



**COLLECTIVE MATERIAL  
'MATERIAL ACTION'**

**EVA MASTERMAN**

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*Material Action*

Common Practice

Culminating Event at Tate Modern

2017

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## INTRODUCTION

### 300 WORD STATEMENT *MATERIAL ACTION*

**September 2016 - March 2017**

Material Action was the inaugural inquiry into collaborative, practice-based methods using clay as a tool of learning engagement in socially engaged arts practice, by the collaborating group of ceramic artists Collective Matter.

It was commissioned by the Nine Elms Vauxhall Partnership, in association with the Tate Exchange, Tate Modern.

Material Action worked with three arts organisations in Lambeth and Wandsworth, South London, with established arts learning programmes which each work with young people in a local south London community, in order to explore different methods of using clay as a learning tool and method. This aimed to deepen an understanding of the specific local areas around South London, culminating in a broader survey of these context-specific methods explored through workshops, at Tate Exchange, Tate Modern – a radically new devolved art gallery learning programme in a major international arts institution.

The South London galleries which formed the specific local contexts for this project, and who hosted workshops were: Gasworks, Pumhouse Gallery, and Beaconsfield Gallery Vauxhall.

Findings of the project have been disseminated at:

- i. Culminating public events or exhibitions at the host arts organisations, including a concluding event, sharing outcomes of all the projects at Tate Modern.
- ii. Presentations at the conferences:  
Hasselt University Clay Matters Conference, Belgium  
52nd Annual NCECA Conference, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA  
Centre of Ceramic Art Restating Clay Conference, York Art Gallery, York, U.K

Material Action aimed to respond to the recent surge in popularity of ceramics in contemporary art practice: by exploring the parallel surge in community ceramics initiatives as responses to the reduction of ceramic learning in secondary, further and higher education.

The project has been included in the Tate Archives as one of the first ceramics and clay focused learning engagement projects led by contemporary artists at the internationally ground-breaking Tate Exchange programme, and it inspired further focused programming at Tate Exchange focusing on ceramics and learning.

Material Action was made with local young people (14-25-year-olds) to create a snapshot of Lambeth and Wandsworth. The project aimed to encourage thinking and engagement with the changing landscape of this area.

A series of creative workshops were devised, ranging from clay shaping techniques, storytelling, guided walks, and discussion groups.

Their focus was on clay as a facilitator of exchange and creativity which comes from its inherent qualities; its immediacy and tactility. Its transitional nature reflected the evolving landscape and heritage of the area.

Clay is an integral part of South London's past and future, Vauxhall was once home to Royal Doulton and clay-brick is the main building block of both the area's new and existing buildings.



*Material Action*, Common Practice - Culminating Event at Tate Modern , 2017

## INTRODUCTION

### MATERIAL ACTION

#### WHO ARE COLLECTIVE MATTER

<https://www.collectivematter.co.uk/>

Artist Eva Masterman co-founded artist's group Collective Matter and delivered the project *Material Action* - their inaugural research project and artwork. Collective Matter was formed in 2016 by clay artists Eva Masterman, Mary O'Malley, and Katie Spragg, in response to:

- i. a major decrease in ceramics provision in secondary, further and higher arts education;
- ii. the subsequent increase in ceramic community learning arts projects taking place outside of formal education institutions;
- ii. a desire to research these developments as a counter-narrative to the recent increase of 'de-materialised' ceramic practice in contemporary art, generally discussed as a reaction to an overly formalised and technical discipline.

*Material Action* was crucial to Collective Matter's development, they have further developed its findings through subsequent projects: The Potting Shed, Contemporary Sculpture Fulmer (2019); their establishment of a permanent studio in the Sugarhouse Studios, Bermondsey, London hosting a residency programme for guest artists alongside Turner Prize winning arts/architecture group 'Assemble'; workshops delivered with London Craft Week and London Design Week. Through these projects Collective Matter have used and developed workshop methods developed through *Material Action* – disseminating the research to new audiences.

