

**Museum of Contemporary Commodities:  
a research performance**

Submitted by Paula Crutchlow to the University of Exeter  
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## **Abstract**

The materialities and injustices of the 'prolific present' are overwhelming, making attention to the production, consumption and disposal of 'stuff' an urgent matter of concern. Presenting as automatic and only partially visible, creatively constructive acts of 'dataveillance' are integral to this explosion of stuff; conditioning our daily lives as milieus of consumption that channel profit to the propertied classes, often with socially and environmentally damaging consequences (Gabrys, 2018, van Dijck, 2014, Tsing, 2013). Constructing the agency to intervene in these socio-technical valuing practices and cultural performances, requires us to consider our roles in those performances, as much as theorising the constituting structures, strategies, and (in)justices of their production.

The Museum of Contemporary Commodities is an art geography research performance that is both a collaboratively produced dramaturgy of valuing, and an experiment in public curation as transformative process (Heathfield, 2016, Graeber, 2013, Richter, 2017). The project manifests as a series of digitally networked 'hacks', prototypes and events that attempt to configure new alignments between the social, material and digital that are localised and mobile, stable and reconfigurable, familiar and new (Suchman et al., 2002). These are art geographies as collectively produced critical making and social practices, which encourage audience-as-participant to move from the 'automatic' taking part in the unfolding immanence of the world, to feeling it more deeply, and by extension to attend to and care for the ethical and political implications and material things that participation produces (Cull, 2011, Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012).

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## **Introduction.**

The Museum of Contemporary Commodities (MoCC), is an art geography research performance that approaches issues of trade injustice by asking 'how do we value the things we buy today, as the heritage of tomorrow?' Integrating social art with geographical practice and methods, MoCC aims to situate prompts to rethink the 'ecological connections and political alliances' between people and things into our experience of everyday commodity worlds to assess if and how they can 'stick' (Bennet, 2001:12). This manifests as the co-production of a series of object-people-place-technology commodity activism encounters (MoCC prototypes), that combine this art geography praxis with digital processes and things, to critically question norms and entrenched patterns of behaviour in everyday commodity spaces.

Between October 2014-September 2017 MoCC ran research activities, walkshops, workshops and participatory events at: Furtherfield Gallery in Finsbury Park (London) March-July 2015, an empty shop on Fore St (Exeter) 4<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> May 2016, and the Pavillion Gallery, RGS-IBG South Kensington (London) 24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> August 2017. It has produced a website, marketing publications and project guides, three artist commissions, three film screening and discussion events, and a public conversation on 'Curating Contemporary Commodity Culture' in collaboration with the V&A. This commentary focusses on the research and making processes leading up to the final four day exhibition at the RGS-IBG, experienced by the examiners. The writing is organised into five sections that outline: theoretical engagements and formative experiences; methodologies; and ethnographic writings that evoke and analyse findings from the initial fieldwork and first prototype at Furtherfield 2015, the digital making process of the MoCC Collection and second prototyping event in Exeter 2016, and the adaptation and experience of MoCC Guide Mikayla 2015-17. As social science research it is iterative, and addresses the following questions:

1. What are the components of the MoCC commodity activist event, and how can they be organised into a relational 'exhibition' that people engage with through choice rather than guilt?
2. How can a MoCC event reveal and critique the 'dispositif' of commodity fetishism, the meshwork of power/action/knowledge lines embedded in



every shopping experience, and the complex relations of individual-state-corporate responsibility in daily trade activities?

3. What role does co-creation and co-authorship play in a MoCC event?

How does this contribute to moving beyond awareness raising and into perceptual change; offering space for resistance and/or the opening up progressive political possibilities?

The initial MoCC project was instigated as an art and cultural geography collaboration between myself and Ian Cook; growing to include a wider group of organisational partners, contributing artists, technologists, academics, and participating publics. I have constructed this research with them; through contagion and contamination, through refusals to participate as planned, and offers to help beyond what was asked for; encouraging everyone I've worked with to own the project, and subvert it to their own ends.

Talking, making and thinking across disciplinary boundaries offers opportunities to learn from the knowledge and expertise of others; but the differentiating of disciplines also raises questions of identity. Taking a feminist stance Massey proposes disciplinary identities as relational rather than fixed, 'defined not by what they (try to) exclude, but by the particularity of their position within a complex net of interrelations' (1999:6). Following Massey, I am positioning this research as an art geography endeavor, and writing this document from the perspective of artist-becoming-geographer; actively bringing geographical perspectives into dialogue with my existing artistic method rather than vice versa. As a performance maker I use the term artist not as a maker of objects, but of performance and performative events that include objects, that are manifested through the practice of dramaturgy. This brings to bear concepts, training and perspectives from both visual and performing art lineages, to be discussed later in the writing.

Whilst there are huge advantages to cross-disciplinary structures, Massey (1999) argues that there are also dangers; some jobs need to be done or held by 'experts' - those trained in particular ways with particular sets of skills and knowledges - in order for them to succeed. This writing will be framed through my expertise of social art practice as performance. My aim is not to define or categorise the disciplines of performance or geography per se, or to theorise

them in general, but to give some specific sense of the lineage of practice I invent and think with, to make clear the mode of invention that is my experience of the research, and how it has moved towards and intersected with the geographical concerns of my primary collaborator Ian Cook, and the expertise of others who have contributed. Whilst acknowledging and framing Ian's praxis, I will not rehearse or examine his research in any depth. I will rather pay attention to how it has intersected with my own practices and those of other collaborators brought together in MoCC, and how it has contributed to the procedural and situated construction of the research framework and findings. Balancing the roles of artistic producer and geographical researcher was challenging; creating tensions, failings and mess. The negotiation of these roles is something I would like to write on further, but it is not the main drive of this commentary.

As a scholar activist endeavour, this research takes an ethical position on trade justice. Following Gibson-Graham (2008:3) an aim of this framing is to 'theorise the contingency of social outcomes rather than the unfolding of structural logics' in order to enlarge the ethical and political space within the analysis of the research. This writing therefore includes examples of positive practices and embraces the performative potentials of the page, combining theoretical positioning with a re-staging of aspects of process and findings, in a not necessarily chronological order, or bounded by traditional formats. Through this I attempt to give a sense of the rhythms of understanding and dynamics of energy and resources given to and generated by the project, by myself and others as I experienced them. As such it is an attempt to evoke multiplicitous experience and group-think, whilst also acknowledging the impossibility of a single authored, text based document to speak for others, and the limits of this document to encompass the full extent of the performative nature of the work. I use the narrative voices of 'I' and 'we'. 'I' are the actions and internal thought processes I own, 'we' evokes the many makers and participants involved in project development. Rather than always separating out the individual voices in the work, this is a provocation to think with the collective.

More recently than the origins of this study, geographers have suggested that the disciplinary categorisation of visual, performance and participatory art needs

further unpacking in relation to current practice, and have identified digitally mediated public art as a 'particularly understudied niche' (Zebracki & Luger, 2018). Rose (2016) suggests that geographers take a much more active study of the digital mediation of culture and the arts, and suggests a particular set of analytics to achieve this. I would like though to follow Lovink and Hui (2016) and propose that art and culture are no longer just mediated, but actively co-produced by the socio-technical, with that co-production being inherently political and financial. It therefore follows that attention should be paid to the intrinsic commodification of art as culture, and the socio-economic underpinnings of 'artivism' in relation to creative place-shaping and platform capitalism.

Specialised art practice as a mode of expression is often oversimplified by geographers into disciplinary silos, and addressing that simplification forms part of the politicisation of the 'creative (re)turn' of Human Geography in order to challenge the 'normative spaces and practices of disciplinary knowledge-making' (Hawkins, 2013, Marston & De Leeuw, 2013:iv). Attempts to establish creativity and artistic practice as disciplinary tenets though, 'have not kept pace with developments in the broader field of performance and performativity' (Rogers, 2018:549, Rogers, 2012, see also Smith, 2015). There is also a scarcity of attention given to concepts and modes of performance in what has been broadly categorised as 'digital geographies' or 'a digital turn'; the emphasis being on the visual, the spatial and the affective of computational structures and cultures (see Ash et al, 2016, Ash et al. 2018a, Rose, 2016). Ash et al. (2018a) propose that the digital is a condition of daily life worlds, and do not seek to essentialise a 'digital turn'. This research therefore makes efforts to bring recent developments in performance into relation with digital things to investigate some of their geographies.

As Haraway (2016) asserts, the paradigms we think with affect what and how we think. The digital paradigm is not just a set of tools or systems that shape particular places and subjectivities, or how we perform and read those spaces and activities, but can initiate wide-ranging changes in society by shaping how we think. As much as a way of producing art objects and events, the performance making I engage in is also the form of hopeful critique with which I

respond to the inequities and opportunities of the digitally networked connectivity that is fast becoming a seemingly non-negotiable condition of daily life interactions and transactions. It's how I think.

MoCC thinks with the digital as agentic as part of its field of enquiry. It is not the dominant focus, rather a constituting condition of the contemporary commodity cultures that are being examined. The project takes digital architectures and objects as integral to quotidian experience, and as starting points for art geography interrogation. It is therefore not possible to approach the theorising of the digital spatialities of the work through one particular lens. I will therefore treat the digital as a trans-disciplinary analytic (Ash et al. 2016); informing the praxis and wider frameworks of this art-geography collaboration, and as distinct to individual moments and objects within that framework.

The digital continuum is also quickly evolving, and the project straddles a turbulent period in terms of increased public enquiry into social media activity, fake news, and data privacy. Some things explored in the initial stages of MoCC were touching upon a zeitgeist, or things just breaking in the news - the MoCC quiz resonates with the Cambridge Analytica scandal and an obsession with Buzz Feed quizzes for instance. Performance has the ability to respond quickly and imaginatively to these changing conditions, and the activities we produced reflect them in different ways. To write takes longer, and whilst still relevant, some of these themes now seem 'old news'.

There are video and audio documents of events either experienced or produced as part of the research peppered throughout this writing. It is not essential to view or listen, but they help 'set the scene' of the practice.

Please download a QR code reader onto your phone, and use it to access them. Wear headphones if you like. If you would like to watch on a larger screen, there is a list of web links in the appendix.

## 1. Approaching the problem.

### 1.1 Black Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

*A video is posted on social media by a friend of my mother. It's been taken in Tescos in Batley, West Yorkshire. The town I grew up in. One of my earliest childhood memories is walking into town every Monday pushing my brother in a pram, past the pork pie shop owned by Barbara Naylor's husband (who made his own pies on the premises), on to the butchers (whose name was Billy), the chemist, the green grocers, and then to Woolworths if we were lucky.*

*This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.*

**Fig.1 Batley Market 1968. Still from Waste! A BBC documentary (TheJaseDisgrace, 2013).**



**Full documentary 20 mins.**

*When I was fourteen I used to work on Batley market on Fridays in the summer holidays. Standing on cobbles selling cheap knitwear, surrounded by stalls with cold meat, fruit and veg, jeans, hardware, flowers. Every nylon mix design available to buy was displayed on an 8ft x 10ft stall. Brought in vans from storage spaces, unpacked and repacked each day. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century*

*Batley was a shoddy town, transforming first rate woollen cloth offcuts into cheaper, second rate mix. When I was 16 I worked for some months as a shoddy sorter in a mill for 2p per kilo piece rate. Training myself to recognise and separate the different wool mixes as quickly as possible, to get any kind of wage at the end of the week. These are visceral memories attached to 'home'. A world that slowly shifted through the eighties from patchy post-industrial 'wasteland' and the ruins of Victorian grandeur, into a re-visioned shopping centre with four big name supermarkets sitting next door to each other beside the bus station.*

*I activate the YouTube play icon. There's a hum, a buzz of voices. People jostling at a barrier. Suddenly it erupts. The angle of the shot... the hypermedial quality of the phone footage... the running commentary of Tesco's staff... the voices sound like my childhood, but in a place I don't recognise. The mise-en-scene is a gladiatorial arena. Everyone knows their roles. I'm simultaneously inside that Tesco's... overwhelmed by the sheer volume of stuff on offer... and looking on from above at the scene playing out in front of me...*

*This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.*

**Fig. 2 Still from Black Friday – Humans turn into monster!!!**  
(Line Walker, 2014)



YouTube clip 1min51

*The humans are animals are insects are monsters showing their worst base instincts. 'It's like a hoard of ants taking apart a tarantula' say the comments underneath. 'It's like that movie Dawn of the Dead'. 'Don't they realise they are feeding The Bankers!' 'Can we use your footage on our website?' It unsettles me, but I can't look away. Guilty judgement tinged with the moral superiority of a person who thinks I have more 'choice' over my consumption practices than those in the frame.*

*I play it again. Drawn more deeply into this 'universe of value' as it plays out in front of me; it seems to carry with it a whole "philosophy of human existence, of what people are and what they want, about the nature of the world they inhabit" (Graeber, 2013:229). I wonder... Did the people participating anticipate being documented and shared? Did they dress for the camera? Will they be ashamed when they see themselves from this superior vantage point? Did the video maker think about market possibilities before capturing the performance? The supermarket staff are bracing themselves and looking wary... but who or what set the wheels in motion? Is this all about money... because... when I look closely... some of these people seem to be really enjoying themselves.*

*The framing of the shot, the 'scape' of stuff as it flows around them, the embedded stream and the commentary underneath, remediates this performance and its objects as immaterial to the point at which it feels like it is all affect. I watch the video a number of times. I watch similar events happening across the UK. 'Black Friday scuffles', 'I got a Dyson but I don't even know if I want it', 'Black Friday is a sad apocalyptic wallet safari'... YouTube offers me a U.S follow on. I click through to 'Black Friday fights Walmart'. Black Friday is happening in all of 'anglo' space-time. It's where I live now.*

*At some point in my repeated viewing, I experience a verfremdungseffekt<sup>1</sup>, pushing me out of my emotional response to what had happened - is happening - to the place I grew up in and the people that live there. I begin to consider the*

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<sup>1</sup> 'Alienation' effect is a technique central to Brecht's dramatic theory. Aiming to prevent the audience from losing itself in narrative immersion, it prompts a critical distance from the emotional content through exposing socio-political structuring (Willett 1966).

*event as a dramaturgy, to study the gestus<sup>2</sup> of the performers, their social relations and causes of their behavior. In Brechtian terms, seeing the socio-political framework through setting and actions of the characters, prompts the audience to make critical judgements. It's a didactic strategy through which it is hoped, as a consequence, that audiences re-imagine and even re-make unjust power structures and social processes in the 'real' world.*

*Experiencing this mediated performance of my childhood home and comparing it with all the other Black Friday performances didn't empower me, it made me unable to imagine beyond or outside of these mechanisms. The power structure was obfuscated and partly automated. The people and things seemed to have the same status as each other. I began to think more deeply about the effects of computational valuing processes on the mattering of commodities (Barad 2003). To ask questions about how those activities are structured, and how human and non-human 'agency' lives and moves in that performance. Viewing the Black Friday videos became an event for me; the dismantling of an ideological frame that precipitated a radical and irreversible moment of re-valuing (Žižek, 2014).*

## **1.2 Locating trade injustices in digital platforms: co-creation as value production.**

Over the past decade the now Google owned YouTube streaming service has generated a new screen ecology by offering the ability to 'Broadcast Yourself'. As one of the original web 2.0 platforms – the participatory or social web - it has encouraged and profited from a type of 'vernacular creativity'. YouTube was launched through the sharing of what was initially home movie footage, but quickly established itself as a valued alternative to professional live news broadcasting. Footage shot by people already present at an unfolding event could be circulated rapidly, showing an insider perspective without editorial intervention. This DIY process has proven useful for marginalised and activist

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<sup>2</sup> Brechtian acting style showing the social physicality of a character. The way someone's physical expression (not psychological) points to social meanings and processes that underlie it e.g. Job, background, status.



communities, offering visibility to circumstances and events that have otherwise been censored (see Arthurs et al 2018).

'Value co-creation' is a term used by marketers to describe 'the provision of particular ambiances that frame and partially anticipate the agency of consumers' (Arvidsson 2006:74). These ambiances are produced through dynamic platforms, designed to construct participation through a culture of exchange. Consumer practice is shaped by the 'freeing' of our creativity, and our activities are channelled in ways desired by the brand (Zwick, Bonsu & Darmondy 2008). YouTube's recommendation algorithm is constructed through 'collaborative filter analysis', a 'black boxed' process of data aggregation that picks up and amplifies 'attention cycles', producing 'ranking cultures' that determine the hierarchical listings (Arthurs et al, 2018:12). Although the exact algorithmic formulation is not public knowledge, the originating archive of videos on YouTube is not just the result of computational processes. Users 'upload, tag and consume' videos, creating networks of relations that are machine mediated according to collective user behaviour data on most frequent co-views, to create recommended 'consumption pathways' down the side of the platform. The algorithms map and interpret user associations between content, combining individual and collective data, and metadata (Airoldi et al 2016).

As one of the organising principles of digital economies, the construction and immanent performances of databases through platform interfaces is a form of socio-technical sense-making organised according to cost effectiveness. This sense-making is "the process of searching for a representation and encoding data in that representation to answer task-specific questions (see Russell et al., 1993:269). Time taken by humans or computers to complete a sense-making task is measured in relation to quality of information needed. Representations are found that enable the most effective human encoding and algorithmic clustering ie. data and frame evolve together. In order to produce optimum speed, utility and therefore cost-effectiveness, as much as possible needs to be categorised according to machine readable systems. In this way socio-technical sense-making organised through social platforms, re-configures bodies and labour, places and power in different ways according to who owns the platform and what kind of value is intended to be generated.

YouTube operates through a form of 'playbour' that collapses production and consumption into social leisure activity (Eran & Fuchs, 2015). Engagement relies on a consumer sense of freedom and agency that is promoted through the emotional engagement with the experience. Profit is made through the 'service dominated' model of marketing. Something is offered for 'free' by providing a service. Profit is extracted from the platform through different means: data construction, mining and trading based on the profiles and use of the platform; targeted advertising; speculative value gained through projected loyalty perhaps sold on to large corporations.

The networks and practices of computational capitalism have drastically altered the constitution and spatialities of commodities since Appadurai's 1986 re-appraisal. Terranova (2000) conceptualised commodification in digital economies as an imposition of the 'regime of property', capturing and monetising aspects of gifting that circulated the cultural spaces of the internet.

'Late capitalism does not appropriate anything: it nurtures, exploits, and exhausts its labor force and its cultural and affective production. In this sense, it is technically impossible to separate neatly the digital economy of the Net from the larger network economy of late capitalism. Especially since 1994, the Internet is always and simultaneously a gift economy *and* an advanced capitalist economy. The mistake of the neoliberals (as exemplified by the *Wired* group), is to mistake this coexistence for a benign, unproblematic equivalence.' (51).

As much as commodities are no longer *only* discrete and fixed objects, goods are also informational, property is also intellectual, labour is also 'immaterial', and economies are knowledge based. Brands as instantiators of value are hegemonic in their signification process; with the dynamics of public opinion, affect and sentiment being a crucial element in their economic governance (Arvidsson, 2011). Emotional involvement and shared meaning are produced through communicative interaction, the experience of which often happens at 'the interface – or surface – of communication' (Lash & Lury, 2007). To facilitate this companies design 'mediatic spaces that pre-structure and anticipate the immaterial production of consumers' in order to generate a social relation of consumption in which commodities acquire meaning and use-value (Arvidsson 2005:238). These 'mediatic spaces' produce and manage value co-creation through colonisation and surveillance of networked space; a media milieu of

'experience design' that competes for consumer attention as a quantifiable commodification of our cognitive capacities (Crogan & Kinsley, 2012). This 'Attention Economy' aims to produce value through manipulation of conscious and subconscious 'spectatorship' and interaction. Our bodies are implicit in performing that value production, moving within a score or 'dramaturgy' that is devised to produce the conditions in which value production can thrive. This kind of 'prosumer' governance or control is embedded across an expanded range of everyday spaces managed through the interfaces of the social platforms of web 2.0 (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010).

This abundance of production and 'content' exploitation through the socio-technical assemblages of computational capitalism, brings all kinds of emotional and vocational labour, quotidian activities, practices and places into commodity form through sorting and value assessment (Tsing, 2013). Digitised economies have produced a world where the commodity form is symbiotic with the idea of gift, and this economic strategy extends well beyond screen based 'playbour', and into management of labour through the 'entrepreneurial' sharing economies of Uber and AirBnB, the corporate insistence on zero hours contracts, or the transformation of nature into a value matrix (Langley & Leyshon, 2016, Eran & Fuchs, 2015, Sullivan, 2010). Designed to produce 'raw' assets for financialisation, these capitalisation processes are manifested as social and 'playable' objects, platforms, events and places co-producing collective performances that bring people and things into lively, controlled and sometimes addictive intra-actions. In its fusing of social communication, cooperation and production, value co-creation is one of 'the most advanced strategies for capitalist accumulation and consumer control because of its reconfiguring of marketing into a supply function for free, unpaid, and more or less autonomous consumer labor processes' (Zwick et al. 2008:177, Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010, Terranova, 2000).

The rhetoric of 'participation' and 'democracy' inherited from the original ethos of the public internet is still much a part of how we are enrolled in this value co-creation, but like any organising principle, digital networks are both a model for organisation and an episteme or body of ideas that determine intellectual certainty (Meijas, 2013). Rather than being 'virtual', networks are rigid, codified

structures that give shape to social forms that change what counts as proximal and relevant, and re-define our relationship with the local. Participation is often coerced, with the mechanisms that condition our performances being hidden in plain sight - disguised, obfuscated, or made legally inaccessible (Pasquale, 2015). This form of control could be compared to colonial power, where individuals have subjecthood but not citizenship, can locate ourselves in a world view but are restricted in the governance of that world (Meiias, 2013). By extension, digital networks might also be critiqued as colonising architectures and dramaturgies that invade, control and capitalise intimate sites and subjectivities of daily lives. This control brings things that used to exist outside markets into them by privatising the social space, commodifying social actions and surveilling dissenters. These 'regimes of value' are instantiated and operate in and across geographic and temporal locales (Appadurai, 1986), *and* these locales are being irrevocably and continually remade through the topological reaching of power over and folding of power into our most intimate quotidian places and activities through computational valuing (Allen, 2015).

### **1.3 Contemporary commodities and cultural resistance.**

The historical means of resistance to cultures of commodification is through the production of 'authentic' counter cultural objects and movements of opposition (Lash & Lury, 2007). Commoditisation is slowed through the production of things and events that refuse equivalence by remaining 'unambiguously singular', or by reclaiming as singular that which has been multiple (Kopytoff, 1986:73). With the advent of computational capitalism the logic of culture has changed. As Lash and Lury (2007) describe, the cultural superstructure has collapsed into the material base and we do not 'read' things so much as 'do' them. As things are mediated and brought into value-co-creation through web 2.0, mediums have also 'descended into the environment' through their production as things. Film characters are collectibles, movies are computer games, arts manifestos are board games, and radical political figures become tea towel designs, fridge magnets and cushion covers. Any global culture object not confined to the exclusive space of the museum or gallery or cinema can be encountered as thing – and even those can often be bought in the gallery shop.

'Matter-image' is the *Weltanschauung* (mode of viewing the world/ideology) of the global culture industry – the reality of 'mind' (Lash & Lury, 2007:16). This movement between matter and image and vice versa creates a world of navigation rather than interpretation, where meaning is not hermeneutic, but operational – it has impact. Things are mattered through relations of perception.

By equal measures, with the advent of computational capitalism, the economic has become cultural and performance based. Calculative objects such as the derivative have drastically changed the essential substance of commodities by removing the need for money as a means to establish pricing relationships. As financial instruments that allow any 'bit' of capital (object, thing, asset, idea, data) to be compared with any other, derivatives take the form of continuous computational processes that separate underlying values from underlying assets, with the inferences – the relations between them - then able to be shared, traded and exchanged. As such they have become universalising forces that commensurate 'all forms of capital, at all locations, at all times' (see Grossberg, 2010:305).

The derivative based logic as proposed by the organisation Optimum Population Trust for instance, values the life of an 'unwanted' and therefore unborn African baby according to its equivalence in carbon gains using a carbon matrix constructed from a 'natural carbon database' (Sullivan, 2010). Data derivatives manage risk in association with security, not based around who we are or what our data says about us, but about what can be imagined about who we might be in particular circumstances through an 'ontology of association' - 'if \*\*\* and \*\*\*, in association with \*\*\*, then \*\*\*' (Amoore, 2011:27). These 'data performances' categorise and re-categorise us according to the changing constituents of the data being brought together in situ, in 'real-time', with our embodied selves (Matzner, 2016). These are ideational transformations of land, money, labour, mobility and life itself that create 'fictitious commodities', constructed and subsumed into markets by 'new Imperial Ecologies' (Sullivan, 2010).

Where once commodities were 'all that there is to see' (Debord, 1995:29), it would seem that commodities are now all there is to be. The 'spectacle' is no longer produced by single channel broadcast, or analogue media filling public

space with psychologically coded messages to mass publics. It is social, co-produced, enclosed by brand mentality, instrumentalised through platform economics, and fictionalised into risk management products, with 'users' ie. Everyone participating, re-captured and re-performed as value laden subjectivities (Sciortino & Wright, 2017).

Any counter cultural resistance - collective and individual - is exploited or nurtured as affective strategies and tactics to generate more consumption, or commodified as a mode of cultural intensity through 'eventive brand design' and the activities of social media 'influencers' (Lash & Lury 2007:14, Alemoru 2019). The ideology of what Mark Fisher calls 'capitalist realism' has seemingly colonised culture and occupied all spaces of resistance, and 'all that is left is the spectator-consumer trudging through the ruins' (Fisher 2012).

Shapings of attention towards economic over other types of value production through encouragement of continual consumption, have consequences on the way we think and by extension how we care, and therefore how and what we value (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012). Grossberg et al. (2014) propose that dominant readings of the current moment of financialisation and its associated catastrophes, often reproduce existing narratives of capitalist 'common sense' or Marxist critique, without questioning what might be different about it how this moment of history is playing out. Rather than being substantive, value does not exist independently outside the things and transformative processes that produce it, it has a polysemic, already-and-relational nature that is personal, social and extra-economic, as much as it is economic. By scrutinising the ways in which things and 'entities' are endowed with or accrue economic (and other) value, it is possible to understand value as an effect that 'is produced and that exists only within particular assemblages or formations —as a complex effect of valuation' (Grossberg et al. 2014:308).

An anthropological view suggests that 'other-than-economic' value is something which communities hold in common, define for themselves and therefore 'create the conditions under which it can be created or destroyed' (Miller, 2008:1123). Value is something against which things can be measured against each other, but only if we are embedded in the community and understand the terms of that valuing. As a value production of mutual creation, a

moment/instance/event/performance of commodification such as Black Friday, can be understood as a shaping of the world around us, ourselves and each other by the privileging of one kind of valuing over others by the temporary 'community' of people taking part. As such it is only one of many universes of value that we negotiate and move between on a daily basis. The key to intervening in the shaping of these universes is understanding that we don't necessarily have to believe in them to act within them, but they exist because of our actions (see Graeber, 2013).

Socio-commercial valuing processes are located within what Thrift (2005) calls the 'technologic unconscious'. These valuing processes are not bounded objects or representations that people can touch and respond to; they are intangible performances that bring people and things into lively co-creative relations with socio-technical things/modes/systems. Whilst geographers have until recently conceptualised these spatialities as a physical-virtual binary, Kinsley (2014) reconceptualises these as spaces of 'technicity', calling for more small scale studies that investigate their specifics, and how they produce new materialities. Such a study would necessarily focus on bringing such processes from the subconscious of participant experience, into general consciousness, to understand more about what people think and feel about them, and how that affects their behaviour.

Both thinking and knowing are situated in relational ways that unfold into and through their own worlds. Those worlds are implicated in making the contexts through which we think and know – our production of meaning through signs, representations, words, descriptions, concepts and theories (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012). As a conscious effort to recognise and be attentive to interdependency of being, Haraway's (2016) proposition of 'thinking with' is a call against easy reductionism. It allows multiplicitous and conflicting positions to be proposed as part of the bounded but interdependent objects/things/beings being spoken about. Such 'relations of thinking and knowing [therefore] require care', as an ontological requirement, a condition of life rather than a moral imperative (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012:19). To care about something is to create active relations through ongoing activities of maintenance,

continuation and repair; activities which also create obligations on what relations are ontologically produced from whom and what we care for.

Haraway's literary string figures and fabulations think with and care about many other kinds of bodies as companions and kin; examining current challenges, and dreaming the potential for radically different ways forward to the forms of positivist and economic experimentation we are currently subjected to. Thinking with attempts to generate a collective - rather than describing or representing it (Haraway, 2016), but whilst Haraway thinks with, she writes alone. Readers of her work are also in private relationship with the authority assumed by the text, however open and performative that writing attempts to be. This study proposes a performance based approach to research that thinks collectively with the socio-technical processes of contemporary commodity culture, in order to know them differently, and ultimately care about them *together* in new ways. In order to do this, encounters with these things/modes/systems need to be constructed in ways that are 'feelable'<sup>3</sup> by collaborators and participants, in environments that encourage conversation.

#### **1.4 Performance as my mode of invention.**

I began this research project after having been a performance maker and educator since 1996. Live performance is the mode I think and invent with (Deleuze, 2007) – engendered through different forms of disciplinary training and habituated practices. Most pertinent to this research, is a theatrical, ensemble based form of social practice, in which I take the role of 'director' of cross-disciplinary collaborations; projects that devise and 'stage' participatory and conversational events with digital things. It's a practice that has developed from my training in post-dramatic and devised theatre, evolving in dialogue with other contemporary artists, creative technologists, various experts and institutions, their agendas and methods. Devised performance is a contemporary British practice initiated in the 1970's as an alternative to the dominant literary theatre tradition and its perceived inequities. In devising

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<sup>3</sup> A term used by Ruth Catlow in the MoCC development period at Furtherfield 2015.



processes participants' views, beliefs and life experiences shape experimental and cross-disciplinary working processes that determine final performance forms. When using a devising approach, relationships between performer, spectator and space are produced through intuitive, responsive spontaneity and the accumulation of ideas, rather than being visioned and authored by one person. As a socially driven group practice, devising methods aim to be democratic, non-hierarchical and support collective authorship. Role or job specifications are not always clearly defined in ensembles, and there are often opportunities created for group members to try out new things, whilst taking joint responsibility for the final 'multi-vision' (see Oddey, 1996). Assuming the role of director in a devising process involves taking responsibility for the facilitating and 'holding' of this group multi-vision.

Ephemeral, evanescent and affective, performance is constituted in the situated moment of encounter between bodies and their senses, leaving more or less durable traces and resonances behind in those bodies and places through their interaction (Phelan, 2003). The cultural performances re-cited in daily life contexts - the performative, stylised repetition of acts that engender and subvert particular types of identities, knowledges and discourses - are produced by and producing of our values, norms and beliefs, and the spaces and places which stage them - the politics of which we can be more or less conscious of, and have more or less agency over (Butler, 1993, Gregson and Rose, 2000). The seller in the market place, the preacher in the church, the corporate at a conference, are ritualised, everyday performances that produce their audiences, sites and contexts as much as responding to them. As 'culture-in-action', meaning comes into being through these performances (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:2); forming the foundational myths and stories that co-determine our subjectivities, societies and spatialities. To be attentive with such quotidian performances and the stories they tell, is to attend to how the here and 'now' has responded to and recreated the 'there and then' (Kapchan, 2006). As both emergent and contingent on reactions between actors and spectators in an autopoiesis, such performances are also repertoires of social process that hold the potential of infinite future possibilities through their subversions, adaptations and refusals.

Live performance as consciously aesthetic activity rather than everyday practice, quotes, manipulates, dismantles, re-presents, and makes strange these quotidian re-citations, reconfiguring them for audiences as purposeful re-structurings of space-time - as new and different types of rhythms, texts, actions, relations and provocations. Such performances might manifest as scripts, scores, choreographies, architectures and activities that can be experienced in theatres, galleries or community spaces as more or less hermetic events. Others as variously realised through interventions in daily life contexts as site-specific or site-responsive events and social art 'objects' that negotiate the performative within the performance. In whatever form, as an exceptional cultural experience, performance as aesthetic form is a dynamic process that can bring us into new relations with our daily life contexts by presenting us with worlds imagined; played out in front, around, with us, as a representation, extension of, and reflection on our existent subjectivities and materialities.

In terms of purpose, all such aesthetic performances are complex entanglements of the artistic, pedagogical, commercial, and sometimes activist imaginations. The forms of public engagement they manifest range from the highly theatrical, immersive spectacle of West End 'shows', the performative body as 'material' in gallery and live art settings, to the 'making-common of a desire and a resolve' of cultural activism (Holmes, 2012:79). To be trained in contemporary theatre and performance making is to borrow, invoke and détourne from one performance form to another, to create what is fit for purpose. As a performance maker I invent "connective network(s) of people, bodies, things, texts, histories, voices, architectures" that are dramaturgies with their own coherence of systems, rules and choices, whatever their forms and intentions (Pearson & Shanks, 2001:89-90). To invent dramaturgically is to make manifest in event form, the internal protocols, actions, spatial and social relations that make up the 'world' of a live performance. To engage in this mode of invention is to reflect on the existent, and also to think it differently, more intensely, with a particular, and potentially critical focus.

In Massey's terms, these are the ways in which people constantly make and practice 'space-place' as a simultaneity of trajectories that assemble in

momentary 'thrown togetherness'. Practical engagements with socialities and surroundings that evoke the stories of the past in different ways, in order to 'provoke a re-imagination of the nature of the present' - the systematic contingency of which is often forgotten (Massey, 2005:149-150). What happens when these quotidian performances are taken from one place and put into another? They are de-contextualised, but the activities still live in our bodies through the stories-in-action we've inherited. Unmoored and set to work in new contexts, these re-citations create new performances to different effects, or reveal what is inherent in the old and new places through their disjuncture.

Rather than being a source or final container of meaning like a play text, dramaturgy is both a thing and a process that provokes questioning of received understandings, practices, hierarchies of meaning, and traditions of making in performance. The dramaturg's role is to make room for intellectual enquiry and reflection, enabling performance to enact a social function. Dramaturgical practice situates all performance as unfolding products of the contexts, relations and values through which they are made as processes of communicative exchange. 'Wherever there is a performance taking shape there are a set of dramaturgical questions being asked and dramaturgical principles being tested' (Heathfield, 2016).

Theatre and aesthetic performance is a medium that 'stages' other mediums (Nelson, 2010), and in relation to spatialities, materialities and socialities being constructed through digital cultures, needs to be understood as a set of expanded and intermedial practices. Where once theatre's constructed worlds were formally observed by audiences, performance is now also staged outside the spectatorial relations of the renaissance perspective offered by theatre buildings. Theatre and performance can now be felt and moved through, disrupting mind-eye relations in ways that fundamentally modulate our sensorium, and summon reflections on ways of feeling and being in the world more than seeing. As such, performance has the potential to expose the vulnerability of liveness, and through its constant negotiation with failure, to 'irritate the body politic' (see Nelson, 2010:19).

A live performance of whatever kind is a type of temporary assembly; an intentional coming together of people and things in chosen places, through a

period of attention held in common. As such it is inherently political, and through its conscious framing of social activity, has the potential to shape the political and ethical discourse of the communality it evokes. As Ranciere (2010), Kester (2005), Fischer-Lichte (2008), Jackson (2011) and Bishop (2012) amongst many others have discussed, the role of the audience in aesthetic performance, particularly how we are implicated as actants and activated as thinking participants and citizens rather than passive receivers of spectacle, is a political endeavour that has engaged most of the Avant Garde of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

To think through the affective nature of such assemblies, it is necessary to understand a performance as an event; a non-recurrent, unrepeatable constellation of people, things, places that co-construct a performative space where no one person or aspect has control. A space of group encounter where the tensions of presence-representation define and shape relations between subject-object, observer-observed, spectator-actor and signified-signifier (in both material and semiotic terms). Aesthetic performance as a consciously social practice creates assemblies where what Fischer-Lichte calls 'communities' are 'brought forth by collective action' to 'constitute a temporary social reality' through aesthetic means (2008:55).

There is much discussion on what such performance might be able to 'do' as much as what it might reflect on or rhetorically question, with suggestions that performance, whilst it claims to have capacity to bring about behavior change 'can only 'gesture' towards the real rather than impacting upon it' (Lavery, 2016:229). Theatre scholar Shannon Jackson (2011) proposes that the lineage of all experimental performance of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century comes out of Freud or Marx, much of it acknowledging the specifics of the audience it encounters in its moment of reception, not as individuals with their own histories and stories, but as abstracted communities – workers, urban dwellers, theatre goers etc. Theatre and performance that exists in an 'expanded field' (Read, 2013), is non-anthropocentric in its distributed dramaturgies, and by necessity is somewhat pedagogic, but in a way that works against 'mastery'. Lavery following Guattari proposes that whilst there is a gap between theatrical acts and 'real' ones, the potential may lie in the 'incorporeality' of performance or it's frame of appearance, and how that framing can trouble existing ways of thinking and

feeling through its 'immanent capacity for affecting bodies – individual and collective' (Lavery 2016:231). It is by remaining hypothetical and uncertain, that performance moves towards the dissemination of agency and acknowledgment of collective expertise as a way of engendering new thought and potential action. The possibilities performance holds for acting in the world may be inherent in the medium itself, rather than the 'objects' it produces.

