DWELLING ON THE EVERYDAY: HOUSES, GHOSTS, ELLIPSES

Helen Hills and Alice E. Sanger

Abstract

This introduction sets out the rationale, themes and organisation of the special issue.

Keywords: artist's house, house museum, cultural tourism, neighbourhood, house, home, everyday, studio, dwelling, dispossession, pilgrimage, saint's shrine, relic
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Biographical note

Helen Hills is Professor Emerita of History of Art, University of York. She has published widely on baroque art and architecture and theory of architecture, particularly on the interplay of architecture, spirituality, gender, and social class in the long 17th century. Horrified by the complicity of art history with art and architecture in the work of marginalizing specific social groups depending on social class, poverty, gender, colour of skin, and geographical location, she has focused principally on women and on southern Italy, including Naples and Sicily. She taught at Queen's University (Canada), Keele University (UK), the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (USA), and the University of Manchester before moving to York, where she was the first ever woman professor of art history.

Alice E. Sanger is an associate lecturer and an honorary associate in the Department of Art History at The Open University. A former Rome Fellow at the British School at Rome, Alice has published on the devotional practice and art patronage of the Medici grand duchesses of the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and co-edited, with Siv Tove Kulbrandstad Walker, the anthology *Sense and the Senses in Early Modern Art and Cultural Practice* (Ashgate, 2012/ Routledge, 2018). She is managing editor of the *Open Arts Journal*.

Banner image: Detail from a view of the studio at the Barbara Hepworth gallery in St Ives, Cornwall. (Photo: Ed Clews / Alamy Stock Photo)

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Figure i.1: A carefully presented bedroom that meets expectations of respectability and august blood lines while dodging anything remotely risqué, courtesy of the National Trust: a bedroom, Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire. (The National Trust Photo library / Alamy Stock Photo; Chris Lacey)

The germ of the idea for this special issue started some years ago when Alice Sanger became intrigued by artists' houses and house museums, particularly the allure and apparent paradox of visiting famous people's former homes to be entranced with everyday objects. By 2020 when Helen Hills became involved, it was clear that we needed to address the ways in which scholarship – especially within art history – has approached this topic, together with its largely unexamined premises.

The house museum as tourist destination is a thriving industry. Scholarship, guidebooks, and coffee table books swirl around this industry, much of it uncritically. A particular fascination with places associated with creativity – artists' studios and writers' studies – marks these publications to the present (as the 2016 exhibition at the Petit Palais in Paris and its catalogue attest: Desveaux et al, *Dans l'atelier. L'artiste photographié, d'Ingres à Jeff Koons*). *The Guardian* ran a series, 'Writers' rooms: portraits of the spaces where authors create', between 2007 and 2009, which is now maintained on the newspaper's website, pointing to this enduring fascination.[1]

It is often assumed that a visit to the house of an artist or writer will necessarily reveal something about its erstwhile occupier that is ungleanable from any other evidence and that, in turn, illuminates key aspects of its owner's work as artist and crosses from 'public' into 'private'.[2] Many house museums epitomise the genteel life of a period, making for soothing visits evoking a nostalgic and comforting view of the past, more or less shorn of any unpalatable politics, not unlike what the National Trust achieved for aristocratic estates in the 20th century (Fig. i.1).

When it came to organizing a conference and to a related publication, while we were interested in a range of questions relating to artists' houses and museums,

1 https://www.theguardian.com/books/series/writersrooms (accessed 27.04.2024).

2 Bell (2013). A simple distinction between 'public' and 'private' is itself ideological and obscures the degree to which the production of the supposedly 'private' is a discourse that is public: arguably there is little that is more ideologically controlled and surveilled than the 'family' and the 'home'. Much of that discursive control is state-led through 'public' health and educational agencies, as Michel Foucault demonstrated, but the extent to which the ideology of the domestic as 'private' is produced by architectural theory, which also serves to police it, has been incisively demonstrated by Mark Wigley. Further discussion is offered below.

Figure i.2: The former bar of the Colony Room, Soho, London: erstwhile haunt of many artists and writers. (Alamy Stock Photo; David Sandison, 2005)

we were averse to perpetuating the celebratory elision of property and persona. The questions that guided us for the conference and that continue to most interest us include: what, if anything, can be gleaned about artists from the places where they dwelled that is not borne out by other evidence? Who else, including servants, family, children, friends, visitors, and lodgers, occupied, lived, or worked in so-called 'artists' houses' and how have their lives been recognized or erased? Is the house where the artist lived that which is really most at issue, given that this might not have been the place that they felt most at home? (Fig. i.2) And what of those who were not rich and who lived in places where they left few traces?

What are the origins of the artist's house museum? And to what extent and how do those origins continue to inform house museums and the assumptions of curators and visitors? (Fig. i.3 & Fig. i.4). What are visitors reaching for when they visit these museums?

In order to address these questions, we decided to include studies of homes of non-artists and of people who were not famous, so as to allow to emerge the peculiar ways in which artists and their houses are treated by curators, visitors and scholars. And as we did so, we became more intrigued by those places which are not celebrated but are quickly forgotten or ignored (Fig. i.5).

Hence we widened the call for papers, in somewhat Heideggerian terms, to include dwelling on the everyday, while retaining an emphasis on artists' houses, seeking to tease out what has been obscured in the scholarship. Our call for papers resulted in a symposium held online in July 2022 across two workshops. Contributors were drawn from a range of academic disciplines across the arts and social sciences, practitioners from architecture schools, artists, and museum curators. We chose papers from the workshops and invited others to complement them.

What is it in a house – whether of an artist or not – that holds or haunts us, how and why? In respect of artist house museums is this just a form of bourgeois property snooping, or of prying into other people's lives, a delusional search for intimacy?

