

Home As Archive - Event Transcript

Event begins

Title Slide: Pink background with white text that reads *“Home as Archive: Presented in collaboration with Essex Book Festival & Metals Culture, Southend. EWF logo and festival dates are in the lower right corner”*

Video One: Katerina Bryant

Welcome to Home as Archive. My name is Katerina and I will be a host and artist this evening.

To begin, I would like to acknowledge the first nations and Traditional Owners of the land we are broadcasting from – I am currently on Kaurna land, where I live and write. I pay my respects to Elders past and present, and, as this is an online recording whose reach is far, to the Elders of the lands this recording might reach.

For this event, we will be discussing home, spaces and histories. This is part of the wonderful EWF and is presented in collaboration with Essex Book Festival & Metal Culture, Southend.

Tonight, we will be witnessing work by artists working between so-called Australia and Essex, England. They will be sharing artefacts from the archives of their personal histories.

I anticipate there will be an intimacy tonight as we will be peering into these artists' homes. Where we live and, who and what we share those spaces with, is intimate and vulnerable. In some ways the past year has allowed us to peer into each other's homes over Zoom, but in others it has separated us from sharing space with people we cherish. I'd love to frame tonight as not only a look into these artist's homes and lives but the creation of our own archive – capturing this moment through place and objects.

So please join me in welcoming the artists featured tonight:

- Blown Fuse Theatre
- M G Boulter
- Ana Maria Gomides
- Steven Lawes
- Delaine Le Bas
- Jazz Money
- Anne Odeke
- Tasnim Sammak
- Adam Thompson

Title Slide: Purple background with white text that reads *“Katerina Bryant”*

Video Two: Katerina Bryant

Hi again. To introduce myself more fully, I'm Katerina Bryant.

I am currently sitting in front of my bookshelf, which I love as it is vibrant and colourful. I am wearing a red shirt.

I am a writer and PhD student whose work focuses on archives, disability and women. My first book, *Hysteria*, came out last year and engages with my own lived experience of mental illness and women's history of illness. I am currently working on my PhD which is about the first woman clown in America.

My work is connected to archives and because of this, I am particularly interested in alternative ideas of what archives can be (so, for example, homes!). I am also very aware of the biases and silences within 'traditional' archives.

I think because my work is very archive-based and working from home and living with a chronic illness, very home-based, I found it difficult to decide what I'd share tonight. I thought about the red wattle tree outside my office window, one I only seem to look at when my work is not going well - the distress I've managed to imbue into a living thing that does not care at all about my writing!

I thought about my living room - maybe my couch where I've spent so many hours in pain or shattered, with my dog resting her chin on my stomach. But to move into that space, I felt, was too intimate. Moving work from outside this room into another felt like a boundary I was not ready to cross. Funny, when so much of my work is deeply personal.

So tonight, in my office and in front of my bookshelf and I have chosen an item that is always nearby when I work. Yet, it is not less meaningful than a tree or a couch. It holds onto history in that way objects do.

I will be talking about a white hand painted plate. To run my fingers along its surface, I can feel the bumps of the paint and where it switches from matte to gloss. The paint itself is vibrant. Blue, red, green, yellow. In the centre are two peacocks facing one another. It takes a few minutes of looking to realise they're peacocks by the large plume of feathers coming out of their backs. Their faces and necks look more like a blue swan. Their beaks too long and pointed. Their feet are drawn in black and look like upside down pitch forks. The more time I look at the plate, the more I notice. How the colours of the paint blur outside the lines. How there are more blue swirls on the top half of the plate's border than the bottom.

On the back of the plate, it tells me what I already know. Handmade. It's inscribed with where it was made. Rhodes.

Above the writing is a hole that's been drilled with a small piece of faded blue wire looped through. The wire looks like the type you'd find holding together a bread bag.

This plate is small and inexpensive but, for me, it's a piece of home. It first belonged to my Big Yia Yia – a woman whom I loved deeply. She died when I was young, but I still remember her presence. Her height, the way Mum would drive past a giant giraffe statue on the way to her home. How she lived in the suburb I do now – she came to Australia in the last years of her life. I often imagine what that would have been like. We communicated in ways that were uniquely our own. She spoke Greek, almost no English. I knew only. Σε αγαπώ. *I love you.* And καληνυχτα. *Good night.*

Mum told me this plate hung, with many others, on her kitchen wall. When I said it to you it was white, that was half true. It is half white, half ivory. The oil from her kitchen is baked onto its lower half. I've wiped it down, but the colour remains. I don't wish to strip this away though. This imprint of her. A small part of the story of where this plate has been.

I do not know but I imagine this plate came with her from Greece. It was made in Rhodes. Where my family is from. I have been once as a teenager and remember only a little. The dust and sand melding into one. Feeling sweat run down my arms on a bumpy bus ride. The Rhodes I know is more in my family's imagining. The stories Mum tells me about the time she spent there as a teenager. Dirt floors, no running water. Family lore. Big Yia yia's sons – the ones who came to Australia died young. Those who stayed in Greece lived into their 80s, 90s.

I realise this is a lot for a single plate to hold. It makes me think of visiting an archive, a museum. Small white cards with descriptions printed. All of the history lost when we condense a plate down to a material or date.

Thanks for your time tonight.

Title Slide: Green background with white text that reads "Jazz Money"

Video Three: Jazz Money

Marang yariya nginyalgi (good evening everyone). Yuwindhu Jazz (my name is Jazz). Wiradjuri yinaa baladhu (I am a Wiradjuri woman). Gadigal ngurambang warra-nha (Standing on Gadigal country).

