



Yorkshire
Artspace Residency
Sept 2013 / Programme
— Sept 2014



Emilie Taylor Ceramics



Emilie Taylor, artist in residence Manor Estate, Sheffield and Chatsworth Estate, Derbyshire

Cover image
Harvest Jugs

1.
Emilie Taylor with
Stoker Devonshire
at Chatsworth House

“ I was first approached by Mir Jansen at Yorkshire Artspace in November 2012 about a residency project with ceramicist Emilie Taylor. I was instantly enthusiastic, having followed Emilie’s work since first seeing it four years previously, in her studio at Persistence Works. The results of her project with Phoenix Futures Residential Service in 2011 further demonstrated what she could achieve, working in the local community. For this residency, Emilie has brought together what were once both Cavendish Estates, by contrasting The Manor today with historic decoration from Chatsworth in the Baroque age. Despite the differences between the estates, at heart they share the same values, described so well by Sue France, CEO, Green Estate: community, a link between place and those who inhabit it, access to beauty, and the use and reuse of local resources.”
Stoker Devonshire

“ Since 2005 Yorkshire Artspace has delivered an ambitious artists’ residency programme offering selected artists access to space, time and money to develop their ideas or create a new body of work. One of the highlights of the programme is the opportunity for Yorkshire Artspace to work in close collaboration with partner organisations to enable public access to the artists’ work and working process. By embracing two very different but historically linked estates, Emilie’s residency has allowed us to get to know the team at Chatsworth and to strengthen our relationship with Green Estate who manage the Manor Lodge site where our Manor Oaks Studios are based. This residency has been made possible in part by generous financial contributions from these partners but largely thanks to their enthusiasm and support for Emilie’s ambition and vision. Thank you both.”

Kate Dore, Director, Yorkshire Artspace

Hymn to Persephone Emilie Taylor





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“So much has changed since those damning words of Roy Hattersley in 2008. Today the Manor is known as much for being a place of positive actions and a destination site without stigma, as it was as a seriously failing neighbourhood and a no go area. A tangible demonstration of how a determined community with targeted assistance in a more prosperous environment can break a cycle of intergenerational exclusion and under achievement. Dignity of work, ambition of opportunity, access to beauty, time and a great story have all played a part. This is all positive and makes for greater neighbourhood resilience. Extreme poverty is still with us though and the danger now is that this becomes more hidden, shameful and isolated. How we accept, accommodate and reduce the impacts of this in our contemporary world lies at the heart of what we try and do as a social enterprise. Valuing the hand crafted and the voluntary, harnessing, using and reusing local resources and above all rekindling a strong positive link between place and the people all add up to a different way of sustaining local wealth and well being. The world out there is difficult to change but at least here, on our Estate, long term stewardship and engaging, creative and responsible residencies exemplified by artists such as Emilie Taylor can and do make a difference.”

Sue France, CEO, Green Estate Ltd
www.greenestate.org.uk

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Estate / Chatsworth Estate / Manor Estate

An ‘estate’ may be a densely populated modern residential development, or an “extensive area of land in the country, usually with a large house, owned by one person, family, or organisation”. The estates of Chatsworth and Manor are a stone’s throw away from each other, but they have been selected by Sheffield-based artist Emilie Taylor to epitomise this contrast, between bucolic national park and troubled inner city development. There is a tradition of rich exchange between the Chatsworth and Manor estates, but they are currently cultures apart. They exist at opposite ends of the economic and cultural scale; a scale which is currently widening due to a rapidly and harshly polarizing economy. Chatsworth, the nation’s favourite historic house, with one of Europe’s most significant art collections, and a thousand-acre park on the banks of the River Derwent chiefly designed by Lancelot Brown in the 1760s, has passed down through sixteen generations of the same family, and is now in trust. Manor was originally a deer park to the east of the city of Sheffield, with a lodge (now a ruin) built in 1516. Both houses hosted the imprisoned Mary Queen of Scots in the 16th century and were once residences of Bess of Hardwick. But times change: Manor became known as a low-rise housing estate of 10,000 homes, just over a mile east of Sheffield city centre. Begun in the 1930s on a garden city model to alleviate inner city crowding, it was devastated by the collapse of the steel industry. Lacking an alternative industrial heart it became an area of especially high unemployment, low opportunity and acute social deprivation. It was infamously described in the 1990s by Roy Hattersley as the “worst estate in Britain”.

