

# Prototyping Heritage: Collections, Materials and Emerging Approaches to Engagement

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(Culture Lab – Newcastle University)

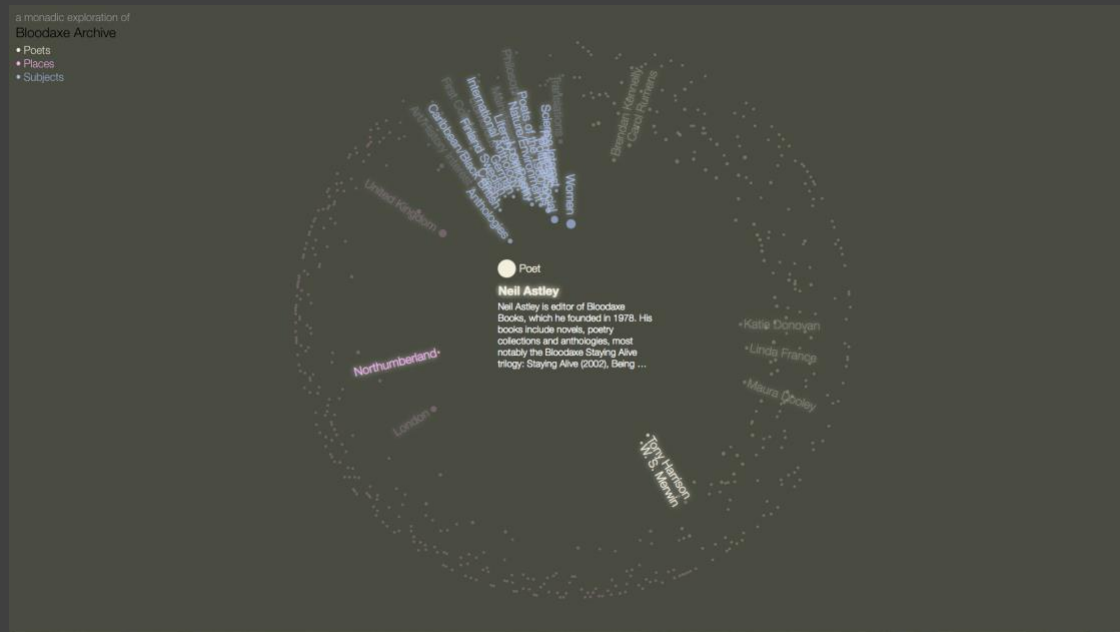
# Prototypes?

- Early version of product / stage in design process / archetype
- Materialise and test idea or vision
- Thinking and learning by doing
- Tool for open and participatory innovation
- Boundary object where meanings are negotiated
- Prototyping in grassroots communities: co-creation, tools for deliberation on science and technology
- Objects for critique, persuasion, debate
- In art history: associated to visions of art as social project

# Heritage and Prototyping

- Digital Humanities, data visualisation, Research through Design, curation: contributing new ways of experiencing collections.
- Prototyping culture values openness to transformation, is populated by objects in flux, and processes of co-creation.

# *The Poetics of the Archive* (Tom Schofield)

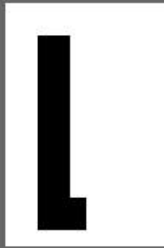


Newcastle University acquires the Bloodaxe Books archive as a resource for scholarly research and creative work.

Aims: creating experimental interfaces enabling new kinds of interactions with the archive, particularly during the archiving process itself.