#### COLLECTIVE MATTER'S AIMS

1. Collective Matter develop methods using clay in community engagement, which combine:
  - i) 'vertical' ceramics educational techniques (methods of crafting ceramics where a teacher takes pupils/students through techniques and principles of ceramic production).
  - i) 'horizontal' community arts approaches (non-hierarchical learning, using expressive, non-technical modes of making, where participants' aim to communicate and share their lived experience through material, in this case clay).
2. The combination of these two approached to 'learning' aim to develop experimental and collaborative methods of ceramics production.
3. This approach aims to bring about new inter-community-member connections and understanding.
4. Clay is a key material we use to develop methods of communication. We believe in the potential clay's material language, as an intermedium, to interdisciplinary learning and creativity.
5. Through combining material-led making, with critical discussion, we hope to contribute to wider critical dialogue surrounding clay and ceramics as a socially engaged artform.



*Material Action*, Common Practice - Culminating Event at Tate Modern , 2017

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## RESEARCH CONTEXT

### *MATERIAL ACTION*

#### **A parallel study of socially engaged ceramics practice, an alternative narrative to the recent rise of ceramics within contemporary art practice**

Parallel to the recent rise of ceramics within contemporary art practice, *Material Action* responds to an increase in community-orientated ceramic learning initiatives. This is a simultaneous development which has been under-researched. Both developments have evolved around the same time-period but for different reasons. Both approaches acknowledge the necessary interdisciplinary transformation of any medium or artform and its rules, in order to develop in response to the social and technical developments.

Contemporary Art has recently embraced ceramics, due to developments of the medium which was formerly regarded as being centred on traditional craft practices, privileging technical skill, in processes, technique, and quality. An example of this is the development of the term 'contemporary conceptual ceramics' in the publication by Maria Elena Buszek, *Extra/Ordinary Craft and Contemporary Art, 2011*, Duke University Press. This discusses recent 'dematerialised' ceramic and clay artworks including Keith Harrison's *Last Supper* (2006) at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Contemporary art practice's discussion of ideas such as 'dematerialized ceramics' has developed in reaction to a perceivably restrictive formal discourse around ceramics. However, Common Practice look to the context this discourse arose from, of applied craft, and the social contexts around these practices.

*Material Action* aimed to develop clay and ceramic learning practices which do not negate technical skills and processes but teach them alongside the contexts of ceramics practice – historic, current, or potential. In turn this aims to bring meaning to the practice, preventing a limited understanding of ceramics as aesthetic object alone.

#### **A shift to community arts learning, in response to decline in ceramics and arts in formal education**

In terms of socially engaged ceramics practice, *Material Action* was influenced by the recent closure of ceramics BA and MA courses in the UK, and the removal of ceramics equipment from Secondary, Further and Higher education institutions. Their work aims to study the resulting rise in community-centred arts projects which provide public access and learning to ceramics. production

The project *Material Action*, was a formative project by Collective Matter, where the group introduced a major arts organisation's learning programme 'Tate Exchange' to contemporary art ceramics practice as socially engaged art.

It developed a bespoke programme of community ceramics with three different arts organisations in South London. Through inter-organisation collaboration, we tested new workshop methods to learn of the scope of inter-organisational working for socially engaged art, specifically using ceramics techniques as a method of engagement with local communities



*Material Action*  
Common Practice - Culminating  
Event at Tate Modern  
2017

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## RESEARCH CONTEXT

### MATERIAL ACTION

#### **Ceramics as a strategy toward a performative and community-centred art, in the context of male authority and post-studio practice.**

The project references international ceramic engagement projects such as the Clay Studio in Philadelphia. Histories of clay practice within alternative teaching programmes of art schools such as Black Mountain Collage, an experimental art school founded in 1933 in North Carolina US are also drawn upon as models. Art historian Jenni Sorkin in her book *Live Form*, looks at three female potters - Marguerite Wildenhain; Mary Caroline (M. C.) Richards; and Susan Peterson working at Black Mountain College, using the practice of thrown pottery, to displace male authority and to extend the reach of their own practice into the community.

Their work responded to how ceramics suffered from the 'post studio' in fine art sculpture, where the concept of 'studio' shifted from that of 'physical place' to 'critical sphere.' This created problems for a practice inherently linked with object production, and until the recent prevalence of ceramics in contemporary fine art over the last 10 years, it has mostly struggled to retain relevance in a world where sculpture could be 'anything'.

