

## Scenes of Studio Practice

*L'atelier mis en scènes*

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## Introduction: Setting the stage

- 1 The notion of the artists' studio still struggles to escape some of the romantic tropes of an autonomous, visionary, and solitary study (Alpers, 2005). However, a number of recent returns to the studio have sought to re-examine these spaces in the light of increasingly nebulous and precarious working practices (Davidts & Paice, 2009; Jacob & Grabner, 2010; Gartenfield et al., 2017). Contemporary investigations often emphasise the networked (Bourriaud, 2003 & 2007; Relyea, 2013), materially-vital (Ariztia, 2016; Hennion & Fariás, 2016), co-productive nature of these spaces, marking out histories of occupation that situate the spaces in which artworks are made within the broader contexts of cultural production.
- 2 Parallel interests have also developed within geography, with particular attention being given to spaces in which artworks are created (Hawkins, 2014; Sjöholm, 2014; Ash, 2016; Boyd & Edwardes, 2019). Making sense of the affective immediacies of artistic production often involves more situated and embedded examinations of artists at work (Ash, 2016; Engelmann, 2019) — forms of witnessing and radical empirical approaches that weave together on-site experiences attuned to “the space of the event” (Dewsbury, 2003; Manning & Massumi, 2014; Kontturi, 2018).
- 3 In drawing such close attention to the immanent geographies of creative production, there is a danger that we underplay the ways in which the studio also *registers* “as meaning, energy, and potentiality in objects, scenes, situations, social formations” (Stewart, 2014, p. 549), and through which artists form particular attachments to the spaces they work in. These are hinted at in Alison Bain's (2004; 2005) work on the constructions of artistic identity and the way in which professional fantasies align speculative narratives with the ‘sweat-equity’ of art-working. They are also described

in Jenny Sjöholm's (2013) examination of the studio as 'archive': a space for restaging memory through the tactile recomposition of texts, objects, and photographic images.

- 4 To evoke the studio is to already conjure up certain predispositions towards ways of practicing. Yet, as Harriet Hawkins has noted, despite its centrality to artistic processes "the studio is not, and never has been, comprehended as a discreet, and atomised place of production" (2014, p. 92). How, then, might we bridge the gap between the registers, attachments, and imaginings that orientate artists to the places in which they practice, and complex and multifarious connections by which, or through which, work is produced, distributed, and re-encountered?
- 5 In this paper I take up a recent provocation by literary geographer Angharad Saunders (2019) to consider the studio as 'scene', rather than site: an oscillation between aesthetic encounters, material stagings, and textual compositions that extend practice beyond the 'event' of its happening. Saunders attends to the ways in which the places and products of writing are generated through the elaborate network of social and institutional relations, domestic arrangements, routines, and travels that compose the scene of practice over time. Here, I extend this compositional and atmospheric notion to the idea of the studio, one that is both situated and distributed, recouped and redeployed across and through multiple times and spaces.
- 6 Scenes, as Saunders describes, offer both "a method of writing the world in duration and a focalisation upon a particular time-space" (p. xxi): a way of addressing not just as a moment of an artistic encounter, but also on the other side of the spatial event – the 'go-along' nature of practice (p. xxiii).
- 7 The main body of the argument is organised in three main sections. The first maps a number of studio and post-studio fantasies that have helped project spatial imaginings of artists' workspaces, before turning to some of the more recent work undertaken by geographers working alongside artists. Here, I show how attention has been drawn towards the vital and affective intensities that emerge through human and non-human interactions, and how these, in turn, shape the production of studio space. Whilst these direct us to the material-atmospheric immediacies of the creative event, the second section moves towards the durational and compositional movements of creative working. It presents some of the contexts and reasoning for articulating the studio as 'scene' by drawing on its capacity not only to orientate us to place, but also to oscillate between moments of atmospheric intensity and worldly (re)composition. The final section of this paper provides a loose illustration. Here, I turn to a number of interconnected scenes or filming, writing, and making that follow the working practices of the artist Richard Wentworth. These draw from a film produced by Julia Cave for the BBC, and a research work carried out by geographer Harriet Hawkins. These occur almost two decades apart, but are presented here as examples that, whilst pivoting around the perambulations of a single artist, draw together fluctuating moments of hyper-attention, staging, and composition.

