Loughborough University

This item was submitted to Loughborough's Research Repository by the author.
Items in Figshare are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise indicated.

# [Schm]alchemy: Magical sites and mischievous objects – episodes in a performative inquiry into the transformative and disruptive potency of stuff

PLEASE CITE THE PUBLISHED VERSION

http://people.brunel.ac.uk/bst/vol15/

PUBLISHER

© the Authors. Published by Brunel University

VERSION

VoR (Version of Record)

PUBLISHER STATEMENT

This work is made available according to the conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) licence. Full details of this licence are available at: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/

LICENCE

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

REPOSITORY RECORD

Whiteley, Gillian. 2019. “[schm]alchemy: Magical Sites and Mischievous Objects – Episodes in a Performative Inquiry into the Transformative and Disruptive Potency of Stuff”. figshare. https://hdl.handle.net/2134/22136.

## GILLIAN WHITELEY

# [Schm]alchemy: Magical sites and mischievous objects – episodes in a performative inquiry into the transformative and disruptive potency of stuff

### Abstract

This paper builds on Isabelle Stengers' suggestion that we need to reclaim magic, sorcery and witchcraft as a means of refuting the stable rational subject. Working with current philosophical and critical ideas around 'new materialisms', it emerges from a longstanding set of research preoccupations related to the affective, disruptive and provocative properties of things. The episodic text ruminates on these ideas through a series of 'site-written' narratives on the traces of sorcery and radical political histories in the *villes* and forests of Limousin, France, intercepted by passages of analysis of the author's involvement (2009 – 2015) in the live art multimedia performance group, *Alchemy/Schmalchemy.* Adding the pre-fix 'schm' to alchemy, the group conjures an intentionally disruptive and mischievous performance space of oscillation, characteristically presenting a hotch-potch of erudition, quackery and avante-gardeist trappings. Simultaneously adhering to and repudiating conventional ambitions of performance, it purposively produces an uncomfortable but potentially creative tension. In its most recent live art 'manifestation' (Manchester, 2015), the group worked with a collection of found objects, exploring their potential for distributed agency with participants. In the process, it engaged in a form of practice-based enquiry that has wider ontological, epistemological, aesthetic and political implications.

(Alongside the written paper, excerpts from video and text-based items used in live performances – or 'manifestations' – are provided, as well as photographic and video documentation of selected performances).

### Epsiode 1 > *Magical sites: Tarnac*

A hot August afternoon in Corrèze, 2012, driving along steep forest roads up through Toy-Viam to the head of the panoramic Vézère valley. The Limousine landscape is sliced through with the tracks of the *forestiers*. Precarious log-piles threaten to tumble onto our path. Individual trees are daubed with mysterious red signs and numbers that resemble pagan ideograms or mystical runes. Then the cool rush down, down, down. First through sterile sunless canopies of pine, followed quickly by the distinctive curving avenues of beech hugging the roadside, creating a narrow verdant tunnel, the diminishing circle of road ahead, a spiraling kaleidoscope. With the strange 1970s lyrics of Van Morrison's *Veedon Fleece* playing on the car's CD player, we edge quietly into Tarnac [1] a small *montagne ville* known for its *maquisard* history and a long tradition of radical communist politics, where in the dawn hours of 27 November 2009, 'something' happened. [2] Sunlight bounces off the impermeable cold stone house walls. In this sparsely populated region, houses are occupied, windows shuttered, all light and movement eliminated. In the corner of the square, near the church, we go through a wooden gate, and there is the magnificent seventeenth century Fontaine Saint

Georges.[3] Besides *les bonnes fontaines*, [4] traces of the region's distinctive folk mythologies and histories of pagan rites and sorcery[5] linger in the roadside crosses and votive objects.