Hello, good evening. Welcome to my home. It's on beautiful Gadigal land in the place now known as Sydney. I want to pay my respects to the custodians of this land who have cared for it, protected it, nurtured it, sung it and danced it since the first sunrise. These lands, and skies, and waters have always been Aboriginal land. This is Gadigal land, and beyond the mountains on the other side is my homelands full of plains and rivers. I want to acknowledge the Wiradjuri elders who continue to care for me and my kin.

Welcome to my home. It's lovely to have you. It's evening time. It's winter now, and so it's a nice time to have coziness. I'm very lucky to live here. Home to me means different things. It's the place I am right now, it's wherever my mum is, and it's also a place that I've never lived; along the Murrumbidgee in Southern Wiradjuri country where my homelands are, where my family have lived since forever.

I grew up moving a lot. We were renters, and every year or two the homeowner would decide to sell or move back, or our circumstances would change and off we'd go again.

My mama is incredible at setting up a house and transforming it into a home. After just a few days, it would feel like we'd always been there. Everything would be settled, and perfect, and feel just right. I like to think that I inherited that trait. I still move quite often; every year or so. In fact, I just counted before. I'm 29 and I've lived in 28 houses, which feels like a lot. There was a space in my mid twenties where I think I moved 15 times in less than five years.

But for me, home has never been the walls, and the roof, and the location. Home has always been about the people and the contents, the objects that become indispensably precious, the things that when you unpack them, instantly the room feels like it's been with you all along. Objects that are full of memories and meaning. I don't think there's a thing in my home that doesn't have sentiment attached. There's nothing here accidentally.

Now, I live with my partner in the most grownup house of my life, I think, and together we're filling it with memories and objects that we bring with us; the things that have led us to this point. And together, we're feeling this house with memories of our own. As we make a home together, we bring in objects that fill us both with joy. Now we have a dog and this beautiful, safe, domestic life that feels really precious. And even though we'll pack up and go; maybe this year, maybe next, who knows; it matters to me that for as long as we're here, it's a safe home. It's a beautiful home, and it's one filled with joy. And hopefully in the future, there will be babies, and a house in the bush, and a backyard, and birdsong. But for now, we live in the city and it is a strange thing, but a beautiful thing in its own way. And I feel very lucky to be here. Thank you, mandaang guwu, have a beautiful night.

Title Slide: Blue background with white text that reads "Steve Lawes"

Video Four: Steve Lawes

I am from an island

Where human habitation

Has lasted for millennia

and now houses three nations

The island is littered

With abandoned villages

And ancient stone circles

Which are our inheritance

Many gods have occupied it

And sacrifices here been made

Look in any lake or stream or bog

To find tools from the iron age

the rituals of people past

remain under our dirt

like stepping on a hidden drain

fingers crossed in the earth

I'd like to have been an archive
Of unwritten ancient scriptures
But these stories were suppressed
By Roman Imperialism

Followed by the destruction
Of their pagan religions
By Christ the Saviour on the cross
And the Christian mission

Who knows what they were doing
When they erected all those stones
And barrows to consecrate the dead
4000 years ago

The builders of the henges,
The Beakers and the Celts
All lived here, died here left without
Their voices being felt

by us who then succeeded
After many thousands of years
Passing tales from father to son
From heart, to mouth, to ear

I'm bitter cos the stories
I would like to know are gone
Oral traditions vanish
When the speakers lose their tongues

Being British is sort of like

Having a vision but no eyes
Some memories have grown foggy
And others left to die

I'm at odds when I go to Ireland
The birthplace of my Gran
She's old now, devoutly Christian
And she's severed from her land

She hasn't spoke her language
for 60 odd years
She once said a few words to me
but in jest like a party trick

She walked to school without shoes
And lived from mouth to hand
But she never knew what came before
Tuatha de Danann

No knowledge of the old gods
of Lugh, Danu, Cu Chulainn
Boann, Manannan, Og
Balor, Dagda, Etain

Our collective cultural memory
Was stolen by imperialists
And those who committed this great crime
Are modern day monopolists

The Earls and the Marquesses
Assembled in our parliament
Are now part of the political parties

And by descent are partly French

Astor, Courtenay, Seymour

Chartres and Montagu

Garnier, Colville, Goddard, Rennard

Dannatt, to name a few

Descendants of Norman barons

The ancient aristocrats

Who came here to build Castles

And now we all live in flats

We're writing rhymes in the maisonettes

Since the days of rewinding tape cassettes

These days we just say it, Alexa plays it

like radio stations take requests

we've lost our capability

of memory of a different kind

Caesar said the Druids

Spent 20 years to learn their lines

They passed on myth and history

From their lips to their communities

They knew secrets of the nature

of truth and life and unity

I'm miffed when I consider

The losses that were made

To the cultural richness of the world

Under the Roman blade

But it's a double-edged sword
writing brings the possibility
Of memory stretching into
Forever and eternity

The monks of Iceland and Ireland
Wrote down the sagas and the myths
Which provide our only glimpse
Into the tales of Celts and Vikings

Maybe it's having these kids around
Or maybe it's the things that I've thinking about
But I've never felt closer to the living ground
I want to learn about where I'm living now

I've been researching heritage
Cos I think that I could benefit
From knowing where the hell it is
My relatives find their genesis

And I've always romanticised
Being a solitary and artist
Of reading, thinking, singing psalms
And this year I've had the chance

To test it with some impunity
The state told me to stay indoors
I'm not one to disagree
with something I'd enjoy