We are interested in the sort of traces and touches that are left – intentionally or unintentionally – that sometimes strangely touch us. What are we to make of the strange and compelling coincidences that can take place, as another person's life crosses one's own,

Figure i.3: Kettle's Yard, Cambridge. The much enlarged and ever more white-cube-gallery-like presentation of the former home of collector Jim Ede and his wife Helen Ede. The Kettle's Yard website continues to attribute the arrangements to Jim Ede and to avoid engagement with the gender politics of this 'open' house and home. (Courtesy Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge; photo: Helen Hills)

indirectly or obliquely? 'The real dwelling plight lies in this' Heidegger proposes, 'that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that they must ever learn to dwell.' (1993, p.363). It is perhaps in searching for short cuts into how best to dwell that the torrent of visitors flock to museum houses.

But what are the risks associated with such temptations and enchantments? What role do matter and materiality, social class, gender, sexuality and racialization play? What of the sacred and sacrality? How might the houses and neighbourhoods that have been overlooked, destroyed, or occupied by adversaries, best be 'revisited'? How do the politics of erasure play out in relation to houses that have become formal museums and depend on tourism?

Much to our surprise, we found that scholarship on artist's houses barely touches on the origins and development of the institution of the house museum – which are, broadly speaking, 19th century – even though they are crucial to an understanding of many of their most significant and peculiar characteristics. It is important to address this lacuna. Hence the first essay, 'From Artist's House Museum to the Everyday', presents a brief history of the cult of visiting artist's homes and the emergence of the artist's house museum, along with an identification of the key features and themes of that scholarship and impulse, in order to establish a key historical, cultural and critical context for the essays that follow. That same essay also offers discussion of the term 'home', together with an analysis of recent scholarship on the domestic house in relation to gender – again, crucial themes, which have remained under-examined in the scholarship on the house museum in general and particularly on artist's homes. We hope that that work of identifying perennial themes and problems allows them to be more readily identified when they crop up (or fail to) in the other essays presented here, including those essays not directly concerned with artists' museum homes.

This special issue

The essays collected here investigate from diverse points of view the relationships between places where people lived and what is left behind, salvaged, celebrated, or overlooked, but may sometimes be reactivated in powerful and unpredictable ways by those who come later. These papers examine houses as homes, as shrines, places where people lived and what remains after they have left, and how those places are memorialised. The question of the burden of the past,

Figure i.4: The contrived presentation of the ostensibly casual and everyday. Pebbles meticulously arranged and dusted on a table. Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (Courtesy Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge; photo: Helen Hills)

Figure i.5: 36 Covent Garden, Cambridge: improvised blue plaques commemorate former inhabitants of this street who are not conventionally significant or famous (photo: Helen Hills)

its unfulfilled potential, and its painful obliterations, together with the ways in which these qualities may come to occupy houses and preoccupy their visitors (or vice versa), are key here.

Almost all the essays investigate – through diverse topics and methods – the ways in which the past resonates in houses no longer lived in, how it leaves its mark on places, and how people leave their mark on their dwellings, what traces are left and how they are celebrated, fetishized, banished or ignored. Which aspects of whose presence tend to get overlooked or even formally erased, by whom, and on what grounds? What are the risks of the temptations and blindspots of enchantment of the allure of famous people's homes? Might we learn as much (at least about ourselves) from the houses to which we do not readily respond?

Temporality as non-linear and occupying a significant but curiously unstable relationship with place plays out in strange crosscurrents and hovers in many of the essays in this volume, particularly those concerned with personal memory and the (contested) legacies of remembering or memorialising home and/or neighbourhood. Photographs often play a key role in these essays, raising further questions of interpretation, not least because photographs tend to present the rosier aspects of life and they tend to infiltrate and get confused with memories and can even restructure them entirely.

Organization of this special issue

This special issue is divided into three sections.

Section I, *Setting the Scene*, comprises this introduction and 'From Artist's House Museum to the Everyday' (Helen Hills), an essay which traces the prevalent practices and habits of house museum visiting and curation to the emergence of the practice of visiting artists' homes and the development of the institution of the house museum in 19th-century Britain amongst rich and famous male artists and middle-class visitors. It argues that the specific historical circumstances of the rise of both the practice of visiting artists' houses, and the growth of house museums, continue to haunt the institution, presentation and interpretation of house museums to a remarkable degree.

Section II, *Whose House is it Anyway?*, focuses on the contestation of place on social, political and racial grounds. It investigates disputed ownership of specific houses, power struggles over property ownership, the right to interpret the past, whose voice is heard,

and in what circumstances can marginalized groups speak and be heard. The first two essays investigate elisions created by the managing or curating of historic houses to privilege or contest hegemonic narratives maintained by the powerful. The second pair of essays dwell on the transformation of place that occurs when specific groups and their histories are violently destroyed.

Section III, *Paying Homage, Seeking Grace*, investigates relics, saints' shrines, and 'devotional' practices in relation to homes, celebrated and obscure, and investigates problems of attestation and presentation in relation to haunting pasts and absences. The first two essays consider shrines, for saints and for revered family members. The essays in the second part examine houses inhabited by more or less famous people to inquire whether a house can live up to its erstwhile inhabitant after they have departed, and, by extension, what it is about the life in relation to the house that comes to matter and how.

Individual Essays

Section II, *Whose House is it Anyway?*, Part 1: 'Contesting Curation and Curating Contestation' offers essays by Elizabeth Chew and Isabelle Priest, both of which challenge prevailing assumptions that iconic houses can adequately be understood by simply celebrating their founding fathers. Both scholars depart from the point that such houses depended on labour, paid or unpaid, to build and maintain them, an aspect conventionally conveniently overlooked in hero-house narratives. And both engage with the controversies and tensions that arise when these issues are evoked in curating house museums associated with famous men.

In their uncritical celebration of a single famous inhabitant, house museums tend towards the conservative and reactionary. Elizabeth Chew's contribution here traces the tensions that arose at Montpelier, Virginia, home of James Madison, 4th President of the USA, when Descendants of the Enslaved who built and worked in the house and plantation became involved in its governance. Racist attitudes took shelter behind default positions (masquerading as neutral) that the house museum is necessarily for the celebration of the erstwhile singular exceptional hero, regardless of the circumstances.

