

# EXHIBITION PROPOSAL: ‘THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM’

---

‘The Elephant in the Room’ - an exhibition by Elaine Fisher and Lucy Gresley - explores the coming together of artistic practices as an alternative lens through which to view the entanglements of things and our perceptions of them within an art-archaeological approach to heritage interpretation.



‘The Elephant in the Room’ refers to a conversation between Elaine Fisher and Lucy Gresley whilst walking together in Orkney. During a discussion of art, archaeology, psychology and other lenses through which we perceive the world, the story of the blind men and the elephant arose:

*This old Indian fable tells of six blind men who touch an elephant to learn what it is. Since each man touches a different part - the trunk, a leg, an ear, the tail, a tusk and the body - they each create their own version of reality from that limited perspective. Consequently, they find that they are in complete disagreement with one another about what an elephant is. Philosophically, the fable illustrates the notion of relativism: that whilst subjective experience can be true, truth is itself never absolute.*

EF ‘Bearings’ (2017) Brodgar stone drawings.

EF ‘Purton Basket’ (2017), mudlined water basket.

LG Clay figure (2017) marked earthenware figure.

# EXHIBITION CONCEPT

The form and construction of Brodgar Stone Circle is used as a metaphor for a coming together of different perspectives across artistic practices (Lucy Gresley and Elaine Fisher), across academic disciplines (art, archaeology and psychology) and between individuals (students on the MLitt Art and Archaeology module at UHI). Drawings made at the Ring of Brodgar will be scaled up on the gallery walls to frame other works. The exhibition has been constructed as Brodgar Stone Circle was constructed - over time, in conversation and using material brought in from elsewhere. The exhibition is encountered as Brodgar Stone Circle is now encountered - as what remains of past activities, at a specific moment in time.

*We see the exhibition as a "situation" off-site, in which the archaeological object (site or artefact) can be held as equal to its stories, and as a way of holding more than one site and story in our peripheral vision.*



*The exhibition will explore areas of shared practice between disciplines - text, the artefact, drawing and photography - as well as notions of performance and the site of production. By opening up and exploring how different perspectives intersect and turn together, the exhibition will offer opportunities for visitors (particularly artists, archaeologists and MA students) to consider their own questions, links and resonances between works and beyond into the imagination.*

LG Exhibition concept sketch (showing Brodgar Stones wall drawings framing works).

LG Detail of 'Dwelling', digital photograph, taken at West Shore Orkney, April 2017.



# SELECTED WORKS

The works included in this exhibition have arisen from collaborative working between the artists whilst studying at UHI. Things found and collected; the wonder of objects that remind us of things - faces, bodies, houses; pieces made by hand, often on-site, with simple, found tools; writing, drawing and hand-making as ways of thinking and reflecting and recording experience; photography as a method of recording, re-looking and (re)presenting.



*'Bearings' (2017)  
Scale drawings on  
gallery wall  
(with text)*

EF



*Clay figure (2017)  
Hand marked  
earthenware  
(with text)*

LG



*'Self portrait series 2'  
(2017)  
(illuminated digital  
photographs)*

EF

*'Squatting by the  
river, they worked  
together ....'  
(A passage from  
Huxley's *Brave New  
World*, 1931 p116).*

*Text about making  
from Aldous Huxley's  
*Brave New World**

EF/LG



*'Purton Basket' (2017)  
Mudlined water basket  
with mound of recorded  
fragments*

EF



*Found stone (c.2002)  
(with manuport text)*

LG



*Unstan inspired Mobius  
Strip Bowl(s) (2017)  
Handbuilt vessels,  
various clays.*

LG



*'Brodgar Círcles' (2017)  
Photographic  
reconstructions of  
Brodgar Stone Circle as  
Mobius strips*

EF



*'Other Buddos'  
drawings (2017)  
Ink and pencil on paper*

LG

*'Several bridge  
building exploits ...'  
(A passage from  
Robertson's *Orkney  
Anthology* 1991  
p259).*


*Text about Cubbie  
Roo from Robertson's  
*Orkney Anthology*.*

EF/LG

# INVITATION TO OTHER STUDENTS

---

Activities at the centre of Brodgar Circle remain unknown and so our proposed exhibition is constructed around a centre that is open to possibility. The centre of the exhibition designates a space to be occupied by other perspectives. It is a place for story making and story telling. It is the central vantage point from which the viewer can consider the displayed works as a circle or cog, engaging with their own circle of experience, extending the entanglements. It is a place for students to meet and discuss the inter-relationships between art and archaeology and how these intersect with their own research/practices. It is a place offered to 2017 Art and Archaeology students to occupy and activate, disrupting the apparent completeness of the circle.



*The phenomenological world: 'the sense which is revealed where the paths of my various experiences intersect, and also where my own and other people's intersect and engage with each other like gears' (Merleau-Ponty 1962 pxx).*

*"We should resist the temptation to assume that since stories are stories they are, in some sense unreal or untrue, for this is to suppose that the only real reality or true truth, is one in which we, as living, experiencing beings, can have no part at all" (Ingold, 2011 p190).*

LG 'Dwelling', digital photograph,  
taken at West Shore Orkney, April  
2017.