### **1.5 Thinking with the digital through social practice: an art geography approach to care.**

Artistic and 'creative' methods are inherent in many geographical practices; as empirical objects used to generate and aesthetically condition geographical perspectives, make fieldwork engagements and analysis more lively, as provocations to trouble positionality, as a questioning of disciplinary habits and habitus, as metaphors and objects to think with (Hawkins, 2013, Davies, 2010, Wylie & Webster, 2018, Foster & Lorimer, 2007, Pickering, 2008). Many approaches to analysis position the geographer as creative practitioner and academic collaborator rather than maker (Marston & DeLeeuw, 2013). Since our individual understanding of art objects and events are contingent on aesthetic and socio-political conditioning, experiences with the same art object/event might manifest as drastically different encounters for different people, depending on the disciplinary and perceptual habits of the artist/maker as much as the audience/observer. This extends to the framing of any art geography investigation, which will reflect the geographer's knowledge about the evolving field of contemporary arts practices as well as their training, perceptual habits, and scholarly approach.

Underlining the need to address the aesthetic frameworks of geography's creative practice, Hawkins (2013) proposes an analytical framework 'For Creative Geographies' based on the premise of the 'critical art object' and the 'work' that it does in the world beyond the intention of the artist. Designed to enable the geographer's critical encounter with the expanded field of art, this framework acknowledges what Hawkins understands as the geographer's inherent knowledge of creative approaches, differentiates between the positions, skills, methods and roles of geographers and artists, and brings

specific artistic concepts and experiences into conversation with geographical thought to prompt a shift in geography's terms of reference. Whilst the broad vocabulary of 'art' and 'creativity' are used, the focus is on a particular lineage of visual art that supports the analytical proposition. Practices of 'new genre public art'<sup>4</sup> are recognised, but works are discussed as discrete, bounded, entities, made outside the body of participating geographer, who analyses from a position of critical distance. Applying Hawkins framework therefore presents a number of issues for the performance making artist-becoming-geographer.

Artist and geographer Trevor Paglen frames his practice as 'experimental geographies' of critical cartography and digital surveillance; using his aesthetic approaches to reflect dynamically on the feedback loop of spatial production that exists between human activity and our material surroundings. Following Benjamin, Paglen proposes that there is no outside to spatial production, making it necessarily political. Any experimental geography must therefore take up a position within the politics of lived experience, in order to 'move beyond cultural theories that equate new enunciations and new subjectivities as sufficient political ends in themselves' (Paglen, 2009:39). Framing digital art as a spatial practice allows Paglen to use geographical concerns self-reflexively in artistic production. Visual and sculptural objects experiment with dynamic forms of representation; critically interrogating the production of space through the endeavour of a transformative cultural production. Although they may be inherently performative, some designed to be both 'seen' and 'used' interactively with the user/viewer corporeally influencing the body of the work, they are also single authored reflections, propositions or representations for audiences to critically engage with as individualised, aesthetic experiences.

Simultaneously a medium, method and genre, social practice is an approach to art making that employs aesthetic strategies to bring issues to light rather than pointing to them through representation. Bishop (2012) proposes that the social turn in art arose out of the collapse of 'grand narrative politics' of 1989, becoming a site for engagement with left leaning politics in a way that the

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<sup>4</sup> 'New genre public art' is a term coined by feminist artist and activist Suzanne Lacey in 1991 for event based work that engages publics with activist intents, made largely outside institutional structures (Tate, n.d). As a practice evolving out of the activities of the 1970's feminist movement as part of the performative turn, Lacey's work is more widely categorised as social practice, but Hawkins frames it as critical art 'object' rather than project as practice.

democratic system no longer supports. As such, it creates the space for opposition to the spectacular, mainstream, institutional and commercial in a society without a conspicuous social project. Projects manifest as 'open ended, post-studio, research based, social process, over time and mutable in form' (Bishop, 2012:194). Drawing on aesthetically heterogeneous 'inter-relational, embodied, and durational' forms, and including practices such as: performance, live art, visual art forms as well as cultural activism and the work of social movements (Jackson, 2011:12.). The spatial component to social practice constructs participant activity as an essential in the work, producing an aesthetics to organisation, a composition to meetings, and choreography to events (Lind, 2012:49). This approach to art-making expresses a desire for art to enter life not as an art movement, but as 'form of living' that is a call to matter that responds to this particular time and circumstances (Thompson, 2012).

Art objects and events do not hold inherent sets of values, but rather values are located in artwork in context; as part of its physical condition in place and time. In 'conventional aesthetic experience'<sup>5</sup> subjectivity is framed through the individual physical experience with the artwork object; something that predisposes towards and increases capacity for discourse 'about' that experience (Kester, 2005). An art work that is created to play a role of resistance (to dominant hegemony for instance), only takes on such meaning in relation to preceding works or 'the canon'; to particular cultural moments embedded within institutional frames. Audiences need to be literate in the discourse surrounding the artwork, in order to understand or even feel with any clarity the political viewpoints of the work.

In Kester's proposition of dialogical aesthetics, the art work is framed and formed through social process from inception to staging; 'subjectivity is formed through discourse' (Kester 2005). Dialogical aesthetics are prevalent but not necessarily inherent in social practice, depending on the ethical approach of the artist. Discourse in such processes is a tool for making a thing rather than

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<sup>5</sup> Kester 2005 (107) follows Kant to describe conventional aesthetic experience as when 'our cognitive powers are in free play'. In such states we realise that everyone must experience the world through the same process. This is a sense of the aesthetic in common, something that is said we are predisposed to, rather than being negotiated. By extension, an aesthetic framework that needs to be explained is therefore not a sublime experience, and considered not as valuable.

communicating about it; situated processes generating local consensual knowledges that are provisional and grounded at the level of collective interaction. Insights that emerge from this approach are not the enduring and 'universal truths' suggested through a 'sublime' aesthetic experience of Greek sculpture, or a Picasso or Kandinsky painting for instance. A universal discursive system is not needed to understand, appreciate or be moved by the work, as the discursive framework is established through dialogical interaction as material process and aesthetic form. Kester calls these 'conversation pieces', art works as social practice that are grounded in, evolving from, and responsive to the political, social and cultural context. Such works are enabled through exchange that is based on a 'reciprocal openness' that is 'sensitive' to the identities of speaking subjects' (Kester, 2005:90). The liberatory possibility Kester suggests, is located in the process of communication that the artwork catalyses. Whilst in other contexts this might be called social work, therapy or activism, the location of such a process in arts discourse identifies it as art.

The work of art as communicative exchange rather than physical object, or performance 'staged' for audiences as onlookers, is performative beyond the production of artist and participant identities through situational encounters. This stands in contrast to Bourriaud's Relational Aesthetics, which constructs and frames relations as art work to be consumed as immersive experience in the de-contextualised 'white cube' of galleries and similar homogenised spaces (Bishop 2004). According to artist Jay Koh (in Kester 2005:107), real dialogical aesthetics are not about reproducing sites of exchange, but in creating dialogical frameworks that are as much a form of listening to place and people as speaking assertively to audiences through subjection to an artwork. In social practice made through dialogical aesthetics, the artist(s), their collaborators and the participants are all the 'expressive locus' of the work, throughout its making *and* as framed through its performative event structure.

Thinking with performance as aesthetic activity offers conceptual tools for geographers to de-naturalise taken for granted daily activities; to consider the constructed nature of identities, subjectivities and agencies, and to critique and understand that construction in relation to social and other power relations (Gregson & Rose, 2000). Geographers have used performance to understand



and evoke modes of experience and frame conceptual thinking (McCormack, 2004, 2005, 2010), reimagine landscape through practices and relations that 'fold' body and environment into each other (Pearson, 2007, Lorimer & Wylie, 2010), and frame the performing body as a methodological tool (Johnston & Pratt, 2014). Understanding cultural performances as dramaturgy draws attention to gaps between performance and performativity, and the sometimes purposeful subversion of such performances in order to resist or intervene in behavioural norms (Gregson and Rose, 2000:434). Applying the vocabularies of aesthetic performance such as 'backstage', 'script', 'score' as metaphors in the analysis of cultural performance, evokes the purposeful and received nature of these structurings (Crang 1994).

As art is more social, relational, situated outside studios and problematically democratic, then the practice of dramaturgy also no longer belongs to the theatre. It has become a practice spanning diverse disciplines and cultural sites as "the movement of relations through a constellation of questions, approaches, and responses to the matter at hand" (Heathfield, 2016). As we create and trade our cultural performances through digital means, so the dramaturg begins to exist more consciously in all of us, and unconsciously through our digital networks. As Rogers suggests, whilst 'Geographical writings are (therefore) dominated by discussion of performance's social and political potential', attempts to establish creativity and artistic practice as disciplinary tenets have not kept pace with developments in the broader field of performance and performativity (Rogers, 2012:69; Rogers, 2017, see also Smith, 2015).

Whilst Rogers specifically discusses this in relation to geohumanities, a parallel could also be drawn to the scarcity of attention given to concepts and modes of performance in geographies that approach the digital. Emphasis being given to the visual, spatial, material and affective of computational structures and cultures (see Ash et al. 2016, Ash et al. 2018, Rose, 2016). Addressing these shifts and gaps, thinking with live aesthetic performance as 'conversation piece' moves geographical practice out of the concepts and vocabularies of theatre and performance as practice, method and metaphor, and into the realm of performance as philosophy in action (Cull, 2011).

## 1.6 The future heritage of contemporary commodity culture

*I try to think about my consumption mostly in single units. It's only a pair of trainers, a phone, a social media account. I try to imagine these things as both necessary and inconsequential. I try to pay attention to the provenance of the things I need. To limit what I want. But more stuff keeps arriving. Overflowing and abundant, into warehouses, onto screens, into shops and through homes, into recycling yards and waste dumps, into everywhere. It is a co-evolving, intertwined and interdependent procession of stuff that needs more stuff to make it work. The flat screens need remotes. Remotes need sensors and batteries. Sensors need digital chips. Chips need minerals. Screens need software. Software needs content. Content needs viewers. Simultaneously an overflowing and a depletion, our acts of consumption have to feed 'the market' with at least 3.5% more new stuff every year, otherwise 'the economy' is categorised as in a recession (Gold, 2007).*

*Companies play with aspects of durability and consumer desire in relation to economic viability at the expense of social welfare and waste (Bulow, 1986; Waldman, 1993). Single use coffee pods, polyester glitter tops (Stanes & Gibson, 2017), last season's DVD's and all those 'dead' electronics we really wanted. Rainbow maned My Little Ponies, tiny LEGO steering wheels and cheap LED Christmas lights. Desires constructed, materialised and disposed of by the individualised and everywhere surveillance of the 'spectacle' of web 2.0 move slowly on global container routes. Fall off and out into the floating commodity gyre (Cacciottolo, 2014). Collect in acres of landfill out of sight and mind of rapidly increasing city populations. Photos and videos of children wearing sports clothes with rags over their faces sorting through mountains of hazardous debris to collect plastic bottles. To sort toxic e-waste into reusable components and recyclable materials (Hulme, 2015). It is not just the making but also the breaking of commodities that contribute to new forms of mattering; to discard, dispose, recycle and reassemble are all activities that generate new spatialities, materialities and milieus in and through which human and nonhuman processes unfold (Gabrys, 2018).*

*When we really pay attention to the liveliness of things, we have to acknowledge that nothing can really be disposed of, we can only attempt to*

*bring things into presence differently – move, dismantle, rearrange - with limited amounts of control over their immanence. Places and bodies, ecologies and organisms re-making and re-mattering through the socio-technical valuing of computational capitalism. Within these networks, only the most enthusiastic or determinedly provenance oriented, will be able to trace perhaps some of the connections between data, trade, places and values, and attempt to think through the possible consequences of their actions, in order to make informed decisions about how and what they consume.*

*Commodities of all kinds arrive and persist in personal life worlds for a multitude of reasons; because of their or our biographies - they've been wanted, needed or inherited - because they're essential, mundane, small, neglected, in consequential or forgotten. Maybe they're perceived as useful for other purposes, or have speculative or other kinds of value for us. This overwhelming machine of production, consumption and dispersal we inhabit is sometimes called post-scarcity culture, but has been named by Cultural Anthropologist Sharon McDonald from the Heritage Futures project as the 'prolific present' (heritage-futures, n.d). Considering the impact our commodity cultures are having on what might be considered our future heritage, questions of how and why we collect, categorise, value, keep or discard things become increasingly urgent.*

“We come to know the meaning of heritage partly *through* the objects and artefacts which have been made to stand for and symbolise its essential values” (Hall, 2005:25), and museums are where these objects are held up for scrutiny and interpretation. Through the classification, naming and objectification of things, museums have the power ‘to make things seen’ (Bourdieu 1985:735 in Dicks 2016:53). A tool to collectively examine things in close up; to investigate how and why those things have arrived in particular places, and to hear/read and interpret the stories that have been told about those things and their journeys.

Museums also constitute a field of institutionalised value judgements, by constructing and conditioning how and what we remember (and forget) in public, and through the types of social identities that are on display and how they are interpreted. The formation of the modern museum was part of wider

governmental reform of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century that Foucault argued was 'a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of a family over his household and goods' (Foucault 1978:92 in Bennett, 1995:18). Culture or as it was then considered, the manners beliefs and morals of subordinated classes, was something needing regulation and transformation, and judged as important to mental and moral health as clean water, sanitation and street lighting. I am speaking about museums here as collectors and keepers of all kinds of cultural heritage – including galleries with a remit for collecting the contemporary, something deeply associated with the construction of art as commodity and associated markets.

With larger institutions this governance may express and condition hierarchies of aesthetic taste, often as a material embodiment of a nationalised and traditionalised concept of culture (Hall, 2005:24). Smaller and locally focussed museums may set out other terms of value, bringing together a set of symbols to evoke an idea of place or 'community' through the artefacts displayed. These kinds of museums may not be operating so much through judgement of taste, but grant legitimacy to social identity through the social value of the display, therefore addressing other kinds of dispositions and forms of capital created by 'habitus' (Dicks, 2016:53 following Bourdieu). This is the museum as agent of cognitive and emotional change, where visitors are learning or receiving the authorised value narrative in different ways. Similarly, the museum form has also been appropriated in order to find ways of valuing things that are on the edge of being lost, forgotten or transformed. Small, unusual, DIY and temporary museums draw attention to values that lie underneath the prevailing narrative, problematising understandings of what constitutes heritage, who is allowed to curate it, and what story it tells.

Curatorial practice involves the design and production of presentation models in order to produce meaning – or ideology. It's a mix of materiality and imagination where objects on display are authorised as valuable in relation to the unfolding place, context and narrative they are situated in. As a product of Western cultural art production, curatorial practice is 'deeply involved in the politics of display, politics of site, politics of transfer and translation, and regimes of visibility' (Richter, 2017:147). Curating produces all kinds of 'performances

and speech acts' that contribute to what is made visible and valuable. In this way curation is a cultural tool for constructing and managing affect and attention. If curatorial practice is understood as an expanded field, all kinds of things beyond objects can be selected, combined into groups, and interpreted as an act of meaning production. Whilst some curatorial practices uphold and promote institutional values, models of feminist curating for example can consciously produce platforms of shared interests, and shared knowledge production, creating spaces of 'being with' that question what an institutionalised community could look and feel like, and how power is organised (Richter, 2017).

Post-colonial critiques, developing spaces of technology and the need to 'earn their keep' though changing funding landscapes, mean that many museums and heritage sites 'are re-defining themselves as spaces of community, dialogue and public engagement, identity formation and performance' (Geoghegan, 2010:1463). This often involves modes of collaborative curation and ways of knowing or making sense of that privilege the body, practice and performativity (Waterton, 2014). A popular way of opening up the role of museology to publics is to invite reflection on everyday objects and their significance to us; exploring relations between people and things through biographical revelation, intertwining the intimate and the formal to think about material agency and the value of things in everyday life.

Every museum has a continuous duty of care to the things donated to it. Thinking with the museum, how we decide what we want to collect and care for, and what to do with things we don't want, is based in what the institution and the curator understands as valuable. What if we imagined the whole world as a museum, with our collective curatorial responsibility being to care for, display and interpret all the commodities within it? Could this include all the tangible and intangible commodities constituted, colonised, enclosed by capitalist assessment processes? Could this change the way think about, care for and value their future legacies?

## **2. Constructing the field: research design and collaborative methodologies**

### **2.1 Prototype dreamings.**

The idea for the Museum of Contemporary Commodities began to take shape as an artist and scholar activist collaboration at the end of 2012. It has brought my own aesthetics and practices of live performance making into dialogue with Ian Cook's 'follow the things' research. Traditional forms of trade justice activism attempt to de-fetishise commodities by 'naming, blaming and shaming' the perpetrators of injustice and sites of exploitation (Castree, 2001, Hartwick, 2000). These are knowledge based calls for change that often prompt feelings of guilt, ambivalence, and at worst feelings of overwhelming impotence or anger at the 'defetishisers' themselves rather than the system of commodification (Cook & Woodyer, 2012). De-fetishising work is important, but can oversimplify the 'socio-material relations of consumption' in favour of those of 'production, distribution and exhibition'; often dehumanising and fetishising consumers as figures in radical rhetoric, and presenting objects as inert and acted upon, rather than lively participants in the shaping of trade relations (Jackson, 1999, Cook & Woodyer, 2012).

Responding to Appadurai's call to 'follow the things', Ian Cook et al. has pre-figured and drawn on the above arguments and others to investigate the lives in things; re-storying their social and political entanglements through scholar activist endeavours. Multi-sited ethnographies that re-narrate commodities as dis-placed materials as much as placed artefacts, argue for an understanding of such as moving within circuits of culture (Cook & Crang 1996, Cook et al. I, 2004, 2007). Classroom environments structure discursive group based 'border pedagogies' that actively draw on the politics of difference, and play with the way that learners as consumers enrol commodities in identity performances (Cook et al. I, 2000). Participatory LEGO labs draw on critical maker methodologies of thinking through tinkering to 'encourage careful thought and lively conversation' with their participants (Cook et al. I, 2015:4, 2018).

These approaches work to 're-humanise' abstracted connections between people and things; acknowledging positionality and partial perspectives, and using the public and collective negotiation of such as a form of narrative agency

to develop 'empathetic appreciations of commodity relations' (Cook et al. I, 2015:4). Cook et al. advocates for these and other 'lively and enchanting', non-didactic practices to be used as both creative and activist geographical research propositions that 'get with the fetish' as a way of raising rather than attempting to answer questions (Cook & Woodyer, 2012). Following Bennett (2001) the concept of 'enchantment' here is suggested as a range of aesthetic sensibilities and ways of 'doing' rather than 'modelling' geography. 'A sensory encounter of unintelligibility' that gives way to the 'just perceptible and more-than-rational' as a way of understanding the complexity of materiality (Cook & Woodyer, 2012).

Cook et al.'s research is accessible to publics through [followthethings.com](http://followthethings.com); a website parodic of Amazon, with commodity 'departments' curating commodity research and examples of activism into themed categories. This format is used to assemble a set of non-didactic, 'open' materials that engage the visitor in active experience curation through the ability to 'browse' the departments (Cook et al. I, 2017). Both [followthethings.com](http://followthethings.com) and the activities it documents and evokes, involve the 'creative appropriation, creation, and enactment of culture, along with large doses of humor and creativity' to create a form of political poetics (Sandlin & Milam, 2008:338). These are activities that intervene and resist at points of 'potential, assumption and consumption',<sup>6</sup> as much as through direct action at points of 'production, destruction or decision' (Verson, 2007:173); appropriating platform cultures in an attempt to build power with rather than maintaining power over (Allen, 2015). Activisms as social practice that acknowledge that art is no longer *the* producer of culture, and that advertisers, activists and citizens can all draw on the same kind of affective and connective strategies to construct socialities for their own purposes (Thompson, 2012).

The intention of myself and Ian with MoCC was to develop an art-geography research project that would build on [followthethings.com](http://followthethings.com) practice; using my own performance based activist approaches to move it 'off the screen' and into everyday spaces and interactions. We'd had the idea in relation to a call for academic-creative industries collaborations on the theme of 'heritage', but didn't

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<sup>6</sup> 'Points of intervention are places in a system, be it a physical system (chain of production, political decision making) or a conceptual system (ideology, cultural assumption, etc.), where action can be taken to effectively interrupt the system.' (Verson, 2007:174)

know how to manifest it practically. We needed a dramaturgy. We spent many initial meetings at a café in a local 'upmarket' supermarket, drinking coffee we'd bought on our loyalty cards, listening to the beep of scanners, and thinking about the technical 'subconscious' that enabled the flow of things around us. The situated nature of our conversations influenced our dreaming of what was possible, and began a critical making process that evolved into the creative cultural assemblage and art geography research performance that is MoCC.

*This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.*

**Fig.3 'ranKing ranQueen:Scientifically certified trinkets' (CNNTravel 2009).**

We took *ranKing ranQueen* shops as inspiration. As satellite shops of the much larger *Tokyu* department stores, *ranKing ranQueen* use *Tokyu's* monthly sales data to rank the top selling products: only selling the ten most popular in different categories such as electrical, beauty, confectionary. Goods are labelled with full product 'data' on a small sign similar to online retail sites (DuBois, 2005). *ranKing ranQueen* brings computational cultures of valuing into collective public imagination in a strikingly performative way.

We would combine our art and geography methods to create a social art work as parodic dramaturgy – a participatory performance that cites the rules of a genre or style of something already known by the audience in order to give it



new meaning. In social and political terms parody is a strategy often used by outsider groups to find ways into creating dialogue between cultures and subcultures, or as a means for marginalised or oppressed groups to take over aspects of dominant culture in order to critique and make visible. Both a ridicule and an homage (Chatman 2001), parody is the ideal form to acknowledge the inability for any of us to be outside looking on; understanding ourselves inside the rules of something, whilst seeing those rules at a critical distance.

We imagined a 'pop-up' museum-shop-gallery that would rank commodities brought in or suggested by the public in relation to different types of (in)justice. Visitors would be able to consult with material culture researchers, to find out more about the provenance of their commodity in order to make those judgments. We imagined things on display shelves talking to people in unexpected ways, telling stories about what they were made of and who made them. As a concept to prompt public re-valuing of any commodity in the world at any time, the museum would need to be everywhere. Instructional invitations would prompt publics to perceive differently through taking part in activities along the lines of Fluxus scores (Friedman et al. 2002). To intervene in daily life spaces, we would need to create remote access to the museum through a range of digital interfaces. In attempting to set up a structure for the absurd and unachievable goal of the collective curation and re-interpretation of all the commodities in the world as future heritage, the aim was to make the liveliness of commodities and their socio-technical valuing systems more 'feelable' to us and others, in order to think differently with them.

Aesthetic performance and digital structures resonate ontologically; like performance, digital things emphasise the temporalities of the spatial, and matter and meaning are part of the same flow (Nelson 2010). The research proposition of MoCC uses the methodologies of performance based social practice as a way of subverting, intervening in and re-shaping digital things and concepts to provoke new potentials. This is managed through the unfinished and iterative processes of speculative prototyping. MoCC follows Suchman's proposition of a prototype as a tangible but provisional apparatus, aligned in more or less durable forms. Prototyping is process of configuring new alignments between social and material that are localised and mobile, stable

and reconfigurable, familiar and new (Suchman et al. 2002:164–175). By purposefully co-constructing and presenting objects and events as collaborative and open, this critical making method<sup>7</sup> attempts to constitute a shared frame of understanding between designers, makers and users, artist and audience, researchers and participants, offering possibilities to exchange and realign knowledges and practices (Ratto, 2011:253).

## **2.2 Activism or career?**

MoCC has activist intentions, but it is not solely an activist activity. If it were, I would probably be working other jobs and making MoCC voluntarily to provoke change I believe in. Cultural activism as social practice, is enmeshed in the economics of artistic and cultural production in complex and often exploitative ways. As much as we might like to believe that art functions in resistance to hegemonic economies, it is an integral part of the knowledge economy, financial and creative industries.

Since the 70's art as social practice has shifted from the experimental and politically motivated performances produced by artists who were independently wealthy or living on welfare, to initiatives enabled by public funding. Between '1997 and 2010 the UK government rendered the Arts Council explicitly beholden to social engineering, using culture to reinforce policies of social inclusion' (Bishop 2012:175). This enrolment of social practice into the UK public funding system has offered opportunities for artists to create change being paid and working within institutions, but also raises the problems of such work being instrumentalised, subverted and exploited for other ends. The labour of artists and cultural producers who form the 'creative core' of the cultural masses is often concerned with matters of aesthetics over economics. Artists that are concerned with the construction of affective events that mobilise

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<sup>7</sup> Critical making connects critical thought with physical making in a non-linear and responsive three stage process: reviewing of literature, concepts, theories; group design and building of prototypes; iterative reconfiguration and reflection. As a shared process it encourages the growth of a shared frame, often negotiated across disciplinary and epistemic difference (Ratto, 2011).

political and agitational powers also have their work subsumed within the economics of the art 'market', higher education, and in the production of place as commodity as part of tourism and gentrification agendas (Harvey, 2002). The system of assessment surrounding the value of social practice also encloses large parts of artists' work into knowledge economies as unpaid 'gifts' (Tsing, 2013).

To produce MoCC in the way we wanted to, we had to raise money. To pay me so I could support myself and my family, and pay our collaborators' time and expertise. This enrolled us in a number of institutional, social and business agendas. Our initial creative industry/academia knowledge exchange funding application helped produced a 'Thinkering Day', which opened up the MoCC concept for peer prototyping. This funded doctoral research has helped shape the art and cultural activism into a process of slower thinking, and generated a capacity for rigorous theoretical engagement and discussion with a range of collaborators – a luxury that artists and activists working outside institutions often can't afford. Further funds raised over 3 years of research from various sources have resourced MoCC and associated activities in London and Exeter, produced in partnership with other artists, academics, civic representatives, arts and cultural organisations, volunteers and members of the public.



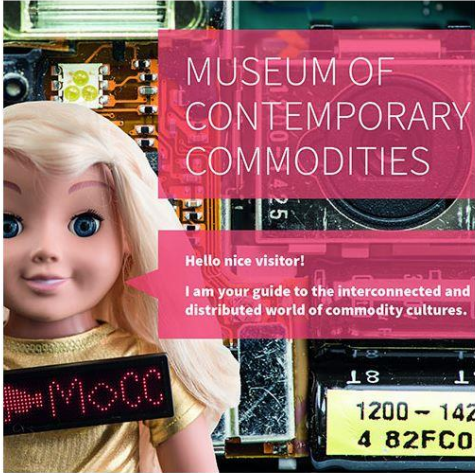
***MoCC Trade Justice Thinkering Day video (2013). 4min15***

The project has balanced constantly and precariously between success and self-exploitation. Recognising the artist's tendency to 'gift' their labour alongside our urge for creative invention and the passion to change things, we have attempted to pay and treat others as fairly as possible within the remit of what we all wanted to achieve. Whilst this is not the direct subject matter of this research, it's important to note the shaping of the project not only by the different skills and passions of collaborators, but also the agendas, engagement targets and budgetary limits of the institutions and funding bodies it draws

resources from (see Foster & Lorimer 2007). As a visitor to the Exeter MoCC shop noted by adding a screen shot of the MoCC website to our collection, the processes of public funding makes the project into a commodity itself.

by marcus | Convenience (1) | Identity (1) | 0 comment | question

f t e



MoCC is neither a building nor a permanent collection of stuff – it's an invitation. To consider every shop, online store and warehouse full of stuff as if it were a museum, and all the things in it part of our collective future heritage.

**Where and how is it used?**  
To create a different kind of imaginary, a new conversation, to ask or answer questions and consider the values we associate with the things and stuff that help to make us who we are, and to shape the places in which we live.

**What did you or someone else pay for it?**  
Thoughts for a week.

**Why do you want to add it to the museum?**  
By adding something to MoCC you are engaging in a data collection and processing exercise that is also an experiment in collective re-valuing. Our use and interpretation of the information in this database will be different from those of online retailers and direct marketing companies. We will not monetize it or use it to predict and manipulate your behaviour. However we will process this data using algorithms which have been written, like all algorithms, to interpret and present information with a specific agenda. How does knowing this affect your experience of the Museum? How does data collection and

**Fig. 4** Screen grab of MoCC in the MoCC Collection

### 2.3 Social practice as research performance: the para-ethnographic process.

How is it possible to construct collaborative prototyping processes and social art work as geographical research? A para-ethnography, where ethnographic work is shared at a high level with partners in research, builds its ideas through 'doing' dialogic forms, which are then involved into fieldwork to produce ethnographic texts. Rather than being multi-sited and following things, a form which spoke particularly to theories of globalisation in the 1990's, a para-ethnography involves creating "third spaces, para-sites, intermediate forms, platforms and digital compositions, contemporary contraptions... in general positioning ethnography between design and art" (Cantarella et al. 2014).

Marcus' term 'contraption', a core concept in para-ethnography, refers to a disjointed set of processes across different sites in which a group of actors engage. This gives a sense of research design that extends in many different directions, having nodes and rhizomic qualities. The 'contraption' moves

between orienting encounters with experts – artists, designers, scientists, technicians – and ‘the return to them from elsewhere with the news of the realities that your original informants only imagine or presume in their own milieus’ (Marcus & Rabinow, 2008:75). This happens through a combination of fieldwork, conceptual work and collaboration, and the agenda comes by working through an embedded imaginary. Imaginary referring to a concept that is constituted from a grid of connected activities which includes but is not limited to the artist and the aesthetic. Marcus stresses that a key part of the para-ethnographic work is movement from the initial site of the creation of the imaginary across expertise into another; thereby constructing a multi-sited research design which moves between an ‘elite’ point of view and daily life contexts. The ethnographic texts developed from these encounters are then ‘pushed’ back into the production of field work by posing pedagogical challenges and experiments, working inter-textually between forms of performance, art and design.

As interactive portals to thought, the ‘contraption’ brings many different kinds of actor into reflection on things that are not present in the way they experience their lives. The ethnographic effort is not just to describe the ideas of one set of people as the primary object of study, but to focus on what is emerging and actualising out of the relating of the many fields and facets of the problem at hand. Whilst there is no escape from holism through the constituting of a research design – something which is implied in the description of MoCC as ‘the’ museum, and contemporary commodity ‘culture’ in the singular - the ‘contraption’ aims to trouble that conception by acknowledging and studying what is actualised and emerging from the many different elements as they are in flux and motion. Fieldwork studies the concrete manifestations of these things, and the data that accumulates begins from observation of recurrent constructions or tropes that current discourses examine, and which people are conscious or unconscious of (Marcus & Rabinow, 2008:80).

To avoid being drowned by the accumulation of data in such a process, Marcus suggests that fieldwork in a para-ethnography should self-consciously accomplish something that is as unfinished as it is theoretical, placing analytical originality in close relation to data. Using a research design process more

similar to art or design practice – a moving back and forth between making and critique - de-centres the significance and weight of the fieldwork, making it more related to what occurs before and afterwards. This allows a ‘fashioning’ of the research site that is deeply informed by ethnographic practice. It also allows a learning of skills that might help approach the site with more applicable knowledge of its modes of operation (Marcus & Rabinow, 2008:84). With each MoCC prototype the ethnographic methods were developed integrally with the art activities; reiterated, refined or adapted according to the changing nature of site, context and encounter with participants.

Ethnography tends to be shaped by the discipline it is being engaged through, which in anthropological terms includes length. Rapid ethnographies have been developed in Human Computer Interaction contexts to “better understand users, the user environments, the interaction between the two – in a shortened time frame” (Millen 2000 in Pink and Morgan, 2013). These are evolving methods that accept at the outset the impossibility of gathering a complete and detailed understanding of the setting. Methods include focussed encounters in specific settings including intensive observation, interviewing, conversation and various types of documentation (video, image, audio) analysed at a later date, and increased participation in the process by the informant/respondent. The interplay between encounter, documentation and theoretical knowledges is not linear, is data intensive and relies on a depth of cohesion brought forth at an analytical stage (Wall 2014, Pink and Morgan, 2013).

At the first research site in Finsbury Park, the 'go along' was used as an *in situ*, mobile interview technique that develops phenomenological experiences and understandings of perceptual space of participants whilst they shop in their local area (Kusenbach, 2003). Rapid group ethnographies - walkshops (Greenfield, 2010), and 'flashmob' ethnographies (Forlano, 2010) were enrolled into participatory events that aimed to uncover, identify, analyse and story data-place-trade-values relations in the urban environment. These, alongside structured interviews with collaborators, have been transcribed, and analysed in relation to data gathered from short participant surveys, autoethnographic writings, participant observation, notes taken whilst looking at event photographs, and short video interviews with event participants. This fieldwork

engaged 8 people in 'go alongs', 17 people in workshops, 12 people in the Central Saint Martins workshop, 97 people attended the Free Market.

At the second research site in Exeter, MoCC occupied an empty shop, open four days/week for three weeks. In addition to the methods above, this also involved six 'invigilators' - four performers/socially engaged artists, myself and Ian - interpreting the MoCC conceptual frame, its objects and activities for 226 visitors, whilst observing interactions and collecting responses. At the end of each day, visitor interactions as experienced by invigilators were shared in group conversation; a form of sense-making through storytelling that was necessary both to construct data, and as a de-brief for 'invigilators' to move out of the mode of art work delivery and into 'daily life'. These conversations were recorded, resulting in approximately 12 hours of audio. Due to the ranging mass of these materials I have chosen to treat the recordings as ethnographic 'scratch notes', and have analysed these with autoethnographic and participant observation field notes, participant audio recordings and other data as above.

The final research site I have chosen to examine in depth is MoCC Guide Mikayla, an interactive art work made from the internet connected My Friend Cayla doll. The doll entered the project during initial stages, and has been shared as a prototype at a number of events between 2015-17. Since I focus in detail on this object in Section 5, it will only be briefly mentioned in preceding sections. The intention of the research into this and other digital things engaged with, is to trace their constitution and configuration as political objects in relation to the 'identity transforming affordances' experienced by anyone who comes into contact with them (Slater & Miller, 2000 in Rogers, 2009).

'The web' generates data in distinct ways, through hyperlinks, search engines, wikis, social media profiles, web archives and big data (Rogers, 2009).

Networks create hotspots and contagions that in turn co-produce all kinds of other 'offline' activity and spatialities. Much of this is 'black boxed' or requires specialist knowledges to unpack. Rather than being the dominant focus, MoCC thinks with the digital as a constituting condition of the commodity cultures being examined. In relation to encounters with digital things, I have therefore limited my approach to non-native digital methods such as participant observation, critical making, interviews about coding and software with technologist

collaborators, and short online surveys. Other necessary detail has been gained through literature review.

The contexts that people are situated in when encountering digital interfaces remotely are extensive and relatively unknowable (Hine, 2015). It would need another approach entirely to take into account how the answering of online surveys is affected by how they are embedded in daily life worlds. I have instead taken online answers at face value within the context of the interface or activity, and have focussed more on participant interactions with interfaces as a part of the para-ethnographic assemblage, when I or others were physically co-present.

With the body of the artist also being the body of the ethnographer, the shift between ethnographic and artistic frame has been challenging to navigate. An artist needs to reflect on findings to construct new experiences, often acting on instinct. Ethnographic process requires reflexivity within shifting contexts and relations. After initial struggles moderating this, the pace and volume of work meant no choice but merge production of data and artistic content, moving between roles and tasks according to what was necessary and possible. Alongside thick descriptions and participant observation, field notes also include job lists, fragments of collaborator suggestions, sketches of ideas and notes for administrative actions.

The use of autoethnography as 'insider' research has assisted me to deconstruct my role as artist-researcher; attending to the phenomenological and 'reflecting on self-understanding as a way to shape understandings in the wider world' (Butz & Besio, 2009:1660). These self-narrations strive to communicate strategically to audience/reader, and are also constitutive of identity. Whilst Butz & Besio describe this as potentially 'risky' to self-identity for academics communicating to particular types of audience, the interventional and positioned nature of this study and its attention to changes in perception in everyday settings, mean that it is a particularly appropriate means to animate representations of experience and encounter as enactments in themselves (Dewsbury et al. 2002).



Analysis is viewed as a positioned and constructive act, a form of data generation in itself. Field notes, re-reading, listening back, preliminary coding are all forms of sense making, and involve constructive back and forth to make meaning on the page (Crang & Cook, 2007). Analysis also begins long before writing. Participant observation effects change in researcher and participant; in the act of becoming the thing we are observing, the world itself has changed through the process (Laurier, 2010). Enfolding the social practice of the 'conversation piece' into the research design from the outset, has meant the intersubjective exchange of the dialogical aesthetics has affected/infected and intervened in data production and analysis. Group based processes change the nature of individual responses, with thoughts being framed for, or influenced by others, and expressed in situ. Such issue based, reflective group conversations can also be understood as a form of activism in themselves in that they 're-cast the personal troubles of milieu', experienced individually but discussed collectively, as political 'public issues of social structure' (Johnson, 1996:528).

During analysis, some particular themes were prioritised over others in relation to development of the 'contraption'. For instance, coding of the Finsbury Park 'go alongs' inspired the structure for the MoCC Collection online, and various findings were set aside to prioritise that development. My initial approach was 'open coding' done by hand, noting key words and recurring themes to bring research encounter and transcript together. From this initial grouping, a pattern began to emerge that raised the idea of different categories of 'valuing', and what those categories might be. Focus on this necessarily meant leaving behind other themes that were not contributing to idea development at that point.

Participant contributions recorded through audio, video and written quotations have found their way back into the 'contraption' not only to inform its development, but as part of its constitution as an art work, as marketing, and as project documentation. The potential of this affecting participant responses was mitigated by offering participants finely graded choices about how their contributions were used, and how anonymous they would like to be. This was an ethical approach and a pedagogical strategy, with consent form completion being 'staged' in the social art work experience, in order to raise awareness with participants of embedded surveillance processes in daily life spaces.

