



Art on the ground: an exploration into human-nature relationships

Louise Emslie



**Faculty of Life and Environmental
Sciences
University of Iceland**

Art on the ground: an exploration into human-nature relationships

Louise Emslie

60 ECTS thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of a
Magister Scientiarum degree in Environment and Natural Resources

Advisors
Karl Benediktsson
Katrín Lund

Examiner
Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir

Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences
School of Engineering and Natural Sciences
University of Iceland
Reykjavik, February 2015

Art on the ground: an exploration into human-nature relationships
60 ECTS thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of a *Magister Scientiarum* degree in
Environment and Natural Resources

Copyright © 2015 Louise Emslie
All rights reserved

Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences
School of Engineering and Natural Sciences
University of Iceland
Askja, Sturlugata 7
101 Reykjavík
Iceland

Telephone: 525 4000

Bibliographic information:

Louise Emslie, 2015, *Art on the ground: an exploration into human-nature relationships*,
Master's thesis, Programme of Environment and Natural Resources, Faculty of Life and
Environmental Sciences, University of Iceland, 135 p.

Printing: Háskólaprent ehf
Reykjavík, Iceland, January 2015

Abstract

Deeper understanding of human-nature relationships is of critical importance in the face of exacerbating environmental problems. Artists and creative practitioners worldwide have begun advocating cultural and creative responses to these problems, including the apparent ‘disconnect’ of humans from the natural world, the issue which this thesis addresses. The research followed a qualitative research methodology, including auto-ethnographic methods and semi-structured interviews with artists and participants. By exploring four participatory out-of-door artworks and performances, in both Iceland and Scotland, the ways in which individuals experience, perceive and relate to the natural environment through the arts was explored. This was juxtaposed with three nature interpretation walks in protected areas, further questioning how trans-disciplinary approaches can be taken to environmental issues, human-nature relationships and environmental education. The capacity for such experiences to facilitate the actualization of an interconnectedness and feelings of unity with the natural world was further questioned. The analysis looks closely at the links and tensions that surfaced in the material, namely between science and art, mind and body, emotion and cognition, site-specificity and place, and direct and indirect experiences with the natural environment. Fundamentally, artistic engagements with the natural environment are seen to be an important way to develop and deepen feelings of interconnectedness. Collaborative, multidisciplinary approaches involving both arts and science are needed when approaching environmental issues.

Keywords: human-nature relationships, perception of environment, outdoor art, nature interpretation.

Útdráttur

Dýpri skilnings er þörf á sambandi manna og náttúrunnar. Þetta verður æ mikilvægara í ljósi umhverfisvandamála, sem fara vaxandi. Á undanförunum árum hafa ýmsir listamenn um allan heim talað fyrir því að þessi vandamál krefjist viðbragða af menningarlegum og skapandi toga. Þetta á meðal annars við um hið áberandi rof á tengslum manna við náttúruna, sem er efni þessarar ritgerðar. Við rannsóknina var beitt eigindlegri aðferðafræði, þar á meðal sjálfs-etnógrafíu, vettvangsathugunum og viðtölum við listamenn og þátttakendur. Fjögur utanhúsverk og sýningar sem byggja á þátttöku áhorfenda voru valin, bæði á Íslandi og Skotlandi, og rannsakað hvernig einstaklingar upplifa, skynja og tengjast náttúrlegu umhverfi í gegnum listir. Þetta var borið saman við þrjár gönguferðir á friðlýstum svæðum, þar sem fræðsla með aðferðum náttúrutúlkunar var í boði. Spurt er hvernig móta megi breiða, fjölfaglega nálgun til að fjalla um umhverfismál, samband manna og náttúrunnar og umhverfismennt. Gildi slíkrar marghliða reynslu til að auka tilfinningu fólks fyrir tengslum við náttúruna og einingu með henni er einnig metið. Í greiningunni er horft náið til þeirra tengsla og spennu sem kom upp á yfirborðið í gögnunum, þ.e.a.s. á milli vísinda og lista, huga og líkama, tilfinninga og hugsana, sérstöðu listvettvangs og staðar, og beinnar og óbeinnar reynslu af náttúrlegu umhverfi. Rannsóknin leiðir í ljós að listtengd upplifun af náttúrlegu umhverfi er mikilvæg leið til þess að þróa og dýpka tilfinningaleg tengsl við náttúruna. Þörf er á samstarfsverkefnum og fjölfaglegri nálgun, sem sameinar list og vísindi, þegar vinna þarf að umhverfismálum.

Lykilorð: Samband manna og náttúru, umhverfisskynjun, útilist, náttúrutúlkun.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Aims, approach, method	1
1.2 Terminology.....	4
1.3 Structure of the thesis	5
2 Art ‘in’ nature and the nature of art.....	9
2.1 Nature as ‘Other’	9
2.2 Art, science, knowledge.....	11
2.3 Nature interpretation and knowledge.....	13
2.4 Art as experience	15
2.5 Aesthetics of the environment	16
2.5.1 Early theories	17
2.5.2 Contemporary debates	19
2.6 Phenomenology	23
3 The study	27
3.1 The artworks	27
3.1.1 <i>Remote Performances</i>	27
3.1.2 <i>Staðir (Places)</i>	30
3.1.3 <i>Fálmar</i>	31
3.1.4 <i>Away with the Birds</i>	33
3.2 Nature interpretation activities.....	34
3.2.1 Wildlife walk: Isle of Eigg	34
3.2.2 Ranger-led hill walk: Cairngorm National Park.....	35
3.2.3 Folks of Forvie: Forvie Nature Reserve	35
4 Being there	37
4.1 Direct participation	38
4.1.1 <i>Away with the Birds</i> : deep listening.....	38
4.1.2 <i>Fálmar</i> : touching	45
4.2 Indirect participation.....	49
4.2.1 <i>Mót</i> : inside/outside.....	51
4.2.2 <i>Remote Performances</i> : immediacy	57
5 The experience of art.....	61
5.1 Art experiences	61
5.2 The ‘art object’	65
5.3 The journey	70
5.4 The everyday.....	72

6 Science, art and emotion	77
6.1 Realities. Mysteries.	77
6.2 Knowing the names	81
6.3 On love and being moved by nature	85
6.4 Nature interpretation.....	89
6.4.1 Nature interpretation walks	91
6.4.2 A self-guided walk	96
6.4.3 Nature interpretation and art.....	99
7 Places and views in places.....	105
7.1 The right place	106
7.2 Collaborating with place.....	107
7.3 <i>A view</i> (of a place)	113
7.4 <i>To view</i> (from a place)	119
8 Conclusion.....	123
Bibliography	127

List of Figures

Figure 1: Outlandia hut.....	29
Figure 2: Live transmission	29
Figure 3: <i>Mót</i> in Tálknafjörður.....	31
Figure 4: <i>Fálmar</i> originally in summer 2013	32
Figure 5 : <i>Fálmar</i> originally in summer 2013	32
Figure 6: <i>Away with the Birds</i>	34
Figure 7: View from the ferry	38
Figure 8: Approaching Canna from the ferry	39
Figure 9: Participants look upon Canna as we arrive	39
Figure 10: Participants outside Cafe Canna	39
Figure 11: <i>Away with the Birds</i> , feet in the water	40
Figure 12: <i>Away with the Birds</i> , moving through the bay	41
Figure 13: <i>Away with the Birds</i> , singers	41
Figure 14: <i>Away with the Birds</i> , singers on the v-shaped jetty	41
Figure 15: Tree trunk upon which branches lay (2014)	46
Figure 16: Tree trunk with my own branch (2014)	47
Figure 17: Close up detail of paint (2014).....	47
Figure 18: Touching branch to colour (2014)	48
Figure 19: <i>Mót</i>	51
Figure 20: <i>Mót</i>	51
Figure 21: Close up detail of paper on the pole.....	52
Figure 22: Close up of paper on the grass	52
Figure 23: Close up detail.....	55
Figure 24: Gallery installation.....	55
Figure 25: The pile of papers on the work bench.....	55
Figure 26: Footpath to Outlandia	57
Figure 27: Outlandia in the trees	57
Figure 28: The singers performing from behind the audience	63
Figure 29: <i>Mót</i> , with the papers on the ground	67
Figure 30: <i>Barist um ljósið (Fighting about the light)</i>	68
Figure 31: Close up of mirrored glass	68
Figure 32: Broken glass on the forest floor	68
Figure 33: <i>Reading Particle Physics To a River</i>	78
Figure 34: Watching the wading birds from the pier	92
Figure 35: Watching the sea for dolphins and whales while eating lunch	93
Figure 36: Walking over sand	94

Figure 37: Walking over heather and willow	94
Figure 38: Participants at burial mound	94
Figure 39: Flint samples	94
Figure 40: The Cairngorms Northern Corries	98
Figure 41: The Cairngorms Northern Corries	98
Figure 42: Satellite equipment with Glen Nevis in the background	108
Figure 43: Sarah Kenchington with trumpet	109
Figure 44: Detail of trumpet on shore line	109
Figure 45: Sarah Kenchington enacting <i>Euphonium at Sea</i>	110
Figure 46: Sarah Kenchington enacting <i>Euphonium at Sea</i>	110
Figure 47: <i>Reading Poetry to Rocks</i> in Glen Nevis	111
Figure 48: Close up detail <i>Reading Poetry to Rocks</i>	112
Figure 49: <i>Swearing an Oath to a Scottish Glen</i>	116
Figure 50: <i>Throwing Rocks at Trees</i>	117

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all that assisted me throughout the completion of this work, including the artists involved, participants and my supervisors at the University of Iceland. Without their time, encouragement and support, such a project would not have been possible.

1 Introduction

The idea that humanity has become disconnected from nature (Leopold, 1949; White, 1967; Næss, 1989; Kals et al., 1999; Mayer & Frantz, 2004; Frantz et al., 2005) is hardly surprising when thinking about exacerbating environmental problems. Ultimately, the scale of the ecological crisis stems from a deficient socio-economic system, one that encourages economic growth (Meadows et al., 1972; Jackson, 2011) and exploitation of natural resources without regard for planetary limits (Rockström et al., 2009) or future consequences. However, taking some responsibility for these systems as human creations and recognising the role of the individual is crucial if environmental issues are to be combated. Artists worldwide have begun to advocate a cultural, creative response to the environmental problems we currently face (Cape Farewell, 2014), one that focuses on public participation and interaction with art and the environment. Indeed, much of contemporary art has been characterised by this “return to nature” (McLean, 2002, p. 1), which questions Western conceptions of ‘nature’ and anthropocentric values.

1.1 Aims, approach, method

This thesis considers the role of art and creative practitioners in human-nature relationships, specifically when approaching humans’ apparent estrangement from nature. By evaluating artworks created and presented out-of-doors, this thesis aims to gain insight into how one experiences, perceives and relates to the natural (non-human) environment through art. The study will investigate the capacity of such artworks in bringing about a sense of interconnectedness with the natural environment by drawing links between the palpable characteristics of landscapes – wildlife, geology and archaeology – and the more imaginative qualities explored through the arts, poetry and music. By juxtaposing artworks with interpretative nature walks, the research will examine how fostering links between creative art practice and environmental education in general can support and encourage the actualization of an interconnectedness with the natural environment. By exploring the relationships between our emotional and creative engagements with the natural world and

our understandings of it through science, I aim to illustrate the value of artistic engagements with the natural environment. In light of this, the following key research questions have been identified:

1. How does one experience, perceive and relate to the natural (non-human) environment through outdoor artworks and performances?
2. Can a sense of unity and interconnectedness with the natural environment be promoted through such experiences?
3. Could adding an artistic dimension to environmental education and science communication offer an alternative way for individuals to engage with the natural environment?

Contemporary art has seen a shift from conventional and linear artistic representations of a sublime and romanticised nature to non-representational, conceptual art advocating participation and interaction (Thornes, 2008). Without traditional boundaries between art and viewer – the art object elevated on the plinth, and the viewer as a passive observer, the relationships that exist between them have been renegotiated and redefined (Pecoil, 2004). As Ronte (1996) contends,

[i]t is not, therefore, a question of placing a bronze by Henry Moore in the landscape, nor of painting a beautiful landscape or of analysing the natural elements that have been transformed into an “artefact”. The aesthetic objective is characterised by *interaction*, by the oneness of art and nature, by the new art in nature and the cultural approach to the understanding of nature (p. 26, my emphasis).

In an era when specialisation dominates, incorporating artistic activity into social and environmental domains requires advocating a trans-disciplinary approach (Gablik, 2006) as well as collaboration across all fields. This thesis aims to highlight this need. On a pragmatic level, approaching our apparent ‘disconnect’ to the natural environment through creativity could be a key role of the artist, as Lippard (2000) writes: “artists are good at

slipping between the institutional stools [...] to expose the layers of emotional and aesthetic resonance in our relationships to place” (p. 31). Moreover,

[f]ew artists are working in park systems or allying themselves with farmers, ranchers, cultural geographers, archaeologists, national park bureaucrats and wilderness advocates, or even know about the new field called “environmental interpretation,” which should be made to order for artists (Lippard, 2000, p. 30).

It is in line with this sentiment that the following research project has been carried out.

Throughout the research, an empirical, qualitative methodology was utilised. Four main art projects and three nature interpretation activities were identified which form and frame this research. A variety of ethnographic data collection techniques were incorporated throughout the fieldwork period, including participant observation, by which observation of and participation in and throughout the artworks took place. Some of the material is largely auto-ethnographic, whereby I note my own subjective experiences as well as commenting on the experiences of others, moving and interacting with the participants where relevant. Recorded and unrecorded semi-structured interviews with artists and participants were undertaken and transcripts produced afterwards. The analysis of the material aims to explore the ways in which humans experience, perceive and relate to the natural environment when one experiences art ‘in’ the natural environment (out-of-doors). Drawing on field notes and interview transcripts I aim to illustrate commonalities between the artworks and tensions present within the material, to provide a strong argument for the importance of artistic engagements with the natural (non-human) world.

The artworks discussed throughout the study are perhaps not typical examples of ‘environmental art’, nor are the artists self-confessed ‘environmental artists’ (this of course depends on how one chooses to define ‘environmental art’). The artworks and artists were selected following observations of an apparent community of creative professionals working with themes concerning human interactions with landscape, site-specificity and art that collaborates with people, the natural environment, context and material, reciprocally and cooperatively. The research began after I contacted my former Fine Art Sculpture and Electronic Media professor, to whom I outlined the current research

direction and interests. From there, he recommended I contact several artists who he thought might be interested. The more artists I talked to, the more apparent it became that I was being introduced to a community of creative people, whose lives and work intertwined and which I was compelled to explore. In selecting the artworks to be investigated, I was keen to avoid visual representations of nature; a view and aesthetic experience normally associated with landscape art. As Icelandic philosopher Sigríður Þorgeirsdóttir (2008) contends “in order for it [nature] to affect us, in order for us to perceive nature, we also have to free ourselves of visual representations of it. The void creates space for a fresh experience” (p. 80). Hence, I opted to include artworks that involved, to a greater or lesser degree, an element of embodied interaction and audience participation with the artwork. Each of the artworks was situated outside, removed from the confines of the traditional gallery space: a decision made in order to make explicit the physicality of the work, of being outside, on the ground.

The role of art in a period of environmental instability is a critical question. The research presented here focuses on the communicative and interpretive role of the creative arts – how can artists act as interpreters and translators of the natural world? How can they open the doors between disciplines to expose meanings and connections? How can they create the conditions for “conversations with landscape” as “a two-way communicative process” (Benediktsson & Lund, 2010, p. 1) and vernacular integrations with one’s environment, with place? Art questions and challenges social norms and is a means of making sense and understanding changes that take place in the world; social, cultural, economic and environmental. When the social norm regarding environmental issues is to persist with a ‘business as usual’ approach, the significance of art advocating change is undeniable. Furthermore, the current discourse regarding the communication and interpretation of climate change, as well as other environmental problems, is one of apocalyptic rhetoric – such rhetoric misrepresents and above all, is counterproductive (O’Neill & Cole, 2009). Evocative art, on the other hand, may have a key role to play.

1.2 Terminology

The word *nature* is difficult to define. Western thought has widely regarded it as anything non-human – ‘nature’ is where humanity is not and thus the opposite of culture. Soper

(1995) asserts “nature is the idea through which we conceptualize what is ‘other’ to ourselves” (p. 15-16). To consider ‘nature’ as a pristine zone entirely untouched by human activity is to refer to a ‘nature’ that in reality doesn’t exist – even the remotest corners of the planet have in some, albeit often indirect way, been affected by human endeavour. Indeed, even the computer upon which I write this thesis is ‘nature’, constructed using metals and minerals derived from the earth (although it would certainly not be considered ‘natural’). It is due to the ambiguous and unsettled nature of the word ‘nature’ that I have chosen to refrain from using it throughout the analysis section.

Ecology, according to Molles (2010), is “the study of relationships between organisms and the environment” (p. 1) and to this regard, will be used where relevant. Thus, humans are organisms with an *environment*, with the ability to shape and be shaped by them. The environment, as Ingold (2000) suggests is “a relative term – relative, that is, to the being whose environment it is [...] thus my environment is the world as it exists and takes on meaning in relation to me” (p. 20). Hence, *the natural environment* refers to the natural, specifically non-human environment. Carlson (1979) expands upon this:

When we conceptualise the natural environment as “nature” I think we are tempted to think of it as an object. When we conceptualise it as “landscape” we are certainly led to thinking of it as scenery. Consequently perhaps the concept of the “natural environment” is somewhat preferable. At least it makes explicit that it is an environment which is under consideration (p. 271).

To this regard, I will use *the natural environment* and *the natural world* interchangeably throughout this work, to refer to the part of ‘nature’ that is non-human.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

In questioning how one experiences, perceives and relates to the natural world through outdoor artworks and performance, some essential theories must be highlighted. Chapter 2 will outline such theoretical components upon which this research is undertaken and explored – the nature/culture, science/art, mind/body dualisms from which our estrangement is thought to originate. Nature (environmental) interpretation will be introduced – its definition, aims and use in the field. Early and contemporary theories

regarding aesthetics of the environment will be examined, primarily cognitive theories centring upon the condition of knowledge for aesthetic appreciation, and non-cognitive ones, arguing against the necessity of knowledge. Phenomenology, which is prominent in present-day landscape studies, will also be discussed. These theories will be referred to throughout the text and drawn on to critically examine the ways in which people experience, perceive and relate to art in this context.

Chapter 3 will introduce the artworks under study, outlining the forms, the artists involved, and the study areas. The artworks include Hanna Tuulikki's *Away with the Birds*, a vocal performance exploring the "mimesis of birds in Scottish Gaelic song" (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014); Karlotta Blöndal's *Mót (Print)*, for the exhibition *Staðir (Places)*, as well as her piece *Fálmar (Fumble)* and *Remote Performances*, a week-long radio station broadcast from Glen Nevis in Scotland, curated by London Fieldworks. Similarly, three ranger-led guided nature interpretation walks I attended in Scottish protected areas will be outlined, including a coastal walk in Forvie nature reserve in Aberdeenshire; a ranger-led hill walk in the Cairngorm National Park in the central highlands; and a wildlife walk on the Scottish Wildlife Trust reserve, Isle of Eigg.

Chapters 4 to 7 will look at the main observations made, the links and tensions between the works and their environments as well as an exploration of the questions they present. Beginning with auto-ethnographic recollections of the events, the tensions between direct, embodied experience and indirect, remote participation will be examined – how does one embody the natural environment through the arts? Does one need to 'be there' in order to experience the artwork or indeed the natural environment? Notions of the art object and 'art as experience' will be discussed – how does one relate to art *experientially* and what does such an experience offer? How can art be brought closer to 'real life'? The relationship between science and art will be widely discussed; do we need knowledge to appreciate the natural world, or indeed an artwork? How does science (and art) elicit feelings of awe and wonder? How can links be drawn between science and art (within environmental education and nature interpretation), to illustrate the need for multidisciplinary, collaborative approaches to environmental issues? This will be concluded with an exploration into places and site-specificity – what is place? What and how do we view from places? The underlying sentiment throughout the analysis questions

how creative experiences with the natural environment can invite or support the actualisation of an interconnectedness with the natural environment in a period of environmental uncertainty. Finally, Chapter 8 will draw upon the points made in the previous chapters and offer some concluding remarks.

2 Art 'in' nature and the nature of art

When considering the connection between our emotional, creative engagements with the natural environment and our understandings of it through science, it is necessary to examine some central theories. In this chapter I will explore the nature/culture, science/art dualisms by dismantling some of the arguments around the mechanistic approach science has taken to 'nature' in the last few centuries. I will outline and draw upon early and contemporary theories regarding aesthetics of the natural environment, introducing the debate between objective and subjective aesthetic responses to art and the natural environment. Additionally, phenomenology as a way of being in the world and its relation to contemporary art, as well as the concept of art itself, will also be discussed.

2.1 Nature as 'Other'

That a divide exists in Western thought between nature and culture is well documented (Soper, 1995; Glacken, 1973; Watson, 1969). As Tuan (1993) notes,

[i]n general, wherever that distinction is recognized, the biological, the raw and the instinctive, the unconscious and the primordial are attributed to nature; and form and order, consciousness and deliberation, the developed and the achieved ideal are attributed to culture (p. 8).

Yet, human beings are a part of nature and inevitably “whatever man does or produces is at once natural *and* cultural” (Watson, 1969, p. 17, my emphasis). Our apparent estrangement from nature, the issue to which this thesis addresses, has been said to hold its roots in Descartes' belief that the mind and body are separate. In fact, the disconnect is thought to go back much further than that, to Judeo-Christian theologies in which humans held dominion over all living things on earth (White, 1967; Glacken, 1973). This dominion was upheld by the scientific and technological revolutions during the Enlightenment period from which, grew the idea of nature as 'sacred' (Vining, et al., 2008), essentially, nature as

‘other’. Hence, vast areas of ‘wilderness’ areas were set aside for preservation of the sacred, first in the United States and subsequently all over the world. Wilderness, however, is regarded by some as being, not a tangible and physical location but a cultural concept (Cronon, 1995, p.79) and, as he suggests, by “[allowing] ourselves to believe that nature, to be true, must also be wild, then our very presence in nature represents its fall. The place where we are is the place where nature is not” (p. 80–81). To this regard, it is difficult to envision a single earthly location that has not been profoundly affected by human action, either directly or indirectly. However, we *are* natural entities – we do, as do other organisms, have a profound impact on our environment and therefore human modifications of the natural environment cannot solely define what is natural and what is cultural (Brady, 2003, p. 54). Such actions are an inherent part of belonging to that environment, any environment. It is the scale and ferocity of human modification of the environment, to the detriment of other living organisms with which we share this limited space, where the problem rests. Perhaps then, as Brady (2003) notes,

[w]e should be careful in how far we understand our closeness to nature. Nature is in some respects ‘other’ [...]. At the same time, nature’s otherness is not something to be devalued in relation to humans but recognised and respected as distinctive in itself (p. 55).

On the one hand, while it is crucial that humans perceive of themselves as fully participant members of the biological sphere, we must on the other hand, recognize difference in our ability to control and transform our natural surroundings. Humans have, to a certain degree, transcended the natural (Elliot, 1994, p. 40). However, expanding human perceptions of nature is required – to perceive of it as all encompassing and something we are a part of. Nature is in the cities, the gardens and in the places we live out our lives, not only in the spaces set aside for its protection. Levy (2006) writes: “Nature is still at work in the city, and in the suburbs. Here you find all the little bits, the tough and un-chewable leftovers, the parts we could not exploit as resources, the very gristle of nature” (p. 46). Snyder (2010) simply asserts: “wildness [...] it is everywhere” (p. 15).

Hence, advocating the inclusion of artistic activity into social and environmental domains, as a means of questioning the nature/culture and science/art divides, is central to this study.

2.2 Art, science, knowledge

“Art teaches us to perceive objects” (as well as events and ideas) - not only to *see* and recognise them but to fervently *look* “from fresh, new perspectives” (Pugh & Girod, 2007, p. 19). Thus, art may be thought of as a way of seeing; a perceptive activity which can offer alternative perspectives on the world around us. Science too, they argue “possesses a similar potential to expand perception” (p. 19). There have been some attempts to integrate scientific enquiry and artistic expression collaboratively, especially geography and art. Geographers have been researching the concept of nature in art (Gandy, 1997), walking in art (Philips, 2004; Philips, 2005; Butler, 2006; Butler, 2007), embodied experiences of outdoor artworks (Cant, 2003; Cant & Morris, 2006; Hawkins, 2012) and collaborative methods in general (Miles, 2006; Philips, 2004; Foster & Lorimer, 2007). However, the sciences and the arts are still widely regarded as sitting on opposing sides. Scientific knowledge of the environment, that is, knowledge of “laws pertaining to the characteristics and behaviour of all natural objects” (Watson, 1969, p. 3) has, as Simmons (1993) notes “been elevated by some of its practitioners to the heights of being the only knowledge worth having” (p. 18). Art, on the other hand, is regarded as pertaining to the “sensory side of human experience” (Eisner, 2008, p. 4) – evoking feeling, emotion and sensibility. While discussing Edmund Husserl’s work on phenomenology, Abram (1996) contends that,

science, for its own integrity and meaningfulness, must acknowledge that it is rooted in the same world that we all engage in our everyday lives and with our unaided senses – that, for all its technological refinements, quantitative science remains an expression of, and hence must be guided by, the qualitative world of our common experience (p. 43).

Yet scientific enquiry privileges rationality and objectivism, maintaining, as Abram (1996) further notes “that subjective experience is “caused” by an objectifiable set of processes in the mechanically determined field of the sensible” (p. 66). In other words, what we feel subjectively can be explained through scientific objectivism. This practice, which has emboldened human negligence and disrespect towards the natural environment, is thought

to stem from Judeo-Christian traditions with “their otherworldly God” (Abram, 1996, p. 94). In turn, this has encouraged “[an] awareness that disparages sensorial reality, denigrating the visible and tangible order of things on behalf of some absolute source assumed to exist entirely beyond, or outside of, the bodily world” (Abram, 1996, p. 94). Even today, the axioms of Christianity continue to shape how our lives are lived (White, 1967). Indeed, a sense of reality has in some way been lost through scientific enquiry and with it, the importance of the arts and its subjectivity.

