

This practice-led project entails the production and presentation of mixed-media art objects to investigate how the resurgent concept of Functional Aesthetics (FA) can be applied to contemporary artworks.

Experiencing an object as functionally aesthetic means taking pleasure in perceiving it as fit for purpose, a central theme of aesthetics before its abandonment in Kant's wake (Parsons & Carlson 2008). In reviving it, aestheticians have ignored contemporary artworks (Davies 2006), or been unable to apply FA to these and other multifunctional objects (Shiner 2009).

This project will use quasi-functions (e.g. obstructing an audience, being transported and displayed) as stimuli to initiate and direct the production of artworks via a manipulation of appropriated objects that will draw upon object use in Heath Robinson's machine drawings. Through this I will investigate how functions arise, coexist and change within objects, particularly artworks, and how this affects their FA. I will reflect upon acts of making via exegesis to generate new ideas and use existing aesthetic theory to help articulate, challenge, and develop these, enabling their situation within it (Bolt 2007). To define and refine my methods I will record and analyse how ideas arise and the dialogues formed between these, my practice and theory (Sullivan, 2009).

This will lead to:

- A new, dynamic view of FA that enables their application to multi-functional objects, including artworks.
- A new methodology for using arts practice to test, engage with, and contribute to aesthetic theory.

The issues around applying FA to contemporary art are symptomatic of a gap between aesthetics and art (Costello 2009). Despite theorists' attempting to narrow this gap, aestheticians continue to overlook or discount practitioners' views, despite their access to perspectives denied to non-practitioners (Halsall, Jansen and O'Connor 2009, Kraut 2005, Montero 2012). Through this project I will devise a methodology that gives practitioners a stake in aesthetic theory, facilitating increased dialogue between the two fields.

- A new, function-centric, ontology of art.

Parsons and Carlson fail to apply FA to contemporary artworks because they perceive these as indeterminate of function, reflecting a focus on attempting to define art by *what* its function is (P&C 2008, Novitz 1992, Iseminger 2004). I will reconsider how artworks as a category can be understood and defined in terms of function by focusing on *how* they function; using Object Orientated Ontology to consider an artwork as something that becomes a new object (with new functions) on each encounter (Harman 2018).

This project have been developed in response to research initiated during my MA where I investigated the concept of function within art by using my practice as a site for drawing together various strands of aesthetics and art theory. The methods of production that I will use in this project were developed and deployed whilst undertaking this research and I am therefore confident of their suitability for this project. This previous research has convinced me of the value of a dialogue between arts practice and aesthetic theory and will provide a foundation upon which the methodology for creating such a dialogue can be built. For my MA I was awarded a distinction, receiving a mark of 74% for my final research outcomes (these consisted of a presentation, a written report and a body of work) and the Best in Show Award for the final show.

As a practicing artist I have exhibited nationally and internationally. Recent group shows include Nature Here and Now, Wirksworth; The Kippenberger Challenge, De Appel, Amsterdam (Both 2016); Showdown, Bloc Projects, Sheffield and Lorem Ipsum, The Tetley, Leeds (Both 2015). I have work held in the Tate Library and Archive and University of Leeds Special Collection.