in displacing existing knowledge through activities and methodologies that promote and enable 'mutual learning'. They are in some ways on a similar trajectory of including diverse communities in processes of making. In design, this comes in the form of co-creation and co-design, while in heritage it is evident in the shift towards more collaborative and participatory approaches to heritage-making. Informed by both critical design and critical heritage, the collective synthesized their criticalities to provoke and problematize the inequalities faced by deaf participants and Deaf heritage.

Heritage-Making with a Wicked Problem

In Chapter Two I described the importance of conceptualising Deaf heritage as a 'wicked problem' (Rittel and Webb, 1973) precisely because it necessitated thinking intersectionally about the diverse agencies, professions, policies, and funding streams that have contributed to the disadvantaged and marginalised status of Deaf history, its

artefacts, buildings and historical figures. This conceptualisation was key to developing the language of the workshops and the semantic spaces that oriented participants. As a 'wicked problem' (Rittel and Webb, 1973) Deaf heritage was often difficult to point to in material form; there is no museum of Deaf Culture and there is no protection of its traditions. Deaf Culture has largely been unrecognised by a system wholly governed through an unreflexive audism. Therefore, the collective's aim to create discussions around Deaf heritage immediately necessitated a fictional and speculative approach.

The workshops were designed to articulate the lack of Deaf spaces, artefacts and roles. By speculating, imagining and playing with what does not yet exist, the team developed a design language that provocatively spoke of possibility and near futures. Leveraging design's vocabulary of 'what if' the team designed a series of activities, exhibitions and programme of guest speakers to highlight the complexity and intersectional nature of the problems faced by the category of 'Deaf Heritage'.

Importantly, the *Deaf Heritage Collective* workshops situated participants *inside* the 'wicked problem' (Rittel and Webb 1973) as both the problem and the solution. In this way, the workshops rehearsed real-life scenarios and prototyped possible solutions. Such performances of real-life problems were not always curated. One example is the very immediate problem we faced in Inverness when two BSL interpreters did not arrive. The communication flow was interrupted, and our response was to 'turn off' voices, switching to non-verbal communication for the duration of one activity. Although this was unplanned, it resonated with deaf participants who are regularly let down by a lack of interpreters and excluded from conversation.

Semantic Space of the Workshop

Throughout the period of two years the same participants came together to form a temporary community (Ørngreen and Levinsen 2017) and gain mutual knowledge through creative problem-solving. In the preceding chapters I have conceptualised the space of the touring workshops as 'semantic spaces' that can be disaggregated into 1) workshop activities, 2) exhibition and 3) speakers.

Each of the 'sematic spaces' was designed to be sociable and thereby mediate complex linguistic relationships (Lee, 2008) between workshop participants. Despite the fact that

the sociability these spaces afford is often left out of the writing-up of research papers Clarke et al., (2019) argues, that these kinds of less formal interactions are necessary to understand and facilitate community networks.

The workshops' 'sematic spaces' were structured according to each theme;

• Glasgow Workshop	*Is it hidden Heritage*?
• Inverness Workshop	*Good practice & BSL Infrastructure*
• Edinburgh Workshop	*Spaces for possibilities*
• Stirling Workshop	*Internships and networks development*

Figure 36 Workshop Themes

The four themes of the 'semantic spaces' materialised the conditions (Matthew and Horts, 2008) of Deaf heritage and provided a 'stage' (Hales 2013) to probe, explore and relationally situate Deaf heritage as a 'wicked problem' (Rittel and Webb 1973). The 'semantic spaces' of workshop activities, exhibitions and guest speakers performatively framed Deaf heritage in a variety of contexts to explore its limits and potential as a cultural minority as well as a linguistic one.

Moreover, in addition to their *socio-materiality* as *research instruments* (Clarke, et al., 2019), the 'semantic spaces' of the workshops created important subject matter to reference during discussion. This is all the more important in a context where there is little by way of Deaf heritage in the mainstream sector. These 'sematic spaces' also supported an environment and atmosphere of dialogue and translingual awareness amongst participants who, as already mentioned, were encouraged to see themselves as part of both the problem and solution.