Art alters the ways in which individuals experience the world. Artistic practice of the last few decades has shifted and blurred the boundaries between art and viewer, object and process and as a result, the longstanding emphasis placed on the art object has subsided. Art has become, on some levels, less about creating objects to think *about* and more about creating objects (or experiences, see Dewey, 1934) to think *with*. With further emphasis placed on the process of art making, by both artist and audience, the role of art as a tool for knowing has been highlighted. Sutherland & Acord write: “The role of art is unique in its ability to create conditions for knowing, experientially” (2007, p. 133). Knowledge, then, is perhaps not something one possesses but is in action – *to know*, a doing word, as opposed to have or possess knowledge (Sutherland & Acord, 2007). The scientific worldview, with emphasis on information and facts, denies sensory interaction with the environment, whereas art on the other hand cultivates it (Dewey, 1934). Eisner (2008) emphasises feeling in this knowing, noting that art may be seen as the vehicle for which we may come to learn about feelings, which may be useful, since scientific statements do not reveal feeling. Thus, it could be said that encouraging direct, embodied, relationships to art in an experiential context can contribute to the activity of knowing (Sutherland & Acord, 2007). They further note: “Artworks involve affective intensities, they engage us ‘bodily’. Art reaffirms the body as a key instrument of knowledge” (Sutherland & Acord, 2007, p. 133).

Moreover, the accumulation of information does not constitute knowledge. Rather, one learns by contextualising, as Ingold (2000) suggests “Our knowledgeability consists, rather in the capacity to situate such information, and understand its meaning, within the context of direct perceptual engagement with our environments” (p. 21). In other words, in order to understand and fully comprehend the meaning and significance of information, it helps to

be situated somewhere, in a place. Thus, one may ask: to what extent is our knowledge place bound? How can learning be enhanced through direct interaction with *place*? In regards to environmental and science education, educative material largely focuses on universal definitions and common principles rather than drawing from direct, fully-embodied experience in the immediate and local environment (Smith, 2002), as he notes “The result is that scientific study becomes detached from the world rather than part of it” (p. 588). Place-based education, as a counteraction to this estrangement aims “to ground learning in local phenomena and students’ lived experience” (Smith, 2002, p. 586) thus replacing the notion of knowledge as something gained in the classroom, where students, “internalise and master knowledge created by others” (Smith, 2002, p. 586). Indeed, place-based education encourages local exploration, and empathy with what is familiar and near to one’s everyday life (Sobel, 2004). The result, in regards to environmental problems, which are so often framed as distantly remote – the extinction of exotic species, rising sea levels in far off places, become near and relevant. If the problem is seen and/or understood locally – in one’s own neighbourhood, in one’s own community, it becomes a concern of one’s own. Smith (2002) terms it “learning to be where we are”. Hence, direct interaction with art *and* the natural environment, as a means of situating information and understanding meaning (Ingold, 2000), regarding the natural environment is a crucial aspect to this work and leads me to my next discussion.

2.3 Nature interpretation and knowledge

With increasing ‘nature-based’ tourism worldwide, annual visitation to national parks, nature reserves and protected areas continues to increase. One management tool commonly utilised to combat the environmental impacts of ‘nature-based’ tourism and promote increased knowledge and attitude and behavioural change is ‘nature interpretation’ (Orams, 1995; Tubb, 2003; Kuo, 2002). As it is often a key requirement within protected area management, the importance of developing engaging and effective nature interpretation that highlights local as well as global environmental issues, is paramount. Nature interpretation, as defined by Tilden (1977), is “an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information” (p. 8). Such a definition implies that both factual and creative methods should be implemented to

meet these aims. A more general definition of interpretation is offered by Brady (2003): “Interpretation is the activity of discovering meaning. It is ‘making sense of’ something” (p. 71). Both definitions emphasise the discovery of *meaning* as a fundamental element in interpretation. Likewise, in traditional experiences with art the question is often asked – what does it mean? With art, meaning is revealed in its form and the artist’s intentions. With interpretation of landscapes and the surrounding natural environment, it is however more complex, as Brady (2003) notes “there is no internal meaning to landscapes. We bring meaning to them or assign meaning through cultural frameworks” (p. 71). To this regard, the study here will look at the revelation of meaning through art and nature interpretation in one’s encounters with the natural environment.

Despite research suggesting that nature interpretation should be both intellectually challenging and emotionally stimulating (Markwell & Weiler, 1998) the focus has remained on communicating factual information. As yet, little attention has been given to the potential outcomes, benefits and emotional stimulation, which may materialise by supplementing and enriching nature interpretation with exposure to art (Carr, 2004). In regards to cognitive theories regarding aesthetic appreciation of nature (which I will return to later), it has been asserted that the aims of environmental education and nature interpretation may in fact be hindered by focusing too heavily on factual and scientific knowledge (Pooley & O’Connor, 2000). Shifting the focus of interpretation from cognitive, fact based knowledge to more imaginative, emotional and non-scientific information to discover meaning through aesthetic appreciation has been called for (Brady, 2003). In interpretation, Brady contends (2003),

meanings emerge through aesthetic qualities, as perceived by an individual who brings with him or her a set of values, preferences, and more or less background knowledge, aesthetic experience, perceptual and emotional sensitivity, and imaginative ability. Interpretation begins in exploratory perception and aesthetic description, but does not end there (p. 73).

Artists interpret the natural environment *imaginatively*. Hence, the role of art as a useful tool to interpretive activity will be discussed throughout this thesis. The form of this art, as *experiential*, draws me to the next theoretical discussion.

2.4 Art as experience

The concept of art as experience is integral to this study. In his famous work *Art as Experience*, John Dewey (1934) argues that when the aesthetic experience is removed from everyday interaction with the world, it is raised up and *out of* the daily stream of experience. He states: “When artistic objects are separated from both conditions of origin and operation in experience, a wall is built around them that renders almost opaque their general significance” (p. 3). Dewey criticises traditional art theories that “spiritualizes” art (p. 11), believing that by segregating art on the pedestal, in the museum, it becomes glorified and hence separated from its roots in everyday life. Furthermore, it seems the commercial art community has encouraged this division “because art is supposed to be set apart from life – above it all or below it all” (Lippard, 2000, p. 15). By incorporating Dewey’s theory throughout the research, I assert that *everyday* aesthetic experiences of the natural environment are crucial. For if we were to expand our conceptions of artistic, aesthetic experiences to include those of a more everyday nature, alternative ways of being in the world may open up. Indeed, the artworks included in this research blur the boundaries between the everyday experience and the art experience, creating tensions and questioning where the everyday experience ends and the art begins. To this regard, Dewey’s theory, based on the sensory reciprocity that occurs between man and his environment, of what he terms the “live creature” (1934, p. 3), asserts that we must recover the “[a]esthetic experience with the normal processes of living” (p. 10). To this regard, the artworks presented in this study are experiential, to a greater or lesser degree, whereby the viewer returns home with *an* experience.

In addition, Dewey contributes to the science-art discussion by criticising scientific rationality, which he believes can never obtain absolute truth (Dewey, 1934). He writes: ““Reason” at its height cannot attain complete grasp and a self-contained assurance. It must fall back upon imagination – upon the embodiment of ideas in emotionally charged sense” (p. 33). Art on the other hand, appeals to the senses and the imagination, with the capacity to expand and intensify the experience of life. Furthermore, the difference between art and science, according to Dewey, is that although “[s]cience states meanings; art expresses them” (1934, p. 84). Indeed,

[i]f all meanings could be adequately expressed by words, the arts of painting and music would not exist. There are values and meanings that can be expressed only by immediately visible and audible qualities, and to ask what they mean in the sense of something that can be put into words is to deny their distinctive existence (Dewey, 1934, p. 74).

Furthermore, art experiences can provide opportunities for transformation in the appreciator, as Jackson (2000) contends: “The experiencer changes by undergoing a transformation of self, gaining a broadened perspective, a shift in attitude, an increase of knowledge, or any host of other enduring alterations of a psychological nature” (Jackson, 2000, p. 5). We may then ask – can art, by facilitating transformative aesthetic experiences, bring about a sense of unity and interconnectedness with the natural environment? And how can these aesthetic experiences be drawn closer to real life?

2.5 Aesthetics of the environment

While discussing art and the natural environment, ‘environmental aesthetics’ is a means of connecting the two. Environmental aesthetics offers insight into the various ways by which we aesthetically engage with both art and the natural world, while highlighting the disparities between. Due to the ambiguity inherent in aesthetic experience, or the “aesthetic response” (Brady, 2003, p. 6) defining it can be problematic. It is important, nonetheless, to have a general understanding of what an aesthetic response is, or could be, before engaging in the theories. Chenoweth & Gobster (1990) attempt this:

The aesthetic experience seems to isolate both us and that which we are experiencing aesthetically, *from the flow of daily experience*. We feel as though life had suddenly become arrested, for we are absorbed in the object of our attention and *abandon any thought of its utility and function*. We do not classify it, study it, judge it, nor consider it for any ulterior purpose it may serve. We are wholly in the present with no thought of the past or future. There is no purpose or motivation behind our experience other than just having the experience for its own sake (p. 4, my emphasis).

In their study, Chenoweth & Gobster (1990) note that the aesthetic response seems to “stand out from the flow of daily experiences” (p. 4) and that they are memorable, as well as highly valued. This goes against Dewey’s contention that aesthetic experiences are, or at least should be, intrinsic to everyday life (Dewey, 1934). They also contend that the aesthetic experience compels us to “abandon any thought of its utility and function” (p. 4). While Kant advocates a ‘disinterested’ model of perception (Kant, 1790), others argue that to ignore the function inherent in the object, is to have an ‘incorrect’ aesthetic response (Carlson, 1979). In light of this, the study presented here will question these lines of thought. Is the way we experience, perceive and relate to the natural non-human environment through art an example of an aesthetic response? Is it a response to art, or the natural environment, or both simultaneously? Is it inescapably aesthetic or are there other aspects to consider?

2.5.1 Early theories

During the Renaissance period, traditional views of nature as wild, untamed and frightening subsided as people began appreciating nature through science and art (Brady, 2003). Following easier access to the countryside in the 18th century, Western travel writings encouraged tourism, highlighting in the guidebooks of the time where to go and what to *see* (Edensor, 2000; Lund, 2005). The appreciation of landscapes became an art form for the first time in the Western world as nature became conceptualised as scenery (Solnit, 2000; Brady, 2003) and the act of viewing nature became popular. It was during this time that three key ideas concerning aesthetic appreciation of the natural environment were formed, namely; the beautiful, the sublime and the picturesque and I will briefly discuss them here.

In Kant’s aesthetic theory of the beautiful he rejected the idea of beauty as being an objective quality, rather, the aesthetic experience was based on feeling, arising from aesthetic interactions between the object and appreciator. To take Brady’s example:

The jasmine [flower] is judged beautiful not in virtue of a concept of it as a particular type of flower or because of knowing it is the source of essential oil used in many

perfumes. It is called beautiful because it evokes an immediate feeling of pleasure, which is a response unmediated by the concept of what jasmine is (2003, p. 33).

Furthermore, although Kant argues that the aesthetic response is highly subjective, this, he contends “ought” to extend beyond oneself, because others may share a similar response (Kant, 1790). He notes: “The assertion is not that everyone will fall in with our judgement, but rather that everyone *ought* to agree with it” (p. 84). It is from these ideas that Kant introduced the concept of ‘disinterestedness’; that is, appreciating an object by separating its sensual qualities from its functional and utilitarian values. Disinterestedness, as Brady (2003) notes “secures a degree of impartiality; by freeing ourselves from personal desires or preoccupations in relation to the object we are in a better position to judge the object on its terms” (p. 34). But is this really possible? Can one contemplate an object or scene of nature with ‘disinterest’, with a sense of disengagement? Are we, as humans, not inescapably bound to our subjective interests?

The power humans have in framing and controlling nature was surpassed in the sublime model of aesthetic appreciation, whereby both pleasure and fear was evoked in the aesthetic response. As with the model of the beautiful, the sublime is based on feeling and is an activity for the imagination – it exists not as an objective quality in nature but in our minds. Feelings of awe and wonder develop as the power and magnitude of nature is discerned (Berleant, 1992). Brady (2003) writes:

Imagination enables us to feel nature's might and at the same time to recognise something valuable and meaningful about ourselves, that in our freedom we feel able to cope with the challenges and dangers of nature as sublime. In that recognition we discover our strength as moral beings, not against or superior to nature, but as having a kind of independence, in its might, and ourselves, as moral beings (p. 37).

In other words, recognising nature's ‘otherness’, as discussed earlier. But is aesthetic appreciation really possible under such conflicting circumstances, such as fear?

Between the serenity and tranquillity of the beautiful, and the grandeur of the sublime, lies the picturesque model of aesthetic appreciation of the natural environment. This model of

appreciation depicts nature's expressive, irregular and organic characteristics and the beauty that is to be found in growth, deformity and decay (Brady, 2003). However, this model has been criticised for viewing nature through an artistic lens (as one would a landscape painting) focusing too heavily on visual aspects and judging it by artistic principles. The picturesque, while maintaining an aesthetic improvement of nature by humans, only created further distancing between humans and the natural environment (Brady, 2003).

With the early theories in aesthetics of the environment, human-nature relationships shifted. Ideas of beauty were questioned and as nature became more accessible, the rough, wild, 'untouched' nature became more inviting. In contemporary debates, the beautiful and picturesque models which emphasised the visual subsided, and the grandeur of the sublime, with its emphasis on feeling and emotion, came to the forefront of contemporary debate, as did the scientific knowledge debate. These models of aesthetic appreciation, which paved the way for emotional experiences of the natural environment renders this important to the discussion.

2.5.2 Contemporary debates

The significance and value of environmental aesthetics as a pragmatic approach to environmental protection and conservation has ensured its grounding in the discussion. Contemporary debates have centred around the objective/subjective divide, questioning whether aesthetic responses are based on an objective, detached experience of the object (artefact or natural) or on subjective, inner experiences. At the same time, arguments about whether a similar aesthetic model exists for both art and nature have been discussed.

The two most prevalent authors in this debate are Allen Carlson and Arnold Berleant, who sit at quite opposite ends of the environmental aesthetics spectrum. Berleant (1992) questions the aesthetic models for appreciating art and nature – is there one that includes both art and nature, or two – one for art and another that pertains to natural beauty? While art, on the one hand, is a human creation and intentional, made in the knowledge that it will receive attention of its form and meaning (Carlson, 1979), natural environments, on the

other hand, are unintentional and sit outside the artistic context. Art traditionally comes framed but nature does not. As Brady (2003) suggests,

[t]he intentionality of artworks is also reflected in their creative character. They are real objects, just like the natural environment, but their content is fictional [...]. As such, we approach artworks with a view to the imaginary worlds they present to us. By contrast, the natural environment is part of our real world [...]. We can use imagination in our appreciation of nature, but nature is not, as such, a product of imagination (p. 63).

Furthermore, aesthetic appreciation should not be confined to visual objects (both art and natural) or that which is seen, as doing so would, as Carlson (1979) notes “impose unacceptable limitations on the aesthetic appreciation of the natural environment” (p. 272). Broadly speaking, we rely heavily on vision – the world is dominated by images and so much of our assumed knowledge comes from sight – seeing is believing, or so goes the saying. Indeed, in order to harmonize inner and outer landscapes (Lopez, 1989), escape from the visual is required (Bunkše, 2007). The aesthetic encounter must encompass that which is perceived with all the senses, as Bunkše’s (2007) title suggests “feeling is believing”.

The two prevailing arguments in regards to appreciation of the natural environment is the cognitive, objectivist and the non-cognitive, subjectivist theories. Cognitive theories are built on the condition of knowledge for aesthetic appreciation, that is, one must possess some degree of knowledge in order to aesthetically and ‘correctly’ appreciate the natural environment. Allen Carlson’s ‘natural environmental model’ advocates that scientific knowledge is necessary for aesthetic appreciation and to identify what and how to appreciate. He argues:

This knowledge, essentially common sense/scientific knowledge, seems to me the only viable candidate for playing the role in regard to the appreciation of nature which our knowledge of types of art, artistic traditions, and the like plays in regard to the appreciation of art (Carlson, 1979, p. 273).

For Carlson, possessing some degree of knowledge allows the transformation of raw experience – the “buzzing” of the senses in immediate experience, into something that is more meaningful and settled (Carlson, 1979, p. 273). Without grounding the aesthetic object in knowledge, our experience is reduced to nature’s facade and impoverished because of that. Carlson argues that in the same way as art history informs our appreciation of art, knowledge of natural history should inform how we view and appreciate the natural environment. He states: “Our knowledge of the nature of the particular environments yields the appropriate boundaries of appreciation, the particular foci of aesthetic significance, and the relevant act or acts of aspection for that type of environment” (p. 274).

Rolston (1995) agrees with Carlson to a certain extent, but recognises the multidimensionality intrinsic to our immediate, first hand interactions with the natural environment. Rolston argues for a melding of sensory appreciation with a scientific one, where the immediate perceptual experience is in some way supported by scientific knowledge. The “organic unity in a landscape”, according to Rolston, cannot be fully appreciated through “treating it as beautiful scenery, though it might be found if one discovered its ecology (1995, p. 378). Moreover, he contends that in order to perceive nature at scales beyond the human, we must utilize our imaginations, but insists that that must be founded on scientific knowledge. Similarly, Aldo Leopold (1970), emphasises ecology, contending that beauty can only exist when the ecological integrity and health of the environment is intact. Hence, knowledge of that ecosystem is paramount to aesthetic appreciation. However, science is a cultural and human-centred practice and really just another way of framing the landscapes around us (Rolston, 1995). Furthermore, some argue that insisting on scientific knowledge for aesthetic appreciation excludes those with non-scientific backgrounds (Benediktsson, 2007).

Non-cognitive, subjectivist theories on the other hand, centre upon sensuality of engagement and challenge the need for knowledge. This argument contends that immediate, perceptual experience of the sensory elements of that which is being contemplated, is needed. In *The Aesthetics of Art and Nature* (1992), Berleant questions Kant’s traditional aesthetic of ‘disinterestedness’, considering it as hindering to our experiences of art and nature, particularly when the approach taken to appreciating art is

applied to the appreciation of nature. He states: “To aid in achieving disinterestedness it is important to circumscribe art objects by clear borders [...] the frame of a painting, the pedestal for sculpture, the proscenium arch in theatre, the stage for dance” (p. 162). However, there are no borders in nature, for we are always in it, always in an environment. Thinking about nature (or landscapes) as a passive scene or “backdrop to human activities” (Ingold, 1993, p. 152) refuses to acknowledge how the natural world encompasses us, continually. Berleant adds: “the distancing that is so important a part of traditional appreciation is difficult to achieve when one is surrounded by the “object” (1992, p. 164). It is then “far more difficult to objectify environment than art” (p. 165). However, Berleant recognises the developments of visual art in the last century which has seen a relinquishing of the art object and increase in perceptual, interactive art-making experiences. Furthermore, he notes: “The picture frame has come to function not so much as an enclosure but rather as a facilitator for focusing our gaze into the painting, and this internal focusing eludes the very objectification that the traditional aesthetic intended to promote” (p. 165).

Berleant firmly rejects Kant’s idea of disinterestedness, believing that “[t]he aesthetic mark [...] is not disinterested contemplation but total engagement, a sensory immersion in the natural world that reaches that still-uncommon experience of unity” (1992, p. 170). He advocates that environmental aesthetics must move towards engagement in order to transform our appreciation of nature and that this can serve as a model, in turn, for appreciating art. Furthermore, he reintroduces Kant’s idea of the sublime as a way of engaging with nature:

[T]he magnitude of natural things surpasses our aesthetic imagination, and in the dynamically sublime, in which the might of nature overwhelms us and produces fear, the aesthetic satisfaction we feel comes from our ability to grasp this, the first by our capacity to comprehend great size intellectually, the second by our contemplation of nature from a secure position, thus turning the initial pain, into pleasure (Berleant, 1992, p. 168).

Several authors agree with Berleant. Carroll (1993), with his ‘arousal model’, adopts a theory of *emotions* – whereby “our emotional responses are explained in terms of the

objects properties and the beliefs of the person having the emotional response” (Brady, 2003, p. 109). Carroll further contends that Carlson’s environmental model “excludes certain very common appreciative responses to nature – responses of a less intellectual, more visceral sort” (p. 90) and calls for a nature appreciative model which he refers to as “being moved by nature” (Carroll, 1993, p. 90) or emotionally aroused. We may appreciate nature “by opening ourselves to its stimulus and to being put in a certain emotional state by attending to its aspects” (p. 90). Furthermore “to be moved by nature is to respond to the features of natural expanses – such as texture and scale – with the appropriate emotions” (Carroll, 1993, p. 105). And this emotional response to the natural environment, he contends, does not require scientific knowledge. The non-cognitive, subjectivist theories call for direct participation and the reuniting of our senses with the immediate environments that surrounds us. Phenomenological theory provides a means for this.

2.6 Phenomenology

Berleant’s emphasis on physical and immersive engagement with the natural environment introduces a key philosophical approach in landscape studies of relevance to this thesis – phenomenology. Phenomenology emphasises the body, the everyday and the experience of landscape through direct bodily contact with it. With an increasing focus on the body and embodiment as a way of perceiving landscape, phenomenological approaches have come to the forefront of scholarly study. In his groundbreaking work *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty (1962) rejects dualist theories of body and soul and contends that what and how we feel comes from a certain way the world has “of invading us” and that our way of “meeting this invasion” (p. 317), constitutes our *feeling* of the world.

Tim Ingold, another key writer in phenomenological theory offers an approach to understanding how human beings perceive their environment that likewise emphasises the moving and perceiving body. He refers to people having “an openness to the world” (Ingold, 2006, p. 18) which he describes as “a condition of being alive to the world, characterised by a heightened sensitivity and responsiveness, in perception and action, to an environment that is always in flux, never the same from one moment to the next” (Ingold, 2006, p. 10). Similarly, David Abram (1996), also influenced by Merleau-Ponty’s writings, contributes to the discussion of the body through his notion of reciprocity. This

reciprocity that occurs between human and the non-human is, as he notes “the ongoing interchange between my body and the entities that surround it [...] a sort of silent conversation that I carry on with things, a continuous dialogue that unfolds far below my verbal awareness” (p. 52). We perceive through our senses of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch and it may be true to say that our sense of touch has been made redundant in modern times (Lewis, 2000). Accordingly, Ingold (2011) believes that a more “grounded” approach (p. 45) to the perception of the natural environment should be used, in an attempt to restore the sense of touch. To this regard, many academics (and artists) have turned towards walking as a means of engaging with landscape (see Lund & Willson, 2010; Ingold & Vergunst, 2008; Wylie, 2003; Lund, 2005; Ingold, 2004; Lorimer & Lund, 2003; Solnit, 2001; Edensor, 2000; Michael, 2000) as Lund & Willson (2010) assert: “[I]t is the ground which one’s footsteps follow that is the point of ongoing sensual dialogue” (Lund & Willson, 2010, p. 97). Walking allows us to move around, to see the landscape from different angles, varying heights and gives us the sense of its rhythms, through the rhythms it generates in our own bodies (Lund, 2005). Although this topic is highly relevant considering the number of contemporary artists that employ walking in their practice, walking as such will not be a focus of this thesis.

To conclude, that humans are a part of nature is the guiding sentiment in this essay. While scientific enquiry privileges rationality and objectivism, art pertains to the senses and advocates knowledge acquisition of a somatic, embodied and subjective means. Art can create the conditions for knowing and hence, deriving *from* and situating knowledge *in* the palpable world is important, especially in regards to environmental education. The potential for direct participation with both the natural environment and with art to foster an understanding of each that goes beyond the visual, as well as a restoration of the body in what Lippard (1997) describes “the sensuous intellect” (p. 17) will be central to this thesis. In this research, the shift in focus from representational art objects (in the gallery) to art experiences (in the world) was made in order to explore how aesthetic experiences can be expanded to include everyday encounters with art and the natural environment, and thus recovering sensorial knowledge which scientific abstractionism neglects. Fundamentally, this thesis aims to highlight the need for collaboration between the domains of science and art, to approach environmental issues collectively. It also aims to emphasise the importance

of the arts, in general, to humanity and explore how human-nature relationships are perceived when art is experienced 'in' the natural environment.

3 The study

Throughout the research period I attended four multi-sensory and embodied art performances and events, utilising an empirical, qualitative methodology comprising of participant observation and semi structured interviews throughout. I also attended three nature interpretation walks in protected areas in Scotland utilising a similar methodology. In the following chapter, I aim to provide a contextual outline of the projects, their locations and participants, as well as brief introductory auto-ethnographic descriptions, which play an important role in much of the subsequent analysis.

3.1 The artworks

3.1.1 *Remote Performances*

Over 20 commissioned artists were invited to Glen Nevis in the Lochaber area of Scotland in August 2014 for *Remote Performances*, a week long arts project to create and broadcast artworks live from Outlandia hut. The project was curated by artists Jo Joelson and Bruce Gilchrist (London Fieldworks) in collaboration with Resonance FM, a London based art radio station. The hydrogen driven radio station (a traditional diesel driven generator would have been too loud) was installed in the Outlandia hut – a small, modest, tree house like structure nestled on the hillside (Figure 1). Sitting at the end of a rustic wooden footpath in a Norwegian spruce and larch forest, the hut overlooked Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in the United Kingdom. The works broadcast were creative responses to place, the natural environment and explored modern day ideas of ‘remoteness’.

The curators, London Fieldworks typically create work about human interactions with the natural environment often engaging with ideas of ecology as an interlinking web of creative, social, natural and technological spheres (London Fieldworks, 2014). For *Remote Performances* they were particularly interested in how experiences of place and remoteness can be transmitted through art. Outlandia, which was built in 2010, has since

functioned as a secluded, creative ‘field-station’ for artists and community groups to explore work and ideas, as well as a location for fostering links between creativity and the natural environment. *Remote Performances* was envisioned as a participatory artist-led project that encouraged participation with the local community. Artworks created in the area throughout the week were broadcast to listening posts set up in Edinburgh during the Edinburgh Art Festival, to the Live Art Development Agency in Hackney Wick, East London, as well as via the internet.