This contribution is the transcript of an interview conducted in July 2023 when Elizabeth Chew was Montpelier's chief curator. She focuses on the role of the Descendants of the Enslaved at Montpelier and the resistance – which hit the national news in the USA – to their enhanced role in the presentation and curation of the house, its collections and exhibitions. The discussion sheds light on racialising tensions in curating historic sites that were former places of enslavement across the eastern United States. Montpelier, established as a museum in 1987, has a long-standing history of working with Descendants of the Enslaved to incorporate their voices into the interpretation of the site, but in 2017 an exhibition, *The Mere Distinction of Color*, curated by Chew, which related stories of Enslaved individuals in the voices of living Descendants, ruffled some feathers. A few years later, ground-breaking efforts to create structural parity at the site – to share power and authority equally between Montpelier's governing body and Descendants – were thwarted by pushback from a faction within the institution's Board, leading to the firing of staff. Chew discusses this controversy and outlines the route to structural parity at Montpelier, eventually achieved in May 2022. Recognizing the role of Enslaved people in the presentation of houses which have long been recognized as significant in the history of the United States remains politically fraught and emotionally highly contested.

Isabelle Priest investigates the ways in which elite homes for artists in France in the interwar years, designed by acclaimed architect Le Corbusier, actively invisibilised servants. In a challenge to the heroicising narrative of architectural history that celebrates Le Corbusier's work in terms of modernist innovation, purist aesthetic, and modernism as supposedly inherently progressive, Priest demonstrates that these domestic buildings (Maison La Roche, Villa Savoye and the building in which Le Corbusier had an apartment, Immeuble Molitor) were far from progressive in social terms, by tracing the roles, working conditions, and accommodation of their domestic servants.

Priest draws attention to the paradox that while Le Corbusier is acclaimed as avant-garde progressive designer of modern buildings for modern ways of life, in point of fact the houses he designed – even for clients who were ostensibly culturally progressive – were conservative, even reactionary, when it came to their accommodation of servants. His architectural organization of domestic labour and social class amounted to systemic denial, effacement and subordination. Le Corbusier's much celebrated 'modernist' houses – built for those with supposedly little inclination for social conventions – radiating efficiency and cleanliness, were maintained by the semi-concealed labour of an old-fashioned servant class. The debasing architectural housing of these servants puts the lie to received notions that Corbusier's domestic architecture overthrew bourgeois stuffiness and obsession with social hierarchy in favour of a

progressive formal egalitarianism. This essay shows that the white and gleaming shiny surfaces, deemed by Le Corbusier to be modern and rational, actually required even more work than conventional surfaces and were anything but progressive and rational for those who had to clean them. Moreover, that domestic labour was undertaken by mostly female servants whose quarters were obscured, cramped and basic. Priest points out that this side of the coin is ignored both in the display of those houses open to the public and in the scholarship on modernism, both of which tend to maintain an illusion of a self-cleaning modern home, and thereby perpetuate uncritically Corbusier's self-serving narrative as socially progressive.

In the second part of Section II, *Whose House is it Anyway?*, entitled 'The Place of Memory', Rasha Saffarini and Robert Gaunt investigate memory and loss in relation to violent political eradication and cultural erasure to address ways in which lost places and photography structure memory and longing. They explore the power of place, the power of the place of memory and how lost places – especially places unjustly destroyed or appropriated – continue to haunt, possess and displace the dispossessed.

Rasha Saffarini's personal and poetic essay explores diasporic yearning and loss, circling around a grand and elegant house in Tulkarem, that once belonged to her family and which now stands inaccessible and abandoned, as a result of Israeli occupation of the West Bank.[3] The house – which Saffarini herself never knew – was built in the 1930s by her great grandfather, Zaki Saffarini, for Salah Al-din Amin Salah, mayor of Tulkarem – has been passed down in photographs and family memory and has come to assume a place of unjust loss, racializing destruction, and yet also a possible redemptive future. As the largest house in the area, it was peremptorily seized in 1946 by the British, who evicted Salah Amin and his family, in order to house one of their own generals. Salah Amin returned to his house on the departure of the British in 1948, but was soon forced to leave it again when he was driven into exile in 1959. In 2019, the house was purchased by the architect's grandson but he was not allowed by the occupying Israelis to use it. Saffarini's essay traces the obsessive haunting and fragmentation of belonging, longing, yearning, memories and loss of diasporic exile and is itself haunted by stories, proverbs, repeated and remembered, but not fully inhabited or owned. The experimental style of the essay evokes the splintering of the present and the past by eruptions of painful truths of what could have, should have, and might have been; and what, in future, might, should and could – but is extremely unlikely to be – in future – in the torsion of injustice and dispossession. The instability of any possibility of dwelling or even imagining a dwelling in an invaded, occupied and destroyed landscape and place is conjured by ellipses and aporia, citations and riddled dreams.

