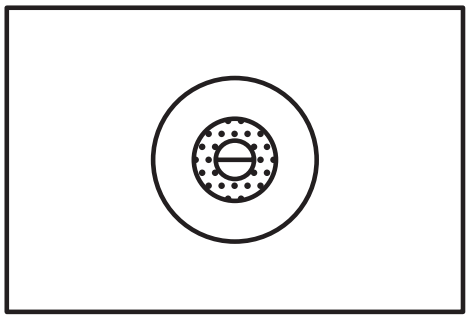
How to Research

Looking as Research

Anna Lucas



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How to Research

Developed in conversation with artists and teachers, *How to Research* invites consideration of the meaning and value of research within art practice. By championing research as an integral tool for developing students' individual voices and lines of enquiry, this resource aims to support engaged, contextualised, thoughtful investigations into and alongside art and artmaking.

A series of booklets, *How to Research* is designed as a collection of prompts to inspire ideas for research in the gallery, classroom and everyday life. Each booklet is devised by a different artist with a specific focus that shares their particular thinking and approach to research in response to a brief posed to them by the Tate London Schools and Teachers team. This booklet, devised by artist Anna Lucas, takes 'looking' as the focus for how to research.

How to Research booklets provide clear yet in-depth examples of what research might look like for artists and students. The booklets offer creative strategies to support a broad range of Art & Design curriculums at GCSE, BTEC, AS and A Level. They allow space for you to use your expertise to adapt the activities to suit the needs of your students, and to expand the ideas within them in ways most relevant to their chosen subjects.

The contents page of each booklet contains the original brief, which we invite you to set for your students as a way for them to generate their own research – with the booklets modelling a variety of artists' responses. Alongside providing artistic inspiration for completing the brief, we hope that the artists' responses will also act as springboards for further research exercises in the classroom. We have included discussion points and activities to support students to expand their research in this way.

By celebrating research as rhizomatic[1], non-linear, formless and continually forming – we want to position research as characterised by the process of ceaselessly establishing connections between ideas, individuals, artworks, experiences, materials, text and images. By advocating that these connections are different for every individual, we hope to support students to engage in forms of research that are unique, responsive, useful and exciting to their own development as artists.

[1] *Referencing Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome – "the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entranceways and exits and its own lines of flight." (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21). The rhizome presents itself as a map or wide array of attractions and influences with no specific origin or genesis, for a "rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo." (p.25)*

Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari, Félix. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia* (Brian Massumi, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

The following is the brief we set artist Anna Lucas and it structures this resource:

Pg	
10	An image of something you have in your studio, something that you are currently using to make art
4	An image of your work
6	An image of an artwork in the Tate collection
12	The connection between the three images you have chosen – this could be a written explanation, an annotation, a drawing, another image etc…
13	A process that you undertake to help you think/research/progress ideas
24	A quote or textual reference that informs your approach to making art
22	A question you would like to pose to students/teachers to initiate research

TO DO: You will notice that Lucas chose to answer the brief nonsequentially. This choice resonates with her approach to making art. When responding to the brief yourselves you may also wish to respond in an order of your choice.

4 An image of your work

The problem here is that I find it very difficult to choose one image.

There are multiple strands to my work and a single image takes me in one direction or another, which doesn't allow for the new meaning that comes from a juxtaposition of images.

Most of the time I see as a filmmaker; at a rate of 25 photos per second, with sound and movement. A single still, silent photographic image is a real challenge for me to make as it involves a very difficult selection process and would not (in conventional photos) necessarily incorporate a combination of images as an edit in film allows.

The image of my work that I have chosen is a photo of a photo, taken recently in my studio, but of an image taken quite a few years ago. It's a sort of still-life sculpture, but it also incorporates some edges (physical boards, leaning against one another), relating to the way photos get piled up on my desk.

TO DO: Try taking a photograph of one of your artworks to represent all the art you are making. What does it mean to represent your art with only one image? How does taking a photograph of an artwork change the way you look at the artwork? In pairs, spend five minutes talking about your work through the image you have taken. Record what this process reveals to you about your current working practice and interests. What is lost? What is found?

5 An image of your work

Anna Lucas,
Still lights series,
2014. Colour
C-type print, 6x4".



6 An image of an artwork in the Tate collection

As hard as it was for me to decide on a single image of my work it is also very difficult to select a single artwork from the Tate collection that can encapsulate a concise relevance, a set of references and sustained enjoyment.

