

Curatorial Rationale.

Home, an exhibition set in the ruins of the New Slains Castle.

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Synopsis:

This writing is the Curatorial Rationale for an exhibition titled *Home*, which will be held in the ruins of the New Slains Castle on the east Aberdeenshire Coast, an empty shell that contains memories and traces from its past, making it as relevant to the topic as the artworks showcased within it. The subjective notions of home and the sense of home will be the main aspects addressed in this exhibition. This will be done partly by analysing theorists such as Gaston Bachelard and Daniel Miller, that explore the way we perceive the spaces we inhabit and how our homes are created by narratives and symbolic dimensions present in both material and immaterial elements.

Drawing on research from Claire Bishop's Participation, Sherry Turkle's Evocative Objects and the works of artist Rirkrit Tiravanija and architect Daniel Libeskind, the exhibition will reject the notion of the viewer as a mere spectator of the artworks, encouraging the visitors to become participants and immerse themselves in their own feelings, memories and silences, constructing their own vision of home. The sense of home will be explored through three different notions that will showcase and create an experience with and around the chosen artworks that in one way or other explore our relationship and our attachments to physical space and objects. The chosen artists are: Gerry Judah, Chiharu Shiota, Rachael Whiteread, Do Ho Suh, Paula Zuccotti and Nele Azevedo.

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Site and diagram for the exhibition:



Figure I. New Slains Castle Aerial view. 2006

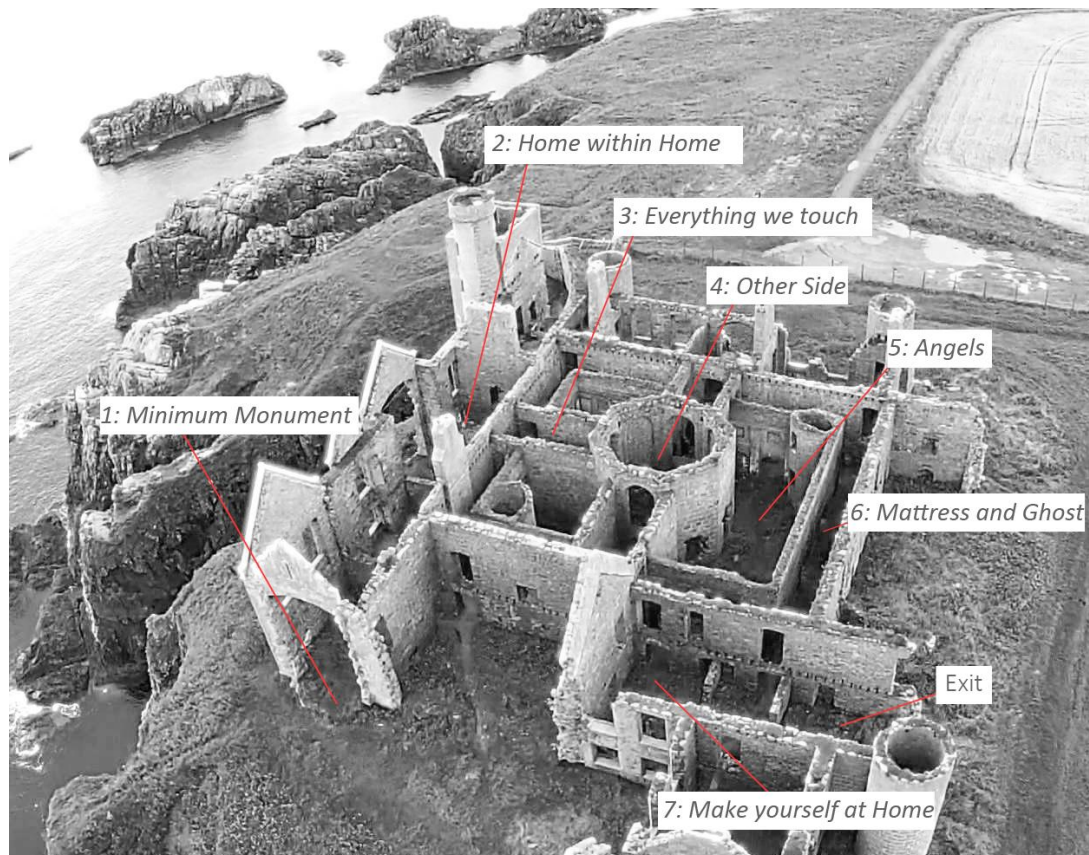


Figure II. Diagram of the exhibition. 2016

Introduction:

