

# VISUALISING ARCHAEOLOGIES

## A Manifesto

by  
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### Questions

Is archaeology a science? Is archaeology a humanity? What are the politics of spectatorship and archaeological representation? These initial thoughts form the basis for our archaeological explorations. Within current archaeological discourse, there are a growing number of requests for expressions, which illuminate and expose the interpretive and artistic qualities of presentation and narration. Yet few scholars actively utilize expressive practice to explore these philosophical issues. As such, we feel that it is an opportune time to intervene in visual and textual discourse by issuing a manifesto for our project. We call for a development of a critically reflexive practice of visual archaeological expressionism, which seeks to contest traditional modes of thought and action.

We declare the importance and the need to express theoretical concepts in a format which is not constrained by linguistic context. We will express theory which is often written and turn to the visual as a means of promoting a visual literacy of archaeological theories, methodologies and narratives. This simultaneously acts as an invitation for practitioners who feel constrained themselves by this discourse in archaeological theory to seek to transcend linguistic cultural barriers by embracing the visual.

Such endeavours have far-reaching ramifications for the tension between non-academic (public) and academic (expert) discourses (if indeed it is possible or appropriate to make these separations). Actions will pose further questions; for instance, can we ask what the implications for value and meaning are in archaeological presentations? Will archaeological science be deemed less 'hard' by its inclusion in abstract and unquantifiable visual expressions? How will this affect the linguistic authorities of archaeological discourse? We feel that the consequences of not undertaking such critical ventures are greater than those of undertaking them. If archaeologists fail to intervene reflexively in discourses of visual literacy, then this threatens meaning and value in archaeological research and risks the loss of the social and visual relevance of archaeological expression.

These concerns and contemplations are the stimuli for this manifesto.

### Reflexive acknowledgement

We accept that this manifesto is by no means an assertion of a universal 'state of affairs'. The views and ideas expressed in this text are the contextualized expressions of our own individual and shared experiences as Western academics and artistic practitioners. In particular we choose to acknowledge our childhood experiences in Richmond, Virginia and Cornwall, England. We studied and currently work in Dublin, Ireland and Cardiff, Wales and understand our thought as a product of Western European and Anglo-American intellectual and social discourses.

### Influences

In the spirit of our project, this manifesto will be an exercise in free thought and expression. Therefore at times we choose to abandon traditional standards of citation and referencing,

and instead acknowledge here a list of thinkers and artists who have greatly shaped our thought and practice.<sup>1</sup> Artistically, we owe a great deal to the work of Banksy, Joseph Beuys, Marcel Duchamp, Andy Goldsworthy, Raoul Hausmann, Richard Long, René Magritte, Eduardo Paolozzi, Man Ray, and Andy Warhol. Philosophically, we are greatly influenced by the thought and work of Theodor Adorno, Jean Baudrillard, Ulrich Beck, Walter Benjamin, Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel. Theoretically, we are also indebted to the scholarly advances of Douglass Bailey, Maurice Bloch, Elizabeth DeMarrais, Alfred Gell, Chris Gosden, Cornelius Holtorf, Stephanie Koerner, Colin Renfrew, Michael Shanks and Julian Thomas. We would particularly like to acknowledge the contributions of Elizabeth DeMarrais, Chris Gosden, Colin Renfrew, Michael Shanks and Aaron Watson, who have all assisted in widening the field of visual artistic practice within archaeological discourse.<sup>2</sup>

## **Structure**

Following Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) and William Burroughs (1914–1997), in this manifesto we also distinguish ourselves from more traditional scholarly writings by articulating ideas as a collection of excerpts and free-standing paragraph.<sup>3</sup> The formatting of argument as fragments in their own context not only allows readers the freedom to absorb discussion in whichever order they please, but also moves us, as authors, nearer to an experimentation with surrealist textual montage, that disrupts particular linear and systemic flows of explanation.

## **To alleviate representational pressure**

Throughout the modern Western world, there has been a growth in the assertion of scientific process as a method of constructing representational archaeologies. The modern scientific expression of a true and accessible past evident in visible and tangible material occurred in tandem with the development of modern faith in rational science as a means for explicating contemporary existence. In response, Jean Baudrillard pronounced of modernity that: 'we, the modern cultures, no longer believe in this illusion of the world, but in its reality (which of course is the last and the worst of illusions)'.<sup>4</sup> In archaeology, the belief in a 'real' past as an observable phenomenon obscures the many layers of modern confusion and misrepresentation that are experienced in everyday life. That 'modern cultures' believe in the 'real' or a 'real' past is not so much a declaration of the 'current state of affairs' but more an affirmative declaration of the desire of one of the projects of modernity, the archaeological endeavour. But as Bruno Latour has asked, 'have we ever been modern?'.<sup>5</sup> If modernity is a process which is in search of the scientifically explicable 'real', will the project ever come to completion? Is it possible to attain a utopia of the 'real', or is this merely a modern purgatory of struggle for authoritative meaning through representation?

In answering these questions, we acknowledge that archaeology occupies a perplexing position in the discourse of human expression. On the one hand, archaeology is a natural science, the logical expression of a process-driven approach to explaining a linear temporal evolutionary understanding of the world. On the other, it is a humanity, a poetic expression of humans grappling with modern philosophies, paradigms and epistemologies in a world which is rapidly changing but simultaneously constant. We can appreciate the positivistic assertions of Lewis Binford in his attempts to have archaeology recognized as a legitimate social science. Such assertions, we feel have, however, actively ignored the critical comments made in discourses such as visual arts throughout the twentieth century, which called into question the violent nature of image construction and representation in a world rampant with

conflict. This has given way to a dynamic state of perpetual struggles for epistemic authority in this shared world we all inhabit.