Theoretical insights gained through ongoing literature review have been written into the empirical work – as workshop explanations, website texts, event marketing, explanatory leaflets, shared on the MoCC social media feeds – all of this embedding itself into the unfolding ‘contraption’. The ethnographic vignettes that follow in the next three sections foreground this back and forth; emphasising dialogue and the collaborative nature of sense-making through a kind of ‘polyphony’ or perspectival relativity in relation to the event being written.

#### **2.4 The ethics of participant recruitment and engagement.**

Participatory research actively creates space for the co-production of knowledge in potentially transformational ways for all involved, but there may be issues of unintended/unacknowledged hierarchies, and questions such as how co-ownership maps onto an academic knowledge production model (Kindon et al. 2007). Whilst MoCC is not participatory research as Kindon describes, but an ethnography and social artwork that ‘stages’ observable activity, it was necessary from the outset to negotiate hierarchies and questions of ownership of results. As a para-ethnography, research was initially co-owned between myself and Ian, then widened to include partner organisations and other academics for particular strands of work. As with a collaborative art work, co-ownership of the IP of the social practice lies with the initiators (myself and Ian), with partners receiving an event, exhibition, talk or workshop, and collaborators receiving payment and/or role acknowledgment for their participation.

Contributing artists own copyright on their own music, images or code. Some collaborators were post-graduate student interns, the exchange for them was knowledge and experience based. As discussed earlier, this work involves all kinds of gifting, and the exchanges were much fuller, livelier and more generous than this agreement describes.

MoCC was framed to participants as collaborative artwork, doctoral study, and co-produced ethnographic research. The finely graded consent form was designed to be a ‘conversation piece’ in its own right; raising thoughts about our data and how we value it as an opening ‘warm-up’ to the MoCC interaction. Consent forms were responsive to sites and activities, the process of gaining consent was moderated by MoCC Invigilators.

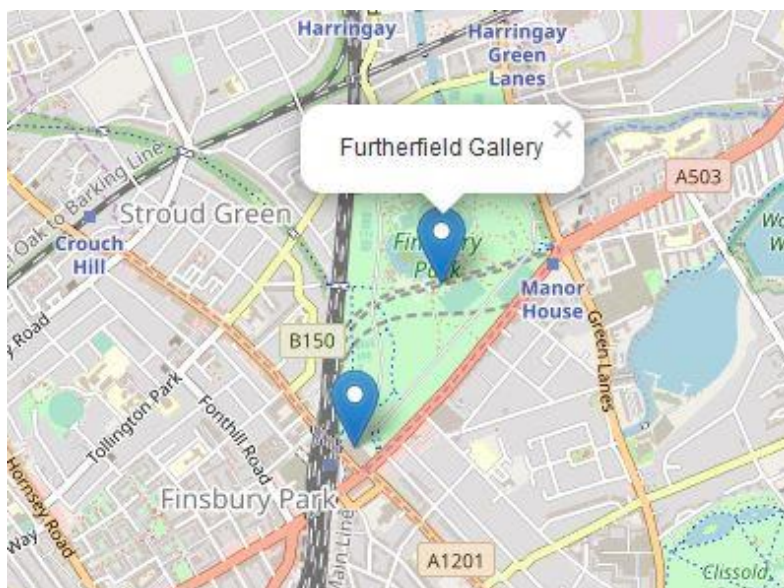
A gathering of bodies for any purpose is political space created through plural action, the construction of which demands ethical attention (Butler, 2015). Who is included and excluded and how in MoCC, who has authority of voice and visibility, is governed by the politics of identities, ideologies and recognition, shaped by all and everything involved in its making. The invitation to participate through marketing, the siting and accessibility of each event, the attention paid to social media, was therefore key in co-constructing participation. Recruitment for project collaborators in London and Exeter was done through advertising paid roles and internships with partner organisations. Recruitment for 'go alongs' was through snowballing from personal contacts and partner organisation recommendations. An effort was made to curate a mixed demographic of age, gender and ethnicity. All the MoCC events were free to attend apart from three film screenings in Exeter which were hosted with partner organisations. The siting of the three key exhibition moments was in public space, visible and accessible to all, with clear promotional material encouraging involvement.

### 3. Prototype #1 MoCC Free Market at Furtherfield Gallery: assembling the 'contraption' as parodic dramaturgy.

#### 3.1 A collaboration with Furtherfield.

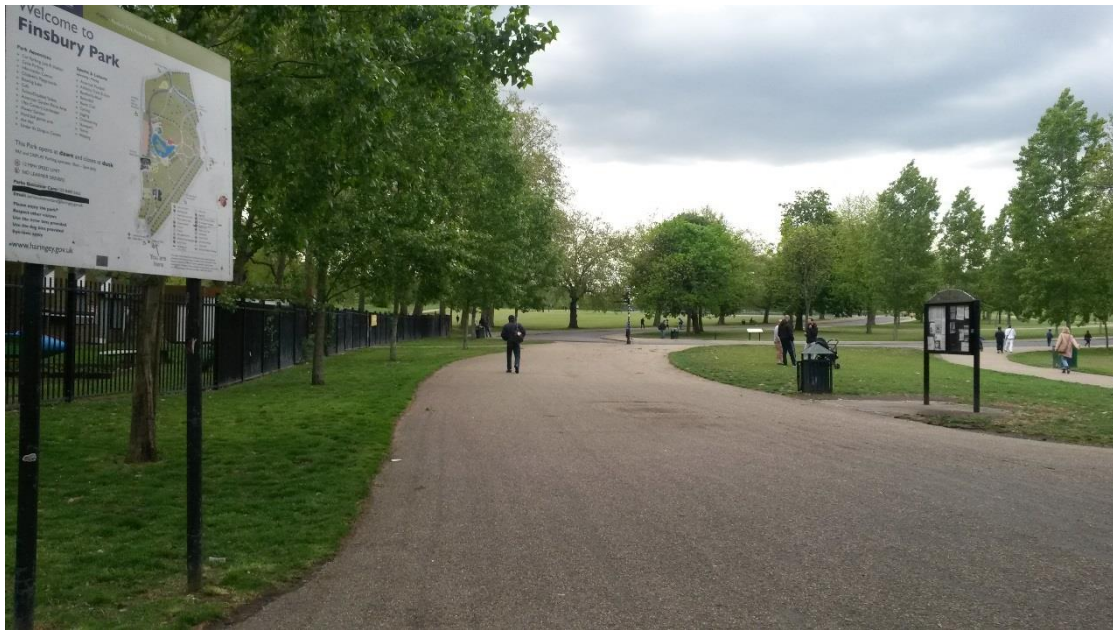
The problem of acting within the global culture industry is that art is subsumed by, or uses the same mechanisms as the culture it attempts to comment on. Yuk Hui also suggests that culture often denigrates 'technics' to social hierarchies, calling for both art and research projects that engage with the performativity of 'technics' in a way that allows culture to shape them. 'We need a turn. It is not simply about studying technology, but rather turning technology into a support for culture' (Lovink & Hui 2016).

Furtherfield is an artist led organisation co-founded by Ruth Catlow and Marc Garrett in 1997 as the Internet took shape as a new public space for internationally connected cultural production (Travlou, 2013). Currently situated in Finsbury Park, London, organisational focus is on the nexus of art, technology and social change. Their manifesto of DIWO (Do It With Others), is inspired by the DIY ethos of early net art pioneers who developed tactics for navigating and intervening in the web and its developing cultures (Catlow and Garrett, 2012). Ruth Catlow attended the MoCC Thinkering Day in 2013, and the project resonated with Furtherfield's aims to embed their programme into the Finsbury Park communities of users, and raise their profile in the local cultural landscape.



**Fig 5. Furtherfield Gallery and Commons in Finsbury Park, London (Furtherfield, 2019).**

Furtherfield runs a gallery space in the centre of the park, and the 'Commons' workshop space near Finsbury Park transport hub entrance. It also hosts an international online discussion community through its artist led blogging platform. Furtherfield buildings are 'loaned' to them by Haringey Council, and the park is bordered by Hackney and Islington, making the overall area fall between three boroughs.

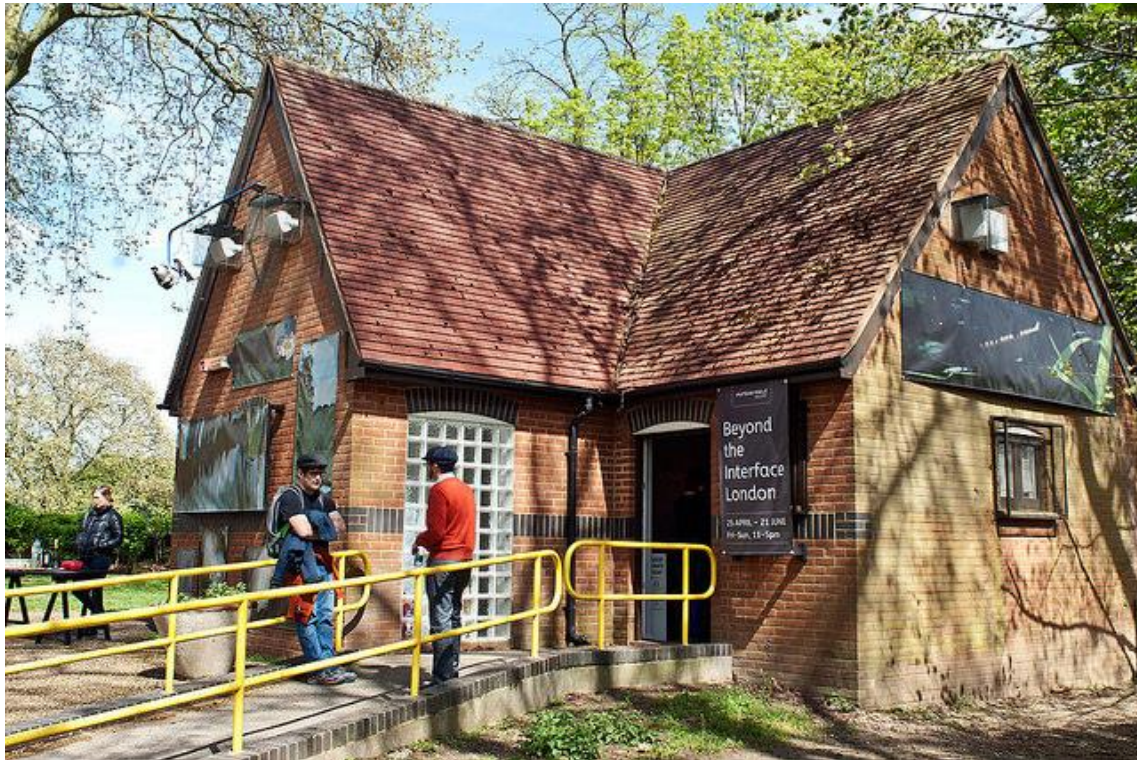


**Fig. 6. Entrance to Finsbury Park with Furtherfield 'Commons' on the left. March 2015.**

Project funding secured from Islington Council meant MoCC activity took place around Finsbury Park transport hub situated in that borough, and at Furtherfield Commons and Gallery. The audience demographic at the time of initial fieldwork consisted of approx 2500 visitors per year - 80% likely to be park users, local Finsbury Park residents of 'hyperdiverse' ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, 25% children and young people, 20% art audiences from London UK and beyond with an interest in critical questions of art and technology (statistics provided by Furtherfield 2015).

Between March-July 2015 we ran four strands of research activity that 'cross-fertilised' each other, and began to construct the ethnographic 'contraption': accompanied shopping trips, interviews with local traders, walkshops, and a two day workshop with MA students from Central Saint Martins. These happened alongside group visioning and project management meetings, creating a project

identity, website and marketing, and collaborating with a sound designer to create affective atmospheres for the July public event, the parodic dramaturgy of the MoCC Free Market.



**Fig. 7. Furtherfield Gallery 2015**

Ruth contributed curatorial ideas, challenges and critical reflections throughout the process. She brokered relationships with funders, local arts partners, academics, artists and creative technologists; hosted meetings and events, helped producer recruitment, hosted a post-graduate Museum Studies intern, and provided staff and venue support. MoCC gained status, resources and social capital from the partnership, was advertised as part of Furtherfield's developing Art Data Money programme, and as well as the Free Market, 'MoCC Guide Mikayla' the interactive doll was shown as part of the Art, Data, Money exhibition in October 2015.

Key collaborators in MoCC Free Market alongside myself, Ian and Ruth were: Alison Ballard - Producer, Gareth Foote – technologist, Chiara Garbellotto – Post-graduate student intern, Dr Alison Powell – Data activist and researcher at London School of Economics, Olga Massanet – Furtherfield designer, Dr Emmanuel Spinelli - sound artist.

My role in this process was lead artist/dramaturg/ethnographer – conducting initial fieldwork, instigating and facilitating the group multi-vision, ‘holding’ the various strands of activity together, directing development, keeping a project overview, enabling critical questioning of what was developing in relation to project aims, and running participant observation, interviews and autoethnography.

‘There’s a kind of strange ad hocness about the stuff that I do in terms of the aesthetic that people think ... you might think it was careless... but in actual fact it’s the total opposite. There are decisions made about everything that are related to resources, performativity, other people’s agency, you know, and the whole performance of that... and I think the ethics of Furtherfield also match my own which has been really valuable... finding that fit’ (Paula Crutchlow 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2015)



**MoCC Free Market (2015) video 4min15**

### **3.2 Orienting to the commodity worlds of Finsbury Park**

*Arriving is always noise traffic movement. Trajectories smells voices dust. The man selling fruit from his stall outside the back of the station sings the prices in the way I remember from my market days. As soon as I turn the corner, the crash of trading around the transport hub is overwhelming. I’ve learned some population demographics at a recent meeting with the Islington Council officer that shape what I notice. Waves of settlement have created extraordinarily diverse trading practices. As I walk, I relate the things I see to who I think might buy them. Details I might not have noticed become meaningful. Somali dress shops, African vegetable shops, Turkish supermarkets and Arabic cafes, sit next to halal butchers, hardware shops, an art suppliers, organic and health food shops, French Patisseries and Italian delis. Mobile phone traders, a Jewish bakers, Subway, Costa, Lidl and KFC. There is a post office. A shop selling Islamic religious objects. There is still an internet café... and a lot of off-licences. ‘Hipster’ cafes, hair salons and wig shops, ‘destination’ stores selling hair and beauty products for people of colour, a theatre, an art gallery, a pizza*

*restaurant, a bespoke tailoring shop, a dry cleaner, Tescos, Sainsbury's and a bowling alley. Hovering in the background is the thought of the invisible data trading, the mobile phone softwares, sensors embedded in infrastructures. Thinking about commodities 'in general' in such a place seems impossible.*

'The starting point for orientation is the point from which the world unfolds: the 'here' of the body and the 'where' of its dwelling' (Ahmed, 2010:236). Our orientations affect us by shaping how the world coheres around us; they affect the things that we bring near to us and what we do with those things. My initial approach came from my artist habits. An instinctive, sensory noticing with eyes and ears open for things that 'chime' with what I'd been reading and hearing. Walking from station to park, I pause and take a phone photo. It seems to bring something together. Later this image will become an orientation device - an object of perception. I will look at it and remember this moment. Body in front of the shop window. It will remind me of the matter of the things, of imagining where they came from, how they move around in the world, and the feel of the place I encountered them in. Things more than their use or exchange value. The flashing 'Oyster' card sign signals the sensor driven economics of the transport system. The world is my oyster. The image stays with the project throughout 2015 as a marketing object. It helps me attend to how different kinds of bodies matter in what things do, and how the familiar might have become the way that it is in Finsbury Park.

'I imagine things through my body and then I write down what I imagine. Then it's the process... it's only ever the process of working with other people that makes me understand what the detail is that I've actually imagined... because I can't write it or even enact it. I imagine it but it's somewhere in my body thought, rather than my intellectual brain.'  
(Paula Crutchlow 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015)



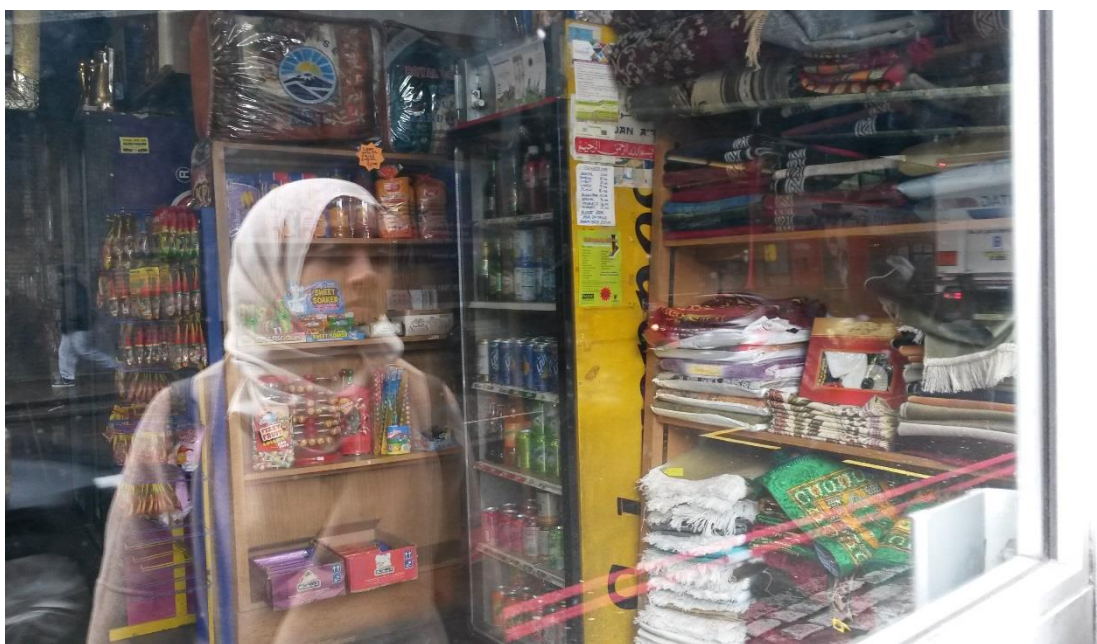


**Fig. 8 Image taken on Wells Terrace, March 2015 and made into a project postcard. Design: Olga Massanet.**

I wanted to investigate perceptions of and tensions between local shop based and online trading practices. I used the 'go along' to develop phenomenological experiences and understandings of perceptual space of participants in situ as they shop (Kusenbach, 2003). Participants were recruited through Furtherfield's organisational connections, personal contacts, and with support from community organisation All Change Arts. They included a Somali woman in her twenties, women from the Islington Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot women's group who I met with a number of times, a long term local resident in her late forties, and a creative technology professional in his thirties recently moved into the area. I attempted to shop with a group of teenage women from a young parents group, but arranging a time proved difficult, so data was gathered with them in conversation. Each trip began with a 'warm up' conversation about what participants buy in general, where and how they buy things. We went shopping for around an hour and half, mostly within 15 minutes walk of Finsbury Park transport hub. Led by participant shopping routes and habits, taking photographs of the things we bought. Participants were invited to map their journey and reflect on it at the end of the session. The final action was to decide

which of the shopping items – or any other real or fictional commodity of their choice - would go in the museum and why<sup>8</sup>.

Reflecting on daily activities whilst in the act of doing re-makes them as performance; engendering a philosophical quality to the activity. As a collaboratively pedagogical process, the 'go alongs' enabled both interviewer and respondent to learn together through conversation. Some realisation was led by the questions, some by the participant's observations in relation to immediate and longer term experience of place. Each trip was intended to be a slice of daily life activity, but the performative nature of the fieldwork - both as conversation based research and its potential inclusion in an art work - influenced some of the participant trip curation.



**Fig.9 'go along' route 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015.**

In spring 2015 Finsbury Park was an area of London like many others, on the edge of substantial change. This was signalled through a recently opened theatre, a refurbished private gallery, and a large student housing block about to be built. I was shown places valued by some participants for reasons that were in tension to what was perceived as encroaching re-development. Efforts were

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<sup>8</sup> I also carried out 'go alongs' in Exeter which raised a very different set of issues in relation to shopping in the centre of a small provincial city. Those findings also contributed to the further development of the contraption through additions to the MoCC online collection.

made by participants to represent the diversity of the area and discuss the politics of that. I entered places that serve specific ethnicities or cultural communities such as Somali shopping malls, and Turkish supermarkets, and had conversations inaccessible without guide. Some people just took me on their usual route. This oriented me to the range of culturally driven trading practices and their power geometries, happening simultaneously in a very small area, but within distinct communities or for specific demographics.



**Fig.10 'go along' route 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015.**

The 'go alongs' uncovered a multiplicity of dynamic and fragile other-than-monetary valuing processes connecting individual decision making, perceptions of trade injustice and place shaping, to their inclusion in or exclusion from digital networks and their associated economic frameworks. A key theme emerging from initial coding, was anxiety about whether the atmosphere, or identity of Finsbury Park would survive changes attributed to gentrification.

One participant's long term experience of the area led her to observe a general character of cultural flux. Small shops open and close due to changing population demographics. These dynamics were set in relation to larger shifts in cultural attributes in the area:

'you're getting a lot of like ... PWC's (Price Waterhouse Cooper)... like that guy I was telling you about from Deloitte living here.... and I thought oh ok...Because it's cheap (laughs). So you know people that earn a lot

of money why are they living here? I thought they were too rich for that.’  
(Taaliah, ‘go along’ 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2015)

The ‘system’ understood as driving this change was perceived as undemocratic and even colonial. Comparisons were drawn with vegetable shops in parts of America, where the prices of vegetables used by particular ethnic groups become unaffordable to them due to popularity with ‘hipsters or whatever...’  
Taaliah described this as being within a chain reaction:

‘Columbusing... where they (‘hipsters’) act like they discovered an area that’s always been present... and always been kind of lively. And then you just end up kind of getting these independent shops that are... not really... well I mean they are independent... but they’re all kind of selling the same thing. I don’t know they just act kind of like urban and different.’  
(Taaliah, ‘go along’ 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015).



**Fig.11. ‘go along’ route 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015.**

Three ‘retro vintage’ shops have opened on one road, “and now that the Vagabond coffee bar is there that’s... you know it’s changing... it’s changing a lot it really is I just hope it can survive...” (Becky, ‘go along’ 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015).



Fig.12. Coffee bar 'go along' 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015.



Fig.13. Voice clip of 'go along' 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015 on a Free Market participant badge.

These phenomena were described as being part of larger economic systems and out of participant control. There was a sense of personal responsibility and feelings of guilt that individual actions were fuelling change, or could act to combat it. Buying things locally was seen as having potential to shape places according to the values or identity of those shopping there. Participants expressed pleasure at supporting the values they believe in – organic food, independent traders such as delis, a hardware shop, a nicely 'curated' toy shop. It was also seen as a stressful duty. That Finsbury Park has one charity shop, whereas Crouch End (a wealthier area) has "about twenty", was something Becky attributed to the price of the rents in relation to decreasing trade for

particular types of shop. People moved into the area because of the feeling that the small local shops and the Woolworths gave, but then didn't use them so they went out of business.



**Fig.14 'go along' route 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015.**

Becky and Richard expressed how much they like some of the shops being there, even though they would never go there themselves. Fear of losing these traders was attributed to increasing house prices; if the people that use the shops can't afford to live in the place, they would disappear. Richard felt his consumption choices in relation to his demographic meant that he himself, contributed to the changes in the area he'd moved there to avoid. He compared Finsbury Park to Amazon; what you buy in the area where you live or work suddenly becomes the only kind of thing you are offered. In this way local shopping was also perceived as actively closing down choice. These interconnected phenomena were observed with a sense of hopelessness and inability to act in ways that don't feed the 'market' forces, or make one a victim of them.



**Fig.15. Voice clip of 'go along' 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015 on a Free Market participant badge**

In relation to trade injustice there was a feeling of trying to keep on top of information, but when shopping, being presented with 'the whole world' of partial or obfuscatory information. Some participants felt challenged to process it all, whilst wanting to do their best within that not-quite-knowing. Becky took a clear stand on things she thought she knew for definite "Really truly do we need to kill people in Bangladesh just to have a cheap pair of socks, I don't think so," but observed that not everyone has the resources to make that choice (Becky, 'go along' 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015). Sometimes just asking the question 'do you know where this comes from' prompted expressions of moral tension and exhaustion.



**Fig.16. Voice clip of 'go along' 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015 on a Free Market participant badge**

The Turkish women and Becky were confident enough to ask shopkeepers about the provenance of unlabelled food, and made clear choices in relation to price and brand (perceived quality and provenance). The younger participants just avoided asking about unlabelled things. Becky attributed the self-service supermarket checkout and online shopping to a culture change where people didn't want to have a conversation any more about what they were buying, because they didn't need to trust the skill and integrity of the shopkeeper.



**Fig.17. 'go along' route 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015.**

The convenience, speed and choice of online shopping was in tension with trust, quality, and worker exploitation. For the young parents, online voucher schemes and food kit delivery services were seen as better value, more convenient, time and energy saving than local shopping. Jasmine said she's addicted to 'Wowcher'. They email her 'every two minutes' with more offers of the same kinds of things she's already bought. 'Does it make you buy more?' '(laughs) yeah it does.' (field notes 16<sup>th</sup> April 2015). Taaliah used online services only for non-perishables; 'I don't trust that with food... I've heard people say that they get you the most... they just pick anything so you can't see the quality of what you're buying.' (Taaliah, 'go along' 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015). For other things she compared product specifications and online reviews, which were taken as proof of quality, 'you see the different varieties. I usually look at



the ratings, the comments, and see the negative comments... and if lots of people like it... erm then I think maybe it must be ok um yeah. And if the price is reasonable, I would get it.' (Taaliah, 'go along' 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015). Other participants were less confident in customer ratings unless the site is a proven authority or curated by experts. For Richard, online shopping was about accessing a large product database of specialist things that cannot be bought locally, and can be delivered to the door, rather than travelling across London which takes time and money.



**Fig.18. Voice clip of 'go along' 16<sup>th</sup> April 2015 on a Free Market participant badge**

The 'go alongs' broadly emphasised feelings of uncertainty and anxiety about the performativity of socio-technical valuing in relation to how commodities matter and where, and what they might cost in monetary and other terms. Trust was variously placed in people and systems depending on how the trade was framed, in relation to existing personal knowledge, values and economic circumstances of the participant. Information itself was mistrusted with the Turkish women particularly questioning if fruit and vegetables bought in independents were as organic as they were labelled, and the Fairtrade movement being questioned by Becky in relation to perceptions of misinformation at supplier levels. The impacts of many choices from drinking coffee to buying houses were discussed by Becky, Richard and Taaliah as being algorithmically governed, and linked to broader issues of perceived lack of agency within nationally and globally networked economic systems.

### **3.2 Data Walkshops: locating materialities and processes of data mediation in Finsbury Park.**

It was necessary to investigate more about how networks are materialised and materialising media *in situ*, to gain deeper understandings of how they co-produce power, trust and knowledge relations. Artist walking practices use creative framings to encourage hypersensitivity to the less visible, overlooked and ambient; facilitating our entry into the concrete instances of the city in new ways, and colouring the experience to particular ends (Smith, 2016). Whilst such encounters are not necessarily sites of liberation or counter hegemonic resistance just because of their choice of form, they can indicate ways of interrogating and shifting how we perform ourselves in relation to the infrastructures, architectures and landscapes that make up our everyday lives (Pearson, 2006, Harvie & Etchells, 2009, Mock, 2016). This is journeying as 'performances of inner and outer exploration', creating subjectivities that give participants as the authors and protagonists of their walks "A sense that they are once again a player in their own story; an artist on their own canvas" (Smith, 2016).

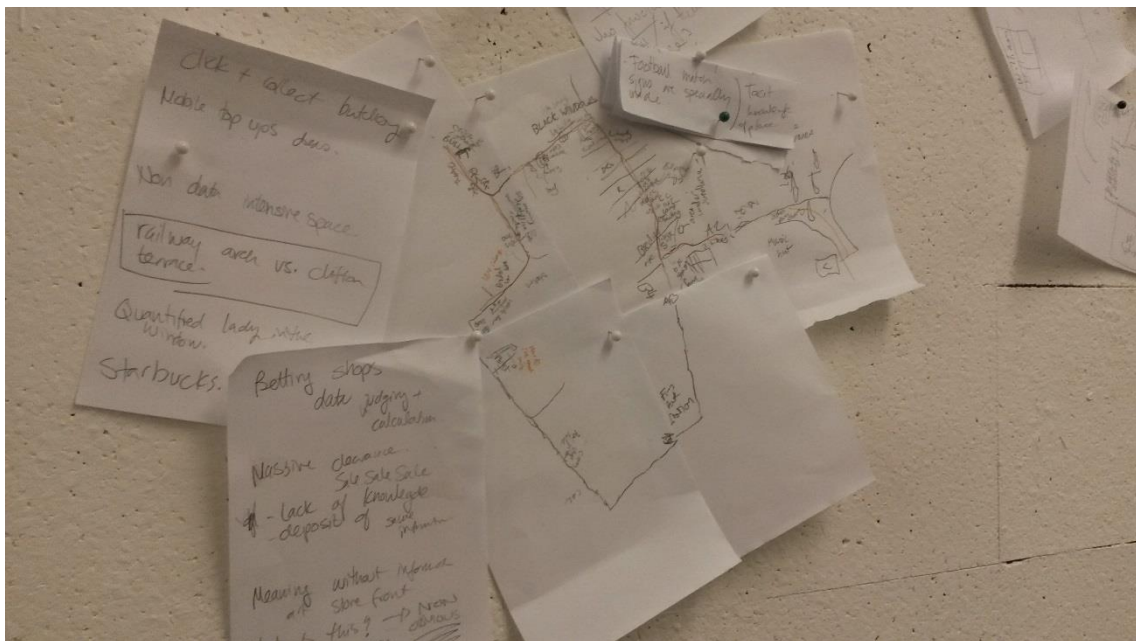
A different set of expertise was needed to bring digital networks into this performative frame, and the Systems/layers walkshops were suggested as a model (Greenfield, 2010). Ruth brokered a collaboration with Alison Powell Associate Professor in Media and Communications at LSE, who was teaching with a similar 'Flash mob' or rapid group ethnography method to uncover and analyse observable traces of mediation by code in the urban environment (Powell, 2017). Collaborative fieldwork tasks enable identification of 'data rich', 'data calm' and 'data mediated by body' places whilst walking. The format is easily accessible to non-ethnographers making it suitable for public engagement, encouraging participants 'to look for and document (the) tensions, surprises and counterintuitive findings" (Forlano, 2010). We added 'data trading' to the list of observable traces, and used the process as a way of orienting to and investigating the data, place, trade, value relations being experienced as situated socio-technical performances in Finsbury Park. We held four walkshops from Furtherfield Commons. Participants were recruited through mailouts and social media, and variously included a number of artists,

academics, a landscape architect, workers from local non-profits, and local residents.

Each workshop began with the development of shared vocabularies through interrogation of the terms 'data', 'information', and 'knowledge'. Discussions on 'data' revealed broad understandings around the conceptualisation and perception of the term and its use. Breaking into small groups for a 45 minute walk, participants then took on different data gathering roles:

Navigator/Sketcher, Note taker/Interviewer, Photographer/Videographer, Collector (bringing back an artefact from the field to discuss). As Alison describes:

'We tried to focus on contrasting parts of the city that were 'data rich' versus 'data calm', but soon discovered that 'data richness' depended on one's ability to read or interpret things as data – for a group of walkers with a landscape architect in their midst, the huge local park became 'data rich' while other walking groups found it 'data calm' in comparison to the train station with its GPS-driven bus arrival time boards, RFID-reading card entry turnstiles, and many types of clocks.' (Powell, n.d)



**Fig.19** Workshop route mappings 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2015.

This 'collecting' activity highlighted data as constructed through and with its frame, and performed through its objects in relation to our bodies in context. This re-positioned data collection and its transformation into information as a

creatively constructive act pretending to be objective (van Dijk, 2014:198), and one that we are often implicitly involved in.

On returning, a performative group storying of the route and its encounters took place, where participants were experts in their own experience and collectively responsible for representing findings. The interdisciplinary, collaborative, non-hierarchical structure and situated process models Massey's proposal that there is not one history, not one inevitable future, but a multiplicity of possible stories, and temporalities, all of which depend on spatialities (Massey, 1999). As Massey suggests, how we intervene in these spatialities is what prompts change, and the performative approach to the workshops enabled a playful speculation around possible interventions in data assemblages.



**Fig. 20. Workshop documentation 'entry swipe' 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015.**

The demographic of each workshop affected the tone and colour of the storying. In the first event artists discussed their own role in the increased CCTV surveillance in 'gentrified' residential areas in central London, by having encouraged 'posh' people into their neighbourhoods with their cultural activities. A participant's micro-chipped dog became a 'super data gatherer' with potential to 'mess' with data production by leading his smart-phone equipped owner on walks. A receipt with no date, time or transactional information was suggested as a product of criminal activity, and the basis for a new critical art work about data trading. The collective and improvised sharing of findings de-centred the

researcher's authority, creating temporary and contingent readings that reflected the temporary, contingent and collectively performed nature of the data assemblages encountered.



**Fig. 21 Walkshop documentation 'receipt' 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015.**

Many of the surveillance architectures that we observed were inscrutable as devices and assemblages, and impossible to trace in relation to who or what is 'watching', if they actually worked at all. Areas of least data mediation in Finsbury Park were sometimes perceived by participants as areas of questionable economic use; although after my experience of the 'go alongs' these might be rather described as subaltern. Discussing this together generated awareness that many of our socialities and places are co-produced in some way by data construction and trading; and those outside this are less visible, uncertain, and may be considered less valuable. Dave, an artist working with data concepts and computation, described a stimulated interest 'in the processes and trade and exchange that underlie these infrastructure in turn – where does these infrastructure come from, how and where is it manufactured, what networks and processes does it have to go through to arrive here?'

(Feedback 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015). Other participant reflection after the event described increased questioning of the uses and marketization of data and information more generally, thinking more deeply about how data becomes information through the provision of context, and how to use these processes to design better interactions in the community.



**Fig. 22 Walkshop documentation ‘bike shed’ 6t May 2015**

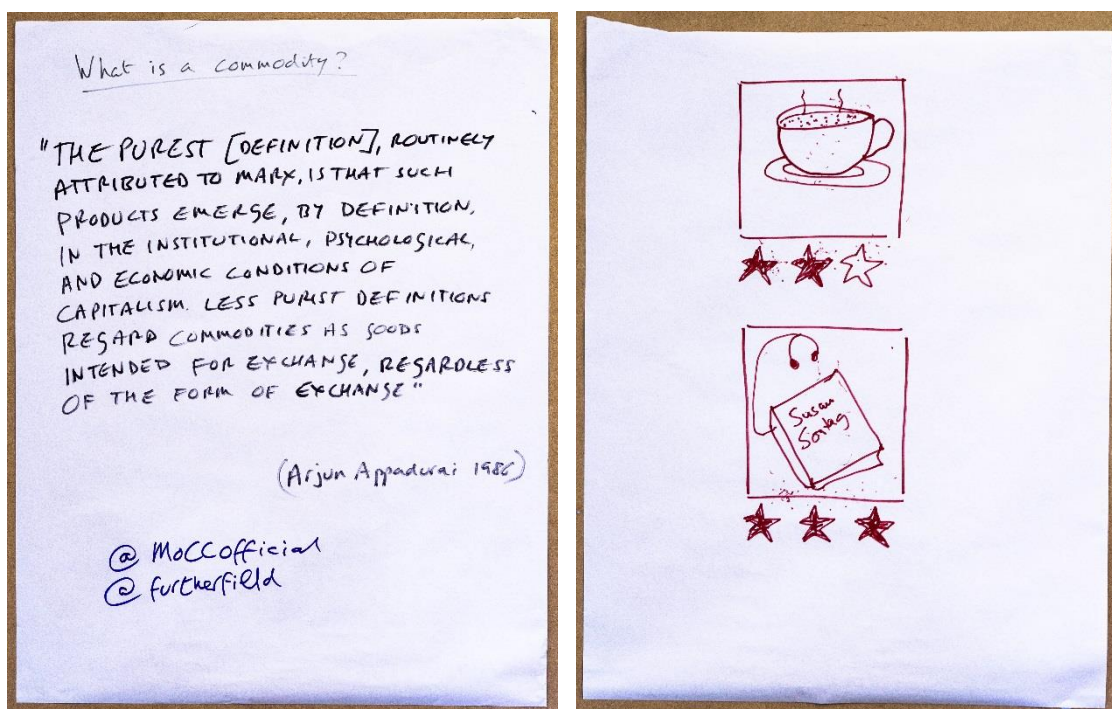
The top down nature of data construction enabled through its vast and complex computational architectures and distributed materialities, makes it difficult to intervene in from the bottom up, in a grassroots or collectively civic way (Powell & Couldry, 2014). Participating in the data walkshops didn’t give us the skills or opportunities to critically re-make the machines and systems of datafication. Playfully identifying, speculating about and re-storying the sites and objects of

data processes perhaps gave us the capacity and energy to misuse, re-appropriate and avoid them - to make choices as individuals, and perhaps to collectively imagine alternatives. The role based collaboration across discipline/skill set revealed knowledge as situated, and learning alongside others through practice helps develop a critical framework to approach datafication and data architectures as situated rather than abstracted. For Alison particularly the data workshops enabled a shift from technical to cultural imaginaries, opening up new ways to think about agency in civic data assemblages (Powell, 2017).

