“AFTERMATH” AND “BUNDLE”: CRITICAL FORMS FOR CO-PRODUCED SCULPTURE

Ellie Barrett

e.c.barrett2@lancaster.ac.uk

Author Bio

Ellie Barrett is a sculptor, practice-based researcher and lecturer. A core research interest is the relationship between material meaning and sculptural co-production, and the implications this has for improving equitability in the visual arts. Ellie has exhibited artworks internationally, including London, New York, Glasgow and Helsinki. Recent projects include “Handmade Soft Play,” a collaborative project with her mother and 2-year-old daughter exploring making as an act of care and childcare as a skills-based experience, funded by Arts Council England and touring across the North of England; and “Personal Histories,” a commission from the National Festival of Making using online makerspace formats to encourage residents of Lancashire, UK, to produce sculpture in their kitchens. She is an Associate Lecturer in Fine Art at Lancaster University, UK and has held a recent teaching post at City & Guilds Art School, London.

Abstract

This article analyzes the critical contribution of “co-produced” sculptures, presenting co-production as a making methodology which extends existing analytical approaches in sculpture. Two sculptural forms - the “aftermath” and the “bundle,” both constructed from domestic and craft materials - are the outcomes of my recent residency with In-Situ, UK, which involved groups of preschool children, parents and carers in the making process. Interacting with my 2-year-old daughter via materially-centric play vitally contributed to shaping the two forms and their component materials. Her presence also connected me with parent communities

as a peer rather than an outsider, enabling me to explore the relationship I had with other co-producers beyond the role of artist.

Recent emphasis on “material literacy” in art practice underpins this inquiry. Material centricity surfaces sculpture’s resonance with public art practice, developed through a discussion of the visceral childhood encounter with material. This framework is further explored in comparisons to existing sculptural practices: the “aftermath” is analyzed alongside 1960s scatter sculptures, and the “bundle” is compared to works by Mary Mattingly, Judith Scott and Nnena Kalu. Gaining critical ground for artworks produced by intergenerational groups overlays childcare with sculpture making, acknowledging young children as sources of embodied knowledge.

Keywords

Sculpture, co-production, childcare, material literacy, making, form

Introduction

This article evaluates “co-production” in sculpture via its relationship to “material literacy,” activating the condition of childcare as a critically important site for sculpture making. Comparisons between sculptures co-produced by preschool children and their parents with existing historic and contemporary practices evaluates their critical significance and explores their capacity to advance our current understanding of the discipline. My recent artist residency at In-Situ (Lancashire, UK) offers a case study. My 2-year-old daughter (N) accompanied me: since becoming a mother, my identity as an artist follows my activities as a parent into childcare settings, observing the child’s innate drive to engage in materially-centric, experimental play. Our collaborative playing as mother and daughter was transferred into an art-making context. This generated “the sculpture kit”: six materials (masking tape, pipe cleaners, tin foil, tissue paper, toilet roll and wool) which may be transformed, combined and rearranged with no skill, training or equipment. Playing with the kit yielded co-produced sculptures. This was tested with larger groups at the culmination of the residency during three public play sessions.

Three questions are posed. Firstly: how might sculpture present existing opportunities for co-production in the context of material literacy? Material literacy may enable us to attune ourselves to sculpture’s wider societal entanglements by illuminating the various agencies which converge in making, thus opening the discipline up to co-production methodologies. Secondly, how does the analysis of co-produced forms extend existing critical frameworks in sculpture? Analysis of sculpture yielded by co-production may support and extend existing disciplinary ideas and ambitions, expanding critical frameworks related to form and aesthetics towards surfacing meaning made by involving public groups. Finally, what are the implications for positioning co-produced sculpture as critically important? Identifying the critical meaning in art made with children may carve out space for artist-parents, caregivers, and others working from

limiting circumstances to contribute to academic and institutional dialogues. Feminist tenets of care are not tangential to this making process, but are woven within it.

Two sculptural forms are the focus of this article: the “aftermath” and the “bundle”. Both were spawned by my collaboration with N and then developed with public audiences during the play sessions. The “aftermath” is the post-play environment conceived as a sculptural landscape. Composed of discarded materials and acts of making, it occupies a transitional point between the kit and the bundle. The “bundle” is an object which emerges from gathering and binding the aftermath together. Many different hands may perform these gestures, yielding a complex sculptural object. Analytical discussions of both forms provide new critical approaches from which to understand the value of socially-engaged co-production and what it contributes to sculpture more broadly. The “aftermath” is compared to 1960s “scatter” sculptures of Robert Morris and Barry Le Va, and the “bundle” is fully comprehended through examining works by Mary Mattingly, Judith Scott and Nnena Kalu.

