



Jetty-Project

Wolfgang Weileder

TEAM

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STATEMENT

Jetty-Project is a body of work which contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexity of agents, engagement, experience, synergies and potential for new methodologies which can evolve from the intervention of fine art practice within the discourse on the sustainability of industrial heritage within the urban realm.

Jetty-Project developed through an AHRC funded collaboration of a cross-disciplinary team of artists, architects, urban planners and social scientists, led by Professor Wolfgang Weileder. It was realised through engagement with local government, heritage, environmental and legal bodies, the manufacturing, construction and education sectors and the local community.

The project was informed by the disused industrial structure, Dunston Staiths, situated on the Gateshead bank of the River Tyne, UK. The resulting body of work comprises the production, between 2014 and 2015, of three related artworks, *Cone*, *Gap* and *Bridge* and the publication, 'Catalyst – Art, Sustainability and Place in the work of Wolfgang Weileder' (Kerber Verlag, Germany 2015).

Cone was a temporary, publicly accessible site-specific architectural scale installation situated on the Staiths from June to September 2014, which served as a nexus for community activities, performance and public debate.

Gap is an architectural sculpture made from reclaimed timber presented at the Great North Museum, Newcastle, UK in 2015 and the Kunststiftung Erich Hauser, Rottweil, Germany in 2016.

Bridge is a fictional proposition for a site-specific installation for the destroyed section of Dunston Staiths, created in 2014.

The publication 'Catalyst' records, evaluates, develops and disseminates the insights which evolved from the production of the artworks, providing locus for further discourse on the value of the intervention of fine art practice in the agency of industrial heritage and sustainability.

Jetty-Project has enabled a Heritage Lottery Fund grant for £418,000 to begin the restoration of the Dunston Staiths and a public programme of events around this site.



You can access a short film about the project online: <https://vimeo.com/110992508>

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OUTPUTS

1. CONE

a temporary site-specific architectural scale installation at Dunston Staiths, Gateshead, UK (4 July – 19 September 2014), documented and discussed in: 'Catalyst – Art, Sustainability and Place in the work of Wolfgang Weileder', see below.

2. GAP

an architectural sculpture exhibited at: GAP, a two-day presentation at the Great North Museum, Newcastle, UK (19 – 21 March 2015); and at: Über alle Maßen, a group show at the Kunststiftung Erich Hauser, Rottweil, Germany (25 June – 31 July 2016), documented and discussed in: 'Catalyst – Art, Sustainability and Place in the work of Wolfgang Weileder', see below.

3. BRIDGE

a fictional proposal for a temporary site-specific installation, published in: 'Catalyst – Art, Sustainability and Place in the work of Wolfgang Weileder', see below.

4. 'Catalyst – Art, Sustainability and Place in the work of Wolfgang Weileder'

A book publication by Kerber Verlag, Germany (2015). Edited by Simon Guy. Texts by Angela Connelly, Simon Guy, Tim

Ingold, Malcom Miles, Ludovica Niero, Michael Tawa, Ed Wainwright, Marianne Wilde and an interview with the artist. ISBN: 978-3-7356-0095-0 Language: English and German

5. Catalyst: reimagining sustainability with and through fine art.

Ecology and Society, 21(4) – Connelly A., Guy S., Wainwright E., Weileder W. and Wilde, M. (2016).

<http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol21/iss4/art21/>

6. Project website

www.jetty-project.info

7. Series of Public Events, held within CONE

(23 August – 10 September 2014)

8. An international symposium at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art Gateshead (6 March 2014).

Jetty-Project was conceived as a collaboration between artist Wolfgang Weileder, at Newcastle University School of Arts and Culture, and urbanist Simon Guy, at that time the Director of the Architecture Research Centre at the University of Manchester, to explore how fine art practice can meaningfully contribute to the multi-layered debate around sustainability in the urban realm.

www.jetty-project.info

At the heart of *Jetty-Project* is the impressive, disused and damaged Dunston Staiths, a Grade II listed wooden structure on the south bank of the River Tyne in Gateshead, with Scheduled Monument Status conferred by English Heritage and surrounded by a Designated Wildlife Site. The Staiths was built in the 1890s to assist in transporting coal, carried by trains from the Durham Coalfields, to barges on the River Tyne and then beyond to the global market. The structure, which once was a site of environmental contamination and a vehicle for contribution to the acceleration in global climate change has now been reclaimed by nature, providing sanctuary, primarily for bird

life. It is now considered to be of international historic and ecological significance and is owned by Tyne and Wear Preservation Trust, whose initiative is to provide a long-term and sustainable future for the structure with positive environmental impact.