## Studio Registers

- 8 Svetlana Alpers (2005) takes us into the atmospheric space of the 17th century Dutch studio through the work of Pieter Janssens Elinga. The studio is a lit box, separated from the main domestic space – the darker scene that makes up the foreground in which two women attend to their own private activities: one reading, one sweeping.

The reflections and illuminations of light create moments of magnetic intensity. It is certainly a romanticised image, and one that presents the artist and studio for us as a scene: scenographically.

- 9 Euro-American Modernism in the mid-20th century offered us different projections of the studio — in films and glossy magazines — of paint maculated walls, marble dust, bare-bulb austerity, maniacal gestures and paranoiac muteness (Bergstein, 1995; Jones, 1996; Thomas, 2009). The work of photographers like Alexander Liberman, Hans Namuth, and Arnold Newman was not simply a way of documenting the working lives of artists such as Alberto Giacometti, Jackson Pollock and Barnett Newman, but also ways of staging studio atmospheres: the dust and physical effluence of artistic activities, the diffuse light that illuminates sparsely furnished boxes through high windows. In these photographic scenes, discarded paint tubes, sculpting tools, half-torn magazines, bones, paint rags, are actors in the same scenes as the artists and the primal chambers they are housed in.
- 10 Caroline Jones (1996) notes how filmic documentation helped socialise and expand the studio, anticipating later ‘post-studio’ evictions in the 1960’s and 1970’s. It shifted emphasis onto the processes and performances of practice by opening up new ways of distributing representations of artistic identity. Whilst the following decades marked radical departures from the studio ‘trap’ (Smithson, 1996), they would also herald a more intense connection between the site and event of artistic production (Kwon, 2004; Gaiger, 2009, p. 47). The event of practice, the place, and the presentation became central concerns in the scrutiny of cultural infrastructures whose claims of political neutrality were now under question.
- 11 The staging of interventions, events, or solitary or group perambulations redirected any presupposition about the spaces in which artwork is either conceived or executed. The vaulted post-industrial spaces that made for such commanding versions of the studio in the middle of the 20th century gave way to alternative registers of artistic industry. The working spaces of contemporary artists are stimulated by an entrepreneurial energy, where flexibility and working-on-the-move cut new trajectories and sketch out new cartographies of affect: the artist-as-global-commuter, the studio-as-network. Each refract mobilised versions of the studio: aggregations of corporate-style professionalism, DIY activism (Relyea, 2013), ‘creative hubs’, and ‘creative industry’ reports (Moreton, 2013; Farias and Wilkie, 2016; Busta, 2017).
- 12 Underscoring the dematerialisation of the studio, and following the emergence of technologies that have radically altered the way that we work and communicate, art writers and historians have traced out progressively fluid and boundary-less descriptions of the spaces in which contemporary artists create. Artists’ work spaces are seen as nebulous and distributed (Eastwood, 2017; Hawkins, 2014; Lehmann, 2009), and artists as global commuters whose mobile agency operates through networks of institutions, collectors, platforms or project events (Kwon, 2004; Relyea, 2013; Joselit, 2013). These expressions of novel, non-horizontal, responsive and endlessly reconfigurable connections extend the sites of artistic production and circumvented linear relationship between producers, technologies of production, and spaces of reception.