Jenni Sorkin proposes that the performative nature of throwing, predicated the 'artist-performer,' and positions ceramics and throwing in particular, as an important tool that has implications beyond individual art production, stretching its influence to learning and the community.

This notion was central to the development of Material Action, building on current movements in grassroots arts teaching and social practice. Through this lens, the project challenges the binary definition of ceramics-as-pottery and ceramics-as-sculpture and expanding out of this dialogue to position ceramic within the fields of socio-political, community, personal enrichment and participatory practice.

The project used clay as a communicative medium in workshops with non-professional artists as a tool for communication between participants.

Material Action (and the group Collective Matter) come from a material specific background and the understanding of clay as a material language and process brings a unique lens to social engagement practice and how this unique approach can develop future methodologies, both in the ceramic discipline and the wider field of participatory art.

#### **Clay Practice Between Arts Education and Participatory Art**

Material Action crossed over individual artistic practice and community participation with institutionally led learning programmes. Collective Matter worked with the agendas of collaborating galleries to explore how participatory, community led art practice could benefit local communities and open up contemporary art spaces as interactive learning environments. It occupies a territory between learning and contemporary socially engaged practice, foregrounding clay and material, collaborative practice as both artwork and educational method/tool. Many other artists/organisations in the field tend to separate the two, either foregrounding educational experiences, such as Modern Clay, or collaborating with the public to create artworks, like Clare Twomey.

Clay Participation at Tate Exchange:

1. The People's Bureau: <https://www.peoplesbureau.co.uk/4278045-tate-exchange>  
<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/tate-exchange/workshop/unearthing>
2. Room 13 Hareclive: <https://www.room13hareclive.org.uk/home>  
<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/tate-exchange/workshop/raw-materials-raw-creativity>
3. Art Lab <https://readingartlab.com/about/>  
<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/tate-exchange/workshop/reading-assembly>
4. Clare Twomey's The Factory, Lead Artist at the Tate Exchange  
<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/tate-exchange/workshop/factory>

Socially Engaged Clay Practices:

1. Troy Town Pottery <http://www.troytown.org.uk/>
2. Modern Clay <https://modernclay.org/>
3. Portland Inn Project <https://theportlandinnproject.tumblr.com/>
4. Clayground Collective <http://www.claygroundcollective.org/>

Socially Engaged Art:

1. Social Art Network  
[https://www.facebook.com/pg/socialartnetwork/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/socialartnetwork/about/?ref=page_internal)
2. Assemble <https://assemblestudio.co.uk/about>
3. Wildfire Gallery <http://www.wildfiregallery.co.uk/about/>

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### *MATERIAL ACTION*

Can contemporary art practice be used to investigate an increase in community-orientated ceramic learning initiatives?

Can research into the above, provide a counter-narrative to the recent rise of ceramics within contemporary art practice as 'contemporary conceptual ceramics' or 'dematerialised' ceramics?

Can clay and ceramic learning methods be developed, which do not negate technical skills and processes but teach them alongside the contexts of ceramics practice – historic, current, or potential.?

In turn, can these methods bring meaning to contemporary ceramics practice, preventing a limited understanding of ceramics as aesthetic object alone?

What strategies can be developed for artists to work within learning programmes at contemporary art institutions/organisations, exploring the potential role of ceramics in the context of a recent departure from 'education' to 'learning'.

What methods of learning with clay can be developed which combine both horizontal (community-engaged learning) and vertical (ceramics education) as an intermedium approach to develop new understandings of ceramics practice in contemporary art?



*Material Action*  
Common Practice - Culminating  
Event at Tate Modern  
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## RESEARCH CHALLENGES

### **MATERIAL ACTION**

To develop a project which was not only viewed as an education/outreach project but viewed as relevant to contemporary art practice and discourse.

The outlook and facilities of each participating gallery would duly affect each project, these limitations would affect the methods developed of using clay as a learning tool.

To evaluate the success of the project in terms of learning, would it be possible to conduct interviews, forms of qualitative evaluation with the participants and with the host establishments.

How was it evaluated in terms of influencing thinking in the arts/contemporary art field?