The 'semantic space' of the four workshops were thematised (Fig.36) to allow for communicative ideas to be shared across different platforms and modalities. In the Glasgow Workshop, we asked *Is it hidden Heritage*? In the Inverness Workshop, we asked participants to devise what they thought was *Good practice & BSL Infrastructure.*

In the Edinburgh Workshop, we asked participants to think about the importance of creative *Spaces for possibilities*. In the Stirling Workshop, we asked participants to consider the importance of *Internships and networks development.* These four themes are provocatively entangled in the wider 'wicked problem' (Rittel and Webb 1973) of Deaf heritage, but in their separation and staging, participants were given the time, space and materials to prototype solutions, assign responsibility and trace the effects of the problem.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has reflected upon the confluence of critical design and critical heritage in their shift to more collaborative, democratic and community-oriented processes. The space of overlap between critical design and critical heritage is also an ethically motivated space that aligns with community-based participatory research (CBPR) and a commitment to social justice. Moreover, the criticality that is described in this chapter is also sustained by critical ethnography and a reflexive positionality that is sensitive to the inseparability of the researcher, site, people and approach.

The chapter has reflected on the importance of conceptualizing Deaf heritage as a 'wicked problem' (Rittel and Webb 1973). This framing encourages a more critical understanding of the intersectionality of the inequality and challenges faced by Deaf cultural organizations, deaf artists and deaf communities. Finally, the chapter reflected upon the curation of the workshops by way of 'semantic spaces' which function as multi-modal platforms that are apt to 'stage' provocations, speculations and debate. The 'semantic spaces' of the *Deaf Heritage Collective* workshops facilitated an inclusive environment where spoken and written English were temporarily displaced.

Chapter Six

The Deaf Heritage Collective? Concluding Thoughts

The *Deaf Heritage Collective* project ran from January 2018 to November 2019 through a series of participatory workshops and events that aimed to generate a network of interested parties (Deaf community, Scotland's cultural sector, and the academic) to ultimately create a much-needed working relationship between Scotland's Deaf Community and the Cultural Sector. As outlined in the previous chapters, a broader aim was to advance discussion around the BSL (British Sign Language) Scotland National Plan (2017) and the future of Deaf heritage in Scotland's public life. On writing this MRes thesis, the project is now complete inasmuch as the RSE funded project has drawn to a close. On a practical level, the *Deaf Heritage Collective* still lives. This final chapter reflects upon the thesis itself and the after-effects of the project.

The dissertation began with Chapter One and its exploration of Deaf heritage, as that which sits as a future-making potential in relation to Deaf identity and its futurity. This first chapter introduced a central argument of the thesis, namely that understanding the lived experience of deaf communities is key to involving deaf participants in research projects such as the *Deaf Heritage Collective*. Following on, Chapter Two addressed the generative synergies of critical heritage and critical design in dealing with the 'wicked problem' (Rittel and Webb 1973) of Deaf heritage. The chapter described the project's approach in relation to critical design and critical heritage and how their confluence allowed for a series of distinctly speculative and performative workshop activities. In Chapter Three the thesis focused upon my own critical ethnographic position as both a project team member and an MRes researcher. This third chapter discusses the complexity of this position of insider-outsider in relation to: the project, the cultural context of Scotland and Deaf culture. In Chapter Four, I turned to the specific workshops that took place over the two years, beginning with Glasgow, then Inverness, Edinburgh and finally Stirling, reflecting upon each of them in relation to the geographical context,

aims, and participative modalities of each workshop. I described every workshop through a detailed account of its three distinctive 'semantic spaces': 1) workshop activities, 2) exhibition and 3) speakers. Within these specific spaces, the participants were encouraged to collaborate in the making of critical fabulations (Jamieson & Discepoli, 2020), materializing the conditions in which the valorization of Deaf Heritage could be realized. In Chapter Five, I reflected upon the project's approach and argued for the applicability of the 'semantic spaces' of the workshops as well as the confluence of critical design and critical heritage. The remaining sections of this final chapter aim to reflect on the project and draw upon the lessons learned and the impact created by the two-year touring workshops.