## Atmospheric geographies and the staging of creative practice

- 13 It is in these fluid and fragmented registers of the studio, that work on the geographies of artistic practice has sought ways of understanding the material and atmospheric dynamics of these sites. Emerging from investigations into the spaces in which art is produced — whether these take the form of residencies, live or participatory projects, or the more static experiences of the studio — are not just new ways of doing geographical research, but also new apprehensions of geographic ‘knowledge’. Through interviews, interactions, and interventions, cultural geographers have traced out descriptions of the nebulous relations, atmospheres, and corporeal and material meshworks (Ingold, 2011) that shape spaces of artistic practice. Researchers have embedded themselves as witnesses in the studio, interviewed studio residents, and worked as co-producers of artistic work in these spaces. Shuttling between acts of observing and those of writing, vivid scenes of creative work are drawn from notes, observations, and personal recollections; detailed accounts that map out new ways of thinking about the relationships between artists and the spaces in which they practice.
- 14 Perhaps unsurprisingly, the studio often takes a pivotal role in situating these ‘events’ of practice. Many writers — alert to romantic tropes that still haunt these privileged spaces — approach the studio as an expanded and collaboratively — produced site rather than the singular and original locus of individual creativity. Here, attention is often focussed not on what studios represent (for example, reflections of prevailing structures of cultural production), but how they emerge as part of affective and contingent relations between human and non-human elements. These often foreground the pre-conscious, more-than-representational dynamics of artistic work, and gesture towards those sites of action in which human-object interactions shape atmospheres and form attachments (for example, Ash 2016; Edwardes, 2019). Others have focussed on the attachments that surround the very fantasy of the studio itself, and the promises that it offers in the legitimization of an artistic career or the construction of artistic persona (Bain, 2004 & 2005).
- 15 Concern for the way that studios are produced as spaces, rather than containing them has stimulated interest in the way that atmospheres emerge in and through creative practices. Whilst attention has largely focussed on the aesthetics of atmospheres — the ‘felt’ intensities of human and non-human interactions — there have also been calls for greater recognition of the elemental materialities that envelop and shape our encounters with environments (McCormack, 2008; Engelmann, 2015; Engelmann & McCormack, 2019). In considering scenes of practice, there is an acknowledgement that the composing of life-worlds does not happen in neutral atmospheric vacuum (Ingold, 2015; Verlie, 2019), but in the both the inter-subjective and inter-objective entanglements that pattern and press on our movements through them.

## Why Scenes?

- 16 In witnessing of artists’ working there is less emphasis, and perhaps less opportunity, to follow the durational processes of creative working: the ruminating, stewing, gathering, gleaning and returning that brings focus to the temporal composition of creative working (Brace and Johns-Putra, 2010), although there are some exceptions (Sjöholm, 2014; Hawkins, 2015). Parallel concerns have been voiced in the difficulties of

locating the sites of composition within literary practices, notably by Saunders (2010; 2015; 2019). In Saunders' work the 'scene' is a method and an orientating metaphor that helps to structure connections between author, place, and the temporal unfolding of their writing; their social and environmental milieu and quotidian human (and non-human) relations. These versions push beyond the idea of the scene as pictorial intensity, or the object of a passive spectatorship, "a scene should not be a picture made for our visual consumption, but rather, an image in which we, as the audience, are a part [...] a lived practice that engages and affects us" (2019, p. xx).

- 17 To take up the word 'scene', however, is to take up an idea that has a broad and complex philological reach. Whilst the etymological origins of the word are located in classical theatre (deriving from the Greek *skēnē*), it is deeply ingrained within post-war French thought, emerging as a conceptual operator in the works of Freud, Laplanche and Pontalis, Derrida, Lacoue-Labarthe, Nancy, and Rancière (Hughes, 2019). Here, however, the focus is on the use of scenes and scenography that is at the core of recent discourses concerning atmospheres.
- 18 These relationships may be understood in three ways. First, in the trans-personal emergence of collective affects that "emerge from and express specific relational configurations, whilst also themselves becoming elements within those formations" (Anderson, 2016, p. 11). So, to 'create a scene' (or find oneself taken up in someone else's) can be described in terms of an affective and emerging atmosphere but one that is also centred in the milieu of social and material relations. Second, is related to the material reconfigurations between different types of bodies through acts of staging and (re)composition (Böhme, 2013 & 2018; Bille *et al.*, 2015). Scenographic practices are routinely enrolled in numerous ways to help charge or 'tune' (Böhme, 2013) atmospheres at public events such as sports fixtures, product launches, or arts performances, as well as in more unassuming environments such as cafés, bars, and domestic interiors (Edensor & Sumartojo, 2015; Pink, Mackley, & Morosanu, 2015). Thirdly, atmospheres are understood as the climatic and aurally dispersed particulate envelope that presses on, cools, heats, and permeates bodies, and gives light its hazy qualities (Ingold, 2007 & 2015; McCormack, 2008; Adey, 2013). Scenes, here, form as 'tactile compositions' (Stewart, 2015): elemental forces whose qualities persist in patterns of working routines and the coherence of worlds (Saunders, 2019).
- 19 As I will show, scenes are not simply back-projections that are cast fully-formed as mental pictures — this runs the danger of narrowing the notion of scene to that of scenery (Hann, 2019). The scenes under discussion here are not images *per se*, but sites of attachment and detachment, or, at least, they can give an immediate (and sometimes lasting) structure to disparate affects, and, simultaneously, act as "worlding irritants" (p. 9). They hold both liveliness and exhaustion (Stewart, 2007), compulsion and recoil (Morrissey, 2012), presence and distance (Casid, 2012). They are integrated in geographies of memory (DeSilvey, 2012), recall, re-experience, and trauma (Berlant, 2011).