I was going to choose the series *Photograph of Photograph* by Jiro Takamatsu (1972-1973). The images in the series are not just single images though. Each one is a photograph of another photograph. In some cases the photograph within the photograph also has reflections in it. So maybe they contain at least three images in one.

I like the fact that the photograph being photographed is often disrupted by light or shadow so you can't see the full subject of the image, or seen another way, you are being asked to see the subject of the image not just as a picture but as an object: to see the surface of a photo; glossy and reflecting the space around it, curling a little at the edges and positioned on another surface.

The first time I saw *Photograph of Photograph* my reaction to the work was immediate and instinctive, chiming at a particular point in my practice when I was beginning to reconcile an interest in my own archive of still photographs, with my interest in moving image.

However, in another mood I might have chosen Richard Tuttle's *8th Paper Octagonal* (1970) or Fischli and Weiss' *Son et Lumière* (1990), which may not even be in the collection…



Jiro Takamatsu, *Photograph of Photograph*, 1972-1973. Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper.



Richard Tuttle, *8th Paper Octagonal*, 1970. Bond paper, wheat paste.



Peter Fischli David Weiss, *Son et Lumière*, 1990. Projection with kinetic objects: torch, turntable, corrugated plastic beaker, adhesive tape approx. 40 x 80 x 50cm © Peter Fischli David Weiss, Zürich 2015. Image courtesy of Sprüth Magers, Matthew Marks Gallery, Galerie Eva Presenhuber Zürich.

8 An image of an artwork in the Tate collection

In the end I have chosen Lothar Baumgartens, *I Prefer it There Better than in Westphalia – ELDORADO 1968-1976 (Candide, Voltaire)*.

Opposite is an image of the artwork in the catalogue *An Aside. Selected by Tacita Dean*[1], from the exhibition at Camden Arts Centre, where I first encountered this work.

I Prefer it There Better than in Westphalia is a slide carousel of images made over several years in an edge of town swamp area of Westphalia in Germany. Lothar Baumgarten has intervened quite minimally in the landscape, making alterations to existing discarded objects in order to imply an exotic forest. He has also manipulated location recordings to form a soundtrack that sounds like the rainforest.

I love the slow shift from one image to the next, accompanied by this convincing soundtrack, which enables you to inhabit the landscape. I always like the slide-tape format, in the sense that it sits between stills and film – you have darkness, movement as a rotation, but static images to reflect upon, sound, and time, but with a pace that allows a very different experience. You do not see images butted together, but separated by the blink of the shutter, and the sound of the projector providing a different rhythm.

Picking up the catalogue for the *An Aside. Selected by Tacita Dean* exhibition, I also realised how many other artworks I have enjoyed or been influenced by from that show. In reading more, I also learned, or re-learned, that the curatorial process was a process of what Tacita Dean refers to as 'objective chance', André Breton's term[2].

I often use what I call 'calculated chance' in my filming. This relies not so much on coincidence, as a partial notion about where I am heading with plenty of uncertainty, which keeps me curious. Tacita Dean acknowledges very freely how one thing led intuitively to another in selecting the work for the show, and she writes in a fluid and honest way about this, including informative anecdotes and autobiography. It felt reassuring and refreshing to re-read about her process in the making of this resource.

[1] Tacita Dean, *An Aside: Selected by Tacita Dean*, Hayward Gallery Publishing, London, 2005.
[2] André Breton, *Conversations: The Autobiography of Surrealism*, trans. Mark Polizzotti, New York, 1993.



TO DO: Take a photograph of a photograph, either on a screen or a printed picture. What do you see now that you couldn't see in the original image? What happens if you repeat this process – how does the actual photograph itself (not what it is picturing) start to become visible, and is this interesting to you? How do you identify what is of interest to you? How quickly do your interests change? Can you map out your changing interests through artworks/artists you have been drawn do? What can you learn from your map about the way that you are currently looking at art and what questions does the map raise for you?

10 **An image of something that you have in your studio, something that you are currently using to make art**

At first I didn't want to use an image of books as it's a bit of a cliché. I wanted to find something a bit more interesting… but I kept returning to the books.



11 ***A note on the word 'studio'***

I only got a studio a few years ago when having a child meant my practice became more fragmented and closer to home. But having a physical space, however luxurious, has also made me think about how many other things 'studio' might mean. And that it is perhaps as much a frame of mind, as a single space.

