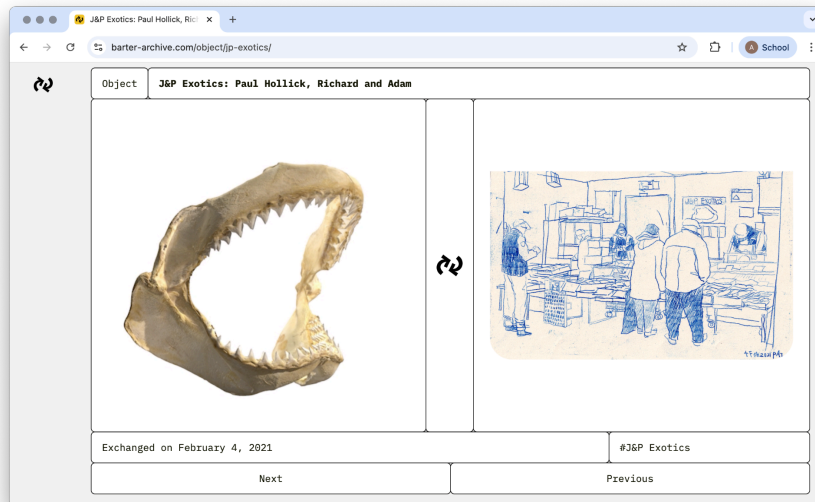


Encounters: Dialogue 03

Wednesday 15 October 2025

What questions are driving your research-practice?

How is your Site supporting this?



Wing Shan Wong, 2020

The Barter Archive aims to preserve stories and collective memories of the people working at the Billingsgate Fish Market, Canary Wharf, London. The archive begins as a series of observational drawings which are exchanged for the fishmongers' stories, memories and personal objects. By using the language of bartering, Wong opens up a dialogue with the Billingsgate community and investigates the public and personal significance of the space, and how it is affected by the rapid urban development of Southeast London.

For one week, commit to a site and immerse yourselves in the process of investigating and collecting material in response to the site you have chosen to explore. We are interested in *all perspectives*, from the seemingly micro and mundane, to the macro. Don't worry if your site changes – just start with one that feels relevant to your interests and that intrigues you!

Spend the first week repeatedly returning to your site, gathering data. Collect imagery, ephemera, artefacts, objects, words, numbers, measurements, times, sounds, smells, textures, impressions, thoughts, feelings, colours, texts, theories... or whatever is most appropriate for your practice.

'...it is a human thing to do to put something you want, because it's useful, edible, or beautiful, into a bag, or a basket, or a bit of rolled bark or leaf, or a net woven of your own hair, or what have you, and then take it home with you... and then later on you take it out and eat it or share it or store it up for winter in a solidier container or put it in the medicine bundle or the shrine or the museum, the holy place, the area that contains what is sacred.'
Ursula K. Le Guin,
The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction



Pentagram Partner, Graphic Designer & Filmmaker Marina Willer planning her Red Trees film project. Red Trees is Marina's personal quest to understand today's refugee crisis through the story of her own family, one of only twelve Jewish families to survive the Nazi occupation of Prague during World War II.

Collecting & Cataloging

A two-week project of investigating and analysing, to support the development of your individual practices, help you build your Community of Practice through sharing, and provide crucial insights for your individual tutorials.

Week 1

DISPLAY YOUR COLLECTIONS – GUIDANCE

Identify a site to which you can return and carry out fieldwork. The Site should be relevant to your practice interests, one that you are inherently drawn to and intrigued by (even if you don't yet know why).

Your site could be:

an institution

(archive, collection, museum, community...)

an environment

(macro or micro, physical or virtual, space or place, urban or rural or feral, factual or fictional...)

a person or people

(with whom to talk, to listen, to walk...)

Gather material (*texts, voices, images, objects, patterns...*) through encountering and engaging with your site (i.e., *reading, visiting, looking, listening, sourcing* etc).

What material interests you?

What is your relationship to this material?

What links this material to your wider practice?

From the material, establish your motive (*theme, question, idea, insight, position, hunch*) for further inquiry (*interrogation, analysis, interpretation*).

What wider themes, questions, ideas (...) arise from this material?

How do these themes, questions, ideas (...) begin to interconnect?

Why might these themes, questions, ideas (...) be driving your practice?

Bring this gathered 'material' into the studio with you and carefully display your 'finds' in BR4 so that these can be shared with the group.

Your 'finds' will form the focus for your Tutorial discussion (tutor-led, between you and your peers), as well as a series of student-led discussions in small Community of Practice groups that run simultaneously to the Tutorials.

