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Communicating Archaeology through Digital Craft Practice: Extending the Object Life History Framework

"If we accept that mind and matter achieve co-dependency through the medium of bodily action, then it follows that ideas and attitudes, rather than occupying a separate domain from the material, actually find themselves inscribed "in" the object.

Thinking through Material Culture - Knappett, Carl

My current practice reinterprets archaeological material through digital and traditional craft practices; I explore how this hybridised approach potentially offers a new lens through which to view the past.

An object's biography is dictated by the journey it has taken and through the myriad interactions it undertakes. Over time both through human contact and varied technologies, raw materials can be perpetually shaped and transformed. I explore the post depositional life of the artefact and how through site-specific knowledge, conceptualisation and digital intervention, I engage with a new dimension to the life history framework.

Tremough in Cornwall is my case study; it has been a long-standing site of 'making' evidenced through three major archaeological investigations, which suggests that this is one of the earliest sites of metal casting in the UK. My reinterpetive works are based upon the prehistoric Tremough finds, which are stone moulds, bronze artefacts and ceramic sherds & vessels.

Artefact 'life history', or object biography suggests artefacts as a sequence of activities and interactions travelling through a suggested lifetime. This involves the procurement of raw materials, the manufacture or making process, and a final resting place in deposition after record, however life history might also include the reuse or maintenance of an object. I am affecting the life history of the Tremough finds through contributing to this sequence of interactions by proposing a continuation and reinterpretation of finds as a post depositional 'formation process.'

Reanimating objects or engaging a 'transformation,' creates an active material culture. To negotiate the place and use of the digital tool within this enquiry I strive to understand the relationship between people/technology and place over the *longue dureé*. By using digital tools it is possible to further enhance the material and work into it on a new level, allowing in some cases for the invisible to be made visible as part of the journey.

The objects therefore have unique extended biography, stretching out over time. I am suggesting a reconceptualisation of the object as a complex arrangement of interactions. It is interesting to think of both object, person and technologies as 'performative assemblages,' made up of a series of relationships and so I consider how people 'interpenetrate' in their understanding of the past through objects produced in the present.