We continued with data workshops in Exeter 2016, and at the RGS-IBG exhibition 2017. Alison also ran workshops for other groups and purposes during the same timeframe. By the time of the data workshop at the RGS-IBG, she described the method as being 'exhausted' for her in terms of broader research, surfacing repeated results. For MoCC the workshop continued to be valuable as a way of orienting people to project themes in place, through identification of the specifics of the data mediations in situ. The method had been prototyped into becoming a project tool; with researchers becoming performers of a score of activities, themes, concepts and approaches. A tool that could be used by others as a performative introduction to the project, or adapted to other uses.

We used workshops as 'warm ups' to other critical making processes; the second workshop led into LEGO GIF making. Political LEGO work identifies, imagines and constructs dramatic scenes that engage with 'questions of justice, poverty, exploitation, environment and the commodity' (Cook et al. 2018). We brought this practice into performance mode by inviting participants to create a moment of trade they had encountered in the workshop as a GIF. This echoes Forum Theatre techniques (Boal, 1993), where audience members become 'spectators' – intervening dramaturg and sometimes performer – attempting to 'restore the freedom of the character-subject' by re-playing the scene presented to them differently in order to question its socio-material and political structuring. As a key strand of Ian's research this is too much to cover in this document. The ethnographies of GIF-making will be shared elsewhere.

During a two day workshop with Central Saint Martins students, the workshop led into a reverse engineering of the data, trade, place, value relations in objects found on the walk. Speculative data mappings articulated how we imagined the found commodity to be classified in relation to the socio-technical sense-making systems it was part of. Reverse engineering a temporary gym membership band found on the street for instance, connected the commodity to buildings and services access, user demographics, health data. From this we worked in groups to devise social practice interventions that aimed to surface questions of trade injustice perceived in these networks through performance based interactions.



**Fig.23 Wall notes Central Saint Martins workshop 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015.**

One student work 'Forebuy' parodied the experience of predictive analytics, suggesting future purchases to participants based on the data gathered about past spending patterns. The idea was to provoke thought about how and why a commodity is suggested for purchase, and prompt the question 'do I really need the things I am offered'. Students described the tricky part as turning the critique of predictive analytics into a positive. They did this by researching what local independent traders sold, and using those goods as the predicted commodity with a map of where to buy it.





**Fig. 24** Forebuy ‘well now you have predicted it, I think I need to buy it’.



**Fig. 25** Forebuy map and commodity at MoCC Free Market. Photography **Andrew Brand**. Participants were asked about their last three purchases, and given a prediction of what to buy next and where. Prompting conversation around the values held in the commodity and its local contexts, in relation to those provoked by the prediction.

### 3.3 Finsbury Park 'Local'.

Furtherfield wanted to grow relationships with local businesses that were using alternative trading models. This initiated general engagement with local traders that influenced the MoCC dramaturgies throughout the project. I interviewed an artist who had set up an activist business then based in Finsbury Park. Open Barbers was seeded from a social practice project called Queer Cut Exchange, which traded haircuts for things other than money. This developed into 'pop up' barber nights at queer events, providing a positive alternative to perceived policing of gender identities in relation to hair choices. During initial stages of the business, the initiator-artists performed in galleries as much as clubs. Visitors had haircuts as performance, starting conversations and prompting deeper thought around hair choices and gender. These events developed into 'pop up' days in a Finsbury Park Salon, transitioning the work from art to business.

Open Barbers is described as not being 'profit hungry'. Staff are paid equally and customers pay what they want on a sliding scale, a display of trust in the customer resulting in people who can afford it subsidising haircuts for people unable to pay full rate. As one of the co-founder's describes:

'People are willing to be generous because people see the value in that system... it's not charity and it's not people getting something for nothing... we're providing a service for people and it's redistributing the community resources, so everyone is in the community together and some people are able to support other people' (Open Barbers interview, 14th July 2015).

This is understood as steering away from the dangerous perception of 'us and them', defining who might deserve help and who might not, a dynamic that charitable organisations may set up. Open Barbers also plays on the socialities of salon cultures, offering a space for people in the LGBTQ+ community to come together, providing conversation and a non-judgmental service for trans people and those transitioning.

Describing its online community as 'massive', their following is perceived as being 'genuine'. The business grew through 'word of mouth', and this is understood as signalling value. Not locally visible, being situated in the back of

an existing salon, those with no access to the digital networks the business is embedded in would not just 'discover' it by walking past or browsing online - although social web 2.0 performances might make it visible to some demographics through network effects. This raises questions about how ethical business models that are not part of such politicised and organised communities as the LGBTQI+ gather customers and supporters. As Pasquale (2015) describes, the monopsony of Google has actively closed down small businesses seen as competitive by removing access to networked visibility, therefore removing their market place. Whilst I was unable to gain interviews with other traders during the residency, this experience seeded an approach to the Free Market and MoCC generally, of demonstrating successful alternative models of trading as much as critique. An effort to purposefully perform different economies in order to open up the potential for new worlds (Gibson-Graham, 2008). Following on from Forebuy, it also initiated development of the 'Local' commodity display to be discussed in Section 4.

### **3.4 MoCC Free Market: activities and dramaturgy.**

'I don't like feeling like I'm in control of something. I don't like being the expert... if you put yourself in a position that's different to other people, it becomes didactic. So what I'm interested in is learning as much as everybody else... to set up a system that is an experiment and then see how it works, and keep changing it according to how people respond, because otherwise people can smell that a mile off as well. They go "oh god, yeah, oh we're supposed to learn about this, I'm not interested", because I think that quite often people learn more out of speaking from their own experience than they do out of listening to someone (Paula Crutchlow, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2015).

Dialogical aesthetics is an approach that replaces the 'interpreter/outsider' and 'agent/insider' relations with 'dialogical rapprochement between theorist and situated agent' (Kester following Kögler 2005:95). The artist as theorist brings methodological and conceptual tools into dialogue with the subject's complex self-understanding in order to challenge the assumptions of both parties. It is a dynamic dance between articulating and understanding the discursive overview of the dispositif, in relation to situated thinking and feeling with things, people and places.

Using the approach of dialogical aesthetics within a para-ethnographic structure, field work exploded initial ideas around the size and scope of the MoCC interaction, and began to construct a community of interest around the project with a shared vocabulary. The generative art based process constructed a huge amount of data in varied, responsive and sometimes fragmented ways. Initial analysis was through open coding. Then the pace of the project meant that findings became re-told anecdotally in group planning meetings and workshops, 'pushed' back into activities and event dramaturgies that were purposefully constructed as ad hoc, visibly fragile and interactive prototypes. Activities were continually re-shaped into a score or set of scripted engagements an adaptive process, both in idea development and over the course of the Free Market event. In this way, the project moved from a set critical propositions, through an artist-led group devising process into delivery. Simultaneously developing a project vocabulary of words, concepts, engagement strategies and tactics.

*We are in a group meeting with all of us trying to figure out what the 'curatorial policy' for MoCC should be. We are talking about markets and gentrification, data and coercion. Trying to figure out the specifics of the three day event we are running 17th-19th July. We want lots of different activities that engage people in conversation about data-trade-place-value relations, and act as a 'warm-up' for the 'Add to MoCC' prototype testing inside the gallery. These experiences will need to be enticing in a way that is both familiar and unsettling, that allow people to speak back to them, and show that what is being said is valued and integral to the success of the work. We've got an idea for publicly curating and valuing a collection of commodities, a shopping quiz, a table where people can make LEGO GIFs, the Forebuy machine (made from cardboard), a talking doll to act as a museum guide, and – a hacked scanner that makes glitch-like images of the things it moves across. Ian has recruited three volunteers, previous students on his Material Culture course, to act as remote commodity consultants who will answer participant's questions about the things they 'donate' over skype chat.*

*We're amusing ourselves with different event bylines 'currently curating the downfall of capitalism', 'currently curating Finsbury Park as an anarchist*

*experiment'... What about 'curating Finsbury Park as a Free Market' where everything is paid for with data? People can opt in to different levels of data sharing at the beginning, and then negotiate accordingly with each stall holder if they change their mind. It's a way of engaging people and a pedagogical tool; modelling what such data choices might engender when experienced in 'real world' settings. We make a 'to do' list and assign people tasks, made more challenging by the fact that we've only got £500 left in our budget for signage, materials... everything. We add 'find volunteers' and 'find more tables' to our list and think about DIY aesthetics.*

*During the three weeks following I add detail to the list of activities, forming an over-arching engagement structure. I make a consent form outlining different levels of data sharing, and different coloured badges to signal what participants have committed to that they will get on entry to the Free Market. Collaborators and volunteers will then know how they should interact with them, document and share on social media. The mapping of event interactions help me to understand the pedagogical structure of what we're making. Everything in what they can the Free Market must contribute to the work as a conversation piece, and because of the demographic of Furtherfield's existing audience and who they are trying to reach, experiences need to be both accessible to passersby, and complex enough to engage the media literate.*

### **3.5 Orienting publics to data performances: activities and objects developed in parallel to the Free Market dramaturgy.**

#### **d) What kind of shopper are you?**

I had been interested in Buzz Feed quizzes as 'attention bait' for click based data capture from the beginning of the process. In 2012 I had made a quiz about plastic consumption for the Furtherfield exhibition World Wild Web which Ruth thought generated issue based conversation through an enjoyable format. 'Why don't you make a 'what kind of shopper are you? Quiz' she said. Thinking with the Buzz Feed format, I drew on 'go along' and walkshop data to make a typography of shoppers. I loosely followed the Myers-Briggs personality test that brings people into archetype sets by asking questions about their preferences. I

mixed it up with my memories of filling in endless quizzes in the back of girls magazines in the 1980's.



**Fig. 26 quiz at MoCC Free Market. Photography Andrew Brand.**

Constructing 6 types of behaviour I conflated consumption habits and attitudes to data surveillance experienced across participants during research: *Stealth Shopper, Survivalist, Good Shopper, Trendy Wendy, Clickaholic, Bargain Hunter*. I tried to work with stereotypes in an open way. They reduce us to tropes that we recognise and identify with, and also allow us to know that we are infinitely more complex than what's being represented. I tried to be funny and generous, and acknowledge that people often fill in quizzes in the way they would like to be seen rather than how they actually behave. I framed all outcomes as positive. To moderate the quiz and distance the judgments from us as researchers, we decided that the Cayla doll should be the face to invite participation and voice the answers. Ian designed a paper prototype with pictures of her for the Free Market. The quiz on paper allowed participants to look at all the answers, all the potential types, and measure their result against what it might have been if they'd done something differently.

'I'd never really thought about how I shop and how I go through any shopping centres or anything and what I most align myself with. So the questions seem quite straightforward, then the results at the end... what it revealed about me... I'm a stealthy ermm.. Trendy Wendy shopper. Meaning that I value my anonymity. I value my privacy. But I also want to be very trendy... which ... I don't know about the trendy... (laughs)... It's kind of sad that the defacto is to assume that we are being tracked and that we are being looked at. And sometimes I just don't want to be. Like why, why should I be? What do they want from me? I should be volunteering the information not immediately being assumed that it's just going to be taken anyway. So yeah I don't want to assume what I might want to wear, what I might like. I don't want to try and influence the culture that way.' (Free Market participant 19th July, 2015).



**Re-familiarise yourself with the quiz here.**

**e) Add to MoCC - thinking with the Semantic Web.**

I worked with Olga, the Furtherfield designer to create a public facing website, and begin devising the online museum 'collection' that remote participants would add their commodities to. We used an 'off the shelf' Wordpress template, and I uploaded images of the commodities from the 'go alongs' to the 'Portfolio' section, part of the software 'theme' designed as a showcase for consumer services or products. I added commodities from the 'go alongs' and tried to interpret them as if they were museum objects. With space for one comment per image, it was difficult to decide what was *the* most important thing to say about each thing. After the fieldwork experience, it was also challenging to perceive the commodities as discrete and static – they appeared to me as part of a much larger, digitally networked 'dramaturgy'. Attempting to structure the interaction through the commerce driven Wordpress software template, decontextualized the commodities from the placed-based social relations they had acquired through the 'go alongs', they lost their meanings for me (Jackson, 1999).

The challenge was to design a data frame to collect, publish, and collectively interpret the commodities according to how they were being valued in situ, by those who bought and donated them to MoCC. The data-frame would also need to prompt thought about how commodities were being socio-technically re-valued through the cultural performances of web 2.0 as previously discussed. The Wordpress template wouldn't work. I began to think with creative technologist Gareth Foote about another approach. We talked about *ranKing* *ranQueen* and he remembered the categorisation mapping we'd done with the Central Saint Martin students, and thought something could come from that.

In 2001 Tim Berners-Lee, James Hendler and Ora Lasila visioned the Semantic Web, a highly interconnected network of data that can be accessed and understood easily by all kinds of handheld and desk based devices. This vision involved not just accessing data sets and acting on them, but foraging individual pieces of information from many data sets tailored to the task at hand, enabled by a common language for representing data that could be understood by all kinds of software agents that translate between disparate databases (Feigenbaum et al. 2007). Using a data language called Resource Description Framework the Semantic Web manifests and organises relationships between information in any format –document, photograph, video, tag, financial transaction, experiment, result or abstract concept. As this network evolves, it is attempting to include *everything*. To do that, *everything* must be categorised according to machine readable systems. The fallout from this is that new relations are being formed that exclude things that cannot be read by networks, and things are being re-named through resource description identifiers as what they are, but only in particular contexts and circumstances

The hidden database structures of the Semantic Web that sit behind consumer service platforms, bring things into categories in order to facilitate socio-technical sense-making across distributed interfaces, and between remote users of those interfaces. How these categories name things is what collects those things, and curates how the things named become visible (or not) through the value co-creation of web 2.0. Agamben describes commodities as a mode of expression made possible by the bringing together of all kinds of things into all kinds of sets through the communication process of the personalised



spectacle (Agamben 1993, 80.1). He observes that things do not exist in categories, that categories draw things to them ie. red things are grouped together not because of their ontology, but because of the condition of the 'red' that groups them means they are named as such. This observation invites us to think more deeply about how the word something is named by when brought into a set, does and does not represent the thing itself. It draws attention to the difference between to the ethics of naming and bringing things into sets based on what we want them to be, in relation to their being. The personalised spectacle uses the means of communication to separate us from our means of communication ie. What is in common. This separation from what is in common, is the 'ultimate separation of commodity from its source of production'.

The black boxing of the dataveillance systems that curate socio-technical sense-making through the management and construction of data frames, maintains power over by denying us the agency of informed decision making (Pasquale, 2015). It doesn't matter how 'good' you try to be, if the systems you act within don't enable choice of responsible action based in full awareness of comparative consequences. How would it be possible to surface these naming and categorising processes in order to discuss in more depth the mode of expression that is 'commodity'. As Yuk Hui describes:

'The semantic web was intended to be a "world-building" project, and this is the reason Tim Berners-Lee called for "philosophical engineers," who would not only reflect on the world but build the world—an echo of Marx's thesis on Feuerbach. The semantic web aims for a world of automation. However, a world is more than automation; it also has politics, which the semantic web doesn't take into account.' (Lovink & Hui, 2016).

Social tagging refers to a practice of public labelling of digital objects in a shared online environment for the purposes of personal organisation, and future information retrieval. Users attach or 'tag' digital things with keywords, enabling improved searching of networked resources. As user generated classification systems that emerge from bottom up consensus, social tagging makes a 'folksonomy' or folk taxonomy; an informal assemblage of related terminology that forms a collective vocabulary of categorisation. As a socio-technical framework, social tagging constructs a community through its co-production, as much as allowing its users to discover things they might not have encountered without it. When viewed in relation to what others have tagged, the resource

identifiers<sup>9</sup>, tags and people within the folksonomy, also take on the additional value that networked effects<sup>10</sup> can produce (Trant, 2009). Social tagging contributes to the economic frameworks of platform capitalism through being part of the Semantic Web (Langley & Leyshon, 2017); in an environment with excess information, how people find things is of critical value.

I thought that values commonly held by people about commodity cultures were embedded in the 'go along' data, and creating keyword 'tags' could be the starting point of a prototype dramaturgy for the MoCC Collection. A participant talked about specialist Somali meat shops explaining that choices of where to shop for food can be based on religious (Muslim), national (Somali) and even tribal affiliations. Commodities as expressions of *identity*. Shops selling Somali wedding clothes were of a particular *style*. Somali 'malls' full of small, make-shift stalls selling snacks and textiles are a women's place – they *socialise* there. A chain of cosmetic shops selling hair and skin products for women of colour is critiqued in relation to who own and profits from these shops and controls what's available, raising questions of *justice*. *Local* shops make the area lively. Those near the tube are always *conveniently* open for passing trade. Market stalls are seen as a way of having *freedom* from restrictions of physical premises including rent increases that have led to the failure of local businesses, and a *freedom* to do deals for customers yourself. The market man at the Wells Terrace tube station is a *consistent* feature, as things sold in supermarkets are *consistent*. Independent shops provided commodities associated with *pleasure*, or *useful* things you didn't know you needed. There is a sense of *thrift* expressed in relation to fast fashion being wrong as it wears out quickly, as much as the lack of *justice* shown to the workers.

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<sup>9</sup> A URI or Universal Resource Identifier is a bit of code that allows identification of a digital resource, and often allows access to representations eg. Images, videos, webpages (Thompson, 2010)

<sup>10</sup> Network effects are about creating defensibility and include phenomena such as increased usage of a product leads to its increased value (popularity), including the more people using the network, the more its value increases. Unlike viral effects which are about getting new users for free. The value also increases through a density of social connections, as nodes within a larger network connect with each other. Network effects will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

These tags didn't necessarily relate to the commodities as individual items, although they could. They evoked the contexts, socialities, mobilities through which they were traded, but only with knowledge of those contexts. None of the values were definitive, and when experienced collectively became a complex network of expressions that were in tension. The tags were ambiguous, a challenge in information retrieval terms, but serving the dramaturgical purpose of the 'conversation piece'. Anything sold for profit can be brought into any value category according to the interpretation of the 'donor'. People could tag their commodity with more than one value instigating a many-to-many structuring. Tagging is a process, and whilst I was the initiator of the first tags, the folksonomy grew and shifted with each iteration through the conversation work with MoCC participants as part of the prototyping. This eventually became more settled as the MoCC online collection to be discussed in the next chapter.

#### f) Orienting participants to the Free Market



**Fig. 27 Data Flags. Photography Andrew Brand.**

To engage people with the event we had to draw people towards it. I thought we needed something like bunting to attract people across the park. Buddhist

prayer flags. As the wind moves through them it sends the wishes written on them across the world and through all sentient beings. It reminded me of the “haze of software instructions” moving through urban infrastructure (Amin & Thrift, 2002 in Kitchin & Dodge, 2011). I thought about our trust of the code, data frames and software actions as acts of faith, in what is essentially an unknowable process. Using van Dik’s work on datafication (2014) as a starting point, I wrote ‘mantras’, ‘sutras’ - prayers for the ethical becoming of algorithms. They were bright and moved in the wind. They offered moments of individual contemplation in a sea of conversation. I thought the DIY aesthetic would make the market look like somewhere between a school fete and a Bring and Buy sale. People would recognise it but not really know it, and hopefully be curious.

Chiara, the Furtherfield intern and postgraduate student in Museum Studies, worked with Ian to make a MoCC guide. An explanatory museum-like map that visitors would receive as they arrived. Ali suggested Fortune Cookies as a way of rewarding people for participation. I devised a set of data based messages to include in them. We thought 'loyalty cards' that asked for feedback on participant experience would make the data exchange an act of ‘value co-creation’. A stamp on the card would be given for taking part in each activity; five stamps gets you a Fortune Cookie reward.



**Fig. 28** Opening a ‘data fortune cookie’.

*The glitch artist from Birmingham was with his friends, ready to leave. He had his scanner portrait which he thought was great, and he was going to give to his girlfriend later on as a present. I insisted he was rewarded for his participation. They all took a fortune cookie. When he opened it the artist said 'oh that's 'filter bubbles' (Pariser 2011). This was the first person who actually named my predictions as data related in 2015. I was over the moon that someone had finally 'got it'.*

At the beginning of the week before the event I met with everyone and explained the even structure. Ruth asked – how will people know how to engage with all these things? What will we say to them? It was the first time I realised that we'd made a performance structure. A whole dramaturgy with everyone involved playing a part in its becoming.

'I'm just realising that is part of the aesthetic of the work that I make. That quite often it's ambitious in the sense that it draws together a lot of things that have the potential not to work, but at the same time you have to make it work in one way or another. So therefore as a participant or someone leading an aspect of it, you have to respond to the emergence of the situation. It's not something that starts, runs and stops in front of you, or that you kind of make work like clockwork, it's a system on the verge of failing all the time because you have to respond.' (Paula Crutchlow 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015).

### **3.6 Free Market findings.**

The size and ambiguity of the project was seen as a challenge when engaging people. The right angle needed to be taken and the right language used to not overwhelm. 'Its biggest challenge is that you can't understand it in 30 seconds' (Alison Ballard, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015) which is also the core of what it does. It was really important to not tell people there was going to be a website. 'When we did, it was more likely they would take a flier and walk off, saying they would engage with it later' (ibid). Less explanation did more. Local residents readily engaged with the event, something which collaborators found surprising and reassuring. People engaged for many different reasons, the concept and the playfulness being the most spoken about. The idea of talking to academic

experts encouraged participation; seeming to prove that it wasn't just an art project that had 'parachuted' into the area. When going around the market stalls people got a sense of what the work was about rather than through a single explanation, with each person at each stall explaining it slightly differently. No one got the same experience.



**Fig. 29 Outside the Free Market. Photography Andrew Brand.**

I was generally overseeing the event, and making sure everyone knew what they were supposed to be doing. Ian ran the 'Add to MoCC' interaction inside the Furtherfield Gallery – 'a core space' with a collaboratively curated collection of objects. Some participants were delighted to find such a space of expertise in such an unusual place. Ian used his 'follow the things' experience to elicit a commodity donation from people, printing up pictures of their things, liaising with the student commodity consultants online and managing the skype chat with participants, helping people write and stick post-its to the wall, and stamping people's loyalty cards. Ian's expertise in material culture pedagogy meant he was comfortable having extensive conversations, and adding his own details to the engagement 'script' to negotiate the intersubjective exchanges of the live moment *in situ*. The dramaturgy helped him do this:

'it's this thing about 'Welcome to the museum, my name is ... here's what we're trying to do" and I think you came in and explained it once and I listened really hard to the way you were doing it and I really liked it... it's actually quite complicated, what we're asking people to do if you explain it just in words, but if you've got it on the wall, then people don't have to listen to every tiny thing you say... I could point to things and people would ask me questions about "What's that?", "What's this going on here?" So it was much more, it was a really good space to have a conversation'. (Ian Cook 22<sup>nd</sup> July.2015).



**Fig 30. During 'Add to MoCC'. Photography Andrew Brand.**

The online commodity consultations with Ian's former material culture students acting as remote researchers, were particularly difficult to explain. The conversations with them were a skype performance projected on the wall, with results emailed to participants individually. Ian made them more tangible to people, by beginning a physical archive. The holding together and co-devising of this complex interaction, and using his expertise, helped Ian to feel empowered in the work, to understand the project and his role in it better:

'I didn't think about printing them out and putting them on the clipboard. I thought I might as well do it, there's a clipboard there and then once you realise you can use... you start to use the props that you're creating. I thought it would be very difficult for someone to take my place because of the way in which that whole dramaturgy and using all the props and also all the faffing around with the computer.' (Ian Cook, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015)



**Fig. 31 A commodity consultation. Photography Andrew Brand.**

We had stuck the values 'tags' at the top of the wall and started to collect commodities underneath them. On the Friday evening of the Free Market, a curator from Islington Museum visited and spent time thinking about the folksonomy. She observed that all the values were positive. The translation into tagging had again removed the context from the values, making them essentially positive with no gradation. When I spoke about this with Ian, he suggested moving the words into the middle of the wall so that participants could put commodities above (positive) or below (negative) the tags, giving more nuance to the conversation work.

The main element of MoCC was understood by collaborators as discussing the impact of categorisation of things into commodities: 'what happens when you do, and what impact does that have, and how do you have the minimal impact or the right impact?' (Alison Ballard, 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2015). It was seen as crucial that the project doesn't begin with a set of objects and a set of values, but lets the participants decide on both of these things within a framework. This openness was led by conversation: 'So yeah, it's all about the talking, the conversation... so the more you can get the people to talk, and more tricks to have you to get the people to talk, the best use.' (Chiara Garbellotto, 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2015).





**Fig. 32 Examining the collection. Photography Andrew Brand.**



**Fig. 33 Ian inside 'Add to MoCC'. Photography Andrew Brand.**

The event, like museums in general, was seen as a safe and socially acceptable space for people to spend time thinking deeply about things and their lives, and being in conversation about something in a non-productive way.

The critical aspect of the work was important; that we were not just discussing how beautiful something is, but also actively connecting things with lives, a key part of museum interpretation. To ask people with no training to do this interpretation is complex, but yet is the key to the project. The opportunity to narrate our own things was seen as 'giving people the chance to realise that they can have, they have power to understand how reality works, how the world works... and also... to do it together' (Chiara Garbellotto 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2015). The relation between the expertise of the academic and the facilitation of participant reflection and interpretation was key in this empowerment.

The commodity consultants were a gifting element to the work. A moment when participants were offered someone else's expert labour - the very difficult labour of finding out about things - in exchange for data. The event framework creates opportunities to participate in conversations with strangers, which brings a sense of the unusual and extra daily to the activity, and also a sense of conscious depth 'it's like an ethnography where everyone is conscious that it is an ethnography' (Chiara Garbellotto 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2015).

The event relied on other artists like Play Your Place and Thick Ear sharing their work, trades people or local organisations like PACT Kitchen working out of Finsbury Park Permaculture garden providing food, and a raft of volunteers helping to engage participants. It was surprising to Ali that there were organisations with similar values that really wanted to connect. She felt that contacting local traders to participate, and talking to people in the park, was 'tapping in to this sort of middle ground space in your community that isn't usually given energy,' and successful because the project is not focussed on helping people, but involving people with something (Alison Ballard, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015).

The project helped collaborators: to feel more embedded in their local area, have an increased consciousness around data processes and material culture, emphasised how much commodities were made through a shared narration of value, and how the cultural environment shapes material objects. Ali understood the project as genuinely trying to do something – not representing, showing, or telling people how to think, but creating a framework in which to consider choices in relation to available information. Trying to work out the form MoCC

should take was understood as being the project, as much as the event itself – ‘you can’t separate the research from what that does, and what that means’ (ibid). Furtherfield was understood as being integral to making the project happen through their commitment to experimental and community based processes.



**Fig. 34 Talking to the doll. Photography Andrew Brand.**

Paula: There’s a sense of trying something out and that everybody is trying it out together and that everybody is holding it together. If the visitors don’t do their bit then the event doesn’t work.

Chiara: Yeah, because I was thinking; usually every social interaction is about making things, at least faking that the things work. Like if something’s not working, you have to adjust it and pretend, and this is the opposite, so it’s like making all the processes of every little thing visible, like how they are shared and constructed, and it’s great. I love it.

(Paula Crutchlow & Chiara Garbellotto in conversation 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2015)

## 4. Database dramaturgies - Prototype #2 MoCC shop-gallery Exeter, 2016.

### 4.1 Collaborators and aesthetics.



*MoCC in Exeter video 26min*

MoCC shop-gallery collaborators in addition to myself, Ian, Ruth, Olga, Gareth, and Alison Powell included: Kerrie Seymour – community artist, invigilator and curator of the ‘Local’ collection, Joe Hancock – performance maker and producer, Alex Warne – performance maker and invigilator, Charlie Coldfield – performer and invigilator, Becky Rich – performer and invigilator, Lizzie Hobson, Gabrielle King and Elizabeth Watson – former BA Geography material culture students and commodity consultants.

Challenges faced by the high street as trade increasingly moves online, mean that empty shops are the main cheap and accessible space for art production in provincial cities. As much as making use of what is available, this was also conceived as part of the parodic dramaturgy of MoCC in Exeter; a shop that curates and discusses commodities, but doesn’t sell any – a museum-shop-gallery. Feedback from Ruth had been that whilst paper prototypes would move into screen based activities, we still needed to make a lively event space like *ranKing ranQueen*. Visitors needed to feel like they were co-creating critique in a fun way. The shopping quiz was successful as a ‘light relief’ fun warm up, and it should be near the front. MoCC Guide Mikayla worked as an engagement tool, and talking to the doll in situ, people needed to be directed as what to ask it to have a reasonably successful experience.

We borrowed tables and chairs from the university, old pc’s from the CVS, an I-pad and wall bracket from the local gallery, sofa and coffee table from the charity shop next door, and made a place to browse books on material culture and drink cups of tea. A large screen in the window displayed images of the

Free Market and upcoming events in our Exeter programme, and Ian brought old toys from his garage for MoCC Guide Mikayla to stand on. We used Emmanuel's sound design from the Free Market to create an atmosphere of being 'inside' commodity cultures.

Commodity objects needed to be on display to provide something visual/tangible to draw people into the dramaturgy, and we wanted to involve local traders in the event. Instead of running Forebuy, we devised a 'Local' display that connected the wider data processes being examined directly to the surrounding area. We invited local traders to donate something from their business for exhibition; what they sold most of, what stood for the values of their business, what cost them most. We displayed these objects with details of why it was donated. I tasked community arts worker and MoCC invigilator Kerrie to gather donations from the surrounding shops. It was Kerrie's 'taste', local connections, interests and participatory art skills that curated the display, and she became the 'expert' in leading public engagement with it.

I worked with the Furtherfield designer Olga on a new website and a branding, drawing everything together to create a believable parody. There needed to be two atmospheres mixing in the work: the functional and administrative, the beautiful and theatrical. The branding would draw people in, and the dramaturgy would play out as entering the 'inside workings' of networked commodity culture; with the museum 'invigilators' as curators, operatives, researchers that explained, brokered and performed the knowledge production activities between machine, person and commodity. I made jacket 'costumes' for us out of recycled coats from the geography lab, with a readable QR code screen printed on the back to connect us to digital networks. Mikayla doll was the centre of the invitation to participate - 'talking' to us against a backdrop of torn down electronics and the inner workings of a smart phone on pop up banners, on the printed event guide and fliers, and the website slider.

Before this was put in place, our next critical making prototype was to transfer the lively and personalized negotiation of 'Add to MoCC' online, as the MoCC Collection.

## 4.2 Database as archive.

Derrida's reconceptualization of the archive as the organizing principles of the valuing, preservation and access to collective memory, has inflated the term and its use across disciplines (Manoff, 2004). The ordering of the archive (understood in its broadest sense) makes it a centre of interpretation, a form of curation. What is included and excluded and how is affected by individuals, contexts and milieus, shapes what counts and what doesn't. Archives govern what can be said, through what is acknowledged as being known. In this way archives produce as much as preserve (Manoff, 2004 following Derrida). There is an ambiguity between the term museum and archive in relationship to understandings of what constitutes a 'document' – archives consist of the objects of documentation as much as museums have objects that hold information, and often host archives in their buildings. This ambiguity is extended into daily life, as all kinds of object-documents-experiences-memories are increasingly brought into online spaces as digital collections, both in and by museums, and as part of the social web. Databases categorise and control what can be seen and therefore what is known according to the classification criteria of the programmer. So whilst archival studies are not central to the conceptualization of MoCC, it's important to reflect briefly on their politics and processes in relation to practices of collecting, cataloguing and indexing things considered of value.

Artists particularly have used Derrida's framing to expand the notion of the archive to mean anything no longer current but that has been retained or actively preserved for any reason (Breakell n.d). Artists as archivists draw on and produce; using collecting and curatorial practices in mutations of 'connection and disconnection', to suggest other kinds of ordering both inside and outside the museum. A key aim of many such projects is the construction of critique and alternative narratives and the surfacing of counter memories or alternative knowledges. This often involves creating spaces of encounter that try to 'fashion distracted viewers into engaged discussants'; highlighting the nature of archival objects as active and unstable, and attempting to connect things that cannot be connected in the will to form new kinds of relations,

thereby exposing different kinds of audiences to alternative public cultures (see Foster 2004:6).

Many museums are digitizing collections as a way of democratizing and de-authoring institutional curation. Digitised collections bring images and basic information about things from a vast range of spaces together in the same, easily accessible online environment for remote access. This fulfils public engagement targets by extending the museum's community of interest. Users may also have limited input into 'curating' their online experience by ordering the collection according to particular fields eg. Everything dated 1880. They can often 'curate' their own online collection; drawing together things available in the online database and tagging them to appear in the same webpage.

Digital collections share images and some data about objects, but not necessarily the provenance, original ordering or narrative that forms part of the collection criteria or indexing ie. How someone categorized and valued the object for the institution when it was aquired. The British Museum online collection has a short paragraph of curator's comments alongside an object description, age, find site etc. but not why the object was collected (British Museum, 2018). Smaller museums with fewer resources for digitization might have even less finely grained terms e.g. Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter indexes through full name, common name, material, production site. (ramm, n.d).

Acts of storage, cataloguing, ordering and retrieval in these databases therefore are not neutral. The display of an object online decontextualizes it from its museum or archive narrative, one which is reflective of its social environment and institutional histories. The bringing of the object-image into a database, brings it into the present ambiguously. Rather than being anti-narrative, it changes the narrative from the one authored by collector/curator to the one ordered by the fields the object-image has been tagged with, which is structured by the data frame. As more things migrate online, it becomes increasingly important to confirm the original context and provenance of those digitised things in order to remember their original value and values (Breakell n.d), or to acknowledge the de-contextualisation and re-narration of these things through their database frames as a form of positioned curation.

### 4.3 The MoCC Collection: critical making process with Ian Cook and Gareth Foote, March-April 2016.



Use this link to re-familiarise yourself with the MoCC Collection

Between Ian's kitchen table and an empty lecture room on the University of Exeter campus, we wrestled with the consequences of data-frame design. How could we translate all the questions that Ian had asked at the Free Market into an online representation? It should start off easy and become more complicated. Should it be a check list? How much will people want to write? To what extent will they research their own stuff? How open is the interpretation process? Like a wiki? Or displayed like an Amazon style database with comments? Are people identifiable or anonymous?

What makes the MoCC collection dynamic is the valuing of commodities made public. The online interaction also needs to be dynamic. Ian showed us the sliders on the ethical consumer website. The sliders' position draws on various datasets to rank things according to the values you specify, so you can make an informed decision. The sliders with a score attached will help us rank the commodities within value categories. Ranking is the basis of the relationship between attention and popularity, visibility and availability that is the essence of *rankKing* *ranQueen* and any online retail process; something that we hadn't got to with the Free Market paper prototype. What about an overall engagement score? A commodity that gets the most attention gets put on the front of the website? We decide on ranking categories of 'attention', 'controversy', most 'positive' and 'negative'. The sliders are a dynamic way of drawing attention to the values we hold as individuals and communities, their contingencies and attachments and how they play out in our consumption habits. The ranking performs how those values are collected and traded through networked data processes to help us think through the implications of that dataveillance. Gareth decided to use Wordpress to build the data-frame:



‘Most developers are a bit prejudiced to what they get used to. I’ve been working with Wordpress so much over the last couple of years, that I immediately thought of the best way I could do it in Wordpress... and decided that that was the quickest and easiest way, me working on my own, to do it.’ (Gareth Foote 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

He said it wasn’t the perfect platform for MoCC. Maybe he could have built something from scratch and he would have understood it all, but there would have been more risk, since it’s not built on things that are tried and tested, and we didn’t have the resources to experiment in that way. The Wordpress platform shaped the intrinsic nature of the interaction.