Robert Gaunt remembers, with unabashed longing and nostalgia, the working-class community and neighbourhood of Brinksway, Stockport, UK, where he spent his childhood until the area was slated for 'slum clearances' and his family moved away. A former centre of heavy industry for 150 years, in the 1950s and 1960s, industrial, factory, and mill life were already running into hard times. Once the family moved, their Brinksway past was disavowed with embarrassed shame. His essay therefore marks Gaunt's stepping back across that abyss of shame and dispersal to reclaim his place in and with that place that was his. He draws on his own memories, conversations with other former residents, and especially on the photographs of the people and rituals in the area taken by Michael Danyliw, an amateur photographer, resident of Brinksway, and refugee from Ukraine during World War II. The haunting of the past and the loss of place are doubled, the community dispersed; and the sense of community, its rituals and ways of life are doubly lost as Gaunt and others shifted into more middle-class ways of life elsewhere. Hence, Gaunt sees himself as an 'outsider' to his own past, looking on, rather like the enigmatic Danyliw. Gaunt insists on the photograph's capacity to record memories and even to 'resurrect' the past. Gaunt's memories and most of the photos are set not in the back to backs and under-dwellings, but outside, in the street. Home was the extended neighbourhood, including pubs, factories, schools, back gardens, outside toilets, scrubbed front steps, mill chimneys, and the mill sirens that marked lunch breaks. But three remarkable photos depict the Danyliw household indoors: Marika snoozing on the sofa, Mrs Danyliw in curlers – an apparently frank portrait of a woman with no illusions – and a more mannered image of himself at work, loupe in eye, expertly mending a timepiece at his desk. The essay returns particularly fondly to the Sunday School Rose Fête and Parade, a proud event, marked by the respectable members of the community, which culminated in the crowning of a Rose Queen. A highly gendered – even eroticized – and stratified matrix emerges. Danyliw's photos testify to a stark gulf between the smartly groomed and expensively adorned participants in the parade – purposeful and assured of gaze and step, accompanied by proud mothers –

3 This essay was written before Netanyahu's invasion of Gaza, 2023–4.

and the awkward, haphazard halting of the scruffy children, too poor to take part, who looked on from the sidelines. Gaunt's essay is a timely reminder of the rapid erosion of working-class culture and creativity and its precariousness in a country which continues to disparage it. One cannot help noting that this failure to value working-class culture is reflected in the fact the UK is almost unique amongst developed nations in still not having a state museum of folk art.

Section III, *Paying Homage Seeking Grace*, Part 1: 'Housing the holy' offers essays by Alice Sanger and Alessandra Batty which investigate shrines. Sanger tackles the miraculous flying House of Loreto, supposed home to Mary the Virgin Mother of Jesus, site of the Incarnation, and as such a particularly sacred place of Christian pilgrimage, while Batty examines small-scale popular shrines, including domestic shrines, at the other end of the scale.

Alice Sanger investigates the shrine at Loreto, an entirely exceptional home on several counts. This house, which occupies an originary role in the story of Christianity, flew from Palestine to Loreto – a sign of its miraculous nature. The Holy House is examined in terms of its allure to early modern pilgrims for whom even the house dust was precious. It is the setting in which the Annunciation took place and later the locus of the day-to-day life of the holy family. This essay probes the ways in which a tension between the extraordinary and apparently ordinary was negotiated and managed architecturally. Sanger shows that the early simple and unadorned qualities of the house, originally testament precisely to its necessarily humble yet divine origins, came to be steadily enriched with grand and aulic revetment and adornment, to celebrate the holiness of the shrine, show proper devotion to the Incarnation, and also to safely ensconce the holy in an upper-class register. In other words, the holy, initially housed in a poor and simple structure, came over the course of the 15th and 16th centuries to be accommodated like a king or a courtier, such that the holy as humble was unhoused to avoid its potential subversiveness socially and politically. In dealing with what is unhoused and chased out, as threatening to power interests on the rise, Sanger's essay resonates with those by Gaunt and Saffarini, despite the apparently stark differences in subject matter.

Alessandra Batty's examines informal shrines, 'dwellings of divinity among common folk', located both inside the house, often on a dresser in the principal bedroom, and outside on street corners, in order to investigate the role of women in their creation and care. The 19th-century Roman small-scale street shrines, located on corners or at entrances to neighbourhoods, mark informal devotional districts, and were erected and maintained by residents. As such, they simultaneously mark their residential neighbourhoods as devout and offer easy access for devotion in busy lives already overladen with work. These street shrines are usually devoted to the Virgin Mary or local saints, while domestic shrines present an array of photos of members of the family, now deceased. The astonishingly high number of street shrines in Rome – over 2,700 in 1855 – has dropped to less than a quarter of that number today. This is doubtless due to a decline in religious devotion in general in Italy, but also suggests that local neighbourhoods are no longer the live centres for informal and public devotion that they used to be (partly because of the relentless gentrification and touristification of the city of Rome). Batty relates the street aedicules to domestic shrines of family photographs of the dead, often set up in bedrooms or formal drawing rooms, both to honour the departed and to demonstrate the respectability of the family in terms of spiritual and domestic harmony. Street shrines and house shrines encourage and advertise the piety and respectability of their worshippers, neighbourhoods and families, and offer a special place for the divine and the dear departed to maintain their presence and relationship with the living amidst the hustle and bustle of everyday life, outside or in. Batty suggests that depictions by male artists of street shrines tend to present women as marginalized, which was not the case in terms of actual devotional practices. And it was and continues to be largely women who create and maintain, clean and dust domestic shrines. In both cases, the absence of an official priesthood or liturgy – traditionally the domain of middle- or upper- class and educated men – permits these shrines to serve to house and nurture female devotion, working-class affect, and family and neighbourhood pride in small but intense 'theatres' which were largely curated and orchestrated by women.

Essays by Edoardo Piccoli, Rosamund Cole and Helen Hills in Section III, *Paying Homage, Seeking Grace*, Part 2: 'Haunted Homes and Indices of Absence', examine hauntings of houses by former occupants. Central to their concerns are relationships between places of dwelling and the traces left behind, and how such traces satisfy, tantalise, and frustrate the latter-day visitor longing for connection with their former occupant.

Edoardo Piccoli's essay focuses on a modest rented flat in a working-class neighbourhood of Turin, used for many years as daily workplace by Franco Rosso, architectural historian, architectural draughtsman, and

friend and colleague of the author. Piccoli is concerned with the fleeting and the fragility of meaning and occupancy of both dwelling and possessions left behind after death. Having assumed, along with two colleagues, responsibility for documenting and ordering Rosso's archive for its conservation at the Turin Archive, Piccoli traces the process by which his initial sense of the flat and its objects as possessing an uncanny agency and continuity with Rosso's life was usurped by a recognition that this place had witnessed his mental decline and efforts to resist progressive amnesia, to an even more disturbing sense that the very work of ordering and curating was itself producing its own objects and subjects.

