



## Adventures in Design Research... CMH

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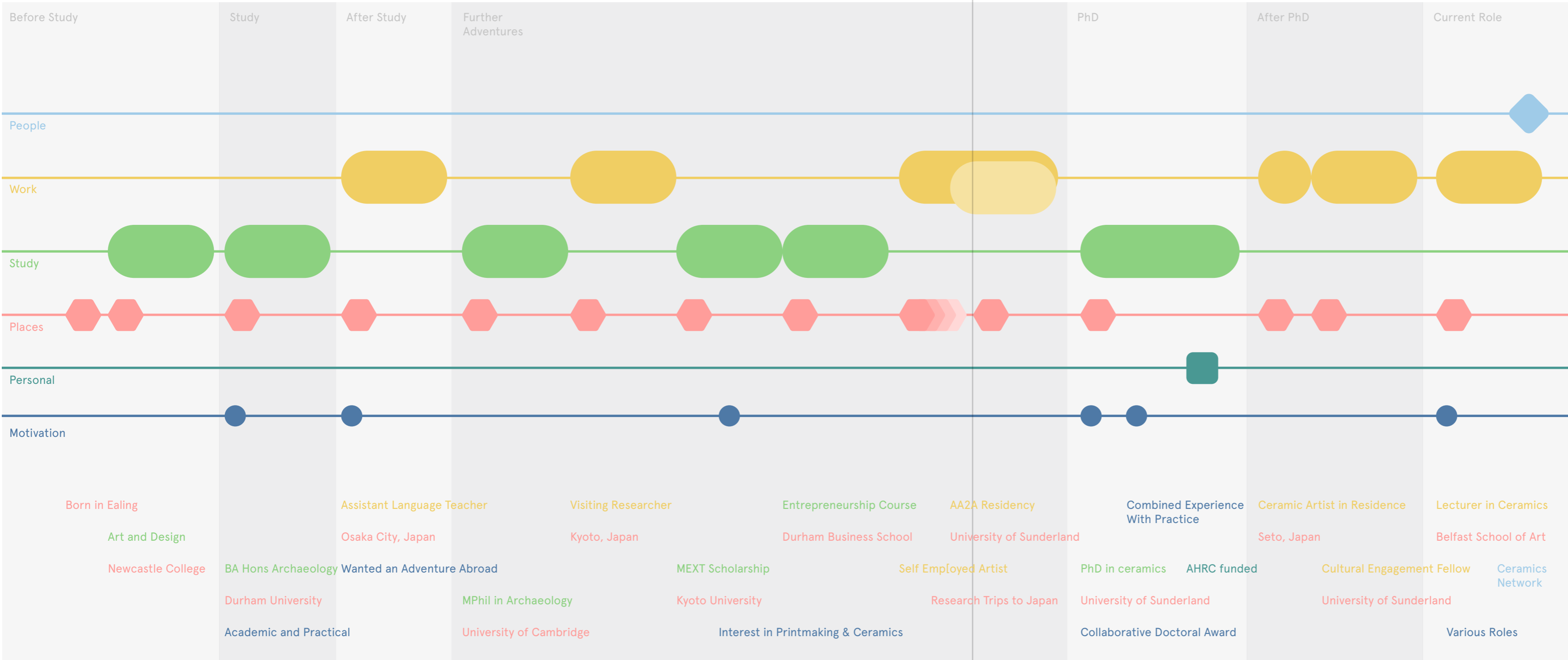
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# CMH

Once upon a time, there was a design researcher called CMH, who was born in Gateshead.

Before heading off to university, CMH had various adventures including a Foundation Course in Art and Design at Newcastle College.

Eventually, CMH started studying BA Hons Archaeology at Durham University.

CMH's plan had been to study Fine Art at university. However, after the Art and Design Foundation course, CMH decided to do archaeology. CMH had always been interested in archaeology and Durham is one of the leading departments in the UK. The combination of academic and practical study appealed to CMH. CMH was also able to study for a Certificate of Higher Education in Visual Arts alongside the degree, through the School of Education at Durham. This is where CMH developed a love for printmaking and sculpture.

