



Evaluation of the national touring installation,
Home-Maker by Jeanie Finlay

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Introduction

Background to Home-Maker



Home-Maker by Jeanie Finlay is an interactive domestic gallery installation, website and publication that explores what makes a house a home and how this changes when you cannot leave. The project is the result of two residencies, which took place in the living rooms of seven housebound older people in South Derbyshire, UK and Tokyo, Japan. Jeanie spent time with each of her hosts, getting to know them and making panoramic portraits of them. Viewers to Home-Maker, both online and in the gallery, can visit Florrie, Roy, Betty, Lilian, Aiko-san, Emi-san and Monji-san in their living rooms and experience their histories, preoccupations and passions by clicking on hotspots to reveal video documentaries. In the gallery installation you can view the work from the comfort of a recreated Derbyshire living room or kneel on a tatami mat in a Japanese-style room.

Home-Maker began as a website made as part of the Year of the Artist residency in South Derbyshire in collaboration with People Express, a community arts organisations based in South Derbyshire. The website was shown as a projected installation piece at Angel Row gallery in January 2002 as part of House Work. Following the successful application for a grant from the Arts Council of England the project has toured to:

- Folly, Lancaster: 31 July–10 September 2004
- Aberdeen Art Gallery, Aberdeen: 16 April–20 August 2005
- Djanogoly Theatre, Lakeside Art Centre, Nottingham: 1–11 September 2005
- Hatton Gallery, Newcastle: January 14–March 2006

The tour of Home-Maker has been accompanied by a new Home-Maker website (www.home-maker.org.uk) and Home-Maker the publication which tells the story of the project and places it in the wider contexts of contemporary art, documentary and notions of home.



Home-Maker video Stills:

Top – Seven participants (l – r) Aiko, Florrie, Betty, Emi, Roy, Lilian and Monji.
Bottom - Details from their living rooms.

Method and aims of evaluation

I have been working with Jeanie on the development of the Home-Maker tour since September 2004. As a curator and evaluator, I was keen to support Jeanie in developing a relationship between the project and the context of contemporary art more widely, specifically with relation to the shift Jeanie was experiencing in her practice from working in more community led ways towards a more artist led approach. In the process of evaluation I have also explored the relationship between Jeanie and the host venues and the issues that arise when an individual artist organises her own touring exhibition.

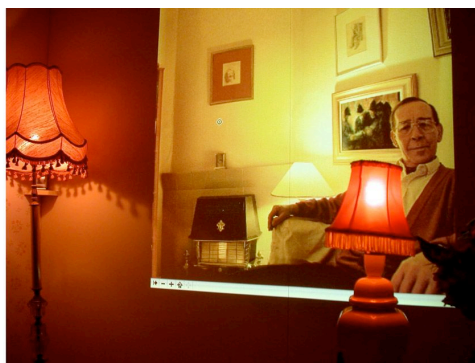
My method of evaluation has therefore centred on regular meetings with Jeanie to discuss the development of the project and address specific concerns. I also visited Folly in Lancaster to see the exhibition and talk to the centre manager there about the project; Aberdeen to discuss Home-Maker with key partners at On the Edge, Aberdeen Art Gallery, Whitespace and the City Council; to the discussion event at Djanogoly Theatre, Lakeside, Nottingham and to Hatton Gallery, Newcastle to talk to the curators prior to exhibition and also during the exhibition to interview the curator again. This report outlines the key findings from my conversations with these key partners. In addition to this evaluation I have also contributed to and edited the Home-Maker publication.

The key aims of this evaluation are:

- To explore the qualitative results of Home-Maker
- To explore successes, questions and opportunities
- To give partners an opportunity to articulate their experiences

This evaluation reflects on the original aims of the Home-Maker tour:

- To develop new audiences for Home-Maker and work by Jeanie Finlay
- To explore how different venues reach different audiences for the work
- To heighten the profile of Jeanie Finlay beyond the East Midlands Region
- To develop partnerships for future collaborations and exhibitions
- To link into current research and development of the project Teenland (a documentary directed by Jeanie Finlay and produced by Debbie Ballin for BBC4 about four teenagers in their bedrooms)
- To make new contacts as part of the projects through invited partners



Home-Maker installation detail at Folly. Photo: Steven Sheil

Summary

Home-Maker: the Tour

Folly, Lancaster

Home-Maker was well received at Folly and the exhibition staff enjoyed hosting it. There were, however, problems with reaching audiences and targeting groups of older people to engage with and invigilate the exhibition.