“Co-production” - as opposed to “participatory” - is used to describe the multi-authored making methodology involved in this project. Critic Claire Bishop foregrounds a tension between the sculptural object and audience contributions to artworks considered “participatory”, suggesting that sculptures which only permit one way of interacting - such as pressing a button - rather than contributing to the shaping of the work itself do not advocate for meaningful public experiences (1). “Participatory” sculpture therefore implies structured interaction with a finished work. “Co-produced” sculpture instead describes a methodology which opens up the making process to involve other stakeholders in the shaping of the completed sculptural form. Artists Heather Peak and Ivan Morison’s *Black Cloud*, for example, was a wooden structure, erected with volunteers who contributed their own specific skills which became “a monument … to the collective efforts and labour of those who built it… .” (2) The bundle and aftermath are similarly

a solidification of multiple perspectives and contributions. Co-produced sculpture is simultaneously able to reclaim social engagement for sculpture, and locate this practice within the discipline.

Motherhood is currently experiencing keen attention in the arts, led by artists and curators such as Ghislaine Leung and Hettie Judah (3), and organisations such as Canada-based MOTHRA, who aim to conflate the roles of artist and parent (4). Grappling with the duality of the artist-mother identity has been the focus of practices since the late 1960s, such as Mierle Ladermann Ukeles's *Maintenance Art Manifesto* - where she writes "clean the floor, wash your clothes, wash your toes, change the baby's diaper…" followed by "Everything I say is Art is Art. Everything I do is Art is Art." (5) - and Mary Kelly's *Post Partum Document*, involving literal layering of her son's scrawling and stained nappies with methodical observations related to her care for him (6). These works reveal fluctuations between the roles of artist and mother. Motherhood in sculpture draws from a longer legacy which expresses the mother and child relationship in the object. Barbara Hepworth's abstract depiction of this as a resonance between physical forms, for example (7). Katie Cuddon's recent sculpture series *A is for Alma* features lumpen clay sculptures which are bitten into, representing "the infant's fundamentally oral way of exploring and getting to know the world… ." (8). Sculptures resulting from this project similarly explore oscillations in the artist-mother identity in forms and aesthetics.

Traversing the arenas outlined above, this paper first presents "material literacy" and the influence of new materialist philosophy in sculpture, outlining the relationship between material and making, and the implications this has for the co-produced object. A discussion of children as co-producers then explores the child's visceral relationship to material via play, presenting the rationale for involving children specifically. Finally, I analyze the two sculptural forms via comparison with ideas, artists and artworks from contemporary and historic sculptural practice.

Sculpture, Material Literacy and Co-production

Recent emphasis on "material literacy" impacts how we decode meaning from artworks. Emerging from both art history and contemporary practice, this is "the ability to "express oneself clearly about materials' qualities, histories, and affordances with words that cling to their object …" (9). Material literacy fuses together material's physical with the people, places and processes that are historically associated with it. This is closely aligned with new materialist philosophies: the hypothesis that matter possesses an intrinsic agency, often counteracting human intention, and that a comprehensive understanding of social conditions requires acknowledging material affects (10). Categorisation of "human" and "non-human" becomes a fluid, overlapping network of affective agencies, distributed across an array of objects, materials and bodies. Rosi Braidotti suggests that this approach calls us to consider how materials, objects and environments inform our understanding and treatment of the world and one another, enabling us to extend empathy beyond our individual experiences (11). This paper positions new materialism as a philosophical framework which emphasizes the importance of cultivating material literacy in visual art since it provides us with an opportunity to manipulate and transform materials with our bodies, reciprocally exerting and experiencing agency with the world and people around us.

Though there are implications for other visual arts disciplines (12, 13), this paper argues that establishing material literacy in sculpture specifically may contribute to repositioning the art object as socially engaged. This approach applies pressure to existing formal and aesthetic frameworks in art by considering meaning which autonomously emerges from material. Sculpture is expanded beyond its physical fact into an object which emerges from - and continues to influence - exchanges between artists, materials, environments and audiences (14). Material's impact on thinking is a "material pedagogy" (15): its responsiveness and resistances

guide the ways in which we gather, process, assimilate and regurgitate it, internally and externally to art making. Artworks are increasingly considered for their various material affects - related to the genealogy of their component parts and the places, events, processes and people they encounter - whether deployed intentionally or unconsciously by the artist (16). Developing material literacy across artists, critics, theorists and viewers empowers us to perceive: the relationship the art object has with the social context from which it was made; and its connection to different bodies, social processes, political structures and environmental phenomena.

Theories related to material agency posit counter models for materially-centric co-production which are vital to this research project. Karen Barad's "entanglement theory," (17) Jane Bennett's "assemblage" (18) and Alfred Gell's "index" (19) position the made object as erupting from a complicated, mutually affecting, vibrant network of human and non-human agencies which already acknowledge the impact that people, places and materials have on sculpture. This approach "draws attention to the agency of the non-human, the ways that materials used to make art can change relationships between people, and building more than human relationships." (20). The bundle sculptures are an entrapment of agencies from myself and my daughter; In-Situ, its building and staff; young children and their parents; the six materials involved and their production processes; Brierfield's built environment; and a continuing list of immeasurable entities which impact these factors. This does not mean that all inputs represent equal intention and influence, but positions all contributors as mutually affecting and affected. Material literacy destabilizes artist-viewer hierarchies by illuminating the various human and non-human agencies already colliding in the making process.