The project was funded by the AHRC (fEC value £347,195) and, in partnership with Tyne and Wear Building Preservation Trust, ran from October 2013 to June 2015, with additional project partners from the arts, heritage, education, business and geographic communities. All project outputs first came into the public domain in 2014.

The term ‘sustainability’ is used extensively across academia, professional and popular debate, however it is interpreted and imagined differently according to local urban contexts and histories, often with conflicting and contradictory understandings. This has created a barrier to the wider adoption of strategies for sustainable development.

There are antecedents in the intersections of contemporary art and sustainability, examples of which have been contextualised in the process of this project, by Simon Guy and Angela Connelly, in the publication 'Catalyst: Art, Sustainability and Place in the Work of Wolfgang Weileder' (edited by Simon Guy). Guy and Connelly define the earliest examples as those of environmental and land works artists such as Robert Smithson, Walter de Maria and Andy Goldsworthy, whose work sought harmony with nature and "which acknowledges ecological fragility" as 'eco-centric' art.. Works concerned with human well-being in the natural environment, such as Faisal Abdu'allah's *Double Pendulum* (2011) are categorised as 'eco-medical' and works such as that of Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison's *Greenhouse Britain* (2007–9), which presents the ability of human ingenuity to deal with environmental problems, as 'eco-technic'. Marco Casagrande's *Sandworm* (2012) form constructed of willow in sand dunes, as a work which uses organic forms, is described as 'eco-aesthetic'. Wolfgang Weileder's own earlier work, *Stilt House* (2012), which reintroduced vernacular architecture as public space can also be positioned within this research context, in the realm of the 'Eco-Social'. This category can be said to make

critical interventions in order to reconcile people and their environments, using the work as a type of tool (as opposed to an art object), which aims to be used in social debate and has the potential to catalyse social change. Other artists working in this manner, according to Guy and Connolly, include Superflex, N55, and Marjetica Potrc.

The core of *Jetty-Project* was, therefore, an investigation of how, through connecting public art practice with communities of interest in an interdisciplinary project, a contemporary public artwork could project its role into this arena and act as a meaningful catalyst for reshaping the debates around the sustainability of architectural heritage.

The process of developing the artworks for *Jetty-Project* was initiated through an international symposium, 'Jetty Project: Art & Sustainability International Symposium', at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art on 6 March 2014.

The symposium brought together international and UK researchers and practitioners - artists, architects and social scientists, the project team, and local experts and stakeholders. Its aim was to spark dialogue about the role that artistic practices play in promoting urban sustainability and help shape the project. It engendered a wide range of ideas about the potential of the *Jetty-Project* to interact with a site of industrial architectural heritage in a way which would be provisional, provocative, performative and transformative and generate an understanding of the significance of processes, systems and relationships in such a way as to help mobilise engagement about how the built heritage could have the capacity to be sustained.

<http://jetty-project.info/symposium/overview/>

The *Jetty-Project* proceeded to negotiate these concepts and realise these ideas through the resulting body of work, *Cone, Gap, Bridge* and '*Catalyst – Art, Sustainability and Place in the work of Wolfgang Weileder*'.

CONE. Documentation (example 1)

Wolfgang Weileder *Jetty-Project*



Cone was the first large-scale installation piece Weileder developed from *Jetty-Project*. The shape of *Cone* was influenced by the historic coal-fired bottle kilns that were once an integral part of the industrial heritage of the North East of England. The idea of *Cone* as a black conical object positioned on the Staiths, referenced the industrial relics of the North East as well as the material conditions of coal and its extraction.

Cone's position and size, standing 9 metres high and 7 metres in diameter, would draw attention to the Staiths from around its geographic environment. The choice of materials and its method of making had the concept of sustainability at their core. *Cone* was fabricated with a readily available material, formed into slabs constituted from waste plastics, made locally, which trapped and stored carbon into the product instead of releasing it into the environment. This material thereby acted as a visual representation of the impact of the production of waste from human activity. The size of the units chosen for *Cone's* construction were small enough and light enough to be manually handled to the top of the Staiths and have enough surface friction to be largely self-sustaining, once the structure was erected and the

internal scaffolding removed. Weileder specifically chose an innovative, modular scaffolding system, supplied by a local company, which reduced the impact of construction on the site.