Networks as a Solution?

As the previous chapters have revealed, the project's ambitions and hearing-led origins were met with scepticism and distrust at points, but awareness of the deaf community's distrust provoked meaningful points of reflection for the team, which ultimately led to a more sensitive understanding of how to restore and reconfigure trust (Akama, Light, 2013). During the project the team came to terms with the power and limits of the networks, upon which its funding had been predicated. Networks are complexly practiced flows of people, ideas and values; which like museums, *are not neutral*. Their dynamics of exclusion/inclusion are contextual, contingent, and situational and serve to secure a space where like-minded organizations and individuals find affirmative connection. Throughout the duration of the project we found that Deaf and disabled people are not catered for in the cultural networks that structure cultural policy, cultural events and cultural engagement. The *Deaf Heritage Collective* highlighted gaps at an infrastructural level. The lack of opportunities for Deaf culture, deaf artists and BSL support is defined by limited funding channels and hearing oriented cultural leadership networks that are not easy to access for D/deaf creatives and professionals (Jamieson & Louise Todd, 2021).

The project aim to establish a national Deaf heritage network of deaf and hearing participants was only partially realised in a formal sense. When the funding to support spaces, interpreters and materials came to an end there was no Deaf or heritage organisation waiting to take over. Despite the lack of space and resources to secure the future of the nascent network, by the end of our last workshop, we could however identify

the existence of a non-formalized network; a new set of relationships borne of the collective's participants.

Despite a sense of success in the establishment of these relationships, there remains a question asked at the last workshop "what next?" This question resonated beyond the workshops to a final event, namely *Dinner Party Debate (2019),* that sought to provoke a further question related to the lack of a Deaf Festival in Edinburgh, the Festival City. The same question was raised by deaf participants; "what's next?" and "who will pay?"

> *'When is the next debate?'; 'who will fund the next meeting?'; 'why are the other directors not here?' and 'who will pay for interpreters if we meet with them?'. This last question goes to the core of a very practical barrier to festival networks for Deaf artists, that of the cost of BSL interpreters"* (Jamieson & Louise Todd, 2021, p 14.).

The *Dinner Party Debate* was a milestone at the end of the RSE funded project and looking back it allowed us to witness a new network of hearing and deaf community organizations, Deaf charities, and mainstream cultural organizations. Since 2019, Edinburgh has seen its first Deaf Arts Festival and begins to plan for 2023.