Actively involving others in a co-productive entanglement may activate alternative methods and sites for making. However, dominant production models - such as the artist working alone or

with a team of assistants and fabricators to realize an individual vision - obscure existing possibilities for co-production. Current approaches to object-based sculpture involving non-artists, children or community groups may categorize such endeavors as “outsider” art, assessing its value according to its positive social impact with less focus on what these projects contribute to sculptural critique (21). Materially-literate co-production as a Baradian entanglement - in which all co-producers mutually learn from and impact one another - requires further development in order for its value to be fully perceived.

Material literacy therefore surfaces existing opportunities to invite wider demographics - including children - into production. Making is already an entanglement with a variety of agencies in which co-producers are already implicated via wider agential networks. Actively facilitating hands-on engagement reimagines sculpture as a strategy for attuning ourselves to material agency, increasing awareness of the treatment of bodies and place, and extending our understanding of how art is made and analyzed. Now this contextual understanding of material literacy and co-produced sculpture is established, I move on to examine the perspective of the preschool child as a co-producer.

Children as Co-producers

Though this article argues for the benefit of working with children as co-producers by interpreting findings from the residency, gaining a theoretical underpinning supports a more detailed analysis beforehand. Examining theories and ideas from new materialism, arts-based research, play theory and artist's writings establishes a critical foothold which enables the value of the preschool child as co-producer to surface. There are implications related to the wider social impact of bringing children into the making process: positioning them as knowledgeable creators presents new possibilities for overlaying sculpture making with childcare.

Children feel materials' responsiveness and resistances viscerally. Arts-education researcher Anna Hickey-Moody suggests that children experience a more corporeal engagement with the world of things than adults, stating that "Childworlds are already posthuman, and that children position themselves as part of the world, rather than simply "in" it." (22). Tactility lies at the core of physical and cognitive development, as textile researcher Victoria Mitchell writes "the tactile is present at the origin of the psyche and is also characterized as having a reflexive structure whereby we touch and feel ourselves being touched simultaneously, proving both internal and external perception." (23). Sensory engagement has been used as an educational tool, such as nineteenth-century educator Elizabeth Mayo's "object lesson boxes," which invited children to experience a physical quality, such as "elastic" in order to fully comprehend the meaning of the word (24). Children possess an inherent drive to interact creatively with material, and experience this with their whole bodies.

Becoming attuned to the child's perception reveals connectivity between material literacy and play theory. Psychotherapist and pediatrician D.W. Winnicott examines the paradoxical relationship between the child and the toy, observing that "the baby creates the object, but the object was there waiting to be created." (25). Even before the child encounters the toy, it possesses autonomous potential more complex than an anthropomorphic projection. Playthings are inherently vibrant. There is a strong resonance with new materialism's posit that all objects exert non-human agency. Bennett's call to adopt a "childlike" perspective of the world is reflected in Winnicott's observation (26). Children's play is positioned as a state of heightened sensory experience of the physical realm, and therefore a strategic means of testing different materials towards identifying new creative possibilities. It is an activity which is generative of and generates material literacy. Practice-based researchers Hood and Krahe state: "mess-making might be a methodological practice, a way of becoming more in-tune with objects." (27). Early encounters with material - as we experience the agency of other bodies and

exert our own agency in response - materialize our own position in the world. This is a valuable state for an artist to occupy.

Sculptural production already operates in the nexus of play, material and making. Arts researcher Elly Thomas suggests that “For Winnicott, object play during infancy may evolve to inform creativity and cultural experience during adult life. We can, therefore, examine childhood play and adult creativity within the same continuum and connect the material qualities of an object with the processes it affords.” (28). Sculptor Eduardo Paolozzi, for example, embraces the logic of play facilitated by a child-like materially-literate perceptive specialism, involving processes of rebuilding, destroying, repeating and reconfiguring (29). Renowned art critic Herbert Read asserts the interface between play and art, stating that “art should be the basis of education.” (30). Read favors works with multi-sensory levels of engagement, implicating the cognitive impact of playful material engagement. Avoiding the implication that young children autonomously produce artworks akin to sculptors (though they may contribute meaningfully as co-producers, as this paper argues), I suggest instead that the drive to engage with the world on a sensory, material level belies a materially-literate perceptive specialism which was present in all of us in our early lives. Observing young children engaged in materially-centric play may generate new experimental methods for sculpture making.