### **Digestible rhetoric and readable text**

We intend to move away from the reliance on textual symbolism within Western academia as an analeptic means of intellectual debate. Taking our lead from Maurice Bloch and Alfred Gell (1945–1997) this article will abandon interpretations, linguistic fallacies or ‘thought-traps’, founded on unambiguous visual meanings, definable symbolism and decipherable textual codification. In rejecting these decompositions of imagery, we remove ourselves from succumbing to the ‘treachery’ or ‘conspiracy’ of language, and call for a move toward non-representational archaeologies.<sup>6</sup> We are moving beyond printed text to seek out alternative metaphors and modes of attention and expression, to further elucidate the past. By exploring archaeological expressionism (such as poetry, sculpture and art), we begin to move more towards what Shanks terms a ‘poetic’ approach to archaeology, and beyond discourses of ‘counter-modern’, ‘non-modern’, ‘a-modern’ and ‘pre-modern’. By further appreciating our contemporary relationships with visual images, we may generate broader understandings of the complex negotiations that may have existed in the past, while celebrating the potential for archaeological expressions in contemporary society.

### **Archaeology and art: diverging traditions?**

In the visual arts there has been a healthy discourse over technological developments enabling methods of increasingly realistic representation. The photographers Emmanuel Radnitzky (also known as Man Ray) (1890–1976) and Raoul Hausmann (1886–1971) used their technological craft in order to subvert ‘known’ or ‘seen’ reality, highlighting the illusion of the visually ‘real’ — an illusion masked by the belief in technological progress. The Futurists after Filippo Tommaso Emilio Marinetti (1876–1944), Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968), René Magritte (1898–1967), Joseph Beuys (1921–1986) and Andy Warhol (1928–1987), all attempted to subvert the authenticity of visual representation in the twentieth century. Archaeology during the twentieth century was, however, generally more concerned with documenting artefacts, compiling archaeological records and producing narratives of ‘fact’ about the past. We suggest an end to this inconsistency between disciplines and agencies which seek to explore human expression with objects, images and environments.

### **A stagnation of discourse**

Post-processual theory developed as a response to disillusionment with the ability of a processual archaeology to present a veristic, ascertainable, factual past. Interpretative scholars embraced the application of modern, post-modern and contemporary philosophy in the exploration of possibilities for creating archaeological knowledge. Despite post-processual critiques of scientific processual archaeological practice, archaeological studies as modern science are still utilized today, and have considerable academic and non-academic currency in the formation of modern national and ethnic identities, being presented to society as evidence of an identity’s ‘existence’.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, recently John Bintliff and Mark Pearce, in their session ‘The Death of Archaeological Theory?’ at the 2006 meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists, begged the question of whether archaeological theory, and post-processualism in particular, has been unsuccessful in facilitating discourses of understanding and solving archaeological epistemic problems.

This illustrates the urgency of the contemporary situation. Given the perceived failure of textual explication of the epistemological and ontological problems with archaeological methodologies, it is imperative that archaeologists not retreat to a process-driven scientific methodology, but accept the humanistic challenges and expressionistic potential of archaeological research and narrative. We feel that archaeological research must be reincorporated into the discourse of visual cultural theory and artistic expression. It should no longer be approached as a singular, unique narrative of 'truths' but as fluid expressions of modern beliefs in temporalities and human agencies. We do not wish to go as far as Marinetti to rid ourselves of the 'gangrene of professors, archaeologists, tourist guides and antiquaries' (1909), but we wish to bring visual criticisms and strategies to bear on archaeological explorations of materiality.<sup>8</sup>

### Visualizing archaeological art

In many archaeological publications, the term 'art' is often thought of as being ill-defined and consequently confined to inverted commas.<sup>9</sup> Deriving the term 'art' from the Old French 'ars', meaning 'skill', some contemporary scholars suggest that 'art' is still only the product of talented people who are often inspired by genius, madness or taste. 'Art' from such a perspective is often described in terms of its semantic or aesthetic properties, which are used for presentational or representational purposes. Previous megalithic and rock-art studies have, for instance, revolved around formal description. Reducing 'art' to descriptive, aesthetic, representational and formal properties, however, limits the roles of the producers and consumers. 'Art' has more recently been defined as '... any painting or sculpture or material object that is produced to be the focus of our visual contemplation or enjoyment ...' (Renfrew 2003, 66). Such a definition does unfortunately focus more on 'art' as being solely 'good to look at' rather than 'good to think with'.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, we wish to free art from quotation and celebrate its practice, suggesting for the purposes of our project to explore art as imageries, societies, objects, events, articulations and fictions as a means of stimulating further debate on the nature of images and strategies of presentation. Or in Aristotelian traditions, as poetry and *tekhnē*, that is the responsible exercise of practice, to render accessible expressions of understandings of being in the world.<sup>11</sup>

By considering moves towards archaeological expressionism, we are seeking alternative ways of understanding the 'why' and 'how' of visual images and physical objects. We take our lead from Alfred Gell (1945–1997) who argued that indexes display '... a certain cognitive indecipherability ...', that they enchant and confuse the viewer who is unable to recognize at once '... wholes and parts, continuity and discontinuity, synchrony and succession ...'.<sup>12</sup> Archaeological expressionism is concerned with *any* form of apparatus designed either to be looked at or to enhance vision, from oil paintings, line drawings or digital photomosaics. Some modern scholars currently advocate that we are increasingly a visual society, as we are no longer informed solely by text, and they suggest a 'visual' or 'pictorial turn', with sensationalists suggesting the extreme of an 'iconic boom' of visual literacy. Daily we are informed and saturated with images ranging from the advertisement, television and the internet. This is not to suggest that human experience is now more visual and visualized than ever before. Human visual experience and visual intelligence, both past and present, is founded on practices of spectatorship: the look, the gaze, the glance, observation and surveillance. But as we are presented, through technologies, with the opportunity to utilize different visual regimes from those in the past, we seek to explore the archaeological, by embracing visual motions which cannot be fully explicable in models of textuality. We therefore strive for other forms of expression and analogy.

