



**School: Bath School of Design**

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**Project Title: Formal Legacies**

**UOA: 32 - Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory**

## 300-Word Statement

*Formal Legacies* embody Shaker craft qualities, aesthetics, historical community and ideology, through formal, functional, ethical, and visual language, seeking to span an anachronistic divide between art and design practice. In 2015, faced with internationally escalating, divisive populist politics, this seemed of particular socio-political and cultural resonance.

Philosophical metaphors of seat and table are explored through contemporary construction of two iconic designs, and their photographic, oral/written, discursive, representation. The project re-examines modes of cultural engagement at a time when *digital* participation is pre-eminent. This hybrid of media is used as a proxy lens for examining European and American antecedence, and asks:

1. What is the link between an object's cultural circumstances, the value of the craft process, individual touch and construction?
2. What influence does photographic, oral and written representation bring to these objects?
3. In which ways are contemporary sensibilities shaped by Shaker design?

This reconstruction of *The Shaker Settee* (2016), based on specifications from *The Book of Shaker Furniture*, [Kassay. J.1980] was photographed periodically in conventional monochrome, and ultimately pictured in a constructed landscape of American Maples and Pines at Westonbirt Arboretum. The combined works were exhibited at the American Museum, Bath 2016, where a model for the *The Occasional Table* (2017) was seen and subsequently reconstructed. Discourse was instigated by presenting a participating writer, photographer, artist, designer, ceramicist with the table's plywood case in a chosen environment. Topics have spanned the traditions of well dressing, whittling, uncanny links to the Bauhaus, Quaker Meetings and grounded boats. The site of each discussion is digitally photographed.

By highlighting a network of ideological migrations from Europe - to America - to Europe, the project extricates mythologies and contemporary value. Cultural interconnections are exposed in these exchanges, through objects, photographs and discussions. Like archaeological relics, they reveal myriad veins of idiomatic interplay.