## Scenes, studios, and 'place' in practice

- 20 What might be gained from thinking about places where art is produced, such as the studio, scenically, rather than in terms of site? For Saunders (2019), it is by thinking about the scenes of literary practice, rather than the sites in which the act of writing

occurs, that we open out the durational aspect of constructing literary works, whilst pulling into focus the vitality and intensity of the particular time-space of writing (p. xxi).

- 21 Saunders draws from Richard Shusterman's (2001) theorisation on art and dramatization, in which the 'scene' becomes a contrapuntal act of framing and unframing worldly experience (Saunders, 2019, p. xx; see also Shusterman, 2001) in order to sharpen or emphasise its affective gravity. Here, framing is impelled by an acknowledgment of the significance of a particular moment. As Shusterman puts it,
 

Framing focuses its object, action, or feeling more clearly and thus sharpens, highlights, enlivens... But, conversely, the intensity of feeling or heightened sense of action that is framed reciprocally justifies the act of framing. We do not frame just anything. (Shusterman, 2001, p. 369)
- 22 Shusterman's alignment of art and drama is part of a broader project to reconcile an epistemological gap between "naturalist and contextualist" (p. 368) definitions of art. Saunders, however, moves to the 'scene' of creative production and the world-making propensity of literary practices. Texts are performances that unfold across various locations and durations: from the gathering of reference materials, observations, through the acts of drafting and editing. Each become moments within a "larger scene of practice... a succession of tracks back and forth, between field site, between one individual and another and between one textual making and another" (Saunders, 2019, p.xv). Scenes, in this sense, are presented not as a suspension of animation or a backdrop to action but operate, as Hughes puts it, "caught between genesis and structure" (2019, p. 26).
- 23 In Saunders' historical analysis of the intertwined social and professional lives of writers such as Arnold Bennett and Anthony Trollope, the lived events of these authors are mapped out in relation to various official and unofficial written outputs (diary entries, letters, drafts) that document the arrangements of specific writing spaces, domestic and social relations, journeyings, and numerous other intercessors that act *en route* to shape developing works.
- 24 Saunders pieces together these scenes (of scenes) from historical and geographic source materials that attend to the complex intermingling of social worlds (the literary and artistic milieu); the meshwork's of class, occupation, migration, politics that are thrown together and intersect lives of writers and co-inhabitants of writers' worlds. She also extends this social 'scene' to the circulation of texts, where readership is not only shaped by cultures of propriety (concerns about the effects and affects of novels on female readership) but also on the infrastructures of publishing and distribution.
- 25 Movement is essential to Saunders' conceptualisation of scenes. It sustains a relationship between the place of writing and the world outside through the continuing flow of material and bodily arrivals and departures: "the study, the garret or the studio become enmeshed, extended and transported, through the mobility of its objects and its occupants" (Saunders, 2019, p. 103). She focusses on the *en route* movements of writing and the 'theatres of composition' that shape them, but also extends these beyond any act of committing pen to paper.
- 26 Teased from the pages of Bennett's and Trollope's diaries are records of walks and journeys that introduce weather and appearing in the descriptions of travelled through places. Scenes emerge from the 'taskscape' of writing (or 'writingscape'), a way of thinking about the act of working as inseparable from people's mutual involvement

with one another or in negotiation with their environments (Ingold, 1993). This not only socialises the time-spaces of writing but proposes that activities cannot be discretely segmented from the broader milieu in which they interact. As an example, Saunders argues that Bennett's walks were part of his 'writingscape' (2019, p. 58), and part of his writing skill. Walking and thinking are not abductions from the real world, but renegotiations and improvisations that become part of the durational unfolding of his writing practices as Bennett adapts his walking and writing routines to the atmospheric qualities of the seasons. Scenes, then, form in the "mundane happenings of life" (p. xxviii) immersed in shifting experiential and elemental atmospheres.