Connectivity between childhood play and sculpture making is something I have observed firsthand. When my daughter was a baby, her congenital desire to play drove her to physically grapple with all objects and materials. Her process of testing and experimenting involved dropping, scattering, squeezing, dragging, tasting, scraping and scrunching everything she was able to grasp. Richard Serra’s *Verb List* quickly springs to mind (31). This is a double-paged list of actions - “to roll, to crease, to fold” for example - in the artist’s sketchbook, opening up creative possibilities for literal material encounters to produce sculpture and reaching beyond

traditional processes such as casting and carving. Artists during this period became less concerned with the outcome and more invested in engaging with materials and their wide variety of affordances (32). Play is therefore an existing sculptural mechanism for both demonstrating perceptive specialisms in action and unearthing a material's concealed affordances.

Galleries are exhibiting a recent turn towards materially-centric play with sculpture-based programming aimed at children becoming more common across the UK. Examples of note from recent years include *Play Interact Explore* by Lucy Cran and Bill Leslie (collectively known as Leap Then Look) at Towner, Eastbourne, 2024; *Sculpting Conversations* at the Whitechapel by Sarah Marsh and Stephanie Jefferies, 2023; and *Are You Messin'?,* at the Bluecoat in 2022 featuring a pile of fabric scraps which formed a baby-sized scaleable landscape by Katie Schwab. Though aligned with the aims of this paper, it is also true that "Art and creative expression are entangled with processes of place-making that go beyond galleries and museums." (33). If sculpture is authentically socially engaged via co-produced making with and for children (as well as other demographics), it must take into account the material encounters which transpire in everyday experiences. In response, this research project challenges the site in which art making and viewing take place, bringing these experiences outside of the studio and gallery and into the environments in which childcare takes place: the home and the playgroup setting.

This discussion of the child's bodily experience of play as a mode of material engagement suggests that involving children as co-producers in sculpture has a reciprocal benefit for all involved. For children, contributing to sculpture-making opens opportunities to "explore ideas, styles and materials together, practice social interactions and build on shared experience." (34). For the artist, becoming attuned to a child's intense sensory engagements with different materials may offer unforeseen insights into experimental methods which reveal new

possibilities for sculptural construction. In this way, co-production as socially engaged practice advances current ideas about who or what can create sculpture. This making model de-centralises a White, European canon. It is “a rejection of the privileging of one perspective over others, dispelling a hierarchical relationship to structure in order to democratize material.” (35). It gives voice to material encounters beyond the artist in the studio as children are “valued sources *and producers* of knowledge… .” (36). Hierarchies related to teaching, learning and knowing which privilege the adult and perceive children unknowing are disrupted. Actively bringing children into the fold radically democratizes art making by acknowledging the specialisms contributed from the experience of childhood, which an adult may not access. Co-production with children may: develop and enrich the ways in which we manipulate material artistically; democratize making by integrating insights from alternative sources of knowledge; and provide radical new methods for understanding sculpture as inherently socially engaged.

Case Study: In-Situ Residency

My residency with In-Situ took place between November 2023 and March 2024, when my daughter had just turned two years old. In-Situ is based in Brierfield, East Lancashire, adopting an “embedded approach,” with a vision “for art to be part of everyday life … for our art to challenge current thinking about environment, people, place and culture.” (37). Brierfield is a small, post-industrial town, part of a chain which circumnavigate Pendle Hill. It has a multi-ethnic population: 34% is British-Pakistani, which is well above the regional and national average (38). In-Situ’s staffing reflects this and the organization operates on a “hyperlocal” level.

My residency explored material literacy and co-production with children by involving N in research, delivery and my professional interactions with In-Situ staff. She contributed her materially-literate perspective, enabling me to gain insights from observing and interacting with her. Methodology combined two parallel strands of activity: engaging in material-centric play in

In-Situ's project space; and attending various playgroups in Brierfield. The residency culminated in three public play sessions which tested and generated co-production models.

At the beginning, I brought a different selection of materials to the project space each week, presenting them to N by simply laying them out on the floor. I noticed what she was drawn to and what she wasn't; what qualities were easily manipulated by her small, inexperienced hands; and what had the capacity to be instinctively combined or transformed. Playdough tended towards working representationally rather than exploring its alternative affordances, for example. Fabric scraps were malleable but not reconfigurable with preschool fingers. I exchanged these for others but repeated examples which: held N's attention for their inherent qualities; could be easily transformed using different gestures; and would be familiar to parents and children due to their domestic or creative uses. These materials tended towards synchronicity with *Verb List*, encouraging literal transformations.

Over time, the "sculpture kit" crystallized: masking tape, pipe cleaners, tin foil, tissue paper, toilet roll and wool. These materials occupy different symbolic statuses. Some of them have domestic functions whilst others are commonplace at playgroups. They also offer different colours and textures, creating material juxtapositions which bridge with aesthetic approaches to sculpture. They invited play processes such as deconstruction and rearrangement: tissue paper torn into tatters, pipe cleaners bent together in a wriggly knot (fig. 1), wool unraveled into a sprawling pile. Combined together, they present yet more possibilities. I made N a costume by wrapping her with tape and tissue paper strips (fig. 2); we built a den by tying wool between chairs, roofing it with tin foil; we invented new toys by taping pipe cleaners in a wobbly, long-fingered bunch. Possible configurations, methods and objects emerging between us seemed almost limitless.

