

## **Elbow Methodology**

Elbow was a collective residency involving 8 artists working collaboratively with input from archaeologists and the general public, all working in ways that they had never experienced before.

The gallery became a collaborative studio. The premise was that anything in the gallery space could be used and adapted by anyone else. The materials and processes available were familiar to some and new to others, so the processes of shared learning began.

The initial weeks saw a sensitivity and adaptability; people worked tentatively together attempting to respond and interact with each other's work. Mid way through, notions of authorship were blurred as original starting points were erased.

Ego was challenged. As the weeks went on, attempts were made to take ownership of works with the knowledge that they could be undone at any time. This proved to be surprising liberation in the creative process. Ian Dawson likened it to how 'jazz musicians jam together' – each artist bringing their own element but responding and adapting responsively.

Dunseath's role was as an artist collaborator. She was initially invited to be part of the residency because of her research interest in the physical and conceptual processes and behaviours around the practice of sculpture. She began the residency by applying her interest in form by connecting the floor and the ceiling of the space.

The impact of new technologies and the emphasis on collaborative working had an important effect on Dunseath's own methodology. Throughout the residency, she very consciously sought to be fully open to this new way of working with an open agenda. The process of working with others raised an important awareness of particular and inherent tropes that had been relied upon in the making of her own work. When these were interrupted, it required a complete re-thinking, a re-evaluation of what she and the work was doing. It shook the very foundation of a singular artist's way of working and thinking.

Working under the remit of the residency's focus on blindness, Dunseath started with an interest in Elkin's 'Object stares back' where seeing is undependable, inconsistent, and caught up in the threads of the unconscious – this began her process of exploring inconsistent form.

As a sculptor, she was interested to explore what happens to form when it is made in a 3D realm and returns back again. What is our experience of the physical and the virtual, and how does this affect our experience of seeing sculpture? Additional to that is the effect of the collaborative approach on final outcomes where issues of ownership, authorship, negotiation and trust are revealed for the artist and audience.

Dunseath established a method of constructing forms, scanning, re-interpreting scans into the forms and repeating. As more layers were added, the scans and forms became more interrupted. Their reliance on each other to reveal was broken. Influenced by Huberman's 'Four ways of stopping information' and the relationship between too much information, dispersed information, private information, and not enough information, Dunseath wanted to investigate if it was possible to make forms that were invisible or 'un-seeable' by the scanner, whilst attempting to consciously undo information and physically re-present virtual information – to break the system of what was known.

From this she established an important position and was interested to see if the forms could be representative of the collaborative process, continually being interrupted and if it is possible to make the seen unseen? Was it possible to make a form that the scanner couldn't read? Was

it possible to make work that couldn't be documented or photographed? What is the relationship between image and form? Was it possible to make work with multiple participants and agendas?

Dunseath became interested in how the collaborative process echoed with learning new skills and questioning what you think you know. She concluded the collaborative process was akin to Huberman's 'Naïve Set Theory' where withdrawal and deliberate vagueness stopped the easy flow of information, and actively encouraged incomprehension through ambiguity. She was less interested in confronting neo-liberalism than finding new ways of looking and opening up space in a discursive way – a desire to examine accepted conventions and simply ask 'why do we do it like that?'

Dunseath's aim was to make the objects un-scanable, un-readable by the archaeologist's equipment, and incomprehensible from their origins. The collaborative process was both tremendously difficult and simultaneously liberating. The objects that were being made were vehicles for the interactions between artists.