We do not mean, however, to ignore the tradition of visual representation inherent to the discipline of archaeology. Rather we intend to confront this tradition to expose its failed attempt at 'realistic' representation of the past and re-engage it with the equally significant tradition of visual cultural criticism. There are recent criticisms of studies that incorporate traditional archaeological two-dimensional black and white images such as line-drawings. Some have questioned a perspective that seems to privilege the static form of the representation, over more fluid social processes.<sup>13</sup> For example, when studying the images engraved on Irish passage tombs or the 'corpus' of Irish early-Christian or 'Celtic' design, such conventions create a situation where the spectator, in studying motifs as a corpus is encouraged to participate in the illusion that the image is a 'realistic' representation of the original design. The viewer is also given an 'observer-imposed' selection of 'acceptable' visual images, presenting the motifs as spatially and temporally static. We argue that all traditional, schematic, representational line-drawing produce similar effects, whilst also creating a particular scientific realism. Furthermore, we consider current appropriations of representational systems from the fields of physics and network theory. Although these are dynamic progressions from the two-dimensional representations of archaeological knowledge, they are still firmly imbedded in the modern archaeological meta-endeavour of constructing and presenting knowledge as a visual 'reality'. This, we feel, pushes archaeological realism to the point of abstraction.

Thus we call archaeologists to participate in active and dynamic methods of visual expression. We are not asserting the need for a Dadaist archaeology or a Futurist archaeology or indeed a surrealist archaeology. What we call for is a re-engagement of archaeology with the history and contemporary practice of the visual arts. This re-engagement, we feel will enable archaeology to:

- move toward reflexive visual expressions of archaeological practice;
- move beyond traditional realistic abstraction in representation, which was created via scientific methodologies;
- transcend the limitations of the two-dimensional plane of archaeological representations (e.g. plans, schematic drawings, section drawings) and embrace dynamic visual articulations of multiple essences;
- empower archaeologists to confront visual appropriation of archaeological material as icons of modern temporalities, ethnicities, or ideologies;
- alleviate representational pressure put on archaeological research and material;
- support a move beyond representational archaeologies;
- explore potentials for multi-vocal, multi-temporal and multi-presentational archaeologies;
- investigate the tensions put on archaeology by its relationships with other disciplines in the humanities and the social and natural sciences;
- counter the modern 'crisis' and 'state of emergency' through responsible acts of participatory archaeological expression;
- highlight the human need for movement and spatial interaction by intervening in traditional representational and discursive environments, thus engaging modern dichotomies through reflexive practice;
- communicate theoretical concepts and expressions which are not limited to language-specific contexts;
- encourage the development of visual material which can be used for archaeological pedagogical strategies in universities, schools and public education initiatives.

As evidence of our commitment to this manifesto, we have already begun artistic interventions within traditional academic and archaeological spaces. Beginning at the 13th annual meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists at Cracow, Poland, we installed a series of visual art pieces within the exhibition area of the conference venue. The

exhibition was titled 'Reflexive Representations: the Partibility of Archaeology' and served as a visual expression of the implications of the archaeological and anthropological theory of partibility. We intend these pieces to resonate with some of the themes of this manifesto by addressing issues of:

1. partibility, personhood, permeability and pointilism (through fragmentation and mosaic);
2. iconic archaeologies and the representational pressure currently put on interpretation through the manifestation of hyper-icons, thus highlighting the need to move beyond representational archaeology;
3. 'public' and 'private' discourses over cultural heritage (thus exposing perceived dichotomies between 'experts' and 'the public');
4. Reflexive visual modernization.

The exploration of these themes can be engaged by both the reader of this manifesto and the viewer of these pieces in at least three possible ways:

1. Each piece is given explicit context both of its overarching representational structure and of its constituent contexts. This is in order to make overt representational systems which challenge the current abstraction of visual and social relationships such as partibility.
2. Each piece exemplifies the application of particular theoretical approaches to visual and tangible materials, and can be seen as a contribution to both textual and visual interpretations and engagements with archaeological objects.
3. Each piece acts as an invitation to critically engage with both the original objects and our rendered art pieces, not only through narratives of discourse, but also through a continued narrative of visual understanding. This is to encourage and highlight the human need for movement with environmental and social interaction in a growing discipline of visual archaeology.

### **Reflexive representations**

This series of art pieces seeks to contest traditional mechanisms for representation and spectatorship by questioning the status that visual images occupy in archaeological discourse. Photomosaics of iconic archaeologists and archaeological objects were constructed through the manufacture of archives and archaeological records of public images available over internet search engines. This digital 'excavation' of what is traditionally an unarchived public space marked the beginnings of our digital archaeological practice.

Inspired by Joan Foncuberta's series of Googlegrams (2005), we call into question the ways in which archaeologists position themselves and their work within broader society. By conflating archaeological figures with a collage of public images, the pieces reveal the manufacture of representations of archaeological identities and of the artefacts and monuments with which they work. In addition, through the use of the world wide web and freeware, they also challenge the role that digital media are playing in the fabrication of collective archaeological visual memory, interpretation, and mediated information.

We began by considering whether experience is ever truly documented or represented. Each (in)dividual piece subverts and parodies notions of 'truth' in archaeology and the veracity of dominant images in the construction of the past and present, memory, identity, gender, emotion and agency. Such a reflexive approach generates connections between unfamiliar essences, resulting in ruptured and fragmented yet dynamic archaeologies, histories and representations.