I've spent the months just making things
And uncovering stones to look

Turning the pages of history
And next I'll be binding books

I've honed some skills and made impressions
On my brain folds that ain't moved
I was a moody prepubescent
Learnt some lessons and improved

Now I'm a teacher but my sessions
Are delivered over Zoom
See I've completed my one mission
To make my living from my room

Find me minding my own business,
Making my business out of my mind
Taking lessons when I get them
Reading from the books I buy

I'm the Abbot of this cloister
Sole trader, my own employer
Aint going out unless I'm needed
Like a pearl inside an oyster

I'm like the Druid, Brahman, Shaman
I won't re-enter the village
Until the drama of the spirit world
Looks like it's overflowing

I'm sitting between the wisdom
of improving where I'm living
and going missing with the spirits
through the kaleidoscopic prism

I want to be a conduit
For faeries, nymphs and fae
Like Ogham but in Roman tongue
A glimpse into the Sidhe

I'm monastic about my time to write
And draw, illuminations
I spend days sat at the desk
In silence with my ruminations

Sat in my Scriptorium
Laptop as a palimpsest
I will be victorious
Tapping at my lamp lit desk

I've drawn and wrote since I was small
And now I'm binding pages
I want my work to resonate
With people through the ages

Like those I've seen before me
On this island I call mine
Connect with me in a place
I cannot yet define

Creation is mimicry
of higher purpose
its not a choice, more like a curse
Turning cursive into verses

That's why I've built an altar

Next to my bed, call it a desk
So my heart can be an archive
Of all the things I've read

And I can take them from my head
And put them onto paper
Then litter them around the house,
And call myself creator.

Title Slide: Pink background with white text that reads "Anne Odeke"

Video Five: Anne Odeke

It's jumping out of bed, because I forgot to put the bins out the night before,
It's then realising, *'Wait! It's only Tuesday and they come on a Wednesday, right?'*
It's the laugh I make out loud because – it's ok, now I'm up, I might as well pop to the bakery,
It's the stroll to the top of the road, passing the man with the big nose, and the woman
whose self-tan means she's practically luminous
Yes – but where are you from?

It's the, *'Since I've now got time, I can take the longer route home'* – pass the boojee shops,
that restaurant I keep meaning to try, and the one with that dress I wish I could fit into.
It's the, *'Alright?', 'Morning!', 'ello!' and 'Hey'* as I pass people I recognise but can't quite put
my finger on where from.
It's the – *'It's ok, it'll come to me... Was it...? I know...! In the... Nope. No idea...'*
Yes – but WHERE are you from?

It's the coffee - my God do I start to need it – *'One coconut latte double shot please'* – A
million pounds? Bargain.
It's the spring in my step as I now stride into the park – It's the graffiti on the park sign as I
enter – *'Tommy-is-a-grass'* – poor Tommy, wonder where he's hiding?
It's the broken glass, the empty crisps packets, high heel – just the one – where's the other?
Where's the owner?
Yes, yes but where are YOU from?

It's the synagogue, the mosque, the church – it's the, *'I should connect with my spiritual self
more often, you know? - You know?'*
It's the Polish food shop, the Caribbean takeaway, the Asian supermarket, the African
restaurant – those dumplings, man... those dumplings...
It's the, *'I'll just quickly pop in for some pickled lemons – I saw Nigella using them. I will use
them. What? I will, I will!'*
Yep, yep – but really, where you from?

It's the, *'The time! Oh shit! Wait, what's the time?'* – Quick march, quick march.

It's the, the sea! Oh my dayz! Ten minutes ain't gonna make a real difference is it?
It's the *'Look at it, just look at it – Ain't it beautiful?'* – grey – I don't care – my sea doesn't need to be blue.
It's a deep breath, it's the *'I could swim out in that anytime I like but I won't because it's bloody cold and I'm not that crazy'*,
Yeah, that's all well and good, but where do you come from?

It's the smell. Ahh the smell – Doughnuts! But not just any doughnuts – seafront doughnuts; the sugar, cinnamon.
It's the arcade light's – the not-so-eco-friendly-because-they-are-on-throughout-the-entire-night-lights - Vegas it ain't, but what a sight!
It's the sleepy theme park, waiting for the scores of families and school parties to arrive – The noise! You just wait till you hear the noise!
Yes, but could you please tell us where you are from?

It's the taxis, the buses, the lorries, the coaches – it's the gaggles of elderly ladies waiting for the driver to pick 'em up for their day trip.
It's their joking and laughing, their checking and double checking that they've got everything they need; pills, purse, phone – check, check, check!
It's the, *'I hope I'm like that when I'm older.'*
Yes, I understand, but could you tell us where you're from...

It's the, 'If I take this turning then I can pass **that** house – the one I will never be able to afford but a girl can dream, right?
It's the, *'Maybe this short cut, wasn't a good idea? You think you know a place, right?'*
It's the stepping over cracked pavements, drains and dog mess – why can't people tidy up after their pet's, right?
It's the *'Ahhh...there it is! Home sweet home. I'm running a bit late, but you're not gonna fire me, right? Right?!'*
Where – do – you – come – from?!

It's home; my home. I don't need to explain it to anyone else.
It's what makes me me, even if you can't understand it.
It's the look I give you to politely hint that maybe you're looking for the word *'heritage'*.
It's me trying to educate – you say you're willing to listen.
It's the position we both find ourselves in, it's awkward but it'll pass.
We'll be in touch.

