

UHI CHAT Mini Projects:

Please express your interest to hary.art123@gmail.com by 21 October and indicate which mini project(s) you wish to undertake. We will provide further details and support to facilitate your engagement with the chosen themes.

Please WeTransfer your completed projects by 1 November 2024. Please WeTransfer to hary.art123@gmail.com

Brief:

We are delighted to extend an invitation to you for an immersive engagement in a series of mini projects from the MA students of Contemporary Art & Archaeology at UHI. These projects are designed to challenge you creatively and intellectually, encouraging you to delve into practices of material activation and explore your artistic expression.

The UHI CHAT Mini Projects are a collection of concept-driven themes that serve as catalysts for artistic and archaeological exploration through experimentation and practise. Each theme is an open-ended prompt, allowing you to interpret and respond through various mediums and methodologies. The projects are intended to foster a dialogue between your personal practice and broader cultural, historical, and environmental contexts and aims to foster a collective of collaboration amongst the attendees.

The Mini Projects weave together themes of directional energies, perception, sensory history, and the essence of space, inviting participants to explore and express the interplay between the seen and unseen, the past and present. Engaging with non-human elements, the earth's materials, and the narratives of movement, artists, archaeologists and historians alike are challenged to uncover hidden meanings and transform their findings into profound artistic statements.

We invite you to select one or more of these themes to develop a mini project that resonates with your practice. Your approach can be as traditional or unconventional as you desire. The goal is to activate materials and ideas, to bring forth new understandings and expressions that bridge the past with the present, the tangible with the intangible.

As you embark on this journey, we encourage you to document your process and share your progress with the CHAT community online before we all meet in person in November. Your insights and creations will be valuable contributions to the collective exploration of these themes during the session that the UHI students will run throughout CHAT.

We look forward to seeing the innovative ways in which you will interpret and materialise these concepts. Your participation promises to enrich our understanding of the interplay between art, archaeology, and the material world.

1. 4 Directions North, East, South, West

To simplify this project idea, you might like to choose just ONE meditation and use it as the basis for reflection. This could be in any medium: photograph, sound recording, words, whatever feels comfortable. You might want to simply use the meditation before you begin a piece of work, or to help kick-start your intuition, or release anxiety. It is a way to surf the energies that are all around us so have fun with it!

Breathing meditation: 4 Directions North, East, South, West.

This process is about allowing and receiving. Ground yourself before you start. Don't do this on an empty stomach! Have a slug of water or a bite to eat. Find your spot outside eg. in the garden or on a favourite walk, where you can be left alone without distraction, and stand with your feet hip distance apart. Do a couple of grounding breath cycles before you start. These meditations can be done on different days, or on one day, or made a regular part of a daily routine.

Early morning meditation.

Go to the North/face North. Close your eyes and breath the energies of the North into your 6th Chakra that governs your third eye, sinuses, nose and ears. Allow the expansive clarity of the North to fill your senses, hold and breathe out. Repeat the cycle 5 times. This is an inspiring energy that enables you to connect to your intuition/inner perspicacity.

Morning meditation 10-12am.

Go to the East/face East. Close your eyes and breath the energies of the East into your 4th Chakra that governs your heart. Allow the gentle energy waves of the East to fill your chest, hold and breathe out. Repeat the cycle 5 times. This energy is about deep feeling and enables you to connect to the wisdom of your emotions.

Afternoon meditation 12-3pm.

Go to the South/face South. Close your eyes and breath the warm energies of the South into your 3rd Chakra/Will that governs your solar plexus, lungs, digestion. Allow the manifesting energy of the South to fill your abdomen, hold and breathe out. Repeat the cycle 5 times. This energy is about will empowerment and enables you to connect to your creativity.

Late afternoon/evening meditation 4-6pm.

Go to the West/face West. Close your eyes and breath the energies of the West into your 1st Chakra/Root that governs your body. Allow the warm consolidating energy of the West to fill your whole body – head to toe, hold and breathe out. Repeat the cycle 5 times. This energy is about grounding the wisdom of the body and brings together the deep learning of all the chakras.

4 Directions Breathing Meditation grounds the Earth's energies into the elements and can be used for specific healing purposes, for example morning Heart healing – east, facing deep water. The meditations are strengthened and supported by our vertical alignment. We are the channel between Earth and the natural energies. Barefoot is recommended, but none of these practices are compulsory.

2. Un/Expected

We walk through the world with our own assumptions and expectations of what we will find, site specific practitioners will have to make decisions on how to engage audiences with what is obviously there and how they can draw audiences into otherwise overlooked narratives.

Go to a space you know well and look around. It can be anywhere, a wood, your garden, a room in your house, a heritage space, town centre, a local shop. Look for the things that stand out to you, that you don't expect to find there, and document it. Look at the things you expect to see, the things that almost blend into the background or that have become so mundane your eye flows over and document them.

Now that you have a list of the expected and unexpected consider ways to blend them together, present the scene to someone who has never visited your site before. You will make decisions about what to highlight: will it be the expected or unexpected? Can you give equal weight to both

these things for a new viewer? Is there anything in your scene that the viewer will have preconceived notions about? Consider how you might refute or reinforce those expectations in your work.