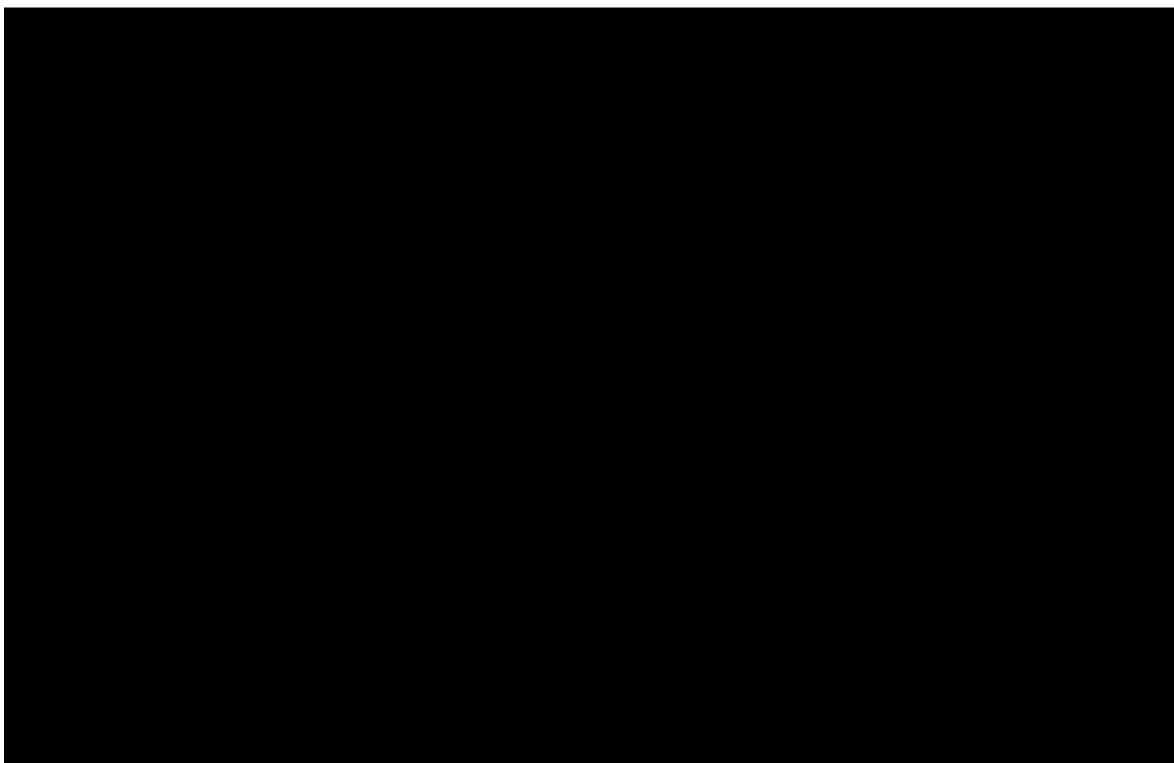


Figure 40 2 Edition of the Dinner Party Debate, at The Edinburgh Deaf Festival, Edinburgh 2022

Reflecting on Scotland's Pledge

Amongst the *Deaf Heritage Collective's* participants, many came from the cultural sector and over the workshop's progress many admitted finding themselves in the uncomfortable role of producing their company's strategy in response to the BSL Act, with no real experience or knowledge of Deaf community or Deaf culture. Given this specific context, the team was aware of a distinct kind of participation; those heritage professionals on their own research journey into Deaf culture. Despite the leap forward in policy with the BSL (Scotland) National Plan (2017), many questions remain unanswered. The 'wicked problem' (Rittel and Webb, 1973) of Deaf heritage has not been addressed as such and the lack of opportunities for Deaf people and organisations has only partially improved.

Opportunities: Critical Heritage Through Critical Design

Heritage from the vantage point of the *Deaf Heritage Collective* is concerned with future-making (Harrison 2013; Basu and Modest 2014). Zetterstrom-Sharp (2014) argues that the future-making capacity of heritage "is strategically applied to activate, or in Appadurai's words 'build capacity for', future aspirations. Similarly, Bauer's (1940) concept of 'common destiny' (p.610) usefully dilates the futurability of heritage processes. Sharing this view to the future, critical design is characterised by a distinctly speculative future-oriented approach. Aligning with these future-oriented principles, the project sought to create "dialogue about possibilities" of Deaf heritage futures.

The synergy of critical heritage and critical design was discussed in the previous chapter, where the disciplines' criticality was described as sharing a *sharpened* sensitivity to their capacity for future-making. The synergy of these two disciplines is of significance to those researchers and heritage professionals with an interest in community-led projects and the type of co-production that prioritizes 'mutual learning'. Methodologically, the *Deaf Heritage Collective* developed a translinguistic platform where provocation and

problematization encouraged collaborative responses through making. The collective's workshop paradigm deliberately displaced the dominance of spoken and written English as much as was possible, to create a more level (but not level enough) playing field.