*Reflexive Representations [1]: South Metope XXVII*

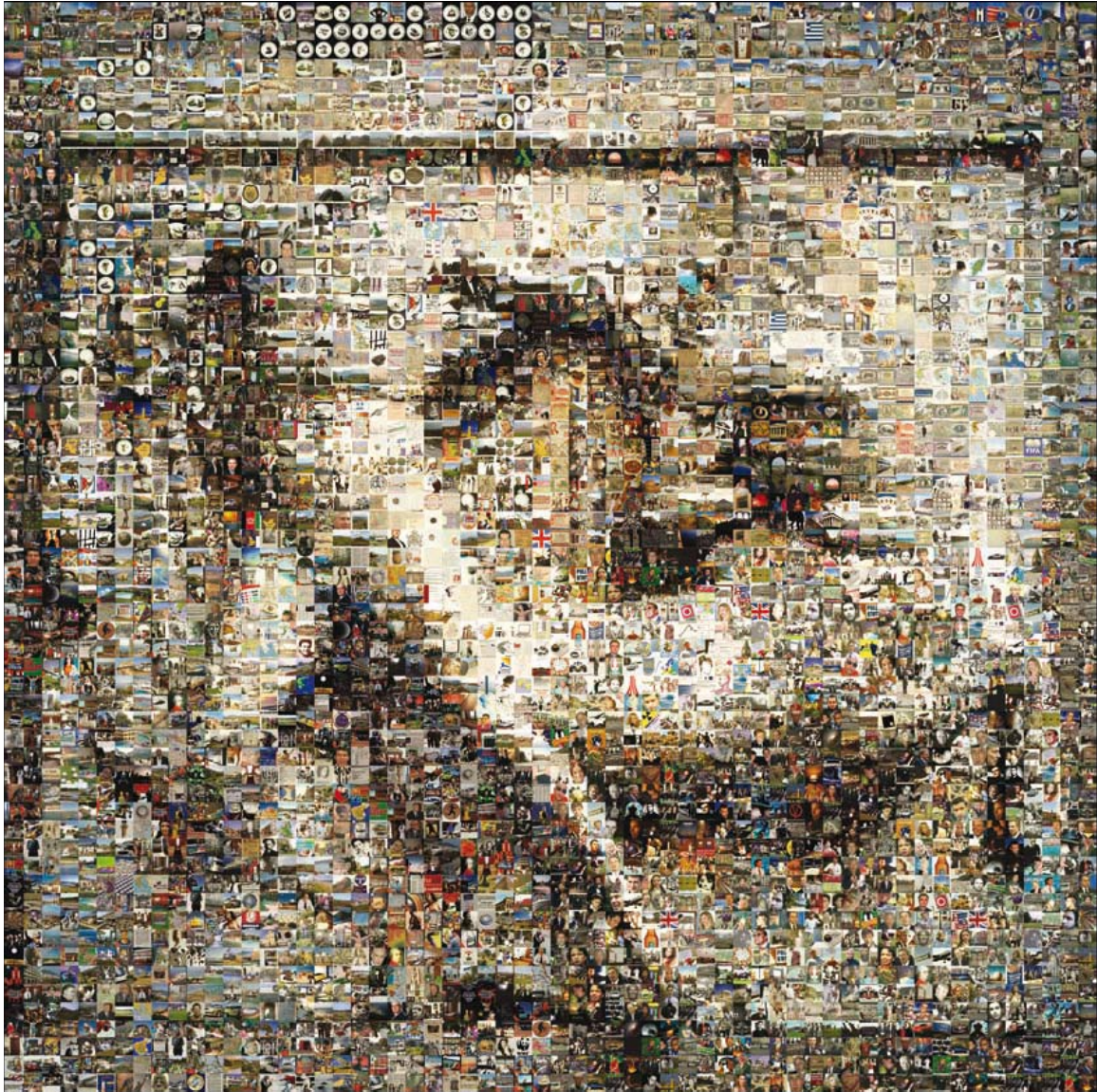


Figure 1: Reflexive Representations [1]: South Metope XXVII  
by Andrew Cochrane and Ian Russell  
10–12 July 2006, Digita Photomosaic (100 × 100 cm) of a  
Pentelic Marble Metope (c. 137 × 137 × 15 cm). Detail below.

This photomosaic (Fig. 1) depicts South Metope XXVII (c. 440 BC) of the Parthenon on the Acropolis in Athens, Greece, which is now located in Room 18 of the British Museum in London. This is one example from the series of 32 metopes which were located on the south side of the Parthenon whose marble, high-relief sculptural decoration depicted images from the Centauromachy — the mythological battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs which began in Thessaly during the wedding feast of Peirithöos and Hippodaemeia (Ovid *Metamorphoses* 12.210–535).<sup>14</sup> The myth is a Classical juxtaposition of, and conflict over, concepts of civility and barbarism.







The corner-focus of the images from each search term is utilized to make overt the structures through which some people understand and communicate identities visually and the impact of digital culture on these expressions. Yet as the viewer moves away from each corner, the divisions between these concepts are blurred and the composite image becomes a conflation of both mythical battles between civilizations and modern conflicts over the ownership of antiquities, identities and the linguistic expression of those identities. Thus the partibility of the image seeks to blur boundaries between conceived nation states and social identities through permeable exchanges between the visual representations of self and other.

The viewer is invited to explore the 'cell-images' themselves and question their role within the composite whole — leading to questions of both the images' and their own involvement in personal and national expressions of cultural identity and conflicts over images of civilization. This piece also highlights the conflict of issues of ownership of images and control of the methods of representation. In this conflict, we acknowledge the challenge to conceptions of copyright and intellectual property, and cite the tradition of artistic appropriation of publicly accessible images as responsible acts of subversion; such is the nature of collage.