Title Slide: Purple background with white text that reads “Tasnim Mahmoud Sammak”

Video Six: Tasnim Mahmoud Sammak

Hi everyone, Salam, Marhaba

I'm grateful for the opportunity to participate in this year's Emerging Writers Festival and especially for our session's theme of 'Home as archive' that is so closely linked to ideas of

remembrance, counter-memory and storytelling that I work with in my research and writing. I come to the topic not as a universal human subject speaking about an abstract, disembodied experience of home with all its modern, capitalist connotations of investment, property, middle class status and nuclear family where the word home is always heard in the public civilisational discourse in relation to the word ownership.

I'm thankful for the invitation to contemplate 'home as archive' together with fellow writers and artists working from the Australian colony where home is certainly invaded and stolen. Home is a site of memory making, archival work and with that 'home as archive', or variations of home is an archive, home is a denied archive, home is a living archive, each holds its truth.

With events in Palestine very present to me as I write and present this piece and we bury over 250 of our people defending the homeland, home as archive cannot but bring up embodied Palestinian poetics for me that are of lifeworlds I have inherited. The iron, rusty key is a symbol of Palestinian dispossession - the theft of our homeland so deeply marked by the stealing of our houses that were and are our homes (our grandparents homes). In 1948 when Israeli terror in the form of massacres was employed as a strategy of ethnic cleansing, over 700,000 of my people left their villages and cities with very few belongings with the perception that this terror would end and they would walk back to the homes they left. There was no permanent colonial temporality in their minds.

More than five hundred villages were emptied using this strategy where at the point of the gun and with the sight of the blood and bodies of family members on the pavement of homes our grandparents had to leave worlds behind not knowing they could never go back.

Settlers moved into their homes. My dad's family is from a village near the city of Yafa, what Israelis have termed as Tel Aviv. I remember my grandfather saying he once, many years ago, had the chance to cross the border into Palestine but as he came close to his father's home he stopped. He couldn't come near or see the barbarism of what happened taking its course - he couldn't bear that sight of a settler living life, chilling, content and prospering inside the house his father had built with his own hands. I think of his agony, may Allah have mercy upon him, when I consider home as archive. Distance from the course of history helps sometimes.

The house key of course is not merely a symbol for remembering a family past or tracing ancestry as is a common impulse within today's eugenicist DNA tracing and construction of whiteness as humanity's singular story. Our inherited rusted keys hold the truth of a contested history, make a material claim to a history that can be assessed by placing this key we carry into the door of a settler's home. The key penetrates fallacies and unhinges neatly told truths that grant the settler his belonging to a home that isn't his. It's always incredible to me how settlers move into our humble houses as they are, how very hardcore that they do not seek to shy from the theft of their theft.

We were raised with not only existence as resistance but very much also, remembrance as resistance. For as long as I can remember, I have *known* that dominant knowledge does not totalise as a Palestinian born in Amman, Jordan who migrated to Aetoroa, New Zealand as a child. In the milk bars I walked to with my cousins in the alleyways of our urban refugee

camp, hung maps of the region, but instead of Israel, they marked the historic land of Palestine. The stores there were Palestinian-owned, packed side by side across now cement homes, which used to be tin, which prior to that were tents after decades of waiting a few kilometres from home for the right to return.

Where the camp's streets labelled by the administering Jordanian government and the United Nations hold numbers even today, street 2, street 7, street 32, rather than names, whereas stores mostly hold the names "Jerusalem Boutique", "Bethlehem bakery" and "Jaffa Jewellery" with Palestinian flags flying across the front and a cheap golden frame of the occupied Al Aqsa mosque hanging behind the cashier.

Israeli narratives were displaced here in this home outside of home, in this archive that writes us back into history. Israeli narratives held no "truth" as far as we were concerned; even as governments in the west recognised Israeli sovereignty and peace agreements negotiated over which parts of Palestinian land to give away, Palestinian sensibilities did not *surrender* to the Israeli archive.

As Linda Tabar & Chandni Desai write: "Palestinian memory also plays a significant role in rupturing the colonizer's ideology and the material edifice of the settler colonial project. More importantly, in the midst of this continued dismemberment, memory mends, repairs and keeps alive relations to place and enables a continuity of history, culture and future. These living memories - in storytelling, resistance culture, daily transmissions and texts - are part of Palestinian worldviews that articulate decolonization through their intellectual and political traditions beyond the colonial system and its ideological apparatus".

'Palestine is not for sale' is what the First Intifada said after the failures of peace negotiations; Palestine is not property and even one inch of the homeland is worth more than the millions and thousands on offer. 'Jerusalem is not for sale' is what we protest in our present as Trump moved the US embassy to Jerusalem while pressuring us to accept his very Trump like Deal of the Century and as the neighbourhoods of Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah spark a unified uprising today. We protest against mandated ethnic cleansing to the shrug of world leaders who allow the removal of Palestinians from their houses so settlers can fulfil their desire of moving in.

Yakoub the Israeli settler from New York tells us how little the Palestinian archive weighs, rationalising so casually his immorality, with a banality of a coloniser who knows he has the power to enact his fantasy: "If I don't steal it somebody else is gonna steal it". And so Yakoub enters our archive and our representations of home while "squatting", as 23 year old Mohammed El Kurd put it, squatting in the home of the El Kurds who have to share a house with him until Allah grants relief. I can talk about Yakoub for days.