Curating the series of workshops presented diverse and interwoven challenges; from the practical logistics of a touring project to ensuring the presence of enough BSL interpreters to support a shift in the balance of presenter language towards BSL. The project began by immediately seeking guidance from the deaf community, which framed the team's intention to work with deaf participants on an equal footing. Enabling such equality was in itself a persistent challenge; *language, power, access, funding* and *networks* are privileged and privileging forces in the heritage sector. The *Deaf Heritage Collective* was a relatively small project that was limited in the change it could affect, in relation to language*, power, access, funding* and *networks.* Nevertheless, the series of workshops began with a sense of collective input in Glasgow's Deaf Connections where deaf participants took to the floor and led debate as to *what* and *how* Deaf heritage could be conceived. This initial workshop was designed to facilitate a provocative, playful and democratic space. Its success was felt in the dominance of BSL.

If we understand culture as constituted by pluralism, multiplicity, and heterogeneity, we understand how participatory methods and collaborative disruption through a critical design approach, can be a future-making tool for empowerment "designing infrastructures that can enable and support people with agency [21,52], and embrace multiplicity" (Akama et al., 2015:144). Bringing the BSL community and cultural professionals around the table, and giving them equal authority unsettled the ideological categories of heritage and culture, and this way the *Deaf Heritage Collective* set an example of a *dialogical and future oriented* design process (Jamieson, et al., 2021) that could challenge and negotiate conflicting ideas performing that democratic notion of '*doing of heritage'* (Johnston and Marwood 2017).

The Deaf Heritage Collective's Impact and Moment of Change

Throughout the course of the project, and reflecting on it after two years, it is clear how 'public things' (Honig, 2017) performed through participatory acts of making internships, BSL Infrastructures and Deaf Museums, were seeded in the speculative activities of the workshops. It is also evident that these 'public things' are becoming realized through

cultural change and institutional commitment to inclusion. Those organizations that were represented in the workshop have continued to develop opportunities for Deaf Heritage in public life. An example of this is Deaf History Scotland, whose funding and networks have been expanded in the past two years, which has led to the rise of new projects, including a collaboration with the National Library of Scotland; *Deaf Fingerprints* which takes a participatory archive approach to establishing the first formal Deaf Heritage archive in the national library.

Furthermore, among the collaborations borne of the series of workshops, one of the main heritage organizations, *Historic Environment Scotland (HES)*, opened its door for a Deaf intern for the first time, evidencing a serious commitment to the needs of training, leadership and Deaf employees. Furthermore, HES has supported the funding of a new research position for a Deaf Scholar, that has been announced at Heriot Watt University.

After the end of the project, the team also contributed by supporting funding applications arising within the community of D/deaf organizations to promote new heritage projects. Other important projects have received funding, most notably *Solar Bear* Theatre Company, which has established an arts-based nationwide Deaf Heritage Project (2020), which has seen some of the Deaf creatives that attended the *Deaf Heritage Collective* workshops employed in management positions. Most deaf organizations have and will continue to collaborate. Furthermore, since the project ended, roles like Heritage Officer (my current role in a Deaf-led organisation) or BSL Officer have become a new addition within deaf and hearing cultural organisations. It is perhaps from these new roles and shifting infrastructures that we ought to see the next development of a *collective*.

Reflecting on the Capacity of a Collective

Over two years, the 'collective', was used by the team as a unifying symbol, (Marchart, 2007). In its name the collective revealed its intention of bringing into being a network of interested parties. By engaging the Deaf community and heritage professionals through speculative play and collaborative activities the team sought to privilege Deaf identity and deaf experience. The *Deaf Heritage Collective* contributed to the development of new links and connections and promoted a futurity of Deaf cultural production rather than consumption, in pursuing the long overdue shift from 'inclusion' to 'authorship' (French, 2017).