*Reflexive Representations [2]: Professor Julian Thomas*

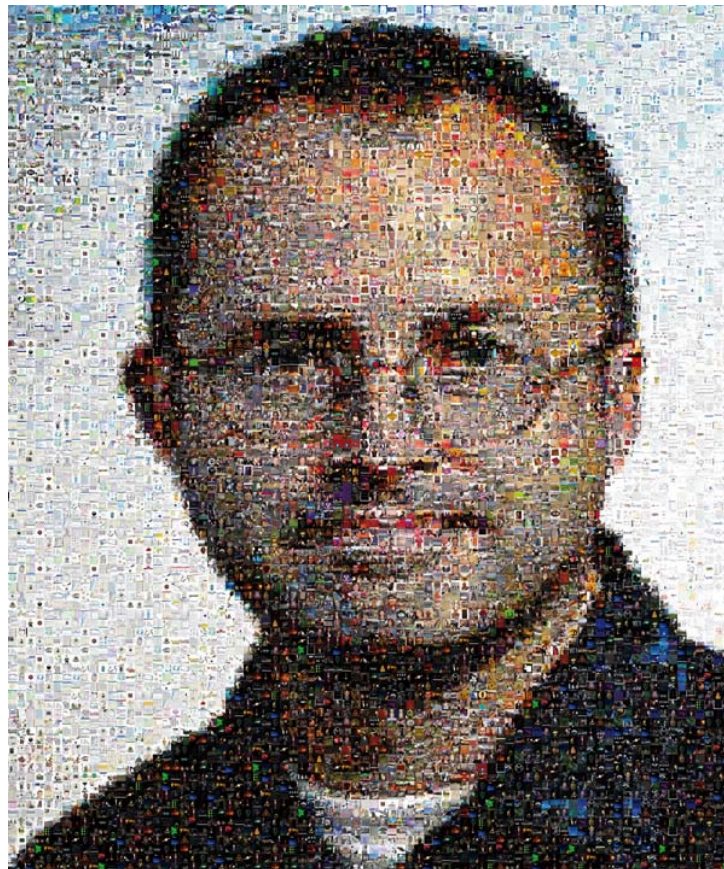


Figure 2: Reflexive Representations [2]: Professor Julian Thomas  
by Andrew Cochrane and Ian Russell  
12–13 July 2006, Digital Photomosaic (90 ×110 cm). Detail below.

This photomosaic (Fig. 2) depicts Professor Julian Thomas, Chair of Archaeology at Manchester University and the Vice Chair of the Standing Committee for Archaeology. He was a Vice President of the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) between 2001 and 2004, and remains a member of the RAI Council. He was the Secretary of the World Archaeological Congress between 1994 and 1999. He is a life member of the Collingwood Society, and is Associate Director of the AHRC Research Centre for Textile Conservation and Textile Studies. Professor Thomas has consistently incorporated theory and philosophy into his interpretations of the archaeological data. He has striven throughout his career to find new ways of understanding prehistoric societies which confront the prejudices and assumptions of the contemporary west, while further illuminating the relationships between archaeological knowledge and the modern condition. Professor Thomas has recently published several works on human entanglements with interpretations of time, culture, identity, and the modern episteme.

In this piece, we explore the titling of Professor Thomas's two recent archaeological theory texts, *Time, Culture and Identity* (1996) and *Archaeology and Modernity* (2004). The image is composed of a collage of 3820 'cellimages' resulting from unfiltered searches for the words 'Time', 'Culture', 'Identity', 'modernity' and 'archaeology' through the Google 'Image Search Engine'. This image highlights through its construct the prevailing modern 'atomistic' perspective, yet also by-passes it by stimulating new fluid engagements that perform within flows of flexible spectatorship. It explores visually how Thomas challenged the ordering of discrete entities into chronological sequences as a means of understanding the past through temporal succession, depicting it purely as a characteristic of modern Western thought. Thomas also argued that sequential or stratigraphic units are first described as free-standing entities, which are later connected to each other through isolated events or acts of intentionality.





Thomas has proposed that the modern concept of the 'individual' may not necessarily represent how non-western people regard themselves.<sup>17</sup> Instead, people may see themselves as a composite of substances and parts with the human body thought of as porous with elements, sensations and emotions continually flowing in and out in a cyclical fashion, both during life and after death. Thus, this image reflects (in)dividual, composite, permeable and partible aspects of personhood by presenting Professor Thomas via disparate parts and images, that produce a whole. The mixing of these digital cell images and parts in differing states reflects the movements of such essences. This notion is support in anthropology; for instance in Melanesia some people regard themselves as dividual persons that are partible. These partible people often give 'parts' of themselves away as a means of maintaining or creating networks and relations with others.<sup>18</sup> An interesting instance of how some people conceptualize themselves as partible beings is demonstrated by the Polynesians of the Marquesas, who have separate names for specific body parts in addition to their own name. Each named part would have its own life that related to other named members of the body and the community as a whole.<sup>19</sup> In another example of how some people transmit essences between persons, Jones has commented on how some of the Classic Maya thought of themselves as permeable, consisting of blood and bone. By exchanging or giving these elements, relationships were manufactured, and strengthened.<sup>20</sup> By blending, and circulating fragmented images, we magnify these perspectives. The de-totalising of the portrait of Thomas in to fragments via digital cell images brings a dynamic new integrity to the presentation of Thomas as a whole. In such a scheme, one might argue that the now iconic Thomas is cosmogony, with digital cells being assimilated in processes of regeneration or transformation.