There are a few verses that come to mind here though that I would like to end with, from a poem by the famous Arabic poet Samih al Qasim who captures Palestinian poetics like no other. These verses were composed as a song by Reem Banna, Palestinian singer and icon may she rest in peace and they really capture the Palestinian imperative to speak of home as remembrance as I have attempted to demonstrate in this piece. The poem is an early work that most Palestinians recognise titled "I tell the world I tell it". As one of the first and

largest post World War Two refugee nations, Palestinians have been telling, crafting an archive of home wherever we are; for liberation, for refugee rights, for return and for truth.

أحكي للعالم أحكي له
عن بيتٍ كسروا قنديله
عن فأسٍ قتلت زنبقةً
وحريقٍ أودى بجديلة

أحكي عن شاةٍ لم تُحلب
عن عَجنةٍ أمَّ ما خُبزت
عن سقْفٍ طينِيٍّ أعشب
أحكي للعالم أحكي له

يا بنتَ الجارِ المنسيّةِ
الدُّميةِ عندي محميّةِ
الدُّميةِ عندي فتعالِي
في باصِ الرِّيحِ الشرقيّةِ

'I tell the world, I tell it
Of a house whose lantern they have broken
Of an axe that killed the lily flower
Of a fire that eradicated a braid of hair

Speak of some cattle that were not milked
Of a mother's dough that was yet to be baked
Of a grassy mud roof
I tell the world, I tell it

O forgotten neighbour's daughter
The doll is with me, safeguarded
The doll is with me, so do come back
In the eastern winds' bus

Listen to Reem Banna's singing of these verses:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhC-9JrekPg>

With that I'll end with a sentiment I believe in, that no one can really steal a home that becomes an archive. Thank you.

Title Slide: Green background with white text that reads "Delaine Le Bas"

Video Six: Delaine Le Bas

This is an opening into a longer work that Home As Archive has been the catalyst for. These minutes will be the taster, the invitation which you have the choice to accept or decline. There is some swearing and language that may sound, feel, uncomfortable. I have given the

warning so please don't complain and if you want more you now know where to find me.....

It begins

I am me

Known as

Delaine Le Bas

That's

Delaine Le Bas

Capital D small e l a i n e open brackets (elaine with a small e with a capital D on the front of it) close brackets then capital L small e space capital B small a and s with the s being silent Le Ba

Born in Warthing that's with an a r not o r which is really how its spelt

17071965 Seventeenth of the seventh nineteen sixty five open brackets

(note to self read numbers as words not numbers) close brackets

One Seven Zero Seven One Nine Six Five

I am an artist

My family are Gypsies

Gypsy that's capital G Y P S Y not Gypo G Y P O or Pykey P Y K E Y

Not some construct

And yes it is spelt with a capital G

There will be reference to this later

It sounds like you come from the East End

Whatever

L.A is not far as we like to call it 'ere Little Ampton with a capital A and a dropped H or open brackets (Hampton Capital H small a m p t on n or Amp-ton Capital A small m p dash small t o n as this spell check keeps trying to tell me) close brackets

Are you really there on Intsa open brackets (Nits capital N small i t s Insta capital I small n s t a Intra capital I small n t r a Ints capital I small n t s or Inst a capital I small n s t space a)

close brackets are the other options is the question asked? question mark

Dropping letters

Pronunciation

Words that emerge

Who are not confined by the place that says they come from

I am a South Coaster by birth

My Archive is me

Like wiggly lines to quote Watts

Open quotation marks "You are not real" end quotation marks to quote

Sun Ra

Travelling virtually, real and unreal, time, space

112006

November Two Thousand and Six

One One Two Zero Zero Six

is when it started and I returned

18112019

Eighteenth of November Two Thousand and Nineteen

One Eight One One Two Zero Zero Nine

Do I use one or zero?

Use of language or misuse?

When I could return between LOCKDOWNS all in capitals
I rested amongst the fabrics like a giant moth
Cocooned in their richness
Caressed by their colours
Threads like views and arteries feeding me
Landscapes of fibres
Embroidered, stitched, printed
Hand and machined
Dressed like a Moor con open brackets (Old Sussex dialect) close brackets
Or a Moone-Man open quotations "The women as ridiculously attire themselves, and in
brackets (like ones that plaies - dash it is trying to change old English p l a i e s to new
English p l a y s - dash the Roague on stage) close brackets weare, again trying to change
old English spelling, rags, patched and filthy mantles upermost, when the under garments
are hansome - dash again trying to change Old English spelling to handsome h a n d s o m e
or hansoms h a n s o m s or hansom h a n s o m - dash and in fashion." close quotations
Thomas Dekker Langhorne and Candle-light Chapter viii Chapter Eight 1608 Sixteen
Hundred and Eight - The Wind On The Heath A Gypsy Anthology chosen by John Sampson
London Chatto and Windus 1930 Is that me?
Or am I
Open quotation marks "HEAD OF A GYPSY" close quotation marks BY AUGUSTUS JOHN
the colour plate in the beginning of the book But this head of a Gypsy breathes, speaks,
writes, paints Is not a specimen, subject, untitled, un named,
My skin is mine
My eyes are the colour they are meant to be
Not bound by dust covered manuscripts.....
My history is mine
Written, painted, drawn, written from my own archive
A year lost but not lost
Documented in written word, drawn lines, painted pages, odd bits of film footage, photos and
remembered sometimes through music. Kept in a set of books, folders and pastel coloured
paper files. I'm old skool with a k which it just tried to change to stool maybe it wants that to
be wooden or soft like shit, you see just like that I don't trust the digital, to many glitches,
things get lost, whole bits of your life stored on a cloud that you can't see can't access when
you need to or at some point they will want to sell back to you after they've searched through
and sifted like Orwellian Mind Trawlers. Erased or partly existing as a series of lines in bright
colours half missing images and empty files, corrupted and lost forever just the memory in
your own mind left to remember as only you can because it's gone no physical tangibility.
These books a history of a forced institutional home archive
transplanted into different space from:
Sunday 15th March 2020
Sunday Fifteenth of March Twenty Twenty
0715032020
Zero Seven One Five Zero Three Two Zero Two Zero
Approx 15 fifteen f i f t e e n one five miles along the coast in Hove is
that Hove actually? question mark
Archives use numbers, systems, written words abound
Books & documents wrapped
Bound by ribbons and elastic bands