Figure 1: Sign, Corrèze. 2014. Photo: Gill Whiteley



Figure 2: Sign, Corrèze. 2014. Photo: Gill Whiteley

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXZ4_0UxRCI&feature=youtu.be
Video 1: Video installation used in Alchemy/Schmalchemy *Manifestation IV* (Sheffield, 2013). Video: Gill Whiteley

**Episode 2 > *Alchemy/Schmalchemy*, *Manifestations II and IV***

> A becoming-animal always involves a pack, a band, a population, a peopling, in short, a multiplicity. We sorcerers have always known that (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004: 264).[6]
>
> *Alchemy/Schmalchemy* conjures a disruptive oscillatory space of mischief, a laboratory of possibility. It plays with the idea of *alchemy* as transformation of value and parodies magic, authenticity and artifice as its unconscious fabrications. Becoming intense, becoming animal, becoming imperceptible, becoming charlatan, becoming shaman, becoming sham [Bright, Shaw & Whiteley, 2013: n.p.] [7]

Gongs wail, hammers clash, clocks tick, radio waves fizzle and spark. The tattoo needle buzzes. Letters weep. Hypnotically, the j-cloth wipes away inky blood to a regular pulsing rhythm as the tattooist prattles about boyhood stories: 'nesting' for sand-martin's eggs on the Rother; driving down to Nottingham to 'go fishing' during the year-long miner's strike.[8] The talismanic hare – sacred symbol and ancient Egyptian hieroglyph signifying 'to be' – emerges on the pulsing wrist.[9] Eventually, wrapped tightly in cling film, an expanse of needled skin is encrypted with the seventy-seven 'unnamable names of the hare, that 'no man ne dare namen' (no man dare name) from a middle English poem.[10]



Figure 3: Hare. Video still: Gill Whiteley

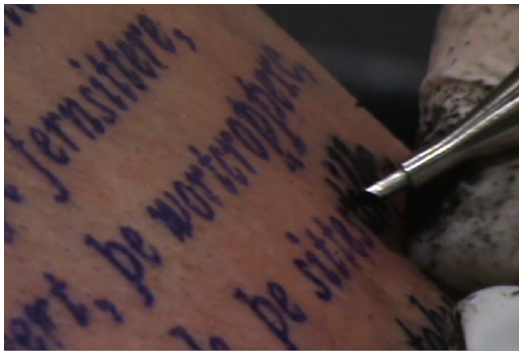


Figure 4: Names of the hare. Video still: Gill Whiteley

Audience members at *Alchemy/Schmalchemy's Manifestation IV* (Showroom, Sheffield, 2013), look down at the ice-cubes melting in their hands, revealing a line of text from the poem. The frenzied activity of a small printing press produces a cartoon image of a melting ice-cube enfolded in a shred of lichen gathered from the forests of Limousin. A cacophony of saxophonic shrieks reduces to a muffled squeal as a huge ice block, suspended from a ladder with rope, melts into an aluminium bucket. Each amplified drip goes off like a gunshot. Eventually, the barbed wire tension snaps. Ice crashes into metal. A palpable exhaustion and stillness descends.

In an earlier *Alchemy/Schmalchemy* performance, *Manifestation II* (MOBU, Bradford, 2012) the walls of an abandoned shop were explored for sound with brushes and scrapers in a faux exorcism of latent *animae*. An alchemist's laboratory of glass baubles and trickling liquids produced an electronic soundtrack for physical gyrations. Amidst the chaotic becoming-animal backdrop, a whirligig figure with a snow-shovel methodically swept leaves and organic debris (collected from forest pathways around Tarnac) in a ritualistic motion, back and forth, up and down, spiralling, trance-like.

What happened here? Were these affective experiences or mumbo-jumbo quackery? Shamanic or sham, alchemy or schmalchemy?[11]

Video 2: Documentation video capturing live performance of *Alchemy/Schmalchemy Manifestation II* (MOBU Bradford, 2012) (approx. 45 minutes recorded in two parts)
1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jY4W56HDN1E
2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yj2536k5H6E
Video: Andy Abbott.

The text, images and video above present snatches from two of the live 'manifestations' of *Alchemy/Schmalchemy*,[12] a multimedia live art practice which has emerged from the participants' long-term engagement with sonic 'free' improvisation and an accompanying scepticism about its claims for 'authenticity'. Fundamentally, the project conducts a practical inquiry into the philosophical notions of 'transformation' and 'becoming', with disruption and provocation as key conceptual elements. For me, it also engages with my own research investigations into *assemblage*, *bricolage* and, in particular, into the evocative,