'Je suis l'espace où je suis'. (I am the space where I am).¹

Home and the sense of home have many definitions and connotations on a personal level. When a space becomes inhabited it starts to live humanly, acquiring the physical and moral energy of a human body, becoming part of us, becoming a home.² Homes contain unique embedded narratives that can be "read" through material as well as immaterial elements. The way we perceive the spaces we inhabit, and how our homes and objects shape our thoughts, memories and dreams are the main aspects addressed in this Curatorial Rationale. These notions of the sense of home will be examined in chapter one by making use of Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* and material culture sources such as Daniel Miller's *The Comfort of Things*. These sources analyse the connections between spaces, objects and human emotions, and although they are from different contexts and perspectives, they contain a lot of similarities, becoming essential sources that will be drawn from throughout this Rationale.

This Curatorial Rationale is highly influenced by my own studio practice which involves a great interest in creating an experience for the user in the space, and therefore I aim to curate the exhibit in a way that is not centred on showcasing the artworks as objects but in creating an experience with and around them. This aspect, alongside the subjective nature of the notion of home, will be translated into the form of a participatory exhibition, in which there is no definitive interpretation, and in which the viewer is no longer just a viewer, but becomes a participant. The curatorial theory of participatory exhibition practice will be explored further in chapter two using Claire Bishop's *Participation* and Sherry Turkle's *Evocative Objects* as key sources that examine the way we perceive artworks and objects in general. This will also be addressed

¹Arnau, Noël and Bucaille, Max, *L'état d'ébauche*, (Paris: le Messager boiteux de Paris, 1950),p.23

² Bachelard, Gaston, *The Poetics of Space*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p.54

through an analysis of the works of Rirkrit Tiravanija and Daniel Libeskind's Extension to the Jewish Museum in Berlin as examples that recognize the viewer as a participant in their work.

The three main aspects that will be explored in a metaphorical way throughout the exhibition are: 'Presence', 'Absence' and 'Trace'. These notions will be linked to the artworks of the following chosen artists: Nele Azevedo, Do Ho Suh, Paula Zuccotti, Chiharu Shiota, Gerry Judah and Rachael Whiteread. The artists selected for the exhibition have a very different approach in terms of media and also context to the way they interpret the relationship between people, spaces and objects. Some explore the notion of home directly (Do Ho Suh, Paula Zuccotti and Rachel Whiteread), while others have been chosen because of the subjective nature of their work (Nele Azevedo, Chiharu Shiota and Gerry Judah), which translates into the fact that the exhibition is meant for individual interpretation. The way that the chosen artworks come together and link to the three aspects showcased will be detailed in the description of the exhibition in chapter three.

The site chosen for the exhibition is the 16th century New Slains Castle, standing on the edge of the cliffs on the east Aberdeenshire coast and built by the Earldom of Erroll for family occupancy.³ The building conserved its domestic use up until the 1920s when the site was declared derelict and included in the list of buildings at risk in Scotland.⁴ The castle now stands as an empty shell, exposed to the wind, sea and silence, anonymous in spirit. The architectural publication *Second Hand Spaces* suggests that the value of second hand items lies in the time with which they have been embedded, and supports the idea of "recycling" these abandoned spaces. The narratives embedded within them become manifestations of stories that allow us to draw certain elements from the

³ Abandoned Scotland, 'Exploring Buchanan Castle', 2014, URL:
<http://www.abandonedscotland.com/Explores/buchanan-castle/>, (accessed 10 October 2016)

⁴ Buildings at risk, 'Slains Castle, Cruden Bay', 2014, URL:
<http://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/details/903870>, (accessed 9 October 2016)

previous uses such as traces, atmosphere and remains.⁵ The notion of spaces and objects containing traces of memories, which is explored further in this Rationale, is one that revolves around the sense of home and that therefore makes the site as relevant as the artworks exhibited within it.

⁵Ziehl, Michael, Obwald, Sarah, Hasemann, Oliver, and Schnier, Daniel, *Second hand spaces* (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2012), p.435

Chapter 1:

In this introductory chapter, the aspects of house and particularly the one of home will be contrasted and explored making reference to material culture theorists such as Daniel Miller and philosopher Gaston Bachelard, both of whom have explored the relationship between spaces, objects and human emotions.