Weileder worked with apprentices from Gateshead College, employed by a locally-based construction company, to develop systems of working which minimised the impact of *Cone's* construction on the site but which also impacted significantly on the resultant sculpture. Building *Cone* engaged the apprentices for the first time with the use of sustainable materials and methods, raising their awareness of environmental issues in construction and teaching them skills applicable to this mode of working. It also engaged them, through friends and family, with the history and industrial use of the Staiths in mining and shipbuilding, contributing significantly to the thinking and connection of the sculpture to the surrounding community.

<http://jetty-project.info/art/cone/>

<https://www.wolfgangweileder.com/installation/cone.html>

Once constructed, from July to September 2014, *Cone* acted as a locus and focus for events which engaged the local geographic and wider artistic community, and other communities of interest with the sculpture and the Staiths.

Opened up for the *Cone*, the Staiths provided a stage for existing works to be performed and as a place for performers and musicians to respond to the weather, the material and formal properties of the Staiths and its context within a post-industrial environment, with explorative, improvised site-specific performances.

The Staiths was made accessible for artist-led, community-led and Heritage Day tours, creating opportunities to re-engage people with its history and stimulate further discussion on its sustainable future.

<http://jetty-project.info/cone-summer-events/>



CONE events: A better noise presents - John Butcher

Wolfgang Weileder *Jetty-Project*



CONE. Documentation (example 2)

Wolfgang Weileder *Jetty-Project*

Gap, the second work in *Jetty-Project*, was conceived by Weileder as a quarter-scale reconstruction of the burnt out, missing section of Dunston Staiths. A wireframe computer model of the artwork and a smaller wooden version enabled the production of precise mirrored copy of the section that had been destroyed by fire. *Gap* is made from locally sourced reclaimed timber including original parts from Robert Stephenson's High Level Bridge and the Dunston Staiths structure itself.

Gap was produced in modular form which potentially could be indefinitely reassembled and repurposed, reappropriated, adapted and reinvented and, as such, manifested qualities such as resilience and endurance, some of the critical conditions which are associated with sustainability.

Gap was first constructed within a large gallery space in the Great North Museum Hancock, Newcastle upon Tyne, in 2015 by Weileder and Newcastle University Architecture students. The process of constructing *Gap*, using traditional construction techniques, manufactured evidence of the material intelligence and industriousness that originally crafted the Staiths.

Gap does not reproduce something that exists but something that is missing, not simply the Staiths' fragment but also the artwork in which it is dissimulated. *Gap* explores notions of the physical absence of the section of the Staiths and its recuperated, reproduced version, as well as intangible absence, in the memory of the Staiths and its copy, dislocated from the geographical site of the original structure. As such *Gap* provides a space for recollection and reverie creating the possibility of contemporary storytelling about heritage, sustainability and creative practice as a tactic for enquiry, renewal and innovation within these arena. *Gap* was reassembled for exhibition at the group show, 'Über alle Maßen' at the Kunststiftung Erich Hauser, Rottweil, Germany in 2016.

<http://jetty-project.info/gap/>

<https://www.wolfgangweileder.com/sculpture/gap.html>



GAP (example 1)
Great North Museum Hancock, Newcastle
Wolfgang Weileder *Jetty-Project*



GAP (example 2) Kunststiftung Erich Hauser, Rottweil, Germany

Wolfgang Weileder *Jetty-Project*

Bridge is a fictional work of conceived by Weileder in the form of a proposal for the insertion of a reproduced fragment of Dunston Staiths, constructed of metal scaffolding, back into the section of the Staiths that was destroyed by fire in 2003. Its wireframe computer and photomontage models of progressive versions of the proposal only exist as photographs in the publication 'Catalyst, Art and Sustainability in the work of Wolfgang Weileder'.

Bridge, in its conceptual proposition for a form of intervention in the missing section of the Staiths, generates possibilities for alternative forms of physical intervention in its structure. In so doing *Bridge* poses questions of what meanings such interventions might signify or contribute to the reading and reception of this industrial heritage site and how its sustainability might be achieved.

<http://jetty-project.info/bridge/>



BRIDGE (example 1) 'Catalyst – Art, Sustainability and Place in the work of Wolfgang Weileder' (page 194-199)

Wolfgang Weileder *Jetty-Project*

'Catalyst, Art and Sustainability in the work of Wolfgang Weileder' consolidates the processes, insights, ideas and discourses that informed the works which evolved from *Jetty-Project* and which were generated as an outcome of it.