Public play sessions were aimed at children aged zero to five with their parents, although older siblings attended one of the sessions due to school holidays. Attendees were predominantly British-Pakistani and N and I had already met many of them at a playgroup. Representing a pool of the general public, most parents did not necessarily engage with visual arts. Sessions were structured around typical timings and activities at playgroups, establishing a comfortable, familiar environment. Firstly, a forty-five minute period during which children can meander between different toys was redesigned as unstructured play with the sculpture kit (figs. 3, 4, 5). Afterwards, "tidy-up time" was adapted to construct a co-produced bundle from the post-play aftermath. All attendees contributed to piling up scraps, threads and strips into a pile, which was gathered into an object by wrapping, taping and bending.

My relationship to the parents and children shifted as the project unfolded. At the beginning, we went to local playgroups weekly for three months. My experiences as a mother were at the forefront, exchanging stories about sleepless nights and tantrums, sharing the camaraderie of early motherhood with other women. My role morphed into artist-facilitator as I delivered the play sessions. Miwon Kwon suggests that "the artist's relationship to a group of people [...] plays a critical role in the type of collaborators that are logistically and creatively possible." (39). Though I was not a sited member of communities in Brierfield, I was part of a wider, "siteless" community of mothers. N's presence prevented me from being only an artist during the sessions: her sudden needs - a nappy change, a snack - meant that I was always a mother, sharing experiences with other adults present. Needing to parent disrupted my artist role; it made the sessions harder to facilitate, but it located common ground with communities of mothers. Artist Ghislaine Leung articulates this inseparability of practice and childcare as "porosity": "trying not to segregate or compartmentalise parts of my life: I have to let the material that's around me in." (40). Despite various differences (including ethnicity), porosity between artist and mother meant that working with this group was creatively possible. Kwon

also observes that typical public art models may position the artist as organizing a singular creative vision to which community partners provide physical labor (41). Though stepping into an artist role restructures power-dynamics, I resisted this to some extent by avoiding specific instructions. An invitation - to "see what you can do" with the sculpture kit - disrupts artist-participant hierarchies since it encourages a multiplicity of ideas and skills, permitting other individuals to meaningfully shape the work.

Several elements of this research project require further discussion beyond the focus of this article. These are particularly related to: the kit as co-production methodology; care aesthetics and making as an act of care; the ethical implications of labor and power dynamics between adults and children in practice-based research; and the possibilities for displaying co-produced works in an exhibition context. However, the primary objective of this article is to evaluate the critical contribution of the co-produced object to sculpture as a discipline. As such, the analytical focus is placed on the two sculptural forms: the "aftermath" and the "bundle." Both offer new critical frameworks towards gaining critical ground for co-produced sculpture.

The Aftermath

At the end of each project space and public session, play remnants dissipated erratically across the floor. Long strips of toilet paper after a roll had been kicked; furious tangles of neon wool after unraveling; shreds of floating tissue paper and sticky clumps of screwed up tape. Arrangements suggest a fury of activity, paused in a snapshot (figs. 6, 7). The "aftermath" manifests materially without the need to be consciously constructed. As a co-produced sculptural environment, it revisits and expands existing forms, aesthetics and practices.

Post play, the room bears striking resemblance to Robert Morris's "scatter" sculptures, such as *Untitled* (1968) - an unruly pile of what appears to be grey lint which actually included felt,

asphalt, mirrors, wood, copper tubing, steel cable, and lead (42). Critic Rosalind Krauss made specific reference to this work as “piles of threadwaste” when navigating the stretching of sculpture’s disciplinary specificities (43). Scatter sculpture’s new formal possibilities moved sculpture from “the making of things to the making of material itself.” (44). Comparing the post-play aftermath positions it within the legacy of scatter sculpture: it is not a “thing” but a complicated array of materials at different points between raw to transformed, colliding as a collective environment. It reaches beyond the “making of material” by encapsulating fragments from producers of different ages, ethnicities, genders and backgrounds. As such, it is not about individual making, but rather complex, interwoven experiences on a broader social level.

“Aftermath” is a term particularly associated with Barry Le Va (45). Though less recognised than Morris, Le Va’s contribution to sculpture significantly extended its formal and aesthetic manifestations. Smashed glass, sprinkled flour and iron oxide powder, shreds of felt and bricks flung across the gallery floor comprised Le Va’s scatter sculptures, with works such as *Installation #1: Outwards* (1968-9) which included strips of paper towel, flour and mineral oil (46). Critic Mike Maizels suggests that Le Va’s works undermine the solidity of the art object, working outside institutional systems to counteract “the stability and knowability of the world … .” (47). Similarities to new materialist vibrant matter are evident, as is philosopher Georges Bataille’s notion of formlessness and its ability to “bring things down in the world” (48). Le Va’s reimagining of “sculpture” as a sprawling, shifting environment vulnerable to change therefore positions the discipline as anti-monumental and anti-establishment. His works pursue a new condition for sculpture to embody egalitarian forms through aftermath aesthetics.