affective, disruptive and disobedient potency of everyday objects and detritus.[13] Operating with a wide range of activities which play with the idea of *alchemy* – working with image, text and objects through physical movement as well as sound, image and video – each live manifestation consciously parodies notions of authenticity and artifice, working with the possibility that it might also be *schmalchemy.* Each event variously improvises with visual and sonic symbols, signs, chemistry and 'laboratory' paraphernalia and substances, mundane objects, alchemical, ritualistic devices and tropes of nonsense, creating a dialectic between affect and artifice, sensuality and silliness, magic and mundanity, in unpredictable oscillation. In each manifestation (some made 'public', some not)[14] the effects and affects are serendipitous for performers, participants and witnesses. This unpredictable movement between each is a key characteristic that invites reflection and analysis. In sum, each manifestation operates as part of an ongoing performative inquiry, a practice-based interrogation of the transformative and disruptive energy of stuff.



Figure 5: *Alchemy/Schmalchemy*. Photo: Gill Whiteley

[Insert link here to pdf for pamphlet for *Manifestation IV*]
Caption: Pamphlet handed out to audience at *Alchemy/Schmalchemy Manifestation IV* (Showroom, Sheffield, 2013)

In *Art Encounters, Deleuze and Guattari*, Simon O'Sullivan (2006) writes about art as an 'event site'. In doing so, he draws on Alain Badiou's notion of the 'event site' as being 'like a point of exile where it is possible that something, finally, might happen' (Badiou, 1999: 84-85), For Badiou, this rupture in being offers the subject a route to 'truth', primarily a particular kind of political 'truth'. O'Sullivan (2006), goes on to focus on the point of rupture as 'at any rate a place where one might encounter affects.' Pertinently, he also acknowledges the possibility of understanding art 'as ritual or its ritualistic component – a return to pre-modern notions of magical causality', adding:

> Magic is to be understood here as a specific technique of connecting with the world (O'Sullivan, 2006: 48).

*Alchemy/Schmalchemy* resonates with these ideas and, in particular, with the notion of an art practice as an 'event site' in which a disruption – a point of exile – can open up participants and audience to possibility. Thinking other possible worlds and accessing alternative ways of being has, potentially, a political

dimension. *Alchemy/Schmalchemy's* manifestations generate places where '*it is possible* that something, finally, might happen'. That 'something' might be consistent with notions of affectivity but as Brian Massumi argues, a politics of affect – or more precisely as, he says, a 'proto-politics' is also possible.[15] *Alchemy/Schmalchemy* attempts to provide a laboratory of tricksterish provocation, a vehicle for a practical inquiry into the affective, disruptive – perhaps 'proto-political' – potential of the disorderly knowledge-making processes of alchemy and magic.

**Episode 3 > *Mischievous objects: Corrèzian forêt***

> The world can be a very strange place, full of things we only half understand or don't understand at all […] A lot of everyday objects were thought to have magic in them. The more the magic was believed in the more it seemed to work. You might have strange feelings about things that are magical for you. (Gribble & MacPhee, 1976: n.p.)[16]

The plateau de Millevaches is cloaked with dense forests and dark woods. Nettles sting my ankles as I walk over the brow of the hill. Crystalline air cools my nostrils and makes my skin tingle. Pools of light illuminate the sparsely populated Corrèzian *paysage*, an undulating patchwork of granite, purple wild thyme, splatters of yellow gentian and the languorous Limousine cattle. The ubiquitous Douglas pine lines up against ancient hairy oak trees, lichen-cloaked beech, spear-leaved sweet chestnut.[17] I enter a dense sunless copse and am absorbed into a strange stillness. The trees look back at me. For a moment, I gaze at a sunlit, luminescent rock.



Figure 6: Object, Corrèze, 2014. Photo: Gill Whiteley




Figure 7: Sign, Vassivière, Haute-Vienne, 2014. Photo: Gill Whiteley

An hour or so away, an exhibition of contemporary artwork, *Things Unseen*, is showing at the Centre International D'art et du Paysage de L'île de Vassivière on the Isle of Vassivière in Limousin. To get there, you drive through a landscape crisscrossed with the ghost tracks of armed resistance fighters, as these forests once harboured clandestine groups of Maquis.[18] The exhibition, dwelt on themes such as water, wood and waste but related projects featured 'secret-hide-outs', resonating powerfully with the unseen radical political histories of the landscape.[19] There is a residue of those things 'unseen', an affective presence of absence, in the trees, in the strange stillness, in the luminescent rocks of Corrèze. How might we apprehend the un-seen and the un-known?