- 27 So, how might we draw parallels between this scenic framing of literary practice in relation to geographies of the arts practice and contemporary notions of the studio? How might we consider the role of the scenic and climatic in the production of spaces and atmospheres? And how do scenes help to open out the event of practice to the durational composition of works?

## Scenes and Followings

- 28 The next sections turn towards two very different 'followings' of the British artist Richard Wentworth at work: one a short BBC documentary filmed in 1988 and directed by Julia Cave, the second conducted in 2005 by Harriet Hawkins, who walked with Wentworth in Liverpool as he restaged his photographic perambulations as part of retrospective at Tate Liverpool. The events occurred nearly two decades apart, but both demonstrate a deep affiliation to a particular place and how this is framed and staged as a scene of practice.
- 29 The first example is centred around Cave's documentation of Wentworth's working routines in and around his London studio. It focusses on the intimate spatial relations that take place in the comings and goings of the studio. As many geographers have noted, the spaces such as these are not containers for action but the product of interrelations and affective intensities (Massey, 2005; Ash, 2016; Saunders, 2015 & 2019). Here, attention is directed to the way Wentworth converts objects into scenes. In the second example, I turn to what Wentworth describes as his 'ruminations' for sculptural work (Hawkins, 2014, p. 137), a series of photographic works that capture the incidental arrangements of discarded or repurposed things found on walks around his home on Caledonian Road. These photographs are a series of works in their own right (published and exhibited most notably under the title *Making Do and Getting By*), but also form evidence of the *en-route* contemplations and encounters that precede the work and "its bringing into being as a material entity or happening" (Saunders, 2019, p. xxiii).
- 30 Both these 'doings' are mediated either through the work of the BBC's film production team or through the various witnessings and writings created by Hawkins. Whilst this runs the immediate danger of always being at least on stage removed from the immediacy of the unfolding events, it allows greater attention to be turned towards the way in which scenes emerge as part of interacting 'taskscape' or 'fields of practice' (Ingold, 1993 & 2011).

## Wentworth's studio perambulations

- 31 In 1988 Wentworth discussed his working processes for a series of BBC documentaries that detailed the lives of (then) up and coming sculptors working in the UK (Cave, 1988). He is filmed at a nearby second hand store, bartering for materials and later, back in his studio, recomposing this matter into new assemblages. Between panning shots that glide across the clutter of his studio, Wentworth talks through his relation to the objects that surround him:

What I have in the studio really are things that I think are useful to me, some of them are ... some of them have chosen to prove me wrong; they've turned out not to be useful to me and after three or four years are still lying around covered in dust ... saying they're not going to perform — that they're resistant. And other things that I hadn't got very much faith in ... are quietly saying maybe they'll co-operate; maybe they'll join in some kind of scheme that I have. (Wentworth transcribed from Cave, 1988, 11:02-11:40).

- 32 In one sense, we can see this iterative act of returning to vital matter and searching out a point of cooperation as a way of framing, or staging, as Shusterman presents it (albeit a sense that privileges the author). However, it is also through these affective encounters that the space of the studio is created (Sjöholm, 2014; Ash, 2016). Wentworth's repeated contact with these collected materials becomes a way of attuning, or training, aesthetic experience. Each encounter is a future-orientated movement, patterned by history of recursive engagements; a “geo-history”, as Ben Anderson (2016) describes it. Each *re*-encountering brings with it references to previous encounters, but remains open to, and perhaps anticipates, a multiplicity of potential trajectories: “life is opened up to what is not yet determined or is to be determined... an encounter is never completely foreclosed” (p. 82).
- 33 In moving from the encounter to the ‘scene’, through which the drama is also ‘seen’ (Massumi, 2011, p. 17), objects are afforded a provisional coherence and the intensity of relations is re-presented and heightened. Shusterman describes this dramatisation as art's framing action (2001, p. 368); Saunders talks of a focalisation (2019, p. xxi), but both emphasise an orientation to place. To frame, for Shusterman, is to “put in place; the scene of *mise en scène* is not a blandly neutral space, but the site where something important is happening” (p. 368). Saunders cautions against the idea of the positioning the scene as the exceptional moment of dramatic action, drawing back to a recognition of apparently inconsequential moments of action that have a persistent affective resonance: “a scene [...] can be a slowing of action, a focussing or gathering in, upon a highly particularised time and space” (2019, p. xxi).
- 34 Saunders description echoes Lauren Berlant's (2011) observations on scenes, in which they consider the aesthetic encounter as a scene that emerges from, and disturbs, the background chaos of life-as-it happens:
- [o]bjects are really relations anchored in a scene whose form emits the phantasm of stability. In psychoanalysis a *scene* is an encounter that produces, organizes, and disturbs affects beyond the manifest content of what's there. In the primal scene we experience unbearable knowledge; the crime scene is defined by enigmas that are not yet evidence; in a theatrical scene situations arise without assurance of their genres. (2011, n.p. emphasis in the original)
- 35 What is important for Berlant is that the scene is kept open, allowing for the critical recomposition of histories that do not freeze the narrative as representation for