Within the broader context of a move in clay-learning into non-formal educational settings: how can outcomes be developed which bring positive effects on areas impacted upon. These are the arts sector, informal learning, and formal education, and communities.

How could studying through working within, instead of working oppositional to the above broader context, help to draw more informed conclusions? How can negative repercussions on the arts sector, be avoided, such as the sector being forced to compensate for inadequate formal education due to cut-backs.

How can the research work against negative effects upon the arts sector, for example, would it be forced to prioritize the area of arts education (school-age) to the neglect of other areas of learning for example,; disability focused, arts learning for wellbeing, the elderly.



### ***Material Action***

Common Practice Workshop at  
Beaconsfield Gallery  
2017

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## METHODS AND PROCESS

### *MATERIAL ACTION*

#### **Combining Horizontal and Vertical Learning Methods in Ceramics and Clay Practice**

Material Action explored learning and clay in relation to both horizontal and vertical pedagogy.

Ceramics is traditionally taught using 'vertical pedagogy', with knowledge passed from master to student. For example, ceramic students would have traditionally been apprenticed to a master for several years, with the master imparting their wisdom to the student through repetition and replication.

Social engagement and learning practices more frequently use horizontal pedagogy, creating an environment for knowledge and skill to be shared mutually, in an egalitarian way between participants and teachers. The Tate Exchange is predicated on this structure, where the public is invited into a space where they can absorb new experiences from those around them, both other members of the public, and the artists/professionals facilitating the experience.

Material Action developed as an artwork and a programme that engaged members of the public in multiple ways. A core aim was to develop a valuable programme of clay learning and engagement in spaces that had no traditional ceramics facilities, and to stretch the boundaries of clay making within that context. Each of the sites had limitations and strengths and the programme was developed accordingly, creating a unique and tailored learning experience in each one, targeting different demographics.

Through this approach, it developed new methods of ceramic engagement to create meaningful experiences and work without the use of kilns or other traditional ceramic equipment.

This, in turn, developed methods of working with ceramics which combined vertical and horizontal pedagogy.

## **Project I Beaconsfield Gallery, Vauxhall, London. 2016**

Beaconsfield Gallery, Vauxhall is situated in the building of a previous 'Ragged School', a charitable organisation dedicated to the free education of destitute children in nineteenth-century Britain.

Participating 14-25-year-olds were introduced to a familiar material in an unfamiliar state. Three tonnes of clay (donated by a nearby brick factory - Ibstock Brick) were placed in the middle of the space and, with the guidance of a prompts relating to the project's overarching theme of urban development and change, local school groups and general public were invited in to freely explore the material and site.

Material Action used the huge railway-arch space for two weeks taking the participants through clay-moulding and shaping exercises which bound traditional brick-making technique (vertical, ceramics learning) with exercises stimulating thinking about their personal engagement with their surrounding area's landscape (horizontal community learning).

The result was a large-scale, unfired clay urban landscape populated with everything from models of the Shard building, to parks with giant flowers.

The project at Beaconsfield attracted a diverse range of participants; group of in-to school refugee girls and a community "adventure playground" run by youth workers brought groups of children to come and build with clay in the space.

### FILM DOCUMENTATION OF THE INSTALLATION

<http://materialaction.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/BGV-01.mov>

**METHODS AND PROCESS**  
**MATERIAL ACTION**

Project 1:  
*Material Action*, Common Matter  
workshop at Beaconsfield Gallery,  
Vauxhall, London. 2017



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**METHODS AND PROCESS**  
***MATERIAL ACTION***

Project 1  
*Material Action*, Common Practice Exhibition at  
Beaconsfield Gallery, Vauxhall, London.  
2017



**METHODS AND PROCESS**  
**MATERIAL ACTION**

**Project 2 – New Heirlooms**  
**Gasworks**  
2017

Gasworks is a gallery without the necessary facilities generally associated with ceramics such as sinks with traps and kilns. This pushed Collective Matter to develop methods of clay material-based learning not reliant upon such equipment.

We fused the traditional Japanese method of Kintsugi, in which gold and lacquer are used to repair broken potter without kiln equipment. This restorative method was explored alongside exercises that explored the participants personal experience of change, evolution and new beginnings within the local community.