So if studio means a place I think, and make work, then it needs also to include being on trains (as I am now), and in the swimming pool, and being with art in books and galleries, or in the cinema. It also needs to include conversations with other people, most often other artists who help ideas coalesce, progress or take a new turn, and who reassure me with the direction I am taking.

Over the summer I had a really productive time in this 'studio' in which my first thoughts about these questions took place:

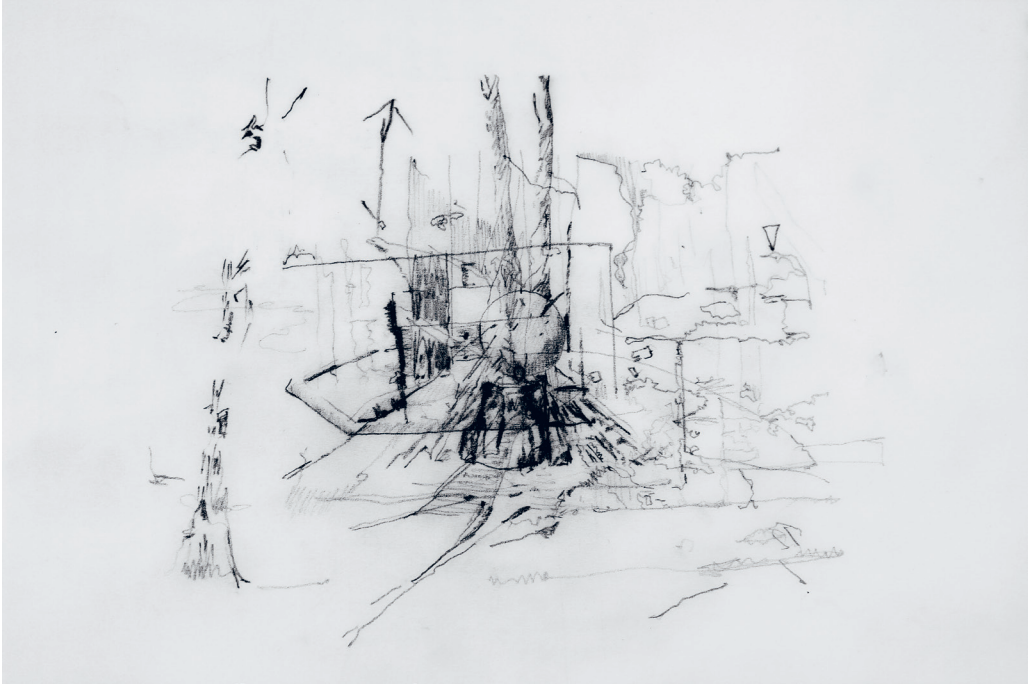
TO DO: Thinking about Lucas' response to the idea of studio as a more varied, fluid set of spaces in which artists make work, hold a group discussion about what you think constitutes 'studio'. Make a list of all the varied spaces you have made work in.



12 The connection between the three images you have chosen

One thing I do to understand the images I am interested in, is to draw them. Sometimes I trace them. I like the sense of graphite on tracing paper and the way in which I can think about the image whilst tracing. It's quite a passive activity, which liberates my thoughts, and also focuses my listening.

I made this tracing whilst listening to a soundtrack for a new film I am finishing called Art School. It felt right to be making the drawing to a soundtrack of studio and workshop sounds of people making art.



TO DO: Lucas uses this process to get to understand her art, to get to know it. Do you think the significance of the process is in the act of drawing, or in the time spent concentrating on the images? Do you think there is any significance in the 'ease' of the process Lucas has chosen? Try the tracing process for yourself using your own images or images that you are looking at for ideas. How does the process change your relationship to the original images and what new forms and ideas emerge?

Other than drawing, what other processes and media could you use to echo or 'trace' images? Experiment with these, and discuss how the processes you choose affect what you produce.

13 **A process that you undertake to help you think/research/progress ideas**

The 'photo story' (overleaf) is a series of top shots taken whilst I was working at my desk selecting and juxtaposing photographs. It relates to my work *Opi 21, Oopsy Daisy, Tiger Lily* (2014), in which I filmed a series of 6x4" photos being moved and arranged. It connects to the ideas of photo of photo, photo as object, movement and sequence.

Anna Lucas,
Opi 21, Oopsy Daisy Tiger Lily, 2014.