Aberdeen Art Gallery, Aberdeen

The partnerships developed through the exhibition in Aberdeen were extremely fruitful and the installation worked well in the gallery. There was also a successful new piece of work made in collaboration with On the Edge, Whitespace, a group of older people and the Keepers of Applied Art at the Gallery. While the exhibition received positive feedback from visitors there was little press coverage of the show. Unfortunately the planned project developed by Jeanie, On the Edge and Aberdeen Art Gallery Home From Home at Provost Skene's House did not take place due to lack of funding.

Djanogoly Theatre, Lakeside Arts Centre, Nottingham

Home-Maker was shown in the theatre space at Lakeside and was accompanied by two parallel events, a screening by filmmaker Nicholas Barker and a discussion between Nicholas and Jeanie at the Theatre. While the exhibition was only on for a short time, it enabled Jeanie to present her work in her home city to her peers, which was a valuable part of the tour. Some of the most successful press coverage came through this part of the tour.

Hatton Gallery, Newcastle

The presentation of Home-Maker developed into a solo show for Jeanie at Hatton Gallery. She presented two other existing works alongside Home-Maker and made two new pieces especially for the exhibition. There were also two successful events during the exhibition, which brought new audiences to the gallery. During the last day of the exhibition Jeanie arranged for a house clearance company to dismantle the Home-Maker installation and take it away. The video of this action and an interview with the house clearance company contribute to a new piece of work by Jeanie.



Home-Maker Installation, Interior detail – UK Room, Photo: Mike Davidson

Conclusions

The tour has developed new audiences for Home-Maker and other work by Jeanie Finlay in Scotland, West Midlands, North West and North East England through talks, workshops and events and due to the accessibility of the work reaching an actual audience of over 80,000 people.

It has been difficult to involve older people in the invigilation of Home-Maker due to lack of time and commitment from the galleries, although older people have been actively engaged in two projects (the cabinets project in Aberdeen and Belonging in Newcastle). The different venues on the tour have reached different audiences, such as students, older people, Friends of the galleries, artists, filmmakers and curators and young people. The profile of Jeanie Finlay has been heightened beyond the East Midlands Region through the tour due to the locations of the galleries themselves; the combination of exhibition, programme of events and commissioning of new works; the publishing and distributing of the Home-Maker book and the website.

The Home-Maker tour has received positive reviews and has been covered predominantly by local media. The marketing, in terms of reaching national media, has not been as successful as it could have been, primarily due to the lack of a co-ordinated and centralised marketing strategy.

Jeanie has developed new partnerships and contacts through the tour, such as On The Edge and Hatton Gallery.

The tour has linked into the research and development of Jeanie's new project Teenland both conceptually and practically.

The Home-Maker tour was extremely successful in creating opportunities for Jeanie to make new work. The talks and presentations also created valuable moments on the tour for Jeanie to reflect on her practice with other curators, artists and filmmakers.



Home-Maker Installation, Interior detail – Japanese Room, Photo: Mike Davidson

Folly, Lancaster

31 July – 10 September 2004

Folly is a media arts agency based in Lancaster. During the Home-Maker exhibition Folly were still based at Castle Park where they had a gallery and cafe. They have since embarked on a redevelopment process as part of Lancaster City Council's project to establish the new Storey Creative Industry Centre. They have therefore temporarily ceased to be a building based arts venue until the opening of the new exhibition venue and media lab in 2007/08.

There were a number of key points that came up during my conversation with Maria Lambley, Centre Manager at Folly:

Maria was very pleased with the exhibition and felt it was very professionally put together, she thought it was one of the most interesting shows they have had at Folly since she began working there 2 years ago. She felt the piece worked on different levels and was very accessible. During the opening night 30–40 people attended and during the exhibition approximately 20 people attended a day, less at weekends.

It was unclear who was responsible for marketing Home-Maker while it was at Folly as Jeanie had contracted a consultant (Anne Denman) to develop a marketing strategy but the roles were blurred when it came to carrying it out. This meant that groups who could have been targeted, such as Age Concern were not. Maria said she would have liked to develop more community links especially with schools but this was not possible because the show fell within school holidays. The lack of targeted marketing was also made apparent when Jeanie gave her live web broadcasted presentation at the gallery and only two people attended in person, although there was a large web audience of approximately 250, some of whom took part in the discussion. Maria felt it could have been made clearer from the beginning what the roles and responsibilities were for her and the Home-Maker tour marketing consultant, Anne Denman. She suggested they could have developed a more targeted marketing campaign for it but as it was she ended up just sending information to the normal mailing list. She thought it would be good if there had been a Home-Maker Tour contract for each of the venues, which clarified these roles and responsibilities.