Contained in boxes with lids
Filing cabinets
Temperature controlled storage systems
And we are there but not there
Visible yet invisible at the same time
Demonised just because of who you are
Documented and held in history
09.02.21
Ninth of February Twenty Twenty One
Zero Nine Zero Two Two Zero Two One
Essex Archives online
T/A418/84/89
Capital T forward slash Capital A Four Zero Eight forward slash Eight
Four forward slash Eight Nine
Calendar of Essex Assizes File (ASS35/55/1)
Open bracket Capital A Capital S Capital S Three Five forward slash Five Five Forward
slash one close bracket
Chelmsford 15 March 1613
Chelmsford Fifteenth of March Sixteen Thirteen
Chelmsford One Five Zero Three One Six One Three
Joan Arrundell and Mary Lacie committed by Tho Harrys for being gypsies open bracket
(gypsies spelt all lower case) close brackets
Mine sprawls
In folders and scavenged boxes piled high
In textiles
Objects
Variable correspondences
Empty perfume bottles
Nail varnishes
Clothes stacked forming sculptures of a kind
Hanging from pictures rails like skeletal figures
Shoes breeding under the bed
Some lost to fires to stop evictions
Shown in Tate in silence
With a blue face in a hand made silk dress trimmed with silver
Now in some vegetable boxes
Fabric and recycled laundry bags

Small amounts that I could transport with me with some art materials which start quotation
marks "are weapons to quote my late husband" end quotation marks and maybe I am an
expert with these.....

Title Slide: Blue background with white text that reads "M G Boulter"

Video Seven: M G Boulter

This is my oak apple. It forms when a gall wasp injects its larvae into a developing flower bud on the branch of an oak tree. The larvae's secretions as they hungrily feed on the bud from the inside make the hard shell.

This particular oak apple sits on a window sill in the back room of my flat alongside a piece of the Berlin Wall my grandfather was given by a German colleague in the late eighties and a small soapstone statue of the Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten, which I bought in the crypt gift shop of Kelvingrove Museum in Glasgow when whiling away a summer afternoon in the city some years ago.

During the lockdown of early 2020 this oak apple caught my gaze every day as I sat at my desk desperately writing lyrics, songs, text, anything to show to this topsy turvy world that I could still be productive despite its best efforts to confine me to my rooms.

The oak apple is small and shiny like a musket ball you might dig up in some unremarkable field in the Midlands where men once died for ideas you can't quite grasp today. I recall the summer's day I came across this oak apple. I was thirteen and on a picnic with my mother. A horse softly rubbed against a wire fence nearby, a blinded horse, its eyes completely bandaged by a white cloth. We were sitting under an oak tree in the grounds of Hadleigh Castle, a ruin sitting on high ground overlooking the sweep of the Thames Estuary, the Nore and the sea reach where any ship heading east along its strait is not far from the English Channel and the rest of the world.

I can't remember much more of that day other than I was happy enough to want to memorise it, capture its essence through artefact; something ephemeral to remember an ephemeral day by. The oak apple lodged in the dusty dry earth amongst the exposed roots of the tree fitted nicely.

It sat quiet in my coat pocket throughout the next twenty years of my life before being brought to the light of day again when I moved to my flat and placed it on the window sill, the finer points of the memory lost except for that blinded horse and the happiness.

I still visit Hadleigh Castle where the wasps made the oak apple all those years ago. The castle was once the pride of Hubert de Burgh Justiciar for Henry III, passing through Ebulon of Geneva's hands when Hubert momentarily fell from favour and ending up centuries later as a gift from Henry VIII to his first queen Katherine of Aragon. A stag's skull was found buried near one of the hearths in Victorian times, John Constable sketched then painted the remaining rounded tower in the early nineteenth century, the original hanging in a room somewhere in Connecticut, a room now darkened and left silent by the pandemic.

Hadleigh Castle is largely ruins now good for little climbing feet or illicit teenage smokes. A school friend often told me he would go there for devil worships but I suspect it was more swigging from beer cans and listening to Metallica on a Sanyo tape machine. He works in IT now. The stones of the once proud towers, save for one, have fallen along with the land towards the river, the stonework reappropriated by locals of times past for new buildings, the immediate area a palimpsest made from stone.

That remaining tower of Hadleigh Castle looks out onto a stretch of the Thames Estuary where the seventeenth century ship The London lies sleeping under a constant tide. Sunk

during an accidental explosion in 1665 its pinnacle of service was escorting King Charles II back into London from exile in 1660. King Charles' restoration to the throne was commemorated on 29th May and was known as Oak Apple Day on account of him evading a parliamentary army in Shropshire during his escape by concealing himself high above the heads of the soldiers in an oak tree.