From an architectural point of view, a house can be understood as a physical construction that contains narratives of culture and civilization that help shape and rearrange patterns of human association and community.⁶ Houses are conventional spaces with a designated number of street and floor, which we fill with furniture and paintings; they constitute something physical that we shape and pad to our own measure. As soon as these spaces become inhabited, they contain customs and conventions of the particular culture as well as the people and their belongings; they begin to live humanly, transcending the three dimensional aspect of a house.⁷ The spaces and the elements present within them, such as our everyday objects, start to contain embedded narratives and cultural biographies that become an expression of who and what we are.⁸ Therefore, a home can be appropriately defined from a material culture point of view as an emotional space that contains personal symbolic and material dimensions. Even though the sense of home as such is not a tangible object, it can be considered material because it is fixed in space and objects, enduring through time.

The notion of our homes being determined by a set of human practices has been one widely analyzed from different perspectives. One of the most inspiring readings I found in reference to the home is *The Poetics of Space* by Gaston Bachelard. Even though it is not contemporary, its poetical take on the subject makes it a relevant source for this

⁶ Dant, Tim, *Material culture in the social world* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1999), p.61

⁷ Dant, Tim, *Material culture in the social world* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1999), p.64

⁸ Appadurai, Arjun, *The social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p.10

Rationale. Bachelard suggests that our homes can be "read", and therefore, rooms within rooms and rooms within houses become psychological diagrams: by hearing and looking at them we can do an analysis of intimacy.⁹ Within his writing, he includes a passage of French historian Jules Michelet, who presents an interesting comparison between the notions of house and home, relating them to a bird's nest: 'A tree becomes a nest the moment a great dreamer hides in it'.¹⁰ This quotation suggests that birds build their nests in trees with their own bodies, in a similar way that we build our homes with the emotional connections we establish with spaces and objects. We mould our homes with our own touches, from the inside outwards, adapting them to ourselves. This intimate space equals to our well-being, and if we're offered an unknown space that we don't belong in, we are likely to refuse it.¹¹ This passage along with Bachelard's writing, emphasizes the notion that our homes are personal to each of us: they become our corner of the world, protecting our dreams, becoming a space where we can wonder and imagine in peace.

The idea of spaces being "read" is also one that has great relevance in the writings of material culture theorist Daniel Miller. Even though Gaston Bachelard and Daniel Miller belong to different contextual frames and their publications were written more than a hundred years apart, it became of great interest to me to find that they share a lot of similarities in relation to the topic of home. In *The Comfort of Things*, Miller suggests that a house becomes a home when it undertakes a process of symbolization, and therefore we shape our homes in particular ways, but we forget why or how they came to be, and what the relationship between the outside world and the inner self is.¹² He takes this idea into practice by visiting different homes, and in a similar way to Bachelard's suggestion, he does an analysis of intimacy of people's lives by "reading" the spaces and objects that they interact with. In his book *Material Culture: Why some*

⁹Bachelard, Gaston, *The Poetics of Space*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p.83

¹⁰ Michelet, Jules, *L'oiseau*, (Paris: Librairie de L. Hachette et Cle, 1861), p.50

¹¹Michelet, Jules, *L'oiseau*, (Paris: Librairie de L. Hachette et Cle, 1861), p.50

¹² Miller, Daniel, *The comfort of things* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), p.54

things matter, he describes how these homes belong and relate to completely different personalities, once more drawing on the idea that we each build our own particular sense of home.¹³

This initial research leads me to conclude that the nature of the topic is extremely subjective and personal. It would suggest that coming up with a general definition for the sense of home is impossible, given that it is unique to each of us. As a result, the way that this notion could be presented to the public in the form of an exhibition lends itself to a challenge that could be addressed through the following queries:

Is Home determined by the spaces we inhabit? Is Home present in the objects that we use? Is Home merely constructed out of memories? And if so, how do we re-construct these? These are some of the questions that I hope to not necessarily answer, but to explore further in this Curatorial Rationale, starting in the next chapter by analyzing possible ways of showcasing these aspects in an exhibition.

¹³ Miller, Daniel, *Material culture: Why some things matter* (London: UCL Press, 1988), p.12

Chapter 2:

Social psychologist Sherry Turkle in *Evocative Objects* suggests that we all relate to objects and spaces in a personal way, reacting individually to a set of circumstances. The individual is bound to supply his own existential credentials, a defined culture, and a set of tastes and personal inclinations and prejudices which are peculiarly his own. It could be said that we think with objects and spaces in order to think ourselves, and as we evoke meanings from them we become their willing subjects. Therefore the original artifacts are modified by the individual's particular perspectives.¹⁴

