

Claire Barber  
University of Huddersfield

## The Train Track and the Basket

This presentation proposes the luggage basket as a travelling concept for the relations between craft making and transmigration. Through expressing the little-known mass movement of people through Hull during the period 1836-1914 I will consider the luggage basket as a place-holder for identities past and present through examining its own structure as a vehicle for conceptual thinking. Then I will reflect on how certain strategies of thinking-through-making are brought to the fore in the analysis of specific examples, through an exploration of the interconnectedness between materials and the landscapes they derive to the distancing of this relationship as the luggage basket travels to unfamiliar terrains. In turn, this cultural analysis provides the framework for my installation 'The Train Track and the Basket' developed at Hull Paragon Railway Station in the UK. The work was commissioned by Hull City of Culture 2017 providing me with the opportunity to respond to the context of indirect passage through Hull from the mid-19th century known as transmigration. During this period, more than 2 million people arrived into Hull by ship from mainland Europe, and left by train to the transatlantic ports of Liverpool and Southampton, seeking new lives in the New World. This movement of people, many of whom were in Hull for just a few hours, ended abruptly with the outbreak of World War 1.

Although it is debated that medium specificity is outdated in contemporary art practice, I hope to show how the symbolic language of woven structures and processes takes my creative practice towards a new conceptual possibility. I will lead an imaginative method based on the movement and fluidity of craft based techniques to assist an historical perspective of transmigration as a strategic gain within the project and the broader spheres of a life in transit.