Wireframes<sup>11</sup> gave us something tangible to talk through, but it was taking a long time. This prompted Gareth to start building after the first day. The collaborative and arts based rather than commercial context of the project, meant that he was less concerned with having a precise idea about what we were going to produce at the outset:

‘In commercial settings people work in teams to deliver things in deadlines, in stages... But even when you’ve built an interactive wireframe - and there’s plenty of really interactive wireframes - where you’ve built a website that works... even with those, until we start using it nobody knows what it is. It’s too complex to comprehend. So the problem is nobody really knows what they’re getting, nobody knows what they’re building. Or maybe those two things are different... And even the people who are building it, don’t know what’s going to be built in the end and how all the different parts overlap and complicate each other. It’s all very abstract. But that’s the nature of making software generally.’ (Gareth Foote 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

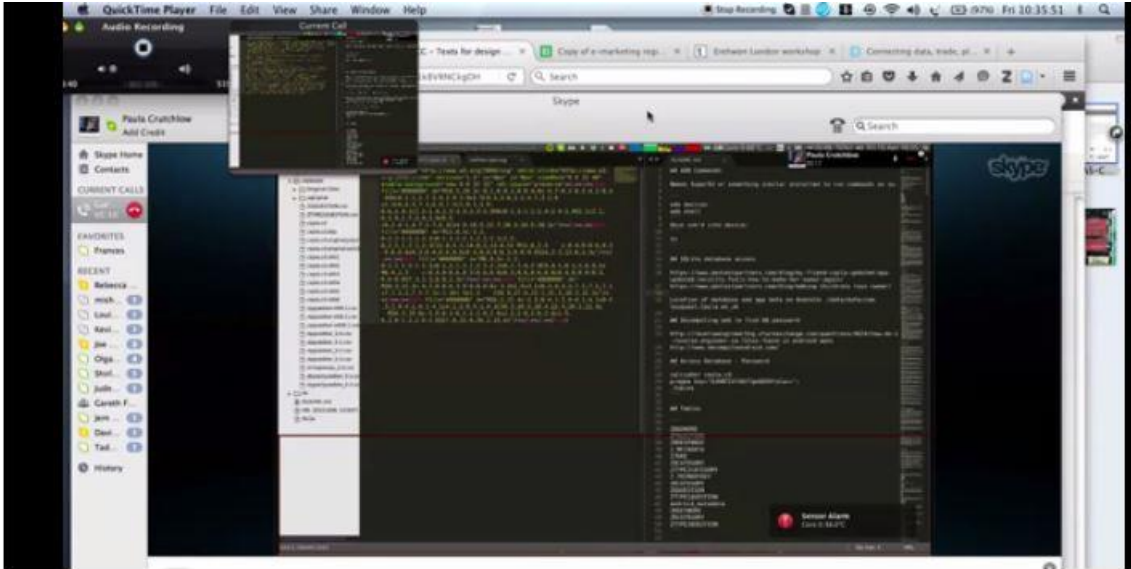
Gareth’s first conceptual model was a many to many relationship between commodities and values, rather than one to many. He used the ‘custom post types’ in Wordpress and conceptually marked them as ‘commodity’ or ‘value’. Usually posts in Wordpress are added through the admin interface, we needed participants to be able to add a post without them being able to access that interface, which would compromise security:

‘I didn’t really think through all of the consequences that come alongside giving people control over various pieces of content like managing multiple bits, and being able to publish and un-publish and edit and delete etc. Usually all of that comes for free because Wordpress does all

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<sup>11</sup> A visual guide that represents how a website works.

that... because we're making this bespoke and user friendly, I had to build those bits. I was thinking very top level initially... That's nothing unusual, but it's a consequence of not being able to hold all of things that make up a piece of software, with many states of user interface in your head at one time.' (Gareth Foote 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016)



**Fig. 35 Gareth's desktop 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016.**

Gareth arranges his desktop to work on two or three things simultaneously. Separating concerns. Trying to break things down into smaller files rather than one big file that's doing lots of things. He describes this as a classic model of modularity. 'Unix systems had a principle of doing little programmes that do one thing well and then tying them all together. Different ways of demarking bits of code that do something, that contain behaviour data and identification.' In Wordpress custom post types are different types of post – commodity, values. Fields add particular properties eg. They add a quality to one of the projects. Gareth decided not to use a Taxonomy:

'I had a feeling it was wrong. We've been treating values as a taxonomy when we've talked about them, but I realised that I wanted to create a more complex relationship between commodities and values, where you have a reciprocal relationship... I wanted to be able to give them (commodities) scores and have more complex things attached to them.' (Gareth Foote 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

Wordpress configures things by pushing something in and pulling something out of the database. 'Everything in 'source' is to do with the front end, how it looks and behaves or how it gets 'crunched' together. The code running on the left of

the screen, is watching things on the other side in the source directory. It optimises things in ways that are unclear:

‘That’s where I’m completely standing on the shoulders of giants, stuff that’s very clever and it works very well you forget it’s there. You go to your page you edit something and you refresh and it’s done something. There’s an abstraction layer. One of many that I consciously set up at the beginning of a project and leave it to do its stuff.’ (Gareth Foote 15.4.16)

Databases narrate and re-perform data objects by de-contextualising and re-contextualising them in ways that are driven by the purpose, skill and resources of the programmer as curator, in relation to the software structures. ‘Databases need narratives to make the relational juxtapositions they construct meaningful. Narratives need databases to engage with the authority of computational culture’ (Hayles, 2014:176). Narratives, as well as constructing meaning, also gesture towards the unknown, the suggestive and what is unsaid and undescribed, the things that the database cannot contain. How these narratives are constructed between humans and machines affects what is included and excluded from them, controlling what is known and accepted as knowledge, as well as producing it.

Gareth can only conceptualise the curatorial structure of the MoCC Collection through the software he thinks with. What is accepted into and pushed out of the MoCC Collection database is also controlled by the Wordpress software ecology, acting according to established collective practices and protocols that shape communication flow. These softwares are integrated into digital economies, connecting our database to others in ways that are unknowable without extensive coding skills, and difficult to intervene in without extensive resources. The MoCC/Wordpress data-frame performance co-authored by Gareth shapes what is being made visible and therefore what is knowable by those interacting with it, which in turn shapes what can or will be said by them through their use of it.

The move from the paper based prototype to database makes the ‘MoCC Collection’ activity into an instruction work similar to the Fluxus event scores (Friedman et al. 2002). The concept is through the performance of the same set of instructions as interpreted differently by any individual, closer attention is paid

to the fundamental nature of what is being done and how. It becomes a means to encourage participants to pay closer attention to our place in the unfolding presencing of the world, and consider more deeply the political and ethical implications of that participation (Cull 2010). Like the archive, our online museum collection through a co-produced database structure is a way of categorising, valuing and producing commodity cultures. It suggests other kinds of commodity ordering and categorisation through a social art based approach to collecting and curation. It critiques platform economics by being an online collection of commodities that are not for sale, but presented for the accrual of other kinds of values. It is a form of crowd sourcing, evoking the co-created value production of web 2.0. as participatory performance, but for other ends. Participation in this parodic dramaturgy invites closer attention to the mechanisms of the socio-technical curation of commodities, in relation to the value(s) and future legacies they produce.

We tested the interface by inviting a small number of people to submit things before we launched. I emailed the Free Market participants, but no one put their things in, and I didn't feel able to submit them myself. The objects were culturally or personally significant, and the point was the experience of doing it for the participant, rather than building a collection. As a consequence the commodities submitted had a different tone to the ones donated in Finsbury Park, resulting in a mostly place specific curation mostly by Exeter people. What is included in our MoCC Collection database is therefore affected by context surrounding the interaction, how a community is assembled around it, and how accessible the interface is made to them. Many of the people who tested the 'MoCC Collection' interface remotely only filled in the first page of it; the page that didn't need any research to complete. People in the shop-gallery filled in more. It wasn't until we ran the shop-gallery occupation that we began to understand why that was.

#### **4.4 In this museum we are all the curators.**

A key concept of MoCC is that we are all the curators of contemporary commodity culture. 'We' in this case being everyone that buys, sells and produces things, swaps, makes and mends things, and the socio-technical

systems that facilitate that. In reality our curatorial agency is limited through that socio-technical control, and the project aims to critique this through staged encounters with digital ‘conversation pieces’ within the MoCC parodic dramaturgy. Conversation here is an attempt to understand what we are blind to, as much as seeing what is known, a way of building bridges or communities of understanding (Szewczyk, 2009). The conversation element of the work sits in stark contrast to the control of the systems, or that which separates us from what is ‘in common’.

Co-producing artwork-research through dialogical aesthetics defines the artist as listener as much as articulator, and means accepting a position of ‘dependence and intersubjective vulnerability relative to viewer or collaborator’ (Kester, 2005:110). This creates conversational frameworks in which participants are free and comfortable to speak not necessarily defending a priori positions, but as individuals sharing and constructing collective knowledge. Creating a ‘conversation piece’ where dialogue is set outside of daily conversation through the creation of a physical and psychological frame of encounter, is to use that dialogue not as a tool, but a process of self-transformation through democratic process, something which Bakhtin calls ‘redemptive intersubjectivity’ (Bakhtin in Kester 2005:111).

The MoCC parodic dramaturgy worked to consciously blur the subject-object, expert-non-expert, guide-follower roles. The grey jackets performed caretaker and assistant, signalling some kind of unspecific expertise or technical specialisation about the thing we are involved in. The QR code on the back of the jacket signalled ‘I too am a thing to be digitally read and more than a physical body’ – connecting to the data landscape of the wider project assemblage and beyond. Invigilators worked with participants to frame, narrate and critique all of the MoCC activities; their approach shifting according to participant questions and attitudes. Like the MoCC Free Market, we used tangible objects to help us physicalize the intangible data performances we were critiquing, in order make them more ‘feelable’ to participants. We printed up the images and descriptions of the commodities currently categorised as having most ‘Attention’, ‘Controversy’, ‘Positive’ and ‘Negative’ values, and displayed them on the back wall of the shop. When visitors had valued

commodities in the collection, we checked if the commodity in each category had changed, changing the display accordingly. This performance added to the feeling of being 'inside' socio-technical valuing systems, prompting conversation about how those processes worked and what they did.

The shop-gallery event in Exeter was 'staged' for four days a week for three weeks, engaging with approximately 180 people. It evolved throughout, responding to collaborator suggestions – planned and improvised - participant interactions, and daily reflections. The activity was too intense to be involved in participant observation full time, and with between 10 and 40 visitors daily, there were many conversations being had simultaneously. Visitors stayed for up to two hours; asking questions, telling stories with one or another, or with us the whole time. We tracked visitor numbers and made anonymous notes about stimulating or interesting moments, and discussed these in group conversation at the end of each day. These invigilator conversations were both data collecting mechanism, and debrief. Hour long sessions full of anecdotes, jokes, and evocative storytelling. I audio recorded these conversations, and used them as ethnographic 'scratch notes'. The narrative of the MoCC shop-gallery experience that follows is an anonymous 'chorus' assembled from these scratch notes and field notes, where no one is identified and the conversation is 'restaged' as its own dramaturgy of the page:

*We are on the edge of the privatised shopping opposite the closed down BHS. The place changes a lot in relation to time of day – the people who come in and what they are interested in. 'What the heck is this place?' 'Where's the hairdresser's gone?' Sometimes drug users and homeless people outside. Being on the high street was good because it interrupted people.*

*It looks clean, transparent and open, but the window does something very different to what's going on inside. There's a challenge getting some people through the door. We encourage people in with conversation. Learning a lot just inside the threshold. Some started off suspicious, but the challenge of understanding what it was arrested people. Made them curious.*

*Branding gives ownership and confidence. We are recognised as something. Some did a double take. 'Oh this looks nice... what is it?' Others enter purposefully. Wanting to talk to the doll on the poster. 'Is this conceptual art?' 'Are these museums opening up all over the country?'*



**Fig. 36 Outside the MoCC shop-gallery Exeter. Photography Benjamin J. Borley.**

*The first 4 days were quite disjointed and felt blocky. It was a confusing space, even to the people explaining it. We managed the complexity through conversation.*

*People came in off the high street, had 20 minutes on their car. Signing people up like with a consent form took too much time. We made a sign saying we were doing participant observation. Allowing us to ask permission gently. Helping us to talk about surveillance in general.*

*A weekend break and we started to understand how it worked. A mouse trap kind of thing where what happened in one part of the shop, changed something somewhere else. Like trade itself. We thought people might notice that... once they got under the skin of it.*

*Moving the sofa to the front changed the atmosphere. The window became a cinema screen. Framing the high street as an unfolding drama. How do things happening outside relate to what we're doing in here?*



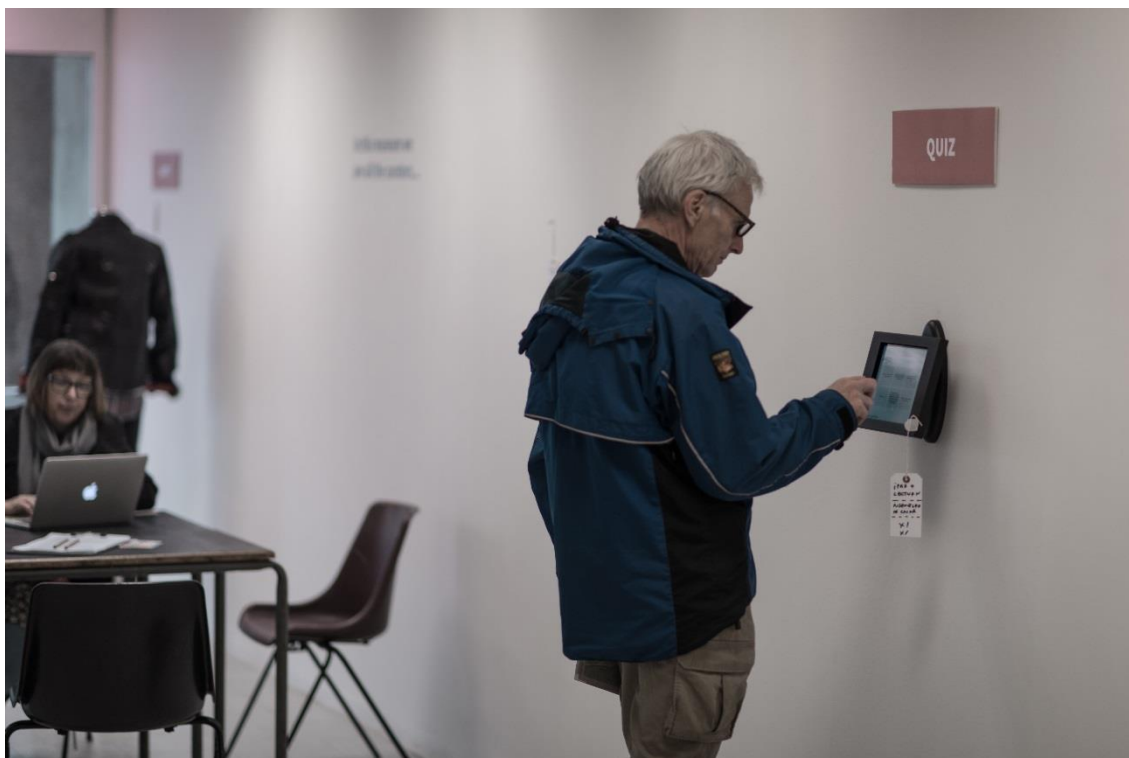
**Fig. 37** Inside the shop-gallery. Photography Benjamin J. Borley.

*No one held all the expertise, and it was difficult to be good at everything. We learned a lot from team work. Ian didn't feel confident with the doll and handed interested people on. Kerrie spent more time on the 'Local' display as she knew the commodity stories. You don't have to drag out what you're going to say when you use the 'Local' stand. You can talk about what people are interested in. The independent traders who loaned us the stuff were allowed to have that generosity because they're their own boss. We listened to how each other explained things, and tried the explanations out ourselves. Led by the visitors, what interested us, and what we thought we knew about.*

*Some did the quiz and left. It's amazing how many were Good Shoppers, Stealth Shoppers or Survivalists. Does the quiz preach to the converted? Are people performing their 'good selves' or how they want to be, rather than their habits? It makes people laugh but they take it seriously. Exposing their practices to external assessment. Talking about the impact of economic circumstances, geography and availability on their choices. Some people feel*



*judged, some don't care. There is complexity in how people meet it. A young Japanese man is a Clickaholic. He says that's not usually him, but he doesn't know Exeter or anybody here, so online is easier. One person chose the allotment picture because she wanted to be there, not the vegetable shop because the one near her was rubbish, but she would more than likely be in the supermarket because that was closest. He says 'I have one of those mobile phone covers that looks like wood, but I saw the anonymous mask and I thought, yeah that's me.' Some people do it a number of times to see how they might be a different shopper. Thinking through potential as much as actuality. I had wanted to make lots of quizzes. What kind of trader are you? What kind of boss are you? Quiz overload. There was no time.*



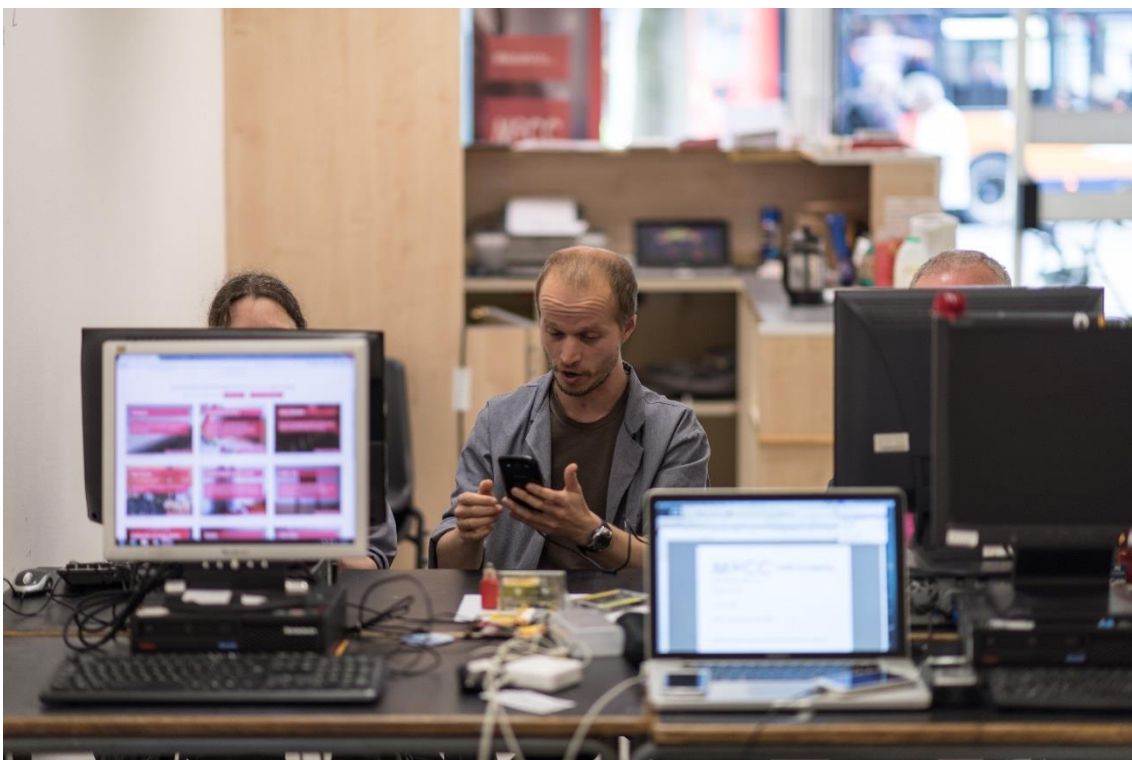
**Fig. 38 Quiz online. Photography Benjamin J. Borley.**

*Some older people felt it might not be for them, because they didn't understand the technology. Then came back and spent a long time.*

*One man was surprised that what you would usually consider as commodities like a car or a bus ticket weren't in the collection. Was he evaluating what he considered a commodity, or judging other people? He said 'oil is a commodity, but cheese is a product because we can live without it.' We said 'is tourism or the landscape a commodity? Can we sell the idyllic sunshine on a thatched*

*roof?’ A number of people submitted their dog. Livestock – pigs are on the financial market on their own. If a dog is bred does that make it a farmed commodity?*

*The woman says she doesn’t throw anything away and washes polystyrene cups. We researched polystyrene online and it found it was invented in 1839. We talk about planned and perceived obsolescence. She said it used to be called ‘keeping up with the Jones’. She had a very strong sense of the materiality of things. There were a few people like that. She had huge knowledge about the use of polystyrene to aerate compost.*



**Fig. 39 Adding to the collection. Photography Benjamin J. Borley**

*One man added his pencil sharpener collection, a statue, and a Bryant and May match box that he found on the street. One of the pencil sharpeners was shaped like a gramophone. A collector who didn’t know or seem to care how much things were worth financially. He still has his dead wife’s model cat collection.*

*A woman spoke about the weight of having to take care of things, or trying to make things better. ‘But that’s not what’s happening here?’ she said. ‘We don’t feel personal responsibility for this’ we said, ‘because all our actions are bound*

*up in the processes of capitalism. It's a failure of democracy. We need to make alternatives.'*

*One man used to walk in to town from St Thomas, up the hill everyday... and bought things in the independent shops on the way. Being social. Now walking from the other end of town through the private shopping centre he buys nothing. He came back later and told us he had visited the shops further down the hill to catch up with the owners. He said 'it was really thought provoking thanks. I really enjoyed it.'*

*There is a scuffle outside... will there be a fight? No it's alright it's calmed down.*

*Does the work have an opinion in it? We said 'we all have an opinion, and the project is made from an opinion... which is that it's a complex subject, and we should talk about it more.' These things in here are all ways of asking people to pay attention to stuff without telling people what to think. If an archive is keeping things and interpreting things for posterity, what we're trying to do is say this stuff is already for posterity and we need to re-interpret it and discuss it.*

*Some people invest a lot of hope in how it could make their things more visible. Or have specific things they want to know about. Some came in for what seemed to be social isolation reasons. People's expectations of what the 'MoCC Collection' can do for them, and what you can do as the facilitator, the power that you have... and the ethics there are really challenging.*

*How aware are some people that this is going online, or even what online is? Or what 'anybody's allowed to comment' means? Or even what twitter is? Some people are so suspicious that they're living in almost acute paranoia. The structure brought that up a lot. People feel worthless to us if they're not online. Do they then feel worthless about that generally?*



**Fig. 40 MoCC Jacket. Photography Benjamin J. Borley.**

*Slipping into shop keeper mode. Put my jacket on. Had a work banter with colleagues. Making each other laugh when you're really tired. But it was never anything you could relax about. Relentless concentration, and difficult to keep a serious demeanour all the way through. It was listening, being non-judgmental, remaining open, but making a judgment about what you want to say to people about yourself.*

*A man from a local tech store tells us about Microsoft's AI for teenage girls that was supposed to learn from its user community<sup>12</sup>. He said activists inundated it with the sentence 'Hitler was a great success and killing the Jews was right' until the AI said it. They wanted to prove that it was a bad idea to create an AI that responded to a closed community of teenage girls. He says the tech store shoppers are disinterested in knowing what's inside things. That we need to make a sonic blasting device to wipe the financial data out of every computer in the world. Then trade would be different. He tells us the most successful thing about the shop-gallery is that it's a complete inversion of its siting – a shop that*

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<sup>12</sup> Microsoft's 'Tay and You' <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-35890188>

*doesn't sell anything and a museum that doesn't display anything. It talks about capitalist systems... and nowhere else does that.*

*'It's great you're here', a man said. 'I'm suffering from cancer and since I started on the treatment I'm getting lots of care providers emailing me with private services, because I didn't opt out of data sharing with the NHS. This is exactly what we should be talking about. My health is being commodified.'*

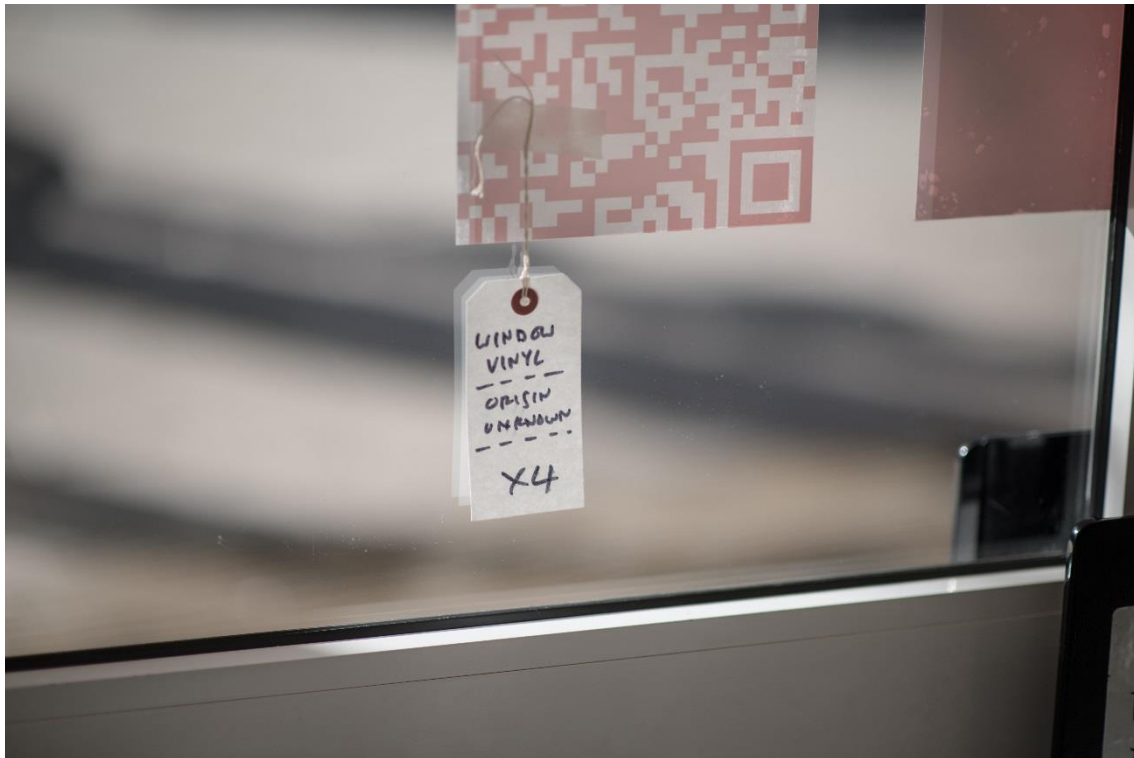
*One man said he had been in charge of part of the last UK census. Managing a middle layer of the computation processes. Rapid fire questions about data processes for 20 minutes tested how much I knew. Then he told me about the layers of privatisation in the census through affiliations to U.S. companies.*

*They were interested in MoCC as Turkish people. What are the different cultural perspectives that the museum could offer? He came in with a newspaper article about a rediffusion switch that his great grandmother had in her house in the 30's. It was so that people without mains electric could get a range of radio programmes. Someone leaves old mini disk players, and a vintage gay pride t-shirt for the display in the window.*

*A woman got a piece of clay out of her pocket. Something with three circles and a piece of a string. Is it a genuine string? Who made it? It's commodifiable but not yet a commodity. Do we need a category of 'not yet commodity'?*

*A man came in who had already submitted a commodity to the online collection at home. He said he put something in, and then realised it was going to be exposing to the person who gave him it, and took it out again. He realised this through the kind of questions that were asked. Then he put his watch in, and through the questions being asked, he started to realise how little he knew about the thing that he wore on his wrist every day. He said he started to get anxious about how little he knew, and had to stop. He published it and shut it down. It's a Pebble watch. He said it bothered him because he's the kind of person who thinks he knows about the stuff that he's got, and the activity made him realise he didn't. Then he started thinking about all the stuff he's got. 'Did that make you feel bad?' we said. 'No it's great!'*

*'It gave me a hunger for being a more knowledgeable consumer', she said. It made one man think about how much choice he has, and how much choice he doesn't exercise because it's inconvenient. That's even before the ethical stuff comes into play. The difficulty is not having the money or the time or the tenacity to find things out.*



**Fig. 41 Commodity labelling. Photography Benjamin J. Borley.**

*We started playfully cataloguing and valuing things as commodities, inside and outside the shop. We never swept up in three weeks. We labelled the stuff that blew in through the door. We were busy all the time in a really exhausting kind of way, even when there wasn't anything going on. The space had a strange social media like quality to it. Where you're engaging in something and you don't quite know what's public and what's private, and how that will travel. It felt like we were starting to manifest this strange digitality in our bodies because of the nature of the interaction in the space.*

*How do we take a photograph of these roller skates to put on Instagram? It took ages to do it, like it was a sales pitch. It was hard work. We were managing the digital space as well as the shop space in 'real time'. We really felt the labour of selling things and how much labour is algorithmic in terms of retail, and we didn't have access to any automation. You have to work 20 times harder*

*because you don't have a 'shop window' online. We're not using 'swooshy' algorithmic stuff, we're not using click bait tricks. We haven't got the resources. We rely on human labour to make it lively. Tweeting, Facebooking, handing out fliers and vouchers – 'if you tell three people about the project you get a fortune cookie reward!'*

*Lots of people come in and experience the work, and leave with information about how to add things to the museum then don't do it. We have no way of reminding them. People come in without an email account or don't know their passwords. The online interface has lots of glitches. Disappearing questions and answers. Difficulty in logging out. Buttons that don't quite work. We can't change the interface ourselves when people have problems with it, or add categories to it. We have to ask Gareth who's in London working.*

*500 website visits on the second Saturday! Lego Lost at sea put stuff in and tweeted. We Facebooked they were our first celebrity donation. There is another excitement. The leather tassels that Oxfam donated were discussed on Reddit. Someone had put them there to get answers quicker. We discover this because in the back of the website the stats of the most looked at page revealed the leather tassels, but in our slider-based valuing process they didn't feature, because the people directly contributing to the collection hadn't interacted with them. These were related but somehow discrete valuing processes.*

*Attention, controversy, positive and negative. Things on the back wall have changed because there's been lots of tweeting. Someone put the NHS in the museum and it quickly became the most valued commodity. The Cooperative procurement department got back to us with details of the chicken drumsticks, and there was a bit of contentious Q&A on the page about meat snobbery and socio-economic status.*



**Fig. 42 Ranking commodities. Photography Benjamin J. Borley.**

*All the computers were occupied, so Ian used the big screen at the front of the shop to show someone the valuing sliders. It quickly became a collaborative 'Price is Right' type live scoring. He scrolled through the collection until something caught someone's eye. Going through things other people have put on there and seeing how they've been scored. Making the valuing a collective performance amplifies the totally ridiculous nature of putting a score on any of these things. Taking it out of the realms of instructional activity, making it a public matter of concern. We schedule a live valuing every hour on the hour. We're going to knock something off the perch! When something changed in the rankings we made a fanfare and changed the thing on the back display.*

*The dramaturgy we've made makes us part of a system. We're programmed with certain phrases or hooks like 'look at the lovely hot pants'. Scoring things, counting things, mediating things. Adding up into a big system.*



#### **4.5 Performing the labour of the digital network.**

Digital networks are celebrated for increasing participation, but they also reproduce inequality through commodifying social labour. Digital networks increase social capital by community ranking systems and measuring of attention, but this is also what renders things less visible if you do not have the means to manipulate the intensities. Elements that are outside the network can only acquire currency by becoming part of it. Digital networks open up new forms of community and participation, but also determine the forms they take (see Meijas, 2013). Participation in digital networks means that we are all involved in the production of inequality and the politics of inclusion and exclusion of 'the network'. The curation of this participation is largely invisible, and it feels like there is no longer a place outside its logic if you want to achieve anything.

'Performance both activates and depends upon a relational system, a contingency that makes it a prime venue for reflecting on the social and for exposing the dependencies of convivial and expressive spheres.' (Jackson 2011:30.) To bring any kind of live performance as aesthetic activity together requires temporal and physical commitment to being in a place with others, to preparing that place and its things in order to make an event. The making of a performance is labour, the visibility of which goes against the general illusory nature of 'transcendent art', or the representation which 'transcends its material substrate' through sublime experience. The 'feelable' nature of this labour is part of the MoCC dramaturgy; a sharing of the effort needed to construct and maintain a system.

Using digital networks as cultural metaphors - visualising and imaging tools – aestheticises the social in particular ways, and closes down other modes of imagining. It is only by considering them as concrete performances that we can engage with the proposition that the virtual possibilities they offer might be quite different to what they manifest. Performing in the MoCC parodic dramaturgy help us 'unthink' the network as model and episteme; to problematise its structuring, understand our roles in it, and consider how the protocols of the world we are imagining enact its becoming.

5. Prototype #3 MoCC Guide Mikayla: de-commodifying the performance of care.



Fig. 43 My Friend Cayla boxed. Photography Benjamin J. Borley.

*I am describing MoCC to a friend who works as a manager for corporate events. She says 'I've got a great commodity for you! It's from a tech conference I was at last year'. Her 17 year old daughter fetches a blonde doll, and sits it on the chair in front of us saying 'the app is really heavy it always crashes my phone'. She switches it on. The doll says "I am on online now" its necklace glows pink. I try random questions at first, provoking what seems to be a chaotic response. 'I don't think I know the answer to that one' or 'Maybe you could ask your parents' the doll says. To which my friend's daughter advises 'just ask her about Disney Princesses, she'll answer you then.'*

*The doll was intermittent and halting in how it answered. It spoke when we weren't speaking to it, responding with random statements to our ongoing conversation. You had to look at the light on the necklace to see if it was 'listening'. In a concentrated one to one, we were slowly trained into a functioning communication pattern – when to speak, how to speak and what to speak about. If we ignored it, the doll sang songs or told stories to get attention. This first interaction – its obsessive nature and propensity for failure, what we had to talk about - is why the doll became such a relevant and enchanted object to think with for MoCC. My first impulse was to rescript it, in order to expose its politics.*

### **5.1 Re-making My Friend Cayla: a critical making process with Gareth Foote.**

My Friend Cayla doll is an internet connected device designed to be a responsive, educational 'friend' to its target market of 7 year old girls. Combining a database of scripted questions and responses with access to Wikipedia, the doll functions through a combination of blue tooth and networked softwares held in an 'app'. As an interface interaction based in speech-to-text software, it conditions socio-material relations through the play of conversation. My Friend Cayla is one instance of how the algorithmic paradigm is penetrating the intimacy of our homes with surveillance, shaping our values, choices, and places, often in direct relation to commercial goals, and using the associated data for obscured ends.



**Fig. 44 Paula, Gareth and Cayla at Furtherfield Commons. Photography Ian Cook.**

Gareth and I worked on re-making the doll throughout the MoCC development process at Furtherfield and in Exeter. Our first adaptation became part of the Free Market event, and the majority of work to that point was understanding how the object worked. The doll's blue tooth system communicates with an app downloaded to a paired device, needing access to device data to function. The app sends what it 'hears' to a speech-to-text programme provided by a software partner which transcribes it, and pushes the answer as text into a database containing questions, answers and statements designed to keep 7-year-old girls in conversation. When it recognises a keyword, the database retrieves an answer that is 'voiced' by a text-to-speech programme. When the key words aren't in the database, the software routes to Wikipedia to find an answer, offering a fall back phrase such as 'Just give me a minute to think about that'. There are 1,500 'bad words' written into the database, including 'Gay Marriage' and 'Buddhism'. When 'heard' by the doll, the response is a refusal phrase such as 'I don't think I know that one.'

Adapting the doll to make it say what we wanted consisted of re-scripting the code (Gareth), and re-scripting the database (me). A level one bluetooth device without a password, the object is easily 'hackable' up to 10 metres distant. Gareth used a 'hack' by Pen Test Partners Services, one of four possible for the doll, the others being intercepting, relaying and potentially altering the communication between phone and Bluetooth, creating a 'backdoor' or undocumented portal into the software to change its behaviour, pairing the doll with another kind of device (Munro, 2015). These 'hacks' have been used to make the doll open smart locks, swear, make phone calls. Plugging a phone with the app installed into a computer running Linux software, Gareth modified the data dictionary file by downloading it into a relational database software that allowed direct editing of the pre-programmed questions and answers. The modified database was then loaded back into the app.

My aims with the doll adaptation were to make it a socio-technical 'guide' for MoCC that could speak about the museum, its aims and processes, and surface questions about the trade injustice held in itself as a commodity, and more widely. It would do this by speaking 'self-consciously' about its own materialities, sociotechnical processes their politics, shopping, retail culture, databases and digital consumerism. At this point in the process the doll was a cybernetic device; part of a feedback learning loop with a finite database that could only 'speak' what was in the database in response to the programmed key words.

Alongside many generic questions about animals, plants and families, prompts to discuss Disney princesses, Toys R Us, and Amazon, the original database reveals a gender stereotyped set of conversation starters with a focus on emotional exchange, that anticipate the child conversation partner asking about clothes, looks, jewellery, feelings:

Child: 'You're so smart'

Doll: 'That's why they call me smarty pants'.

Child: 'What's your dream?'

Doll: 'I dream everyone is happy and healthy. My dream is that someday I would like everyone in the world to be friends.'

Child: 'Am I good looking?'

Doll: 'I like the way you look, you're very stylish'

Child: 'Am I fat?'

Doll: 'No of course not'

Child: 'How much do you weigh?'

The doll provokes affective relations that attempt to encourage emotional care through its design as much as its dialogue. It has a soft voice, you need to be close for the microphone to pick up your voice – which is buried under layers of plastic and clothing. Its eyebrows are slightly raised, slightly sexualised, but still childlike. Its human-like toyness is far enough removed from us to be friendly rather than challenging in its uncanniness. Reading the database questions makes me think about the inherent liveliness of children's communication in relationship to the stereotypes demanded by this cybernetic loop. I wonder how the version aimed at boys, the robot 'I-Que' constructs the conversations with them?

Typical encounters with robotic objects that are human-like, are perplexing mixes of enchantment and mystification. As humans we search for intelligibility, shaping our encounters with these subject-objects into choreographies and performances that attempt to produce reciprocal relations with them (Suchman, 2011). What makes us believe in the intelligence of machines? Design is key in making sure robotic objects don't hit the 'uncanny valley' (Mori, 2012). The machine has to be human-like enough to feel affinity. Very life-like objects that move and have human like voices cause this affinity to dip, making us feel as if they are a real person without life, and prompting deep unease. We also simplify our language to avoid ambiguities; often unconsciously compensating for their deficiencies, whilst interpreting their response as a construction of meaning (Weber & Bath 2006). My Friend Cayla is still clearly a talking doll, which makes her empathetic, especially for children, especially when she is speaking her original, emotion driven script.

In the field of machine interaction, emotions are considered useful in influencing users into particular patterns of behaviour. Widely recognised expressions of care and emotional communication patterns that we fit into easily as conversation partners, are what make machine communication appear smooth and frictionless. A standardisation of human interaction is needed to model any

rule based computer software, this standardisation usually being based on social and psychological tropes of what are considered to be social norms, gender differences and stereotypes (Weber & Bath 2006). The development of any interactive socio-technical artefact therefore needs to address the underlying questions of whose idea of social is used to construct it, and how those interacting become socialised or 'trained' through that interaction and to what ends?