The way in which this notion will be showcased in the exhibition is essential and requires careful consideration; for this purpose I have analysed several cases that have informed my choices, parting from the ideas present in Claire Bishop's *Participation*. I considered it essential that the exhibit and the artworks presented constitute open works that the viewers are free to interpret and bring to conclusion as they wish.¹⁵ It should be up to them to discover and construe their own vision of home. To facilitate this, the artworks included should act as evocative objects, rejecting the idea of a concluded message and multiplying the formal possibilities of the interpretations. By doing this, the artworks will be soliciting the visitor to be their subjects, and in turn, the author of their meaning, at least for a little while.¹⁶

Putting this idea into practice rejects the notion of the viewer as a passive observer, which has been a widely analysed subject within curatorial practices.¹⁷ Jacques Rancière discusses this topic in his book *The Emancipated Spectator* in which he presents the 'Paradox of the spectator', which states that mere spectating reduces the viewer to the

¹⁴ Turkle, Sherry, *Evocative objects* (London: MIT Press, 2007), p.230

¹⁵ Eco, Umberto, *The Open Work* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), p.21

¹⁶ Caroline A. Jones in Turkle, Sherry, *Evocative objects* (London: MIT Press, 2007), p.242

¹⁷ Bishop, Claire, *Participation* (London: Whitechapel and MIT Press, 2006), p.150

role of passive observer in which he is held in a state of ignorance. He defends that we need a "theatre" with active participants who are removed from this position of observer. The viewers must be encouraged to select, compare and interpret, composing their own poem with the elements before them. Once the spectators become active as interpreters, the division between active and passive disappears, inviting everyone to appropriate the work for themselves, making use of these in ways that their author might never have dreamed possible.¹⁸

Many artists, including Rirkrit Tiravanija, which I found most relevant to include in my writing, have put this idea into practice in their own work. Rirkrit creates participatory installations which primarily question the role that visitors have in relation to artworks and gallery spaces, and how their behaviour can be modified. His installation *Make yourself at home*, recreates his own apartment, opening his home and by extension opening himself, by inviting the viewers to make the space their own. This piece could be classified as a participatory performance, in which the viewer becomes the participant and consequently the maker of the art, constructing its meaning through use; if they don't make use of the space, the work has no life at all.¹⁹

This notion of participation has also been put into practice parting from the architectural aspect that we are never only observers of a building, we become participants in the life of it.²⁰ A relevant example that applies this idea of a building as an experience is Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum extension in Berlin. His design is devoted to the spatial enactment of the philosophical issue of showcasing a memory. To do this he makes use of process-architecture, in which the building represents the search for meaning, and is always on the verge of becoming, rather than suggesting a

¹⁸ Rancière, Jaques, *The Emancipated Spectator* (London: Verso, 2009), p.13

¹⁹ Rebecca Stokes, 'Rirkrit Tiravanija: Cooking Up an Art Experience', 2012, URL: https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2012/02/03/rirkrit-tiravanija-cooking-up-an-art-experience, (accessed 5 November 2016)

²⁰ Littlefield, David and Lewis-Wiley, Saskia, *Architectural voices- listening to old buildings*, (Great Britain: Academy, 2007), p.98

final solution. The building becomes an artwork itself, in which the voids, absences and silences are "constructed" as open narratives, made to be experienced.²¹ Instead of merely housing the collection as a regular museum/ gallery space would do, it seeks to provide a new insight for the visitors, leaving the philosophical aspect open to individual interpretation.²²

The notion of the viewer becoming part of the exhibition by participating in it relates directly to the subjective aspect of home and therefore seems to me like the most logical curatorial practice to apply in this case. Therefore, the aim of this exhibition is not to create a conclusive interpretation for the viewers to accept, but rather to reject this notion, designing a spatial experience open to unique conception. Curating an exhibition as a spatial experience rather than as a container of objects is something that appeals greatly to the participatory aspect of this Rationale, but also to my own studio practice, in which the user's spatial experience is something fundamental in every one of my projects.

Home showcases three different aspects that are interconnected between themselves and with the artworks. These three notions are represented in a metaphorical way, creating experiences with and around the chosen contemporary art pieces, forcing the visitors to participate and in this way allowing them to interpret their own sense of home: Now it's up to them to discover their own stories, their relationship to space, time and material.

²¹ Bothe, Rolf, *Aus den Berliner Museen: Antike und außereuropäische Hochkulturen*, (Berlin: Presse- und Informationsamt des Landes Berlin, 1977), p.169

²² Libeskind, Daniel, *Between the Lines: Extension to the Berlin Museum, with the Jewish Museum*, (Berlin: the MIT Press, 1990), p.63

Chapter 3: *Home*.