Twenty artists contributed, producing a rich and extensive body of work. I will focus primarily on the works of Bram Thomas Arnold, Alec Finlay, Sarah Kenchington and Geoff Sample and draw upon their work where relevant. The live broadcast (Figure 2) ran from 12-4pm, and consisted of interviews, short story-tellings, poem recitals, live music sessions, as well as the sound works created. Throughout the afternoons people came and went, and members of the production team assisted artists with sound recordings down in the Glen when required. Most of the works were created throughout the week in the local area but some were pre-existing and re-conceptualised for the project. By exploring *The Sounds of Lochaber*, the title of one of the works, the tensions present in the area between tourism, nature, industry and heritage were explored.

As the site of the highest mountain in Britain, the area is a popular tourist destination for holidaymakers and hill walkers alike (nearby Fort William has been labelled ‘the outdoor capital of Britain’). Although the campsite at the foot of the Glen was brimming with holidaymakers, a sense of calm hung over the hut, which maintained its seclusion, hidden on the hillside. The project ran for one week, with artists coming and going as they needed. They stayed in a house 40 miles from the site, driving back and forth each day to Outlandia. I arrived on the third day of broadcasting and stayed in the campsite at the bottom of the hill. For three days I visited the hut, observing the production of works, the broadcasting schedule and the comings and goings of the artists, recording notes and conducting interviews when possible.

Throughout the thesis I will comment on the artists’ works, some of which I witnessed the creation of personally or heard live as a broadcast, others I heard after the project finished in the online archived material. The tensions between active and passive participation,

between temporal and spatial remoteness as well as concepts of place, will be the main points for discussion. The innate immediacy of live broadcast and how this manifests in the artist's engagements with the work and the locations will also be discussed.



Figure 1: Outlandia hut



Figure 2: Live transmission

3.1.2 *Staðir (Places)*

The exhibition *Staðir (Places)* was a project exploring site specificity of the southern West fjords region of Látrabjarg, Iceland, which took place over spring and summer 2014. Three artists were invited to make permanent and temporary work, in collaboration with local municipalities that explored the history and unique landscapes of the region. Bjarki Bragason, Hrafnkell Sigurðsson and Karlotta Blöndal were selected to participate due to the nature of their practice – with the natural environment at the forefront of their subject matter and a relational approach to working with communities and places (*Staðir*, 2014).

The exhibitions were open to the public for several weeks throughout the spring, but the project culminated in a one-day event in June 2014 with people travelling to the region to view the pieces. Individuals were invited to meet at the Hnjótur Museum in Örlygshöfn where a talk and discussion about Bjarki Bragason's work *Fyrri þáttur/Seinni þáttur (First Part/Second Part)*, (which was exhibited in the gallery) was offered. Viewers were then invited to drive together to the next location at the Algae Factory in Bíldudalur, 66 km away, where Hrafnkell Sigurðsson was exhibiting his piece *Myndun myndar myndast (From form forming)*. The day culminated in a drive to Karlotta Blöndal's piece *Mót (Print)* in Tálknafjörður where an outdoor sculptural, performative piece had been set up for several days (Figure 3). People could walk around the fjord where her piece was situated, experiencing the landscape and the work simultaneously. In the evening, people were invited to camp and join the artists for a barbecue and fire on the beach.

Due to the immersive nature of the work and the fact that the piece was situated outside, I chose to focus on Karlotta Blöndal's piece *Mót*, which I did not attend (descriptions come from correspondence with the artist and images of the event). *Mót* was created in situ in Tálknafjörður and later re-contextualised for an exhibition in Týsgallerí in Reykjavík in September 2014. The work consisted of thirteen poles, upon which hooks held a number of A4 sheets of paper in place. The sheets became battered by the wind and rain and detached from the poles, flying off into the valley. I later attended the gallery exhibition where the work had been re-contextualised for the gallery setting. The collaboration that unfolded between land and material, between artist and environment will be the main discussion point throughout the thesis. Furthermore, the fact that I did not experience the piece directly, but indirectly through recalled experiences and re-presentation, will throw

interesting questions at the ideas of public participation, direct experience and site-specificity.



Figure 3: *Mót* in Tálknafjörður (image courtesy of Karlotta Blöndal)

3.1.3 *Fálmar*

Fálmar was a permanent, participatory art piece, commissioned by Reykjavik Forestry in the area of Heiðmörk on the outskirts of Reykjavík (Figures 4 & 5). In summer 2013, the public were invited to visit Heiðmörk and take a walk through the area to look and participate in the sculptures and installations set up in the forest. *Fálmar*, another work by Karlotta Blöndal, was made using the trunk of a tree, upon which painted branches with various colours lay. Corresponding colours were painted discretely onto parts of trees throughout the forest and visitors were invited to pick up a branch and search for the matching colour within the environment. *Fálmar* was one of four pieces installed in the forest.

The original event took place in summer 2013, but I visited the piece over one year later in October 2014, to view and experience it for myself. The discussion of *Fálmar* throughout

this thesis will focus on its participatory element and the direct physical contact with both art and the natural environment it encouraged. I will also discuss the experience of encountering sculptural art ‘in’ the natural environment.



Figure 4: *Fálmar* originally in summer 2013 (image courtesy of Karlotta Blöndal)



Figure 5 : *Fálmar* originally in summer 2013 (image courtesy of Karlotta Blöndal)

3.1.4 Away with the Birds

The last project I attended was Hanna Tuulikki's *Away with the Birds* (Figure 6), which explored the "mimesis of birds in Scottish Gaelic song" (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014). After four years in the making, *Away with the Birds* culminated in a sited vocal performance on the Isle of Canna, one of the Small Isles on the West Coast of Scotland. The performance had previously been performed in the theatre during Tectonics Festival 2013. As an artist and musician, the piece emerged from Tuulikki's interest in music from around the world, specifically cultures that have an intimate relationship with the land. The music of these cultures, as she notes "has a strong mimetic quality [...] it seems to grow directly from the relationship with the land" (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014).

Over the weekend, around two hundred people made their way to Canna from all over the United Kingdom, a journey taking them through some of the most dramatic landscapes of the West highlands to reach the mainland port of Mallaig, where the ferry would depart. The Isle of Canna as the location is central to the work. The islands remote setting, birdlife and rich collection of folkloric material in Canna House, partly explains that decision.

Throughout the one hour performance the singers, an eclectic group of ten women from various musical and performing backgrounds, moved around the bay – the pier, a purpose built v-shaped jetty and the seaweed covered rocks. They performed a score composed by the main artist, which drew upon fragments of Gaelic song that mimic or draw on metaphors of the birds of the Western Isles (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014). The composition, with its layers of sound and voice, focused on five movements, entitled; "by the shoreline", "on the cliffs", "ebb tide (lament)", "flock and skein" and "night – flight to the burrow", with each depicting a different bird community; wader, sea-bird, wildfowl, corvid and cuckoo. The movements were illustrated in a visual score received by each audience member. The horned speakers transmitted the womens voices, while others to the side transmitted field recordings of the regions birds. Real birds flying overhead, in the trees behind the audience and on the shore could be seen and heard, enhancing one's immersion in the piece and the environment. It was performed like a musical performance, with interludes for the performers to re congregate silently along the shore.

The discussion of *Away with the Birds* will focus on the heightened sense of awareness it has been noted to encourage, the journey involved, as well as questions concerning aesthetic appreciation and the proposed need for scientific knowledge it brings forth.



Figure 6: *Away with the Birds* (image courtesy of Daniel Warren)

3.2 Nature interpretation activities

In addition to the art projects, I attended three nature interpretation activities also implementing ethnographic research methods, which I will briefly outline here and expand upon in Chapter 6.

3.2.1 Wildlife walk: Isle of Eigg

The Isle of Eigg is a small island on the West Coast of Scotland (near the Isle of Canna), inhabited by 95 people. The entire island is a Scottish Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve and offers a guided walk once a week, which I attended in late summer 2014. A group of 12 people met at the middle of the island and the ranger informed us that the best option would be to walk down towards the pier (as that would be where most of the sea and wader birds would be). He encouraged us to ask questions on the flora and fauna of the island as

we went. The walk extended to a nearby cave and lasted approximately 4 hours. The walk focused primarily on the flora and fauna of the island, in particular birds such as the greenshank, curlew and arctic terns.

3.2.2 Ranger-led hill walk: Cairngorm National Park

The Cairngorms is the largest National Park in the UK, with over 1.4 million visitors a year (Cairngorm National Park, 2014). A ranger-led hill walk in the Northern Corries had been advertised so I travelled to Aviemore, a major town in the Park, to attend. Unfortunately, I was the only person that had signed up and so it was cancelled. As a substitute, I informally interviewed the ranger and went on a walk alone instead. We talked about what the walk would have been – the route (which he showed me on the map), his approach to delivering guided walks, what people gain from them as well as providing comments on my research. The walk would have emphasised the natural environment, its ecology, as well as the experience of going for a high level hill walk in a National Park (over 1000 m).

3.2.3 Folks of Forvie: Forvie Nature Reserve

Lastly, I attended a coastal walk at the Forvie Nature Reserve in Aberdeenshire. This was advertised as a walk about the people, archaeology and cultural landmarks of the area, but it also included much about the wildlife, flora and fauna of the area. We met in the car park and walked through the reserve – up and over the sand dunes, next to the river and along the beach. The ranger talked about both the cultural and natural elements of the landscape in a walk that lasted about 3.5 hours.

Throughout the study I set out to question how one experiences, perceives and relates to the natural environment through art, choosing to attend nature interpretation activities as means of comparison. By experiencing embodied and multi-sensuous artworks certain links and tensions between the subject matter, environment, place and context were brought to light. The following chapters will discuss these links and tensions by drawing on field notes, observations and interviews recorded, to explore the material. In addition, much of the analysis will be auto-ethnographic, whereby I draw on my own subjective, personal experiences.

4 Being there

Modern lifestyles in the developed world and the lack of direct experience with the natural environment, it has been argued, are partly responsible for the “psychological and physical divisions between human inhabitants and the natural world” (Hinds & Sparks, 2007, p. 109). Pyle (1978) has termed this “the extinction of experience”; a condition he says “leads to a cycle of loss and disaffection” (Pyle, 2003, p. 209) with one’s environment. Direct experience and physical involvement with the surrounding animate earth – moving within it, feeling for oneself the changing contours of land, the intensities of wind, the wetness of rain, is believed to be necessary for one to feel ‘connected’ to the natural environment and have a sense of belonging to the earth. To this regard, direct participation with the natural world and art has been favoured throughout this study, exemplified by the participatory and interactive nature of the artworks and the insistence that they were all situated out-of-doors. Being somewhere, being place-based, allows one to situate information (knowledge) and understand meaning in the tangible world of the palpable. Through my own direct, somatic experience of art ‘in’ the natural environment, *Fálmar* and *Away with the Birds*, allowed me to explore a bodily, sensory way of experiencing and perceiving the natural environment and art. This was contrasted with *Mót*, which I experienced indirectly in a gallery space, and for the audience of *Remote Performances*, whom engaged with the project remotely, via radio. The varying levels of participation raised some interesting questions; how does one embody the natural environment? How does one experience, perceive and relate to the natural world through art, without actually being present? Are indirect encounters with the natural environment, just as valuable as direct ones? Can these experiences help individuals to actualise feelings of interrelatedness to the natural world? It is in this chapter that I will describe each of the artworks from my own, auto-ethnographic perspective and then proceed to discuss notions of ‘being there’.

4.1 Direct participation

4.1.1 *Away with the Birds*: deep listening

The journey to and from the Isle Canna was all part of the experience. After a short wait in Mallaig, the ferry departed, via the Isle of Rum (Figure 7). With the calm weather most stood out on deck scanning the sea for whales, dolphins and porpoises, looking back to the hills of the mainland, looking forward to the shores of the Small Isles. The sun shone as the ferry approached the harbour of Canna (Figures 8 & 9). Everyone picked up their bags and disembarked to begin the short walk to the pier, where a tent stood administering tickets and camping passes. People gathered at the main social area of the island – a small cafe and community shop, which stood opposite the pier (Figure 10). The atmosphere was friendly and collective, as people chatted about the journey here and the island itself. Six horned speakers lined the foreshore where the performance would take place.



Figure 7: View from the ferry



Figure 8: Approaching Canna from the ferry



Figure 9: Participants look upon Canna as we arrive



Figure 10: Participants outside Cafe Canna

An hour after arriving, we were gathered at the historic Canna House where much of the folkloric material the project is based on is housed, into a marquee area in the gardens. After a brief introduction to the performance, we walked together in silence, around one hundred people, through the gardens of Canna House to the bay to take our seats. Ten women dressed in black hooded capes and bright red, neoprene stockings stood calve deep in the sea, motionless, staring towards the shore, staring towards us. The costumes resembled shore birds – the oystercatcher and the redshank. Beyond the performers lay the

Isle of Rum, where moody clouds sat stubbornly on the summits of its hills. As the audience settled into position, the performers stood amongst the seaweed while the sea lapped at their feet. A slight wind rustled the trees and birds called in every direction.

As I watched the performance (Figures 11–14), leaves floated down from the autumnal trees behind the audience, dropping like feathers from an almost blue sky. The rain came on. I could feel my jeans get wet and could hear the rain on my waterproof jacket. I felt a midge biting my neck. I listened intently to the sounds, bird like sounds coming from the singing women – the trenchant calls of ravens, the plaintive moans of red-throated divers. The sounds retained the essence of the bird calls yet were transfused and woven with distinctly female, human voices. The performers moved precariously across the bay, over the seaweed-covered stones, a slippery surface the human foot is unaccustomed to. As they stood on the pier, I felt they should fly away – I was in some way convinced they had merged into the landscape, had become the landscape, had become bird. This was momentarily shaken when one of the singers coughed – she wasn't a bird, she was human and gravity would secure her standing.



Figure 11: *Away with the Birds*, feet in the water (image courtesy of Daniel Warren)



Figure 12: *Away with the Birds*, moving through the bay (image courtesy of Daniel Warren)

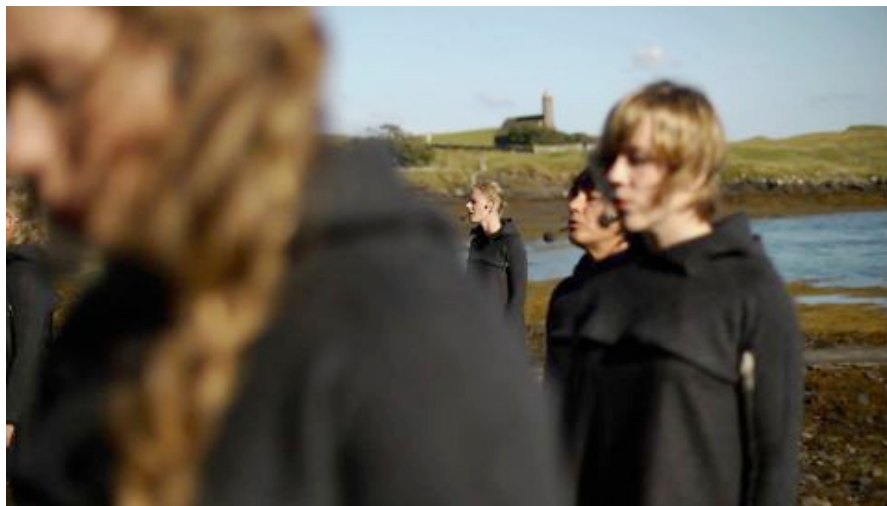


Figure 13: *Away with the Birds*, singers (image courtesy of Daniel Warren)



Figure 14: *Away with the Birds*, singers on the v-shaped jetty (image courtesy of Daniel Warren)

As the tide came in for the evening, the earth seemed to breathe with this constant ebb and flow and the crowd was silent. I sat and watched the real birds coming and going – indifferent to what was unfolding. As the singers made their way to the jetty, over the slippery, seaweed-covered rocks, I suddenly noticed it was drowned by the sea and visible no more. I was so transfixed by the performance that I hadn't seen the level of the water rise. They were walking on water. Later, lying in my tent that evening and warmed by the fire on the beach, I could hear the geese in the bay and was immediately brought back into the performance.

Away with the Birds was not unlike a traditional performance – there was a stage (the bay, the sea), there was an audience (sitting on chairs and applauding at the end) and there was light (the sun). Unlike the passivity of a traditional performance, it was deeply engaging. Firstly, sound was central to the piece – the voices of the performers, the recorded sound emanating from the speakers and the birds flying overhead, all contributed to one's immersion into the performance. Sound, as inherently all-encompassing meant that the performed sounds and real sounds of the environment fused into one, so it was impossible to hear one without the other. It also seemed to overthrow the usual reliance of the visual. In conversation with the main artist, she noted:

We wanted to try and find a way of performing the piece outside to really connect the audience with the experience of being present in the landscape [...] there was something about that liveness and the presence of the more than human world and kind of how the performance being present in that but also the audience engaging with that (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014).

Having the audience engage with the environment itself and interacting was paramount to the work and physically being there crucial. Although we, as the audience, were not physically moving with the performers, we were looking and listening and those activities were *active* and *bodily*. I could hear the rain drops on my jacket, I felt the itch of a midge crawling over my skin – the environment was around me and pervasive, infusing my being – the smell of the sea air, the coolness of the grass I sat on, the birds bobbing around. As

the audience sat on chairs, or simply on the grass, they did more than just sit. As Lund (2005) notes in an ethnographic exploration of moving through mountains in Scotland:

‘[J]ust sitting’ does not indicate a lack of movement [...] the sitting position does not push the sensory experience towards face level only because the physical movement stops temporarily. The ‘lived body’ continues to move in the sitting position rather than exclude haptic forms of sensation (p. 32–33).

Indeed, far from being bodily inert, the eyes and ears moved – my eyes scanned the scene presented and became transfixed on the singers as they moved. My ears too were attentive and awake, moving within the sonic scape. In a conversation with Tuulikki she noted her interest in “passive hearing and active listening”, as she stated upon reflection:

The thing that’s resonating most for me at the minute after the performance is this sense of heightened awareness and deep listening, deep engagement and em that seems to be something that has come up in conversations (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014).

As a viewer, one’s hearing was guided in a sense – from the singers’ voices, to the sounds of the speakers, to the bay and the birds and back again. As artist Alec Finlay (who attended the performance) noted on reflection: “You’re being lulled to so you were in quite a gentle state as you were watching the geese” (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014). I was transfixed by the performance and did not turn around to look at anyone else until the very end. The man beside me had his eyes closed, as had I at some points. Music and sounds seem to penetrate deeper when the eyes are closed. I felt it permeate through my ears and into the rest of the body, like I was drawing it in as one draws in breath. It seemed I could only do so with closed eyes and with it, I became more aware of the act of listening itself – following the sounds with my ears, moving.

The five movements of the performance were interjected by pauses which was not dissimilar to a traditional musical performance where the act pauses between songs. These moments of silence, as the singers re-congregated or moved position, seemed to offer opportunity for space of thought and reflection, both for the performers themselves and for

the audience. Returning to Lund (2005) as she discusses the pauses of a walk, (the moments of sitting which are crucial to the experience of a hill-walk as a whole), she comments: “[he ...] look[s] at where he came from and where he is going and, thus the momentarily pause is in itself full of movement” (p. 33). The space allows one to gather thoughts and realign, ready for the next movement. Ingold also remarks that “every period of rest punctuates an ongoing movement” (2010, p. S126).

The sense of ‘active’ and ‘deep’ listening was heightened further when in the final movement the performers silently walked behind the audience and continued to sing. The Isle of Rum then became centre of stage and the sounds suffused the bay as the sea swept in and out. As they sang, a melancholic, sorrowful tone swept over as the bay lay empty. This movement stuck out to me by bringing forth thoughts of change – changing landscapes, changing seas, changing weathers. Was it a symbol of things to come? What happens when the birds disappear?

Our senses are “receptors” and “receivers of stimuli” (Cazeaux, 2005, p. 113) and we as humans are “both sensor and sensed, seer and seen, toucher and touched” (Cazeaux, 2005, p. 117). The senses of the audience seemed to be heightened after the performance as people talked about the birds of the island: “I saw an eagle this morning” and “it was nice to fall asleep to the geese last night”. I got the impression that the performance, which danced in-between the human and the non-human worlds, had whispered and conversed in some way with the birds and wildlife of the island. They sensed us as we sensed them. I was reciprocating with the environment, which Abram (2011) notes “is the very structure of perception [...]”. Sensory perception is this ongoing interweavement: the terrain enters into us only to the extent that we allow ourselves to be taken up *within* that terrain” (p. 58). By doing so I was “becoming animal” (Abram, 2011), or at least more human. This involvement with the terrain and with the performance invited questions about performance itself – what is a performance when there is no curtain to rise and fall? Tuulikki noted in an interview:

In a theatre space hmm you have a curtain that rises em and an audience walks into a space [...] we were interested in the question around hmmm when does a

performance start and really what is a performance? (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014).

As I noted, when lying in my tent that evening I felt as if the performance was still going on. The geese were calling *artfully*, or so it seemed, singing to the audience asleep in our tents just as the women had done earlier. Or was it that I was simply more attuned to these sounds now? Is this the type of experience Dewey (1934) refers to when he asserts that the aesthetic experience must be brought closer to “the normal processes of living” (p. 10), to real life? Was this an aesthetic response to the environment around me? As I lay, smelling the smoke from the fire on my skin, I wondered – when did the performance end and everyday life begin again? At that moment, life was artful, and the art was very much alive.

4.1.2 *Fálmar*: touching

As Lewis (2000) notes “the body is our most fundamental means of communication and interaction with the world” and hence “we make sense of the world by acquiring information through our bodies” (p. 68). *Fálmar* was a direct interaction between the human body and the forest. It was set up in the conservation and recreation area of Heiðmörk, near Reykjavík in summer 2013. Participants were invited to interact with the piece by walking through the forest with a tree branch, on the end of which was painted colours corresponding to painted colours on the trees. The idea was to find and match the colours which were discretely painted throughout the forest. The title is important to the understanding and interpretation of the work. The word *fálmar* in Icelandic means two things. Firstly, the verb *að fálma* means *to fumble* – as one would in a darkened room, holding your hands out in the dark to feel your way around that which you cannot see. Secondly, *fálmar* (*fálmarar* in the plural) is the name given to an insect’s antenna, a very important sense organ for the insect to sense and feel its way through the world. This interesting word play adds to the piece, insinuating that the participant has a sensory tool attached to, and a part of the body – the branch is an arm, used to feel one’s way through the forest. At the same time, fumbling (both in Icelandic and in English) denotes a clumsiness and awkwardness of movement, for one is not used to interacting with the

forest in this way. This is suggestive of the disconnected and perhaps detached manner in which humans often interact with their surrounding environments.

Fálmar was a permanent work, which meant I could go there and experience it for myself, albeit over a year later, in October 2014. The piece was still discernible even after that length of time – the paint had weathered and there were no painted branches so I had to pick up one of my own (see Figures 15–18). The subtle weathering and fading of the paint indicated the ongoing conversation that was occurring between the entitites in the forest. I walked through very slowly, considering my surroundings while holding the branch and looking for colours. I could smell the forest – a deep, rustic pine. I could hear the birds rustling in the branches, and the faintness of my footsteps. There was a purposefulness in my walking but also an aimlessness too. I was attentive to everything around me. As I walked, my eyes looked for the colours and when I came upon a painted branch I touched it with my own. While I touched the tree the act of seeing seemed to recede. I went from seeing to touching, back and forth, using my eyes and then my arm, *my* branch. The trees had theirs.



Figure 15: Tree trunk upon which branches lay (2014)



Figure 16: Tree trunk with my own branch (2014)



Figure 17: Close up detail of paint (2014)



Figure 18: Touching branch to colour (2014)

As I walked, I encountered other sculptures in the forest, which led me to contemplate the non-passive nature of *Fálmar*. I was being encouraged to look at the entire forest differently – actively looking for art. I came across one sculpture, partly broken, with glass fragments littering the forest floor entitled *Barist um ljósið* (*Fighting about the Light*). There was a stark contrast between the interaction of *Fálmar* and the passivity of the piece that stood before me (I will return to this discussion in Chapter 5). I questioned a tree trunk that looked different from the rest – was this a sculpture or a natural part of the forest? Was this art?

Fálmar was an extension of the senses, primarily sight and touch. It encouraged participants to look, not passively but *actively* – to scan the forest for the colours and to touch and feel the forest not only with the feet, but with the eyes, ears and hands too. This touch was delicate and sensitive, simply allowing the branch to touch upon its corresponding colour. As the artist noted in an interview: “It becomes like an extension of your arm and then you can kind of touch things with it and it becomes like a connection between you and nature” (K. Blöndal, personal interview, July 24, 2014). Bunkše (2007) notes that by using the “earth-bound senses”, primarily feel, smell and taste, it may become “possible to edge closer to human nature”, to fundamentally “diminish the distance

between outer and inner landscapes” (p. 219). Feeling is what *Fálmar* pertained to and it is feeling, that is sometimes referred to as the “truth sense” (Ackerman, 1991, in Bunkše, 2007, p. 227).

In this way the forest environment was experienced at a slower pace, forcing individuals to slow down while walking and take in the environment – assimilate it. One was encouraged to look while walking, carefully and completely. Touch, in a visual sense was apparent as one’s eyes were encouraged to touch the forest (Lund, 2005). From this, the senses seemed to merge. *Fálmar* forced the viewer to look and feel *for* something, not just *at* something. It was purposeful and directed. In this way, Blöndal had created “an instrument for seeing rather than an object to be seen” (Lippard, 2000, p. 27, description of Nancy Holt’s sun tunnels). Berger (1972) describes this way of seeing thus:

We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice. [...] We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves. Our vision is continually active, continually moving, continually holding things in a circle around itself (p. 8).