Participants used personal items alongside found, second-hand objects. Discussions were led relating to how individuals relate to objects, why the object they brought with them had meaning, and how as artists they have power to relate experience through objects.



**Gasworks**  
155 Vauxhall St  
London SE11 5RH

**Kintsugi workshops**  
10, 11, & 12 Feb. 2017  
Limited space, book now!  
Visit: [materialaction.com](http://materialaction.com)

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**Digital vs hand making workshop**  
18 Feb. 2017  
Drop in during gallery hours

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# New Heirlooms

Join Collective Matter in Learning about our connection with objects. Using the technique of kintsugi, explore the journey an object takes. Through digital design, and wheel throwing, experience different modern ways of making. Create your own new heirlooms that reflect your current journey and culture.

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Follow the project at:  
[materialaction.com](http://materialaction.com)

Launched by Nine Elms Vauxhall Partnership and taking place across Beaconsfield Gallery Vauxhall, Gasworks and Pump House Gallery, Material Action is a public engagement residency with arts group Collective Matter. It will culminate in an interactive and participatory showcase within Tate Exchange at Tate Modern on 10 March 2017.

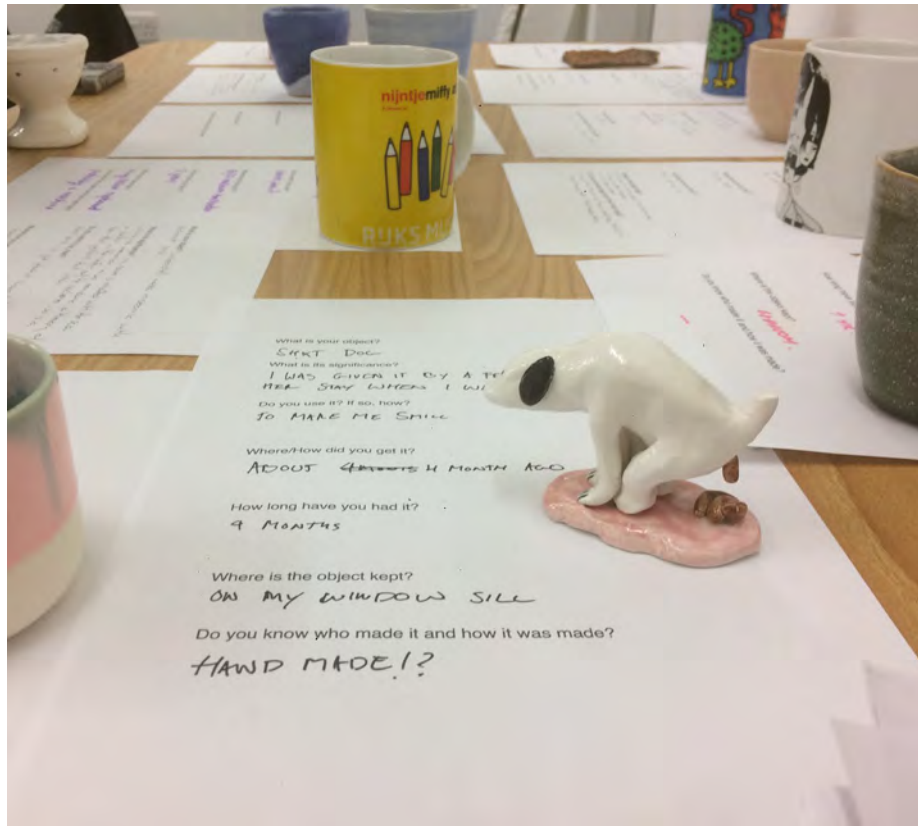
BEACONSFIELD GALLERY | GASWORKS | NINE ELMS VAUXHALL PARTNERSHIP | PUMP HOUSE GALLERY | TATE | Lambeth | Wandsworth | Collective Matter.



**METHODS AND PROCESS**  
**MATERIAL ACTION**

Project 2 – New Heirlooms  
Gasworks  
2017

*Material Action*  
Common Practice Workshop at  
Gasworks  
2017



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**METHODS AND PROCESS**  
**MATERIAL ACTION**

Project 2 – New Heirlooms  
*Material Action*  
Common Practice Workshop at  
Gasworks 2017



## METHODS AND PROCESS

### MATERIAL ACTION

#### Project 3 – Urban Nature

##### Pump House Gallery

2017

Pump House Gallery is a council-run gallery with no onsite participation space. The programme here developed around off-site engagement with the local community, where tailored workshops were delivered to a secondary school, a youth group and at a community centre.

