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## BEYOND JUNK : The complex art of valuehacking

In this paper we aim to explore how we, as arts practitioners, educators and makers, can find ways to construct, disseminate and put on display the often complex, and at times ambiguous, underlying methodological approaches of live, collaborative, practice and action-based research. Collaborative projects, like JUNK: rubbish-to-gold, which we introduced at the Making Futures conference 2015 (1) by necessity, see the intersection between multiple ways of thinking, seeing and making and often continue to evolve throughout the duration of a project. To be successful, a merging of methodologies, aesthetics and concepts is required that satisfies all involved while remaining concise and easy to understand for the audience. This is especially challenging when a project aims to address a layer of aims and objectives, for example a project where the audience are participants and at the same time the live project is part of an academic research project.

Alongside and inter-dependant is our interest in the dynamic of values in the transformation of materials, their bibliographies and contexts. While some would class the turning of one product into another as merely up-cycling, if reframed as valuehacking a more complex set of understandings arise. A valuehacker can be understood as someone who finds ways to intelligently apply their skill in a playful and exploratory way to reveal, and put on view, the shifting of values regarding materials, ideas or relational aspects, and so searching for innovative ways to negotiate, represent or communicate.

By moving beyond a simplified understanding of the up-cycled product, JUNK: rubbish-to-gold was a co-authored, collaborative project with multiple concepts, goals and manifestations. It sought to question and put on view, physically and digitally, the whole cycle of a material (JUNK jewellery (2)) from its production, consumption, disposal, deconstruction, reconstruction, possible revival, to the associated economies that are then subsequently developed around this process. This in turn poses the question how does one successfully navigate and incorporate complex dialogical relationships within the curation and publication of such a project? Are there ways in which we can valuehack complex, constantly growing projects as a means to find ways to clearly disseminate an evolving methodology?

In order to find a means of articulating this complexity, the proposed paper will include a re-reading of a passage in Kant's *The Critique of Judgement*, where he writes about the importance of not presupposing either a judgement of sense or one logically determinant, but one of reflection(3).

Key words:  
valuehack & value-hacking  
collaborative  
dialogic  
delight  
value  
materials

(1) <http://rubbishtogold.com>

[http://crafthaus.ning.com/group/junk-rubbish-to-gold?xg\\_source=activity](http://crafthaus.ning.com/group/junk-rubbish-to-gold?xg_source=activity)

<http://makingfutures.plymouthart.ac.uk/2015/journal-home/current-journal/workshop-papers/?id=1399>

(2) The JUNK jewellery was broken or unserviceable jewellery gifted to the project by a number of partnered charities, who in return received a percentage of the profits made from the redesigned pieces created as a result. For more about the project visit [www.rubbishtogold.com](http://www.rubbishtogold.com)

(3) Kant, I. (2004: 23) Book II. Analytic of the Sublime, Section I. Analytic of Aesthetic Judgement, in *The Critique of Judgement*, available at <http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/k/kant/immanuel/k16j/index.html>