The direct physical experience of the artworks – the smells, the sounds, the textures, invaded me, for it is these senses, these ‘earth-senses’ that cannot be conveyed without direct physical contact – one must simply be there. How then, did the experience of *Fálmar* differ to my experience of *Mót*, which I experienced indirectly? What did I gain from being there that I could not gain from documentation?

4.2 Indirect participation

We perceive our environment through the senses – we see, hear, smell, taste and touch the environing earth. Yet, as Abram (2011) contends: “[S]ensorial engagement with the ambiguous depth of our world has been largely overcome, in the last half of the century, by our steady involvement with flat *representations* of that world” (p. 89) – that is, with indirect experiences through books, television screens, images and computer monitors. Although these indirect experiences with the natural environment (increasingly popular nature documentaries for example) may accommodate opportunities for learning about the

natural world, the question remains – can they ever really be a replacement for direct experience? As Abram continues: “[T]he primary lesson your organism steadily learns from the program is that nature is something you look *at*, not something you are *in* and *of*” (2011, p. 91). To this regard, although one may experience the natural world through images, books and representations (or re-representations) it may never be a substitute for the real thing. Pyle (2003) adds:

The shimmering pixels on a computer screen can never substitute for the shimmering scales on a butterfly’s wing. Direct, personal contact with other living things affect us in vital ways that vicarious experience can never replace (p. 209).

On the other hand, some argue that our experience, relation and perception of the natural environment may be in no way reduced by the lack of physical presence, it’s just different. Friday (1999) suggests that “looking at certain photographs provides a kind of aesthetic experience of the environment that could not (or is unlikely to) be had by someone standing face-to-face with the scene depicted” (p. 26). To this regard, looking at a photograph allows one to see the world from a different perspective – from the photographer’s perspective. Thus, photographs may be valuable “not only because they show us the world [but] because they can show us the world in a way we’ve never seen it before” (Friday, 1999, p. 34). Could the same be said about literature, poetry and ‘nature writing’? Can the written word pull at our imaginations and permeate into our poetic memories? Can we engage with a place and its ecology without ever setting foot in it? To take an example from the research, Geoff Sample (whom broadcast works for *Remote Performances* as well as worked alongside Tuulikki for *Away with the Birds*) recalled in conversation that as a young boy (living in London) he developed a passion and obsession for golden eagles, which emerged from reading about them. His imagination was ignited and he recalls thinking, ‘well I can actually go up to Tomintoul (north-east of Scotland) and stay with Granny and Granddad and see for myself, find the golden eagles’. To this regard, it could be said that nature writing (or scientific writing for that matter) can function as a sort of entry into the natural environment, enticing the reader, through imaginative (or informative) ways, to go out and see for oneself that which has been read about. Nature writing is an established genre in itself, with many notable authors – Muir,

Thoreaux, Emerson, Leopold – and provides an evocative means of engaging with the natural world indirectly.

Although direct experiences were advocated, some environments and artworks included in this study were *indirectly* experienced – the audience of *Remote Performances* experienced the works via radio and I was not physically present for *Mót*. In fact, more people experienced *Mót* through its re-contextualisation in the gallery space than they did in situ. Even when one was physically present, participation was still to some extent passive. To this regard, one may question, what kind of experience is had by oral descriptions and images of pieces and places and do they do justice to the work? Can virtual experiences of the natural environment ever be equivalent to the real thing (Levi & Kocher, 1999)? Or is it the case that, as Clair Chinnery (an artist involved in *Remote Performances*) noted: “nothing beats being out there” (C. Chinnery, personal interview, August 8, 2014).

4.2.1 *Mót*: inside/outside



Figure 19: *Mót*



Figure 20: *Mót*



Figure 21: Close up detail of paper on the pole (image courtesy of Karlotta Blöndal)



Figure 22: Close up of paper on the grass (image courtesy of Karlotta Blöndal)

As the wind blew and the rain dampened the paper, pieces loosened and blew off of the poles (Figures 19–22) and into the surrounding landscape, becoming twisted and crumpled into abstract shapes and forms. The sheets lay on the rocks and the grass for a few days, absorbing a part of the landscape where they landed. The result was a visual translation of the collaboration occurring between the land and the paper, between the natural environment and the artist. Participants could walk around the poles flapping in the wind, or walk to the sheets lying on the ground, moving from piece to piece to look at the shapes and forms of the paper. Whilst acknowledging disembodiment as a part of daily life, (partly the result of auto mobilization and suburbanization) (Solnit, 2001, p. 266) walking as a conscious, leisure activity could be said to be a means of counteracting this disembodiment – trying to get ‘back in touch’ with things. During *Staðir*, getting into the fresh air was a welcomed break from driving all day, as Blöndal notes:

They were first oh do we have to get out of the car can we not just go eat but when they got out of the car it was sort of refreshing, after a whole day of exhibitions and driving people just sort of relaxed and started walking because you go to see one paper and then you want to go to the next paper and how it looks, it’s like picking berries or something you just continue (K. Blöndal, personal interview, July 24, 2014).

Participants of *Mót* were invited to immerse themselves in the landscape by walking around the piece. As one traverses land, its scale and textures are sensed – the steepness of slopes, the softness of grass. One feels exposed in wide-open spaces and protected under forest canopies. As Lippard notes: “Motion allows a certain mental freedom that translates a place to a person kinaesthetically” (Lippard, 1997, p. 17). The walking element of this piece ensured physical movement through the landscape and an immersion in the weather, which was important to the work. The weather – the wind and rain – was the creative entity, blowing and softening the paper to create the abstract forms. The result was a sort of visual interpretation of the wind and what it does in combination with the rain. Individuals were out and absorbed in the weather. As Ingold writes: “to inhabit the open is to dwell within a weather-world in which every being is destined to combine wind, rain, sunshine, and earth in the continuation of its own existence” (2007, p. S20). Furthermore,

[f]or the walker out of doors [...] the weather is no spectacle to be admired through picture windows but an all-enveloping infusion which steep his entire being. [...] the weather is not so much what we perceive as what we perceive *in* (Ingold, 2010, p. S131).

Mót was interesting because as I was not physically present I had to rely on photos, videos and verbal recollection, for which I was forced to use my imagination to move within the landscape. This is a task that involves transporting oneself to the fjord, mentally. How would I have interacted with the piece directly? What would I have been ‘interested’ in? The physicality of it – the walking? Or the abstract papers, with the snails and insects crawling over them? Or the sounds – what did the work sound like? Several months later, I attended the exhibition in Reykjavík, so I had a fragmented view of the work in its entirety. Would the experience have been enhanced by being there? What did I miss in the process? How did I experience the *place*? It also calls into question the publicness of the work.

The gallery exhibition consisted of a video projection depicting the paper fixed upon the poles flapping and changing forms in the wind. Two close-up framed photographs of the papers hung on the wall, while a pile of them sat upon a printers work bench, bits of soil still clinging to them (see Figures 23–25). For those who experienced *Mót* indoors *and* outdoors the work was a continuum and they were able to relate both to each other. For most viewers however, who relied on photographs and the gallery exhibition, the indoor and outdoor work may be seen as two separate pieces, since the gallery naturally presents restrictions and boundaries. The use of photographs as a way of exploring the work meant that the viewpoint for the viewer was restricted to *one* view. One cannot see behind, below or above and thus the artist has control over which view to show - what to *include* and what to *exclude* (Malpas, 2007). However, that is not to say that the photographic document is of less value than the direct experience because, as noted before, photographs can give individuals a perspective on the world (or the work) in a way they may not be accustomed to. Amelia Jones writes:

[S]pecificity should not be privileged over the specificity of knowledges that develop in relation to the documentary traces of such an event. While the live situation may

enable the phenomenological relations of flesh-to-flesh engagement, the documentary exchange (viewer/reader <-> document) is equally intersubjective (1997, p. 12).

Thus “the premise that one had to be there – in the flesh, as it were, to get the story right” (Jones, 1997, p. 11) was questioned.



Figure 23: Close up detail



Figure 24: Gallery installation



Figure 25: The pile of papers on the work bench

The tension between indoor and outdoor art was deepened when the work created outside came inside. Nash contends:

An object made indoors diminishes in scale and stature when placed outside. The reverse happens when an object made outside is brought inside, it seems to grow in stature and presence. It brings the outside in with it (Nash, 1978, in Malpas, 2007, p. 58).

The piece certainly brought a part of the outside inside – the soil that still clung to the paper (see Figure 24). The papers in the fjord, which “looks like rubbish” (K. Blöndal, personal interview, July 24, 2014) became pieces of art *and* pieces of land – they held an imprint of the fjord on them. They indeed seemed to grow in stature and size when taken into the gallery – looking rather small and insignificant when lying on the grass but emanating a greater presence when set upon the bench. I would also note that the images themselves – the video depicting the paper on the poles, was visually strong with their stark, clinical whiteness against the green grass and grey sky (this being the frame the artist chose). Would they have felt so powerful in the wide-open landscape? Would it have felt even more so? Seeing the piece in the gallery had the effect of making me want to go to that ‘elsewhere’, to see and feel the work for myself, but also to gain a sense of the place, which was perhaps lacking in the gallery context.

The relationship one has with art and how one interacts with it indoors as opposed to outdoors was also explored. In the gallery, I did not touch the papers. As Joy & Sherry note,

although individuals can move freely through a museum, guided tours, audio guides, and camera surveillance all reinforce a top-down orchestration of space. The lack of street sounds, the presence of guards, the prohibition against touching, reinforced through signs, all curtail the tactile and other sensory apprehension of the artefacts (2003, p. 222).

Indeed, the set up outside permitted a greater freedom – one was able to physically touch the papers and the poles and the grass underfoot. This meant that the viewer was

simultaneously both with the surrounding landscape and the artwork. As Lund & Willson state: “When the body [...] enters the landscape, it is not merely *in* it, as when looked at from a distance, but *with* it” (2010, p. 102). To this regard, the indirect experience of *Mót* was valuable but it is not possible to say whether direct experiences are of more or less value than indirect experiences. Both will elicit disparate emotions, thought and feelings, and both would be meaningful.

4.2.2 Remote Performances: immediacy



Figure 26: Footpath to Outlandia



Figure 27: Outlandia in the trees

The Outlandia hut was accessible by a steep footpath, which took thirty minutes to walk. Pure and bright shining greens contrasted with the darkness of the spruce as one walked down the rustic wooden path towards the hut (Figure 26) which sat perched in the woods and swayed in the wind (Figure 27). As performances were transmitted, the gurgling and spluttering of the hydrogen tanks and the birds of the forest could be heard. A small window overlooking the Glen and Ben Nevis let in some light.

A sense of immediacy was really captured by the *Remote Performances* radio. There was a presentness and with it came pressure. In radio, broadcasters don't have time for perfection, they must continue on and although mistakes are made, by the time they surface they are already in the past and uncorrectable. One cannot dwell on what has already been, one has to just keep moving forward. The immediacy of radio relates to the ideas of sensory interaction I have talked about – radio is now, it is live, it is breathing. One is forced to be in the present because you are broadcasting to people who are listening, somewhere. You do not know them, and they are not here but they expect to hear something and they participate, remotely.

In *Remote Performances*, the listener had the option to tune in live or listen to the archived material online at a later point. During the broadcast period, the quietness forced me, as a spectator, to also be quiet. In doing so I became more aware of the surrounding forest, listening intently to the voices being transmitted over the radio while simultaneously listening to the sounds of the trees creaking in the wind. There is an intimacy about radio, as Tracey Warr, an artist and writer (who kept a blog of *Remote Performances*) notes “Radio whispers its voices and sounds intimately into your ear, seeming to speak only to you” (T. Warr, Blogpost Day 6, 2014). In the studio of Outlandia, I got a fractured glimpse of the broadcast, hearing only the spoken voices, without the sound effects, music and ambient sounds in the background. What did I get from the liveness of it all? How would I experience it in a different place at a different time, without the trees around me? How did the listeners experience the place, remotely?

All of the works were in some way transient and ephemeral (except for *Fálmar*, the only permanent work which discretely remains in the forest for people to experience). The immediacy of these performances was exemplified in the fusion of performance *with* the environment, with the here and now. The palpable objects of the landscape could be touched, seen and moved around, within the same space as the performances. It was temporally immediate – happening now, in the moment and spatially immediate – to the surrounding environment. The impermanence and ephemerality of the works was also suggestive of change and seasonality – they came and they went like the green leaves on the trees and the terns preparing for their migration south.

To conclude, direct and indirect experiences of the natural environment and art are both significant. Being there offers a “concrete reality”, where the experience is “total, that is, through all the senses as well as with the active and reflective mind” (Tuan, 1977, p. 18), and thus situated in place. But being physically there isn’t necessarily to say that engagement is full or mindful, for one can often be in a place but have his or her thoughts and mind elsewhere. Thus, not being there is work for the mind – one has to use the imagination as a tool to discover place and meaning.

5 The experience of art

The relationships that exist between artwork and viewer, viewer and artist have been renegotiated and redefined in modern times. Much site-specific, performative and conceptual art has dematerialised the 'art object' by encouraging non-representational, participatory and interactive art. The notion of the 'art experience' has thus blurred the conception of what artists do and what art is. By evaluating the works and drawing upon interviews and field notes, I will explore the tensions between 'art as object' and 'art as experience', namely, the value of art objects and documentation as a means of materialising an experience. I will incorporate Dewey's assertion throughout the analysis that we must recover the "aesthetic experience with the normal processes of living" (1934, p. 10), and thus expand our artistic and aesthetic experiences to include our everyday interactions with the natural environment and art. This will be juxtaposed with his notion of having *an* experience, that is, beyond and above the stream of daily life, yet simultaneously imbedded and rooted within it. Journeying, as an important element of the artworks, as well as the impact it has on one's experience of them will be explored, alongside notions of reforming the ordinary.

5.1 Art experiences

That art can exist as an idea or experience, is a concept supported by conceptual and performance art. As Malpas (2007) notes "[t]he question in postmodern, post-Conceptual art is not: 'what does it mean?', but 'what does it feel like?'... 'what is the experience?'" (p. 122). In *Art as Experience*, Dewey believes that the traditional concept of art, where meaning and understanding is manifest in the physical work of art, should be replaced with an understanding of the process as a whole, where the art is in the *experience* of encountering the object, rather than contained in the object itself. Thus, the art object becomes a point of departure, for the artist and viewer to meet in a shared space with material and context. He also distinguishes between two types of experience – to experience in general, life as we live it from one moment to the next and to have *an*

experience, that is, in some way whole and complete. To have *an* experience is to be affected emotionally by it – it stands out as worthy of our attention, residing in one’s memory and emotional sensibilities, (as one may note “that was *an* experience!” 1943, p. 36). All of the artworks included in this study were experiential to an extent, but were they what Dewey refers to as, *an* experience? Did they sit outside, beyond and/or above the normal stream of experience? Did they affect the audience emotionally? Jackson (2000) notes:

Our interactions with art objects epitomize what it means to undergo *an* experience, a term with a very special meaning for Dewey. The arts do more than provide us with fleeting moments of elation and delight. They expand our horizons. They contribute meaning and value to future experience. They modify our ways of perceiving the world, thus leaving us and the world itself irrevocably changed (p. 33).

Away with the Birds, I argue, was emotionally affecting – it was highly evocative and moving which seemed to emanate from the heightened sense of awareness it encouraged, which I will discuss in detail later. Likewise, *Fálmar*, as a way of experiencing the forest in an entirely different way, sat outside the stream of everyday experiences – it too was *an* experience and transcendental to a degree. To this regard, having *an* experience of the arts (*in the natural environment*) has the potential to transform the ways in which we interact, perceive and relate to the world around us. As one interacts with his or her environment in new ways; new thoughts, feelings, and emotions are likely to arise. That said, both pieces were at the same time grounded in the everyday – they took place, *in places* and in real life as it unfolded around the audience.

To have an aesthetic experience, or aesthetic response, is more likely to occur when one is alone than when accompanied by others or so it has been contended (Chenoweth & Gobster, 1990), yet the artworks in this study questioned this. In the final movement of *Away with the Birds*, as the singers moved behind the audience (see Figure 28), both performers and audience were looking out over the bay, sharing the experience.



Figure 28: The singers performing from behind the audience (image courtesy of Daniel Warren)

Tuulikki noted of this: “there are questions around, well are the audience now performing? What is this shared experience that we’re having?” (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014). The idea of ‘shared experience’ was further highlighted by Alec Finlay, whom noted in an interview “I sometimes talk about art as the best form we have of shared consciousness [...] the way that our minds can meet” (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014). Such a view offers a compelling argument for the necessity of the arts to humanity in general, which, to this regard, can be a means of eliciting what Finlay terms “a sense of common experience” (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014). Undoubtedly, this is desirable – for experiencing art ‘in’ the natural environment can be a means not only of connecting with the non-human natural environment but also connecting with each other. This argument is supported by Carroll (2004) whom contends that the arts (in particular art events) may be a means to “coordinate feelings” between individuals, a way to “attune audience members to each other” resulting in them being “bound together in feeling” (p. 100). He notes that an audience laughs at the same time when sitting in a theatre or cries at the same time during an evocative film. This assertion comes from his article *Art and human nature*, in which he contends that the compulsion to create and enjoy art is instinctive and innate to the experience of being human. In this evolutionary view of the arts (see also Dissanayake, 1995; Tooby & Cosmides, 2001; Boyd, 2005; Dutton, 2009), the argument is that humans have adapted to enjoy the arts, in

fact, to *need* the arts. Carroll talks of humanity's "evolved cognitive, perceptual and emotive architecture" (2004, p. 95), which he believes is a legacy to the way our bodies have been shaped by the environment, by our *everyday* environments through evolutionary processes and natural selection. To this regard, art is seen as a means of bringing people together, *emotionally*, through shared experiences, whereby the arts act as the "social cement" (Carroll, 2004, p. 100).

There was a real sense of commonality with *Away with the Birds*, not only because many people were acquainted beforehand but for, as artist and viewer Alec Finlay recalls,

Eating together you know, and the boats and the weather and the islanders and chatting and the ferry and the sense of being lucky to be there, the journey and telling, I told someone you might see an eagle watch out for the eagle (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014).

This was all part of the experience and contributed to the overall experience of the performance. In conversation with one of the singers (at the bonfire on the beach after the performance where around 30 people sat around a fire and watched the flames rise up into the night) she noted: "For me it's about meditation and connection, about connecting with people, with the landscape and with the environment – about singing in the sea with beautiful women. She talked of this "coming together in a common ground", which for her was sort of like a pilgrimage. The bonfire, meeting new people, chatting about the island and the journey was as vital to the experience as the performance itself. Furthermore, the experience of *Away with the Birds* created the conditions for conversation – there seemed to be fertile ground for conversations about ecology, wildlife, Scotland, conservation, art, the natural environment and so on. One may then ask: if the arts can bring humans together, can they also bring the human and the non-human together? Can the arts extend this cementing quality to include other animate and breathing entities, to the broader biological community with which we share this earth?

On another level, the art experience, as opposed to the art object, is not something that can be owned, sold or destroyed. Once attained, it may be held in memory. Experiential art, to an extent, sits outside the prevalent consumer culture and outside the commercial art

world. To this regard, it could be argued that art pertaining to experiences rather than to objects is more ‘environmentally-friendly’, since resources are not depleted in their creation and a physical object which can be bought or sold does not exist.

5.2 The ‘art object’

The Land Art movement of the 1960s, which has its links with performance art, live art, body art and action art (Malpas, 2007) could be said to have encouraged the abandonment of the art object, as artists physically moved outside of the gallery space, creating work in and *onto* the natural world itself. Using natural materials and surrendering the artwork to natural forces, land art went beyond traditional art practise, protesting the commercialization of art and emphasising the ‘art experience’ (Malpas, 2007). However, land art for some was “true capitalist art” (Long, 1984, in Malpas, 2007, p. 50), whereby wealthy individuals possessed land, wielded large machines that churned up the earth and partook in activities of excessive cost and waste. Land art for them was “a romantic retreat into escapist, nostalgic fantasies about nature” (Malpas, 2007, p. 31). The land artists had wanted to free themselves from the commercial gallery and the commercial art world but as Blöndal noted in an interview “of course ended up there anyway because they had photos” (K. Blöndal, personal interview, July 24, 2014). The art, which existed outside the gallery, was photographed, documented and then materialised as an object, which in turn re-entered the art market. Thus, the art object existed as documentation – as evidence that something had been created, that an event had taken place.

For *Away with the Birds*, the producers insisted that no public documentation would be accepted during the performance. This had the effect of not only freeing the viewer from the confines of the lens, but of forcing one to be attentive and aware of the immediacy and temporality of the piece. The act of documenting itself is an informed and conscious activity which affects the relationship one has with what is being documented. Where am I in relation to it? Where is it in relation to me? What am I including in the frame? What am I *excluding*? Documenting is a distraction from the present moment. The documenter, by virtue of the replicative capacities of images, has his or her mind in the future, rather than with the activity at hand. Furthermore, by documenting something, it materialises and you hence have something physical for recollection. Without documentation all that exists is a

memory and so one must obtain other forms of documentation in order to remember. For *Away with the Birds*, hearing the call of an oystercatcher, or a red-throated diver in the future, may act as a mnemonic, a memory prompt which returns the viewer to the Isle of Canna. This condition thus forces the viewer to be mindful, receptive and aware of what is unfolding in front of them. In an era of relentless image making (almost everyone owns a camera), not documenting a notable or memorable event, such as the *Away with the Birds* performance for which one has travelled far to attend, seems positively unnatural. As Blöndal noted: “We’re so used to documenting everything, the food we eat [...] before we eat it” (K. Blöndal, personal interview, July 24, 2014). While discussing her work (a piece she did whereby no documentation was taken but not included in the research) she noted: “It’s just for the moment, it doesn’t have to be for more than that” and the same may be said about *Away with the Birds*. That documentation was not an explicit part of *Away with the Birds* (other than documentation for the artists’ records), meant that it was important to the work to be there – the art was experienced in situ. It also meant that as one watched the performance, the customary (and relentless) camera flashes and shutter clicks of a typical musical performance were not endured – everyone was in the moment and unencumbered by technological distractions. In *Fálmar*, by the very nature of having to physically hold the branch while wandering the woods, documenting while walking would have simply been impractical.

Throughout the study it became clear that creating traditional art objects was not a priority for many artists involved – “The world is full of objects, more or less interesting; I do not wish to add any more” (Huebler, 1969) was quoted by Bram Thomas Arnold, an artist with *Remote Performances*, as he discussed his own work, adding that “a big part of my practise is trying to be an artist without making stuff that just hangs around [...] I’m an artist but I don’t really make anything” (B. Arnold, personal interview, August 7, 2014). Blöndal also noted of her work: “This kind of trying to make art without [...] trying to escape the material object of it, everything is so focused on the object” (K. Blöndal, personal interview, July 24, 2014). Objects, which once held meaning and place in people’s lives (Levy, 2002 in Gablik, 2006, p. 61) are today dispensable and replaceable. A ravaging consumer appetite for the new (and industries reluctance for the repairable) has created a ‘throwaway’ culture, which sustains itself through the continued depletion of natural resources and cheap labour. Objects have thus lost their value. In Blöndal’s work *Mót*,

value in the art object was questioned. The white papers, blown off the poles by the wind, literally littered the valley (Figure 29), as she notes “because I mean, because it looks like rubbish” (K. Blöndal, personal interview, July 24, 2014). Rubbish has little monetary value and most would rather it hidden in landfill than seen. Art, on the other hand, is considered valuable and precious, traditionally set upon a white wall *to be seen*. This contradiction between the papers apparent worthlessness and their supremacy as precious pieces of art creates an interesting tension. Is the art in the object – the paper that could be rubbish? Is it in the individuals experience as they walk around? Or is it in the art-making process, between the paper and the land itself? Furthermore, the papers, as Blöndal contends, are not only works of art, they are “piece[s] of land [...] if I sell this work in a commercial gallery it would be like selling a piece of this land because it has, it’s like a print of it” (K. Blöndal, personal interview, July 24, 2014).



Figure 29: *Mót*, with the papers on the ground (image courtesy of Karlotta Blöndal)

Fálmar also explored notions of the art object. As I walked in the forest I encountered another sculpture, (Figures 30–32) entitled *Barist um ljósið* (*Fighting about the Light*),

mentioned previously, which was a wooden piece that rose high into the trees, with mirrored plates that faced each other.



Figure 30: *Barist um ljósið* (Fighting about the light)



Figure 31: Close up of mirrored glass



Figure 32: Broken glass on the forest floor

Over a year after its installation, much of the mirrored glass now lay smashed on the forest floor and I was reminded of the conversation I had with the Cairngorm ranger about encountering art ‘in’ the natural environment. For him, encountering sculptures in the natural environment was intrusive, invasive and not what one expects to see – why build a poor representation when one can see the beauty of the real thing itself?, he asked. Ephemeral, transient artworks, he noted, may be better received because they dissipate without trace. He further noted that if someone built a cairn or something, he would see the holes that have been left behind from where the stones were. *Fálmar*, on the other hand, was in harmony with the forest – the tree trunk was already there before the artist appropriated it and so did not look out of place. Rather, it seemed to be in cooperation with the woods – there was unity. Upon coming across *Barist um ljósið* I questioned whether encountering an art object in the natural environment is any different to encountering an art object in the gallery? Outdoor sculptures still retain much of the formal conventions one would expect in a gallery space for viewing and displaying an artwork (Morris & Cant, 2006). One still passively *observes*, rather than actively *interacts* with the object, although this may be attributed to the preconceived ideas people come with of how to interact with art rather than as a response to the work itself. To this regard, as natural environments are dynamic, changing from one moment to the next, both *Fálmar* and *Mót* (both sculptural objects) questioned the idea of art as something static. As Fenner (2003) writes of most artefacts and artworks,

They are meant to stay as similar as possible to how they were at the point of their creation for as long as possible. Everything changes, of course, but most artworks are meant to be as stable and immutable as possible. Collectors and museums take great pains in either to maintain a work in its original state [...] or to bring back very old works (p. 4).