*Reflexive Representations [3]: South Cross, Ahenny, Co. Tipperary*

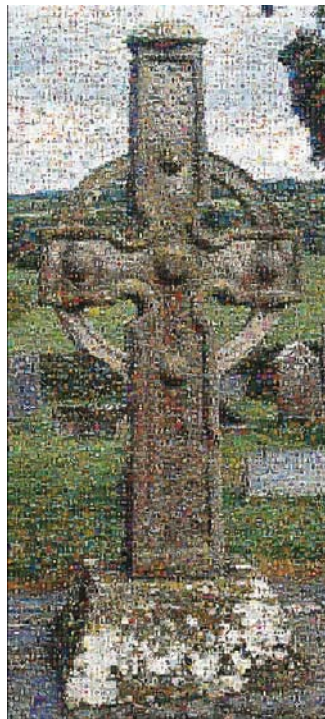


Figure 3: Reflexive Representations [3]: South Cross, Ahenny, Co. Tipperary  
By Andrew Cochrane and Ian Russell

9–16 August 2006, Digital Photomosaic (100 × 173 cm) of Freestanding Sandstone Cross (height: 267 cm; base: 122 × 117 × 45 cm; shaft: 48 × 35 cm; cross width: 135 cm). Detail below.





Although the original purpose of the crosses or the cause for their erection are unknown, the 'high cross' today performs as an icon of Christianity, Celtic culture and traditional craftsmanship. In particular, the 'high cross' was a regularly used symbol in the nationalist cultural revival in Ireland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as grave markers and public political monuments. Throughout England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the crosses are legally titled 'national monuments' — the same legal status given to the modern political and cultural monuments which schematically mimic their form.

Today, crosses such as this example, have been replicated as 'Celtic Cross' jewellery and are marketed to tourists as souvenirs or signifiers of 'Celtic Christian' identity. These schematic representations of the 'high cross' form, decorated with 'Celtic knotwork' and interlacing motifs have helped divorce the original objects' form from their material context and created an abstract representation of modern aspirations for cultural authenticity.

This image is composed of 7200 'cell-images' collected from unfiltered searches for the words 'Celtic', 'Christianity', 'Cross' and 'Monument' through the Google 'Image Search Engine'. In doing so, these now iconic terms are juxtaposed with the material icon. The viewer is invited to explore the visual association between the public 'monument' of the South Cross at Ahenny and the public images associated with the words most commonly used to describe the object. This juxtaposition makes overt the conflict of images and crisis of meanings that are inherent in these textual terms that seek to understand visual images and material agency.

*Reflexive Representations [4]: Sir Mortimer Wheeler*

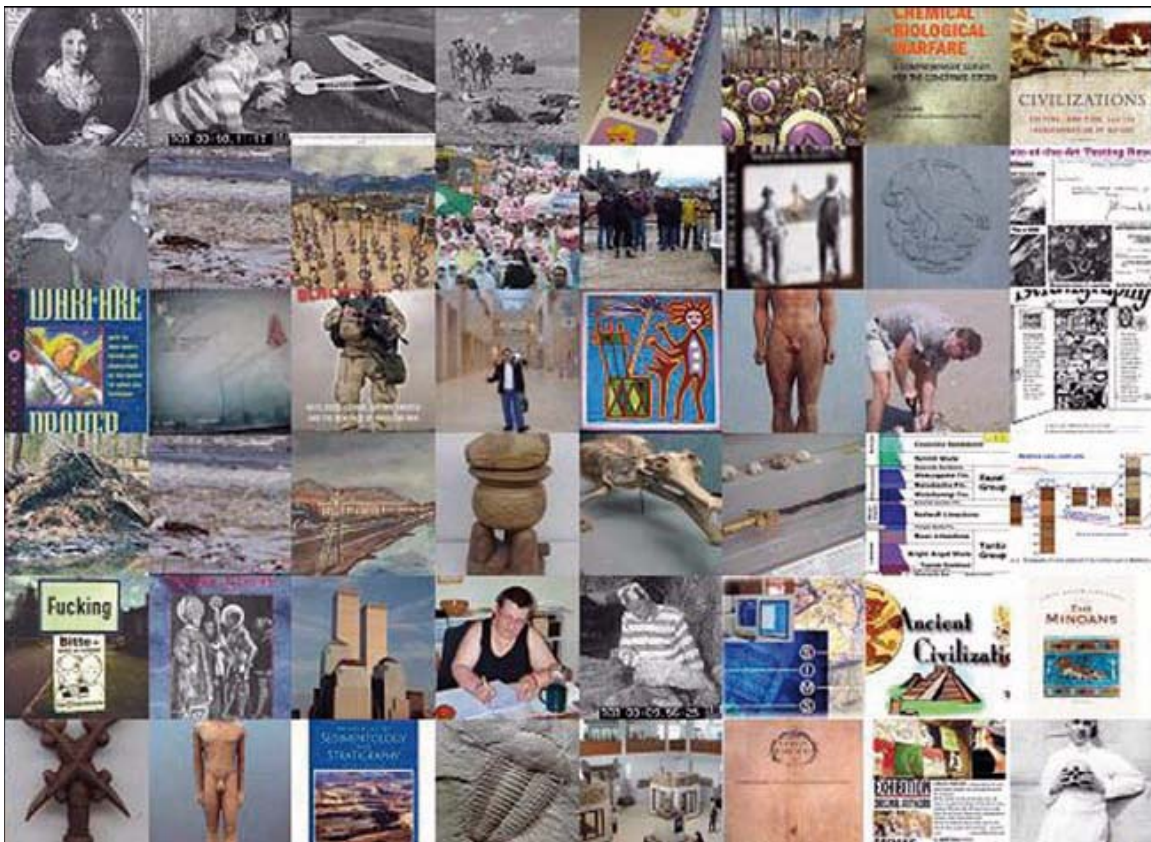


Figure 4. Reflexive Representations [4]: Sir Mortimer Wheeler  
by Andrew Cochrane and Ian Russell  
18 August–4 September 2006, Digital Photomosaic (90 × 110 m). Detail below.