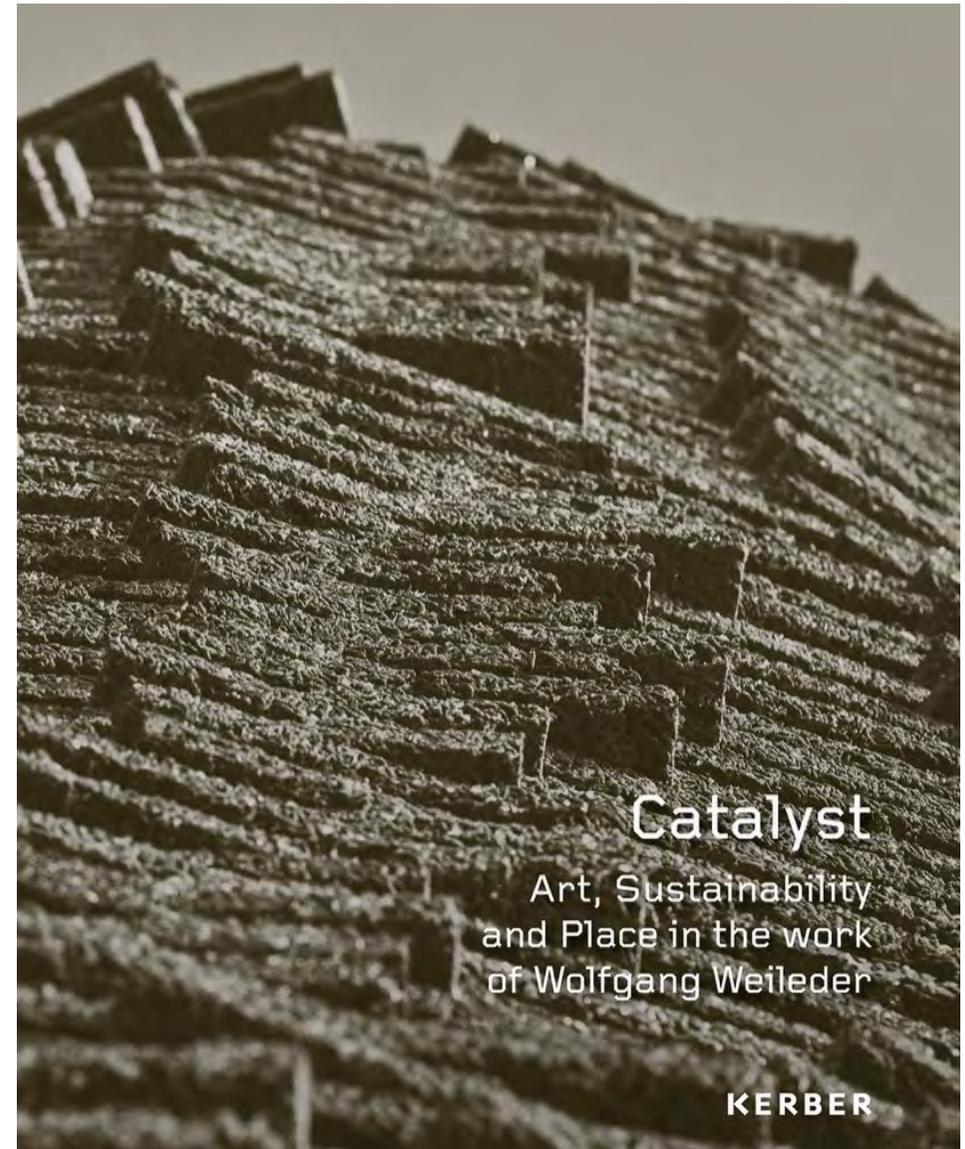
Through the diverse range of its contributors the book evidences the cross-disciplinary nature of *Jetty-Project* and that of its reach beyond the local geography and community of Dunston Staiths to a global audience. These include practitioners, researchers and educators across the fields of fine art and visual culture, architecture, anthropology, economics, ecology, environment, urban planning and design. Their commentaries identify and explore the complex relationships which underlie Weileder's body of artwork for the *Jetty-Project* and situate his work within global art practice and its catalytical effect on sustainable urbanism.