When situated outside however, artefacts and artworks have no alternative but to give themselves wholly to the surrounding environment – they automatically enter into a conversation and exchange with what is around them. Thus, upon encountering the sculpture and the mirror on the floor, I thought about the dialogue ongoing between the forest and the art piece – what had caused the mirror to smash? A storm? The birds? What had they seen? What had they mirrored?

5.3 The journey

A contention of mine was to include artworks which involved some level of public participation with the arts as a means of engaging with the natural environment, but the lengthy journey, commitment and time it required to attend most of these works questioned whether they were really public. That individuals had to give up time and money to embark on a journey rendered them rather exclusive. This could be seen as a weakness, one that echoes criticisms of land art that contends art on the land is distant and for most still “understood from the outside, as a view, a picture, a spectacle [...]. If we do manage to get to the site, we already have in mind the glamorous aerial views we’ve seen in magazines (Lippard, 2000, p. 15). But that is not to say that travelling for art should be discouraged. On the contrary, ways of making it more accessible to a wider audience must be found.

Journeying is a reflective and transformative experience – when removed from daily life we are forced to confront ourselves and our thoughts. As De Botton (2003) notes on travelling,

journeys are the midwives of thought [...]. There is an almost quaint correlation between what is in front of our eyes and the thoughts we are able to have in our heads: large thoughts at times requiring large views, new thoughts new places (p. 56–57).

To this regard, the journey was a crucial part of the experience. For *Away with the Birds*, Tuulikki noted that she had wanted to create a piece “where the audience could be taken on a journey to [...] the roots, the threads, the things that inform the piece of music” (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014). That is, a physical journey to the island itself where the Gaelic music originates. Likewise, she also envisioned that the audience would undergo a metaphysical journey to “the origins of the sound making process” – to a primeval space (or time) when the relationships between the human and non-human were perhaps better aligned. Grandin and Johnson write: “Animals are the originators of music and the true instructors. Humans probably learned music from animals, most likely from birds” (2006, p. 278 in Mason, 2013, p. 132). Thus, Tuulikki aspired to bring the audience

closer to the relationships we have with birds and the non-human. The journey, she notes, evolved from the idea of “taking people back to the roots of what this work was [...] as a way to understanding our kind of natural and cultural origins in a sense” (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014). *Natural*, that is, our physical and evolutionary origins, and *cultural* – how, why and when we began using our own sounds and our own voices to make music, through imitation and emulation of the sounds of birds, the land and the surrounding natural environment. Defining self through similarity, as Tuulikki termed it (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014). She further notes:

I have a strong sense that this is where our own music making comes from, our roots of our music making, perhaps even our language [...] I feel like it's a glimpse into mmm this intimate relationship that still exists even if it's not even if people aren't so dependent [...] in a sense it's about creating or inviting a heightened sense of awareness which is an extension of the journey experience, the score itself is a journey but it's linked to this journey that comes before.

Hence, the physical journey and the psychological journey are imperative to the work. For when one journeys over the tactile, palpable landscape, one simultaneously journeys through an emotional, inner landscape, and is sometimes taken on an imaginative journey.

While the commissioned artists for *Remote Performances* travelled to Glen Nevis, the audience however did not. For the most part, individuals would have listened either at home, at one of the listening posts set up in London and Edinburgh or at a more convenient time or place with the archived material. To this regard, instead of the audience journeying to the Glen, the Glen journeyed to the audience, through the medium of radio. The audience, it could be said, were ‘taken on a journey’ to the Glen through the artists sound works, interviews with residents and local music. This will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

When thinking about the journey to the areas; to the Isle of Canna for *Away with the Birds* and to Tálknafjörður for *Mót*, it is also necessary to consider the onward journey. After having such an experience where does it take one? What does one take home? Transformation of self? New ideas? Altered values? As I noted earlier, travelling can be a

transformative experience and paired with *an* experience, perhaps even more so. By experiencing new sights and sounds, by encountering new people and new places, one changes. If the experience pulls at us emotionally, it may stay with us for a considerable time – in our poetic memories, in our emotional consciousness perhaps even extending into the way we live our lives. With this in mind, the journeys, which were as much a part of the experience as the performances themselves, could be seen as conducive in fostering a reflective, meditative state in the individual as well as stimulating a heightened sensitivity and responsiveness to the surroundings that may not have been gained in normal circumstances. By journeying, the audience were thus emotionally (and physically) adjusted to receive new stimuli, new sights and sounds. Travelling can give people the sensation of stepping out of their ordinary, daily lives while continuing to move within them – established routines can be broken and the senses are given a new set of stimuli to engage with. As De Botton notes,

It is not necessarily at home that we best encounter our true selves. The furniture insists that we cannot change because it does not; the domestic setting keeps us tethered to the person we are in ordinary life, but who may not be who we essentially are (2003, p. 59).

This leads me to the next topic – the everyday.

5.4 The everyday

For many cultures, artworks and artefacts are often practical (Carroll, 2004), used in religious ceremonies, rituals etc., and are thus ingrained in the everyday, common experience. Art on the other hand, from a Western perspective at least, is often considered separate from daily life and divorced from our everyday interactions with the world. Art is something we engage with for pleasure, for beauty but not for practicalities. The artworks throughout this study questioned this by bringing the arts, to a certain extent, back to the realm of everyday experience by enticing journeys and direct contact with art and the natural environment. Indeed, the Western concept of art, Carroll contends, is outdated. Art is no longer “exclusively an affair of disinterested contemplation” (Carroll, 2004, p. 98), and thus conceptions of it must be expanded – to include, and be *in* and *of* one’s everyday,

immediate environment. It is the detachment of art from the everyday that is perhaps responsible for the apparent gaps between art and science, whereby subjective experience is overlooked in favour of hard-science. Art is seen as ‘wishy-washy’, because we no longer consider it a part of, and/or of value to, common experience.

Incorporating Dewey’s theory throughout the research, *everyday* aesthetic experiences of the natural environment are crucial. If our artistic, aesthetic experiences were expanded to include everyday interactions with the natural environment, this may foster new and alternative ways of being in regards to the way humans interact with the world around them. Indeed, the artworks included in this research blur the boundaries between the everyday experience and the art experience, creating tensions and questioning where the everyday experience ends and the ‘art’ begins.

Movement is central to everyday life, but journeying has a way of lifting one out of the everyday. Tuulikki, while commenting on the journey participants took to get to Canna noted: “When you arrive, after having had this motion your kind of lifted out of the everyday [...] and then there’s a settling that happens in the body, hmmm so there’s something about that and about that newness” (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014). This ‘newness’ comes from stepping out of the everyday, where the eyes readjust, the ears are attuned to different sounds and things are seen afresh. The participants left behind their everyday lives in order to go on a journey, but in some way were *returned* to the everyday, to a simpler reality, unencumbered by the routines of daily life. She further notes: “Whenever I journey on a boat for a long time and then arrive at an island, there’s a, I hear things I see things afresh”. The physicality of being lifted *out* and then resettled back *into* the everyday re-tunes the senses, a condition favoured for what one is about to experience. Furthermore, by removing the works from the gallery space, which according to Lailach (2007) acts like “protective cells, keeping all factors of everyday life at bay” (p. 24) ensures their re-positioning into the everyday. Art that is segregated from everyday life in the museum becomes “opaque” (Dewey, 1934, p. 3) and impenetrable.

Remote Performances raised interesting questions about the everyday through its use of radio. As a once predominant mass medium for entertainment and news in society, radio is quite emblematic of the everyday – one tunes in while doing the housework, driving to

work, eating breakfast. This presented an interesting tension, as art entered the daily, everyday life of the audience through such a commonplace medium as the radio and points to Dewey's contention that art should be brought closer to real life. Indeed, before I arrived in Glen Nevis, I had to first take a train from Glasgow to Fort William. As I sat on the train waiting to leave, I tuned in to *Remote Performances* while I could still receive internet connection in the train station. While sitting on the train, eating my lunch, I listened to an interview with Sarah Kenchington, one of the commissioned artists, followed by her sound piece *Euphonium at Sea*. The whale-like, blubbing sounds of water interacting with the trumpet whispered to me through the headphones plugged into my laptop (I will return to her piece later). Real life and art were fused, on a train to the Highlands.

As I have previously noted, everyday aesthetic experiences of the natural environment are crucial, because as Hiss notes "[o]ur ordinary surroundings, built and natural alike, have an immediate and a continuing effect on the way we feel and act" (Hiss, 1991, p. xi). In an interview, Tuulikki noted: "There's something about the sense of being present em, but it's also in the city as well, I mean doing the washing up I hear a bird outside and that's where I can be mindful as well" (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014). Tuulikki is aware that aesthetic, mindful experiences can be had in daily life, as well as in more special circumstances and that the sensations and feelings that are evoked by the minute details that occur in daily life should be acknowledged. Indeed, mindfulness and being present is believed to promote well being (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Being attentive, and actively seeking these encounters are what is required and so by attending to one's own environment, one's own *place*, the ordinary can be reformed. As Redgrove puts it:

[T]his 'strangeness' is 'strange' because reality is so fucking extraordinary, and strange too because most of us try to live without strangeness, and construct something called the 'ordinary' which never existed. Actually, the strangeness is so ordinary as to be quite natural. The strangeness is wonder and what is wondered at is so wonderful that it is strange we do not wonder more (Redgrove 1993 in a letter to Malpas, in Malpas, 2007, p. 38).

To conclude, everyday aesthetic experiences of art and the natural environment are crucial and offer a compelling means of engaging with places and the natural world. By bringing

art physically into one's everyday experiences and one's everyday environments such places (natural and built alike) may be amplified, perhaps re-discovered.

6 Science, art and emotion

Science and art are often thought of as opposites. While science pertains to objectivity, rationality, detachment and precision, art is thought of as subjective, emotional, and creatively unpredictable. Throughout the study, the tensions that exist between science and art; between one's emotional and creative engagements with the natural world and our understandings of it through science, surfaced in the material. The notion that science represents reality was questioned by Bram Thomas Arnold's *Reading Particle Physics to a River*, part of his *Actions For and Against Nature*, which he enacted during *Remote Performances*. The necessity of scientific knowledge for aesthetic appreciation was explored through Hanna Tuulikki's *Away with the Birds*, which questioned whether knowing the names and calls of the birds enhanced the experience. The work also explored emotion in aesthetic experiences and interactions with the natural world. The underlying sentiment throughout this chapter is the need for advocating a multidisciplinary, collaborative approach to science and art.

6.1 Realities. Mysteries.

In their pursuit for understanding, sciences such as biology, chemistry, physics and earth sciences objectify and divide the natural world into quantifiable and measurable components. The more we know the closer we believe we are to understanding the world and the complex systems and laws that govern the universe. However, some have questioned whether this knowledge is in fact a knowledge of reality (Omnes, 1999 in Harrison et al., 2004): "Science may attain a knowledge, but may never obtain complete understanding" (Harrison et al., 2004, p. 26). For not all that is knowable can be deciphered through scientific enquiry and believing so denies the complexities created by the interactions between people, the environment and creative art practice. Science, after all, is a product of culture, and just another way for humanity to interpret the world.

Bram Thomas Arnold's *Actions For and Against Nature* was a set of performances enacted at various locations throughout Glen Nevis during *Remote Performances*. In *Reading Particle Physics to a River* (Figure 33) the artist stood barefoot in the Nevis river while reading aloud from *Quantum Theory: A very short introduction*. The performance, documented through sound and photography, was later broadcast on the Outlandia radio.



Figure 33: *Reading Particle Physics To a River* (image courtesy of Bram Thomas Arnold)

When questioned about the work he noted,

[It is] sort of about, trying to explain supposedly the sort of high achievements of humanity to, things [because] my understanding of quantum theory is that we've realised we don't really understand things [...] it's sort of an admission that we don't really know how particles behave [...] if you watch them in one way they look like a particle and if you watch them in another way they look like a wave and they can't be both can they? But apparently the can and they are (B. Arnold, personal interview, August 7, 2014).

The (somewhat) futility of science is evidently a concern of the artists', that, far from being a truthful representation of reality, science is often inconsistent, full of impossibilities and unknowns. In an excerpt from the passage that Arnold reads to the river, the mystery that shrouds the double-slit experiment is noted. (The double-slit experiment is one in quantum physics that directs a light source onto a plate with two parallel slits. The light enters the slits and is then observed on the screen behind. The electrons behave like a wave but when observed they behave like a particle (of matter). The experiment thus suggests that matter is created, just by observing it (Phys.org, 2013). The passage reads:

We cannot make the mystery go away by 'explaining' how it works, we will just tell you how it works, in telling you how it works, we will have told you about the basic peculiarities of all quantum mechanics [...] it is no longer possible to form a clear picture, of what is happening in the course of physical processes (Polkinghorne, 2002, p. 22).

I personally witnessed the enactment of *Reading Particle Physics to a River*, and was taken by the contradictions it poses. On one hand, the act appears to be a poetic, and rather romantic gesture towards the river – to read to the river is to acknowledge its sentience. On the other hand, reading particle physics to a river seems rather futile, as the river is indifferent to the science behind its structure, and to its proposed particle composition (or so is commonly assumed). Finlay (2014) comments on this idea in one of his poems:

T
H E G
O L D E N
M O U N T
A I N D O E S
N T K N O W T
H A T I T S A
G O L D E N M
O U N T A I N

(The Golden Mountain doesn't know that it's a Golden Mountain)

While Arnold read the passage, he stood barefoot in the water, and the river encompassed him. He noted in an interview:

There's a saying, that I don't think I've got the wording right for here that you can never step in the same river twice which is from Heraclitus, and I quite like the idea [...] that very simple sentence sums up the entire issue with particle physics is that you sort of can never experience the same event from a different perspective, everything is immediately different [...] what you look for is what you get in quantum physics (B. Arnold, personal interview, August 7, 2014).

The world around us is always in motion, always changing and entirely different from one moment to the next, as are we. Elevating scientific knowledge above other knowledge sources, as mentioned earlier, is problematic, since science is not the only means of knowing. Indeed, science is not sufficient to understand life completely (Dewey, 1924), rather, it is the body and the senses that are the primary means of communication with the surrounding earth, for the body comes before words and before language. If science is the attempt to discover reality, then art may be the attempt to, enhance, transcend or even distort that reality (Ramachandran & Hirstein, 1999) or to capture that which cannot be caught in the net of science. Standing in the river (with the body), is to encounter the *realness* of the river and its palpable characteristics – the sound of it as it swooshes through the Glen, its touch as the cold burns the feet. Scientific abstraction has to some extent, obscured that reality.

Thus, it is clear that science can never completely explain or provide full 'understanding'. Arnold's piece touches upon this – mystery itself. To take the example of water, there is much humanity has gathered about water through science – that it is composed of hydrogen and oxygen, that it freezes at 0°C, but as noted, not everything that is knowable can be discovered through science and some mysteries will forever remain as so. Scottish writer and poet Nan Shepard observes (of the source of the river Dee in the Cairngorms),

Like all profound mysteries, it is so simple that it frightens me. It wells from the rock, and flows away. For unnumbered years it has welled from the rock, and flowed away. It does nothing, absolutely nothing, but be itself (Shepherd, 2011, p. 23).

With this in mind, Arnold's *Reading Particle Physics to a River* emphasises the shortcomings of the dominant scientific community, with its desire to explain the world through scientific discourse while demoting subjective, intuitive and sensory knowledge sources. Indeed, some have contended that science, far from providing explanations, in fact *deepens* mystery: "The more one learns of this intricate interplay of soil, altitude, weather, and the living tissues of plant and insect [...] the more the mystery deepens. Knowledge does not dispel mystery" (Shepherd, 2011, p. 59). Furthermore, it is often the case that the explanation does not do justice to the real life event itself:

The relationship between what we see and what we know is never settled. Each evening we see the sun set. We know that the earth is turning away from it. Yet the knowledge, the explanation, never quite fits the sight (Berger, 1972, p. 7).

Although I have suggested that science may obscure reality, I also wish to assert that science, by deepening mysteries and the apparently inexplicable, has the potential to be "a carrier of wonder", as MacFarlane notes (on the work of nature writer Barry Lopez): "Lopez's scientific training also helped him. Through it, he came to realise the importance of fact as a carrier of wonder [...] science [...] finesses the real into a greater marvellousness" (MacFarlane, 2005, para. 9). If that is so, then science plays an important role in (re)awakening one's sense of wonder, which, it has been stated, is a model to aesthetically appreciate the natural environment (Carroll, 1993) and in turn, perhaps bring us closer emotionally to it.

6.2 Knowing the names

Taxonomy – the cataloguing and categorizing of the natural environment by the discernment of difference – is one scientific tool for identification. In correspondence with *Remote Performances* artist and poet Alec Finlay, discussions regarding knowing the names of things and places recurred again and again:

In a simple way I find that any name can set up a quest, and, without names, landscape is simply ecology – itself a wonderful thing, but then, if you don't know

some names, of lichen, or trees, well, it is all rather bare, and walking becomes just a matter of ‘athletics’ (A. Finlay, email correspondence, March 27, 2014).

As he notes, a name can prompt inquiry into specific flora, fauna or place names, whereby knowing the names may encourage greater examination or instigate a journey into a place and its history. Finlay’s assertion that without names “landscape is simply ecology” and, “all rather bare”, is reminiscent of Carlson’s argument that appreciation requires “knowing what they are and knowing something about them” (Carlson, 2000, p. 90) and that without such knowledge “mere sensory interaction is tantamount to emptiness” (Brady, 2003, p. 111).

In addition, science has enabled humanity to perceive the natural world at varying scales as Finlay commented in an interview: “We no longer just see our hand but [...] our mind can see every bit of DNA” (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014). As Rolston (1995) notes,

Science, by extending so greatly human capacities for perception [...] teaches us what is objectively there. We realize what is going on in the dark, underground, or over time. Without science there is no sense of deep time, nor of geological or evolutionary history, and little appreciation of ecology. Science cultivates the habit of looking closely, as well as looking for long periods of time (p. 376).

Thus, having knowledge (common or scientific) means we perceive not only our hand, but all that we *know* of our hand. To this regard, by naming and classifying things, one may ask, have we in fact constructed a barrier between us and reality? Scottish writer Andrew Greig illustrates this well (as he comments on the works of poet Norman MacCaig):

[His] eye and heart were drawn to animals, yet he was not particularly knowledgeable about them; he could name the commonest birds and that was about it. I think he didn’t want to know more, believing that knowledge of their Latin names, habitat, feeding & mating patterns, moulting season would obscure their reality. Sometimes the more you know, the less you see. What you encounter is your knowledge, not the thing itself (Greig, 2010, p. 87).

Knowledge, it seems, simultaneously deepens mystery and obscures reality. Some crucial questions may then be asked – is there a fine line between knowing too much and knowing too little in appreciation of the natural environment? If one knows too little, the immediate and the sensory become central – is that sufficient for appreciation? On the other hand, if one knows too much, can one get beyond it to rediscover the elemental and perceive it without the scientific (*cultural!*) associations placed upon it?

Similarly, *Away with the Birds* dealt with the classification and identification of natural things by questioning whether knowing the names (or having some scientific knowledge) of the birds enhanced the experience of the performance. Whilst some, like Berleant (1992) would argue that one can aesthetically appreciate art or the natural world without scientific knowledge, others such as Carlson (2000) would suggest that such an experience would be empty. John Fanshawe, founder of New Networks for Nature, (an alliance for creative practitioners and scientists that challenges the notion of scientific exclusivity in regards to wildlife and landscape (New Networks For Nature, 2014) attended *Away with the Birds* and I talked to him on several occasions over the weekend. As a scientist, artist and naturalist specialising in birds (or a ‘birder’ – a term I was introduced to over the weekend as someone interested in birds) he believed that knowing *does* enhance the experience of the performance, but that not knowing isn’t necessarily a disadvantage. This presents an interesting paradox. It is contradictory in the sense that they cannot both be true but reconcilable as it expresses a possible truth – there is no ‘correct’ way to aesthetically appreciate the natural environment and hence both experiences are rich, albeit for different reasons. Possessing the knowledge to identify the call of a raven, or an oystercatcher and to interpret the interactions of the performers in relation to real interactions of these birds, may elicit an enhanced understanding of the performance, as well as the ecosystem to which they belong.

Although the performance did not directly teach the audience about the birds or ecology of Canna, it did offer an interpretation or a translation in a sense, of that environment. It depicted the ecology of the island through musical, theatrical expression – the interactions of the different bird communities were portrayed through the choreography of the movements. It also depicted the cultural elements of the island – the folklore, history and

traditions that are imbedded in the land and the songs. To illustrate, the redshank, a wader bird depicted in the performance, is often mimicked in Gaelic laments and sung at funeral rites as it's believed to ensure safe passage of the buried to the afterlife (F. Wilkins, email correspondence, December 3, 2014). Similarly, the red-throated diver has strong symbolic associations with journeys (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014). Hence, the performance emphasised that the knowledge the viewer comes with need not necessarily be *scientific* knowledge. Knowing something of the cultural associations of the birds may generate melancholic, mournful feelings in the viewer as one recognises such symbolism. Certain types of knowledges, therefore, will encourage different experiences. To this regard, each viewer comes with his or her own interest (or type of knowledge), which leads us to question if one can ever aesthetically experience something with 'disinterest' as Kant (1790) would have us do. Can we ever escape our subjectivity? This is illustrated in the following interview except:

For some people it's important to know what the birds are, for some people it's important to know what the call means, for some people it's about the body experience (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014).

We arrive with preconceived values, interests, ideas and attitudes, which it is difficult (if not impossible) to detach oneself from. Thus, we experience, to a certain extent, what we want to experience or have the relevant knowledge to experience.

For bird watchers, birdcalls act as a mnemonic for identification as a bird is generally heard before it is seen. Hence, knowing the calls allows one to navigate, physically and imaginatively, through the landscape – discerning what is happening, where and to what end. As a wildlife recordist, Geoff Sample (field recordist and sound artist for *Away with the Birds*) has dedicated much of his life to recording birds, and thus is highly skilled in recognising birdcalls and songs. He has learnt the language of birds, and as with any language, one understands little at first but with time and dedicated study one becomes fluent. For him, knowing the calls and the names enhances the experience of being in the natural environment because he can understand and bear witness to what is going on around him. Hence, bird song becomes “no longer just a melodic background to human speech, but a meaningful speech in its own right, responding to and commenting on events

in the surrounding earth” (Abram, 1996, p. 20). Fanshawe, as a fellow ‘birder’, further noted that humans worldwide have a unique relationship with birds (see *Birds and People*, Cocker, 2013, a book he edited), as they come to symbolise and mean various things to various cultures. Through migration, birds transcend cultural boundaries. The arctic tern for example, spends its summers in the high Arctic and its winters in the south and Antarctica. When one follows the migration of birds and their comings and goings, it nurtures a seasonality in the individual as one becomes more aware of the seasons and is in tune with the world and the land as it changes. Fanshawe recalled a quote: “the swifts are back, the world is still running”, which suggests that if one witnesses these predetermined, yearly, seasonal shifts, then the world is okay and therefore *you* are okay. This further suggests that the knowledge one comes with need not necessarily be scientific, but could be of a more vernacular nature.

As a musician, Geoff Sample noted that he listens to the natural world with musical ears and regards it as a source of music. Likewise, for Tuulikki, her interest in music brought her to this work. We then may ask – is it training? Can one become trained in appreciation, as one can become trained to play music? Is it transferable to the visual? Are artists sensitive to the aesthetic? Are they trained in aesthetic appreciation? In regards to nature interpretation (a branch of environmental education which I will discuss later), Carr (2004) contends that environmental education should not only consist of moral education through “the promotion of reflective moral capacities and values” (p. 226) but that it should also cultivate aesthetic appreciation and aesthetic sensitivity. This he notes, may be promoted by “recognising the arts for engaging with aesthetic, spiritual and moral aspects of environmental education” (p. 228). With this in mind, can one become trained to appreciate? Can one’s senses be prepared, or disciplined, to seek out the aesthetic in the midst of ordinary, everyday life?

6.3 On love and being moved by nature

I sincerely believe that for a child, and for the parent seeking to guide him, it is not half so important to *know* as to *feel*. If facts are the seeds that later produce

knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow (Carson, 1965, p. 59).

Love, as one of the strongest of human emotions, entered the discussion at several points throughout the study. In a conversation with audience members on the Isle of Canna we all agreed that our interests in the natural world stemmed from a love of it. Fanshawe, as a scientist and artist noted that one would not open a seminar or a presentation with the statement, ‘I love nature’, because in the scientific community it would be seen as inappropriate to do so. However, he argued that fundamentally that’s what it is – it is love and it is rooted in loving the thing. Many have agreed that feeling emotional affinity towards the natural environment can help promote nature-protective behaviour (Kals et al., 1999; Müller et al. 2009), and the level of connectedness one feels towards it (Hinds & Spark, 2007). Gould asserts,

We cannot win this battle to save species and environments without forging an emotional bond between ourselves and nature as well – for we will not fight to save what we do not love (Gould, 1991 in Orr, 2004, p. 43).

However, the words ‘love’ and ‘emotion’ are not commonly associated with scientific discourse and hence are not often talked about (Orr, 2004). Scientists may be unable to talk about love, but as Tuulikki noted “artists can” (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014). This feeling of love, it was noted in conversation, often comes from the connection one has with another person whom at the same time, may act as a mentor of sorts. This has been affirmed by others, whom contend that experiencing the natural environment “with significant others may function as an amplifier of the impact of stays in nature” (Kals et al. 1999, p. 182) and that developing a sense of wonder of the world throughout childhood, relies upon sharing that experience with others (Carson, 1965, p. 45) – for example, family members, close friends, competent teachers.