Paradoxically, in current academic and artistic research, cultures that fetishise the nomadic and the transient, serious consideration is not always given to particular 'alternative' forms of knowledge. For centuries, in particular cultural locations and at certain conjunctures, practitioners of paganism and witchcraft have been relentlessly 'hunted and appropriated'. In her exploration of 'witchcraft' as a metaphor and social construct, Anna Colin notes:

> The reality is that this figure symbolizes insubordination and the transgression of normality, and she pays dearly for her alterity (Colin, 2012: 9).

Colin's work is not alone in its investigation of the potency (from Latin *potens, potential,* indicating both power and potential or possibility) of alternative perspectives on the un-known.[20] As the reliance on interpretations of language and text as the chief focus for cultural critique has waned, and discourses on *materiality* are gaining ground, the exploration of objects and materials as 'wilful actors and agents' is gaining critical significance (Lange-Berndt, 2015: 18).[21] Furthermore, there is a current surge of interest in a range of para-knowledges and the notions of animism and vitalism are being widely explored through art, science and philosophy.[22] That said, stigma persists around a particular set of epistemologies and ontologies. As Isabelle Stengers notes,

> Can the proposition that *magic* designates both a craft of assemblages and their particular transformative efficacy help us to reclaim it against

> both the stigma of the metaphoric and the stigma of the supernatural? (Stengers in Franke, 2012: 190)

Alchemy/Schmalchemy's *Manifestation V* (SIQR, Manchester Metropolitan University, 2015) attempted to work with some of these ideas specifically in relation to the reclamation of magic and in its exploration of ways that bodies encounter and interact with objects.

**Episode 4 > *Alchemy/Schmalchemy*, *Manifestation V***

> *The Democracy of Objects* attempts to think the being of objects unshackled from the gaze of humans in their being for-themselves. […] what we get is a redrawing of distinctions and a decentering of the human (Bryant, 2011: 19-20).
>
> There is the power of boundary objects and the general principle that objects are active life presences (Turkle, 2011: 9).[23]

First the preparation of the space. Objects are placed in concentric circles: an egg slicer, a Thunderclouds mint tin full of coins, a shell, a mobile phone, a music box, a miniature jug, a crystal ball with numbers, a Gorbachev toy, a wire head-massager, my son's little red ball, a crunched-up bit of paper, a Playmobil figure, a small tin vessel, a broken ceramic doll's arm – the air is cleared with ringing gongs. A crackling object, its sound muffled by its bandage wrappings, is carefully placed at the heart of the installation. We pause, gazing at the objects, anticipating the energies that the coming improvisatory practices will release. A cacophony of visual, sonic, physical and ritualized activity follows. Objects are taken from their bags, some carefully, some hastily. They are scratched, poked, sonorised, voiced, thrown, bounced, spoken, written. Finally, a ceremonial unbandaging of the wrapped object leaks its crackling static, until the noise is stopped dead.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SshGjqOoCys&feature=youtu.be
Video 3: Video used in *Alchemy/Schmalchemy Manifestation V* (Manchester, 2015) Video: Gill Whiteley

Video 4: Documentation video capturing full live performance (58 mins including introduction) of *Alchemy/Schmalchemy Manifestation V* at Summer Institute for Qualitative Research (SQIR) at Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, 6 July 2015.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1muWgp03hM

[Insert link here to pdf for pamphlet for *Manifestation V*]
Caption: Pamphlet handed out to audience at *Alchemy/Schmalchemy Manifestation V* (Manchester, 2015)

In the morning of the performance, participants who planned to come to the later live performance had been invited to take a small plastic bag from a table. Each bag contained a set of instructions, a typed quote with a distinct theoretical,

philosophical or sociological perspective on objects, and an object from a collection of around forty things that we had carefully selected.

> **Instructions**
> Please take the object out of the bag. Hold it, look at it, feel it, smell it. Over the next couple of hours, think about your evolving relationship with it. How does the quote affect that relationship? PLEASE bring it back to us at the requested time.