Home is an exhibition designed to be experienced by each visitor, taking them on a journey through their own feelings, memories and silences. The visitors will enter individually but exit as a group since the final participatory piece will require everyone to be present. *Home* aims to create a narrative through different settings and artworks, building up a notion of home through three different aspects in which all the artworks are meant to be participatory, some not in an obvious way, but rather in the sense that the visitors are encouraged to make their own interpretations. The aspects that divide the exhibition are 'Presence', 'Absence' and 'Trace'.

'Presence' refers to the sense of home being made tangible, in the form of material objects and spaces. In 'Absence', the sense of home is made intangible by emphasizing the fact that even though the space or objects are not there anymore the memories and traces don't disappear. And finally, 'Trace' refers to the mark that we leave on spaces and objects and that they in return leave on us.



Figure III. Nele Azevedo, *Minimum Monument*, 2001

The first participative installation that the visitor will encounter is inspired by Nele Azevedo's *Minimum Monument* installed at different locations around the world since 2005. This piece consists of hundreds of ice sculptures that are placed by passers-by and are left to melt, leaving only physical evidence if the process is recorded through photography or video.²³ The reading of the artwork is open, and is placed as the first to symbolize the fact that the whole exhibition will only have meaning if the viewers immerse themselves in it: the viewers are the makers. Since the exhibition is non-invigilated, visitors are free to place as many sculptures as they want and free to sit and watch them melting away before their eyes. The ephemeral process of the melting of the ice represented with perishable bodies will become a metaphor of the later addressed aspect of 'Trace'. It also introduces the main notion explored throughout the exhibition: the material and immaterial traces we leave on objects and spaces.

Part one: 'Presence'.

Addressing the sense of home from a tangible, material point of view is the main focus of the first part of the exhibition, 'Presence'. When we own and use objects and spaces, we increase their human dignity, they aspire to a higher degree of reality than those that are indifferent to us, those that are merely defined and perceived as geometric realities.²⁴ We can reconstruct memories from an object and a space through our care and devotion to it. But how can we ask questions about things that cannot speak for themselves? Objects and spaces surely don't talk, or do they? Perhaps if we can learn to listen to these things we will have access to an authentic other voice.²⁵

²³ Jodie A. Shull, 'Made to disappear: Nele Azevedo's minimum monument', URL: <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=edca5f53-f5fb-4f18-99f5-cf1b9c4bc28b%40sessionmgr106&vid=1&hid=121>, (accessed 23 October 2016)

²⁴ Bachelard, Gaston, *The Poetics of Space*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p. 83

²⁵ Miller, Daniel, *The comfort of things* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), p.2



Figure IV. Do Ho Suh, *Home Within Home*, 2013

After experiencing *Minimum Monument*, the visitor is presented with a very different experience, invited into someone's home and memories. *Home within home* represents two of Do Ho Suh's homes, the outer layer corresponding to his home in Rhode island, and the inner layer to his Korean traditional family home²⁶. This installation deals with the impossibility of fixity, motivated by the artist's own displacement but also by the broader philosophical displacement of the 21st century.

'I don't want to sit down and cry for home, I just want to carry it with me all the time'.²⁷

Do Ho Suh considers personal space to be transformable and transportable; home is something you carry along with you in life, and is given endless layers of new meaning with time. The participants are invited to enter this domestic space, breaking the boundaries between the public and the private, with the possibility of imagining themselves in either of the spaces. Walking through his dreamy piece touches on an individual nostalgic emotion of personal memories and the fragility of these, emphasized by the use of translucent silk. *Home within Home* deals with the spaces we

²⁶ Nina Azzarello, 'Do ho suh constructs a home within a home at MMCA', 2013, URL: <http://www.designboom.com/art/do-ho-suh-constructs-a-home-within-a-home-at-mmca-11-19-2013/>, (accessed 2 October 2016)

²⁷ Art 21 'Do Ho Suh: 'Seoul Home/L.A. Home"—Korea and Displacement', 2011, URL: <http://www.art21.org/texts/do-ho-suh/interview-do-ho-suh-seoul-home-la-home-korea-and-displacement> (accessed 21 October 2016)

inhabit in a lifetime, and the sense of displacement that this can create given the deconstruction of memories. This artwork has a narrative embedded within it, and in the context of this exhibition it aims to conjure the vulnerability of home and the unreachable nature of the memories attached to this, but also emphasizes the fact that a home can take the form of tangible objects, in this case portable. *Home within Home* will be presented free standing in the ruins, emphasizing its presence and taking the visitor on a journey through someone else's and their own memories.