interpretation, but restage it. It is through these restagings that object relations are 're-ventualised' by training our attention in ways that allow us to remain "alive in curiosity about what had seemed a fateful object" (2011, n.p.). These successive takings continually work against a representational and affective rest, re-posing these restagings as questions and speculations. Wentworth restages the objects that he has so carefully archived by hyper-focussing (see Casid, 2012), slowing things down in order to turn them into scenes. It is a way of becoming attuned to the scenographic potential (Hann, 2019) of the object; a training in our capacities for generating "scenes in life for our objects" (Berlant, 2011, n.p).

- 36 It is this orchestration of objects, elements, ideas, and images, that allows us to temporarily *fix* scenes of practice, that I want to pick up again, briefly, through the academic work of Harriet Hawkins. In doing so, I also consider these acts of staging, atmospheres, and the broader configurations that condition these relationships 'on the move'. In the following section, I turn to the way in which the extended activities of making work, of touring and storying his walks extend the studio not only spatially, but also temporally. This extends the notion of mobile 'sites' of practice, into iterative acts of re-presentation that reframe, recompose, and restage the studio over time.

### Stagings and the studio on-the-move

- 37 Recent discourse on the aesthetics of atmospheres has been drawn from the work of Gernot Böhme (Bille & Simonsen, 2019), and from his interest in the stage set and in scenography (Böhme, 2013 & 2017). For Böhme, the production of atmospheres is the fundamental goal of scenography (2017, p. 160), and the practice would be meaningless if there were not some intersubjective experiences that made it possible for the scenographer to "tune" the audience to the events on stage. Atmospheres, in Böhme's framing, are quasi-objects that can be produced where the crafting of environments (the deployment of light, sound, or material properties) provide the conditions for them to appear for the viewer (p. 162). Whilst maintaining origins in theatre, Böhme extends scenography across a variety of related practices: marketing, urban planning, interior design, and politics, in order to talk more broadly about "arts of staging" (p. 164) that reflect "the actual theatricalization of our life" (p. 165).
- 38 We may think back to the role played by the camera in the studio that Jones sees as so central to the production of studio 'life' and artistic identity. In Cave's documentary, we are directed to Wentworth's perambulations that extend the studio space from workshop to roof to street. The camera-camera operator-editor dramatize their own moments of hyperfocus, heightening attention to the covering of dust, or the low hiss of the oxy-acetylene torch. However, as both Olwig (2011) and Ingold (2015) observe, relationships between staging and atmospheres are not simply produced through object relationships. To assume so is to privilege the aesthetics of atmospheres at the expense of the climatic and elemental contexts in which these events take place.
- 39 Olwig and Ingold both draw on the dramaturgical histories of theatre's interiorised landscape to pinpoint the metaphorical separations between the spaces and atmospheres of performers and audiences: "[t]his was actually a world brought indoors, and its meteorological effects had to be simulated by means of props and pyrotechnics" (Ingold, 2015, p. 74). We might find hints of this restaging of the weather-world in Wentworth's attempts to pretend to be the weather, as he washes down leaded steel

sculptures on the roof of his studio (Cave, 1988). But these are also extended in other aspects of his practice, the photographic works that act as ‘ruminations’ on his sculptural work (Hawkins, 2014, p. 137). Wentworth’s ambulatory photographic practices offer insight into both the mutual implications in, and momentary production of atmospheres and scenes ‘on the move’.