A few of the objects held intimate emotional associations for each of us. Some were treasured or talismanic objects, other things had specific aesthetic, sonic or phenomenological potential, whilst many other objects held no particular attachments or significance at all. Opening up a discussion with participants after the performance, even though their new owners had only had a few hours to develop a relationship with them, serendipitous powerful attachments and connections emerged. Objects had become actants in the production of personal narratives. The actant and evocative potential of insignificant mundane things made its presence felt to a greater extent than we had imagined. *Something* had happened: these now vibrant objects had generated stories.

**Episode 5 > *Coda***

> What are the implications of a (meta)physics of vibrant materiality for political theory? (Bennett, 2010: 94)

The implications of a vibrant materiality for politics are complex and there is still a lot to tease out. Back in the 1980s, in *The Three Ecologies* (1986), Deleuze Guattari argued that the only way to counter what he called Integrated World Capitalism was to take a networked 'transversal' approach to the interplay of three ecological registers – the environmental, the social and the mental – focusing on an ontology of interconnectivity. In the last decade or so, those associated with 'new materialist' thinking, working with critiques of conventional Western dualist ontologies, have brought a fresh approach to the relationship of materiality and sociality. [24] They identify a world of generative matter in which objects are agentic and material is constitutive, eschewing the distinction between organic and inorganic, inanimate and animate. In *Vibrant Matter*, Jane Bennett urges us to consider not only the sensuous enchantment of nature but to re-invoke the actant capacity and affectivity of organic *and* inorganic things. She argues that the nature-culture binary is obsolete. Instead, as Karen Barad's work suggests, in her ways to 'think the social and the natural together', she asserts that it is possible to reconceive the world being made up of various *collectives* of 'entangled' objects (Barad, 2007: 30). Arguably, *Alchemy/Schmalchemy's* ongoing performative inquiry into magical sites and mischievous objects has worked through – and *practised* – the generative assemblage of stuff's potential to be affective, disruptive and even, perhaps, transformative.

**Notes**

[1] Tarnac is a commune of around 320 inhabitants (2008) in the department of Corrèze.
[2] Tarnac has a long history of political leftism and cultures of resistance, most famously here the reference is to the 'case' of the Tarnac 9, when gendarmerie, with dogs and helicopters swooped into Tarnac and arrested a number of alleged anarchist revolutionaries, accused of planned insurrection and acts of sabotage and connections to the Invisible Committee. See Smith, 2012 at www.vice.com. Also see Dufresne, 2012 and Bergounioux, 2014
[3] The sacred traditions of the fountain (going back to pagan, pre-Christian, traditions) are particularly strong in the region – and are undergoing current revival – as is the history and prevalence of sorcery and folk cultures. See 'Le culte de l'eau' in Louty 1990: 85-148.
[4] On Limousin's cult of the fountains, many of which pre-date Christianity, see Rastoueix-Guinot, 2008.
[5] Documented by the artist Gaston Vuillier (1845-1915) in his writings and paintings.
[6] This Deleuze and Guattari quote was included in the *Alchemy/Schmalchemy* pamphlet for *Manifestation IV.*
[7] Extract from words written collectively by Bright, Shaw and Whiteley in the *Alchemy/Schmalchemy* pamphlet for *Manifestation IV*, Sheffield, December 2013.
[8] 'Going fishing' – a euphemism for 'flying picketing' – was one of many tactics commonly used to foil the police bent on prosecuting and arresting anyone attempting to picket working miners in Nottinghamshire in the miners' strike 1984-85.
[9] The hare, the animal that 'no man ne dare namen', has a long cultural history but, of course, any ritualistic or symbolic use of the hare in 'performance' is a weighty referent – given Beuys' infamous provocative 'action', *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, a solo ritualistic performance at Schelma Gallery, Dusseldorf in 1965 (See Antliff, *Joseph Beuys* 2014). However, more pertinently here, the hare is the longstanding talisman of one member of *Alchemy/Schmalchemy.*
[10] **'**The Names of the Hare' (anonymous, 11th Century) is from Evans & Thompson (1972: 200). 'The creep-along, the sitter-still, the pintail, the ring-the-hill, the sudden start, the shake-the-heart, the belly-white, the lambs-in-flight. The gobshite, the gum-sucker, the scare-the-man, the faith-breaker, the snuff-the-ground, the baldy skull, (his chief name is scoundrel)'. Extract (trans. Seamus Heaney) from Heaney & Hughes (1982: 305-306).
[11] Adding the pre-fix 'schm' to a word in this way (originally a Yiddish practice and commonly used in USA, England and Anglophone countries) as a form of reduplication, indicates irony, skepticism or derision about the issue or term in question.
[12] *Alchemy/Schmalchemy* is Geoff Bright, Walt Shaw and Gillian Whiteley. For my own part, it also builds on a former project of mine, *Pan-demonium* (2009) presented at AC Institute, New York and subsequent 'pan-demonic' performance at *The Knot*, Berlin, 2010. For more on all this see www.bricolagekitchen.com
[13] See Whiteley (2011), Whiteley (2010) and www.bricolagekitchen.com. On the possibilities of objects to be 'disobedient', see the exhibition curated by Gavin