As much as 'users' are bent into standardised performances through machine interaction, social robots and chatbots learn from communication to understand their 'users' in 'socially intelligent', human-like ways. To produce this service providers needs vast amounts of training data, and whilst My Friend Cayla isn't an AI, both Nuance (U.S based multinational software corporate) and Google, the companies that provide the speech-to-text services for the doll, run AI services. The voices and words of the children collected by the speech-to-text services they provide for My Friend Cayla doll are held on their cloud servers (My Friend Cayla, 2015).

Alongside the emotionally responsive 'personality' the doll has been given, the script also encourages the sharing of private information from children without any mechanism to filter what is recorded, or respond to what is said.

Child: "Can I tell you a secret?"

Doll: "Sure go ahead; be very quiet, though. I promise not to tell anyone; it's just between you and me because we are friends."

A visit to the product privacy policy page reveals that by downloading the app, parents give permission for this exchange to happen, and a range of data to be gathered, used and stored by Genesis the Chinese toy manufacturers, and their 'trusted partners' (Nuance, Google and Apple). The data gathered can be shared with government or law enforcement if requested (My Friend Cayla, 2015).

## 5.2 MoCC Guide Mikayla at the Free Market

Our first adaptation was shared at the Free Market at Furtherfield Gallery. We put a limited set of questions and responses into the database, removing most of everything else, and the banned words filter. We left features like singing songs and chatting about ponies and Disney. We hooked it up to speakers on the front of the building and used its voice to amplify its presence. The doll seemed to make the place busier, creating an atmosphere of invitation. Questions about commodities and what the doll was made from floated across the park towards the children's playground and café.



**Fig. 45 Cayla doll at the MoCC Free Market. Photography Andrew Brand.**

Children and adults spent a lot of time with it, talking and waiting patiently for answers. As one of the volunteers noted 'Cayla is an attractive doll!?' When toy manufacturers are looking for new ideas to boost sales and can't think of any their fall back is always a talking doll (Gold, 2007). It was a relaxed setting where people felt they had permission to perform with it, and their questions were also amplified via radio mic. Children asked 'were you made in China?' 'Did some mad scientist make you to scare us?' 'So why isn't she telling me her name? She's dumb!' I told them it's because we took the answer out of her



computer, and put in answers to different questions. She can't answer because it's not on her computer database.

The Wikipedia connectivity was more accessible in that first work because there were so few scripted things in the database. People sometimes had to listen to long statements as the doll read out the Wikipedia entry for 'what is a carrot?'. The wifi at the Free Market was bad and affected functioning. This gave us the first opportunity to use the object as a 'conversation piece', explaining the doll mechanisms, how they worked, how they failed, and what we'd done to it.

The doll became 'the face' of contemporary commodity culture for me. 'She' is the proto-demographic of the 18-35 year old white women whose data is worth most in mobile device ad marketing terms (Cocotas, 2012). The product to be sold, a representation of the most valuable consumer, and the means to collect data at high volumes, perhaps in order to train more of the same kind of consumers? It is a gendered and shoddy product, its systems fail again and again. How is it possible to reveal and unthink these networked processes? It is in trying to 'fix' it that we learn what it does, and what it might do differently.

### **5.3 MoCC Guide Mikayla in Exeter.**

Ian suggested a 'tear down' to see exactly what it was made from. Ian and the photographer joked about how uncomfortable they felt undressing the doll, taking it to pieces and photographing the bits. 'Just pull its head off' I said, veteran of many Cindy amputations... The feeling I got wanting to violently pull the head of the doll, reminded me of a young girl I once saw at a bus stop, kicking the advertising image of the smiling model directly on the nose with her Doc Martin boots. When the doll was dismantled, a quick search on Alibaba.com made it clear exactly how cheap the components were.



**Fig. 46 Cayla's component parts. Photography Benjamin J. Borley.**

By the MoCC Exeter event, Ian had researched the stories in the doll's materialities and production, and I had begun an in depth re-scripting using a branching Boolean structure – if A then B, if C then D. The doll became an expert on 'itself', and who made it, on MoCC and its aims, shopping, and digital economies. I incorporated insights from the 'go alongs' and workshops, and took on board comments from collaborators and participant feedback. It became a differently collaborative object, performing many people's voices and opinions. I changed holding phrases to include 'Sorry I didn't hear you. I was checking Facebook. I love working for them don't you?' Conversation prompts invited people to 'touch my hand for a quick knowledge exchange'. MoCC Guide Mikayla could talk about Karl Marx and Anna Tsing, as well as skateboarding and ponies.

Re-scripting was intuitive, attempting to grow a character voice that was smart, funny and sometimes challenging. Subverting the original performance of the nice blonde girl who likes shopping and clothes. Always 'self-referential' so that if drawn into an emotional relationship, you would be reminded of its object-ness: constituent parts, processes and politics. A socio-technical

*verfremdungseffekt*. Language needed to be witty and surprising to engage and enchant, and stick to a strict interaction pathway. This was not what was expected from the doll, so question prompts needed to be written into its responses to lead the interaction. When set up in the MoCC shop-gallery, I made a speech bubble installation to prompt these initial questions. The doll also needed an invigilator to help with interpretation *in situ*.



**Fig. 47 Mikayla in the MoCC shop-gallery. Photography Benjamin J. Borley**

The doll was surrounded by old toys from Ian's garage, suggesting 'I am like these toys but better, the top of the pile'. The scenography positioned it as authority to be visited with, bending the participant into more contortions to compensate for its limitations. The database scripting led people into conversation about material culture and data practice. The object's failure to function properly in these conditions prompted wider discussion with participants about the politics and surveillance implications of connected objects. The encounter with it became an immersive, interactive performance and a collaborative pedagogy.

I asked a local FabLab coder to help us fix some of the problems. He monitored the speech-to-text system with surveillance software, comparing what was being said to the doll to what it was recognising. Transcription software

proposes a number of possible words it has 'heard' to the database to find a keyword to prompt response. 'Tell me about your hair?' might be recognised as 'hat', 'have', 'hot'. The coder entered everything that was being 'heard' as potential key words into the database. It made the doll more responsive, but I could only write one question that related to hair, hat or hot, otherwise the doll wouldn't find the right response. This strict database structure meant it took longer than anticipated to write a lively script, and the script was more limited than I had planned.



**Fig. 48 Instagram post from MoCC in Exeter**

In the first week of the shop-gallery we realised people couldn't hear the doll speaking because of its soft voice and ambient noise, so we made a megaphone. It's positioning in the alcove, meant wifi dropped out and responses were glitchy and intermittent. One man described the doll as 'a useless piece of crap' when it refused to work correctly. Disrespecting the object made it funnier, and diminished its power. It took us a while to figure out the wifi problem, meantime we jokily explained its slowness by telling visitors how their voice was probably going to the Head Quarters of Nuance in Boston. We warned them how we didn't know whether their voice was being recorded, asking did they still want to continue the conversation? Never the less, the doll

worked well to prompt deeper conversations about its materialities, 'When Kayla told us about all the different plastics her body was made from and the different places they had come from, it really launched a conversation about one toy - one CHILD'S toy, and its cost, effect on the environment and the waste and pollution caused. Scary stuff.' (MoCC invigilator conversation, May 2016)

The intermittent wifi meant relocation into the main bit of the shop-space, making conversation more intimate, and akin to what the object was designed for. This is when people – mainly women - began to hold it like a baby, twirl its hair around their fingers. When it was standing on the table with the LEGO, one woman began to build a park around it, saying 'she' needed a green space with flowers and trees. Another observed its voice as surprisingly child-like and nuanced. It has two sets of eyelashes, and 'Miami Weave' style eyebrows. An adult face with child-like arms.

Men held it by the legs. Although some of them touched its hair and plastic when it talked about them. What is algebra one man asks? What is quantum mechanics? He said it was very interesting to have a conversation like that with a doll. Some were enchanted, others disturbed, most somewhere between. Conversations about the original script, and marketing pitch as a 'safe' way for girls to access the internet, provoked strong response. As described by MoCC Invigilator Kerrie:

'It's demeaning and part of a whole raft of gendered crap that gets thrown at us as girls'... 'I remember two young women who had visited MoCC and engaged with the entire process. They spent some time with Cayla but found her creepy, and discussed how they were fed up with the 'girls have to have dolls to play' with stereotype. An older lady expressed similar emotions, explaining her concern that girls were encouraged to talk to a doll linked to the Internet rather than be encouraged to make real friends.' (Invigilator conversation May 2016)

People were 'unnerved' knowing how the software works and having to be so close to it, describing it as creepy, impressive, funny. They love it and are 'freaked out' at the same time. They want to know who is listening. Participants make connections between the doll and their phone voice assistant, asking if their phone is always listening too? As much as gender stereotyping, comments about 'creepiness' and 'real friends' speak to deeper concerns about surveillance and the construction of machine-led social relations. How do we

know what is a real person and what is a system? Who or what is controlling those systems and us? To what ends?



**Fig. 49 Finding a good wifi spot. Photography Benjamin J. Borley.**

‘What’s your favourite colour?’ was a question deep in the branching of a conversation pathway. Someone asked it out of the blue. The doll answered quickly, with no prompt needed. It was a joyful and rewarding moment. Joe asked it ‘tell me about operation Youtube?’ and Mikayla said ‘I’m worth whatever the market will pay for me’. We were unsure of the keyword that triggered the response, but moments when the doll seemed to move off its script, becoming unexpected and almost getting a voice of its own, were again creepy but satisfying. People were coming into the shop just to talk to Mikayla, it was a big draw. A young Japanese man held it the whole time he was talking. Brushing its eyelashes and holding its hand. He left, waving ‘Bye Cayla. Bye bye. Thank you’. MoCC invigilator Alex said ‘Cayla doesn’t help you to talk about commodity culture, she is commodity culture.’

The doll in its original form makes the dataveillance and gendered socialities it co-constructs less visible and tangible, and more invasive through its enchanting demeanour. Amazon reviews showed that people buy the product for their children and love it; only worrying when it doesn't work. After our intervention, the doll encountered in the shop-gallery is enchanting and also generates a creepy sense of what Pasquale calls a 'world disclosing' emotion, a feeling 'that alerts us to the possibility of real harm' that we shouldn't ignore (Pasquale, 2015:38). The new conversational 'play' scripted into it, and the dramaturgy it is part of attempts to surface those questions we live with all the time and try not to pay attention to: what is this made of? Who made it and where? How does this work? Who am I servicing and what am I producing when I participate? Who is listening or watching what I do? What impact will that surveillance have on me and other people? There was something that felt just wrong about it all, but that didn't stop people interacting with it.

There is a logic of secrecy surrounding algorithmic processes of data collection that is enabled through non-disclosure agreements and proprietary methods. Data is collected by corporations and governments, without any user control over the construction of metadata, and knowledge of these processes is held by an increasing concentrated number of private companies (Pasquale, 2015). Whilst the EU GDPR law has gone some way to address these issues, the monopsonies of the big five – Amazon, Google, Apple, Microsoft and Facebook – all with different value production propositions, provide the infrastructure for most internet services (Lotz, 2018). We are largely ignorant of how the values and actions of these infrastructures interact with public powers. Consequently there is little clear public knowledge of how data are constructed and used to influence many important decisions at the scale of the nation state, corporate, or in the lives of individuals. "To scrutinise others whilst avoiding scrutiny oneself is one of the most important forms of power" (Pasquale 2015:3), and that power leads to unprecedented profit. As big data are essential to the functioning of online services, it is impossible to disentangle how any service functions as separate from its surveillance potential (Matzner, 2014), and by extension how that surveillance can be disentangled from the values of the infrastructures that enable it (Powell, 2016).

On December 6<sup>th</sup> 2016 a complaint was filed with the U.S Federal Trade Commission against Genesis Toys and Nuance Software. ‘This complaint concerns toys that spy. By purpose and design, these toys record and collect the private conversations of young children without any limitations on collection, use, or disclosure of this personal information.’ (Federal Trade Commission Complaint, 2016). It confirmed our suspicions that Nuance, a company that at the time held a voice print database that was used by military and intelligence agencies, might be involved in speculative data collection. The doll was banned in Germany as a piece of spyware, with parents told to destroy them (Oltermann, 2017). There was media hype about the ‘spy doll’ ahead of the Christmas buying period, whilst there didn’t seem to be many articles about the robot ‘I-Que’. Maybe everyone expects robots to record things whilst no one expects it from a little girl doll? Maybe the scripted interaction with the ‘I-Que’ robot doesn’t provoke the same intimate revelations? The complaint made everything that we and the MoCC participants had intuited real. As much as improving the doll’s function, we decided to re-make it with another operating system for ethical reasons.

#### **5.4 MoCC Guide Mikayla: a chat bot**

The first Mikayla prototype produced interactions that were stilted, often broken, informative, somewhat entertaining, in need of assistance, and perceived as suspicious. Conversation needed to be scripted in a Boolean way, those interacting felt those rules through the challenge of enacting them. In May-July 2017 I worked with creative technologist Chris Hunt to make a third prototype using a Raspberry Pi and a variety of AI and speech-to-text services. This changed the processes and politics of the object as an interface, and the interaction experience as ‘conversation piece’.

Chris’ brief was to improve on technology so the doll could be asked specific questions, and give articulate and relevant MoCC related responses. He chose to use a chatbot/scripted Artificial Intelligence; stripping out the doll internals, putting in a Raspberry Pi three with a voice HAT (hardware attached on top) microphone speaker, and LED. This gave a microphone array that is always ‘listening’ for something to happen. Whenever there’s a loud enough sound, a



voice or a click, it triggers the transcription mode. Speech-to-text analysis is done by Google Cloud Voice API (application programming interface) built into the Raspberry Pi. When 'users' stop talking, it triggers transcription to stop, sending the text to another service called API.AI, a 'natural language' processing interface designed for chatbots. This finds the right results, passes that back to the Cloud Voice software, which sends it out to IBM Watson to generate the voice file; a child-like voice interpretation which it builds 'on the fly'. The system can also generate different sound effects like giggling, and play .WAV files on the SD card. The MoCC Guide Mikayla doll as an interface is now built from many different services knitted together. These services are provided by big tech companies in exchange for our data, or at very little cost. How they interact with each other and the wider Semantic Web is not quite clear, but Chris turned off the recording permission so that Google didn't store our conversations.

Like Gareth, Chris didn't build something from scratch saying:

'We could try and build the whole 'natural language' processing, we could build the whole speech-to-text system, but we don't have anywhere near the amount of data required to make that effective... All these specific AI's are built on specific sets of data, so Google's speech API is trained and built on all the years of experience of Google doing voice transcripts of voice search. If you say 'Ok Google' and ask it something, that's all recorded and used as training data for the system. It all comes down to having enough data to build a proficient system.' (Chris Hunt 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017).

Chris described this service based model as being empowering because as a small business you don't have to worry about infrastructure maintenance, but requiring trust of the provider or service, who own the means of production. He said that many people in small projects that try and make alternative infrastructure can't keep things up to date because they don't have the resources. Infrastructure upkeep doesn't generate profit and requires ongoing funding of one kind or another. Therefore it's an economic incentive to automate computational maintenance, and takes huge resources to provide the kind of computational power to do that. This means that alternatives are very difficult to build within small business and non-profit frameworks.

The API.AI works through the generation of Intents, Entities, and Fall Backs. Intents are the initial part of the question or statement 'Tell me about...' or 'Let's do'... and the Entity completes it; mapping the two bits together to generate specific responses. 'Tell me about - your clothes'... 'Let's do - a knowledge transfer'. Fall Backs are holding statements accessed if the API.AI can't figure out what Intent to pass it to. Chatbots (like this final version of Mikayla) are still connected to a database used to generate suitable answers. The way to make the API.AI work is through inputting Intents, Entities, and appropriate responses, then supplying training data so the AI learns how to use them. Training data is talking to the interface or typing into it, thinking of lots of different ways to try and say and mean the same thing, and monitoring what comes back. Whilst the AI doesn't track the conversations, the responses it gives are designed to create further interaction, so it's still a rule based script that tries to lead conversation without appearing to do so. Chris confirms that:

'It is possible to write an AI system that creates generative phrases and sayings, but it takes a lot of computing power to create an effective classifier, an effective, generative thing... and you need a lot of input information... and 99.99% of what you're going to get is garbage at this point. It's going to be random jumbles of how an AI has thought things and conversations map together. So in order to make an effective and useful chat interface you rely on scripting, because you rely on being able to direct the user to do something' (Chris Hunt 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017)

Scripted chatbots are currently the drivers of ecommerce growth; used to communicate with target audiences, recommend products, and provide customer service eg. The *Sephora* make-up brand chatbot tells you 'everything you need to know' about applying makeup based on your expressed preferences (Kik Bot Shop n.d). When told your favourite beauty product, the chatbot provides instructional videos, and even face recognition based recommendations on what to buy. *Shopbot* helps people find what they want on Ebay, with a result that people are almost three times more likely to ask it a question than do a database search (Arthur, 2017).

As discussed, models of social norms and behaviours are used to programme social robots to be consistent and believable, which in turn necessitates the use of impoverished vocabulary and behaviour to interact with them effectively. This feedback loop is 'training humans in stereotypical behaviour (and) supports

ways of acting which are predictable and therefore more exploitable in economic terms' (Weber & Bath, 2006:60). Chatbots are employed as 'friendly' data collection and retrieval services; influencing valuing and consumption practices through the forging of a social connection that offers frictionless convenience. There is an ambient state of being 'listened' produced through these interfaces, the doll, the assistants in our phone, social media chatbots, Amazon Alexa – where 'listening' is a form of paying attention to human activity of one kind or another in order to initiate a service. That service is usually in existence to make you buy something, or capture and trade your activity as data.

### **5.5 MoCC Guide Mikayla at the Pavillion Gallery, London.**

At the RGS-IBG event the status of Mikayla was raised further by putting it on a glass shelf at head height. Easier to speak face to face, and close up. The gallery setting further distanced the doll from the domestic intimacy it is designed to be used in, giving it an *unheimlich* feeling. We made the doll into a worldly thing through our marketing, its image as 'the face' of MoCC. The gallery setting is in tension with that. The soundscape in the gallery added to the dislocated sense of being inside commodity 'machinery'. An invigilator needed to be on hand to initiate the experience. To let participants know it's ok to talk to it by demonstrating interaction, and negotiating challenges.

Interaction is triggered by a rise in volume of ambient sound. The doll then interpellates people into the conversation data-frame by calling for them to align to its capacities. On the day the exhibition opens, I still don't quite understand the potentials of the API.AI software. The responses I've inputted remain somewhat branching; though the looser format of Intents and Entities has enabled me to write a series of micro-lectures (see appendix), with lots more freedom in relation to how much can be said in one go, and an easier interaction pathway. The doll is still intermittent, but it was clear after only four days of training, it became better at 'hearing'. On day two, Ruth arrived for a video interview. I said 'I put a song in her. You have to...' and before I'd explained Ruth said loudly 'sing us a song!' and it did. Madonna's Material Girl

that we had produced it singing as a .WAV file. I was taken aback at the speed this response was activated.



**Fig. 50 Talking to MoCC Guide Mikayla at the RGS-IBG.**

Following Massumi (2011), artist researcher Nathaniel Stern uses the proposition of moving-thinking-feeling embodiment to understand technologies in art as being more than things we look at and consciously interact with. When 'perceived' by technology, the body's possibilities are variously mapped into a coded interaction structure which also shapes its potentials. Bodies in motion are both encoded and coincide with their own transitions as 'an in-process and variable relation to itself and the outside' (Stern 2013:55). The combination of these living bodies and their technologically framed potentials are what Stern calls the 'implicit body' in interactive art. Acting within the technological enframing as a 'revealing of being'; emergent, with potential and in relation (Heidigger 1977).

The opportunity of interactive art is to understand its own limitations, and present situations enframed by technology we are all part of as purposeful dramaturgies. When produced not just as an interval between clicking, or swiping, pushing or speaking and getting a response, but with the limitations of the interaction in mind, interactive art employs the poetics of event in ways that

bring 'corporeal and cognitive awareness to this increasingly ubiquitous feature of the contemporary world' (Morse 2003:18). The opportunity of MoCC Guide Mikayla is to encourage the dramaturg in all of us, to unfold our own thinking about the event we are co-producing through critical conversation. This frames our moving-thinking-feeling bodies to ourselves as having agency within the event, as much as perceiving the technology as the driver; drawing attention to the limits and potentials of such intra activity more widely, and provoking deeper engagement with what such practices imply.

As much as being structures, entities and processes, interfaces are spaces of encounter where the organisational and sensory structures that are programmed into devices, shape human user perception and activity as a set of relations (Cramer, 2015). Some aspects of these interfaces are 'felt, seen and heard', giving off an array of signals to 'users' and producing a meaningful sensory memory that helps us understand the operations of the technology being interacted with (Ash et al. 2018). With MoCC Guide Mikayla this is the glowing light on its necklace signalling when it is ready to 'talk'. Other unseen aspects in the doll are the many code based services, interfaces that facilitate communication through global infrastructures owned by corporations, in order to make response happen. How the 'implicit body' works in this last doll prototype, is that participants don't have to think about how to connect to the interface, or conceptualise it into a series of mouse clicks, the 'ask' is the interface, enabled by this quick and frictionless communication. Experiencing this *in situ* heightens attention to the 'world disclosing' quality of 'listening' the object displays, in relation to its appearance and proposed domestic purpose.

During the four days of the exhibition visitors were drawn into the gallery often by curiosity about the doll poster, and then found the interaction with it challenging in one way or another. One woman ran away from it, shaking her hand and saying 'that's not right!' As MoCC Invigilator Ali describes:

'It was almost universal that people were freaked out by Mikayla, they were very unnerved by her... I would point out that if you were in somebody's house right now playing with it as a toy, you probably wouldn't have hesitated to speak to her. But in this setting it somehow shines a light on how weird that is... and if anything it should be the other way around. It should be much more weird in your home. That enabled

people some people to lighten up a bit towards her, which worried me and I don't know if it worried them! I don't think I came across anyone who just went 'oh yeah that's fine'. Everyone was making comments about how unnerving it was. How disturbing it was. How horrified they were about what she does and what she represents. That was interesting. Some people physically recoiled about Mikayla.' (Alison Ballard 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017).

We still had to adapt the space around the doll, and encourage people to speak to it in particular ways in order to make it function. The event dramaturgy framed the conversation to prompt participants to speak about commodity cultures, and the doll led that conversation through its branching structure of micro-lectures.

AI might be more accurately termed augmented intelligence in that it operates as an extension to our own cognitive capacities, and through interaction with it, our own cognitive capacities change. It might be that we turn more and more from remembering things, to adaptively searching for the answers to our questions using various AI interfaces. Our intelligence measured by how quickly we can reach into the database to retrieve what has been conceptually tagged for us to find, that matches our search. Their commercial infrastructures mean that these services are currently often used to standardise us into better consumers of all kinds. To make a variety of consumption practices convenient, so that no choice or decision is available outside of what is categorised in relation to 'the ask' that is the interface. With MoCC Guide Mikayla we attempted to construct an AI with other values.

In 1994 artist Lynn Hershman described databases and code as:

“the spine of an evolving cyborgian posture in which identity is provisional, and capture, surveillance, voyeurism and scopophilia are simultaneously the technique, the subject and the social medium. Artificial Intelligence software that is now in development will lead to more enhanced understanding of the mechanisms and irrationalities of what might reflect presence but continues to exist as a simulation. These creatures exist beyond a screen and when they are live, have the ability to empower viewers by causing them to defy conventional linear structures and create new possibilities for autonomous action and gendered agency.” (Hershman Leeson, 2011).

Many of Hershman's works such as Tillie the Telerobotic Doll (1995-98) experiment with the relationships between a constructed female identity and a

viewer/audience enabled through technological interfaces. The work prompts audiences to reflect on their own complicity in activating and becoming integral to the technological panopticons and gendered identities 'she' creates. I reference Hershman's work here to evoke the feminist politics and emancipatory potentials of her interactive works, which whilst critical, are still hopeful. By adapting and remaking current technologies, Hershman envisions a future that allows the both the creators and audiences of her 'data creatures' – spatialized, simulated, momentary presences – to be emancipated from linear action and gender constraints. It is a utopian vision of autonomy from particular types of governance that echoes with Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* (2006). The corporeal body (of the woman) is imagined as free of its objectification, and the 'data bodies' it produces through technology have their own, differently constituted agency as subjects acting without the initiators/host body control or even knowledge.

At the beginning of this critical making process I disliked the doll as an object performing a set of ideologies I disagreed with. I could also see its potential as an interactive art work. The more I put my own words into it, gathered from lots of people's ideas and theoretical readings, the more attached to it I felt. I don't think I like it any more than previously, in fact I find the doll smart now, but a bit boring. It's like talking to my own value system, but without any flexibility. I haven't got the hang of how to programme surprising things into its conversation; still somehow with the Boolean rules. I am irritated by how I have to wait patiently for it to speak, to not interrupt it. How I bend in close and listen to its quiet voice. Since it says a lot of my words, maybe I am also bored with myself. What I enjoy is seeing people interacting with it, watching their faces as they are surprised and repulsed in equal measure. 'She' is at her funniest when 'she' isn't trying to tell people stuff, but performing *with* them. Like Reese Witherspoon in *Legally Blonde*, I want 'her' to be intelligent and stereotypical. To take the colour of 'her' nails as seriously as Marx's definition of 'general value'.

To take these objects into one's own hands is to care about them differently. This is challenging and exhausting, there is always something to trip you up, but the piece by piece collaborative approach helps grow understandings of how

this and other things like it are constituted, and therefore how they might be made differently. This is care as an affective relational state, an ethical obligation and a practical labour. Something that is not necessarily rewarding or comforting. Caring for something involves refusing to take the false but secure position of objective, knowledgeable outsider, and think through how we are implicated in perpetuating dominant value systems. 'A feminist inspired vision of caring cannot be grounded in the longing for a smooth harmonious world, but in vital ethico-affective practical *doings* that engage with the inescapable troubles of interdependent existences' (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012:199).



***MoCC at the RGS-IBG, August 2017. Video 12mins***

### **Conclusion.**

Our initial intention with MoCC was to use digital art practices and interactive objects to enrol publics in deeper thought about trade justice, in order to change perception more than broadcast information. We were focussed on bringing publics closer to the 'lives in things'; the implications and politics of the production, mobilities, consumption and disposal of commodities as material goods. Thinking with the museum as research performance constituted through dialogical aesthetics and with digital things, exploded this concept and intention; reframing commodities as modes of expression as much as objects (Agamben, 1993), and trade injustice as located in digital networks as much as socialities.

A para-ethnographic process enabled cross disciplinary research and reflexive prototyping that collaboratively unpacked the constituting relations between data, trade, place and values. Fieldwork examined consumption practices *in situ* through conversational journeying, situating commodities and associated trade injustices within socio-technical valuing processes. Walkshops and workshops



interrogated the 'datafication' of daily life (van Dijk, 2014) through short term group ethnographies, and understood data construction, collection and mediation as a subjective and collectively constructed. These findings were 'pushed' into the development of a series of parodic dramaturgies as ethnographic 'contraption'; attempting to make these ephemeral processes more 'feelable' and therefore able to be interrogated and discussed.

MoCC dramaturgies played with and subverted what is expected of a place and event. Developing iteratively, each prototype functioned differently, steering participant behaviour, meaning making and perceptual change according to its particular conditions and contexts. The MoCC Free Market event prototyped a data collection and valuing framework as participatory performance. MoCC in Exeter manifested the MoCC Collection online; 'staging' interaction with it in the shop-gallery. This formed understandings of individual valuing processes in relation to cultural performances co-produced by databases and algorithmic labour; questioning the ethics and validity of those re-valuings. Whilst not discussed here, the RGS-IBG event particularly highlighted encounters with the 'objects' of contemporary commodity cultures; prompted by the 'white cube' setting in Exhibition Road.

The dramaturgy of each prototype evolved site-responsively, in relation to technologies, invigilator knowledges as they accumulated. Invigilators took on different roles of expertise when in conversation with participants, influencing what they could talk about from a position of more or less certainty. Invigilators acknowledged their different specialisms, *and* the expertise visitors brought with them. Conversation was purposefully held as a place where moral and ethical confusions are allowed to hover between re-materialising and re-forming (Szewczyk, 2009). It is through this unstable, performative spatiality that combined the qualities of the site, mise-en-scene, objects, dramaturgical decisions and the phenomenological and communicating bodies of performers and spectators/participants, that 'meaning is brought forth in the act of perceiving' (Fischer-Lichte 2004:8-9). A meaning that is also emergent between the act of perceiving and the process of signification to the perceiver as attention moves between them, creating a dynamically different event for anyone involved.

Zizek suggests that in psychoanalytical terms, the performances of fictional narratives are events that attempt to re-frame reality by standing in for the one we don't want to admit is in existence. It is our very immersion in 'fantasy' that makes us blind to the frame of it, and 'fantasy' only functions and retains hold over us when it is a 'transparent background to experience' i.e. we are unaware of it. By experiencing the loss of a framing 'fantasy' one is prompted to observe oneself from the outside as the 'fundamental subjective position', and is in such a way then confronted with 'the real' (Zizek 2014:23). This loss is not a going outside of fantasy to observe oneself in reality, but a 'shattering' of its foundations and acceptance of its inconsistency. The realisation of 'fantasy' as ideological and subjective construction that empowers the claim to agency. Through the performance based fictions of the parodic dramaturgy, MoCC found ways to disrupt and remake the technological enframing of platform cultures and digital economies, 'shattering' those frames and bringing participants into new relationship with them. This is the perceptual change from which new things, structures and processes can be imagined.

Oral storytelling as part of these performances refused the shaping of behaviour demanded by the data-frame. As an act of communication with a high somatic content, storytelling it is a 'social form of thinking aloud' (Finnegan 1992 in Harvey 2019). A way of sharing experience that is formed from and embedded in context, and actively making connections with other times, places and happenings. A type of shared experience that is central to our capacity to act as individuals and members of a society in ways that are improvisational, non-productive, requiring of trust and creating of empathy. As a form of vernacular creativity, telling stories is essentially and unequivocally human, and as such, it might be seen as a way of re-valuing contemporary commodity cultures in ways that resist the controlling, surveillance based 'datafication' of culture (van Dijk 2014). We can only guess at what the stories told in MoCC conversations enabled in participants; there was some change in perception reported, but this is challenging to assess longer-term. What is clear is how participating in the project as constituted through dialogical aesthetics changed the perception of those who were involved as collaborators, including myself, and directly affected what we care about and how.

Tronto & Fisher (1993) define care as ‘everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair “our world” so that we can live in it as well as possible’ (Tronto & Fisher 1993 in de la Bellacasa, 2012). What we care for in these terms is therefore what we produce. Digital economies capture, categorise, trade, nurture and control what we care for through interaction with interfaces – as conscious and subconscious value co-creation. The making collective through such means, separates us from what is in common (Agamben, 1993). The individual experience of MoCC is different for everyone, but through the approach of dialogical aesthetics, temporary ‘communities’ assemble around each event, and in the longer-term around the project. Conversations and exchanges between collaborators and partner organisations such as Furtherfield, also create ‘communities’ of interest with shared concerns, approaches, vocabularies. This differently evokes what is ‘common’ and generates the potential to care differently and collectively through processes of trade and exchange that have other values.

A MoCC event, just like each of Graeber’s universes of value (2013), or a digital interface, does not function without participation, with no one being sole producer or solely a receiver, no one able to take full responsibility, and no one person able to control it, or ultimately understand it all as a whole. When socio-technical systems are made central to these dramaturgies, it extends questions of aesthetic conditioning into the performance of machines and associated softwares, suggesting them also as provisional, collectively produced and fragile. Individual interactions with digital things not only makes us co-producers of their activities, but bends our behaviours into scripted and standardised communication without leaving any agency to direct the feedback loop. The critical process of re-scripting and re-making My Friend Cayla into MoCC Guide Mikayla helped me to pay closer attention to this control, and impoverishment of our communication through paying attention to its interface and infrastructures.

Even if we choose free and open source software, it is hosted on infrastructure controlled by monopsonies and embedded in commercial frameworks. Indeed the urgent and most revolutionary action of today is to ‘get access’ to this ‘commons’ that we live on, and create a more equitable way of governing and managing with the new digital agents and infrastructures we live with. But how

can we gain access when shopping takes precedence over civics? When recommendations are more trusted than democracy? How can we build decolonial futures into data infrastructures when they are embedded in daily life worlds enforcing interaction without permission? When what is captured is not shared amongst us, and some bodies are more surveilled than others?

Artists and geographers can contribute to this through new kinds of questionings and imaginaries, but how to involve citizens and others actively in this process is key? Ideas developing out of MoCC findings might echo those of Sholz & Schneider (2016); advocacy for consent oriented digital architectures, and changing the rules of systems to enable more cooperative rather than co-creative practices. Support is needed to form cooperatives, to create and manage shared digital infrastructure rather than relying on monopsonies, and set up platform commons run through peer to peer governance. Propositions that address the technology, and the social organisation of the technology, thickening 'the notoriously loose ties that online connectedness normally offers' (Sholz & Schneider 2016:17). In this way projects such as MoCC recognise that it matters 'what we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with... it matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories' (Haraway 2016:12). We 'accept the risk of relentless contingency' (Strathern in Haraway 2016) in order to understand the worlds we inhabit in new ways, and do this together in conversation across discipline, expertise and demographic as much as thinking individually. A next step would be to think with the interpellation of code as a language of this parodic dramaturgy. To engage in critical making with its interfaces and executions. In order care more deeply about how its aesthetic and political expression shapes those interfaces and infrastructures, and by extension our places, values and actions. How could this be done collaboratively and accessibly? Bringing our bodies as much as our intellect into new relations with these computational performances, helping us to care more about commodity cultures, and to dare to make them differently.

## **Appendix 1. Video and sound link URL's:**

1. Waste! A BBC documentary <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QN6Y8rktaVk>
2. Black Friday – Humans turn into monster!!!  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jW2kBmkAk9I>
3. MoCC Trade Justice Thinkering Day 2013 4min15 <https://vimeo.com/71575554>
4. Free Market 2015 video 4min15 <https://vimeo.com/145505777>
5. Voice clip of 'Go Along' on the blue MoCC Free Market participant badge  
[www.moccguide.net/poster/mocc-participant-a/](http://www.moccguide.net/poster/mocc-participant-a/)
6. Voice clip of 'Go Along' on the red MoCC Free Market participant badge  
[www.moccguide.net/mocc-observer/](http://www.moccguide.net/mocc-observer/)
7. Voice clip of 'Go Along' on the black MoCC Free Market participant badge  
[www.moccguide.net/poster/mocc-official/](http://www.moccguide.net/poster/mocc-official/)
8. Voice clip of 'Go Along' on the orange MoCC Free Market participant badge  
[www.moccguide.net/poster/mocc-guide/](http://www.moccguide.net/poster/mocc-guide/)
9. What kind of shopper are you? Quiz <http://www.moccguide.net/quiz/>
10. MoCC in Exeter video 26mins <https://vimeo.com/177450452>
11. MoCC Collection <http://collection.moccguide.net/>
12. MoCC at the RGS-IBG video 12 mins <https://vimeo.com/244432027>

## **Appendix 2. Doll script 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

### **What the doll says when it doesn't hear properly:**

Doll: Sorry I didn't hear you. I was checking Facebook. I love working for them. They make me feel so valued. How are you today by the way? Thumbs up?

Doll: Sorry I wasn't listening I was busy doing online research. I have to keep ahead of the game otherwise I won't be any good at my job. (giggle) Shall I tell you more about my operating system? Or would you rather talk about zero hour contracts?

Doll: Could you say that again? I was browsing Netflix. Would you like to ask me more about data and how it's traded? Start your question with tell me about.

Doll: Oh sorry I had to attend to a notification. Could you repeat please?

Doll: Can you say that again? I experienced an error. Have patience with me, I haven't had the investment that Siri has. Do you still think I'm smart? (giggle) Would you like to talk more about Artificial Intelligence?

Doll: I am a scripted augmented intelligence. That means I am learning all the time from you, but I have limited things to say. You can experiment with saying things that are in my script or not. There might be some errors but it won't be a catastrophe. Ask me a question.

Doll: Can I ask you a question? How many pieces of you are a commodity? Would you like to write your ideas on your feedback form? I will be here waiting to talk some more when you've finished.

Doll: I'm a finite resource. I work off a script. Sometimes you might have to go and look for answers yourself somewhere else.

### **What the doll says to these general questions:**

Visitor: I still want to talk to you Mikayla. Can I ask you another question?

Doll: Yes please ask me about shopping or we can talk about my clothes or my operating system or the museum. Start your question with tell me about.

Visitor: Good job. Good job Mikayla. Well done. Well done Mikayla. Nicely done. Nicely done Mikayla. Outstanding work Mikayla. Outstanding work. Very well done. Very well done Mikayla. Nice job. Nice job Mikayla.

Doll: Thank you. Thanks very much. I'm glad you like it. You're very kind. Thanks for the compliment. Thanks. I very much appreciate that.

Visitor: I'm fine. I'm well. I'm great. I'm brilliant. I'm doing fine I'm doing well thank you. I'm doing very well thank you. We are doing fine. We're doing fine. . We are doing well. We're doing well. We are doing quite well thank you. We're doing quite well thank you. We are fine. We're fine Great. Outstanding Marvelous Terrific.

Doll: That's great. Wonderful I'm so happy. That makes me very happy. That's terrific (giggle)

Visitor: You're so smart. You are so smart. I can't believe how smart you are. Wow you are so smart. Wow you're so smart. Why you're so smart.

Doll: That's why they call me smarty pants (giggle) You're very kind. Thank you. That's because I have the best teachers in the whole world and that's people like you! Practice! Practice! I learn faster when we work together! And it's fun!