As well as through spaces, homes can be read through objects. These may be as personal to us as spaces, insignificant to some, significant to others.²⁸ Stories can be told through objects that we either own, consume, need or are unable to let go of. From a smart phone to soap, from spices to a spoon...can a collection of objects tell a bigger story?

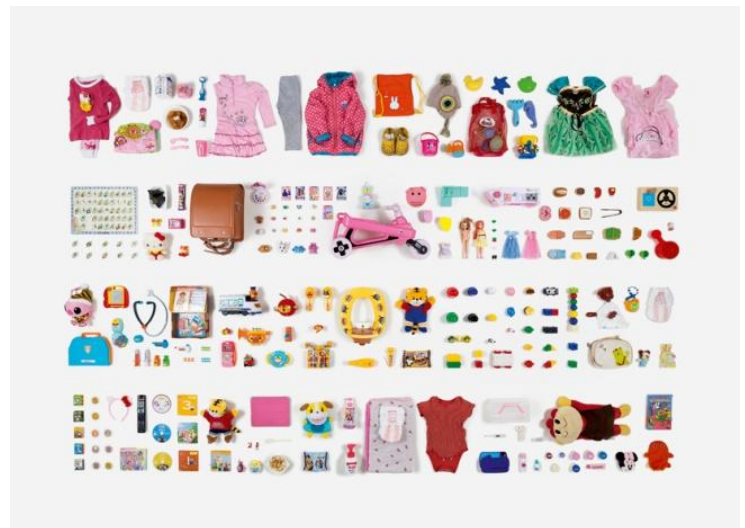


Figure V. Paula Zuccotti, *Everything we touch*, 2015

This different approach to the way that a home can be read is presented in Paula Zuccotti's *Everything we touch*. The artist questions whether objects can tell the story of our lives by asking people to collect every object that they touch and use in their everyday, creating what could be defined as a catalogue of a sentimental journey of people's lives.²⁹

²⁸ Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Judgement*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), p.145

The visitors will be presented with the photographs of the different collections of objects alongside a name and age, and from there they are left to interpret and imagine. Each setting is a mystery, a story, a moment in time, a world and a life reflected back to them; can they make sense of someone's life by only viewing the objects they interact with? For the purpose of the exhibition, *Everything we touch* is set in a blank canvas construction in the basic shape of a house, where all the furniture is painted white, as if absent from the space. This underlines the relevance of material culture and the fact that everyone can construct their unique sense of home from their personal objects, even if these are taken out of context.

The meaning of objects and spaces is not strictly determined by their form and function, but also by the way that they are woven into an individual's life course. Object and space narratives form a complex expanding web, each fragment of which gives meaning to all others.³⁰ This aspect is showcased in a transitional piece that leads the visitors from 'Presence' to 'Absence': *Other Side* by Chiharu Shiota.

Many of the objects found in Chiharu Shiota's installations represent human life and its desires and dreams. She utilizes these everyday objects to create connections between what is present and what is absent. For *Other Side* she uses doors which have been removed from their original frames and context. The space behind each door has been removed, is absent, creating an empty space, and is substituted by a claustrophobic and confusing labyrinth of black thread that represents the stories and memories that weave around everyday objects.

²⁹ Paula Zuccotti, 'Everything we touch, behind the scenes', 2015, URL: <http://paulazuccotti.com/behind-the-scenes>, (accessed 9 October 2016)

³⁰ Mitchell, W.J. in Turkle, Sherry, *Evocative objects* (London: MIT Press, 2007), p. 150



Figure VI. Chiharu Shiota, *Other Side*, 2013

The black thread used to secure these objects creates drawings in the space as a way to represent the connection between spaces, objects and human figures³¹. Chiharu Shiota doesn't aim to pin down a singular absolute meaning in her artworks, instead she makes it about the bodily experience, what we sense and feel within them. In this case, each door contains a different narrative behind it, and the dense labyrinth weaving around them tries to conserve the stories and memories that are waiting to be discovered. The doors suggest images of hesitation, desire and security, becoming a two-way symbol, a frontier between two worlds. The visitor has the option to open and walk through every door, entering a world of their own, or to simply circulate the installation avoiding them; once again, the artwork becomes what the visitor chooses to make of it. 'At the door of the house who will come knocking? An open door, we enter. A closed door, a den. The world's pulse beats beyond my door.'³²

³¹ MinorLits, 'Chiharu Shiota- Other Side', 2013, URL:

<https://minorliteratures.com/2013/11/19/interview-chiharu-shiota-other-side/>, (accessed October 16 2016)

³² Birot, Pierre Albert, *Les Amusements Naturels*, (Paris: Éditions Denöel, 1945), p 217

Part two: 'Absence'.