I use this process as a way of seeing what goes with what… what works next to, on top of, and alongside? What new meaning and understanding is generated for me through the continuous process of moving images around? How fast or slow should they move, or should I work? What interventions are useful? How can I show I am looking all over and around the image?

It is not a linear process, but a three dimensional one. It looks very flat, and I find flattening things very helpful to see them objectively, but at the same time the experience is very spatial. There is the depth of the space photographed, the thickness of the photograph, the height of the image pile, and then the space around me, delineated audibly by birds, and aeroplanes, neighbours, ambulances and the town hall clock. And there is also the changing effect of light, which disrupts the image through movement, shadow and reflected light.

I don't want to name the connections, but I can feel them.









.....[*Plane overhead – east to west*].....















Is it about formal concerns, lines and colour?

What are the edges doing?





.....[Phil calling his dog]....[ ]....[ ].....



TO DO: Look at the photo story. Look all over and around the image. What connections can you feel? Choose a selection of images – your own or found – and try out the process for yourself. What questions does the process generate for you? What is it about this process that is actually generating the questions? What questions do you ask yourself as you develop an idea? Try out another research or artistic process that you are familiar with and write down all the questions it generates for you. Share your questions with each other. What do your questions say about your approach to making art? What do they reveal about what is most important to you? How would you go about researching these questions in a different way?



[Next door's

What connects these?



parrot]

When will the process end?

Which images shall I commit to?











22 A question you would like to pose to students/teachers to initiate research

In answering this part of the brief, I thought of Hollis Frampton's 1971 film *(nostalgia)*. It is a film about many things: time, photography, friendship and noticing: enough to warrant a book about it[1].

It takes the very simple premise of burning a set of twelve photographs on an electric ring. Each photograph is described anecdotally, in a deadpan voice-over but the description is offset from the image you are looking at and relates instead to the image you have just seen. So you are always trying to remember an image that you have just seen burning up whilst listening to a description of an image you have not yet seen. The last image described is not revealed. In the film a narrative tension is built through the last description, but for me the last words of the film pose the viewer a far wider fundamental question about visual perception, and our different interpretations of what we see. The final words from nostalgia are:

Here it is!
Look at it!
Do you see what I see?

My first question would be the same:

Do you see what I see?

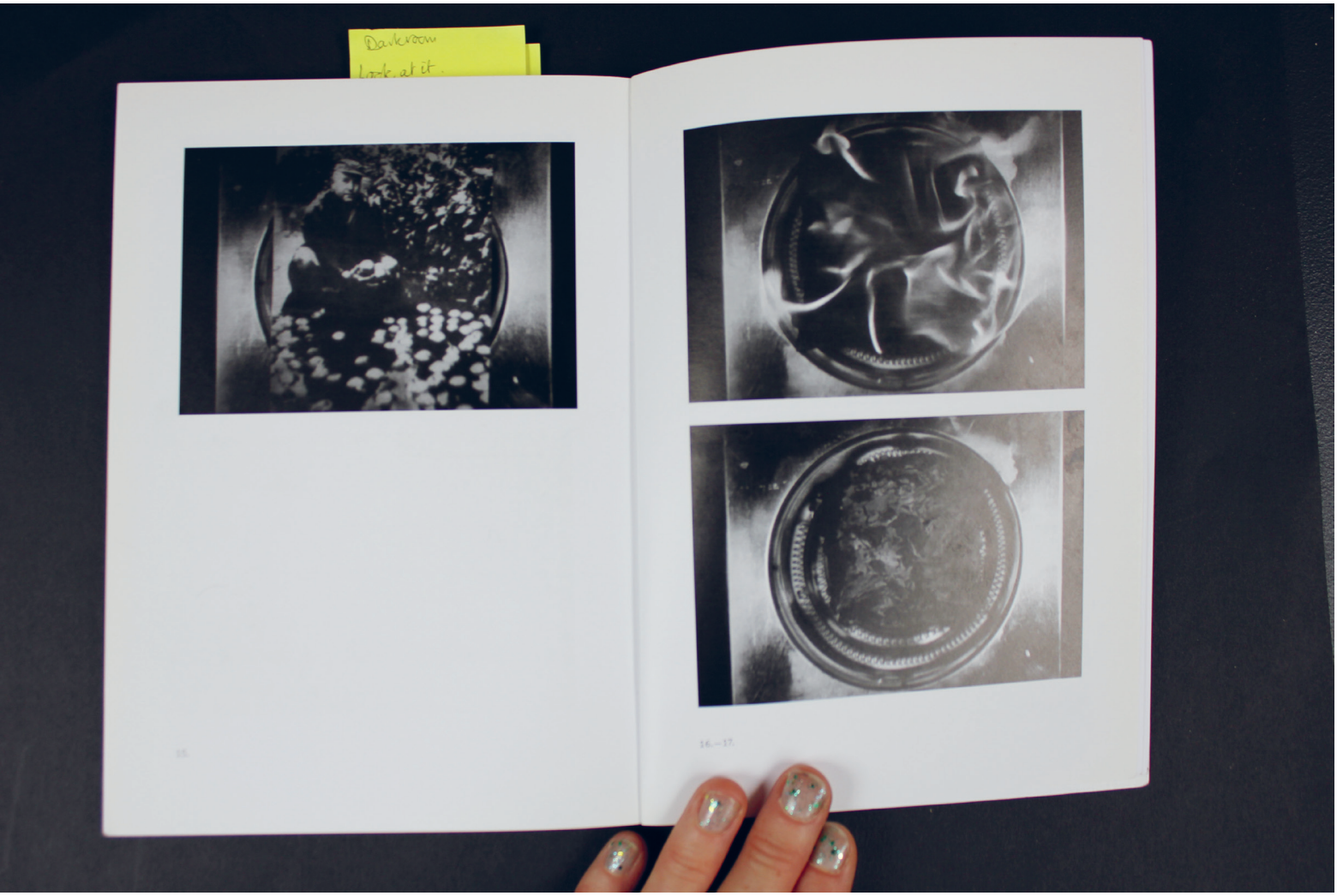
In addition, my own questions would be along the lines of:

What do you see that others don't?

How can you make an image that is strong enough to stand alongside all the images that exist already?

TO DO: Take up the artists questions. What do you see that others don't? What does it mean to create an image in a world of images, and how can you show someone exactly what you want them to look at and to see? Try answering these questions through making - use drawing, photography, film or text.

[1] Rachel Moore, *Hollis Frampton: (nostalgia)*, MIT Press, 2006


Darkroom
Look at it

A quote or textual reference that informs how you make art

One of the things that is missing in a book, or in printed material like this resource, is sound. Within my films, and when I am shooting, sound plays a really vital role in terms of pace, and space. Visuals take a primary role in many instances, especially for artists, but I really listen also, especially whilst I am working. Listening is just as important as looking actually. And the simple act of looking and listening, more precisely and with clearer awareness, and for a sustained period, can be very powerful. How often do we do just that?

James Benning is a filmmaker and artist who has also taught at Cal-Arts in Los Angeles for many years. He has taught a class called 'Looking and Listening' since the 1970s, which an ex-student describes in a book of collected essays about his process and work, simply entitled *James Benning*. The class is essentially to send the students out into the nearby landscape, alone, to look and listen, for four hours.

A few years ago I met James Benning by chance at the London Film Festival. I had just photocopied the chapter about 'Looking and Listening' to give to some students the following day, so he was really on my mind. Anyway, he still teaches the class.

My quote is:

In 'Looking and Listening' James helped us to find a place to begin. Just quietly observing, something magical happens. When the clouds of our psyches lift, our internal monologues fade into silence and our focus expands to accommodate the world, reality appears in all its glory, its strife, its majesty, story upon story and world upon world into the infinite.

Magic is the ability to transform reality, it happens through a shift in perspective.

(*Looking and Listening* by Amanda Yates Garcia. In *James Benning*. 2007. Edited by Barbar Pichler and Claudia Slanar. Synema: Austria. pp.155-164.)

TO DO: Spend some time in a nearby landscape, preferably alone, to look and listen. Devise ways to enhance your experience of looking, and then of listening. Choose a way to record your experiences. Use these recordings to make an artwork that explores how reality appeared to you in that moment.

Do you agree with Lucas' comment that visuals often take priority for artists? What sense do you prioritise when making art? How could you challenge this by using an alternative sense to further an idea you are working on?

ANNA LUCAS is a London based artist predominantly known for her work in film and video. She also makes drawings and still images. Her practice develops from observations of social networks and individuals in response to specific geographic and architectural locations. Her work also refers to the processes of filmmaking and the materiality of film itself. She is interested in the camera as a research tool and with the simultaneous engagement and detachment that occurs in the moment of looking through a lens.

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