Week 2

DISPLAY YOUR 'CATALOGUES' – GUIDANCE

In the second week, get close to your material.

Expand your understanding beyond the material itself, and identify methods with which you might begin to organise, interpret and 'catalogue' your material so that it can be shared and understood by others.

Use relevant methods to structure the captured material you found on site, to organise, interrogate, interpret and 'catalogue' it (on – or off-site), in a way that can be physically shared with others.

What method(s), familiar to your practice, can you use?

What method(s), unfamiliar to your practice, might you use?

What do these methods reveal?

What might they be missing?

Drawing? Scanning? Writing? Interviewing?

Recording? Performing? Videoing? Documenting?

Collaging? Editing? Timing? Sequencing? Counting?...

Bring this material to your Encounters 04 Tutorial and student-led discussion group on Wednesday 22 October.

Consider how you will display your 'catalogued' material, paying careful attention to how you present this work (e.g., *sequence, scale, duration, participation* etc) so that your methods speak your intentions and carry your ideas (without you having to explain it).

NB: Conscious of your other commitments, we ask you to spend about four days across the two weeks on this work; this is a small step towards more sustained inquiry, which we'll action-plan with you.

Arrival

09:30 Meet in BR4

As a group of 21, you will have set up the room and installed your 'finds' beforehand – on Tuesday 14 October, any time after 4pm – in BR3 and BR4. We will explain how the day will run.

You can use the materials (concrete blocks, tables, shelves etc) available to you in our studios to create 'displays' as you wish. These are a shared resource, so we ask you to return these neatly following our session, if applicable.

10:00-13:00 Tutorials & Small Group discussions commence

13:00-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-17:00 Tutorials & Small Group discussions continue

One-to-one Tutorial Schedule:

Please see the tutorial schedule, [here](#), which shows when you will have your one-to-one tutorial with Jessie or Amelia, and when you will have group discussions with your peers.

If you need to change your time you will need to find a direct swap with someone else (to make the schedule work, you may need to switch both your one-to-one tutorial and your group discussion with someone else).

INDIVIDUAL TUTORIALS

During your Tutorial we shall agree three key 'actions' (specific, achievable, time-bound), so you have a clear plan-of-action looking ahead, including during Independent Study week, so you return to us for Encounters 06 ready to display your work for our Group Crit on 12 November. Therefore, please come prepared to suggest your next steps, and contribute to others' plans during both your Tutorial and peer-led discussions – both have equal value.

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE Around your Tutorials, you will be working in Community of Practice groups co-curating and co-displaying your site/field-work to surface connections and establish future directions. So be prepared to be in and around the studios all day.

Form groups of 5/6 people.

Spend the first half hour individually looking at your group members' work; you can do this in silence and write notes. Then, as a group, spend at least 20 minutes on each person's 'finds' (moving to their display). The person whose display you are looking at should not speak for the first 5 minutes. Instead, everyone else is invited to discuss and interpret what they see, using the questions (below) as prompts or starting points for discussion, if useful.

Take turns to write notes for another person, so the person whose finds are being discussed need not scribe (they can focus on listening to discussion and feedback while someone else writes).

The prompts below help to bring a special focus on emerging research questions and research methods:

- What is your chosen site? Why?
- What did you collect? How? Why?
- What are you most excited about from these 'finds'?
- What themes can you identify? What questions are arising for you?
- What connections can you make to others' theories/practices?
- Which research methods have you explored, and what might you explore next?
- What is challenging you right now? How are you responding to this?
- What possible lines of enquiry could be explored next?

Document your display by photographing it for future reference and keep the notes that have been written for you.

Move to the next display and repeat the above steps.

Preparation

1. PLEASE READ * [*Too Close To See: Notes on Friendship*](#),
A Conversation with Joha Frederik Hartle, Céline Condorelli.

2. DISPLAY YOUR COLLECTIONS ** Please bring your collection of 'finds' from your chosen Site. Display them in the studios on Tuesday 14 October, any time after 4pm – ahead of your Tutorial and peer-led discussion.

Objects, artefacts and ephemera may be just as important to bring and display as drawings, words, texts, photographs and sounds. Don't feel restrained in what you choose to display next Wednesday, even if it seems a little obscure at this moment. In preparation, consider how you will explain your collection of items to the group, or to your tutor. You could practise talking through links and connections between your items in order to deliver a cohesive explanation of your process.

3. COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE *** Please work in small peer-led discussion groups, around your Tutorial time. See again [here](#) for your allocated time.