Formless aesthetics are well established in contemporary sculpture. Here, I do not suggest that the post-play aftermath presents new images, nor is it the result of sustained artistic interrogation comparable to Morris or Le Va. What I do argue is that understanding the

post-play environment as a sculptural aftermath enables us to extend this reading onto co-production. Hickey-Moody suggests that "A new materialist reading of children's meaning making is sensitive to the things that can be learned from [...] the emergence of meaning as a result of embodied activities and interactions." (49). In this way, meaning emerges in the post-play aftermath as all co-producers offer their own embodied experiences to the environment. It is - revisiting Gell's term - an "index" (50) of materially-centric play: and the evidence of a chain of causality which brought children, parents, grandparents, artists and organizational staff together. It is inherently attached to all of its co-producers, populated by chance encounters, moments of discovery and exchanges of knowledge.

The co-produced aftermath is fully anti-monumental and anti-patriarchal. Le Va's position against these structures is ideologically egalitarian, but co-production involving multi-ethnic, intergenerational groups interrogates the authenticity of a lone, white male as truly anti-establishment. The post-play aftermath enhances the ideology of scatter sculpture, decentralizing the monument and its male creator by offering a comparable aesthetic but involving people of different ages, ethnicities, experiences and knowledges. In this way, co-production as a model of making contributes to and advances sculpture's conceptual meaning.

The Bundle

The bundle emerged after N asked me to "walk around with the tape." I held one end of a long strip, she the other. We circled each other, connected by the sticky strand. Scraps of tissue paper and tin foil, coiled pipe cleaners, sheets of toilet roll and tangles of wool became bound up together, resulting in a complete yet unwieldy sculptural form (fig. 8). Each of the six materials's affordances lent themselves to bundling: tin foil wrapped; pipe cleaners fastened; tissue paper and toilet roll scrunched and bulked; tape and wool bound and secured. Glints of foil shine like

pyrite. Wool bubbles to the surface from clumps trapped within. Pastel pipe cleaners protrude from deep inside, twisting together to contain the overflowing mass. Yellow and blue masking tape cocoon. Toilet roll and tissue paper tendrils waft. Shaping the aftermath into the bundle was often guided by N's hunger, tiredness and attention. I did not have much control, and she led the flow of production. The resulting sculpture is complex: layers of material simultaneously unfold and enfolded within. Surfaces, textures and colors are juxtaposed, each emphasizing the other: shiny and dull; soft and hard; unfurled and scrunched. Bundling was an accessible process. It did not require skill, facilities or academic training. Simple, intuitive gestures of gathering, bending and wrapping produced a sculptural object.

Many children produced their own bundles during the play sessions, before this was suggested. An older child made a boulder-like lump of tin foil, fastened with tape and wool. She explained that she didn't know what it was, but it was exciting because "you don't know what's inside it." (fig. 9). A younger child (M) began bundling after unraveling a ball of wool. She noticed its neon pink against mint green tissue paper and folded them together. Seeing the results, she added more colors and textures, becoming more motivated as the object grew in complexity. M was especially invested in the production of the co-produced bundle. She happily contributed her smaller work to the pile and applied strip after strip tape, tethering woollen straggles. Construction was led completely by M. I followed her instructions to "turn it over" so she could add more tape. This task was important to her, and she seemed to gain satisfaction from the finished sculpture. Bundling binds together relationships between child and material. Objects emerging from their acts of play exert presence (fig. 10).

The bundle is an existing sculptural form. There are many examples which would provide a rich comparison, such as Yu-Wen Wu's *Leavings/Belongings* project which draws on associations of mobility and migration (51). This article, however, focuses on three artists: British artist Nnena

Kalu, and North American artists Mary Mattingly and Judith Scott. These sculptors do not employ co-production; their works are the result of sustained, self-driven practices. Each represents a different means of interpreting the bundle as a sculptural object, as well as raising questions related to "outsider" art and biographical influence. Mattingly's bundle sculptures offer a physical representation of the complex genealogies of familiar objects. She gathers personal possessions - books, CDs, clothing, technical equipment, furniture - into a bulbous, boulder-like form using rope. Judith Scott's bundle sculptures are predominantly understood as "textile" works, exhibiting a careful, decisive making process which are "woven" rather than "wrapped" (52). Ends of the securing yarns are carefully tucked into the form, resulting in a taught, cocoon-like surface. Nnena Kalu's works involve repetitive binding, using reels of plastic wrapping, video tape and clingfilm. They are driven by Kalu's need to "layer," "cocoon" and "start off rough and then tighten them up… ." (53), pinioning industrial materials into sensuous shapes (fig. 11).