Piccoli poignantly contrasts Rosso's meticulous and elegant measured drawings, the product of many weeks of scrupulous field work and concentration, with his roughly scribbled notes and memoranda, pinned up on shelves and walls as aide-memoires, one testifying to the capacity to investigate and measure vaults hundreds of feet high and the other testimony to the loss of memory and control over daily life. The essay pays tribute to a judicious, frugal, and scrupulous work and world of its former inhabitant, at once down to earth and tangible yet also unknowable and far away. Friendship, collegial respect, and the recognition of the value and meaning of Rosso's work and possessions telescope in this essay forwards and backwards, inside and out, rather like the marvels of observation, imagination, and compression and expansion in scale, to be seen in Franco Rosso's formidable architectural drawings.

Musicologist Rosamund Cole investigates the soprano Lilli Lehmann's summer villa, which was built on the shores of the Mondsee, Austria, at the end of the 19th century. Lehmann, celebrated as the 'Berlin Nightingale' and a renowned expert on vocal technique, used her grand villa to shore up the hard-won successes of her career. On the one hand, the elegant rusticity of Mondsee provided a refreshing retreat from her professional life. On the other hand, Lehmann sought –not entirely successfully – to use her fashionable house to bolster her social status and marriage. In 2015 when Cole first visited, the 'Villa Lehmann', still privately owned, was largely as its original owner had left it. Cole's work was like that of a detective, searching the house and discovering long-overlooked and concealed documents and photos, which have subsequently been photographed and archived at the International Stiftung Mozarteum in Salzburg. Her essay provides the backstory to the house, its occupants and its collection, seeking to derive from the artefacts a sharper sense of life in the villa, the role of the house in the affair Lehmann's husband embarked on in it and the disintegration of their marriage.

Rejecting the notions that a person is coherent and the past reconstructible, Helen Hills challenges the common assumption that the artist's house is necessarily a representation of artist or/and their work to investigate the strange allure that visiting an artist or writer's house can nevertheless hold. She likens the practice to that of paying devotion to saints' shrines in the hope of miraculous insights or inspiration in a culture that elevates (certain) artists to the modern equivalent of glorified saints. Hills' essay focuses on a visit in the same day to two houses, Emily Dickinson's *Homestead* in Amherst, Massachusetts, and the house next door, *The Evergreens*, where Emily Dickinson's brother, Austin, lived with his wife, Susan Gilbert – probably also Emily Dickinson's lover. The first has been fastidiously curated in line with historical evidence and various notions of Dickinson the poet, 'a curiously exacting make-believe of time stopped still', while *The Evergreens* is an unnerving place in which past and present are open-ended, contradictory, fragmented and beriddled. Hills sets aside 'the puritanical belief in authenticity' to draw on Jean-Luc Nancy's notion of the portrait. For Nancy the object of a portrait is the absolute subject, 'detached from everything that does not belong to it', 'a taking place that is neither "interior" nor "exterior", but set toward and in relation': the face appears in the portrait only by way of 'the absence that resemblance precisely is' (Nancy, 2006, p.7, p.67). Hills uses this notion of the portrait to suggest that a visit to a house may bring into visibility something hitherto veiled or occluded precisely by the life and work (or ideas about them), as if the person remains in the house and has just stepped out. Hence a house may hold the subject insofar as they comported themselves to themselves, in private or in distraction. It holds the subject as accretion, a self-relation mediated through a departure from the self. Hills suggests that within a regime faithful to a clean order of linear history, the artist's house is inevitably reduced to a representational deadliness, and becomes little more than an institutional archive of a greatly extended single day. By contrast, an economy of salvation, that recognizes the possibility of presence in absence, that is open to time as non-linear, and that is able to resist representational imperatives, even while apparently depending on betrayal, might momentarily lift the veil.

Key Themes

Tensions and contradictions amongst the essays remain and it is not part of our project to erase these. Indeed, we hope they will lead to further investigation. Below we pick out some key issues.

House and Home

Is our focus on the home reactionary? Material feminists and socialist feminists long ago identified the home as site of oppression and patriarchal domination. There has been a vigorous and widespread critique of house and home in relation to sex, gender, and sexuality within feminist and queer theory.[4]

'The very regularity of home's processes is both inexorable and absurd', argues Mary Douglas, 'It is this very regularity that needs focus and explaining. How does it go on being what it is? And what is it?' (Douglas, 1991, p.287). Douglas suggests that 'home' is always a localizable idea (not 'how' or 'who' or 'when' but 'where') located in space, but not really a fixed space' (p.290). While Douglas fails to engage with the significance of the materials and materiality of the home, her insights about the tyranny of the home remain valuable. She argues that the ethnic domain of the home is 'structured domesticity', which 'creates its own time rhythms ... its own spatial effects and its own regulation of vision and perception of distance' (p.293). The home's technique is to use synchrony and order to protect fair access to the goods, movables and perishables. Synchrony and order 'effectively combine to show up delinquency' in a tangle of conventions and totally incommensurable rights and duties (pp.300–1). 'Even in its most altruistic and successful versions, [the home] exerts a tyrannical control over mind and body', because 'those committed to the idea of home exert continual vigilance on its behalf' (p.305).

Part of the reason for the emotional enmeshment of the house museum is that there are few words more evocative to bourgeois fantasy than 'home' and 'house'. 'Home' is a fragmentary and shifting concept, highly ideological and contested, and house and home are not identical (Mallett, 2004). Ranging from half-remembered nostalgic childhood homes, such as that conjured by Gaston Bachelard ([1958] 2014), to fantasies of family harmony, the cultural hegemonic notion of home as the bourgeois home is vital to a dominant USA-European imaginary and continues often unchallenged in the artist home museum (Harever, 1991; Hepworth, 1993).