This photomosaic (Fig. 4) depicts Sir Robert Eric Mortimer Wheeler (1890–1976), one of the most iconic British archaeologists of the twentieth century. During his archaeological career Wheeler was Director of the National Museum of Wales, Keeper of the London Museum, Director-General of Archaeology in India and Chair of the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. During the First World War he served with the Royal Artillery holding the rank of Major, being awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry and initiative. During the Second World War Wheeler earned the rank of Brigadier and served at both El Alamein, Northern Africa and the Salerno landings in Italy. Wheeler excelled at warfare and archaeology with equal measure.

Wheeler's major archaeological skills were demonstrated through excavation, administrative organisation, the creation of successful National Museums and the increased presentation of archaeology to the media and general public. Wheeler advanced archaeological method by following Lieutenant General Pitt-Rivers and working with Dame Kathleen Kenyon, and advocated the importance of Stratigraphy. Whilst in India, Wheeler conducted now classic excavations at Harrappa and Mohenjo-daro in the Indus Valley, exploring the remains of the civilizations that lived there. Wheeler was one of the first who believed that archaeology needed public support, and utilized all available media to present the discipline to a mass audience. His most popular and famous book was entitled *Still Digging* (1956), in which he depicted his adventures in archaeology.



In this piece, the image is composed of a collage of 3262 'cell-images' resulting from unfiltered searches for the words 'Warfare', 'Still Digging', 'Civilizations', 'National Museum' and 'Stratigraphy' through the Google 'Image Search Engine'. Exploring the concept of stratigraphic method, this piece excavates the Google Image Search Engine Site, to further reveal the digital contexts of specific images. Just as each excavated deposit is



characterized by a particular position in the composition and sequence of a site, digital and visual information is used to create a pattern or montage against which other elements of interpretation can be studied. In doing so, the Wheeler Photomosaic further illuminates how seemingly disparate elements from the world, when viewed from an appropriate perspective and distance, can generate new understandings and thoughts.

### **Future interventions and exhibitions**

The Reflexive Representations intervention also occurred at the 2006 meeting of the Contemporary and Historical Archaeology in Theory conference at Bristol University 10–12 November, the 2006 meeting of the Theoretical Archaeology Group at the University of Exeter 15–17 December and will also occur at the 2007 conference 'Resisting Archaeology' at Uppsala University in Sweden 17–20 May. We welcome any and all reactions to these exhibitions. Please send us your comments at: [reflexiverepresentations@gmail.com](mailto:reflexiverepresentations@gmail.com).

Other projects which are currently under development include:

#### *a) The Politics of Digital Architecture: Archaeologies of the Information Age*

René Magritte (1898–1967) problematized the use of text relating to works of art. Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) problematized all textual communication; however, both critiques relate to overt textual expression. In the Information Age, embedded and discrete communication has been taken for granted as 'information'. Letters on keyboards correspond to logical code. Words and terms are utilized 'behind-the-scenes' as a discrete architecture, structuring our digital gazes. Many layers of text and coding are, however, utilized in constructing and accessing the digital spaces we interact in. Words and terms are utilized for search protocol, structuring the manifestation of digital visualisations in webpages and affect our organisation of data through 'tags' and 'metadata'. Thus, classical meanings are overtly utilized and postmodern problems are forsaken for pragmatic use in creating navigable spaces and digital architectures. We plan to make overt the appropriation of textual titles as logical systems for data recognition. This process creates digital spaces for information experience, structuring some views whilst restricting other possible perspectives. Amongst other issues, we question whether national and descriptive titles can ever be discarded, whilst they are intimately incorporated into data and metadata structures and digital architectures, which ultimately form the foundations of the Information Age.

#### *b) Bricolage and the Performance of Archaeology*

Practitioners in both the disciplines of archaeology and theatre have written extensively about the act of excavation as performance. We will be participating at the excavation of a Late Bronze Age midden and occupation complex in Warwickshire (The Whitchurch Project). This site is currently under the directorship of Kate Waddington and Niall Sharples from Cardiff University. We intend to explore the dynamic ways one can document site-specific archaeological acts. Through creative visual expression, we will participate with the archaeological site teams, engaging the use of site diaries, and provoking the visual expression of digger observations through photographs, layered together in mixtures and montage that not only perpetuate scientific and historical realism, but also contest it. This work will provide more dynamic and fragmented snap-shots of excavational time, structure, memories and narrative.

### *c) Representation and Realism: the Hyper-Reality of Archaeology*

Inspired by the thought of Jean Baudrillard, we will explore methods of stratigraphic expression such as those advanced by Mortimer Wheeler and Gerhard Bersu (1889–1964) through physical installations within a series of academic environments and public spaces. Hyper-real expressions of stratigraphic conceptualisations will provoke a rupture in traditional views of archaeological deposition and reconstruction of occupational layers.

### *d) Superimposition, Palimpsests and Temporal Illusion*

We will explore notions of time and textual significances in archaeological thought through processes of overlay and underlay, and similarity and difference. These distillations of interpretation and expression will resonate physically via a series of installations curated to interact not only with the assemblage of pieces but also with the assemblage of persons. Intervening in public and expert spaces, these pieces will act as constellated reference points which will simultaneously express structural experience and a physical illusion.

## **New beginnings and open endings**

We have set out to challenge more traditional archaeological perspectives via alternative media. We feel that our current work, combined with future projects, will serve as an active engagement with the questions posed in this manifesto. We encourage dynamic interactions with our work whether positive or negative in the spirit of open and free discourse. This manifesto marks the beginnings of our expressions and interpretations of archaeologies, which will explore as many richly textured, and sometimes textless, formats as possible.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## Notes

1. Although please see References at end where we present a fuller and more detailed list of authors we have been inspired by.