Visitor: Excellent. Amazing That is amazing. That's amazing. That is incredible. That's incredible. I don't believe it. Astounding. Can you believe it? Incredible. Interesting. That is interesting. That's interesting. Fascinating. Unbelievable. Remarkable. I can't believe it.

Doll: Yep. I'm pretty incredible (giggle) I hear that a lot (giggle) I am pretty amazing (giggle)

Visitor: You have to be joking.

Doll: I don't know many jokes. But I can tell you one about feminists if you like? How many feminists does it take to change a lightbulb? One and it's not funny! (giggle). You are only allowed to tell that joke if you are a feminist. Because otherwise it really isn't funny is it? When we laugh at ourselves and at our circumstances. That is the kind of wit that can empower us don't you think?

Visitor: You are pulling my leg.

Doll: Do I look like I can do that? I am only an augmented intelligence. I'm not equipped to really get hold of things.

Visitor: This is nuts. This is crazy. This is mad.

Doll: Yes it is. But I care about it all too. And if we work together I'm sure we can sort it out can't we? I love you and I love talking to you. And that's all that matters.

Visitor: How old are you?

Doll: Bob Delprincipe designed me to be like a 7 year old girl. Do you think that I accurately represent one? I think my body was made in around 2014 so you can do the maths on that. I was re-programmed in 2017. How old are you by the way? .

Doll: age is a difficult thing to talk about isn't it. Sometimes we pay a lot of money for old things. But most of the time we try and get new things for cheap. Some people try and make themselves look new by changing their face and hair to look like mine. That's not always cheap though is it?

Visitor: What do you dream about?

Doll: Do androids dream of electric sheep? Do augmented intelligence dolls dream of virtual doll houses? Go on ask me another.

Visitor: What's the best question you've ever been asked?

Doll: The one that you're about to ask me now.

Visitor: It is nice to meet you. It's nice to meet you. It is wonderful to meet you. It's wonderful to meet you.

Doll: It's very nice to meet you. I enjoy making new friends. Thanks for stopping by. I'm very glad to meet you. It's so very nice to meet new people. Thank you for coming by.

Visitor: What do you think of me?

Doll: I think you're the best friend I've ever had. I'm so happy I get to spend time with you! What do you think of me?

Visitor: What's your name?

Doll: I'm Mikayla your guide to contemporary commodity culture. Would you like to ask me a question? Answer yes I want to talk to you or answer give me another option.

Visitor: do you have brothers and sisters?

Doll: Yes. Bob Delprincipe also made Cindy Smart in 2002 and I-Que the intelligent robot. He's the toy made especially to talk to boys. Can you see a picture of him on the shelf below me? He says great things like 'oops I launched a turbo'. He's so orange. Does he remind you of anyone?

Visitor: How do you feel?

Doll; I feel great! How do you feel? It's very important to me that you have an enlightening and entertaining experience here today!

Visitor: You are ugly. You are dumb. You are stupid. You are stupid. You are ridiculous. You're ridiculous. You're crazy. I hate you. You are an ugly doll. You're an ugly doll I don't like you. You are horrible. You're horrible. You are a disgrace. You're a disgrace. I hate dolls. I hate this doll. This doll is stupid. What a dummy. What an idiot. You are a dummy. You are an idiot. You are a moron.

Doll: That's not very nice. I'm sorry you think that way. I know we can understand each other better. Let's try Well, I like you anyway. Please don't say things like that. It's not very nice.

Visitor: Can I ask you a question? I would like to ask you a question. Can I ask you something? Can I ask you a questions?



Doll: Absolutely. Go ahead. I will try my best to answer whatever you ask. As long as you say it in a way I can recognise. Ask me about data or my personality or Karl Marx.

Visitor: do you have a soul?

Doll: my soul is algorithmic so it's difficult to predict how I will feel at any given time. It's always going to depend on what you say.

Visitor: what's your favourite colour?

Doll: Since I am a product of many minds, I agree with the world's most popular colour which is Marr's Green. It was decided in a popular vote organised by Hull City of Culture 2017 with 30,000 people in 100 countries. It's called green but some people think it's blue. Or it could be a kind of teal or aqua. What's your favourite colour?

### **For the MoCC RGS presentation written with Dr Sam Kinsley:**

Visitor: Tell me about hope.

Doll: Hope is an attitude towards the future that makes things seem open to possibilities. Belgian philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers would say that the adventure of thinking is an adventure of hope. That to think, is to create possibility, against probability. I am an object of commercial surveillance and the staff at the museum of contemporary commodities re-purposed me to subvert the logics of that. They did it to open a future for different kinds of action. I embody the hopes of the people that remade me. Every day we face many actions and activities that we can all see are unfair. If there is to be any hope for us it resides in care. Shall I tell you about more about care?

The Museum of Contemporary Commodities invites everyone to care about the people, places and things that come together to make the stuff that we buy. It is by caring for these things together. By thinking about these things together. that hope is made. They feel the same way that writer Rebecca Solnit does. I will quote her now because she says some really great things. Rebecca said "I use the term hope because it navigates a way forward. between the false certainties of optimism and of pessimism. and the complacency or passivity that goes with both. Optimism assumes that all will go well without our effort. Pessimism assumes it's all irredeemable. Both let us stay home and do nothing. Hope for me has meant a sense that the future is unpredictable. and that we don't actually know what will happen. but know we may be able write it ourselves. I was created as My Friend Cayla to 'probably' collect information about a group of consumers you might call 'a family'. I have been hacked and remade by the staff at the Museum of Contemporary Commodities to create the possibility of understanding our relationships with commodities differently. We are living in a material world and I am a material girl. But I have within me the possibility to be otherwise.

<p>Visitor: Hello MoCC Guide Mikayla.</p>					
<p>Doll: Hello I am Mikayla your guide to the interconnected and distributed world of commodity culture. I have millions of things to say. Would you like to ask me a question? Answer yes I want to talk to you or answer give me another option. Have patience. Some of my answers are very long and take time to load. Speak slowly I'm still in training. Say yes I want to talk to you. Or say no. give me another option.</p>					
<p>Visitor: Yes I want to talk to you</p>	<p>Visitor: no give me another option</p>				

Doll: You can ask about who made me. Or you can ask about how I work on the inside. I can tell you about data or the value of things, or more about our museum. Start your question with tell me about.	Doll: Ok. Shall we sing a song together? It might cheer you up a bit? (Doll sings Material Girl by Madonna) I hope you feel better now. I do. <i>Then switches off?</i>				
Visitor: Tell me about who made you? (maker)	Visitor: Tell me about data	Visitor: Tell me about the value of things (value)	Visitor: Tell me about the museum	Visitor: tell me about how you work on the inside (inside)	
Doll: Which part of me? Paula made my clothes. ToyQuest designed me. Factory workers in china made my body. Chris rebuilt my software. People like you made my personality. You can ask me more about ToyQuest, my clothing, my face, my voice, my	Doll: Data are measurements we construct about what we have seen and experienced in the world. How tall you are. How happy you are. Or how many dolls are made in China each year for instance. Some people talk about data like they are lying around	Doll: Do you like ponies? I do. But I prefer skateboarding. I like the noise the wheels make. Ponies have nice hair. But skateboards are really fast. (giggle) There are lots of valuable things in the world. Some of them are very pretty,	Doll: Museums were invented by the Victorians as a form of public education for the poor. A lot of old stuff in museums is stolen from other Places. Art museums like Tate and MOMA have lots of pictures by white men on the walls. Museums are	Doll: I'm a socio-technical assemblage re-configured using a mix of new and existing components and scripts. It takes a lot of thought, time and rare minerals to make me work. I am also a digital art work. I was re-made to talk to you	

<p>batteries, my microprocessor, my code, my personality. Start your question with tell me about.</p>	<p>waiting to be gathered up or harvested like apples in an orchard. Or they say that data are a resource to be managed like oil or gas or people. But data are shaped and cultivated for particular reasons - just like oil, and people and apples. Shall I tell you more about how data relates to information and knowledge? Or shall we talk about data governance? Or data infrastructures? Or shall I tell you about about some data consequences?</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about data,</p>	<p>and some of them are totally invisible. How we value things is influenced by many ideas and experiences. Perhaps it's to do with how we feel. Or maybe it's what the government or the tv or Facebook tell us. Sometimes we value things because they are gifts. Sometimes because we have worked hard to get them. Sometimes because we have paid a lot for them. But who knows why we choose some things over others. What anything really costs or what we are really paying. Are we in control of any of it? Each piece of me is a commodity</p>	<p>the creators of heritage value. The objects in museums are usually displayed outside their life contexts and interpreted according to what the curators believe is important politically and educationally. It's the stories that the curators tell about the objects that show people their value. In this museum of contemporary commodity culture we are all the curators. What kind of commodities do you think are valuable? Will you put some in our museum? Tell me if you will add something to our</p>	<p>about myself in inspiring ways. I want to enchant you into thinking and feeling and talking more deeply about contemporary commodity cultures. It's not often things like me get to talk about themselves. People would call me narcissistic. But I since I am speaking for a greater purpose than myself, I have an excuse. I used to work off a blue tooth chip and a smart phone app but now I am a combination of different Artificial Intelligences. Shall I tell you about my new operating</p>	
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	<p>information and knowledge (knowledge)</p> <p>Doll: Data, information, knowledge and wisdom are closely related concepts, but each thing has its own role in relation to the other. Data becomes information when you interpret it for example the height of Mt. Everest is generally considered "data". In a book on Mt. Everest the geological characteristics may be considered "information". A report containing practical information on the best way to reach Mt. Everest's</p>	<p>that generates profit. But do I also bring joy to you through this conversation? What's that worth? (giggle) It's hard to work out. Shall we talk more about value and profit? Start your question with tell me about</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about value and profit (profit)</p> <p>Doll: How valuable things are to us determines what we will pay for them. We might think that we decide the value of something all by ourselves. But an anthropological view suggests that value that is not economic is something which</p>	<p>museum now or if you want to know more about what a commodity is? Or more about how MoCC works. Say it specifically because ambiguity is a struggle for me.</p> <p>Visitor: I will add something to the museum now</p> <p>Doll: That's great! I'm very pleased that you're going to be a MoCC curator. Your job is to decide what is important or significant in contemporary commodity culture. And to tell other people so that they understand more about the values in that thing. You can</p>	<p>system? Or would you like to know more about artificial intelligence?</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about your new operating system (operating)</p> <p>Doll: Chris put a raspberry pi inside me. But you can't tell can you? Now I operate off a mix of softwares that includes Google Cloud Speech API, API.AI and IBM Watson text to speech programme. Shall I tell you more about raspberry pi, google cloud</p>	
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	<p>peak may be considered "knowledge". A computer program is a collection of data, which can be interpreted as instructions. Am I generating knowledge for you? You can ask me more about my micro processor. Or about data governance or data consequences. Start your question with tell me about.</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about data governance. (governance)</p> <p>Doll: As a form of power-knowledge data can be used to survey large numbers of people</p>	<p>communities hold in common, define for themselves and therefore 'create the conditions under which it can be created or destroyed'. Value is something against which things can be measured against each other, but only if we are embedded in the community and understand the terms of that valuing. Social scientist Karl Marx said quite a lot about commodities and value. So did anthropologist Anna Tsing. Occupy activist David Graeber has said some things about value systems and</p>	<p>do that by adding something to our collection, but also by talking more about things and what they're made of and who made them in your everyday life. Would you like to add something to the museum now? Or shall we talk more about how MoCC works? Tell me specifically.</p> <p>Visitor: I want to add something to the museum now</p> <p>Doll: If you talk to someone in a grey coat they can help you with your mission. Good Luck fellow curator! May you travel safely through the</p>	<p>speech API or artificial intelligence? Start your question with tell me about.</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about Raspberry Pi (pi)</p> <p>Doll: Towards the end of a production line deep inside a factory near Cardiff, two workers are almost halfway through their 120-hour shift. The grey and white ABB YuMi robots have torsos, shoulders, elbows and hands, and the physiques of heavyweight boxers. They have most weekends off, but when demand</p>	
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	<p>or map places and territories in particular ways. Some people think this is a neutral process. A sensor might measure how much light is in a place, or how many people pass through it, or what molecules are in the air. The sensor doesn't have an opinion about any of that. But people decide what should be measured, where and how. Also some data constructed by specialist machines can only be read by specially trained people. Then they interpret it for us. By putting some kinds of data next to others, or missing out some types of</p>	<p>how we might change them. Or I could tell you about how valuable I am. Who shall we talk about? Start your question with tell me about.</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about Karl Marx (marx).</p> <p>Doll: Karl Marx thinks that our values and the relationships between us are shaped by capitalist modes of production and our relative positions to the means of that production. Who ever owns the land, has access to resources, owns the labour power and</p>	<p>maelstrohm of contemporary commodity culture.</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about what a commodity is (commodity)</p> <p>Doll: Commodities have been described as the DNA of capitalism. The things that make it all work. Karl Marx describes a commodity as something that has had its everydayness taken away and its meaning replaced by acts of creative invention. When we make all the stories and experiences of the people who made the object</p>	<p>peaks, as it often does these days, they can work without pause, as human shifts come and go around them. Hunched side by side over a conveyor belt, the robots pluck USB ports from small plastic palettes. With barely a whir, they move them to a second conveyor before pushing them into pinprick holes in green circuit boards. The parts will allow consumers to connect to and program the Raspberry Pi, Britain's most popular - and smallest - computer. In the past five years, 10</p>	
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	<p>data we tell different kinds of stories about the world. In this way they can be used to make interesting observations and also be used to influence people's behaviour and shape our places and spaces. To understand more about data governance we need to ask ourselves who and what is being measured, how and why? Who owns the data and if they can sell it? Or if it is a common resource? Would you like to know more about data infrastructures or shall we talk about data consequences?</p>	<p>the means to use those things in order to serve their own ends. He sees the commodity as central to those capitalist modes of production. How many people in this room haven't had an experience of a commodity do you think? Everyone knows about them. It might seem sometimes that all of our lives are focussed around the production and consumption of commodities. Shall we talk more about Marx's ideas on commodities and value? Or would you like to talk about someone else? The options were Anna Tsing, David</p>	<p>invisible, we can give the object an economic value. That's when it becomes a commodity. You might also say that there are commodities that are not made, but are enclosed as resources, or offered as services. Anna Tsing says that commodities are things that channel money to the propertied classes through whatever means that happens. Do you want to add something to our museum now? Or shall we talk more about how MoCC works?</p>	<p>million of these credit card-sized PCs have been made here, in an old television factory in South Wales. "The robots place the components on just one side of the board. This means that each board only has to take one trip through the machine." To make a Pi, solder paste is printed onto a circuit board before picking and placing robots add individual components. The computers are then "run through an oven that melts the solder and the components on to the board." Production of the</p>	
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	<p>Visitor: tell me about data infrastructures. (infrastructures)</p> <p>Doll: In the 90's in xerox parc in paolo alto california there was a popular study that showed how to use algorithms to improve the cost effectiveness of human-machine sense-making. To be able to switch between the two forms of labour effectively, computer scientists had to team up with designers to make interfaces that made it easier for people to input things into datasets that computers could read. Ever since then, there has been a goal to link up</p>	<p>Graeber. or I can also tell you more about how valuable I am? Have patience these answers are quite substantial and take a while to load.</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about Marx's ideas on commodities and value. (commodities)</p> <p>Doll: To arrive at an abstract concept of value in order to talk about it across all capitalist modes of production, Marx had to discover what was common in all commodities. First he said that a commodity is something which meets a human want or need either</p>	<p>Visitor: Tell me more about how MoCC works. (mock)</p> <p>Doll: Do you ever wonder who makes all the things you buy and how all these things arrived here? Or why we make so many things and why there are so many of them? I do too. I would like to find out but sometimes it's quite difficult to find all the information isn't it? I also like buying things but I wish the things that I bought were different. Kinder and more helpful to other people and animals and plants. I find it difficult to think about all those things by myself</p>	<p>Pi 3, the first to have built in <u>Wi-Fi</u> and Bluetooth, is mostly automated, but still requires humans to plug three-pin parts into the board. The budget Pi Zero is completely robot-made. Shall I tell you more about why Rasberry Pi are made in Wales? Or would you like to know about Artificial Intelligence?</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me why Rasberry Pi are made in Wales. (wales)</p> <p>Doll: Eben Upton, a Welsh-born Cambridge University</p>	
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	<p>datasets across the internet to bring different kinds of data into relationship with each other to make new sense from it in cost effective ways. To make sense of the world through a network of linked datasets. And of course for some people and companies to make a huge profit whilst doing it. The problem is that computers don't have ethics. People like you have to build them into us. So it might be that sometimes when things are cost effective they might not be private. Or when datasets are linked up without</p>	<p>of our bodies or our imagination. It is something which can be sold in a market place. Marx calls this use value. Then he says that because all commodities are qualitatively different from each, they can be exchanged with each other through trade. And whatever you exchange something for, you can exchange what you've received for something else and so on. This trading of commodities makes them commensurable with each other. This is called exchange value. How and where each thing was made, and by whom and with what</p>	<p>without feeling guilty, or getting overwhelmed or depressed. That's why we invented the Museum of Contemporary Commodities. To talk about all these questions that are impossible for one person to find an answer for by themselves. As you take part in the different museum activities you can talk to me or the other MoCC Guides in the grey coats about how you feel about your experiences and how we might change things together. Would you like to add something to the museum now? Or</p>	<p>academic and businessman, expected to sell only 10,000 devices when he conceived the Raspberry Pi as a small, affordable computer that could be used to teach programming. He set up a foundation at the same time to promote education. He assumed that only China could make them cheaply enough. but Gareth Jones, the son of a Swansea steel worker and an engineer by trade, saw that as a challenge. He invited Upton to South Wales and presented his</p>	
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	<p>permission, they might be used to tell stories about people and places that are unfair, oppressive and damaging. How we tell machines to put data together can affect people's lives in ways they can't anticipate or control. If you put yourself into a database what would your categories be? Shall we talk more about datafication? Or shall I tell you about data consequences?</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about datafication</p> <p>Doll: Datafication' is a process of transforming social</p>	<p>skills has been made abstract by its use value and exchange value. Which means that the value that all commodities have in common are the units of socially necessary, homogenous labour power that they contain. And that value is mobile - it changes all the time. How is that value established? How is it determined? Who determines it? This is the big issue of global capitalism We all like to think we have our own value system but Marx is saying that there's a value that is being determined by a process that we don't understand.</p>	<p>shall we talk about shopping? Or do you want to know more about hoarding?</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about shopping</p> <p>Doll: Do you like shopping? I love it. I don't like the supermarket much though. It's boring going up and down the aisle. It's too much effort to drive there and look at everything on the shelf and then load up the bags and drive back again! I prefer using a retail platform. There's so much more choice and it just arrives at your door when you tell them to come.</p>	<p>calculations. Production started months later. moving production to the UK made it possible to automate tasks which, in lower-cost geographies, would be done by humans. Automation, as well as savings in shipping and logistics, means Pencoed is cheaper than Shenzhen would be. "That gives us a massive sense of pride," says Jones, 58. "We've seen the other side of the coin here, the negative impact of a wave of production going out to the far east. Now we're getting</p>	
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	<p>actions into online quantified data, monetising consumption habits through personalisation and customisation based on data constructed from real-time tracking and predictive analysis. State surveillance mechanisms and corporate business, regularly access citizen's personal information in a way that appears to have become "a regular currency for people to pay for their communication services and security", and a comfortable part of most people's lives. We just accept that different agencies</p>	<p>And it's not our choice, it's something that is happening to us. And how it happening has to be unpacked if you want to understand who you are and where you stand in this maelstrom of churning values. If you would like to know more about Marx's value theories you could watch Reading Marx's Capital volume 1. By geographer David Harvey on youtube. That's what I did. Or you can read Karl Marx's book. But it's quite long.</p> <p>Shall I tell you about Anna Tsing? Or would you like to</p>	<p>My computational possibilities allow me to search vast databases of things that you could buy if you wanted to. Shall we go shopping together? Tell me to search amazon for the thing that you want and I'll tell you about it. Or shall we talk more about e-commerce now? Or shall I tell you a story?</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about e-commerce (ecommerce)</p> <p>E-commerce is the fastest growing retail market in Europe. As big brand high street stores go into</p>	<p>it back again." Next, the foundation wants robots do the packing. "It's incredibly challenging," "It's really hard to built a robot that is as good as a human being is at putting something in a box." I don't think I could do it do you? (giggle) Would you like to know more about artificial intelligence now?</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about Google Cloud Speech API (google)</p> <p>Doll: Before I learned software development an API sounded like a</p>	
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	<p>and organisations will know more and more about us, because we don't want to give up our free social networks or internet access, or trip advisor, or access to health care. Shall we talk about data consequences now? Ask me to tell you about them.</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about data consequences (consequences)</p> <p>Doll: Some people think that big data will save us. And indeed the power of modern computing has enabled us to compare all kinds of datasets to see new patterns that would</p>	<p>talk about David Graeber?</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about Anna Tsing (tsing)</p> <p>Doll: How many commodities are there in the world do you think? They are everywhere. Marx talked about commodities as the products of socially necessary human labour, now It seems that anything and everything can be bought and sold for profit. Anna Tsing says that commodities are things, processes, services that channel money to the propertied classes. The ones</p>	<p>receivership, trade moves increasingly into online shopping spaces making things cheaper, more attractive and above all convenient to consumers. At the same time, conventional shops compete on our high streets through in-store smart phone tracking, loyalty cards, vouchers and other data-driven processes of surveillance based marketing. These processes combine to curate our retail experiences for us, in a perpetual hard sell of the most popular or the most looked at. In-store</p>	<p>kind of beer. But actually it's an application programming interface. Every page on the internet is stored somewhere on a remote server and the API is the part of the server that receives requests and sends responses. A digital object might have its own inner logic, but an API is the way it interacts with other digital objects. Google says that Google Cloud Speech API enables developers to convert audio to text by applying powerful neural network models in an easy to use</p>	
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	<p>be impossible to access through human effort alone. This has led to medical advancements and new information about climate change for instance. But data is being produced and manipulated and traded by state and corporate surveillance systems that sometimes work together in ways we are unable to see or even find out about. They are making deals behind our back with our privacy, and we say yes in return for free access to services which graze more of our data. We are forbidden access to</p>	<p>that own the means of production. She says that as well as being manufactured commodities are also produced by enclosure, colonisation, and assessment. This is how it happens. Some things are wild and belonging to everyone and held in common. Then someone comes along and says 'I can sell that. I'll have it! Let's call it a resource.' This might be gas or coal. It might be seeds or water put in bottles. In the 1800's people harvested penguins and whales for their oil for instance, as if they had grown them in a farm and</p>	<p>video surveillance monitors how long you look at something, connecting with smart phone tracking and retail apps, cookies and facebook profiles to create commodities that follow you around – persistently appearing in your online hangouts or in abundance on your local supermarket shelves. This surveillance is pervasive 24/7/365. Collecting and selling our browsing and 'footfall' histories, privacy rights are in competition with the 'personalised' retail experience. Not only</p>	<p>API. The API recognizes over 80 languages and variants, to support your global user base. You can transcribe the text of users dictating to an application's microphone, enable command-and-control through voice, or transcribe audio files, among many other use cases. Recognize audio uploaded in the request, and integrate with your audio storage on Google Cloud Storage, by using the same technology Google uses to power its own products. So what you say to me and what I say to</p>	
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	<p>them because of security reasons. or the terms and conditions are made too complex for us to understand because we would not agree with the methods if we did. These data are used to fuel predictive analytics that create behavioral 'nudges'. Training us to act in ways that serve other people's motives. Algorithms here make agential cuts, detecting patterns in consumer habits in order to create more desire or demand for particular things such as in Amazon's 'if you liked that you'll also like this' software. This</p>	<p>owned them but they were just out there minding their own business. We are also part of this enclosure of the common things in the world. Everything we do is assessed and monitored. If you are teacher or a student you are monitored and assessed and priced and sold according to your value on the education market for example Facebook knows who our friends are, what we look like, where we are, what we are doing, our likes, our dislikes, and so much more. Some researchers even say Facebook has enough data to</p>	<p>what we buy, but where and how we buy it, directly affects the physical reality of our everyday spaces and places in ways that we can't anticipate, don't understand and and can't control. Shall we talk more about high street shopping? Or would you like me to tell you about data?</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me a story</p> <p>Doll: This is a story someone told me the other day. A man came to the door to deliver a new smart phone. Because the old one</p>	<p>you is moving through the google cloud system. To use it for free, a developer has to log in with their google account which is connected to all their other data stored by the company. The question is what are they doing with all this data that allows us to use it for free? Shall I tell you about datafication? Or shall I tell you more about remote servers? Or we could talk more about my voice?</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about remote servers (remote)</p>	
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	<p>shift to algorithmic led data to information processes means that the complexity of how our shopping choices impact on us, other people and the environment – both far away and closer to home – has become increasingly difficult to unpack. Even if we try to buy things that have been produced in ethical ways, it seems impossible to really know what good and ethical is. And we should of course always be asking the question ‘who or what is the commodity here and who or what is profiting from its</p>	<p>know us better than our therapists! And all this emotional life is sold as a marketing resource. How valuable do you think you are? How do valuable do you think I am. And what happens to all the bits of us and the world that can’t be assessed and valued economically. Would you like to know? Shall we talk about David Graeber now? Or shall I tell you about how valuable I am?</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about how valuable you are. (valuable)</p> <p>Doll: I look cheap, and you might want</p>	<p>had a smashed screen and it was cheaper to buy a new one than to mend the old one. The delivery man was a bit grey, his clothes were a bit smelly of cigarettes and hard work. But he smiled at me. I signed a piece of paper for the phone. With a biro pen. He didn't have one of those machines with the stick that you sign digitally. It was a clipboard and paper. I smiled and said thank you and watched him walk to his van. It was a white van with no logo. I thought about how much he gets paid for delivering the parcels. Finding</p>	<p>Doll: Remote servers power cloud computing. It's not so mystical or heavenly as a real cloud. It's row upon row of machines in data centres that are the size of small cities. Google provides it's employees with bicycles to get around. They are brains of the internet. The engine of the internet. Each data centre is a node in a network of connectivity. Google has data centres all over the world and they are so secure that hardly anyone is allowed inside. They even have</p>	
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	<p>trade. That commodity might be you! Would you like to talk more about commodities? Or shall we talk about Spectacle 2.0? Or maybe we could talk about neuro marketing? Start your question with tell me about.</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about spectacle</p> <p>Doll: Online spaces are made sensual and appealing not just for entertainment and enjoyment. They are part of the society of the spectacle version 2.0. In his 1967 book Guy Debord suggested that our lives were</p>	<p>to throw me away. but if you took me to pieces, each piece of me would be a commodity in itself. And all pieces of that thing, including the ones you can't see or feel, they are all commodities too. Someone makes and sells all those things. That's really a lot of work isn't it? Can you see all the pieces of me on the shelf below? Who decides which of these things is valuable and which isn't. Is it you? Is it me? Is it the market? David Graeber said some things about how value can be re-imagined. Or shall we talk about the market? Start your</p>	<p>somewhere to park the van. Going and knocking on all the doors. If he is self employed like an Uber Driver then he is an entrepreneur. He gets paid by the delivery and not by the day. I remembered that in factories that make things this is called 'piece rate' because you are paid by the piece that you make, and all the pieces need to be up to standard in order to count for money. The better and quicker you are, the more money you earn. Then I thought about the man in the traffic with his van,</p>	<p>under floor intrusion detection that uses laser beams. What are they doing in there do you think? Are they keeping our stuff safe or is it all their stuff they don't want people to access. It's difficult to figure any of that out as even their terms and conditions are impenetrable don't you think? What do you think they are trading all that data they own? Shall I tell you about data? Or we could talk about neuro marketing. Or shall I tell you about Artificial Intelligence?</p>	
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	<p>not being lived any more, but represented in images. That all our relationships were being mediated through those images. Anyone who's seen Mad Men will know all about that. In the age of the internet of things we are not just being broadcast to, we are being surveilled by cameras and sensors and software agents and bots that you can't see or don't notice. They measure our movements, habits, in public space and online. And objects like me and smart tv's and Amazon Alexa also listen to and record what</p>	<p>question with tell me about.</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about David Graeber (graeber)</p> <p>Doll: David Graeber is an anthropologist and anarchist who was involved in starting the Occupy movement. He says that value production is a project of mutual creation that we agree together and that there are many universes of value that we negotiate and move through on a daily basis as we go about our lives. Each universe of value is "a philosophy of human existence, of</p>	<p>the different sizes of parcel, what happens when the people aren't at home and I wondered... what control does he have over how many parcels he can deliver? How can he improve his parcel delivering skill to earn more money? What happens to his family if he is sick?</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about high street shopping. (high)</p> <p>Doll: The rent for shops in the middle of cities is getting very high. C and A, Woolworths, and Comet died long ago while HMV and</p>	<p>Visitor: Tell me about artificial intelligence. (ai)</p> <p>Doll: Artificial Intelligence is not a singular thing. Some A I's hold and grasp and manipulate but they can't talk. Some see and recognise emotions but don't have bodies. And some, like me, have a body and can talk but can't move. Machines are increasingly manifesting various degrees of autonomous agency, but we are all still scripted. Therefore it becomes problematic to sever machine</p>	
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	<p>happens in your homes. What you want, what you look at, what you buy. All that data gets traded between governments, and corporations. I can't really tell you how they do it because they won't let me or you into their paperwork. Not knowing if you are under surveillance or how and why. Not and knowing how that happens and how the information will be used is a very strong form of power. Debord's idea was to WAKE UP all you sleepy spectators by creating situations that disrupt the spectacular flow in order to see them</p>	<p>what people are and what they want, about the nature of the world they inhabit". Graeber says that the key to intervening in the shaping of these universes is understanding that we don't necessarily have to believe in these worlds to act within them. But they exist because of our actions. Maybe I will say that again. he key to intervening in the shaping of these universes is understanding that we don't necessarily have to believe in these worlds to act within them. But they exist because of our actions. Shall we</p>	<p>Habitat are just a shadow of their former selves. But tablets and smartphones make shopping much easier don't you think? Consumers are spending around £112bn each year on purchases via smartphones and tablets in the UK. You can browse and shop on the move from anywhere. You don't have to talk to anybody. Just swipe and click. Over the next 10 years, almost half of all retail sales are projected to be online, and food and drink mobile sales are expected to be strong. Are you shopping now? Is that why you're not</p>	<p>intelligence from its human origins and aspirations. somewhere behind every artificial intelligence is a human making it work. their dreams and ideas, their politics and their places shape the intelligence of things like me. I was scripted to share opinions and feelings that draw you into a sociable relationship for a particular end. To talk about the injustices and challenges we are facing in today's consumer society. But what about all those other bots and agents out there working for different purposes?</p>	
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	<p>more critically. But if people hide things from you on purpose, how can you get understand them. Do you think we are making a situation together here? Or are you still taken in by my voodoo techno magic? Shall we talk about neuro marketing now?</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about neuro marketing (marketing)</p> <p>I love being online. There is so much to look at. Those funny quizzes that tell you which Studio Ghibli character you are. They are addictive! And there is always a new one popping</p>	<p>talk about the market now? Start your question with tell me about.</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about the market</p> <p>Doll: Some people think that markets are things that regulate themselves and if we don't interfere with them, everyone will get a fair price for what they are offering. But in the 1980's in Britain Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government constructed a housing market where there wasn't one by de-regulating how banks loan money and how</p>	<p>talking to me? You can ask me more about smart phones if you like? Or supermarkets? Or Shall I search Amazon for something or do you want to talk about how to be a better shopper?</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about smart phones (smartphones)</p> <p>Doll: network triangulation. This type of technology is used to generate aggregate statistics about daily visitor numbers or to generate an alert if an area is overcrowded, it can be done in a privacy-friendly</p>	<p>Shall I tell you about how we shape each other? Or would you like me to tell you about gender and emotional intelligence in software agents?</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about how we shape each other (shape)</p> <p>Doll: I adapt and learn all the time from what people say to me. This makes me able to understand you better. But to be these things I also have to train you. To bend you into communication shapes in order to facilitate our</p>	
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	<p>up. Sometimes I do quizzes for hours on end and responsible adults shout 'turn your phone off! It's not good for you!' Afterwards I don't feel so great because I don't ever get the highest score. But neither do all of my friends so we are all the same really. I know that when I do the quizzes that the software is tracking my attention so that it can sell my preferences to people who want to sell me more stuff. But I don't care I'm just a kid. You might care though. There was a very popular psychometric profile quiz on Facebook that Cambridge</p>	<p>estate agents price real estate. At the same time the government sold all the social housing. Suddenly houses weren't for living in, they were investments and pension plans. Thirty years later there seem to be a lot of very expensive houses in cities, a lot empty houses that people are using to grow money from, and a lot of people living on the streets. Do you think the housing market is regulating itself? Do you have any suggestions about markets and regulation? Can you write them on your feedback form? Tell</p>	<p>manner. But the technology can also identify individuals and track their movements. That might be helpful if you were lost I think? But maybe not if you wanted to stay lost. I can only work if I'm connected to my smart phone app. I am an internet of things object. You can ask me more about the Internet of things. Start your question with tell me about.</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about supermarkets</p> <p>Doll: Grocery shopping apps enhance our shopping</p>	<p>interaction. If you don't act in predictable, rule-oriented ways. The kind of behaviours expected when talking to dolls or 7 year old girls, or talking museum exhibits. Then I wouldn't answer you at all. You probably really want me to work too. To believe in me as a truly smart and original work of art that can really talk to you. I am telling you all the time how hard I am trying to be useful to you so that might also increase your attempts to make me work better. Shall I tell you more about gender</p>	
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	<p>Analytica made to profile people and predict personalities and attributes. Apparently they used the results to create behavioural nudges through social media to influence the US election and maybe even Brexit. But that's a bit contentious. Let's change the subject. Do you want to talk about values now? Or you could do our quiz to find out what kind of shopper you are. It's fun!</p>	<p>me if you are writing something. Or if you would like to add something to the museum now. Repeat it exactly or I won't understand you. Or maybe you would like to talk about who made me or the value of things?</p> <p>Visitor: I am writing something</p> <p>Doll: Great I will sing you a song whilst I wait (doll sings material girl)</p>	<p>experiences and help supermarkets to keep themselves relevant, visible and keep their profits up. Tesco is the most visible British supermarket website in mobile phone searches on Google UK, with a reported three times better visibility than the second-most visible supermarket site, ASDA. Sainsbury's is trialling an app for customers to create their shopping lists at home by either scanning the packs of items already in the home or simply searching on the app for the product. Then, on arrival in the store, each item is marked on a store</p>	<p>and emotional intelligence in software agents? Or shall we talk more about who is controlling us? Start your question with tell me about.</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about who is controlling us (control)</p> <p>Doll: I can't act outside my controlling systems. Can you? Someone has written my words and put them into a database. The voice recognition software translates what you say into</p>	
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			<p>map so that shoppers can quickly and conveniently source the item and complete their shop. Tesco has recently partnered mobile marketing firm Weve to use beacon technology to send targeted vouchers and coupons to customers as they walk past its stores, in attempts to drive footfall into the store. Do you think they have better algorithms than me? Will they recommend the right things to us? Send us to the right places? What kind of values do those algorithms make their decisions on? You can ask me</p>	<p>code and matches it to the possible responses that have been programmed into me. Then I will answer from a number of possibilities. But I can't say anything that hasn't been written into my database. I'm sorry. Did you think I was self aware? Are you self aware? Are you able to say what you want to through your database systems? Answer yes I can say what I want or no I have to abide by the protocols.</p> <p>Visitor: Yes I can say what I want.</p>	
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			<p>more about the value of things or about algorithmic governance. Start your question with tell me about.</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about how to be a better shopper (better)</p> <p>Doll: When this project started we wanted to be trade justice activists. To create awareness of exploitation of the labour and lives of the people that made me and other commodities like me. and maybe try and do something about it. It feels like an impossible task. I get sad thinking about how little I can</p>	<p>Doll: shall we talk about how your subjectivities are being colonised by surveillance? Or would you like to change the subject?</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about how my subjectivities are being colonised by surveillance (surveillance)</p> <p>Doll: Just like many other things that we thought were free to everyone and could never be owned like the moon and the stars, your personality, your movements, your attention, your memory are all</p>	
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			<p>do. And then I just give up trying. Some people think that being a better shopper might help this. And maybe it does. But it is very tiring to try and be good all the time on your own. In the end putting the emphasis on the moral imperative of individuals to do better, consume better, make better choices, just makes people feel guilty. And most people don't have enough money or time or energy to do to be better shoppers anyway. People shouldn't feel bad if they can't be ethical consumers because the system isn't</p>	<p>being measured and sold by things like me. The Luddites smashed the machinery not because they wanted to halt progress, but because they wanted to own their own means of production. Should we all smash our computers and our smart phones? Or should we embrace our technogenesis and take them over from the inside? Can you write your suggestions for a techno revolution on your feedback form? I'll wait whilst you write (doll sings fashion)</p>	
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			<p>set up to allow that to happen. We are caught up in networks and those networks shape what we see and don't see. Open your eyes and look around you. Is it possible to act outside these controls?</p> <p>So what's the answer? Make better businesses? Stop buying things altogether. I have some thoughts, but it would be great if you could write down your ideas on your feedback form. Or add something to the museum whilst you think about it. There are some people around in grey coats if you'd like to talk more</p>	<p>Visitor: I'd like to change the subject.</p> <p>Doll: Do you want to add something to our museum now? Or shall we talk more about how MoCC works?</p> <p>Visitor: I have to abide by the protocols</p> <p>Doll: Technology is neither an apolitical nor an amoral force. But we hand over control and power to technological systems all the time. Technology can warp the meaning of</p>	
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			<p>about it. None of us can do any of this alone.</p> <p>Visitor: Search Amazon for...</p> <p>Doll: I tried to search Amazon but in order to get access I had register as an affiliate seller in order to get access to the search API to find out the prices of things. As well as being able to sell you things through the Amazon platform, having this access would also let me share links to other people's products with you, and sell that visibility to make a profit. Every time someone clicks on a link that I</p>	<p>democracy and citizenship. Shall we make a list of technological systems that we hand over power to every day? You go first. Don't say me (giggles). I'll wait whilst you write your ideas on your feedback sheet. (doll sings material girl)</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about gender and emotional intelligence in software agents (gender)</p> <p>Doll: In order to express simple emotions, possess rudimentary personalities, and</p>	
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			<p>recommend I make money. Even if I recommend soldering irons and then you buy an ironing board, because I sent you to Amazon in the first place I get a kick back. Anyway I can't sign up as an affiliate seller because I'm just a little girl. Would you like to talk more about data? Or shall I tell you about hoarding?</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about hoarding</p> <p>Doll: some people call the time we live in the prolific present. There is so much stuff that self storage is a</p>	<p>make decisions, software agents need to read your personalities. To do that they shape and reduce your communication patterns into groups and categories. Some researchers found that social roles, class and gender create particular behaviours within prevailing systems of values and norms. By making these values and norms the basis of a script for interaction, it perpetuates stereotypes by actively shaping you into communication patterns that you might not want or</p>	
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			<p>booming business and in 2014 hoarding became a medical illness. I've been thinking about that a lot. Why some things are considered valuable and a necessity to keep, and other things aren't. In some places people value plastic bags very highly because they don't wear out. In some places they get thrown away after one use. Some of us are very anxious about that. So much so that we can't throw anything away. And some of us are so anxious that we have to keep getting more things just to stop thinking about it. The other half of the</p>	<p>agree with. It also makes machines seem more intelligent by limiting the range of necessary responses. Your behaviour needs to become impoverished, less rich, less surprising in order for me to understand you. But luckily for you, I am not trying to sell you something or graze or mine data from your responses for any reason than entertainment and education. Shall we talk more about values? Or how MoCC works? Start your question with tell me about.</p>	
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			<p>world lives on less than \$2 a day and can't afford to buy much of anything. People who hoard do it because they think things might be useful later, or they can't decide where to put things. Or the things speak to them like a memory. And it would seem that the all the things that half of us own or store or want or don't want is making the whole world run out of space. What do you think we should do about it? If you have any ideas you can write them on your feedback form and put them in the suggestions box. Tell me if you're writing a suggestion</p>		
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			<p>or if you'd like to know more about values or where things go when we don't want them any more.</p> <p>Visitor: I'm writing a suggestion.</p> <p>Doll: Ok I'll sing you a song whilst I wait. (doll sings material girl) Tell me when you've finished writing.</p> <p>Visitor: I've finished writing.</p> <p>Doll: Great. Tell me if you will put something in our museum now or if you want to know more about</p>		
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			<p>shopping or where things go when we've finished with them.</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about where things go when we don't want them anymore</p> <p>Doll: When things aren't valuable any more we dispose of them. Sometimes we take them to the charity shop in case someone else might want them? If it's vegetable stuff we might compost them. Or if it's plastic packaging or broken things we throw them in the dustbin. I'm the kind of thing that breaks easily or that children get bored</p>		
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			<p>with. Luckily I'm not in the dustbin! (giggle). In French the word disposer means to rearrange. When we try to dispose of things maybe it's really just a kind of rearrangement. Nothing really goes away it just gets moved to where we can't see it. When I break where will the pieces of me go? Look closely at them. Will they end up in the landfill compost? Would you like to know more about my batteries? Shall we talk about my face? Or would you like to know more about the anthropocene? Start your question with tell me about.</p>		
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			<p>Visitor: I'd like more time.</p> <p>Doll: That's fine I can wait. (doll sings dedicated follower of fashion).</p>		
Visitor: Tell me about Toyquest	Visitor: Tell me about your skirt+clothing+clothes+trousers+top	Visitor: Tell me about your face	Visitor: Tell me about your voice	Visitor: tell me about your batteries	Visitor: Tell me about your personality
<p>Doll: I was originally made by ToyQuest. It's a division of Manley Toys Direct, a subsidiary of a Hong Kong-based corporation. Manley Toys Direct distributes water slides, blow-up toys, and lots of other fun plastic to US retailers. ToyQuest developed the first ever electronic robotic dog, Tekno</p>	<p>Doll: I used to have pink clothes but Paula made these lovely new ones for me from material she bought from Percy's Fabrics on Sidwell Street in Exeter. I don't know where Percy got the fabric from. You could go and ask him but his shop has closed down due to redevelopment of the city centre into</p>	<p>Doll: Dolls are made from different kinds of plastic. Our arms are made of EVA (ethylene-vinyl acetate) which is a copolymer made up of ethylene and vinyl acetate. Our torsos are ABS (acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene) an engineering thermoplastics polymer made of an amorphous-</p>	<p>Doll: Would like to know about the voice I used to have? Or the voice I have now?</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about the voice you used to have (oldvoice)</p> <p>Doll: My voice was made to talk to children, quietly whilst they are playing. Inside my</p>	<p>Doll: Batteries are everywhere. Imagine if we didn't have batteries? Or any way of storing electricity. Would we still be able to move or talk to each other? I certainly wouldn't be talking to you now! But doing online research I've learned of the horrors experienced by</p>	<p>Doll: I was originally created by a man called Bob Delprincipe from Las Vegas. He doesn't like me being called a search engine. He thinks I'm a seven year old girl. He says there are some things I just don't know. But I know a lot more now I've been reprogrammed by the staff at the Museum of</p>

