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## Labour and Skill in Keith Harrison's Joyride

Debates around contemporary art over the last decade have featured an important and sustained exploration of labour as a concept. Much of this discussion has revolved around social practice and art activism, two developments that can be grouped within the diverse legacy of conceptual art. Rather than being understood as the 'form-giving activity' required for artisanal and industrial production, as was the case in classical Marxism, labour is identified in these debates with thinking, communication, and the performance or services: activities which are associated with so-called 'post-Fordist' capitalism. Influential upon this perspective has been the notion of 'immaterial labour' which has been popularized through the work of Italian post-autonomist thinkers including Maurizio Lazarrato and Antonio Negri.

This paper will explore the question of labour through the work of a practitioner whose activity spans the boundary between contemporary art and ceramics, Keith Harrison, who gave a keynote address to Making Futures, 2015. Harrison's current project Joyride, a Jerwood Open Forest commission, responds in a sophisticated and thoughtful way to changing forms of labour under post-Fordism, specifically the demise of the Longbridge production plant for Rover cars, as well as the interconnection of driving subcultures with regimes of pleasure and 'self-destructive' behaviour.

This paper will read Joyride, alongside Harrison's extensive body of work, as an ambivalent statement about processes of post-industrial deskilling. In one sense it is elegiac, referring to the loss of the craft skills that survived within certain kinds of industrial manufacture – the production of clay prototypes for Rover cars, for example. In another sense, it is affirmative of the communities that can assemble around a project that makes a virtue of spectacular failure: Harrison's plan to drive a clay scale model of the last Rover car to be made at Longbridge off a ramp in the middle of Cannock Chase Forest. This work, it is argued here, is an important emblem of the tensions that affect deindustrialized, post-Brexit Britain.