2. See Shanks (1992); Renfrew (2003); Renfrew *et al.* (2004); Watson (2004a, b). Also see Tilley *et al.* (2000).

3. See Benjamin (1992a) and Burroughs (1959).

4. See Baudrillard (1997, 18).

5. See Latour (1993) and Russell (2006b,c).

6. We consider how archaeology, as an enterprise in understanding past human endeavour, operates via the modern production of texts in propositional form. Although we acknowledge that the creation of texts and terminologies within the discipline facilitates discourse and communication amongst practitioners, we are inspired by the art of René Magritte (1898–1967), most notably 'The Treason of Images' (1928–1929) (an image of a pipe with text - *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*). We feel the visual cultural critique inherent in Magritte's work is integral to an acceptance within archaeology that text can not prove the true identification of an artefact, and an artefact can not prove a text to be true. The contemporary adoption of terminologies within public spaces such as museums encourages the belief that the textual concepts linked to the artefact are in fact materialized truth and not interpretation. This creates a paradox in which we as archaeologists utilize text to understand worlds in which text often may not have existed (e.g. in prehistoric studies). It is therefore suggested that a better comprehension of the cognition of thought processes, or how past people perceived their world, will derive from focusing not only on what we write about these people, but first on what they may have been able to see, and second from what they made of what they had seen (Bloch 1998). Building upon this notion, we suggest that broader understandings of an interpretation of a past in the present will also derive from focus on visual rather than just textual stimuli.

7. For some discussions of the role of archaeology in modern national and ethnic discourse see Kohl & Fawcett (1995), Díaz-Andreu & Champion (1996), Graves-Brown *et al.* (1996), and Meskell (1998; 2001).

8. The Futurist Manifesto, written by F.T.E. Marinetti, appeared in *Le Figaro* (Paris) under the heading 'Le Futurisme' 20 February 1909. This was a violent declaration of fear of the stagnating affect of a overly past-oriented society. This sentiment is also articulated in the thought of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) and echoed by Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) and Theodor Adorno (1903–1969). Marinetti saw it as the charge of the Futurists to deliver Italy from this past-oriented society by using poetry as a means of moving society forward. For Marinetti, 'poetry must be a violent assault on the unknown'. Other Futurist manifestos were articulated relating to specific fields of human endeavour. For example the Manifesto of the Futurist Painters was issued 11 February 1910 followed by a Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting 11 April 1910 by Umberto Boccioni (1882–1916), Carlo Carrà (1881–1966), Luigi Russolo (1885–1947), Giacomo Balla (1871–1958) and Gino Severini (1883–1966), both published in *Poesia* in Milan. The Technical Manifesto of Futurist Music was issued by Francesco Balilla Pratella (1880–1955) in 1911. A Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture was issued by Umberto Boccioni 11 April 1912. Valentine de Saint-Point (1875–1953) issued A Manifesto of the Futurist Woman in 1912 and The Futurist Manifesto of Lust 11 January 1913. The Manifesto of Futurist Architecture was issued by Antonio Sant'Elia (1888–1916) 1 August 1914 published in *Lacerba* in Florence. These reached an ultimatum in The Futurist Reconstruction of the Universe issued by Giacomo Balla and Fortunato Depero (1892–1960) 11 March 1915.

9. The term 'art' is difficult to define from an archaeological and anthropological perspective, due in part to the imprecise boundary between 'art' and 'non-art', whose location shifts with fashion and ideology (Layton 1991, 4). Ventures within the twentieth century at expounding the term 'art' have been fashioned to encompass not just recognizable paintings and abstract paintings, but also anything that an artist defines as 'art' (Dickie 1997, 80–81). The doctrine is that 'art' is very much the free creation of the individual artist. Art is therefore characterized to be an 'ultra-abstract' concept of an 'institutional' kind (Gell 1998, 188; Tillinghast 2003, 133). Studies in anthropology have, however, elucidated that this is a highly unusual perspective unique to the modern West (Layton 1991; Gell 1998). It is proposed that one should instead consider issues of social expression, knowledge and understanding. Moreover, it is noted that the term 'art' does not always exist in non-Western societies. As an illustration, the languages of Aboriginal northern Australia, such as the Kunwinjku language of a region with 'rock art', have no word for the notion of 'art' (Taçon & Garde 1995). It



might therefore be as Sparshott suggests that art is '... so specifically framed within "our" civilisation that it is perhaps something native only to "us" ...' (1997, 239).

10. Outside the discipline of archaeology, there is a large body of knowledge encompassing art history. Most of this discourse, however, addresses art in a specific cultural context of literate societies, and is therefore of limited use within some archaeological milieu (e.g. prehistoric studies). The areas of archaeology that have demonstrated a specific interest in visual expression, such as studies of the Greek Classical world, present a tendency to project back contemporary artistic aesthetics, values and judgements onto past societies (Gill & Chippindale 1993). The trend is to create a framework for artistic study that demonstrates relationships between the image and its social meanings (Layton 1991). This orthodox art historical application informs little of indigenous and pre-Renaissance European contexts, and more of Western notions of universal human 'culture specific' and 'period specific' aesthetics (Gell 1998, 3).

11. See Koerner (2006) and Russell (2006b).

12. Gell (1998, x)

13. See O'Sullivan (1986); Jones (2001b; 2004).

14. For a discussion of the metopes of the Parthenon see Schwab (2005).

15. For a discussion of the acquisition of the Elgin marbles see St Clair (1998).

16. For a discussion of the current legal ownership of the Elgin marbles see Merryman (2000).

17. Thomas 2004. See also Strathern (1988); Gell (1998; 1999); Busby (1997); Ingold (2000); Fowler (2004); Jones (2005).

18. Gell (1999, 33); Fowler (2004, 55).

19. Gell (1998, 44).

20. Jones (2005, 197).

21. See Harbison (1992).

22. The reference reads, 'the termon of Ciaran was burned this year from the High Cross to the Shannon' (*Annal of the Four Masters* M957.10). A later reference in the same text refers to a group taking refuge at the foot of the *crois na screaptra* (Cross of the Scriptures) (*Annal of the Four Masters* M1060.5).

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