This chapter concludes with the final metaphoric activity that marked the end of *Deaf Heritage Collective* workshop in Stirling 2019. As we prepared for the final workshop, we decided to assess the *success* and appetite for more workshops with a simple anonymous feedback box (Fig. 19). We wanted to metaphorically end, by leaving the question of the *Deaf Heritage Collective's* legitimacy and continuation in the hands of the community. Our question was met with another*; "what's next?"*

Figure 41 The last 'feedback activity' on the Deaf Heritage Collective experience

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Appendix:
Interviews Transcripts

Transcript / Glasgow

Tania Allen

I am over the moon the be here today it is a great opportunity to be here, to meet people from Museum, Library and lots of different organisations, to be able to share our views and what is best for the deaf community.
It has been fascinating to share my view and lots of the organisations have no idea of our experiences and are happy to listen to our views and experiences and you realise that we have got a voice to share”

I think today looking about has been fantastic, when they were talking talking about deaf history it has been very very good and there are a lot of interesting things because (and I am looking at that part of my personal experiences) and all of that relates to me and this part, you know, it links to my culture and also my family, because also my family is part of their culture as well, it makes me think of my family and I think it has been very good looking at deaf heritage and the different ways we can explore that. And the Activities we had earlier on like bingo, really opened up discussions and different ideas and people views on heritage

I think today has been great, has been mind opening, I have had a lot of good discussions, it has been nice to brainstorm those things. I have worked with the community and academics at our table it is has really opened doors for us and the potential is there for this to just explode, especially with the policies contest just now, with the BSL National Plan and the local authority plans which is due now in October 2018, now this is a really timely discussion. It has been good to share experiences, we have had some different experiences and activities today, there has been a lots of tactile objects that we can touch and we have the exhibition here, a lot to see, the Bingo activity has been really good to share ideas there, nice and unformal and we have good all the different installations, I have to say I love the phone boxes I really enjoy seeing them because I think they are visual, it is an excellent metaphore. You might think it is just a phone box, but

what is that? Oh it is just a phone box, but actually there is all that rich deaf heritage that is in there, preserved, and once you open the door it can get out and fly out, which is why I thought it was great and yes, it has been a really good day so far.

“ - Feedback to improve?”

For the next futures event if you are going to tour in different areas of the country, that would be very good, but also I would recommend more members of the everyday deaf community, because you know they don’t have access to this information and deaf

history, most of the people that are here today are here from deaf organisations or academics and more people from the grassroots community need to be made aware of this, maybe you could advertise this through deaf organisations, through partnership, to get more people along with a wider age range, where is the elderly population here? There is nobody who is older here, but I think it is a very good start".

[redacted]

My name is [redacted], this is my sign name and I am from Dumferline
I have come here to Glasgow today, for this conference and I have really enjoyed it so far, I have taken a lot of information, to find out what everybody else is experiencing with regards through history and it is very interesting, and it is interesting to other people and for other organisations who do not kno anything about deafness and deaf culture and it is good to have a networking opportunity because it is important for deaf people to be involved. In my experience I used to have a wildlife park and I used to run that for 15 years, so I used to have BSL guided tour and I used to have a lot of deaf visitors who were able to get access to all the information regards animols, so opening up the access I would like to be that example to other organisations around the country where other deaf people are involved, because there are a lot of deaf people with skills and experiences that have another background, or you know trying to encourage that and think that is a good opportunity now to open discussion and hopefully improve access to deaf visitors and deaf people linking them with tourism, especially with the BSL act that is coming up in a few years, I think it will be great

CodeBase

Trudi – I realised for the first time how much research I had to do and I have been doing lots of research. My background is that I have been teaching deaf and hearing people for many different things. This experience has benefited me.

Feedback from workshop activities

Yellow Top – They need to have knowledge about BSL, Deaf Culture and community. They need to have the skills to work with the deaf community. To be able to liaise with organisations and museums. They need to have the skills to network and reach to the deaf community.