## Aesthetic trainings and recompositions

- 40 In 2005, Harriet Hawkins took a series of walks with Wentworth in Liverpool. These walks formed part of an event connected to a retrospective of Wentworth’s work at Tate Liverpool. As Hawkins notes, Wentworth’s ambulatory practices form part of the sites, spaces and processes of his artistic production, they constitute a “close observation, a type of repetitive, recursive, urban fieldwork, sensitizing artist and viewer to change” (Hawkins, 2010, p. 810). On these walks, Wentworth photographs small ‘situations’: “disrupted pavement lines [...] mismatched period features” (Hawkins, 2014, p. 142), agitations or double-takes that rub against the formal patterning of the world and remind us of its ‘out-of-tuneness’. Discussions recounted by Hawkins tell of ‘schoolings’ and encouragements to seek out disturbances in these encounters with worlds on-the-move, whilst local guides help with navigation as the group moves through unfamiliar territories.
- 41 Sumartojo and Pink (2020) show us how atmospheres are not simply passed through, but participated in. Experiences of previous encounters allow for the labelling of atmospheres, “making them momentarily tangible” (p.76). Previous experiences of how place, event, or practice ‘feel’ play a role in their orchestration and composition (see also Anderson, 2019). Hawkins describes a training in attention to the aesthetics of the ‘Wentworthian urban’—an encouragement to develop an ‘eye’ for “the artists peculiar way of framing the world” (2014, p. 142). As has been previously noted, scenes “are not merely big spatial and temporal happenings” (Saunders, 2019, p. xxi), they are also small stories that we bump up against. Kathleen Stewart, for example, indicates how:
- Scenes pop us and we mine them proactively. Sometimes you can see someone else’s world snapping into form like a force of nature and recognize it as your future or your past or as a previously unrecognized aspect of your now. (Stewart, 2011, p. 451)
- 42 Saunderson’s, too, finds similar anchorage in the composition of work in the places we live in and move through — our everyday routines, journeys, and social encounters (2019; see also Bratt, 2016). As we follow Hawkins, following Wentworth, conducting his urban fieldwork tours, an aesthetic of rubbish and discards emerges (Hawkins, 2010, p. 808); a world of second-hand shops and hardware stores. It is an ‘everyday urban’ at a particular moment of time; a noise aesthetics in which the vital materialities of chipboard veneers, rusting white goods, disjointed pavements, cut new dynamic figurations alongside histories of Situationist tactics and psychogeographic experiments. Even in unfamiliar Liverpoolian environs, scenes register for Hawkins as part of the patterning of “urban imaginaries” and “street level activities and politics” (2014, p. 135).
- 43 For Wentworth, the excursions and the photographs he takes during them are further recomposed in various forms: books, essays, and slide talks. Wentworth’s ‘Caledonian Road talks’ take the form of ‘talk-walks’: “intertextual journeys narrated by way of slides of Caledonian Road, accompanied by spoken stories” (Hawkins, 2014, p. 144). This

literal re-staging of his urban studio reproduces it as the thematic subject of performance. The talks intermingle personal histories with ruminations on practice, and each performance recomposes these images in different forms.

- 44 Outside a direct experience of these events, it is hard to get a sense of atmospheres that move beyond the aesthetic in descriptions of Wentworth's perambulations. In order to recover a sense of the immersion not only *in* scenes of practice, but also *in* material and atmospheric worlds, these must be recomposed from the implicit, unspoken "enigmas that are not yet evidence" (Berlant, 2011, n.p.). As the art critic William Wood (1999) reminds us, even the most overtly peripatetic practices of artists are forms of restaging that chose to heighten some scenes whilst allowing others to remain unremarked. Wood notes that what is often excluded from the presentation of nomadic working methods "is the artist sorting negatives and contact sheets, ordering prints or travelling to talk to dealers and collectors" (p. 75).
- 45 There is an aesthetic and conceptual patterning, as Hawkins identifies (2014, p. 140), and a materiality. In the parsing of light into photographic film, there is the trace of something elemental. Wentworth's choice of analogue cameras and high-street processing meditates the world in particular ways: built-in exposure meters instruct on the regulation of light, the chemical composition and sensitivity of the film, the composition of fluids in its processing contribute to the production of its aesthetic 'feel' (see Edwards & Hart, 2004). These patternings are taken up in another scene, that of Hawkin's own writings in which the experience of walking in and through the atmospheres of Liverpool become a series of *writings-through*: "a way of elucidating thought within a larger and longer process of [...] writing" (Saunders, 2019, p. xxv)