Many people have an interest in the natural environment but perhaps do not feel emotionally connected to it. How then can a cognitive interest in the natural environment be converted into feelings of emotional affinity towards it? (Kals et al., 1999). As Seamon (1984) notes “love and responsibility for the earth cannot only be thought about cerebrally;

they must be felt emotionally, with the heart” (p. 769). Carroll’s aesthetic theory which he refers to as “being moved by nature” (1993, p. 90) or emotionally aroused, may provide a useful appreciative model for doing so. Such moving experiences of the natural environment are, he contends, of a “less intellectual, more visceral sort” (p. 90), proceeding from instinct rather than intellect. He continues: “We may appreciate nature by opening ourselves to its stimulus, and to being put in a certain emotional state by attending to its aspects” (p. 90). Art encountered in the natural environment may provide a vehicle for this “opening [of] ourselves” whereby an emotional state of mind is fostered through art, (in particular art events) which pertain to the sensory and emotional side of human consciousness. Thus, one may come to feel more emotionally attached to the natural environment through evocative and memorable experiences. Since, as noted earlier, artists *can* talk about emotion, it is important that they do so. Artworks which elicit memories and feelings - joy, love, fear, empathy, grief and sadness, should be encouraged. This brings me to discuss *Away with the Birds*, which I maintain was an emotional and moving experience of art and the natural world. This assertion is founded on conversations I had with audience members, as well as my own personal experience, illustrated through auto-ethnographic recollections which I outlined previously and will expand upon here.

The *Away with the Birds* performance evoked feelings of deep sadness, grief and guilt. Sadness and grief for the species that no longer exist (because of human activity) and guilt as I discerned my own impact on the natural world and collectively as a species. In the final movement when the performers moved behind the audience to sing, leaving us with the landscape and the mountains of Rum, I was saddened by the feeling of emptiness it seemed to evoke. I sensed a mourning and felt a deep grief for what we, as humanity, have inflicted upon other organisms and habitats. I later learnt that the final movement was dedicated to the manx shearwater, a bird that has disappeared from Canna in recent years. Tuulikki sees this final movement as an incantation for their return (Brownrigg, J. 2014) and somewhat of a ceremonial calling to the birds. Or was it directed to us, the audience, to humanity? What was it asking of us? Simultaneously however, feelings of compassion – with the earth and fellow audience members and a sense of wholeness was generated. I felt deep joy and humility as I recognised myself as a part of this complex intertwining of species, alive and breathing, participating in this unique performance, in the here and now.

At one point the singers moved closer to the audience and stood side by side on the bay. They slowly turned their heads to the left, looking at the audience and then slowly turned their heads to the right, looking at the audience, concertedly, all in unison. One spectator noted: “when the singers turned to look I thought they were all looking at me”, another said “it was arresting”. John Fanshawe, who had first seen *Away with the Birds* performed in the theatre noted: “it was very moving, we were all very moved, you looked around and people had tears in their eyes”. As Tuulikki says,

Sound has the power to move [...] when we close our eyes we don’t necessarily know what something, what the source of the sound is but we *experience it as a whole*, we don’t like necessarily pick everything up em which I think is very powerful when, we can feel ourselves in relation (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014 my emphasis).

This experience of ‘wholeness’ is significant in one’s emotional encounters with the natural environment, for it is through such united, complete experiences that one may come to actualise one’s own interrelatedness to the wider ecological community. To this regards, certain conditions we find ourselves in, may provide us with the means of gaining a sense of wholeness, that is “a sense of belonging to the whole” and of “being whole” in oneself (Þorgeirsdóttir, 2008, p. 73). In *Meditation at the Edge of Askja*, Páll Skúlason (2005) notes that the experience of Askja, a caldera north of Vatnajökull glacier in Iceland, gave him a sense of ‘wholeness’ and ‘relation’. He writes that “coming to Askja has – at least in my mind – a clear and simple meaning: the discovery of the earth and feeling one’s identity as an earthling” (p. 21). Apprehending oneself as an earthling he notes,

is to feel one’s life to be bound to the earth, or deriving from it, to feel the earth to be the fundamental premise of one’s life [...]. The earth is thus the beginning and end of all of our feeling for reality as a unified totality, and thus of all of our feeling for ourselves as inhabitants of the world (p. 21& 23).

In line with this, Þorgeirsdóttir (2008) further notes such an experience is “understood as a sensing of the whole of *my* life, here and now in *this landscape*” and thus perceiving of “oneself in a much broader context, as part of nature, as part of life itself” (p. 76). To this

regard, evocative, moving art in the natural environment can perhaps give rise to the (re)discovery of oneself as earthly – as *a part* of (not *apart* from) the *whole* earthly ecosystem.

Alec Finlay also attended *Away with the Birds* and when asked to comment on the piece he said,

well people were crying [...] people were very moved and felt in some way very deeply connected because of our humanness, that we were being called to I guess and it helped out all our attention on the ecology, at the same time as not necessarily actively informing us about it (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014).

One may then conclude that emotionally stimulating art *and* science both have roles to play in bringing about the actualisation of an interconnectedness to and appreciation of the natural environment. While science can reawaken a sense of wonder by deepening mysteries, art can be evocative to elicit memories and feelings, and both can complement each other. This leads me to the next discussion – how can art and science be united through nature interpretation and environmental education?

6.4 Nature interpretation

Nature interpretation, (or environmental interpretation) as noted earlier, is a branch of environmental education commonly used as a management tool to engage people with protected areas whilst minimising human induced impacts on the environment (Sharpe, 1982). Through increasing knowledge acquisition and promoting attitude and behavioural change (Tubb, 2003), nature interpretation encourages visitors to develop an awareness, appreciation and understanding of the area (Sharpe, 1982) and is a means to help achieve sustainable tourism (Moscardo, 1998).

Much of nature interpretation at present relies on the communication of factual and scientific knowledge without much regard for its affective capacities. The definition I have chosen to refer to is offered by Tilden, who recognises that interpretation should extend beyond fact-based information. He regards it as,

an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information (Tilden, 1977, p. 8).

Tilden continues that the aim is “not instruction but provocation” (p. 8–9). Such a description highlights the need for nature interpretation, (and environmental education in general), to focus not only on cognitive development but to target the ‘affective domain’ too, a term developed by Eiss & Harbeck (1969), that looks at the “part of human thinking that includes attitudes, feelings, emotion and value systems” (Orams, 1995). Thus, to meet its aims, nature interpretation should encourage the visitor “to feel something” and “develop perception” (Wallin, 1965 in Sharpe, 1982, p. 3), it should “reveal meanings and relationships” (Tilden, 1977, p. 8) and it should not only be didactic but inciting and stimulating. But just how does one *interpret* the natural environment? How does one make sense of it? How can meaning be revealed through nature interpretation and how can science and the arts be integrated to this effect?

Although interpretation exists in many forms; self-guides, audio guides, publications, exhibits and so on, I chose to focus on guided walks in this study, due to the direct physical contact walking facilitates. As Solnit writes: “Walking allows us to be in our bodies and in the world without being made busy by them. It leaves us free to think without being wholly lost in our thoughts” (2001, p. 5). Direct contact with the natural environment, as with the artworks, was thus crucial. Furthermore,

[e]nvironmental philosophers have long proposed that direct experiences in nature, including wilderness and other nature based tourism, wildlife watching and photography, in situ environmental awareness programs, or even community and back-yard gardening projects, can often have profound emotional effects on people (Perkins, 2010, p. 462).

Prior to the study, I talked to a practising artist and seasonal ranger, Eygló Harðardóttir, who has worked in the highlands of Iceland as a ranger for some years. She recalled a nature interpretation guided walk she led with a group of visitors which led me to

contemplate the relationships between nature interpretation and the creative arts. She asked the participants to turn towards the sun and close their eyes, so that an orangey, red tinge would appear on the back of their eyelids. She asked them to remain like this for a minute or so, feeling the wind and the warmth of the sun on their skin, listening to the sounds around them and taking it all in. Upon opening their eyes everything appeared as a greenish, bluish colour and the group saw the natural environment, *physically*, in a completely different way. Was it art? Was it nature interpretation? Was it both or neither? And where is the boundary? Such perceptive exercises, as I have come to refer to this as, forces one to question the role of the artist as well as interpretation in general. What are we interpreting? Do we need to expand our understanding of what interpretation is? And similarly, what an artist is and does? As Gablik notes,

[n]o matter how much the notion of the artist is expanded and redefined, many people are still only truly comfortable with the image of the artist as a maker of objects circulated in a network of art-related institutions like galleries and museums (Gablik, 2006, p. 61).

This, Gablik adds “must be reversed [...] artists should be encouraged to approach topics outside their field” (2006, p. 61). On this note, could artists be interpreters and/or mediators of the natural environment? How would they interpret and what would they mediate? With these questions in mind, I intend to briefly explore the nature interpretation walks attended, looking at the ways cognitive, fact based understandings of the natural environment were delivered and to what extent affective, emotional and intuitive experiences were encouraged.

6.4.1 Nature interpretation walks

Throughout the four hour Isle of Eigg wildlife walk (Figures 34 & 35) we were encouraged to directly engage with the flora, fauna and terrain around us. Starting at the middle of the island, we walked unhurriedly towards the pier, where we stopped for lunch to watch the wading and coastal birds. We made frequent stops along the way, picking ripe brambles to eat which seemed to grow everywhere. I held the stems cautiously, trying not to prick myself on their sharp thorns or catch them on my clothes. I noticed one of the three young

girls, on the walk with their parents, had purple stains around her mouth from the berries juices. She and her sisters would walk over to nearby plants unaided, and pick off the berries or hand small piles of them to other members of the group. The ranger crushed up and passed around water-mint for us to smell and handed us scurvy grass to taste, which some were hesitant to try at first or outright refused. The spicy, foul tasting plant stuck at the back of my throat and I saw people grimace as they reluctantly chewed or plainly spat it out. While we ate the grass, our guide informed us about the origins of the plants name and its use by sailors and fishermen who had been at sea for weeks without fresh fruit or vegetables. For them, the freshness would have been a delight. The ranger pointed out various other plants to us – devil's bit scabious, named so for its devil-like roots and a small, delicate plant called eyebright. After setting up his binoculars, the ranger invited us all to look through them at some geenshanks that were feeding on the sands and then later by the pier where we could see curlews and arctic terns. He told us about the migration routes of the terns, the long journey south they were soon to embark on, a distance that seemed improbable for such a small, balletic bird. We were also encouraged to look out to the sea for dolphins, whales and porpoises, which he assured us, could often be seen.



Figure 34: Watching the wading birds from the pier (Isle of Eigg)



Figure 35: Watching the sea for dolphins and whales while eating lunch (Isle of Eigg)

Similarly, the Forvie walk encouraged direct physical contact. We walked in single file, on and off the path, over varying textures – from knee-deep heather onto grass and moss and then up and over white sand dunes (Figures 36–39). We stopped at several points where our guide gathered the group together to comment or explain something. We stood for a few minutes on a rocky section, where she encouraged us to look at the colours, patterns and varying types and sizes of rocks. People knelt on their knees, or bent down to look more closely, while others picked them up and rotated them in the light to see them sparkle. At another stop, she pointed out the crowberries we were walking on and encouraged us to taste them. We were told about the willow around us and the smell of aspirin (made from willow), often discernible in the air. I noticed people inhale deeply, trying to catch the smell. At another point she took out flint she had been carrying from her bag, from which tools were once made. We passed them around the circle, studying them one by one (Figure 34). Throughout the entire walk people bent down to touch the luminous green moss and the spiky marram grass as they walked. By the end I had sticky hands from the mix of salt and water and I could taste it when I licked my lips. My hair too was dishevelled by the sea air.



Figure 36: Walking over sand



Figure 37: Walking over heather and willow



Figure 38: Participants at burial mound



Figure 39: Flint samples

The information delivered, coupled with the close proximity and direct contact to the immediate environment, had the effect of situating this new or reinforced knowledge *in* the place. As I discussed briefly earlier, being there, being in place allows one to situate information and understand meaning in the tangible, material world. The place then becomes individualised and imbued with meaning. The Isle of Eigg walk was a wildlife walk, but we were also informed about its cultural aspects, folklore and local history too. After eating lunch on the rocks by the pier, we continued to the Massacre and Cathedral caves, where we were informed of how the inhabitants of the island fled into the cave to hide from raiders where all but one was killed. We walked in to both caves and got a sense of them. Massacre cave was long but narrow and I tried to imagine all the people hiding in there. Upon entering Cathedral cave (which can only be done so at low tide), the origin of its name was obvious – I stood under a large, concave shaped ceiling with what looked like a natural alter.

On the Forvie Nature Reserve walk, cultural aspects of the landscape such as the Bronze-age remnants and ruins that dotted the landscape were explained, as well as the wildlife. We arrived at a bronze-age cremation site which resembled a stone circle (Figure 33). She pointed out that the head stone lined up exactly in the direction of the most prominent local hill – Bennachie – and questioned whether we thought this was intentional and what it may mean. The horizon was barely discernible through the thick fog, but she was prepared and had a photograph depicting the view. At this point I remembered another walk I had done on the west coast of Scotland a few weeks earlier. There was a similar burial mound which also stood in view of a prominent hill. I connected the two in my mind, pondering the location choice. She posed the question to the group – why were they buried here, in this spot and not somewhere else? Was it for the view? The proximity to the sea? One must assume it's intentional she noted. This made me think about the landscape and the layers of time embedded in the area. The shifting sand dunes, that could bury a path in a day or two, made this even more prominent.

Most of the group walked in silence or had conversations between those they had come with. By the end, people started conversations with other members of the group, questioning where they came from, or talking in general about the area. We walked to the top of a sand dune, from which the view spread out and I noticed the mist had lifted somewhat. She indicated a section of the reserve that they discourage people from entering. This was a nesting area for the little tern, which makes up one third of Scotland's nesting population. Those who enter during nesting season can be heavily prosecuted. At the same time we saw a deer dart through the thickset bushes and everyone turned to look.

It was an illustrated talk as she carried many prompts in her bag – a map depicting the geology of the region, flint from which tools would be made and several photographs. It was evident the walk had been meticulously planned beforehand, framed and set up. In both walks we often walked in silence, and although there was information given about the wildlife, it did not feel overwhelming. As Sharpe notes,

All too often, a conducted activity becomes an almost uninterrupted barrage of information with pauses only long enough for the interpreter to catch a breath. What

can you really say about the beauty of a sunset, the magnificence of a star-filled sky, or the grace of a leaping frog? (1982, p. 182).

The guided walks, in my opinion, attended to both cognitive, fact based experiences as well as to affective domains. While we were informed about science – the names of flora and fauna, the behaviours of wildlife in the areas, of landscape characteristics and geology – this knowledge was situated *physically* in the places and *mentally* in our memories. Direct, somatic and sensory interactions were encouraged, which seemed to plant this new knowledge directly in the place. Through reference and association, the place was imbedded in the new knowledge gained and the knowledge was imbedded in the place – fixed, bounded and rooted.

6.4.2 A self-guided walk

The Cairngorm walk could be regarded as a self-guided walk – I did not have the ranger to lead me and so I had to lead myself. Instead I spoke with him at the ranger's base, conducting an informal interview and then proceeding to walk. We discussed the nature of the walk and he considered it similar to a performance – in the same way as you would read your audience in a traditional setting, you would read your group. If people wanted to chat, you would chat and depending on the types of questions they were asking the interpreter could gauge what interested them. He noted, you want to give people what they expect and the walk is very much dictated by the group. We spoke about group sizes and he noted that he did not enjoy walking with large numbers – it becomes more about the group than about the landscape. This was a similar comment to Geoff Sample's, who had taken some people on a walk after the *Away with the Birds* performance – an impromptu guided walk to look for birds. He had also noted that large groups inhibit the group and are more difficult to execute because of this.

We talked about humans in the landscape, making their way through paths created by and for them. Animals too make paths in the landscape, trails where they come and go. The ranger noted that people come to the national park for a need, a need for the mountains and the landscape, and the place supplies that need. Thus he actively encourages the use of human made paths. He used the expression “entry level” as did Geoff Sample, whereby

guided walks may be considered an entry, or introduction into the life of birds, natural science and wildlife watching. I thought – could it also be an entry into art? For those who do not normally engage with art in the traditional sense, could it work in that direction? Could experiencing art in the natural environment, out-with its' usual setting, afford access? Many perhaps feel disengaged with art in the gallery, believing 'modern art' is inaccessible. Could it be that by redefining where art is situated and how it is delivered we may renegotiate the ways in which people encounter and perceive art in general? By blurring those boundaries, is it possible to offer individuals an alternative experience of both art and the natural environment?

Walking alone (Figures 40 & 41), I decided to walk to a fork in the path, to see how the weather held up and then decide from there which way to go. It was a wet day and there were clouds on the ridge and summits. I had no desire to spend the day walking in a cloud, getting wet, just to sit on a train all the way back home but I decided to climb for a bit nonetheless. As I walked, I startled some grouse – they clumsily and hurriedly fluttered out of the heather – plumb, brown birds with a reddish mark above their eyes. Plants were transforming into their autumnal colours, the heather more orange than purple now. The visible transitioning made me contemplate my own seasonality. The rain came on and I looked at the water in the burn. A glimmer of sun tried helplessly to break through the cloud, casting an antique light over the landscape, a sepia filter accentuated by the oranges and browns of autumn. The rain turned to wet snow and I was alone in a thick fog. I passed two walkers – “It’s a bit wet”, “Aye, it’s a bit wet”. I turned around and walked down the slope, where the day seemed to be calmer. It felt as if I had walked through an invisible stratum as I detected the earthly warmth down here compared to the cool, wet air up there. Looking from the bottom towards the ridge I could see it was now clear and my eyes followed its edge for a few minutes. It wasn’t long before the cloud enveloped the summit again enfolding over the mountain like hands clasping – a bodily embrace between the clouds and the mountain. This reminded me of the rangers comment earlier: “It’s very different here in winter”. I could see snow in the gullies – a sliver of last year’s winter and testimony to the altitude and short-lived summer. When I stepped off the path onto the grass the sound of my footsteps on the gravel was replaced by the swish, swishing of my waterproof trousers. I saw another grouse, then another, then three, then many, right in front of me. What’s the story here then? What am I in the middle of? They all flew off

eagerly in different directions. As I drew nearer the corrie, it started to look more foreboding. A woman had died here just days before. I thought of my vulnerability in such a landscape – the land seemed to amplify my flesh. I thought about the sublime and the power of imagination when we encounter places such as this. I didn't see many people on the track and presumed most had gone for the summits. I looked forward as I walked, then back in case I had missed something. Later, on the bus to the nearest town I watched a grey cloud form over the mountain, ready to break under the weight of itself.



Figure 40: The Cairngorms Northern Corries



Figure 41: The Cairngorms Northern Corries

6.4.3 Nature interpretation and art

The divides that exist between science and art are reinforced by educational establishments and work places, which encourage specialised rather than integrated and holistic approaches to education and work. As Orr (2004) notes,

The great ecological issues of our time have to do in one way or another with our failure to see things in their entirety. That failure occurs when minds are taught to think in boxes and not taught to transcend boxes or to question overly much how they fit with other boxes (p. 94–95).

Integrating science and the arts is crucial if we are to approach and communicate environmental issues effectively (and collectively). Nature interpretation, it has been noted, has both educational and transformative components – communicating science to the public while encouraging shifts in attitudes and behaviour modification. My question is – what is the role of the arts in this? How can art help facilitate transformative aesthetic responses in order to bring about a sense of unity and interconnectedness with the natural world?

The educational element of nature interpretation is indispensable, but as noted previously, for information (knowledge) to be effectively conveyed and apprehended, it must pertain to both cognitive and emotional domains. Moreover, this involves situating the information and establishing it in *place*. The natural environment is complex, there's so much of it, as Sample noted in conversation and this presents a myriad of possible facts and things to know. Art, he asserts, can retain that complexity by channelling the newly acquired information in some way – not by simplification but by perceptual guidance, leading one, in turn, to unexplored and anomalous terrains (of both a physical and mental nature). Art, as a carrier of meaning and a means of making sense of the world can be a vehicle for apperception, 'channelling' the complexities of the natural environment without overly simplifying it or overwhelming the participant with information and facts. Alec Finlay remarks:

You know going on a local history tour can be too much of one thing so, as artists I think we're interested in bringing different odd disciplines together that's where you get something interesting is, to relate things because that's where you get into complex ecology, our job is to find a range of skills that are quite disparate (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014).

In an unrecorded interview with John Fanshawe he noted that too much interpretation can be excessive and that there is often a tendency to over-manage – the interpretation interferes with the experience as the prescriptiveness of it becomes obvious. However, he acknowledged that going with a guide can be less invasive. It can act as a cultural exchange rather than a didactic experience, from which a temporary relationship may be established between the guide and the guided, one that celebrates place and has links with livelihood and sustainability. He bases his assertion on personal experience of nature interpretation in Kenya, where he has spent a lot of time. Thus, one can postulate that interpretation can be an effective means of introducing the natural environment to individuals and teaching them about it. The arts, in addition, can link these disparate ideas and disciplines together, to help uncover meaning.

Indeed, pairing educative nature interpretation with the creative arts may provide a way to “overcome the idea that learning happens in the classroom” (Orr, 2004, p. 98) and enhance the notion that we need to learn *from* the natural environment not simply *about* it (Ling, 2012). This implies direct contact with the natural environment in one's local and *everyday* environments. In ecological terms, Pyle (2003) argues that the loss of habitats and biodiversity within one's “*everyday* environs” results in one becoming “increasingly inured to their absence” (p. 209). He writes,

As the richness of the *neighbourhood* diminishes, the power of the neighbourhood to fascinate, arouse, excite and stimulate also passes into dullness, ennui and apathy. Those who *know* and recognise less, care less” (2003, p. 209, my emphasis).

Pyle touches upon two important points here. Firstly, he talks of the *neighbourhood*, suggesting that learning must take place *in place* and in one's own *environments* if we are to (re)apprehend ‘nature’ as something ubiquitous and near, not elsewhere and distant.

Natural science teaching in schools, according to Maitland (2013), has abandoned the ““look-closely-and-see-what-you-can-see” approach – in favour of huge (and usually frightening) global perspectives in which the natural environment is perceived as fragile, delicate and endangered by human beings” (para.4). She continues,

This year Scottish children have probably learned more about the mating habits of giant pandas than about those of the spiders in their own kitchens. Nature is over there, somewhere else – and ultimately if “nature” becomes Chinese pandas and Brazilian trees it becomes nothing to do with us: not our fault, not our problem and, saddest of all, not our joy or indeed our heritage (Maitland, 2013, para.5).

To this regard, bringing the natural environment closer to home to rediscover one’s locality and sense of place is paramount. Nature interpretation and art may provide a means of actualising this by emphasising the significance of place and, perhaps more importantly, one’s place within that.

Secondly, he emphasises *knowing*, insinuating that the less one knows, or the less one is able to recognise, the less care that is displayed for the area. This brings to mind Carlson’s (1979) argument that one must possess a degree of knowledge in order to appreciate the natural environment, where “knowledge and intelligence transform raw experience by making it determinate, harmonious and meaningful” (p. 273). Nature interpretation communicates factual information, which was evident throughout the guided walks. The guides, whom knew the areas deeply, were adept at pointing out aspects of the natural environment that may have otherwise gone unnoticed – a butterfly resting on a leaf, a buzzard on the lookout from a tree, digested mussel shells littering the ground near eider duck habitat. During the Cairngorms walk however, I was alone and illiterate in the sense that it was more difficult to read the landscape. I did not hold the level of knowledge as someone who lives and works in the area. Perhaps sometimes you need a more knowledgeable person to point things out to you and call attention to certain elements. But this of course brings forth the question – what is knowledge? Finlay noted in an interview: “Well for me it’s almost the only way I get it I don’t learn flowers names from books so it’s a lovely process of, of connection and tutorship” (A. Finlay, personal interview,

September 10, 2014). Furthermore, previous knowledge of the flora, fauna or the landscape was reinforced or built upon and situated as I linked the plant with the place.

Another element to nature interpretation is the transformative component, which may be derived through emotional engagement. Indeed, the walks did more than just communicate factual information – they invited emotional, intuitive engagement as well. As noted, we were encouraged to perceive the environment with all our senses, which invited affective and sensorial interaction. Such experiences, by initiating emotional responses have the power to transform one’s perception. Pugh & Girod (2007) developed the idea of *transformative, aesthetic experience*, forming a model of “what science education might look like if approached from the perspective of art and aesthetics” (p. 13). In this they talk about “re-seeing” (p. 19), a condition gained through cognition whereby perception is expanded through knowledge acquisition and the aesthetic *application* of that knowledge. To use Pugh’s (2002) example, which draws on concepts of adaptation and evolution to ‘re-see’ animals, one student noted,

I now don’t just look at [an] animal and say, “That’s cute.” I stop and think a little harder...I wonder if they are closely related to me as a human. I also think about their markings and how it helps them [the concept of adaptation] made me look past the animal and made me try to understand more about it (Pugh, 2002, p. 1128).

‘Re-seeing’ takes an arts/aesthetics perspective of science education by making transformative, aesthetic experiences a primary aim, and thus “illuminating the artistic side of science” (Pugh & Girod, 2007, p. 24). We take what we know and apply it to the act of seeing, as they note “[it] involves explicitly teaching students to look at ordinary objects from a new perspective” (Pugh & Girod, 2007, p. 20). In addition, science coupled with imagination has the potential to transform our relationships with the natural world by allowing us to perceive things at various scales, as noted previously. On this note, Eygló Harðardóttir’s perceptive exercise could be seen as another example of ‘re-seeing’, somatically, via the body. One takes what he or she has (or knows) and uses it as a tool or a frame for viewing. This may work the other way. Upon experiencing the artworks, one may come to ‘re-see’ the birds of Canna, through this new knowledge. For example, one may ‘re-see’ the redshank through the artistic concept of music (as opposed to scientific

concepts like adaptation, population dynamics etc) and the birds' ability to be musical. Or through the concept of journeys, in its carrying of the soul to the spirit world. To this end, nature interpretation and art may be fused, through the process of what Pugh & Girod (2007) refer to as 're-seeing'.