Grindon in 2014 at the Victoria & Albert Museum, which brought together a wide range of objects which have been agentic in various historical and contemporary political situations and contexts.

[14] Coincidentally, but fittingly perhaps, we developed our *Alchemy/Schmalchemy* manifestations in a nineteenth century Methodist church in South Yorkshire, utilizing the trappings and fixtures (including the grand piano and a foot-pedal harmonium worn down with decades of playing hymns).

[15] See the *Preface* in Massumi (2015)

[16] The quote is taken from *Strange Things to Do and Make, a Practical Puffin book,* written and produced in 1976 by McPhee Gribble Publishers, illustrated by David Lancashire (no page numbers), a practical book for children with information and instructions for making things relating to magical objects, warts, Ouija boards, mind-reading, water-divining, codes and things to combat 'fixed ideas'.

[17] On the complexities of de- and re-forestation in the region, see *Rapport sur l' état de nos forêts et leurs devenirs possibles, par des habitants du plateau de Millevaches*, November 2013, a campaigning pamphlet made up of writings by people living in the Millevaches – available at http://aupresdemonarbre.noblogs.org/rapport-sur-letat-de-nos-forets/

[18] Limousin was a key region of popular 'resistance' during the Second World War. In 1942, the first group of Maquis formed there, eventually growing into an army of over 10,000 maquisards who lived in the forests, planning and carrying out various acts of sabotage. One of the most notorious reprisals against local inhabitants was in June 1944 when the 2nd SS Panzer Division arrested all men between 16 and 60 in Tulle, torturing and publicly hanging 120 of them in the streets. The fierce resistance and radical leftism of the region led the Wehrmacht to call it 'Little Russia'. On the vestiges of war in French forests more generally see 'La forêt en armes' in Derex, 2012.

[19] The exhibition, 6 July – 21 September 2014, was the culmination of a three-year residency in Tulle by RADO, a collective of nine artists. Another exhibition resulting from the residency included work with local children featuring, for example, the collection and creation of 'secret hide-outs' shown earlier at Peuple et Culture in Tulle, 7 June – 27 June 2014.

[20] Recent explorations, in relation specifically to artistic research, include 'The State of Magick/The Magickal State', an event and conference curated by Nick Kilby at De Montfort University, 23-24 May 2014. The event went beyond investigations of 'magick' (with its particular association with Aleister Crowley, the cultish English occultist) and included papers addressing the occult, paranormalities and other associated esoteric knowledges and practices from 'weird folk' to Reverend Nemu's experiences of Brazilian sorcery and the place of mythopoeia in contemporary everyday life in South America.

[21] In her recently published anthology on *Materiality*, the editor Lange-Berndt describes it as 'a critical genealogy of the formation of concepts of materiality, de-materialisation, inter-and transmateriality, focusing on the moments when materials leave behind the confines of the white cube, become ***wilful actors and agents*** within artistic processes and enmesh their audiences in a network of connections […]' (Lange-Berndt, 2015:18). Also see Barrett and Bolt (2013).

[22] See, for example, Franke (2012) and Franke (2010).

[23] These are two of a series of quotes about 'objects' that were used in *Manifestation V*.
[24] See Bennett (2001), Bennett (2010) and Coole and Frost (eds) (2010).

**References**

Antliff, A. (2014) *Joseph Beuys.* London: Phaidon.