After studying archaeology, CMH taught

# CMH Continued

English in Japan as an Assistant Language Teacher on the JET Programme. CMH worked at several state junior and senior high schools in Osaka City.

CMH took this route because quite a few friends at university had studied languages and taken a year abroad as part of their course. After three years of study, CMH wanted to have a similar adventure abroad. Durham University has a relationship with Teikyo University in Tokyo and CMH had become interested in Japan through Japanese friends at Durham. The JET Programme is quite well paid as a starter graduate job and is a great way to experience and learn about Japan. This was a life-changing experience and CMH has been a regular visitor to Japan ever since.

CMH had some other adventures after this, which included an MPhil in Archaeology at the University of Cambridge. CMH then went back to Japan as a Daiwa Bursary-funded Visiting Researcher at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies in Kyoto.

After this, CMH was a MEXT Scholar at Kyoto University.

In Japan, CMH had become particularly interested in printmaking and ceramics. In 2004, CMH returned to the UK, took an entrepreneurship course at Durham Business School, and became a self-employed artist. Over the next few years, CMH went on several UKTI-funded market research trips to Japan and worked with various Japanese design businesses and manufacturers to promote his work.

In 2009, CMH participated in the Artists Access to Art Colleges (AA2A) residency programme at the University of Sunderland. This was where he started to make ceramics.

This eventually led to a PhD in ceramics at the University of Sunderland.

CMH's PhD was an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award project based at the University of Sunderland and Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens

(SMWG). CMH's research involved the reinterpretation of the Museum's collection of 19th century transfer-printed Sunderland lustreware pottery in order to engage the local community. CMH designed a model of practice for artist-led, collections-based community engagement, which was tested in various community settings.

The interdisciplinary nature of this project appealed to CMH. It combined research on the collection and associated archives with the design and production of ceramic objects. The project's strength came from the close proximity of the ceramics collection to its originating community in Sunderland. This facilitated a high degree of engagement and communication. Throughout the project, CMH had unparalleled access to SMWG's collection and expertise.

What motivated CMH was that it enabled him to combine his past research experience with ceramics practice. One of his motivations was to develop an

academic career, although CMH felt that the experience would also enhance my creative practice.

CMH was fortunate to receive AHRC funding, which provided a stipend and covered fees. Without this, CMH wouldn't have been able to embark on the project. CMH also received further funding to undertake research at the National Museum of Ethnology in Japan as part of the AHRC's International Placement Scheme.

Once CMH had completed the PhD, he went back to Japan for two months to take part in the Seto International Ceramics and Glass Exchange Programme as a ceramic artist in residence. CMH continues to visit Seto regularly to undertake research into its post-war ceramic figurine industry and he has presented this research at numerous conferences and exhibitions.

In 2016, CMH became AHRC Cultural Engagement Fellow at the University of Sunderland. CMH worked with the

National Glass Centre and veterans' charity Forward Assist to design and deliver a ceramics and wellbeing course for military veterans based in NE England.

This eventually led to CMH's current role, which is Lecturer in Ceramics at Belfast School of Art, Ulster University and Course Director, BA Hons Ceramics, Jewellery & Silversmithing.

CMH's current role includes coordinating a team of academics and technicians working on BA Hons Ceramics, Jewellery & Silver-smithing (CJS) and working with colleagues in BA Fine Art, MSc Art Therapy, and BA Product Design to develop CJS pathways after the current degree course closes in 2020. As well as teaching ceramic arts and design to undergraduate, postgraduate and research students; developing teaching materials and carrying out assessments; undertaking ceramics research (theory and practice); being a member of the University Research Ethics Filter Committee and Visual Arts Subject Lead for Northern Bridge PhD training

consortium; Supervising PhD students and managing an adult education programme of short courses in Ceramics.

What helped CMH achieve his current role was his PhD, which enabled him to develop a good ceramics network in the UK, and internationally, as well as contribute a number of book chapters and articles to prominent publications. The teaching CMH did as part of his AHRC Cultural Engagement Fellowship enabled him to become an Associate Fellow of the HEA. Timing was important. Ceramics jobs don't come along very often and CMH was in a good position to apply for the job, being between projects and having recently finished his PhD.