On a final note, integration and collaboration, primarily between the sciences and the arts would broaden the discussion in regards to environmental issues and would require a change in the way we approach education in general, particularly of the natural environment. In line with this, Orr (2004) contends for the study of *ecologies*, in the expanded sense of the word – the interweaving web of ecological, biological, sociological, economic and cultural elements in a place. A group of students for example, may study a river in its entirety, (or a mountain or a forest) with each researching a different part – the folklore of the river, its ecology, literature, art, the politics that govern it, its chemistry. This would, he contends “remove the abstractness and secondhand learning that corrupts knowledge at its source. Natural objects have a concrete reality that the abstractions of textbooks and lectures do not and cannot have” (Orr, 2004, p. 96). Thus, direct interaction with the *reality* of the river would teach students an important lesson: “there are some things that cannot be known or said about a mountain, or a forest, or a river – things too subtle or too powerful to be caught in the net of science, language, and intellect” (Orr, 2004, p. 96). Such a method would highlight the importance for the arts to capture that which cannot be caught in the net of science and fundamentally, using art to facilitate transformative, aesthetic experiences to bring about a sense of unity and interconnectedness with the natural environment.

Fundamentally, Gablik (2006) believes that we are beginning to move away from “relentless specialisation” (p. 63) whereby artists are becoming members of a bigger social network extending creative practice into social and environmental territories. Indeed, in order to address environmental issues we have to look at everything, as a whole and see how it all interacts and relates. This task, which she refers to as “cultural renewal” asks difficult questions:

What makes anyone change their beliefs about something? How do individuals overturn a dysfunctional worldview and break free of limiting ideologies? Can the

neutrality of art for art's sake be replaced with an ethics of connectedness? Can we recover, if we choose, from the estrangements of Western civilization? Can art help us to revision our selves and our way of living? (Gablik, 2006, p. 64).

7 Places and views in places

To be at all – to exist in any way – is to be somewhere – and to be somewhere is to be in some kind of place. Place is as requisite as the air we breathe, the ground on which we stand, the bodies we have (Casey, 1997, p. ix).

When questioning how one experiences, perceives and relates to the natural environment through art, it is also necessary to ask: how does one experience, perceive and relate to *places* through art? Places are meaningful – they combine physical locations with locale and a sense of place (the emotions and feelings they evoke) (Cresswell, 2009). These meanings come from the events that unfold there. As Cresswell notes “space becomes place when it is used and lived. Experience is at the heart of what place means” (2009, p. 2). Although we engage with places in everyday life – one is always in a place – they seem to have no fixed identity, and are generally more sensed than understood. People can often inhabit a place physically, yet be emotionally or mentally elsewhere, exploring thoughts disconnected from their spatial or temporal location. The word ‘place’ is thus highly ambiguous. Site-specific, place-based art highlights the importance of place and, as Lippard notes “can create a different (not necessarily better) relationship between the viewer and the place” (Lippard, 1997, p. 20). All site specific to a degree, the artworks under this study explored such themes by responding to and working with place(s). This chapter will examine these notions of site-specificity; the significance of the place to the artwork, the collaboration and interaction that developed between the sites, the works and those involved as well as the act of viewing itself – *what* we view, in and from places and (perhaps more importantly) *how* we view. The underlying sentiment is that in order to actualize an interconnectedness with the natural world, one must first discover a sense of place, where place is first and foremost, one’s physical location and thus the site of one’s immediate exchanges and conversations with the natural environment.

7.1 The right place

Site-specific art is inextricably linked to the places it occupies and is generally created in response to place. The works explored in this study were site-specific and the locations were central to the delivery and interpretation of the work. However, in most cases, the vision of the work actually occurred before the places had been identified and so were not made directly *for* the place. Blöndal's *Fálmar*, for which she had wanted to create something that would fit the surrounding forest environment, was the only work created in direct response to place, instigated by a walk and discussion with fellow artists. *Fálmar*, however, could be replicated elsewhere, in any forest environment and so was universal to a degree. For the most part, the works (or at least the idea of the works before they were manifested physically) seemed to dictate what kind of place they would most deeply and fully occupy, as the artists searched for the right place. Blöndal noted in regards to *Mót*: "I decided on what to do but I didn't, I hadn't found a place". After some searching "that place just kind of, showed itself [...] I just wanted some place that was em, a bit em *afskékk* [secluded/remote/isolated] and not many people around" (K. Blöndal, personal interview, July 24, 2014). The artist had a mental image of the ideal place – remote and with few visible traces of the cultural elements of the landscape. Initially, she had planned to set up the piece in Látrabjarg, the most westerly tip of Iceland, but finally decided against it due to tensions regarding tourism in the area.

Similarly, with *Away with the Birds*, the artist first thought about the Isle of Islay, (a Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Nature Reserve) however it also didn't seem quite right: "it felt too big and felt too touristy" (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014). The Isle of Canna was identified as the preferred location for the performance as a smaller, less frequented island with a rich cultural practice and conservation ethic. The artists and performers subsequently visited the island frequently before the event, which in turn shaped how the score would be performed:

The more time we spent there em and actually engaged with how the score related to this area the more it actually became about this relationship of the tide to the performance [...] thinking about this literal zone, this space between sea and land (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014)

The piece was thus actualised in an exchange between the creators and the island itself, through a ‘getting to know’ the place. Consequently, the physical (and imaginary) space between sea and land, between tide and shore, became very important. As I watched the performance and the tide come in, I remember being surprised by the depth of this in-between space, easily discerned by the horned speakers which had at one point seemed so tall, become suddenly dwarfed by the rising sea. I noted the margins between high and low tide – the space that fills with water twice a day, the seas reclamation. For *Remote Performances*, Bram Thomas Arnold also noted that he had envisioned his *Actions For and Against Nature* some years before, having worked with the title for a while but having failed to find the right place to do it. Glen Nevis, would finally provide an appropriate setting.

The works are undoubtedly site-specific but they could just as easily be replicated elsewhere. *Mót*, for example was first created in Norway and then re-contextualised for the Staðir exhibition in Iceland. The same could be said of the other pieces – Arnold’s *Reading Particle Physics to a River* could be replicated in another river and still retain the same meaning. *Away with the Birds* could be enacted on another Scottish island; it would naturally be different but would nevertheless explore similar ideas.

7.2 Collaborating with place

Within some of the artworks, there was a strong sense of collaboration and participation with place and the natural world itself. Throughout the *Away with the Birds* performance, the interaction of the weather and the ebb and flow of the tide ensured that the performance, the performers and the audience were in participation with the environment. Birds bobbed around in the bay, the sun lit the singers and then threw them into shade, the tide drowned the jetty which they stood on, and crabs scuttled over their feet as they sang. There was an ongoing interchange between one entity and another, a dialogue, an exchange with each responding to the other. As a member of the audience I too was immersed in my surroundings – entranced by the performance, and the presence of wildlife and weather. *Away with the Birds* was performed twice over the weekend (on the Friday and Saturday night). I saw the first performance as a member of the audience and the

second one from afar. The differences in the weather dramatically changed the atmosphere of the performance; on the first day, sunshine broke through breaks in the clouds, illuminating the singers and the bay below, on the second day, the sunlight was more subdued, restrained behind a nebulous sky. The tide too was different from the previous day – the jetty remained visible throughout the entire performance. Tuulikki recalls:

I mean there's something quite incredible, that the, the two performances that we did were so different because the weather was so different, the tide was so different so the meaning that em is created is in participation with the environment that we're in and yeah it was magical (laughs) forgive me, having this journey through the score em where we were at one point it was raining and then the sun came out so yeah it was, special (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014).

In *Remote Performances*, the weather and the environment also had an effect on the work. On a logistical note, the connection failed on the first day, which highlighted the problematic nature of installing such a technical set up deep in the woods – on one side of the Glen stands the UK's largest mountain and on the other, tall, imposing trees (Figure 42). The radio station was to a degree inhibited by the location, dictated to by the environment, and the producers constrained in a way they wouldn't be in a studio. This all added to the experience, for both the artists and the listeners.



Figure 42: Satellite equipment with Glen Nevis in the background (image courtesy of Inga Tillere)

Collaborations occurred between the artists and the Glen itself, as the artists created works within the area. Sarah Kenchington gave voice to the ocean, in her collaboration with the sea. She adapted a trumpet, playing it with foot pumps, pipes and balloons, and submerged it in the water (see Figures 43–46).



Figure 43: Sarah Kenchington with trumpet (image courtesy of London Fieldworks)



Figure 44: Detail of trumpet on shore line (image courtesy of London Fieldworks)



Figure 45: Sarah Kenchington enacting *Euphonium at Sea* (image courtesy of London Fieldworks)



Figure 46: Sarah Kenchington enacting *Euphonium at Sea* (image courtesy of London Fieldworks)

In *Euphonium at Sea*, the sea animated the inanimate, as the water and the trumpet came up against each other. The culminating sound was a hypnotic, discordant, yet at times rhythmical, expression of the collaboration between sea and instrument, and it depicted their meeting. Aquatic and watery, the grunts, groans and gurgles spewed from the trumpet. Later, low, whale-like tones emanated, voicing sounds the human voice could not get from a trumpet. The artist noted:

I felt like there were so many variations of the coming and going of the water and it actually bends the notes, the note goes lower when the water laps up against the balloon and when the water goes inside the horn and I just, I felt like I could have sat and listened to it for ages to be honest (S. Kenchington, interview on Outlandia Radio, August 4, 2014).

Bram Thomas Arnold too, directly participated with the environment in his works by acknowledging the river, the rocks and the trees as sentient entities – he *read* to the river and the rocks, and *spoke* to the Glen in his works *Swearing an Oath to a Scottish Glen* and *Reading Poetry to Rocks* (Figures 47 & 48). But was this really a conversation? What was the response of the river and the rocks? Additionally, the delivery of the performances was influenced by the surrounding environment, as one saw the trees outside the window of the hut and heard birds. The quietness forced you to be quiet and to listen to the surrounding forest.



Figure 47: *Reading Poetry to Rocks* in Glen Nevis (image courtesy of the Bram Thomas Arnold)



Figure 48: Close up detail *Reading Poetry to Rocks* (image courtesy of the Bram Thomas Arnold)

In *Mót*, a clear collaboration occurred between the material (the paper) and the land and the surrounding environment. The wind, rain, grass and rocks, to an extent, created the piece, as the artist notes “the art piece, em the art bit happens between the paper and the land and gets stuck on the paper” (K. Blöndal, personal interview, July 24, 2014). In this sense the artist was in direct collaboration *with* the natural world. She could sit back and watch the process unfold: “I let the environment and the nature take care of it [...] there wasn’t much I had to do basically and then I took it down and it’s like nothing now” (K. Blöndal, personal interview, July 24, 2014). The environment produced a visual interpretation of the wind and rain, and what the wind does in combination with the rain – sculpting and carving forms into the landscape, onto the land. As individuals walked around the valley, the work was still in progress, still being created. And this sculpting process did not stop when it was removed from the valley – it continued into the gallery space, set up like a printing workshop, like a work in progress. Consequently, the interaction between land and material exemplified by *Mót*, played on the idea of art as a human creation. The art was created by the land and the environment itself, with the artist merely instigating the collaboration. The result was a conversation with the landscape through the interaction of art and the natural environment. Using the metaphor of conversation in the human-

landscape encounter as Benediktsson & Lund (2010) note, highlights the mutuality of such encounters: “Landscape is not comprehended as a predetermined, culturally contrived and passive “text”, but as a conversational partner that is certainly more than human” (p. 8).

Relationships were developed with local people whom were involved with all the projects, helping to shape the works contextually and provide assistance by means of accomodating and welcoming the events. Many noted that the artwork gave them an ‘excuse’ to go to a place. *Away with the Birds* gave people the opportunity to stay on the island and as Tuulikki noted “well [to] experience proximity with em well just being outside” (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014). For *Remote Performances*, one local woman had never been up the peat track before (where the hut was situated) and so doing an interview on the radio station gave her the ‘excuse’ to go. A journey, thus, does not need to be epic in length or duration for its affects to be felt. Journeying, to this regard, is more a state of mind than a physical activity.

7.3 A view (of a place)

The locations of the artworks in this study were central to the delivery and interpretation of the pieces. By employing different means of expression; live voice performance (*Away with the Birds*), interactive and participatory sculpture (*Mót/Fálmar*) and sound/radio transmission (*Remote Performances*), they each portrayed a unique view (or translation), of the places they occupied. In order to do this, the artists had to, in some way, involve themselves with and get deeper into the place and take time to explore it. They were not just *in* the landscape, they were *with* the place.

Landscape and place are two disparate concepts. Landscape is often understood as something scenic and visual (Lothian, 1999; Brady, 2003; Muelder & Eaton, 2008) with visual representations of the natural environment (landscape paintings) further emphasising the visual gaze. Landscape is, according to Lippard “place at a distance, visual rather than sensual, seen rather than felt in all its affective power” (1997, p. 7). Place, on the other hand is,

seen from the inside, [it is] the resonance of a specific location that is known and familiar. Most often place applies to our own “local” intimacy; a once-lived in landscape can be a place, if explored, or remain a landscape, if simply observed (Lippard, 1997, p. 7).

Thus, in order to become place, a landscape must be explored rather than passively observed. This exploration denotes movement, as well as stillness – a phenomenological, embodied experiencing of the landscape, as well as a ‘dwelling’ within (Ingold, 2000). The artists and viewers alike underwent a getting to know the place, to various degrees, by physically journeying to the places and moving within them.

As noted before, the makers of *Away with the Birds* familiarised themselves with the island prior to the event, working with the local people and the land to shape the piece. The performance itself was a depiction, an interpretation of the island – its people, culture, language, history, ecology and wildlife. For the viewers, the event was a chance, or an excuse (as some noted) to go to a place they had wanted to visit but had never the time, or reason to do so. While some individuals went to Canna for the performance and quickly departed again (on the chartered boat to Skye the same evening), many stayed one or two nights, relishing the opportunity to explore the place. People went on walks across to Sanday, up over the hills and around the island – exploring the terrain and searching for wildlife. This was all part of the *Away with the Birds* experience, the opportunity it afforded people to explore and walk. People exchanged comments about the wildlife and the weather, routes they had walked and birds they had seen.

Tuulikki also spoke about “mnemonic topographies”, whereby,

The land [is] encoded in the song and the lore [is] embedded in the land [...] there are songs linked to specific places and can teach us about those places em and em, belief systems that are attached to places, sacred sites em that we can learn from in order to em have a certain kind of respect em but also em certain beliefs that are in songs that can eh allow us a glimpse into other ways of being with the land (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014).

Remote Performances also generated a view of the Glen by transmitting the artists various creative responses to place. Tony White created a short story *High Lands* inspired by the Glen, local musicians played in the hut, musical interpretations of the landscape by Kirsteen Kelly Davidson were transmitted, Tracey Warr's writing work shop drew on the Glen to inspire short stories and poems, and Alec Finlay and Ken Cockburn's *The Road North*, a word map of a journey through Scotland, (including the Outlandia hut) was broadcast. Actual sounds of the area – birds, sheep round-ups, church bells, were also collected and transmitted in *The Sounds of Lochaber*. This rich assemblage of translations of the Glen were gathered and combined to produce a view of a place. The listeners got an impression, and sense of the place through these recorded environmental sounds and the sound art works created.

Geoff Sample created a series of three sound pieces, *Mythologies 1, 2 and 3*, by interweaving fragments of recorded birds and other environmental sounds with recited lines of poetry, texts and thoughts and reflections on his questions – what is a Glen and what does a Glen sound like in itself? Through this combination of sounds and words, he created an auditory montage of the Glen. As I listened to *Mythologies 1*, I could hear the chirping and cheeping of birds which was then followed by the faint sounds of running water, and then, by the low, somewhat ominous drone of a plane flying overhead. A call from a larger bird of prey, and sheep bleating in the background was heard. The haunting voice of a black-throated diver cut in unannounced, and I sensed the presence of water by the way the call seemed to skim its surface (or so I imagined). Writing excerpts, including Nan Shepherd's observations on the sounds of water added to the illuminative and sensory capacity of the sound descriptions: "The sound of all this moving water is as integral to the mountain as pollen to the flower. One hears it without listening as one breathes without thinking" (2011, p. 26). Together, this culminated in a vivid, expressive portrayal of the place. At one point he noted "well they were sketches of Glen Nevis soon after dawn a couple of days ago, before the rain hit" (G. Sample, *Mythologies 1*, Outlandia Broadcast, August 6, 2014), offering the listener entry into the place (from another location).

As most of the artists came from further afield (one lived locally), their relationships to the place were also explored. Some were newcomers to the place whereas others had spent some time there previously. Bram Thomas Arnold (who had been in the Glen once before),

in *Swearing an Oath to a Scottish Glen*, walked up to the top of the hill, with a desk and a chair and proceeded to recite an oath to the Glen, (Figure 49) which he noted was “me introducing myself to the Glen in a way” (B. Arnold, personal interview, August 7, 2014). The following oath was recited and recorded,

I hereby undertake, not to remove from Glen Nevis, nor to mark, deface, nor bring injury to in any way, any tree, brook, stream, stone or animal. To harm neither sentient being, nor physical presence residing therein, or belonging to its custody. I undertake, not to leave in my wake any foreign body, nor kindle hostile fire nor flame within and not to smoke within the Glen. I promise to obey all the rules of the Glen, to adhere to pathways, and respect the property and prosperity of others therein, to plan ahead and leave no trace behind (B. Arnold, personal interview, August 7, 2014).



Figure 49: *Swearing an Oath to a Scottish Glen* (image courtesy of the Bram Thomas Arnold)

Through his oath, Arnold acknowledges the Glen as a sentient entity, as a place worthy of respect and protection. However, the antagonistic nature of the work is revealed as he proceeds to break his oath immediately after by *Throwing Rocks at Trees* (Figure 50) and accidentally killing an insect while folding up the oath. He noted,

Rather ironically just in the process of recording up on the hill I accidentally squashed a bug on it so in the process of sort of folding up the oath and putting it back in my book I broke one of my oaths already (B. Arnold, interview on *Remote Performances* radio, August 6, 2014).

This portrays the action, and the others as,

Sort of contrarian and contradictory em intentionally really [...] it's about that, defining that word, that word nature [...] it's against the word nature as opposed to what the word nature is used to assign (B. Arnold, personal interview, August 7, 2014).



Figure 50: *Throwing Rocks at Trees* (image courtesy of the Bram Thomas Arnold)

Blöndal's *Mót* brought attention to the valley as one looked up to the cone shaped paper, being battered and disfigured by the wind and rain, and then down to the valley floor, where the papers lay resting. The arrangement of the poles ensured the place was physically explored by walking, as one walked from one to the other – the sounds, weather,

textures, sights and smells encompassed the viewer. In addition, the piece explored notions of land ownership – the thirteen flag like poles, were visually strong, territorial and monumental. They symbolised land ownership and conquest, which added to the tensions and complexities of human relationships with land. Furthermore, the artist asserts that the pieces of paper, with the land absorbed and imprinted on them, can be collected, sold, bought and owned as they *are* the land. As she remarked “the whole valley is in these boxes now” (K. Blöndal, personal interview, July 24, 2014). Although the artist put up the flags, a monumental gesture in itself, she nevertheless took them down again. *Mót* was thus symbolic of land ownership, but not aggressive as the structures were transitory and removed at the end.

Returning to the notion of knowing the names, place names create a picture of a place. They depict, through words, how a place may look, what may be found there as well as delineating something of its history and culture. Names are therefore important in documenting changes that occur in places – physical landscape changes as well as perceptual changes in those who have resided there. As Finlay notes,

You can open names up that’s what I love about them, they’re time capsules so they do tell you who was there and what they thought about a place it’s not the name itself it’s, it’s rhythm and it’s hidden information [...] so I think they are civilising, I think people like me who used to travel through the highlands and just not know what all these names meant and what they tell you, that there was once a shieling there, that deer were seen on that hill, that someone died there [...] you know sometimes if people know there once was a wood in a place they’ll plant a wood (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014).

Thus names can open up landscapes and places, to reveal the meaning that resides there. Lopez (1989) notes “what makes the landscape comprehensible are the relationships between them. One learns a landscape finally not by knowing the name or identity of everything in it, but by perceiving the relationships in it” (Lopez, 1989, p. 64), which, he goes on to note may be knowledge of the scientific relationships or “others that are uncoded or ineffable, such as winters light on a particular kind of granite” (p. 65).

7.4 To view (from a place)

All of the artworks offered a view *of* a place, as well as an opportunity *to* view, from a place. *Away with the Birds* portrayed *a view* of the island – its birdlife, history, culture and folklore, but it also allowed the viewer *to view* while sitting on the bay. Similarly, *Remote Performances* transmitted a view of a place – the Glen, its ecology, the local people but the hut also provided a position to view *from*. *Fálmar* itself was not just an object to be viewed, but an object to view with. Lippard's definition of place as "seen from the inside" and landscape as "seen from the outside, as a backdrop for the experience of viewing" (Lippard, 1997, p. 8) leads me to the next point for discussion – the act of viewing itself. Lippard seems to suggest that viewing is in some way a detached act – that when one views, one merely observes. This, in my opinion dismisses the importance of viewing to human behaviour and the complex relationships that exist between humans and the natural environment. Viewing *from* places was once practical and necessary, and is still a common cultural practise in many places today. Finlay observes,

They have traditions in Asia of cherry viewing, moon viewing and they have structures that you stand on and you see them in all the paintings [...] they're a place to look out from and look around so they had a culture of viewing, you know it's not just looking out, it's not just military I don't think it's sacred and practical, they had no clocks so the skyline is your clock and it tells you when to plant stuff so there's a whole different reading of the landscape (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014).

With technology and clocks, we are less reliant on the weather and the seasons to tell us intuitively what to do and when. Thus viewing, in modern times, has been reduced to tourist 'viewpoints' and panoramic views from the summits of hills, as Finlay notes "you get a kind of tourist viewpoint, it's not the same thing, it's not culturally aligned" (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014). This type of viewing seems to have emerged from movement through landscapes, rather than stillness within them, but also from visual representations of the natural environment and from viewing landscapes as if it were a landscape painting – with detachment. Although the works included in this research involved an element of movement – the journey, the walking – they also involved the rests

and the pauses in-between, or what Ingold (2000) would term ‘dwelling’. Finlay further comments,

[It’s] more I think about dwelling, in a sense it’s more about the stillness for me, about knowing where I am [...] I’ve become really interested in what I would call a conspectus, seeing in the round from a particular place [...] I’m gonna sit still. I can see that skyline, what’s that hill? What’s that river? (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014).

Finlay is concerned with viewing, both *what* one views as well as *how* one views. Viewing, as an act, is a way to navigate a place, to look and see what can be seen. Normally, viewing happens in the pauses, in the moments of rest, but that is not to say that the body is inert when one is viewing, or “just sitting” (Lund, 2005, p. 32). As I noted earlier – the eyes move and that is bodily. While discussing the act of viewing and watching, Finlay asked,

But what is letting you rest there? Is it perhaps just having the right kind, enough knowledge but a knowledge that you can I don’t know how to put it, but there’s a knowledge you can rest with whereas some people are uncomfortable because it’s strange (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014).

Finlay suggests that in order for one to comfortably sit and view, one may need a certain level or type of knowledge of what is being viewed. He also attended *Away with the Birds* and noted “I found myself going between watching it [the performance] and just watching a bird” (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014). The performance thus, in a sense allowed one to just watch, to just sit and to *just* view. This notion of knowledge was furthered as he discussed a different type of knowledge – cultural knowledge, or knowledge of places from literary works about them. He used Shakespeare’s MacBeth as an example. After visiting Dunsinane Hill (a place mentioned in MacBeth) he noted,

It’s just a wee hill and it changes your perception and yet it’s also, you bring a specialness to it, the hill doesn’t have the specialness to it you have it [...] if you don’t know it’s Dunsinane, it’s not, it’s not Macbeth, but once it is you’ve got that

doubling going on of the real and the imaginary (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014).

This ‘doubling’ that Finlay speaks of, is the projection of a type of knowledge about a place, which in a way, may deepen or extend our capacity to appreciate it. This can be enticed through wonder, memory, fear, or any number of feelings and emotions. For example, I also felt this on my hill walk in the Cairngorms where I had a ‘doubling’ effect of the real and the imagined. As the ranger showed me the route on the map I noted some names of corries and landscape features I had seen before – Allt na Sneachda, Corrie an Lochain. As I approached the Allt na Sneachda corrie, I was reminded of a book I once read – *Cairngorm John* – written by the leader of the Cairngorm Mountain Rescue team about call outs and accidents in the area. I knew the place, I had read about it – many accidents had occurred in this area and many deaths and so it dawned on me that I was in a location of death and tragedy. I knew also that the recent floods had wiped out the track which goes up the through the corrie onto the ridge of the Northern Corries. The ranger back at the base had told me to avoid it. This was a dangerous area, and I could see with my own eyes the rocks that had fallen. These stories were not fictitious or imagined, they were real. And so my experience of the place was affected by what I had previously read about. What is read and seen and heard all melds into one and we experience a landscape with our knowledge and impressions, so that reading about a place can add a different dimension to it, an imaginative dimension. As Malpas (2007) notes “words alone can be sculpture, for poets have long known that language is an experience, not simply abstractions or concepts. Language really does affect people – otherwise why would they spend so much time consuming language?” (p. 92). Memory also works in combination with this, as Lippard suggests “Space defines landscape, where space combined with memory defines place. The spatial experience of a landscape can be impressive because it evokes a known place or, on the other hand, because it is so totally unfamiliar” (Lippard, 1997, p. 9).

Finally, there is also a sense that by actually creating in the natural environment, in the place – both become entwined with each other. That is, the artwork becomes inextricable from the place it was created and something of the place resides in the creator and that which he or she created. One may come to a place and be reminded of the art, or see the art

and be reminded of the place. Finlay coordinated a shared writing project where a group of people came together to write. He noted,

Writing change[s] when you [sit] all day doing it together, the poems aren't that good but the experience of being there, I've never forgotten the places, I remember some of the lines [...] transitory forms of art can reside in a place and I guess that's also what names are (A. Finlay, personal interview, September 10, 2014).