█████- This person needs to have good planning skills. To be able to challenge them. The wage should be at around 35,000 to 40,000 a year. Thank you.

Workshop activities

Lady with blue/green . At the break, hearing people always talk to each other and they ignore deaf people.

█████ – Hearing people earn a good wage. Why can't deaf people earn as same as them?

█████ – **I am not sure what he is talking about**

Lady – with check shirt. Says we should have our own Deaf museum. Manager earns 35,000

█████. Talks about deaf perspective for architecture.

Feedback about traverse and codebase

Trudi. Says we would benefit from workshop activities rather than talks. Some talks that may not be related….for example, Inclusion Scotland's talk is useful but is it related? That is an example…but overall it is lovely to see new faces and familiar ones. Great to network. Lovely. Good for today. Thank you .

█████ – Hello, I am █████ and an artist. Pros - I want to tell you about today. I am really impressed with Codebase and Traverse venues. They are different. Codebase is more formal and It is for presentations. It talked about Creative Scotland, Tourism and accessibility. Trudi as a BSL tour guide, for example, it is more successful with number

of BSL users. We need to create more deaf BSL tour guides for BSL users and we need to raise Deaf awareness and more accessibility where deaf people can work in museums and galleries in the future. I am impressed with Traverse. Why? It has great exhibition. It has lovely space and good walls where people can stand and have a look. Lovely lights and colours. I think it is good and deaf friendly. Good space for drinks, bar, gathering and people can browse. I hope to see more events like this. I want to see more deaf people and hearing people. Codebase is great because more hearing participants are involved in mixing and networking with deaf people. We need more opportunities for deaf people to network with hearing professionals. Cons – I feel there is not enough advertisement because it is so new and it takes time to develop. It is processing and creating more opportunities. It is a long road. Ok. Thank you.

[redacted] – I come here to meet. I enjoy learning different perspectives and like to share & talk about culture, Arts and everything. The information is really good. I want more deaf talks/presentations. Why? Because deaf perspective is where deaf people live and breathe, it is their real experience what it is like. Venues are awesome. I hope they would consider creating more job opportunities for deaf people so they can influence on young people to carry on their deaf culture and BSL etc.

[redacted] – Workshops are awesome and brilliant. Why? ….**frozen – I could not translate**

[redacted] – My name is [redacted]. My sign name is…. I would like to talk about today workshop, it is really awesome and amazing. Why? Because different organisations, deaf and hearing people come and get together to discuss different ideas about how to improve accessibility and inclusion. I thought that is great. Why? Deaf people share their perspective (Deaf perspective) and that is where hearing people never know about before. So this communication and sharing information can improve the progression and also this is important. The exhibition in Traverse is great because hearing people come and see deaf people and their work. They are impressed by their work. When the organisations plan accessibility they do not think about issues, they just want to tick the box which means the quality is lower. It is not right. Deaf people's work show that they are the same as everybody. It is important to remind them that the

deaf people are so capable of doing excellent work and for the future. It will improve inclusion for deaf people. Fingers crossed. Thank you.

[redacted] – What I really like is about meeting Artists. I am passionate about networking and making new contacts. I did not have much opportunity in Glasgow. So today has been a great opportunity for me to talk and meet new people and also others that I wasn't properly introduced to and that is my opportunity. I also like to hear different views about politics, funds and opportunities. It is good to hear their views. I would want to say one negative thing.. is…(just my view)..I know this is just an event but sometimes I feel it is too much focused on deaf issues and frustration with barriers. I understand that and I do really know that. But perhaps after few hours, it becomes a bit depressing..I felt a bit depressed..well that word is not right but it is just like I feel like I want to think positive and we need the encouragement about the future. You can complain…it is no problem but you need to talk about how to change and how we can improve rather than just complaining. But I really have good experience with this event. It is good for me to meet new people and listen to what they have to say and their views about the future. I really realise something I have never thought before..for example what is the next step. It is really good.