## Concluding remarks

- 46 Collecting, collating, sorting, and researching the fragments of artist's practices; Hawkins examinations, like Wentworth's, are steeped in the values of being in (a) place: traversing its terrain, hyper-focusing on its objects, slowing things down. Between the places and situations in which embedded observations, participations and other forms of witnessing occur, geographers like Hawkins, working in studios to explore the spaces of artistic process, draw together documents, photographs, fragments, notes, and archival material so as to unpick the material geoaesthetics of creative activities.
- 47 Working alongside, intervening in, and participating with artists scenes become part of the tissue, the fibrousness, of attachment and detachment through which the situation, the place or space in which we work becomes one of a number of objects, a 'thing' that we try to stabilise (Berlant, 2016). An emphasis on the material-affective atmospheres within creative spaces can underplay the liveliness of the studio as a registering form. To move from objects-in-relation to scene involves a movement towards representation, but not as a fixing of identities. In these representations, the studio is not part of a referential system (Anderson, 2019); it is not an archetype for a particular mode of practicing, nor does it refer to a systematic organisation of art-institutional relations. However, like other emergent forms, the studio has the capacity to register both as and within scenes of practice as an accumulation of affects, histories, meanings, and atmospheres.
- 48 In this paper I have described how places of artistic practice, and in particular the studio, have been central to a number of recent geographic explorations. I have also

sketched out some of the historical contexts that saw the gradual dematerialisation of the studio as a specific mode of making work, and the shift towards increasingly mobile registers of artists' spaces. In one sense, the 'scene of practice' becomes a way of accounting for the multiple sites of production and reception – the gathering in and focusing on sites and moments through which works are made and remade, staged, and restaged. In turning towards the scene, rather than site, as Saunders does within literary practices, we attend to the act of creative practice as something that “both occupies and exceeds place” (Saunders, 2019, p. 132).

- 49 The place of practice is not only stretched out to account for the *longue-durée* of framing, formulating, testing, and presenting, but also takes up the sociality of these processes through their attachments to material compositions that spatialise the writer in acts of writing, socialising, moving, and gathering in material worlds. Works are made and remade continually, on different sites and at different times; each formed through new “points(s) of impact, curiosity, and encounter” (Stewart, 2007, p. 5). What I hope to have demonstrated here, is that scenographic and dramatic presentations are not only techniques of framing that tune our wordly experience in the production and reception of art works, but also ways of understanding the composition of, and attachment to, places and processes of creating. The 'scene' continually shifts a frame of focus between backdrop of encounter; an active participation within, and distancing from, the becoming-event; and its narrative-forming potential.

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## ABSTRACTS

The creative turn within geography has seen a number of returns to the artists' studio as a site for exploring the vital, immanent, and affective relations that form these spaces of creative practice. Where interviews, observations, collaborations, with artists have directed attention to the non-representational, this paper approaches the studio as both a scene, and an atmospheric staging. Taking up broader discourses around the scenographic, it argues that scenes not only take account of the durational and compositional construction of studio spaces, but can be understood as a form of training and attunement through which participants are enrolled in the joint composition of studio atmospheres and registers. It directs attention to the agency that these compositions have in the production of the studio imaginary.

Le virage créatif au sein de la géographie a donné naissance à un certain nombre d'explorations dans les ateliers d'artistes ; afin de révéler les relations vitales, immanentes et affectives qui donnent formes à ces espaces de création. Des entretiens, des observations, des collaborations avec des artistes ont attiré l'attention sur le non-représenté ; cet article aborde quant à lui l'atelier d'artiste à la fois comme une scène et une mise en scène atmosphérique. Reprenant des discours autour de la scénographie, nous développons l'idée selon laquelle : les scènes non seulement prennent en compte la construction de la durée et de la composition des espaces d'atelier, mais sont aussi les lieux de formation et d'initiation à travers lesquelles les participants s'inscrivent dans une composition à la fois d'atmosphères et de registres d'atelier d'artiste. L'attention est attirée sur le rôle de ces compositions dans la production d'un imaginaire d'ateliers d'artistes.

## INDEX

**Keywords:** studio, scene, stagings, artistic production, representation, atmosphere, affect

**Mots-clés:** l'atelier d'artiste, scènes, mise en scène, production artistique, la représentation, atmosphères, affect

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