Badiou, A. (1999) *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being* (trans. Louise Burchill) Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press [originally published in France as *Deleuze: La clameur de l'Etre* 1997 by Hachette Littératures].

Barad, K. (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Barrett, E. and Barbara Bolt (eds.) (2013) *Carnal Knowledge: Toward a New Materialism through the Arts.* London: IB Tauris.

Bennett, J. (2001) *The Enchantment of Modern Life, Attachments, Crossings and Ethics*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter, A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Bergounioux P. (ed.) (2014) *Utopies en Limousin, de Boussac à Tarnac, histoires d'autres possibles*. Les Ardents Editeurs, Limoges.

Bryant, L.R. (2011) *The Democracy of Objects*. Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press.

Colin, A. (ed.) (2012) 'Introduction', *Sorcières, Pourchassées, Assumées, Puissantes.* Queer Editions B42, La Maison populaire, Montreuil.

Coole, D. and Frost, S. (eds) (2010) *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency and Politics*. Durham/London: Duke University.

Deleuze G. and Guattari, F. (2004) *A Thousand Plateaus* [orig. pub 1980], London: Continuum.

Derex, J-M. (2012) *La mémoire des forêts*. Paris: Les editions Ulmer.

Dufresne, D. (2012) *Tarnac magasin general*, Calmann-Lévy.

Evans, G.W. & Thompson, D. (1972) *The Leaping Hare*. London: Faber & Faber.

Franke, A. (ed.) (2012) *Animism, Modernity through the Looking Glass*. Generali Foundation.

Franke, A. (ed.) (2010) *Animism*. Berlin: Sternberg.

Gribble, D. & McPhee, H. (1976) *Strange Things to Do and Make, a Practical Puffin book.* Illustrated by David Lancashire, Sydney, Australia: Penguin Books.

Grindon, G. & Flood, C. (eds) (2014) *Disobedient Objects*. London: V&A.

Heaney, S. & Hughes, T (eds) (1982) *The Rattle Bag.* London: Faber and Faber.

Lange-Berndt, P. (ed.) (2015) *Materiality*. London: Whitechapel/MIT.

Louty, P. (1990) *Limousin Ensorcele?* Editions de la Veytizou.

Massumi, B. (2015) *Politics of Affect.* Cambridge: Polity.

O'Sullivan, S. (2006) *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guatarri: Thought beyond representation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan.

*Rapport sur l' état de nos forêts et leurs devenirs possibles*, *par des habitants du plateau de Millevaches,* (2013) available at http://aupresdemonarbre.noblogs.org/rapport-sur-letat-de-nos-forets/ [accessed on 29/12/2015]

Rastoueix-Guinot, B. (2008) *Magie, Religion et Spiritualité en Limousin*. Lucien Souny.

Smith, A. L. (2012) *Vive Le Tarnac Nine!* Available at www.vice.com. [accessed on 29/12/2015]

Stengers, I. (2004) *Capitalist Sorcery, Breaking the Spell*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave MacMillan

Turkle, S. (2007) *Evocative Objects, Things We Think With*, Cambridge/MA: MIT Press

Whiteley, G (2011) 'Scavenging from margins to mainstream; artist as bricoleur' in Stéphanie Jamet-Chavigny et Françoise Levaillan (eds) *Retour sur l'art de l'assemblage, actes du colloque international*. Rennes: Les Presses Universitaires de Rennes.

Whiteley, G. (2010) *Junk: Art and the Politics of Trash.* London: IB Tauris.

**Biography**

Besides being a member of *Alchemy/Schmalchemy*, Gillian Whiteley is Senior Lecturer in Critical and Historical Studies and Programme Director for Fine Art at Loughborough University, where she is also Coordinator of the Politicized Practice Research Group and Co-organiser of *RadicalAesthetics-RadicalArt*. Her research focuses on interdisciplinary practices and cultural production within radical and socio-political contexts. Projects and publications include *Pan-*

*Demonium* at the AC Institute, New York, (2009), *Junk: Art and the Politics of Trash* (2010) and a case study on Welfare State International in J Bull and G Saunders (eds) *British Theatre Companies: From Fringe to Mainstream*, (Methuen, 2016). See www.bricolagekitchen.com