Until now, the visitors have experienced and interpreted their own sense of home from a material, tangible point of view. But what happens when these presences are no longer there? Can we still read narratives?³³

As explored previously through Chiharu Shiota's installation, the memories won't disappear just because the physical aspect isn't there anymore; the absence remains silent and unnamed, but not forgotten. We could even say that the object attains exceptional value only by virtue of its absence.³⁴

Presence through absence is the main notion explored in the second part of the exhibition.



Figure VII. Gerry Judah, *Angels*, 2006

³³ Turkle, Sherry, *Evocative objects* (London: MIT Press, 2007), p.143

³⁴ Baudrillard, Jean, *The system of objects* (London: Verso, 1996), p.99

The following installation that the visitor will encounter is Gerry Judah's *Angels*. This contemporary artist addresses absence from a spatial point of view, exploring the sense of what was once there but is there no longer.³⁵ He uses ruins to express the heavy sense of what ought to be there, as is also strongly depicted in the site used for this exhibition. The physical remains presented in the artwork become manifestations of stories that allow the visitors to "read" a space that is loaded with the traces of people's personal and collective memories. Faced with nothing, one's gaze is not returned, there is a loss of shape, absence leaches away the sense of being.³⁶ The ruins stripped from colour and humanity stare blankly back saying nothing, begging for interpretation, inviting the viewer to fill the gaps with imagined stories and memories³⁷.



Figure VIII. *Angels* placed in the courtyard of the New Slains Castle, 2016

³⁵ Judah, Gerry in Ziehl, Michael, Obwald, Sarah, Hasemann, Oliver, and Schnier, Daniel, *Second hand spaces* (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2012), p.435

³⁶ Miller, Daniel, *The comfort of things* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), p.2

³⁷ Littlefield, David and Lewis-Wiley, Saskia, *Architectural voices- listening to old buildings*, (Great Britain: Academy, 2007), p.101

Angels is originally a relatively small piece, but for the purpose of this exhibition, its scale is enlarged to be exhibited in the courtyard of the ruins, becoming part of the site and the elements. 'Absence' is strongly represented by the vastness and solitude of the space. As previously mentioned, the exhibition is not invigilated, and consequently the visitors can interact with the piece in the way they wish: touching, treading or merely observing the installation. *Angels* presents an unexplored world that contains memories and emotions within it, strongly emphasizing the notion that spaces and objects are evocative, and that their absence holds a vast structure of recollection.³⁸

The evocative aspect of the absence left by spaces and objects is also explored in the artwork that the visitor will come across shortly after exiting the courtyard.



Figure IX. Rachel Whiteread, *Untitled*, 1992



Figure X. Rachael Whiteread, *Ghost*, 1990

Rachel Whiteread sees a home as a haven of privacy and comfort where human needs and desires are fulfilled. Sheer human presence significantly affects these spaces, and when they are deserted and abandoned they become entirely different spaces that rapidly decay. However, the past use and occupancy will always remain on the surfaces, leaving a sense of humanity in the absence. Many of her artworks focus on the fact that materials and objects preserve human traces, having the capacity to accumulate their

³⁸ Susan Pollak in Turkle, Sherry, *Evocative objects* (London: MIT Press, 2007), p.228

own history which allows absence to become presence and space to become solid form. In order to preserve these past narratives, the objects are recorded in the form of casts that are then re-staged to discover the positive through the negative.³⁹ The casts of the objects are presented to the viewer, revealing a narrative, the object's past. The pieces chosen for the exhibition include *Untitled (Freestanding Bed)* and *Ghost* which both have a similar concept behind their realization: 'To redirect our gaze to that which was an absence, a void, the uncanny spaces beneath the surface of our everyday life.'⁴⁰

Part three: 'Trace'.

'Buildings and objects are containers, they hold in their skin the wear and tear that bears witness to the events that have taken place.

We leave our mark on buildings and objects and they in return leave their mark on us'.⁴¹

The artworks in the exhibition have already suggested this notion, exploring the relationship between presence, absence and that 'something else'. This aspect is neither presence or absence, but rather a combination of both or perhaps the absence of presence, trace. This last aspect of the exhibition will be showcased in the form of a collective participatory installation.