I think my thirteen year old self would be amazed that this little oak apple survived my teens and twenties, kept me company through salad days, drought years the golden epochs of summer months and Christmas cheer. This oak apple serves more to me now than it did then, it is not just a simple reminder of a happy day with my mum but now, entering my fourth decade, it reminds me that we ourselves are ephemeral, we are merely here a moment and then gone. But this is not a sad lesson, perhaps we should think of it more as a cycle of things discovered, lost and discovered again. King Charles in his oak apple tree, escorted by a ship now drowned off the coast of Essex, overlooked by a castle where I discovered my own Oak Apple Day. Discovered, lost, discovered again.

Title Slide: Pink background with white text that reads "Blown Fuse Theatre"

Video Eight: Blown Fuse Theatre

Eleanore McCann

The Thames Estuary snakes through the east; from the channel all the way to London. A jagged tear in a paper map. Foam kisses the shore in a thousand bubbles that fade as quickly as they appear. The silt is charcoal and glitters in the setting sun, the tide retreating back to the horizon as if apologising.

We used to think that we could see France from the shore, when really, it was just Kent across the river. Everything seemed so much bigger then, through eyes the same size as they are now but in bodies much smaller. When you are born your eyes are the same size they will always be; a pair to see you throughout life. Your feet? Well, those are a different story. They stretch out, toes spreading, outgrowing countless pairs of shoes.

In our journey through life, our shoes are our vessels, taking us through our stories one step at a time. Like hollowed footprints in wet sand, our shoes carry us away into our tomorrows. And just as easily as they drive us forward, they bring us back home again.

I entered the earth thrust into a concrete utopia, where looming grey buildings pump out smoke from chimneys taller than cranes. The factories made laundry detergent and dish soap, so the air permanently smelt like a mix of motor oil and suds. Industry lives there; lorries clattered by and rattled the house so that the glasses in the sideboard clinked for a few split seconds. Amidst the tolling of machinery, the swinging roar of cranes and the foghorn of a container ship, if you closed your eyes and really listened, you could hear the waves.

We had gravel in the back garden; there was not enough time to maintain and manicure a lawn. In the afternoons, I'd sit with legs outstretched, grabbing at fistfuls of stones to make a moat. Every so often in my excavation, I'd find a shell. Pure white with tiny crevices, they were always just too small to hear the sea. I'd collect them in the underside of my sunhat

when my pockets were full. A half deflated paddling pool served as my tide, and I stamped in delight, splashing hose water into the air so high that for a brief moment, a rainbow flashed across the blue.

Each day, I walked with my dad up the hill past forests that scared me. Uprturned shopping trolleys were cages and plastic bags caught in the treetops were ghosts. It was forbidden to go in there alone. Mesmerised by the oil slick of petrol slithering on the asphalt, we'd pass the local football ground and turn down a street that faced into the morning sun. I'd squint into the haze.

At the bottom of this street, there's a small school where the corridors smelt like coffee and dog-eared books. In a classroom off the hall, children smeared PVA glue and sprinkled litter. At break times, they'd veer off into the woods where they knew the trees leaked sap. Giggling, they'd smear perfect droplets across the bark with tiny, sticky fingers before wiping their hands on their gingham dresses. On the fields, they'd blow dandelion clocks, cartwheel and skip rope. Simple and unaffected, the seconds turn to minutes turn to years. Saplings grow to trees.

Scuffed school shoes, grazed elbows from falling off a skateboard, the smell of vinegar chips and pick & mix in paper bags from a corner shop. Six library books at a time, getting hair caught in the chains of the swings, rewinding cassette tapes with an HB pencil. Costco sheet cakes with fluorescent frosting, laying on our fronts on the carpet, heads propped up on our elbows, cutting pictures out of magazines, building dens and making up dances, sticky arms from roll-on body glitter. And the sea.

Always the sea. The pumping vein of my childhood. The undercurrent of my now. The whisper of my tomorrow.

Michelle Barrington

January 1 st of every year starts with a brisk walk along the seafront. The children run around to keep warm, having competitions for who can collect the most shells. The adults are desperate to join in with stone skimming. Beach games have no age limit.

Birthday walks in February, surprised by the appearance of the sun, glistening down on the gentle waves as the frost in the air bites at my skin. The sun peers through the clouds to slowly melt the snowy paths as we cling to one another, determined not to slip.

The tide is nowhere to be seen. Clouds look like smoke pumping above the sand. How can they appear so crisp and white against the bright blue sky? I meander through the soggy sand and pebbles as the damp air wakes me up. Everything is slow and quiet. Early mornings along the estuary before the world awakes.

Long evening chats with friends, from Chawkwell to Southend and back again. Covering every detail with every footstep. Talks of heartbreak, loneliness and struggles. Problems are equally as talked out as they are walked out. The waves and sunset act as an extra comfort. As the sun begins to set, our worries are put to rest.

Dreamy blue skies merge into the bright blue water. It's not clear where one ends and the other begins. Beach huts lined up, overlook swimmers and paddle boarders enjoying the waves as the Southend sun beats down on them. Not a cloud in sight, the sun stands high in the sky and I strain my neck as I look to see. Families pitch up on the sand with children building sandcastles. I can see Southend Pier and the rollercoasters in motion at Adventure Island. The crowds disperse as the day comes to an end. The sun is still beaming, shops begin to close down, bins overflow with rubbish and wrappers blow in the soft breeze. The aftermath. A warm, Summer evening and I walk further along the estuary and take a seat on the sea wall. Gentle waves caress the wall at my feet as I watch the orange sun begin to hide away in the distance.