draw

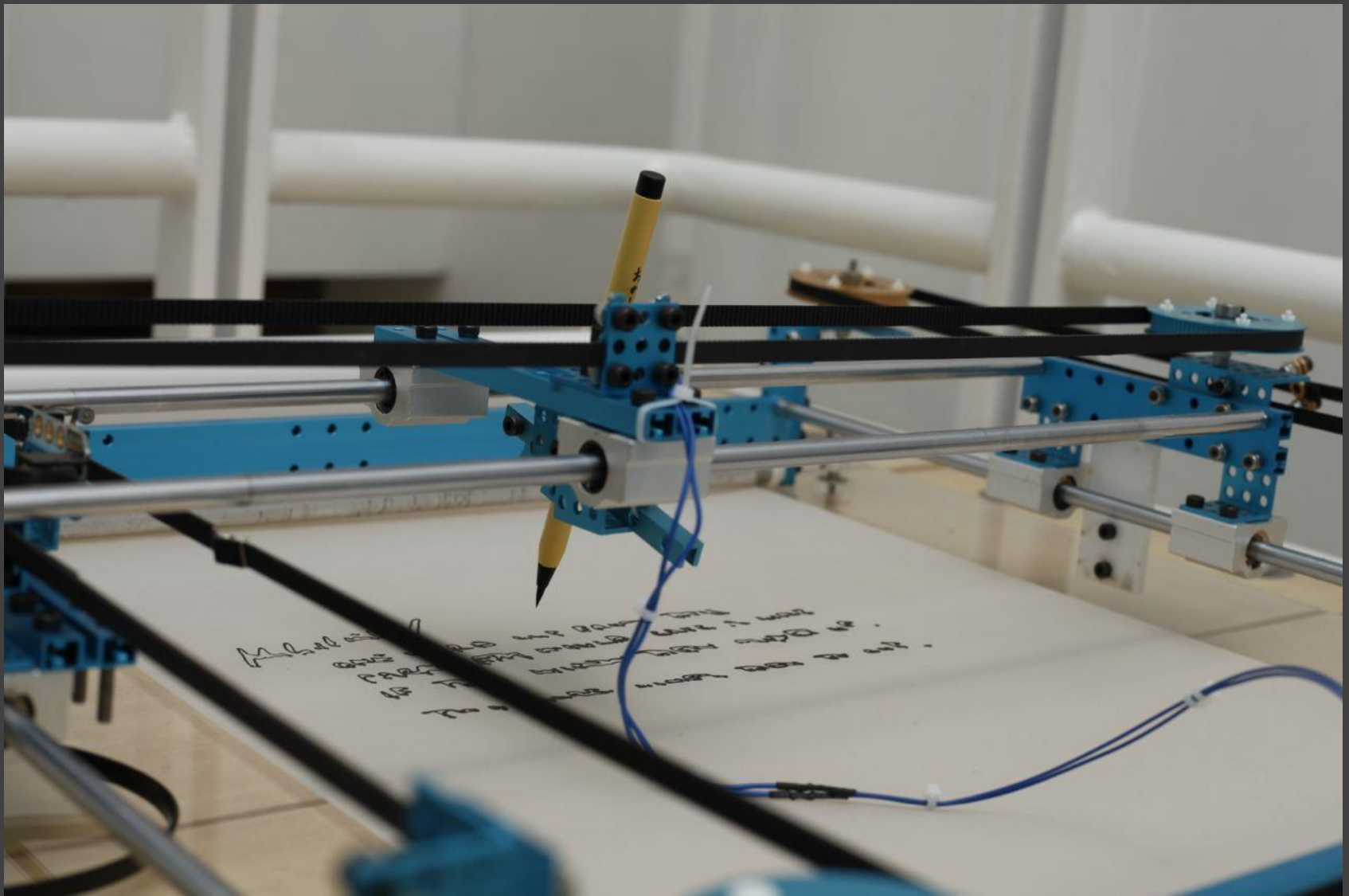
aggregates



CLEAR



Experimenting with ways of searching / associating information / viewing



Experiencing materiality and liveness related to the process of cataloguing and digitisation

The Marginalia Machine

# *Interglacial/Erratics* (John Bowers and Tim Shaw)



Performing Collections – The Pacitti Company residency 2014 (natural history/geological objects from the Ipswich Museum)

# Museum artefacts as raw materials



Aims: incite curiosity, imaginative and playful interpretation; creative appropriation.  
Outcomes: new sonic devices and displays