These examples of sculptural bundles present three overlapping critical registers related to form, process and material. Firstly, each may be interpreted according to established sculptural frameworks revolving around form: they suggest density, weight, "mass," "horizontality," and "volume," a vocabulary developed by sculptors such as Barbara Hepworth and William Tucker (54, 55). Mattingly strategically deploys density, dragging the bundles around New York as a call to action against consumption and waste, stating that "seeing your objects one at a time doesn't have the same impact … the denser the objects are … the more of an ability there is to tell that story… ." (56), (fig. 12). Artist Alice Channer suggests that there is "no hierarchy between exterior surface and interior content" in Kalu's works (57), and Scott's sculptures similarly blur boundaries between interior and exterior with parts protruding from deep within, problematising the finality of a "finished" sculpture (58). Analysis of the bundle's form,

constraining disparate objects and materials as a singularity, emphasizes their conceptual richness as they fluctuate between stability and instability, thing and assemblage.

Secondly, the bundles are a compound of the linear chronology of making. Channer compares Kalu's work to Morris since they emphasize that "there are forms to be found within the activity of making as much with the end products." (59). Each of the bundle's component parts are still recognisable, from Mattingly's furniture, to Scott's yarn and found objects, to Kalu's video tapes. Similarly to Morris's literal manipulations, the visibility of these materials - transformed and yet untransformed - and the evidence of their assembling - wrapping, weaving, taping - enable us to understand them simultaneously as singular objects and unfolding acts of making.

Finally, material literacy opens another interpretation of the bundle. Mattingly's, Scott's and Kalu's sculptures are new materialist entanglements: they demonstrate that all objects, bodies and processes are inextricably interconnected. Juxtaposing surfaces, densities and temporalities jostle against one another. Shedding books strapped to glass screens, red yarn lacing gray plastic tubing, opaque gaffa cinching transparent cellophane. Component materials emphasize the qualities of others, enabling us to perceive their properties more viscerally, and interrogating the network of agencies they are embroiled in.

These three critical registers - form, process and material - may also be applied to the co-produced bundles. They are ripe for formal analysis - mass, volume, horizontality - as autonomous artworks in their own right. In this way, they are absorbed by sculpture's existing analytical language which permits them to occupy space in the discipline as well as artifacts from public art practice. In relation to process, the bundles are an agglomerative entrapment of creative acts. Expanding on individual manipulations of material, they gather together a multitude of experiments and encounters between children, parents and materials. Though

similar in concern to the aftermath, they solidify this landscape as a single form, assimilating it into interior and exterior and imbuing it with new formal qualities, straddling making environment and made object. From a materially-literate reading, they are catalogs of material affordances: floating toilet roll, lines of tape, meshes of wool, twists of pipe cleaners, scrunches of tissue paper and nuggets of foil. Viewing these agencies, acting with and against one another, ask us to perceive their qualities more sensuously. Across these three critical readings, the bundles make and unmake themselves before us as we interrogate them. They offer complex images for entanglements between human and non-human entities, contributing critical meaning across three layered yet intersecting critical models.

Biographical influence may also be explored in the context of the bundle: Mattingly, Scott and Kalu each draw differently from their personal experiences. Mattingly's possessions manifest her biographical narrative, purposely enfolding them into a sculptural form as a means of exploring consumption on a societal level. Scott and Kalu, however, present much more complex examples of biographical influence on the bundle. Both artists are differently abled: Scott was born with Down syndrome, and Kalu is supported by ActionSpace, a London-based charity working with learning-disabled artists. Their works may be associated with "outsider" art as they have not developed their practices through conventional education routes. Here, I am not suggesting that Scott and Kalu's practices are comparable to a preschool child's creative outputs: both artists clearly demonstrate a critical, skillful and intentional manipulation of materials, making careful decisions towards producing artworks (60, 61). However, examining these artists provides insights related to "outsider" art which are relevant to discussions of co-production.

Considering differently-abled or neuro-diverse artists as "outsiders" often limits critical approaches to their works, which may be more concerned with measuring their intention rather than analyzing the works' autonomous critical meaning (62). Academic Soyoung Yoon offers an

alternative model, suggesting that acknowledging Scott's biography positions the work as a form of generalized institutional critique. Scott spent a significant proportion of her life institutionalized, lacking any creatively stimulating experiences until she was relocated to the Creative Growth Centre, California, in her forties. She accessed facilities, equipment and support to pursue her practice. Acknowledging this dramatic shift in Scott's life "urges a method of seeing, of reading, which (re)discovers the "record" of a life, of lives, in our very perception of the work's shape, proportion, weight, entwining and clash of colors and textures, movement of binding and unbinding." (63). Scott's sculptures therefore document a resistant form of living, which manifests in their physicality.