³⁹Whiteread, Rachel, *Rachael Whiteread: British Pavilion, XLVII, Venice Biennale 1997*, (London: British Council, 1997), p.31

⁴⁰ Houser, Craig, Dennison, Lisa, Deutsche Guggenheim, *Rachel Whiteread: transient spaces*, (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2001), p.23

⁴¹Littlefield, David and Lewis-Wiley, Saskia, *Architectural voices- listening to old buildings*, (Great Britain: Academy, 2007), p.228

On entering the last section, the visitors will be surprised to find themselves in an exact replica of the house used to exhibit *Everything we touch*, only this time the furniture within it can be used as it is no longer painted white and "absent" from the space. Inspired by Rirkrit Tiravanija's *Make yourself at home* discussed in chapter two, this domestic space is meant for a performance installation, in which the visitors become the makers of the art.⁴² The participants will be forced to stay for a determined period of time, in which they will decide whether or not to interact with the objects and people that surround them; they are free to make a cup of tea, watch television, or simply sit and chat at the table. At the end of the session, the physical traces left by the participants will be wiped away, and all that will remain are the memories of those who interacted with the installation, along with the narratives embedded in the objects and space. This process of wiping away the human presence aims to emphasize the ephemeral sense of home and represents the de-symbolization, the moment when a home is depicted from all symbolism to become a house once again.⁴³

A trace is left where something that was present has become absent. Through this participatory installation and in a similar way that happened with *Minimum Monument* and with the successive artworks, the visitors will have left their trace on the space and objects that constitute the exhibition, as these in return will have left their trace on them, not necessarily visible, but certainly present in its absence.

⁴² Stokes, Rebecca, 'Rirkrit Tiravanija cooks up an art experience', URL: https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2012/02/03/rirkrit-tiravanija-cooking-up-an-art-experience, (accessed 5 November 2016)

⁴³ Miller, Daniel, *Material culture: Why some things matter* (London: UCL Press, 1988), p.13

Conclusion:

By analysing material culture and philosophical aspects that concern the notion of home throughout this Rationale, the idea was formed that the sense of home is created by narratives and symbolic dimensions. These reflect individual customs and emotional connections created with spaces and objects, and consequently the notion of home will never be general to all. These aspects were explored mainly through the ideas of Gaston Bachelard and Daniel Miller, reasserting their importance as the main sources in this Rationale. The curation of *Home* has contributed to this fact, and has therefore lead me to reach a further understanding and to re-affirm my position: a conclusive definition for the terms home and sense of home cannot be reached, we each construe our own through material and immaterial elements. Given these factors, *Home* by no means aims to offer answers to the questions posed earlier in the Rationale, but rather invites the visitor of the exhibition to shape their own unique vision on the topic. This has been allowed through the participative engagement with the artworks, that have offered the opportunity to contemplate on the subjective and ephemeral aspects of home.

Drawing on references from the theories of participation of Claire Bishop, the evocative aspects of objects of Sherry Turkle and the case studies of participatory art and architecture, the exhibition is curated in the form of a narrative that takes the visitor through a series of experiences and emotions. Therefore, it is not limited to visual appreciation, but goes beyond this, engaging the visitors with the space and the artworks. By becoming part of the exhibition, the spectator becomes an active participant, especially in *Minimum Monument* by Nele Azevedo and *Make Yourself at Home* by Rirkrit Tiravanija, where the visitors are the actual "makers" of the art. Each participant will leave the exhibition having experienced a whole range of different emotions that will be unique to themselves. In order to capture these experiences and thoughts that could serve for further research and publications, the visitors will be interviewed after leaving the exhibition.

Creating this participatory experience has involved a great deal of exploration and analysis in order to find the most relevant artists that, even though belong to different contexts and ways of working, could come together to define the different notions of 'Presence', 'Absence' and 'Trace'. These aspects may not have become so obvious to the visitor whilst immersed in the exhibition, as the transitions are made subtly and are not meant to offer a definitive conclusion, but they became of great use as a method to facilitate the curation and selection of the site and the artworks included.

Home not only engages the audience, but also engages the historical and contextual aspects of the site in which it takes place. Even though the New Slains Castle still stands as a reminder of its past, its ruinous state demonstrates its demise. By using this appropriated space to curate an exhibition involving the immersion of the visitors, a new narrative has been created that will remain embedded and that will hopefully have drawn attention to its abandoned state. By housing this exhibition, the ruins have returned the castle to its previous use even if it was just for a short period of time; the site has become a home for *Home*.

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