<http://jetty-project.info/about/new-book-published/>

<https://www.kerberverlag.com/en/1263/catalyst>

'Catalyst – Art, Sustainability and Place in the work of Wolfgang Weileder' Cover image

Wolfgang Weileder *Jetty-Project*



The cross-disciplinary nature of *Jetty-Project*, with the involvement and perspective of the social scientist and urbanist, Simon Guy, enabled a deeper insight into the processes by which *Cone* took form. This revealed how the method, timeframe and physical realisation of *Cone*'s construction was contingent on a wide range of interacting institutional, organisational and individual factors: governmental, legal, heritage and ecological, industrial, educational and community. Guy was able to identify and develop a methodology to map the complex systems and agents involved.

The creation and existence of *Cone* on the Staiths drew the attention of both the local and the global community to the physical structure of the Staiths and to the potential of a public artwork to engage in and generate a multi-layered debate on sustainability. *Cone* promoted how artworks could be fabricated using systems and materials which can be used and repurposed to minimise impact on the environment while acting also as a vehicle for promoting skills and education in working sustainably. *Cone* demonstrated how the intervention of a public artwork into industrial heritage can engage with different communities of interest, act as a stimulus for memory and association with local history and heritage and as a tool for learning about their different understandings of the term sustainability.

Cone has therefore provided valuable learning about how many human and non-human agents influence and require negotiation to realise an artwork in a heritage environment. It contributes to an understanding of the multi-layered nature of artwork within a heritage context which can inform the means of debate beyond that of heritage, into the wider realm of urban sustainability.

Cone is the manifestation of *Jetty-Project* in the public and urban realm, creating a physical locus for discourse on the intersection of art, industrial heritage, ecology and sustainability. *Gap* and *Bridge* are works predominantly in the virtual realm which create conceptual space for imagining possible sustainable futures for Dunston Staiths and other such broken physical structures with an historical past. '*Catalyst*' acts as a repository for the knowledge and learning gathered through the creation of the artworks of *Jetty-Project* and for the cross-disciplinary ideas and insights that they have generated. As the title indicates, it also holds the potential for driving forward, with new insight and understanding, discourse on how public art practice can negotiate and support sustainability in the urban realm.

Jetty-Project contributed to Tyne and Wear Building Preservation Trust gaining Lottery funding to make repairs to the Staiths, which now continues to serve as a much-used community amenity.

Jetty-Project has been extensively documented, discussed and disseminated across disciplines and communities of interest, locally and globally and across a range of media in the fields of art, architecture, urban planning, heritage, ecology and sustainability.

Foremost, it is in the publication, '*Catalyst – Art, Sustainability and Place in the work of Wolfgang Weileder*', published by Kerber Verlag, Germany (2015), ISBN: 978-3-7356-0095-0 <https://www.kerberverlag.com/en/1263/catalyst>

The project is discussed further in: *Correspondences* by Tim Ingold (2017), University of Aberdeen Press.

Connelly, A., S. C. Guy, T. Edward Wainwright, W. Weileder, and M. Wilde. 2016. 'Catalyst: reimagining sustainability with and through fine art.' *Ecology and Society* 21(4): 21. <https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol21/iss4/art21>

The book chapter 'REcall Project: Reinterpreting and Representing 'Difficult Heritage': Interview with Wolfgang Weileder' in *Beyond Memorialisation: Design for Conflict Heritage* (2014), Politecnico de Milano: Milan (pp.57-63)

It provides a case-study in Miles, M. & Strecker, Z. (eds) 2016, 'Ecoaesthetic dimensions: Herbert Marcuse, ecology and art', *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 3:1, DOI: 10.1080/23311983.2016.1160640

CONFERENCE SESSION: Wolfgang Weileder was invited to discuss the project in the 'Eleventh International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic, and Social Sustainability' 21–23 Jan 2015 | Copenhagen Denmark | Organised by On Sustainability Knowledge Community - onsustainability.com and Common Ground Publishing (Illinois USA)

VIDEO: Simon Guy on Lancaster University website discussing the work of Wolfgang Weileder and the Jetty project: <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/cemore/linking-art-space-and-sustainability-guy-simons-seminar-at-cemore/>

VIDEO: Wolfgang Weileder: The Jetty Project A video by Contemporary Visual Arts Network (CVAN), North East: <https://vimeo.com/110992508>

REGIONAL NEWS: The Chronicle Newspaper <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/gateshead-industrial-monument-centre-national-9555281>