Though Kalu's experiences are different to Scott's, her sculptures may also be read as an act of defiance, taking up space in the neuro-typical, ableist art world by discovering forms towards prompting new critical approaches. They remove the need for verbal explanation: Kalu's Artist Facilitator and Head of Artist Development at ActionSpace Charlotte Hollinshead observes that Kalu's making process enables her to "share what she's doing without having to overly communicate." (64). The formal properties of these works offer new ways of sharing knowledge through material-centricity, particularly if we consider the relationship between making and communication in Kalu's work. Oscillations between the autonomous object and the artist's biographical information compound formal and biographical information, extending critical readings of the work.

Yoon's attention to biographical influence unlocks another layer of value for the co-produced bundles since children and parents may also be categorized as "outsider" artists. However, returning to Hickey-Moody's discussions of children artists, we see their biographical perspective may influence meaning. Children are deeply attuned to their position in the world, the way they transform it and the way it, in turn, transforms them (65). Through traces of the

component parts gathered into the bundle, we can still perceive experimental acts of making by preschool hands, when the material world is felt so corporeally. Acts of bundling - gathering these smaller acts into one larger one - collect these multitudinal material encounters into a single form. Though they are only partially visible, they are contained and collide within the bundle, each one a colossal moment of wrestling with the world. Knowing that the bundles are produced by children and parents, then, does not diminish their critical potential. They may be interpreted as autonomous artworks aligning with models which prioritize form, process and material. However, acknowledgement of the different biographical experiences contributed by co-producers saturates them in different ways of being, thinking, feeling and making. Bundles are “very shapeable by all sorts of hands.” (66). Furling different intentions, experiences and narratives together into one sculpture presents new possibilities for critical analysis, layering observations related to form, process, material, biography and collective action. This permits the bundle, as well as other co-produced sculptures, to alternate between traditional artwork, material assemblage, and collective experience, ultimately providing new possibilities for approaching the complex, overlapping analytical registers of any made object.

Conclusion

This article has presented new forms for co-production in sculpture, analyzing two outputs from my residency at In-Situ towards identifying new approaches which contribute to and extend existing critical models. I posed three questions towards categorizing this task. Drawing concrete conclusions from this analysis, which has enveloped texts and ideas from sculptural practice, arts education and new materialism, I evaluate the findings in relation to these questions.

I first asked how might sculpture present existing opportunities for co-production in the context of material literacy? This question was addressed in discussing the relationship between

material, co-production and sculpture. New emphasis on material literacy implicates co-production, inviting entanglements of perspectives and experiences which reconfigure the making process as a collision of different sources of embodied knowledge. This was expanded on by considering children as co-producers, arguing that their materially-centric perspectives position them as valuable contributors to sculptural production as working with them may offer new and experimental methods. Analysing children's perspectives as valuable states for artists to occupy presents a broader case for other demographics to be involved in co-production by foregrounding different perspectives, experiences and knowledge. The value of material literacy is further cemented in the case study since materials which may be easily accessed, transformed and interpreted catalyze art making in different contexts.

Secondly, I questioned how the analysis of co-produced forms extends existing critical frameworks in sculpture? Comparisons between the aftermath with scatter sculpture and the bundle with examples from recent practice identified the critical potential of co-produced forms. Aligning the post-play aftermath with 1960s scatter sculpture revisits and revises intentions to position sculpture as anti-monumental and anti-establishment. It expands formless aesthetics as collective interaction with accessible materials which comprise the sculptural landscape, illuminating co-production as a strategy to generate forms which are fully egalitarian. Comparing and contrasting the bundle with works by Mattingly, Scott and Kalu emphasize the conceptual richness of the bundle as an autonomous artwork, presenting form, process, material and biography as tiered analytical registers which may overlap and deviate in many possible combinations and readings. In this way, co-produced sculpture is not ostracized from the specificities of the discipline, but synchronizes with and expands on forms, ideas, concerns and ambitions.

Finally, I asked what the implications are for positioning co-produced sculpture as critically important? These are numerous and vital. Firstly, understanding co-production as capable of making a distinctive critical contribution creates possibilities for alternative forms of knowledge, experience and production to occupy institutional and academic space. This democratizes access to visual art since it repositions sculpture within public art practice rather than ostracized from it. Secondly, co-production initiates a reciprocal relationship between artists and other producers involved in entanglements of making. As an artist, I gained many valuable methods, gestures, and forms from observing and interacting with preschool children and their parents. In this way, professional artists have much to gain by inviting others into the making process. Finally, if children contribute valuable insights to an object, then sculptural production may involve rather than segregate childcare and other "limited" circumstances. Artist-mothers, parents, caregivers, and artists approaching practices from alternative pathways may meaningfully participate, since co-production may activate all circumstances as critically valuable sites for sculpture making. This project embodies Thomas' and Hickey-Moody's observations that decentralising a Euro-centric, able-bodied, white, patriarchal cannon and creating space for alternative ways of thinking and knowing is a feminist practice since it disrupts hierarchies related to gender, class and ethnicity. This aim lies at the heart of this inquiry.

Overall, this paper has argued that co-production in sculpture is a rich, complex and nuanced field which has much to offer the discipline by continuing to explore new making methods, forms and critical approaches.

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