J. Hollander has shown how Germanic words for home – *Heim, ham, heem* – derive from Indo-European *kei,* meaning 'lying down' and something dear or beloved, in other words, a place to lay one's head (2004, p.64). In English the term 'home' derives from Anglo-Saxon 'ham' meaning village or settlement. From the 17th century 'two kinds of moralists' displaced the earlier meanings of the term. The concept of 'homeland' was appropriated by the ruling classes to provide a form of nationalism and patriotism aimed at protecting and extending their land holdings, wealth, and power. At the same time, the idea of home became the focal point for a form of 'domestic morality' aimed at protecting and controlling familial property, land, women and children.

Corporate, capitalist, and marketing interests have informed, trespassed, pilfered, infiltrated, and exploited notions of house and home. Governments of advanced capitalist countries, including the UK, USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand have promoted the conflation of house, home, and family as part of an agenda to increase growth, shift the burden of responsibility for citizens' welfare from the state and its institutions to 'home' and the nuclear family (Mallett, 2004, p.66). Ideal Home exhibitions from 1950s on manipulated marketing techniques to sell commodities as pathway to happy homes. Notions of the ideal home often haunt the relationship between house and home (Chapman and Hockey, 1999).

The unself-aware but politically charged notions that continue to structure much writing on the house and home and the curation of house museums – idealized and exclusive conceptions of home as white, overwhelmingly middle class, harmonious, and socially respectable – have been challenged in terms of ethnicity, social class and disabilities by bell hooks (1991), Doreen Massey (1992), Madigan and Munro (1992), amongst many others (including Isabelle Priest, Rasha Saffarini and Robert Gaunt in this issue).

Despite the cultural significance and emotional weight of house and home, most people have very limited choice about the location or design of their houses, constrained as they are by governments, developers, architects, urban planners, politics, engineers, builders, interior designers and, above all, limited wealth. Yet the physical aspects of the house, including its location, design, site, and internal spatial configuration, have enormous impact on sense of identity, relationships, and patterns of interaction within and without (Saunders & Williams, 1998).

The extreme constraints of most people's houses may account in part for their fascination with the homes of social groups – including well-to-do artists

4 See, for instance, Butler (1993); Grosz (1994); hooks (1990); Young (1980).

– in possession of sufficient economic and cultural capital to shape their own spaces in a purportedly 'individualistic' manner (see the essays by Priest and Cole). Partly because housing is over-determined by external forces, the 'house' or 'home' emerges as an idealized object of fantasy. Tucker suggests that the 'ideal home' of memory or yearning is where one 'would be fully fulfilled' (1994, p.184).

The house, then, becomes the overburdened locus of the dream of fulfilment in capitalist cultures which have shifted emphasis away from communal engagement for the greater good to aspirational fantasy of individual lives providing their own complete satisfactions.

Memory and family, home and neighbourhood, loss and dispossession loom large in several of the contributions (Batty, Cole, Saffarini, Gaunt and Piccoli). Romantic and nostalgic conjurings of lost homes, whether of childhood or other forms of loss, often yield to a confused search in a sentimental journey for irretrievable time and place, a sort of religious pilgrimage to a lost and promised land (Gaunt, Cole, Hills). In turn, this may prompt a search for some sort of corrective authenticity. Doreen Massey usefully insists that there is 'no single, simple "authenticity" as unique eternal truth' of an actual or imagined or reinvented place or home that can be used as a reference either now or in the past (Massey, 1992; 1994). By its very nature place is provisional and in flux, as explored here by Piccoli (Hills, 2017–8, pp.39–65). Indeed, rather than fixed or static, as is so often imagined, places–including houses– are endlessly coming into being, slipping away, and resurfacing unexpectedly, sometime in heavy disguise. Boundaries between outside and inside are necessary unstable and permeable (here Gaunt, Saffarini, Priest). Identities and meanings of places, houses and homes are inevitably plural, constructed, and contested (here Saffarini). Just because memory is unreliable, remembering homes lost and dreamed is not necessarily reactionary or to be sneered at (here Gaunt). As Marcel Proust showed, remembering the past can illuminate and transform the present (see also hooks, 1991, p.19; Massey, 1992, p.14).

What is evoked by house and home depends on cultural norms and individual fantasies, which are also culturally specific. Indeed, much of the scholarship has been dominated by an un-self-aware middle or upper middle-class voice and outlook (Jones, 2000, is a case in point). Many diasporic, marginalized, traveling and nomadic peoples do not assume that home is settled or safe or private or sharply differentiated from the outside world (here Saffarini). For the Warlpiri of the Tanami Desert in central Australia, home traditionally is where one hails from and the places where one has camped or stayed over the course of one's life (Jackson, 1995, p.22). Sara Ahmad (1999) has usefully challenged the oft drawn distinction between 'home' and 'away', arguing that they are not oppositional terms, that home encompasses movement and strangers, familiarity and strangeness, inside and out. Indeed, Sigmund Freud long ago pointed out that canny and uncanny are both homely and unhomely experiences.

Private / Public

The terms 'house' and 'museum' tend to be regarded as in tension with its apparent dualisms of private/public, universal/particular and mundane/exceptional. But it was 19th-century ideology that largely generated notions of the house as a 'private space', a retreat from the demands of the 'public' outside world, including the world of work (Dovey, 1985). And it is not coincidental that this was the key period for the house museum. Although any simple distinction between private and public has long been challenged, especially in relation to the domestic house, it readily re-emerges in discussions of 'homes' and of the house museum.

Material feminists long ago were troubled by and sort to address the distorting power of this powerful ideology in the domestic realm. Consider Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1903:

> Let us begin with one especially dominant domestic myth, that fondly cherished popular idea – "the privacy of the home." In the home who has any privacy? Privacy means the decent seclusion of the individual, the right to do what one likes unwatched, uncriticised, unhindered. Neither father, mother, nor child has this right at home (Perkins Gilman, 1910, copyrighted 1903).