3. Edible Histories

Create a dish to invoke a time and location. Using food to transport yourself somewhere personal or historical. As the work will be shared digitally, plating will be an important aspect. What visually will this invoke? Create a written recipe poetic or factual to go alongside the work that I will compile into a 'Cookbook of Memory'.

Think outside of traditional cooking and recipe (Think Anicka Yi's deep-fried flower.) The work is about invoking time and memory through smell, texture, and taste. As we won't be able to experience these use the recipe to tell us the story.

4. Mapping Emptiness: be busy

In the paper Paez relates 'orientation of reality that is characteristic of maps opens up possibilities for the transformation of reality, which can be brought into play by architecture or other disciplines' or any other disciplines. like archaeology and 'art'.

The International Situationist concept that, 'space is a social product, versus the free construction of lived space' and Paez's 'cartographic activations of empty space' reads as maps are 'live' and once they are made they cease to be 'live'. They are created and live in the action of their creation. So, space cannot continue to be conceived as passive and empty. The transformation of reality if you like.

Colonisation declared territories surplus or obsolete. Worthless even though they might have been valued by indigenous communities for millennia.

Task

In real-time using a drawing material, map a space that is in your vicinity. That could be the space between two wires off a laptop. The gap between two pieces. **Or it could be a geographical space between us, or an area of land or sea.** An emptiness.

Repeat this process. Try and employ the same time scales and the same materials. Are these spaces empty? Could these collaborate or respond to the compass? Reflect on the drawings what do they say do they have a code? Repeat the process in different places or apply the same process to different areas.

5. Non-human collaboration

Humans make middens, but on these sites, it is generally non-human objects; shells, bones, flints, pottery sherds, that are encountered. For this mini project you are invited to collaborate with some non-human element. This could be anything nearby, air, water, shells, spoons, rolls of sellotape....anything at all as long as it is non-human. Allow the non-human element to make the mark, shape the form, in whatever medium suits.

6. Becoming Earth

An invitation to collaborate with a handful of earth (outlined in the powerpoint). If you prefer to freestyle don't watch the videos and don't get too hung up on shiny stuff if you don't have sticky clay in your subsoil. Think about our tangible and intangible relationship with soil and what it means to you. It might also involve water and plants and will be rooted in place.

You might reflect on the relevance for archaeology (and art) and about what we leave behind.

I'm also wondering about merging this idea with other mini projects so thanks for the inspiration.

The ppt below is a bit huge so I have now also put it on youtube as well: <https://youtu.be/yv2R6WPUvII>

7. Consider the 'Hidden'

Select something that represents 'the hidden' to you. This could be an object that has a hidden meaning. Perhaps its context has been lost or its meaning lost, perhaps its meaning is unknown to you or is *only* known to you!

Perhaps you are thinking of something that is physically hidden from view, decorations on neolithic stones that were carved and then hidden from view, something that is buried, or within? Is it soil, rubbish or your body?

Maybe the hidden is something that is commonplace, that is very familiar but that you look at with a completely different view from a different cultural or psychological context?

When you consider your hidden piece, think about how 'the hidden' makes you feel? What images does it evoke in your mind, how would you describe it? Or draw it?

Some words to think about: Secret, Intimate, Personal, Disused, Discarded, Disregarded, Sacred, Bias, Safety, Preservation, Lost.

8. Linear Proposals

Make a small journey - real or memory or imaginary- and record the landscape using words or pictograms. Any format will do - not necessarily on paper. Think about how you can describe space or place, distance, and time by combining words and an aspect of art practice.

How wide is a memory?

How long is a piece of string?

Is the hill below or above you?

9. Wrapping

Take an object - anything, any size (smaller is probably easier!) and wrap it. The wrapping can also be anything 'to hand', textiles strips, yarn, paper, plastic, wire, seaweed, grass...

Record it however feels comfortable and I'd love to see the results!

If you'd like to take it further: It is interesting to add other objects as you wrap, or play around with man-made and natural materials (*entanglements*). Perhaps use found objects. Or materials that hold memories. Think about the meaning of the wrapped material, and the wrappings. Does the form of the wrapped object change, or is it still recognisable? Think about the transformative aspect of it, what is hidden and what is revealed?

I have attached a work in progress photo, I imagine that this will become something else very soon, maybe even grow arms and legs...

Wrapping as Metaphor

Wrapping is a powerful metaphor discussed by Karina Croucher and Colin Richards in *Wrapped in Images*, a study of Rapa Nui and the metaphorical concept of 'wrapping' seen in traditional tattoos and the rock art in the landscape.

Wrapping [...] although physically containing and concealing, they also advertise and draw attention to that being concealed. The paradox can be best described as wrapping as a mechanism of indication, whereby that which is being indicated is also necessarily hidden or obscured. Perhaps under such circumstances wrapping may additionally be conceived as an embrace of that concealed. This wrapping propagates a conjunction and intimacy between that practice, form, and materiality of wrapping and what it is that is being wrapped.

Croucher, K. & Richards, C. (2014) *Wrapped in Images: Body Metaphors, Petroglyphs, and Landscape in the Island World of Rapa Nui (Easter Island)* https://www.academia.edu/17206068/Wrapped_in_Images_Body_Metaphors_Petroglyphs_and_Landscape_in_the_Island_World_of_Rapa_Nui_Easter_Island

Also see Fiona Campbell for inspirational use of wrapping in art installation <https://fionacampbellart.co.uk/work>