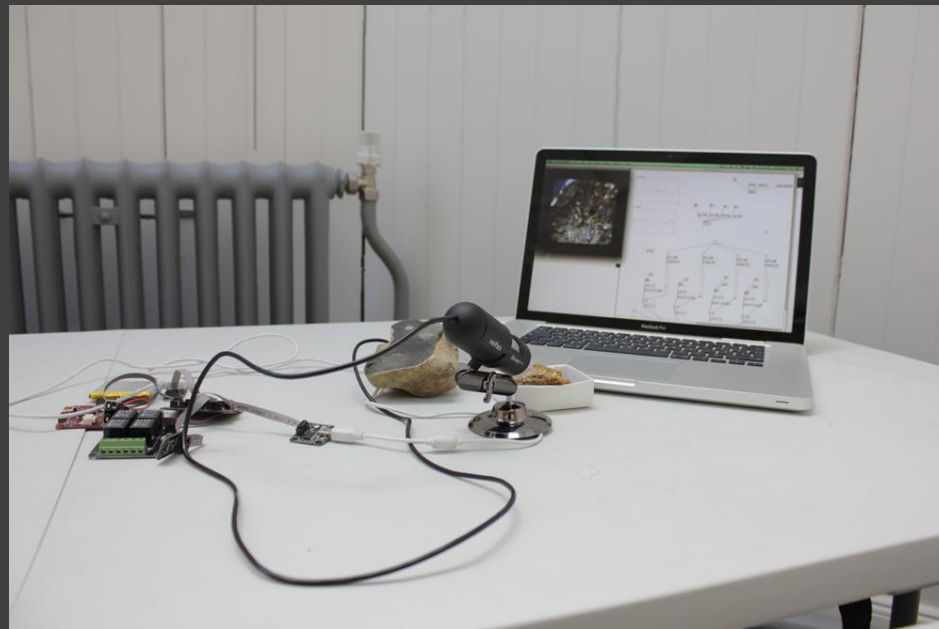
**Juxtaposition** of materials and data to vary interpretative possibilities (eg. fossil samples associated with real time meteorological data; simulations of geological and atmospheric processes).

Expanded **sensory** engagement: sonification, visualisation, new quasi-instruments; recordings; new exhibition arrangements showing loaned items alongside new assemblages, devices and outputs (sensorium).



Why prototyping? Unfreezing collections, opening them to transformation in their meanings and materiality; inventing machines, devices or interfaces to generate new interactions; sites of collaborative work.

Values: serendipity, exploration, playfulness, transformation, materiality.



# Subversive logics

- From didactic approaches to generative ones > objects support further creative work or research.
- Items become relevant for qualities different from the ones at the origin of their inclusion in the collection (eg. from antiquity or literary value to sensorial aspects, creative potential, juxtapositions).
- Use of technology: from aids to interpretation separated from the museum objects, to integrated arrangements.
- From objects of knowledge to materials of making (and knowing).

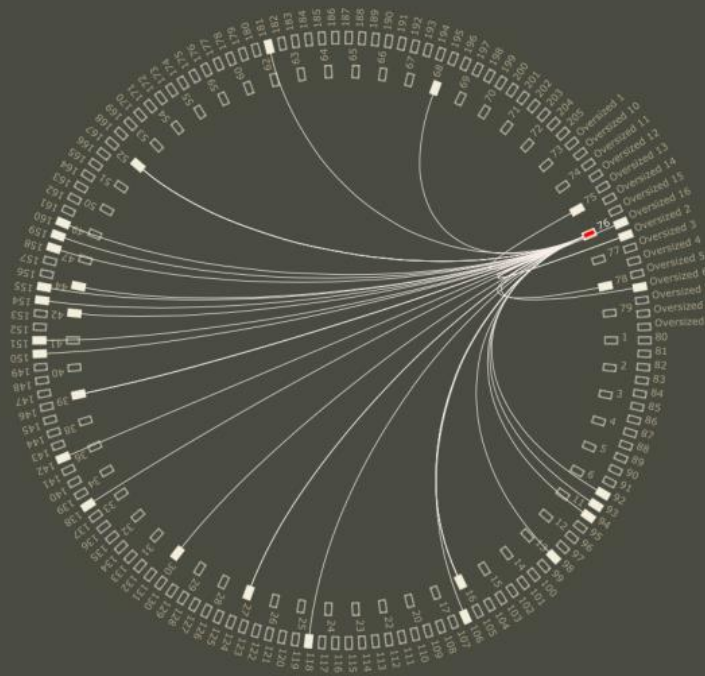
# Problems

- Cross-disciplinary tensions
- Conflicting approaches to preservation
- Hybrid status: artworks/interfaces/temporary assemblages/displays?

## Box Log Connections

The first part of the archive came to Newcastle University in 62 boxes. A further 142 were added later. With this visualisation tool you can trace particular authors across the archive to support your research.

The most popular box is **31**



## Box 76

Bill Naughton can also be found in boxes 16,

1995 can also be found in boxes 16, 39, 52,

Bartlett can also be found in boxes 16, 93, 98,

Two Women Dancing can also be found in boxes 16,

Tony Harrison can also be found in boxes 27, 30, 39, 46, 49, 55, 70, 140, 143, 154, 160

# Thank you

Image credits:

Tom Schofield

John Bowers & Tim Shaw at Test Department, part of Performing Collections by Pacitti Company, photo by Mafe Valen