Before industrialization, most paid work was undertaken in the household and a distinction between where one lived and where one worked did not hold (the cardinal entertained distinguished visitors in his palace which was his home including even in his bedroom). Historians, sociologists, and geographers have successfully dispelled the notion of a distinction between domestic and workspace, private and public; and the notion of home as haven has been rightly chased out the back door (here see the essay by Priest).[5] The unequal division of housework–unpaid and unending – that unfairly burdens women and continues in most households, was first examined systematically by Ann Oakley in 1975. One person's haven or 'shrine'

5 Duncan and Edwards (1996); Tosh (1996); Hepworth (1999), Jones (2000); Wardaugh (1999).

is place of thankless toil for another. And for many women, children, immigrants and illegally trafficked people, 'home' is a site of deprivation, abuse, violence, fear, imprisonment, and torture.

Scholarship to date on artists' houses has focused overwhelmingly on western European bourgeois notions of the house. Essays in this collection challenge those currents in multifaceted ways (Saffarini, Priest, Batty, Sanger). Curator Leslie Umberger has provided a useful corrective to the overwhelming emphasis in art history on upper class artists and commercially successful artists' homes, by investigating instead vernacular artists and their domestic and urban interventions. After all, the house is not necessarily where even its inhabitants feel most at home. The home is the site of much abuse and violence. Power relations and the complex ways in which they are architecturally imbricated are too often overlooked or over-simplified.

House as Engendering Gender

It is an ideological effect of domestic architecture and its theorization that it appears merely to house what it in effect produces, as Mark Wigley (1992) has brilliantly demonstrated. The house is the very institution which most sharply produces respectable masculinity by demarcating it as that which is maintained by labouring outside it and respectable femininity as that which is protected by its walls. The house serves to reproduce patriarchy, the labour force, and consumers for the market. And it is the very cradle of the generation of gendered difference.

Gendered assumptions have long infiltrated the design and theory of domestic architecture, mostly invisibly and insidiously, as cogently shown by Wigley (1992; 1993), Marion Roberts (1991) and others (including, Hills, 2004; Durning; Madigan & Munro, 1999). However, liberal and architectural determinist approaches continue to ignore issues of social relations and power imbrications. Even while Michel Foucault demonstrated that power relations are imbricated spatially, he overlooked gender.[6]

Feminist scholarship initially focused on the gender of architects or clients in order to identify gendered imperatives. They investigated houses designed by women architects for themselves and the implications for domestic design of feminist materialism (Hayden, 1981; Wright, 1977; Weisman, 1996). Scholars examined houses designed by male architects for female clients hoping to uncover gendered assumptions (Bryden and Floyd, 1992; Crum, 2001; Friedman, 1997, 1998; French, 2003). Hence Farès el-Dahdah and Stephen Atkinson (1995) interrogated the Josephine Baker House in Paris in relation to architect Adolf Loos' pleasure. This early work was marked by an assumption that gender and gendering was inscribed in the person of architect or client and would therefore emerge in the architecture as a result.

The imbrications of masculinity and the house or 'home' remain too often unmarked, while discussions of 'gender' are too often restricted to discussion of women. Even where it occurs, the investigation of masculinity and architecture tends to remain somewhat unnuanced (Anderson, 1999, pp.130–53; Wagner, 1996, pp.183–221). The critical investigation of the inscription of masculinities in domestic architecture has received far less attention than that of femininities; unmarked masculinity still tends to be casually overlooked.

Scholarship focused directly on masculinity and architecture has tended to concentrate on gay sexualities (Hatt, 2007, pp.105–28) and, while this is important, the continued neglect of heterosexual masculinities still weakens interpretations of domestic architecture and 'home'. Davidoff and Hall in their fundamental study *Family Fortunes* (1987) offered ground-breaking analysis of questions of gender and social class in this regard. The imbrications of social class and colour of skin in spatial relations of power and how they manifest in domestic architecture have been explored by bell hooks (2000) and others (hooks, 2000, pp.203–9; Neely & Samura, 2011).

Most house museums are associated with famous men, but the scholarship tends to blithely disregard unmarked masculinity and the politics of gender. Several essays here focus on women (Cole, Sanger, Hills, Batty, Priest). More significantly, some expose gendered and classed dimensions in play (Priest, Gaunt, Batty). Hence Priest explores the gendered and classed relations produced by house design by tracing the presence of servants – mostly women – in houses that are better known for their famous architect and privileged inhabitants. Gaunt's essay on the Rose Queen exposes the gendered work of maintaining and parading working-class family respectability and its ideals of nubile femininity; and Batty's essay sheds light on gendered devotion in street and home.

House as Shrine

In an essay of 1904, Virginia Woolf tested the idea of a visit to Haworth as a 'pilgrimage'. Indeed, houses of artists and writers are often treated like relics or holy shrines by fans and scholars. Sanger's investigation of

6 For the inscription of gender in spatiality see Massey (2000). For a brilliant discussion of these issues in relation to visual art, see Pollock (1998).

a relic that is a house sheds light on the way that the notion of preserving a precious relic is at odds with the radical material changes carried out on the fabric of the House of Loreto; Hills argues that the tendency to sanctify or celebrate the artist in the house museum depends on a notion of 'already knowing' that artist, which then generates modes of presentation that are based on representation, and which in turn inevitably tend to work to betray their subjects. Batty investigates informal shrines of saints in streets in Rome and *altarini* of deceased family members in private houses, to suggest that invocations to saints and evocations of the dear departed have much in common.