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Emilie Taylor’s project makes reference to industry, culture, high and low, agriculture, economy and representation, and brings together activities, artefacts and socially engaged practice to spark a new dialogue between the estates. The result is, once again, rich, and this time provocative and politically challenging.

In March this year, Guardian environment journalist Dr Nafeez Ahmed published a controversial article* which claimed that a new study, partly funded by NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Centre, proposed that “global industrial civilisation could collapse in coming decades due to unsustainable resource exploitation and increasingly unequal wealth distribution”. While contested for accuracy by NASA, this article went viral. Emilie was struck by the implications of the article, and specifically by a phrase used in the report: ‘carrying capacity’, clearly a resonant term for a maker of ceramic vessels. Emilie has applied the observation that extremes of wealth and poverty are globally unsustainable, by wryly illustrating the products available in Chatsworth Farm shop on one vessel, in contrast to the items listed as desirable donations to the rising number of Manor food banks on another. The styles of eating they illustrate are worlds apart; fresh produce and luxury brands contrasting starkly with a morbidly postwar-era array of tins and highly processed foods.

(4)

*Reference:
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/earth-insight/2014/mar/14/nasa-civilisation-irreversible-collapse-study-scientists>

While Chatsworth has preserved the artefacts of a Golden Age of cultural production and symbols of plenty, the presence and expansion of the food banks in the estates harks back more to an Iron Age, of hand-to-mouth existence and individuals looking after themselves in the very short term. On a series of harvest jugs, which would traditionally have been used to carry refreshment to workers in the fields, Emilie has used ancient Greek deities personifying fertility and harvest, Demeter and Persephone. These figures were once part of a universal code but are now only seen in high art and historical painting, such as the painted ceiling, ‘Return of the Golden Age’ in the Great Chamber at Chatsworth, a key source of inspiration for Emilie during her visits.

But Persephone is now a 21st century urban teenager, sitting bored on a park bench, swinging on a climbing frame, howling at the moon, albeit still out in the ploughed fields or within the corn crop. She is as richly fertile as the original classical figure – full of potential, and yet her potential is sometimes not fruitfully channeled. Emilie has adopted a new palette of colour and materials for the vessels, which are based on the traditional English earthenware slipware made in the region by Thomas Toft in the 1700s, with rich browns and a distinctive yellow – the colour of ripe corn. The jugs have been fired in a wood-fired kiln in the very heart of the Manor Estate. As historical slipware would have celebrated local births, marriages and deaths, alongside coronations and political events, Emilie makes pots that draw our attention to the politics in the everyday. Installation of the work will happen at traditional harvest time. Emilie has organised an event involving walking, eating, talks and seminars, to take place on the day of the Harvest Moon in September, across Chatsworth and Manor, bringing the estates together once more in creative endeavour.

Sara Roberts
August 2014

(5)

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www.artspace.org.uk

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Hymn to Persephone:

Chatsworth House 19 September - 7 November
Opening hours 11am-5.30pm (last entry 4.30pm)
www.chatsworth.org / info@chatsworth.org
01246 565 300

Harvest Moon Event:

On 23rd September, the day of the Harvest Moon, an invited group of theologians, planners, architects, artists, activists and curators met at Chatsworth to view the work, then walked to Manor Estate for a Harvest supper, music, talks and discussion. You can view a film about the event and listen to the speakers at www.artspace.org.uk and emilietaylor.co.uk

Presentation at Manor Oaks

Join us at Manor Oaks on Sunday 23rd November 2-3pm for a screening of the Harvest Moon film and a talk and informal discussion of the work with the artist, as part of Open Studios 2014.

All images by In Two Dimensions except central image and numbers 2 and 3



Hymn to Persephone
These vessels were used to hold honey and were made at a collaboration between Yorkshire Art Space, York, and the University of York. The vessels were made in a traditional style, using the traditional techniques of hand-blown glass. The vessels were made in a traditional style, using the traditional techniques of hand-blown glass. The vessels were made in a traditional style, using the traditional techniques of hand-blown glass.