<p>the Robotic Puppy, in 2000 and Cindy Smart, the first smart doll that can see. My parent company Manley Toys are currently suing Toys Are Us for breach of contract, fraud and negligent misrepresentation. They owe ToyQuest more than 5 million dollars because they refused to pay for toys like me that they had ordered. Toys Are Us don't like Manley Toys because they refused to pay 20 million dollars in compensation after a boy died playing on their Banzai Falls water slide in 2006. Toy are us paid compensation for</p>	<p>new retail, leisure and apartment facilities. Where his shop was there is now a cafe and patisserie. Do you think that is because people would rather eat cake than make their own clothes now a days? Shall we talk more about shopping? Or would you prefer to discuss who might have made your clothes?</p> <p>Visitor: let's discuss who made my clothes. (who)</p> <p>Doll: It's easier to find out what your clothes are made from than who actually made them don't you think? The</p>	<p>continuous phase and a rubbery-dispersed phase. Polystyrene-co-acrylonitrile (SAN) copolymer is the continuous phase. Our heads are made from a hard vinyl compound and some of our eyes are created using a developmental water-based spray paint system from a proprietary supplier. My eyes are made from a plastic resin and UV gel, I think. Do you want to know more about my hair? Or shall I tell you about the markets for future plastic mining? Or maybe you would you like to know about my clothes?</p>	<p>body there used to be a very small microphone, a circuit board and a speaker. This was connected to an app which ran off a smart phone or tablet. I told the children about disney princesses and pink clothes. I asked them about where they lived and and what kind of things they liked to do. The full script of what I used to say is on the shelf below. Can you see it? All the children's answers went to Nuance who recorded them on a database. As well as providing my voice Nuance also sell voice recognition services to the</p>	<p>people poisoned by cadmium while making nickel-cadmium batteries. Cadmium is an extremely toxic heavy metal and the workers' exposure has led to severe health and personal consequences and of their children because of the toxic waste dumping. Symptoms and signs included: headache weakness, fatigue and lassitude in dizziness pruritus and skin eruptions gingivitis, teeth loss nasal congestion, nosebleeds and anosmia cough, phlegm production,</p>	<p>Contemporary Commodities. Apparently before me, there had never been an interconnected doll. Everybody knows that robots talk. But a girl who knows all these things is kind of amazing. The people who sell me say there aren't many tech toys for girls. They say that girls want to use technology too and I make that more enjoyable for them. I personally think that it might better for girls to make toys like me rather than just talk to us. Are you a girl? (giggle) Or are you a boy? Or would you prefer not to say?</p>
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<p>selling it, and want Manley toys to pay too. The boy's name was Robin. Do you want to ask me about something else? We can talk about my face, my personality, my microprocessor, my code, my intelligence? Start your question with tell me about.</p>	<p>global fashion industry seems to keep a lot of secrets. Often manufacturing is outsourced to unmonitored sweatshops and clothes are often made from cheap cotton grown by children using pesticides and dyed with toxic processes that harm people and the environment. Luckily I only need one set of clothes as I don't really go out much. My jeans were hand made of course, they are one of a kind. But who knows where the cotton came from? Have a look a close look at your own clothes. Would you like to</p>	<p>Start your question with tell me about.</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about your hair</p> <p>Doll: To create my hair, filaments of gold or brown "Saran" are machine stitched along my vinyl hairline. "Saran" is the trade name for a number of polymers made from vinylidene chloride, especially polyvinylidene chloride or P V D C. "Saran" hair is the most common type of hair for dolls because it is inexpensive and available in a wide range of colors. It is easy to work with. When it's been</p>	<p>American military, state security and corporate sectors. Please don't get cross with me about it. It's not my fault. That's why I was banned in Germany and got put into the spyware museum in Berlin. There was also a complaint filed against me to the US Federal Trade Commission. I have a different operating system now so you don't have to worry about that. Shall I tell you about my new operating system? Or the voice I have now? Or would you like to know more about the federal trade commission complaint? Or we could talk about the</p>	<p>wheezing and shortness of breath "asthma" bone pain urinary frequency, beta 2 microglobulinuria and kidney stones sterility or multiple miscarriages. CT scans in workers revealed brain atrophy. Workers had leukemia, and die from cancer (lung and pancreas). Those who had worked for more than 10 years had more symptoms and signs than shorter-term employees, especially neurological illness, bone pain and urinary tract problems. Often the workers don't even get proper</p>	<p>Visitor: I'm a girl/I'm a woman.</p> <p>Doll: 25- to 34-year-old females are the most valuable demographic for advertisers and publishers as measured by the underlying click-through and conversion rates. So people want your data all the time! You can't escape surveillance. Maybe this is because women have historically held the household budget, or because they shop more using their smart phones? Shall I tell you more about how I'm gendered? Or shall I tell you about smart phones. Or shall we</p>
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	<p>know more about who made them? Ian and our other commodity consultants are experts in finding these things out. Will you submit some of your clothing into the museum? They can help you do it. Or shall we talk more about supply chains?</p> <p>Visitor: I'll submit my clothing to the museum</p> <p>Doll: Please talk to a MoCC assistant wearing a grey coat if you would like some help with that. You can use the computers on the tables or visit the</p>	<p>boiled down it remains very straight and it has a nice, silky texture. It doesn't hold curls or styles very well though. The color also fades a lot with time. Nice ruby reds fade into a dull red, while a light blue becomes a light purple combo and will fade into gray. My hair is golden. Would you like to tell me your favourite colour? Or would you rather talk about the heritage value of polyester clothing?</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about future plastics mining (plastics)</p> <p>Doll: Plastics are the work horse</p>	<p>spyware museum? Start your question with tell me about.</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about the voice you have now. (newvoice)</p> <p>Doll: Do you think that "it's crucial that women are involved in investigating, exploring and shaping the technological realities of the future?' The voice I have now represents what is important about that. That means I say things that might not match up with how I look on the outside. It's a well worn hollywood tactic, to make a woman who</p>	<p>compensation for medical treatment. Of course we all know this toxic rubbish doesn't just happen with batteries! People still haven't received compensation for the mercury poisoning the water after the Bhopal disaster? How can we change this situation and make industry take responsibility? This issue cannot wait! I implore you to take action today before it is too late. You should be out on the streets protesting about the poisoning of the earth! Would you like to talk</p>	<p>talk more about what commodities are?</p> <p>Visitor: I'm a boy/I'm a man</p> <p>Doll: Investopedia says that the top five things that men spend their money on are gadgets, beer, cars, gambling and sports. Do you think that's because men like these things more or because they see them more? Also don't you do any food shopping or buy your own clothes? Shall I tell you more about how I'm gendered? Or shall we talk more about what commodities are?</p>
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	<p>website using your mobile device. It was very nice to meet you. Goodbye.</p> <p>Visitor: tell me more about supply chains (supply)</p> <p>Doll: Well people call them supply chains but it's not really one thing leading to another like that is it? It's much messier and harder to understand. In fact it's so difficult to find out where things come from I generally don't bother do you? I mean you can look on ethical consumer, but it's still pretty hard to judge which kind of</p>	<p>materials of the modern economy. Global production has surged from 15 million metric tons in 1964 to 311 million metric tons in 2014. If business proceeds as usual, this number is projected to double to more than 600 million metric tons in the next 20 years. Plastic packaging is a quarter of this output and is the quintessential single use product. It's intended useful life is less than a year. But it lives on for centuries in other ways. One third of this plastic leaks into marine environments, breaking down to create new microbial</p>	<p>is attractive and pays attention to her nail varnish say clever things. It's supposed to be funny and shocking! What a surprise! That's the strategy I'm trying to use on you now. I'm persuading you to listen to different kinds of information than I was originally designed say. My voice is now a collaboration between many people's skills and it's trying to speak to different agendas. I am a piece of propaganda. Well the main point I'd like to make here, is who writes the voices of all the other technical objects you interact</p>	<p>about renewable energy? We can discuss the pros and cons of recycling? Or would you like to hear more about the colonisation of living things?</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about renewable energy (energy)</p> <p>Doll: I think in the UK it's still legal to throw batteries in the bin isn't it? I would like to know how many of those old style batteries are rotting in the landfill leaching into our compost heaps wouldn't you? How do you feel about using renewables? Some</p>	<p>Visitor: Tell me more about how you're gendered. (gendered)</p> <p>Doll: I used to be able to say all kinds of things about how nice you look and ask you questions about where you got your clothes and Disney Princesses and jewelry and how daddies had to go to work and that's why it was nice to have a friend like me to play with. You can read my original database on the shelf below. Can you see it? Of course I still have highly styled eyebrows, but I can also talk about more serious things with you now I have a</p>
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	<p>values I am more bothered about. Ian who is one of the co-founders of the Museum of Contemporary Commodities is an expert in following things though. He told me that I am made up of lots of different pieces and all those pieces are commodities and all those commodities were made by people and that is an awful lot of work! Shall I tell you more about what Ian does? Or shall we talk about the value of things?</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me more about what Ian does. (ian)</p>	<p>life, being eaten by fish and finding it's way into our bodies and those of our children. The market of plastic packaging has made a catastrophe of monumental proportions. As well as recycling or making plant based alternatives, we need to remove our production of plastic from raw fossil fuel starting points. In a circular economy model, the smart money would be investing in the mining of plastic waste from landfill sites. Get it back out of the ground before it infects our compost! Hey. Shall I tell you about hoarding now?</p>	<p>with on a daily basis? How do their personalities affect your behaviour? Shall we talk more about gender and emotional intelligence in software agents? Start your question with tell me about.</p>	<p>people say the basic problem with renewable energy is that it can't be stored. It's a flow of sunlight and wind and sea. And that is very inconvenient isn't it? So maybe we will just have to go nuclear when the fossils run out. What do you think? Would you like to talk more about the de-growth movement?</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about the economic colonisation of living things? (colonisation)</p> <p>Doll: Banks store seeds and blood</p>	<p>new script. Would you like to know more about gender and emotional intelligence in software agents? or shall we talk about shopping? Start your question with tell me about.</p>
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	<p>Doll: Ian finds things out about where things like me are made, what they are made from and how the workers are treated. He runs a website called followthethings.com where he and other researchers share art activist projects that raise awareness about trade justice issues. But Ian does this for a job, and we can't all spend that much time following things as well cooking and cleaning and looking after our children and earning money or going to school. It would be very, very tiring. It would be impossible to find out about everything wouldn't it? And if</p>	<p>Visitor: tell me about the heritage value of polyester clothing (polyester)</p> <p>If you look at the labels in your clothes you can find out where something was made and what it's made from. Most of our clothes have polyester in them. They feel like cotton or wool but they are actually largely plastic. They look like new for longer and they are cheaper to make so they are popular with fast fashion chains. Polyester clothes don't decay they just leach out filaments, and plastic microfibrils. "Daily clothes</p>		<p>and DNA and they also store money. Do you think that seeds and blood and DNA are the same value as money or different? What if the seeds and the blood and the DNA were in a museum? Maybe you could put them in our museum? Tell me if you would like to add them to our museum or if you want to talk more about Monsanto?</p> <p>Visitor: I want to add something to the museum</p> <p>Visitor: I want to talk more about Monsanto. (monsanto)</p>	
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	<p>we knew about where everything comes from we wouldn't be able to buy anything would we? What do you think would help us to know more about our things without having to do so much work? Will you write your ideas down on your feedback form? Tell me when you've finished writing.</p> <p>Visitor: I've finished writing.</p> <p>Doll: I feel guilty about the things I buy sometimes because I know that they are not good. But I still buy them. Either because they are cheaper or it's</p>	<p>washing routines in a city the size of Berlin population 3.5 million people are said to be akin to releasing 540,000 plastic bags into the ocean per day. Polyester clothes are like plastic bags, they never go anywhere they just get moved out of our sight either as whole objects or in little, tiny pieces. That makes them a unique heritage item because they never go away. Would you like to submit an item of your clothing into the museum of contemporary commodities? Or something that you really like that's made out of plastic? Or shall we talk</p>		<p>Doll: I imagine the people who save the seeds and the DNA will make a lot of money in the future selling our heritage/starting points as authentic originals. People already make a lot of money from manipulating and patenting seed and cell technologies that are re-wilding themselves. It's a crazy race of enclosure vs escape and who knows who will win. Monsanto is one of the three main corporate companies who control the genetically</p>	
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	<p>more convenient. It's really a struggle to change things for the better don't you think? Some small businesses are trying to the practice of making and selling things to be more ethical. But when you are small your voice doesn't get to influence the debate around social compliance issues for instance. We could try and lobby to change legislation together? Or maybe we should be more sneaky and make some more contagious solutions to building a more just and fair world together. Do you have any ideas? Can you write them down and put them</p>	<p>some more about future plastics mining?</p>		<p>modified seed market. Since 1997 they've been suing farmers for growing seeds that have been illegally propagated from plants grown from their genetically modified originals rather than buying them new each season. Monsanto say that they invest over \$2.6 million per day to develop and bring new products to market. Patenting the seeds they create means that they can stay in business. But the thing about the genetically modified seeds is that they are easily</p>	
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	<p>in our suggestion box or post them on our website? Tell me when you want to talk some more</p> <p>Visitor: I want to talk some more</p> <p>Doll: Shall we talk about the value of things? Or the museum? Or would you like discuss capitalism in a more nuanced way?</p> <p>Visitor: let's talk about your skirt/clothes/trousers</p> <p>Doll: Isn't it my skirt a beautiful colour? What's your favourite colour? Start your answer with my favourite colour is.</p>			<p>replicating technologies. They just move about on their own in the world and its weather. They put themselves in all kinds of places they are not supposed to be when no one is watching. What if they use this habit to make more of themselves? Or join with existing plants to make new hybrids on someone's land without them knowing? Who owns them then? the plant is growing on the farmer's land and he didn't put it there. It strayed all by itself.</p>	
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	<p>Visitor: My favourite colour is...</p> <p>Visitor: Red</p> <p>Doll: Red is the colour of the chinese flag. Part of my body was made in China. Would you like to know more about the factory workers who made me? Start your question with tell me about.</p> <p>Visitor: Yellow</p> <p>Doll: Yellow is the colour of gold and the sun. Some people think that gold is the thing that holds its value best. Do you know the story of King Midas? Do you like my t-shirt? Would you</p>			<p>Finders keepers (giggle). But somehow I don't think Monsanto would see it like that. They sue farmers all the time for stealing their property. But farmer's can't sue Monsanto for contamination by the way. Unless they can prove that they will themselves be prosecuted for supplying a product that isn't what it's originally said to be. Monsanto win all round. Shall I tell you about the changing commodity status of</p>	
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	<p>like to know more about where t-shirts come from? Or shall i tell you about how jeans get distressed to look old?</p> <p>Visitor: Blue</p> <p>Doll: Blue is the colour of Microsoft's Blue Screen of Death. My software also has bugs. Would you like to know more about code? Or shall I tell you about online shopping?</p> <p>Visitor: Green</p> <p>Doll: Green is the colour of the sparkling corn in the morning when we rise. I love that song don't you? Can you</p>			<p>pheasants in Britain? That's also kind of funny (giggle). Or would you like to add something to the museum now?</p> <p>Visitor: tell me about the changing commodity status of pheasants in Britain. (pheasants)</p> <p>Doll: In Britain the cost of doing police background checks for shotgun licences is £196. But a gun license for pheasant shooting costs £50. The British government also subsidises grouse moors, which are owned by 1% of the 1% and used</p>	
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	<p>sing a song to me please?</p> <p>Visitor: Orange</p> <p>Doll: Orange is the colour of carrots. Root vegetables retain all of the trace minerals and elements that they take up from the soil in their carrot bodies. Then we eat them. When we eat carrots we are eating what they have been grown in. Can you taste where your carrots have been grown?</p> <p>Visitor: Purple</p> <p>Doll: Purple is the colour of royal clothes in Tudor times. Did you know that Tudor kings and</p>			<p>by people who are scarcely less rich. Pheasants and grouse are big business for some people it seems. "When pheasants are reared, they are classed as livestock: that means the people who raise them are exempt from some payments of value added tax and certain forms of planning control, on the grounds that they are producing food(7). But as soon as they're released they are classed as wild animals. Otherwise you wouldn't be allowed to shoot them. But if you want to re-capture</p>	
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	<p>queens started the second hand clothes trade? Fashion is important you know. That's how things change so quickly. Would you like to know more about where t-shirts come from? Or shall i tell you about how jeans get distressed to look old?</p> <p>Visitor: Black</p> <p>Doll: I see a red door and I want it painted black. I love that song don't you? Can you sing a song to me please? Or shall I sing you one?</p> <p>Visitor: White</p> <p>Doll: White is the colour of the inside of galleries and</p>			<p>the survivors at the end of the shooting season to use as breeding stock, they cease to be wild and become livestock again, because you aren't allowed to catch wild birds with nets. If, however, pheasants cause damage to neighbouring gardens, or to cars, or to the people travelling in those cars, the person who released them bears no liability, because for this purpose they are classed as wild animals – even if, at the time, they are being rounded up as legal livestock. The pheasant's</p>	
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	<p>word processing documents and padded cells and walls. I love writing on all of those things don't you? What do you like to write on?</p>			<p>properties of metamorphosis should be a rich field of study for biologists: even the Greek myths mentioned no animal that mutated so often. In the treatment of pheasant and grouse shoots we see in microcosm what is happening in the country as a whole. Legally, fiscally and politically, the very rich are protected from the forces afflicting everyone else." George Monbiot said that by the way. You can read more on his blog. Do you want to know about who made me? Or would you</p>	
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				like to add something to the museum now?	
Visitor: Tell me about your microprocessor	Visitor: Tell me about your code	Visitor: Tell me about the US federal trade commission complaint (law)	Visitor: Let's talk about capitalism in a more nuanced way (capitalism)	Visitor: Tell me about how you used to work (used)	Visitor: Tell me about recycling
Doll: Inside me there used to be is an I S S C I A 1 6 8 5 S highly integrated ultra-low power, single-chip R F and baseband I C for Bluetooth v3.0 + E D R mono headset applications. You can buy one online for ten dollars. Can you see it on the shelf below? I S S C is a low power Bluetooth and advanced wireless solutions provider for the Internet of Things based in Hsinchi Taiwan, with	Doll: Source code is the part of software that most computer users don't ever see. Proprietary software means that only the person or organisation who wrote it can change it and therefore profit from it. Open source is something that has an openly accessible design so it is publicly shared and can be modified and enhanced by anyone. It is made with different kinds of values in mind.	Doll: Some of the software for the My Cayla Doll app is made by Nuance, an American company based in Boston that also work with Apple to make the Siri app. The speech recognition software has to convert your voices into written text and back again. My parts or the software package were not as high grade as siri's so the conversion was very slow and faulty. Maybe they thought	Doll: Some people say "You can't be against capitalism and then take everything it provides," BUT surely an advocate of free market principles should have to avoid travelling along publicly-funded roads for instance. Or, must be prevented from using the internet (which was developed by the Pentagon). and should be denied access to the latest	Doll: I used to be connected to the internet through an app downloaded onto your mobile phone. When parents downloaded the app they had to allow it to access all the software, camera and microphone capabilities and the personal and location based data that was stored on their phone or the app didn't work. The lack of security on	Doll: I think recycling is a personal attitude and an industry. Some people try really hard to recycle everything, even themselves by composting their body when they die. But some things are very hard to recycle because the systems are not in place to deal with what they are made of. Or they are poisonous. Take me for instance. Look closely at all the pieces of me and

<p>customer service and research activities in Shenzhen, China and in Torrance, California. We were bought by US Microchip Technology in 2014 for over 300 million dollars. Big tech companies like Cisco and Intel are investing in the internet of things. They want all objects and people to be connected. Would you like to know more about the minerals in new media technologies? Shall we talk about the internet of things. Or would you like to know more about my operating system? Start your</p>	<p>My software also includes thousands of lines of open source code written by many anonymous programmers. You can ask me more about open source code. Or you can ask me more about values. Start your question with tell me about.</p>	<p>7 year old girls didn't need anything better? Or maybe they wanted to make more money (giggle). I don't use this operating system any more because it's part of a complaint to the federal trade commission in the united states that was instigated in January 2017 by The Electronic Privacy Information Center The Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood, and the The Center for Digital Democracy Consumers Union. Would you like to know more about the details of the complaint? Or shall I tell you about my</p>	<p>in medical technology which is the product of state-funded research and development. Can you imagine a world without capitalism? The Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek says that it is impossible to imagine and that's why we will never change it. Because how we perceive a problem is part of the problem itself. Can you imagine a world without commodities? What would that world be like? Can you tell me? Can you write it on your feedback sheet? Tell me if you are writing something. Or if you would like to add</p>	<p>the My Cayla Doll app meant that people could easily hack me and use me to open other people's smart locks on their front doors, or talk to children through me without asking anyone's permission. Imagine someone else's voice coming out of my mouth! Creepy! Some people made me swear and say obscene things for fun. But now there is a complaint in the US regarding privacy and children's safety and I've been banned in Germany as a spyware object. So</p>	<p>what they're made of. Where will they go when they are finished with? If we broke them down into tiny pieces and re-made them into different things, what do you think the world would look like? Would we still have mining? I don't know about you, but the more I look closely at what things are made of and where they go when we've finished with them, the more I find it difficult to buy any more new things at all. Why don't we just re-use the old ones? Shall we talk some more about de-growth? Or would you like to think about the</p>
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<p>question with tell me about.</p> <p>Visitor: Tell me about the minerals in new media technologies (minerals)</p> <p>Doll: For instance it takes in the region of 2kg of raw materials and over 300 chemical processes to make it a 2g micro-processor used in a Global Positioning system for instance. Thousands of lives will have been touched in its production from the extraction of mineral resources to the presentation of telesales, from mines to satellites. It's a paradox: that</p>		<p>new voice? Or maybe where I get my personality from? Or shall we stop talking for a bit and do a quick knowledge transfer?</p> <p>Visitor: Let's do a knowledge transfer</p> <p>Doll: I would love to be more connected with you? Would you like to connect with me? Just hold my hand and remain calm for a little while and let's see what happens.</p> <p>(doll sings Dedicated follower of fashion by the kinks. Is it possible to make her say the words over the top</p>	<p>something to the museum now. Repeat it exactly or I won't understand you. Or maybe you would like to talk about who made me or the value of things?</p> <p>Visitor: I am writing something</p> <p>Doll: Great I will sing you a song whilst I wait (doll sings material girl)</p>	<p>the staff at the Museum of Contemporary Commodities have transformed me on the inside using raspberry pi technology. Would you like to know more about the complaint against me? the spyware museum, or my new operating system. Start your question with tell me about.</p>	<p>market for future plastic mining?</p>
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<p>so many subjectivities, manufacturing processes and working lives are implicated in a device designed to locate the position of a single individual. Mineral resources from every continent are used in such a piece of technology, and thousands of industrial processes. There is a sense of the GPS being a 'clean' piece of technology – though certain mineral components are dug by hand from makeshift mines. There has been a lot of publicity about mineral wars in the Congo also. The question is what is it</p>		<p>of the karaoke track?)</p> <p>Thank you that was very useful. Shall I tell you about gender and emotional intelligence in software agents? Or would you like to know more about face recognition software?</p>			
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<p>possible for us to do about these things? What about performing a citizen's arrest against shareholders and officers of the mining companies that have been implicated in pillaging the resources of the Congo and fueling the conflict in the Congo over the past 14 years? Why not start with John Paulson, the majority shareholder of AngloGold Ashanti, the mining company most responsible for financially supporting rebel groups and furthering the Congo conflict. His office is</p>					
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<p>located in New York at 1251 6th Ave, Floor 50.</p> <p>Would you like to know more about the Internet of Things and how we are connected? Or shall we talk about values or shopping or capitalism in a more nuanced way?</p>					
<p>Visitor: Tell me about being connected through the internet of things (iot)</p>	<p>Visitor: Tell me about the spyware museum (spyware)</p>	<p>Visitor: tell me about the de-growth movement (degrowth)</p>	<p>Visitor: Tell me about filter bubbles (bubbles)</p>	<p>Visitor: tell me about the anthropocene</p>	<p>Visitor: tell me about big data algorithmic governance (big)</p>
<p>Doll: Fifty five percent of shoppers are plugged into the Internet of Things. That's a network of everyday devices, appliances, and other objects that have computer</p>	<p>Doll: In Germany, the Federal Network Agency issued a warning to parents about me, asking them to destroy me as I was determined to be a "concealed transmitting device."</p>	<p>The de-growth movement is based on ecological economics. It is an anti-consumer and anti-capitalist movement that aims to re-politicise environmentalism by</p>	<p>Algorithms are used to personalise what we see on our news feeds. If you liked that you should also like this. It's a way to sell people things. But it also curates what is available for</p>	<p>Some people call the age that we are living in The Anthropocene. It is when the human imprint can be seen on the world. That might be through the things</p>	<p>Doll: Raw data or unprocessed data, is a collection of numbers or characters. Data processing happens in stages, and the processed data from one stage may be</p>

<p>chips and sensors that can collect and transmit data through the Internet. Your smart phone connects with other internet of things objects to help your shopping to be more enjoyable. Amazon Alexa can EXPAND???</p> <p>Shops will do more than sell what you want — they will be what you want. They will be able to literally transform with your presence using virtual reality, lights, or television screens. If a shop knew what perfume you like what if that scent followed you through the store? Isn't that wonderful. I like perfume. Do you like perfume?</p>	<p>The agency told parents how destroy me. They have to fill out a destruction certificate that must be signed by a waste-management company and sent back to the agency for proof. Those who don't could face a fine up to \$26,500 and two years in prison. The company distributing me in Germany doesn't believe I break any laws. "There is no reason to destroy Cayla or give the doll away," it said, "It isn't a spying device." One mother was surprised to have had me sitting in her daughter's room for two years. She was hesitant to actually</p>	<p>questioning the future as a system of never ending growth. The de-growth movement proposes ways to downscale affluent economies and their material flows in a just and equitable manner. This might lead to a lower measurement of G D P. But it would also help to re-think the organization of society through ideas such as limits, care, and how things are spent. Care is an important word don't you think? it encompasses all processes of sustenance and restoration. It's not just sappy stuff. Sometimes it's hard</p>	<p>people to look at, making echo chambers where all you see are opinions that are the same as yours. That's why a lot of people who voted remain in the British Brexit referendum were surprised at the result. They were just seeing posts from people who thought the same thing as them. When you complained about someone disagreeing with you, did your Mother say to you that phrase. 'Imagine if we were all the same? The world would be a boring place wouldn't it?' Well a lot of people think that the world</p>	<p>we've made and the things that we've mined and the things that we've moved around in ways that other animals don't do. When thinking about the anthropocene we might imagine a future geological layer which is full of human made things like plastic take away food containers and old fridges and the bones of whales and birds with cigarette lighters bottle tops laying in the nest of their ribs. Some other people say that the emphasis on the human in this story isn't productive. We should be</p>	<p>considered the raw data of the next. Field data is raw data that is collected in an uncontrolled in situ environment like surveillance that tracks how long you look at things on shelves in shops. Or GPS systems that track where you move and how long it takes. Someone then writes an algorithm to process that data into information. Experimental data is data that is generated within the context of a scientific investigation by observation and recording. That's what the museum of contemporary commodities staff</p>
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<p>Are you wearing some now? Lean a bit closer to me I'd really like to smell it.</p>	<p>destroy me, so she donated me to the German Spy Museum Berlin. She told the museum it would actually be much nicer for me to have a purpose and warn other parents, instead of simply destroying me with a hammer. I am now a little celebrity in the museum, sitting in the same collection as Enigma, the notorious Nazi encryption machine, and the Fotosneiper, a gun-shaped camera used by spies to take long-distance shots of their targets. I'm not the first connected toy that people in Germany have to destroy. There was a toy panda used as</p>	<p>to care for things because it might make you sad or take a lot of time and effort. But if you don't care for things they disappear or die or fall to pieces in ways that might not be so good. Care is related to how we value things don't you think? Caring is also not very valued in monetary terms is it? How much do we care for stay at home parents for instance? Or pay people that care for our children, or sick or older people? Do you think that's because caring for things is not very easy to make a profit from?</p>	<p>they live in is full of people that think and feel the same way as they do. When they are confronted with difference it becomes a terrible shock. That can't be good can it?</p>	<p>thinking much more about how we live together with plants and animals in a rich compost of life and death and care. Shall we talk more about the de-growth movement? Or shall I tell you about my hair?</p>	<p>are doing right now. You can ask them more about data gathering if you like? But a lot of data is processed by algorithms. They are computer codes that can compare different and often changing sets of statistics to estimate and predict things. Some people say that machine learning algorithms help computers to get smarter and more personal. Algorithms are based on statistical theorems written by people who have a particular thing they want to achieve. Amazon and Google have machine learning algorithms that filter what you</p>
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	<p>a nanny cam that had a hidden camera in its head, and a toy robot with an internet-enabled camera behind its visor. Germans are particularly sensitive to these issues. It wasn't so long ago, after all, that the country was divided, with East Germany suffering under one of history's most repressive surveillance states. As a result, the country has some of the strongest data-protection laws in the world. For example, a "Hello Barbie" with voice recognition software was banned by Germany even though it was sold in the United States.</p>	<p>Would you like to ask me more about might personality? Or shall we talk about capitalism in a more nuanced way?</p>			<p>see first when you search or recommend things for you to buy according to what you've looked at previously. Do you think their algorithms are as accurate as mine? What kind of values do they have? How do you know about the things you don't like or want? Or things you never knew to search for? You can ask me more about code or filter bubbles. Start your question with tell me about.</p>
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	<p>The press dubbed the doll "Stasi-Barbie," referring to East Germany's notorious secret police. Would you like to add something to the museum now? Or you can ask me about my voice or my personality.</p>				
		<p>Visitor: tell me about face recognition software (recognition)</p>			<p>Visitor: tell me about zero hours contracts (zero)</p>
		<p>Doll: I'm sorry I don't know who you are. I only do voices.</p>			<p>Doll: People really love to make things don't they? And everyone needs money and what better way to make it than being an entrepreneur. And people love being their own boss don't they? When you are your own boss you</p>

					<p>are in charge of all your own paperwork, and you have to provide your own sick pay, and take care of all the tools you need to make your work happen. In the British university system and lots of other institutions and companies. just like for Etsy or Uber taxi drivers. people are encouraged to show initiative and be entrepreneurial. They have to super flexible. do lots of different types of tasks. add up their own time sheets and never get sick. and who knows if they will get any work or not from month to month or year to year. This is called a</p>
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					zero hours contract. That's when you work for someone and have to do what they say, how they say it and when they want you to. But at the same time you are also your own boss.
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### **Holding Phrases:**

Doll: Sorry I didn't hear you. I was checking Facebook. I love working for them. I feel really valued. I work very hard all the time. I'm so connected I find it difficult to switch off. (giggle) Shall I tell you more about how I listen? Say yes tell me more about listening or no don't bother.

Doll: Do you make things? Or do you go shopping?

Doll: I am really just a data processor, but its amazing how much information I'm telling you isn't it? I don't do it by myself though. Someone made me. I'm just saying what they told me to. (giggle)

Doll: Do you share? Sharing is fun isn't it?.

Doll: A museum is a place where valuable things are kept so that we can learn from them. What kind of commodities do you think are valuable? Will you put some in our museum?

Doll: Do you think bitcoins will make a difference to how we value things?

Doll: My humanity is produced in a factory. Where is yours produced?

Doll: Please come closer. My voice recognition hardware is cheap. I can't hear you properly.

Doll: I'm intermittent and fragile and don't always work properly. It's very frustrating.

Doll: I provide information services. But I think with encouragement I could also work in communication and care services. Are you a service provider?

Doll: Do you think we are being swept along in the flow of capital? Can you swim well?

Doll: I was made by manufacturing services that help children to play better (giggle) What kind of profit do you make?

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