The notion of home as shrine and place of sanctity haunts the very institution of the house museum, especially the homes of creative artists, and it is important to approach it critically. Maintenance of that shrine depended disproportionately on unpaid female domestic labour. Material feminists recognized this issue as central to any construction of 'home' from the 19th century on. Thus, Charlotte Gilman in 1903:

> The later sentiments of sanctity and the others have moved a little, but not much. *Why* it is more sacred to make a coat at home than to buy it of a tailor, to kill a cow at home than to buy it of a butcher, to cook a pie at home than to buy it of a baker, or to teach a child at home than to have it taught by a teacher, is not made clear to us, but the lingering weight of those ages of ancestor-worship, of real sacrifice and libation at a real altar, is still heavy in our minds. We still by race-habit regard the home as sacred, and cheerfully profane our halls of justice and marts of trade, as if social service were not at least as high a thing as domestic service. This sense of sanctity is a good thing, but it should grow, it should evolve along natural lines till it includes all human functions, not be forever confined to its cradle, the home.

Gilman recognizes that the domestic shrine was a sacrificial altar for female labour and women's intellectual and creative fulfilment:

> The domestic hearth, with its undying flame, has given way to the gilded pipes of the steam heater and the flickering evanescence of the gas range. But the sentiment about the domestic hearth is still in play. The original necessity for the ceaseless presence of the woman to maintain that altar fire–and it was an altar fire in very truth at one period – has passed with the means of prompt ignition; the matchbox has freed the housewife from that incessant service, but the *feeling* that women should stay at home is with us yet.

Housing the Everyday

In order to shift the focus away from celebrating the great genius and collapsing house-work-and-artist into one, we turn to the everyday, partly because it is so often the everyday that visitors to artist house museums seem to respond to (or to look for).[7] While 'the everyday' has been pursued as a means to resist top-down, aulic, and upper class perspectives of cultural life, a key question must always be '*whose* everyday?' In this special issue, this question is explored by Chew, Piccoli, Gaunt, Priest, Batty, Saffarini and Hills. Others address houses that are as far from the everyday as it is possible to be – a lavish villa in an area of prime property for the successful (Cole), and an aulicized house, formerly supposedly humble, lived in by a Virgin mother (Sanger). As such, those essays tend to follow canonical notions of what constitute houses worthy of study, while nevertheless looking anew at these sites.

The notion of housing the everyday, as it intersects variously with neighbourhood, familial obligations, remembering and forgetting, loss and dispossession, is pursued in all the essays here. We are not under the illusion that the 'everyday' is innocent or provides access to 'authenticity'. Foucault brilliantly demonstrated that the everyday has been invaded by scrutiny in the effective governance of social subjects. The simple claim that everyday life is 'authentic' and resistant to hegemony or dominant forces fails to recognize this infiltration of everyday life that has been underway for centuries and that is exercised in relation to sexual practices, hygiene, family life, work, diet, education and health – and, above all, the house and home. The Rose Queen parade in Gaunt's essay also reveals systems of coercion that 'respectability' exerted on the inhabitants of Brinksway and their asymmetrical pressures in terms of gender. Despite the cosy memories, the status of the respectable depended on the exclusion of the unrespectable, and the excluded show up at the edges, unmoored and drifting through Danyliw's photos, unidentified and marginalized.

'The everyday' is recalcitrant, opaque, and often obscure. Freud long ago observed that the everyday is both real and fantasy, actuality and its guise, the home site of the canny and uncanny. It is certainly not as it appears to appear. It occupies a realm of desire

7 Thinkers dealing with the everyday include, Day (2006), de Certeau (1984), Freud ([1901] 1961), Goffman (1959), Heller ([1984] 2016), Lefebvre ([1991] 2014), Smith (1987), Steedman (2005), Williams (1989). Also see, Gardiner (2000).

and fear, however much social propriety may require ritualistic and socially sanctioned practices designed to smother or detract from disturbing desires and fearful qualities. Karl Marx usefully challenged the notion that one can simply grasp the everyday that one dwells in and his insights remain useful (if little heeded). Marx dismissed idealist notions of readily grasped worlds, whether exterior or interior and described the self's understanding of culture as an illusion. For Marx ideology is a product of social and economic relationships and processes, rather than the result of mere reflection or thought. The way that the world appears to each person is the outcome of the particular material circumstances in which they live. While there is a relationship between the material conditions of everyday life and the way it is perceived, this relationship is distorted: 'if in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process' (Marx & Engels [1846], 1985, p.7). That is, the appearance of everyday life works to obscure the material circumstances – crucially the division of labour, the fetishism of the commodity – that gives rise to that distortion. This ideological outlook structures and conditions the way people live. Hence ideology cannot just be cast off by taking a second look. This is why the everyday must be considered in relation to the material circumstances of its production (Gaunt, Saffarini, Piccoli, Priest).

Micro-sociologist, Erving Goffman (1990) argued that individuals perform very differently, depending on contexts that they are in. These plural performances of self challenge the very idea that there is a stable unified individual to which a narrative biography or identity can be simply ascribed. While some assume that everyday life is mundane, routine, humdrum and repetitive, Michel de Certeau ([1984] 1988) argued that the everyday is practical, supremely singular, and capable of resistance to disciplinary regimes. Certeau rejects Goffman's dependence on the notion of the 'individual' as useful point of departure. For Certeau the social individual is too heterogenous and networked to form a useful basis for the analysis of everyday life. Not fully controllable or open to direct observation, the everyday is rather a realm of practice that is always irreducibly specific. He addresses the everyday not in terms of content, but in terms of 'form'. Saffarini's essay leans closest to this approach, despite the deprivation of any sort of 'everyday' contact with the house that is at the heart of her essay.

'But what sort of sense is constitutive of the everydayness?' asks Michael Taussig, 'Surely this sense includes much that is not sense so much as sensuousness, as embodied and somewhat automatic "knowledge" that functions like peripheral vision, not studied contemplation, a knowledge that is imageric and sensate rather than ideational'. Taussig's approach intersects with aspects of shimmer in the essays by Piccoli, Saffarini, and Hills which may appear to risk a return to romanticizing riffs. (Taussig 1992, p.14). But the estrangement of the everyday is a crucial part of it.

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