Malpas writes "The nature poem itself is a piece of land art, a work evoking or representing or describing or situated in particular places" (2007, p. 35). In a similar way, the land in *Mót* imprinted itself on the paper, so that the artwork held something of the place and the place held something of the art. The imprints of the land on the paper could be seen as a metaphor for the imprint of the land on the minds of those who participated, for they leave with something of the place within themselves. This contact, could be said to enrich the experience and also touches upon the idea of 'being there', in the flesh, as discussed earlier. Perhaps we need to look at places and our everyday surroundings in a new way, with different eyes.

To conclude, environmentalists have contended for a while now that we must 'act locally and think globally'. But what does that actually mean? Indeed, we must rediscover our sense of place (Orr, 2004) and locality because place is where we are and thus where we can begin from, as Snyder notes: "find your place on the planet. Dig in, and take responsibility from there" (1974, p. 101).

8 Conclusion

This thesis has highlighted the importance of artistic engagements with the natural world and the need for cultural and creative responses to environmental issues, primarily the issue of humanity's supposed disconnection from the natural world. By looking at various out-of-door artworks and performances, in both Scotland and Iceland, I questioned the ways in which one experiences, perceives and relates to the natural environment through art. The capacity of the arts, which are pertinent to the emotional and sensory side of human consciousness, to foster an actualisation of one's interconnectedness with the natural environment has also been looked at – can a sense of unity with the natural environment be promoted through such experiences? Juxtaposing these artworks with nature interpretation walks has questioned how trans-disciplinary approaches can be taken when addressing ecological problems, human-nature relationships and environmental education. By reflecting on the immersive and sensory experiences I encountered, the links and tensions that exist between art and science, nature and culture, cognition and emotion, mind and body, were highlighted. From this, several key points regarding art and the natural environment have been revealed.

Considering the scale of environmental issues today, rethinking how humans relate to their environment is important. Both direct and indirect experiences of art in the natural environment may provide a means to do this. This study has showed that direct interaction allows one to somatically experience the environing, animate earth, and in doing so, align the body and the senses with it. One comes to see, hear, touch, taste and smell the tangible “flesh” of the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. *liv*). Direct, participatory experiences with art remove the barriers between the viewer and artwork, viewer and artist, which are so often characteristic of traditional art in the gallery. From such experiences, visual dominance is overcome by evoking the ‘earth senses’ (which can only be sensed directly), resulting in a heightened sense of awareness. Thus, artistic encounters may provide a compelling means of engaging with the natural world in alternative ways, which may, in turn, modify attitudes, behaviours and ways of being in the world. On the other hand,

indirect experiences with the natural environment (through literature, poetry, films, photographs, nature documentaries etc.) are also significant, revealed in the way that the arts seem to pull at our imaginations. Since modern lifestyles dictate that indirect, second-hand experiences are a primary means for many to interact with the non-human natural environment, the potential for them to engage individuals with it becomes significant. How can such creative material be used effectively to draw people into the natural world, both physically and emotionally? Can they be used to more effectively communicate exacerbating environmental problems such as climate change? Much more research is required in this influential area.

Much of contemporary art has dematerialised the art object, favouring experiential, non-representational art. When art is segregated from real life it becomes sacralised and disconnected from one's daily, everyday experience. Similarly, when the natural environment, (nature) is conceptualised as distant and outside of ourselves, it too becomes sacralised and segregated from our experiences in the world. For we do not go *into* nature, we *are* nature. While aesthetic experiences can be transcendental, eliciting feelings of wholeness and completeness, they can also be commonplace and ordinary, to the same effect. It is these *everyday*, aesthetic experiences with the natural environment which are important, and suggestive that both art and the natural world could be (re)discovered in the everyday and brought closer to real life. Restoring a sense of wonder, may in turn, allow us to live the ordinary while sensing the *extraordinary* (Lippard, 2000). Furthermore, the capacity of the arts to engage collectively with individuals, as a way of sharing experience, highlights their potential as a means of connecting to others. To this regard, can such experiences be extended to become a means of connecting to non-human entities as well? Can they be a conduit for apprehending oneself as an earthling, as a part of the encompassing earth?

The divides between science and art were made apparent throughout the study. The relationships between our intuitive, sensory engagements with the natural environment and our understandings of it cognitively, through science, were questioned – is science really a true representation of reality? What does science *not* reveal? The elevation of scientific knowledge above sensorial knowledge has meant that scientific abstraction has to an extent obscured reality. We do not see the reality of things; rather we see our knowledge of it.

Art, however, may offer a way to regain a sense of the corporeality and realness of the world, as they pertain to the sensory and emotional side of human consciousness. Emotional experiences of the natural environment are thus important – the natural environment needs to be felt, viscerally. The necessity for scientific knowledge in aesthetic encounters with the natural world was also explored. While knowledge can add to one's experience and understanding, it can also obscure it. Do we need to know the names to enter the natural environment? How much knowledge is enough? Can it ever be too much or too little? Fundamentally, science and art, especially in regards to environmental education and nature interpretation, must be approached more holistically, to escape from the confines of specialisation. By taking an arts/aesthetic perspective of science education, one that pertains to both cognition *and* emotion, the notion of 're-seeing' as a way to expand perception and meld science and art may be favoured. Thus, feelings of wholeness and connection with the world may be encouraged through transformative, aesthetic experiences of art and science.

The artworks in this study were site-specific, creatively translating and responding to place. Through this, the places they resided in were illuminated – bringing attention to the locale, the people and the 'sense' of the place. Collaborative approaches were undertaken with the environments to highlight their conversational capacities, from which interesting dialogues unfolded between the artists, material, locations and people. Furthermore, the study commented not only on *what* we view but on *how* we view, deducing that art is a way of seeing. With much of our experiences of the natural world relying on the visual, the act of looking itself is important. It may be that we need to change the way we look at places – not passively but actively, not from a distance but from our immediate and proximate surroundings. Fundamentally, place is the location of our experiences and are thus meaningful and personal to peoples lives. Perhaps we need to (re)discover places, because as Pipher suggests "with place comes responsibility – to those who were here before us, to those who are here now, and to those who will come later" (2002, p. 321).

To conclude, the research undertaken here aimed to explore how people experience, perceive and relate to the natural environment through art and how these interactions could help actualise one's interconnectedness with the non-human environment. It is clear that artistic interactions with the natural environment are different than those we may have

through scientific or cognitive means. Both are important and there is no correct way to appreciate or interact with what is around us. Before embarking on this project, I discerned a community of artists, whom were addressing human-nature relationships through participatory, performative art, and which I felt compelled to investigate. This new field of art is not ‘environmental art’, or ‘eco art’, or ‘land art’, or ‘landscape art’ – it’s neither and all of these things. It’s relational – working collaboratively with people and place, it’s conversational – a two way dialogue unfolds between its practitioners, the audience and the environments it is situated in and it’s servicing – it seems to *serve* those people and places. Tuulikki noted: “I keep coming back to this word service [...] the responsibility we have as human beings” (H. Tuulikki, personal interview, September 9, 2014). Essentially, that is it – we as human beings are in service – to others, to the natural environment and to ourselves. What we need now, as Gablik (2006) notes, is a “conscious revolution of the conscience” (p. 65) in order to “live in a connected way, with compassion and responsibility” (p. 67). Adding an artistic dimension to our interactions with the natural environment, I contend, may provide such a conduit. As Gablik further asserts,

Art itself is an instrument; it can be used to develop a civilization with heart – a civilisation with compassion, instead of greed, at its centre. Art that is moved by emphatic attunement offers a completely different way of looking at the world, but it also implies a radically different approach to the way artists do their work. Empathic attunement leads us away from the culture of individualism and separation, towards a culture of “inter-being” [...]. Neither art nor artists are what will save the world. Only a new way of being can do that (2006, p. 68-69).

Thus, what is called for now is a renegotiation and transformation in how we relate to the natural world around us, in order to gain a heightened sense of interconnectedness with the natural environment and the apprehension of oneself as an earthling. We must live symbiotically with the non-human – united, harmoniously, one.

Bibliography

- Abram, D. (1996). *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-human World*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Abram, D. (2011). *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Benediktsson, K. (2007). "Scenophobia", geography and the aesthetic politics of landscape. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 89(3), 203-217.
- Benediktsson, K., & Lund, K. A. (2010). Introduction: starting a conversation with landscape. In Benediktsson, K., & Lund, K. A. (2010) *Conversations with Landscape* (1-9). Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing.
- Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin Books.
- Berleant, A. (1992). *The Aesthetics of Environment*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Boyd, B. (2005). Evolutionary theories of art. In Gottschall, J., & Wilson, D. S. (Eds.). (2005). *The Literary Animal: Evolution and The Nature of Narrative* (149-178). St. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Brady, E. (2003). *Aesthetics of the Natural Environment*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 84(4), 822-848.
- Brownrigg, J. (2014, September 16). Hanna Tuulikki: Away with the Birds. Blogpost. Retrieved October 27, 2014 from; <https://jennybrownrigg.wordpress.com/2014/09/16/hanna-tuulikki-away-with-the-birds/>
- Bunkše, E. V. (2007). Feeling is believing, or landscape as a way of being in the world. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 89(3), 219-231.
- Butler, T. (2006). A walk of art: the potential of the sound walk as practice in cultural geography. *Social & cultural geography*, 7(6), 889-908.
- Butler, T. (2007). Memoryscape: How audio walks can deepen our sense of place by integrating art, oral history and cultural geography. *Geography Compass*, 1(3), 360-372.
- Cairngorm National Park (2014) Facts & Figures. (n.d.). Retrieved November 13, 2014, from; <http://cairngorms.co.uk/the-park/facts-figures/>
- Cant, S. G. (2003). The tug of danger with the magnetism of mystery 'descends into' the comprehensive, poetic-sensuous appeal of caves. *Tourist Studies*, 3(1), 67-81.
- Cant, S. G., & Morris, N. J. (2006). Geographies of art and the environment. *Social & cultural geography*, 7(6), 857-861.

- Cape Farewell, (2014). Home - Cape Farewell - The cultural response to climate change. (n.d.). Retrieved from; <http://www.capefarewell.com/>
- Carlson, A. (1979). Appreciation and the natural environment. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 267-275.
- Carlson, A. (2000). *Aesthetics and the Environment: The Appreciation of Nature, Art and Architecture*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Carr, D. (2004). Moral values and the arts in environmental education: Towards an ethics of aesthetic appreciation. *Journal of philosophy of education*, 38(2), 221-239.
- Carroll, N. (1993). On being moved by nature: Between religion and natural history. In Carlson, A., & Berleant, A. (2004). *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments*. (89-107) Peterborough, Canada: Broadview Press.
- Carroll, N. (2004). Art and human nature. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 62(2), 95-107.
- Carson, R. (1965). *The Sense of Wonder*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers
- Casey, E. S. (1997). *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.
- Cazeaux, C. (2005) From sensation to categorization: Aesthetic metaphor in Locke and Merleau-Ponty. *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 4.2/3, 111-124.
- Chenoweth, R. E., & Gobster, P. H. (1990). The nature and ecology of aesthetic experiences in the landscape. *Landscape Journal*, 9(1), 1-8.
- Cocker, M. (2013). *Birds and People*. J. Elphick, & J. Fanshawe (Eds.). London: Jonathan Cape.
- Cresswell, T. (2013). *Place: A Short Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.
- Cronon, W. (1995). The trouble with wilderness: or, getting back to the wrong nature. In *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*. (69-90). New York: W.W Norton & Company.
- De Botton, A. (2003). *The Art of Travel*. London: Penguin.
- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as Experience*. New York: Perigree Books.
- Dissanayake, E. (1995). *Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Dutton, D. (2009). *The Art Instinct: Beauty, Pleasure, & Human Evolution*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Edensor, T. (2000). Walking in the British countryside: reflexivity, embodied practices and ways to escape. *Body & Society*, 6(3-4), 81-106.

- Eisner, E. (2008). Art and knowledge. *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research*, 3-12.
- Eiss, A. F., & Harbeck, M. B. (1969). *Behavioral objectives in the affective domain*. National Science Teachers Association. Washington, DC: National Education Association Publications.
- Elliot, R. (1994). Ecology and the ethics of environmental restoration. In Attfield, R., & Belsey, A. (Eds.). (1994). *Philosophy and The Natural Environment* (Vol. 36), (31-43). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Fenner, D. E. (2003). Aesthetic appreciation in the artworld and in the natural world. *Environmental Values*, 12(1) 3-28.
- Finlay, A. (2014) *Some Colour Trends*. Un-published book.
- Foster, K., & Lorimer, H. (2007). Cultural geographies in practice. *Cultural geographies*, 14(3), 425-432.
- Frantz, C., Mayer, F. S., Norton, C., & Rock, M. (2005). There is no “I” in nature: The influence of self-awareness on connectedness to nature. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25(4), 427-436.
- Friday, J. (1999) Looking at nature through photographs. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 33 (1), 25-35.
- Gablik, S. (2006) Art & the Big Picture. *Art, Nature & Environment Conference Publication: Artful Ecologies*, (2006). Research in Art, Nature & Environment (RANE). University College Falmouth.
- Gandy, M. (1997). Contradictory modernities: conceptions of nature in the art of Joseph Beuys and Gerhard Richter. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 87(4), 636-659.
- Glacken, C. J. (1973). *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought From Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Grandin, T., & Johnson, C. (2006). *Animals in Translation: Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behavior*. New York: Mariner Books.
- Greig, A. (2010). *At the Loch of the Green Corrie*. London: Quercus.
- Harrison, S., Pile, S., & Thrift, N. J. (Eds.). (2004). *Patterned Ground: Entanglements of Nature and Culture*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Hawkins, H. (2012). Geography and art. An expanding field: site, the body and practice. *Progress in Human Geography*, 37(1), 52-71
- Hinds, J., & Sparks, P. (2007). Engaging with the natural environment: The role of affective connection and identity. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 28(2), 109-120.
- Hiss, T. (1991). *The Experience of Place*. New York: First Vintage Books.

- Ingold, T. (2000). *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Ingold, T. (2004). Culture on the ground: the world perceived through the feet. *Journal of Material Culture*, 9(3), 315-340.
- Ingold, T. (2006). Rethinking the animate, re-animating thought. *Ethnos*, 71(1), 9-20.
- Ingold, T. (2007). Earth, sky, wind, and weather. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 13(s1), S19-S38.
- Ingold, T., & Vergunst, J. L. (Eds.). (2008). *Ways of walking: Ethnography and Practice on Foot*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing.
- Ingold, T. (2010). Footprints through the weather□world: walking, breathing, knowing. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 16(s1), S121-S139.
- Ingold, T. (2011). *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Jackson, P. W. (2000). *John Dewey and The Lessons of Art*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Jackson, T. (2011). *Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*. London and New York: Earthscan.
- Jones, A. (1997). "Presence" in absentia: Experiencing performance as documentation. *Art Journal*, 56(4), 11-18.
- Joy, A., & Sherry Jr, J. F. (2003). Speaking of art as embodied imagination: A multisensory approach to understanding aesthetic experience. *Journal of consumer research*, 30(2), 259-282.
- Kals, E., Schumacher, D., & Montada, L. (1999). Emotional affinity toward nature as a motivational basis to protect nature. *Environment and behaviour*, 31(2), 178-202.
- Kant, I. (1790) *The Critique of Judgement*. Translated with Analytical Indexes by James Creed Meredith. (Meredith, J. C., Trans, 1973). London: Oxford University Press.
- Kuo, I. (2002). The effectiveness of environmental interpretation at resource□sensitive tourism destinations. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 4(2), 87-101.
- Lailach, M. (2007) *Land Art*. Cologne, Germany: Taschen.
- Leopold, A. (1949). *A Sand County Almanac*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Levi, D., & Kocher, S. (1999). Virtual nature the future effects of information technology on our relationship to nature. *Environment and behavior*, 31(2), 203-226.

- Levy, S. (2006) You are here: Locating ourselves in Nature. *Art, Nature & Environment Conference Publication: Artful Ecologies*, (2006). Research in Art, Nature & Environment (RANE). University College Falmouth.
- Levy, D. (2002) in a letter written to Gablik quoted in Gablik, S., (2006) *Art & the Big Picture*. Art, Nature & Environment Conference Publication: Artful Ecologies, 2006. Research in Art, Nature & Environment (RANE). University College Falmouth.
- Lewis, N. (2000). The climbing body, nature and the experience of modernity. *Body & society*, 6(3-4), 58-80.
- Lippard, L. (1997). *The Lure of the Local: Sense of Place in a Multicultural Society*. New York: The New Press.
- Lippard, L. (2000). Land art in the rearview mirror. *Art in the Landscape*. Conference Proceedings (September 30 & October 1, 1995). Marfa, Texas: The Chinati Foundation.
- London Fieldworks. (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.londonfieldworks.com/index>.
- Lopez, B. (1989). *Crossing Open Ground*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Lorimer, H., & Lund, K. (2003). Performing facts: finding a way over Scotland's mountains. *The Sociological Review*, 51(s2), 130-144.
- Lothian, A. (1999). Landscape and the philosophy of aesthetics: is landscape quality inherent in the landscape or in the eye of the beholder? *Landscape and urban planning*, 44(4), 177-198.
- Lund, K. (2005). Seeing in motion and the touching eye: Walking over Scotland's mountains. *Etnofoor*, XVIII(1) 27-42.
- Lund, K. A., & Willson, M. (2010). Slipping into landscape. In Benediktsson, K., & Lund, K. A. (2010). *Conversations with Landscape* (97-108). Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing.
- MacFarlane, R. (2005, April 2). Seeing the light. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/apr/02/featuresreviews.guardianreview35>
- Maitland, S. (2013, November 26). Do you know the names of the trees in your neighbourhood? Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/26/trees-names-knowledge-of-nature-rainforests>
- Malpas, W. (2007). *Land Art: A Complete Guide to Landscape, Environmental, Earthworks, Nature, Sculpture and Installation Art*. Kent, UK: Crescent Moon.
- Manuel, C., & Molles, E. (1999). *Ecology: Concepts and Applications*. Fifth edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Markwell, K., & Weiler, B. (1998). Ecotourism and interpretation. In D. Uzzell & R. Ballantyne (Eds.). *Contemporary Issues in Heritage and Environmental Interpretation* (98-111). London: The Stationary Office.
- Mason, T. V. (2013). *Ornithologies of Desire: Eco-critical Essays, Avian Poetics, and Don McKay: Ecocritical Essays, Avian Poetics, and Don McKay*. Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Mayer, F. S., & Frantz, C. M. (2004). The connectedness to nature scale: A measure of individuals' feeling in community with nature. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 24(4), 503-515.
- McLean, I. (2002). Sublime futures: Eco-art and the return of the real in Peter Dombrovskis, John Wolseley and Andy Goldsworthy. *Transformations*, (5) 1-11
- Meadows, D. H., Goldsmith, E. I., & Meadow, P. (1972). *The Limits to Growth* (Vol. 381). London: Earth Island Limited.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception* (Translated from the French by Smith, C.). London & New York: Routledge.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968). *The Visible and the Invisible: followed by working notes*. Lefort, C (Ed.). Translated by Lingis, A. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Michael, M. (2000). These boots are made for walking...: mundane technology, the body and human-environment relations. *Body & Society*, 6(3-4), 107-126.
- Miles, M. (2006). Commentary: Geographies of art and the environment. *Social & cultural geography*, 7(6), 857-861.
- Morris, N. J., & Cant, S. G. (2006). Engaging with place: artists, site-specificity and the Hebden Bridge Sculpture Trail. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 7(6), 863-888.
- Moscardo, G. (1998). Interpretation and sustainable tourism: Functions, examples and principles. *The Journal of Tourism Studies*, 14(1), 112-123.
- Muelder Eaton, M. (2008). The Beauty that requires health. In Carlson, A., & Lintott, S. (Eds.). (2008). *Nature, aesthetics, and environmentalism: From beauty to duty*. (339-362). Lintott. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Müller, M. M., Kals, E., & Pansa, R. (2009). Adolescents' emotional affinity toward nature: A cross-societal study. *Journal of Developmental Processes*, 4(1), 59-69.
- New Networks for Nature. (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.newnetworksfornature.org.uk/>
- Næss, A. (1989). *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- O'Neill, S., & Nicholson-Cole, S. (2009). "Fear won't do it": Promoting positive engagement with climate change through visual and iconic representations. *Science Communication*, 30(3), 355-379.
- Orams, M. B. (1995). Using interpretation to manage nature-based tourism. *Journal of sustainable tourism*, 4(2), 81-94.
- Orr, D. W. (2004). *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect*. Washington, DC: First Island Press.
- Pécoil, V. (2004). The museum as prison: Post postscriptum on control societies. *Third Text*, 18(5), 435-447.
- Perkins, H. E. (2010). Measuring love and care for nature. *Journal of environmental psychology*, 30(4), 455-463.
- Phillips, P. (2004). Doing art and doing cultural geography: the fieldwork/field walking project 1. *Australian Geographer*, 35(2), 151-159.
- Phillips, A. (2005). Cultural geographies in practice: walking and looking. *Cultural geographies*, 12(4), 507-513.
- Phys.org. (2013, March 13). Feynman's double-slit experiment brought to life. Retrieved from <http://phys.org/news/2013-03-feynman-double-slit-brought-life.html>
- Pipher, M. B. (2002). *The Middle of Everywhere: The World's Refugees Come to Our Town*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Polkinghorne, J. (2002). *Quantum theory: A very short introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pooley, J. A., & O'Connor, M. (2000). Environmental education and attitudes: Emotions and beliefs are what is needed. *Environment and behavior*, 32(5), 711-723.
- Pugh, K. (2002). Teaching for idea-based, transformative experiences in science: An investigation of the effectiveness of two instructional elements. *The Teachers College Record*, 104(6), 1101-1137.
- Pugh, K. J., & Girod, M. (2007). Science, art, and experience: constructing a science pedagogy from Dewey's aesthetics. *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, 18(1), 9-27.
- Pyle, R. M. (1978). The extinction of experience. *Horticulture*, 56(1), 64-67.
- Pyle, R. M. (2003). Nature matrix: reconnecting people and nature. *Oryx*, 37(02), 206-214.
- Ramachandran, V. S., & Hirstein, W. (1999). The science of art: A neurological theory of aesthetic experience. *Journal of consciousness Studies*, 6(6-7), 15-51.

- Rockström, J., Steffen, W., Noone, K., Persson, Å., Chapin, F. S., Lambin, E. F., ... & Foley, J. A. (2009). A safe operating space for humanity. *Nature*, 461(7263), 472-475.
- Rolston III, H. (1995). Does aesthetic appreciation of landscapes need to be science-based? *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 35(4), 374-386.
- Ronte, D (1996). Art and culture of the environment: A concrete working perspective. In Fagone, V., & Beke, L. (1996) *Art in Nature*. Milan, Italy: Mazzotta Edizione.
- Seamon, D. (1984). Emotional experience of the environment. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 27(6), 757-770.
- Sharpe, G. W. (1982). *Interpreting the Environment*. Second edition. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Shepherd, N. (2011). *The Living Mountain: A Celebration of the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland*. London: Canongate Books.
- Simmons, I. G. (1993). *Interpreting Nature: Cultural Constructions of the Environment*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Skúlason, P. (2005). *Meditation at the Edge of Askja*. Reykjavík. The University of Iceland Press.
- Smith, G. A. (2002). Place-based education: Learning to be where we are. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(8), 584-594.
- Snyder, G. (1974). *Turtle island* (Vol. 381). New York: New Directions Publishing.
- Snyder, G. (2010). *The Practice of the Wild*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press.
- Sobel, D. (2004). Place-based education: Connecting classroom and community. *Nature and Listening*, 4.
- Solnit, R. (2001). *Wanderlust: A history of walking*. London and New York: Verso.
- Soper, K. (1995). *What is Nature?: Culture, Politics, and the Non-human*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Staðir. (2014). Um Staði: Staðir/Places. Retrieved from <http://stadir.is/index.php/project/>
- Sutherland, I., & Acord, S. K. (2007). Thinking with art: from situated knowledge to experiential knowing. *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 6(2), 125-140.
- Thornes, J. E. (2008). A rough guide to environmental art. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 33, 391-411.
- Tilden, F. (1977). *Interpreting our Heritage: Principles and Practices for Visitor Services in Parks, Museums and Historic Places*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press.

- Tooby, J., & Cosmides, L. (2001). Does beauty build adapted minds? Toward an evolutionary theory of aesthetics, fiction, and the arts. *SubStance*, 30(1), 6-27.
- Tuan, Y. F. (1977). *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Tuan, Y. F. (1993). *Passing Strange and Wonderful: Aesthetics Nature and Culture*. Tokyo: Kodansha International.
- Tubb, K. N. (2003). An evaluation of the effectiveness of interpretation within Dartmoor National Park in reaching the goals of sustainable tourism development. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 11(6), 476-498.
- Vining, J., Merrick, M. S., & Price, E. A. (2008). The distinction between humans and nature: human perceptions of connectedness to nature and elements of the natural and unnatural. *Human Ecology Review*, 15(1), 1-11.
- Warr, T. (2014, August 9). Remote Performances: Day 6 - Wild Radio - Blog - Live Art Development Agency. Retrieved from <http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/blog/remote-performances-day-6-wild-radio>
- Watson, R. A. & Watson, P. J (1969). *Man and Nature: An Anthropological Essay in Human Ecology*. New York: Harcourt Brace & World College Publishers
- White, Jr. L. (1967). The historical roots of our ecological crisis. *Science*, 155, 1203-1207.
- Wylie, J. (2003). Landscape, performance and dwelling: a Glastonbury case study. In Cloke, P. J. (Ed.) *Country Visions* 136-157. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.
- Wylie, J. (2005). A single days walking: narrating self and landscape on the South West coast path. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30(2), 234-247.
- Þorgeirsdóttir, S. (2008). Wholeness, otherness and nothingness in experiences of nature. *Dreams of the sublime and nowhere in contemporary Icelandic art* (18 May-31 August, 2008). Exhibition catalogue. Listasafn Reykjavíkur/Reykjavik Art Museum.