We combined walking workshops exploring the architecture of the local area, encouraging learning through an everyday experience of walking, looking and responding to/interpreting the local environment.

We combined this method using ceramic clay-making techniques of brick-making. Each participant created a clay brick which responded to their experience of the changing local neighbourhood's environment.

These ceramic sculptures were then exhibited at the gallery.

## Pump House Gallery

Battersea Park  
London SW11 4NJ

# Material Action

for Pump House Gallery

## Urban Nature Walk and Clay Workshop

R.O.S.E Clubroom  
Ascalon Street, Savona Estate, SW8 4DL

**Sat. 25 Feb. 2017**

**Walk: 11:30am – 1:00pm**

Meet outside the R.O.S.E Clubroom

Reexplore the estate.

Walk with us from R.O.S.E Clubroom to Battersea Park and discover the changing nature in the places we live.

Be inspired...and create:

**Clay workshop: 1:00 – 4:00pm**

Make a clay brick and decorate it with nature from the city. Build your own part of your neighbourhood and share your stories.

Workshop led by Collective Matter artists for 'Material Action'.

## Installation at Pump House Gallery

**Launch event: Fri. 3 Feb. 2017**

4:00pm – 6:00pm

**On display: 4 – 5 Feb. 2017**

11:00am – 4:00pm

Come see the fired ceramic bricks on display as part of an installation outside Pump House Gallery. Find out more about the Material Action project and meet other makers from your community.

Follow the project at:

**collectivematter.co.uk**

Launched by Nine Elms Vauxhall Partnership and taking place across Beaconsfield Gallery Vauxhall, Gasworks and Pump House Gallery, Material Action is a public engagement residency with arts group Collective Matter. It will culminate in an interactive and participatory showcase within Tate Exchange at Tate Modern on 10 March 2017.





**METHODS AND PROCESS**  
**MATERIAL ACTION**

Project 3 – Urban Nature  
*Material Action*  
Common Practice Workshop at  
Pump House Gallery 2017



## METHODS AND PROCESS

### MATERIAL ACTION

#### Culminating Project

##### Material Action

Project Timeline by Common Practice -  
Culminating Event at  
**TATE Exchange**  
**TATE Modern 2017**

The final iteration of the project was a one day showcase of live events and exhibition at the Tate Modern, where over 500 people came.

The installation included: a scaled down version of the collaborative installation at Beaconsfield gallery alongside a time-lapse video, images and an exhibit of the bricks from Pump House and a recreation of the full kintsugi workshops from Gasworks.

Visitors were led through a physical timeline of the project, setting up 'stations' that represented each individual workshop, giving the general public an opportunity to try these processes for themselves as well as seeing the outcomes from our established participants.

The initial programming at Gasworks, Pump House and Beaconsfield worked with over 150 participants including numerous community groups, secondary schools and colleges.



**METHODS AND PROCESS**

***MATERIAL ACTION***

*Material Action*

Culminating Project

Installation by Common Practice - Culminating

Event at

TATE Exchange TATE Modern 2017



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## INSIGHTS

### MATERIAL ACTION

- The public event held at the participating organisations including the Tate Modern, gave the public an opportunity to have their work showcased at a professional level and those that came back to the event found it an incredibly rewarding and unique experience. Material Action provided a space to explore the importance of giving people the opportunity to work with their hands and clay's ability to inspire, break down inhibition, and facilitate conversations.
- Observations made during Material Action highlighted a shift in the responsibility of arts education in the UK away from formal education programmes into gallery-based 'learning' with artists as an interface to the public.
- Whilst it formed the beginning of a wider network for Collective Matter – we went on to work with both Clare Twomey and the 'People's Bureau' - it threw a harsh light on the 'helicoptering' and 'artwashing' of artists who are dropped into a complicated socio-political situation and then removed without any legacy building.
- Material Action began for us, an ongoing exploration of how alternative learning methods can progress the ceramic field and how clay may be used as a vehicle for creative development and cross disciplinary practice.
- It also provided a drive to create platforms for deeper engagement with the public that weren't ruled by the political agendas of the institutions, and to provide opportunities for artists to gain greater agency within the construct of socially engaged practice.
- This directly influenced our direction as a collective, and in response, Collective Matter went on to create the Potting Shed, a project which interrogated the established model of gallery led, socially engaged practice through an artist-led approach.