A change of pace after a busy working day. We stroll, hand in hand, along the seafront. Dark blue skies and a calm reflection. No movement from the water, everything is still. Time to reflect on the day's events. We stop, take in the sunset, listen to the soft waves and let the sea air beat against our faces. And breathe. We turn back, no longer need to chat. We just walk as the sun sets on another day. The sea air promises a good night's sleep.

Title Slide: Green background with white text that reads "Adam Thomspou"

Video Nine: Adam Thompson

ya pulingina

My name is Adam Thompson and I am in lutruwita (Tasmania). My mob are the pakana people.

I am an emerging writer. My debut short-story collection, *Born into this*, was published in February this year by the University of Queensland Press.

Right now, I am in what we call the 'top room' of my house. It is my writing space. It didn't really occur to me that my home was an archive. I mean, it's full of things I've collected – things that have meaning to me. Many have been shelved, rarely used or looked at over the years. I guess the comfort is in knowing that they are there. Safe. But this event has made me consider what IS in my home. What ARE the things I have archived over the years, brought with me as I've moved from location to location? House to house. Over and over and over again...

When we moved into my childhood home, it felt like it was still occupied. What I mean is, the people who had moved out had left their things behind. Maybe not all of their things – but a lot. I was only young – perhaps 4 or 5. I remember the room that was to become my bedroom, it was dank and dusty. The bedspread, the wall-paper - everything was dull and brown. It was old fashioned. And it had a negative vibe. I sensed that someone had died there – someone who resented the world.

But Mum and my grandparents did their best with the renovations. They created a nice bedroom for me. Over time I accumulated toys and various other curiosities – as children do. Some of the things I had must have been left from the previous owner. There were a few really old soft toys amongst my possessions that nobody seemed to know the origins of.

There was also an accordion. An old accordion – a red one - well it seemed old to me. In those days, I just assumed it came with the house. I played with it pretty roughly. It was an accordion after all, and those things take some energy to play. It lived in the bottom of a big plastic toy bin in my room. As I grew a bit older, I didn't give the accordion a lot of attention. New toys came into fashion, out of fashion. Then technology came along – or at least into my world. There was an Atari – and then a computer. We didn't have much, but my mum gave me what she could – at least until my brother came along when I was 7 or 8.

It was around that time my grandmother was at the house one day. She came into my room and for some reason the accordion was out. 'That was Daryl's accordion', she said. 'Who is Daryl?' I asked. 'My brother,' was all she said. From that point on I thought of it as Daryl's accordion. So, it didn't come with the house after all.

But the knowledge that it was Daryl's accordion didn't elevate its status at all. Not then. It still lived in the bottom of the toy bin – and there it stayed.

Mum got remarried prior to my brother being born. We moved out of that house when I was in grade 6 – so about 1989. In the space of a year we lived in 3 houses, and I seemed to lose things during each move. And then of course high school happened, then college, girlfriends, travel, girlfriends, work... I've lived interstate a few times, but now I am back in Tasmania, married and with a 7-year-old boy. Now, we own our own home. My motivation for buying was quite simply because I was sick of moving house: relocating, of physically moving my 'stuff' around, losing things along the way, losing pieces of myself.

I have almost nothing physical left from my childhood. The few things I DO have are like little miracles. When we talk of home as archive, it is these things I think of first. They are my prized possessions. But I rarely look at them. They are more alive in my mind, I think, than they are in the physical world.

A few weeks ago, my wife found my old doona cover in the top cupboard of our bedroom. It is from the house I grew up in. It is white and 'snoopy' themed. All the peanuts gang are on it. It must have cost someone a bit because it is like a hotel sheet. It is thick and smooth and luxurious on the skin – still, 40 years after it was made. Perhaps they just made them better back then.

I hadn't thought about the doona cover for a while. I went into my son's room and it was on his bed. Made up, like. I was in shock and in two minds: I wanted to protect it, to whip it off the bed and stow it back into the cupboard where I knew it would be safe, but at the same time it felt special to see my son using it: gripping onto it like I used to, pulling it to himself for comfort. His eyes were closed, and his breath was shallow. He was asleep. He wriggled his nose when I brushed a lock of hair from his face. He looks so much like me. I felt like a sook – standing there, tears on my face. I'm glad my wife didn't see me. But there really was no decision to make. Of course, the cover stayed on the bed.

If home is archive, then my home is the richest, most valuable archive of all.

The accordion now lives in my spare room. It has its own cardboard box. Inside the box, its wrapped in a flannelette sheet. Of course, as I grew up, I learned more about my Uncle Daryl – and the origins of his accordion.

See, Daryl died young. He was the last of my great grandmother's children. The way grandma tells it, he was sickly – had a hole in his heart. They were a big family, and my grandmother was at least 20 years older than Daryl. She was already married when he came into the world.

Daryl was in hospital in Launceston after a heart operation in Melbourne. He was only 12 years old. Grandma would visit him every day, and on these occasions he would ask her to bring him something – a cake without salt (because he couldn't eat salt), or a toy or some sweets. The accordion was one of those things – one of the things he wanted. His father – who had died earlier in the year – played many instruments, including an accordion. One night when my grandma visited, Daryl wasn't his usual self. When she asked what he wanted, he said 'nothing – just a lot of hugs'.

He died that night, in his thirteenth year.

'A dear boy', my grandma says when she talks about him, and she cries every time she tells his story.

I have a few photos of Daryl, and I have his accordion. I can't believe its stayed with me for all this time. Through all the moves. How it even managed to survive the beating I gave it as a kid. Of course, now it is safe in my home. My archive. And I understand what it means. I know its story. Now, I handle it with care.

Title Slide: Pink background with white text that reads "Thank You!"

End of event