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## **DISSEMINATION**

### ***MATERIAL ACTION***

## **CONFERENCES**

I presented the project to international audiences at

- Hasselt University Clay Matters Conference, Belgium 16/11/17,
- 52nd Annual The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts. (NCECA) Conference, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA, 14/03/18,
- Centre of Ceramic Art Restating Clay Conference, York Art Gallery, York, U.K, 19/03/18.

## **TALKS / PRESENTATIONS**

- Camden Arts Centre 01/11/17
- Ceramic Art London 2019, Central Saint Martins, London, 2019

## **PANEL MEMBER**

'The Future of Craft and Society'

At The Future of Craft and Clay Symposium

London Craft Week 2019

Friday 10 May 2019.

The Barge House Oxo Tower Wharf, London.

The Ceramics Research Centre (CREAM) University of Westminster  
*How has the role of craft in communities transformed experiences of daily life?*

Then we would, with the chair Clare Twomey engage in a discussion between the speakers that would also open up to the audience as well.

Chair: Clare Twomey

Panel Members: Anna Frances, Eva Masterman, Tessa Peters and Phoebe Cummings

## **DISSEMINATION**

### ***Material Action***

## **WORKSHOPS**

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## **DISSEMINATION MATERIAL ACTION**

### **FURTHER REACH RESPONSES**

#### **1. DISCUSSION IN ARTICLE IN THE JOURNAL OF MODERN CRAFT**

Eva Masterman discussed Material Action in a presentation for the 'Restating Clay' conference, Centre of Ceramic Art, York Art Gallery, March 19-120<sup>th</sup> 2018 - conference was supported by Arts Council England, Museums' Resilience Fund, The University of York, and York College.

In her published paper Martina Margetts (2018) Restating Clay Conference, The Journal of Modern Craft, 11:3, 279-281, DOI: 10.1080/17496772.2018.1543965

Discusses Eva Masterman's presentation:

"Papers by researcher Laura Breen and ceramicist Eva Masterman fleshed out the hinterland of ceramics in the UK since the 1970s, indicating institutional constraints. Breen noted that "gaps open up between what has been said about ceramics and what ceramics can say," while Masterman felt that, "ceramics has suffered from an insularity which, whilst creating a strong identity, has kept it removed from debates and dialogues within the wider visual arts." As if responding directly to Clark's keynote,

Masterman analyzed vivid new approaches to ceramics based on themes of "Digital Touch," "DIY Revolution," and "Slacker Aesthetics/Recession." She suggested our haptic engagement with technologies put the craft of ceramics in alignment with, not in opposition to, contemporary life.

Economic imperatives and higher education cross-disciplinary programs were bringing in non-specialists, she claimed, whether motivated by activism or a more varied creative interest in process—"product designers, fine artists, illustrators, architects" exploring "installation, the ephemeral, performance and general development of languages traditionally associated with 'art'." (i) Conference citations of prominent UK ceramicists such as Clare Twomey, Keith Harrison and Neil Brownsword, and Phoebe Cummings' own presentation, confirmed how embedded ephemeral installations are in the new ceramic tradition.

(i) Masterman deploys Johanna Drucker's term "slacker aesthetics" to outline how contemporary "socio-economic disasters" are reflected in deskilled labor and artwork which uses found materials and detritus.

#### **2. TATE ARCHIVES**

The project is documented in full as one of the first Tate Exchange, Tate Modern projects, and the first to use and explore clay and ceramics learning methods.

#### **3. INFLUENCING TATE EXCHANGE'S FUTURE PROGRAMME**

*Material Action* foregrounded other projects such as Clare Twomey's *Factory* which took over the Tate Exchange the following year, and the *People's Bureau* at the Tate Exchange.