There was an issue with access for elderly people to the exhibition. A steep flight of stairs led to the gallery. The gallery itself was also quite dark and therefore it was difficult to see the interpretative material. The gallery is separate from the café downstairs and there were no invigilators looking after the space while I was there. For an exhibition that could have attracted an audience that certainly included elderly people, it may have been difficult for them to have accessed the installation.

"I really liked this, very intimate and privileged picture of two societies" Lancaster

"I think this is one of the best shows you have staged" James Barber, Warton Carnforth

"I'll come back" A Quin, Lancaster

"Very good piece" David Ferry, Head of fine Art, Winchester School of Art.

Aberdeen Art Gallery, Aberdeen

16 April – 20 August 2005

Background to the exhibition

Jeanie worked closely with On the Edge to develop Home-Maker in Scotland. On the Edge were introduced to Jeanie's practice through writer and researcher Francois Matarasso. On the Edge is a visual arts research unit at Gray's School of Art, Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen. Anne Douglas and Heather Delday, who run the research programme originally approached Duff House, an 18th Century Country House and Gallery in Banff to exhibit Home-Maker. Following further research, however, it was felt that Aberdeen Art Gallery was a more suitable site to accommodate the exhibition and could host it for a longer period. Jeanie states: 'Duff house is very traditional and [we] were unsure about housing the structure – whether it would fit physically or tonally'. Anne Douglas stated how this was a good opportunity for them to develop a project between Aberdeen Art Gallery and Gray's Art School.

Christine Rew, Aberdeen City Council's Keeper of Applied Art based at Aberdeen Art Gallery, also stated how this project created an opportunity for the Gallery to work with the Art School and that this was something she wanted to build on (for example, she is involved in developing a Critical Design course with the college). From their experience of Home-Maker, Christine also stated how they wanted to continue to create opportunities and commission work by artists but are aware they would have to raise extra funds for this. They programme two years ahead and are open to different ways of working on a visual art basis rather than applied art. Home-Maker was an opportunity to use contemporary and traditional collections together. It was essential for both Aberdeen Art Gallery and On the Edge that they develop the strategy for the Home-Maker exhibition and associated projects together.

'For On the Edge, listening to the partner is important as is responding to the discussions'. Anne Douglas

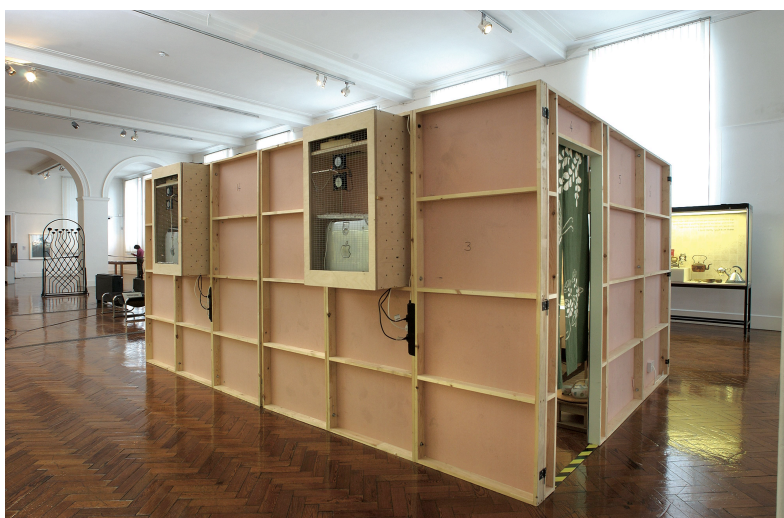
While the project enabled the Gallery and Art School to work together, Christine and Deidre Grant (Contemporary Exhibitions Officer, Aberdeen Art Gallery) stated how it had been difficult to get staff and students to come to the gallery. They did think, however, that Jeanie's talk at the college (to which approximately 60 attended) encouraged some students to come and see the exhibition.

'I enjoyed your lecture and loved the work' (F. Gallager, Aberdeen).

Despite the difficulties, the gallery received hundreds of visitors, including a large international audience (evidenced by the very long list of entries in the visitors book).

'I wish I could put into words how affecting your widow video rooms were to me. I am a young widow (34) and feel the same way about my husband as these elderly ladies. So much for the generation gap! thank you, love to my Tim xx' (Abbie, Chichister).

The Home-Maker installation



Home-Maker Installation, Exterior – Aberdeen Art Gallery Photo: Mike Davidson

Jason Williamson, Exhibitions Officer at Aberdeen Art Gallery noticed how some audience members were hesitant to enter the installation and some people had problems using the mouse to navigate the work. He suggested a sign on the outside would have helped but understood this would have intruded on the artwork. When speaking to one of the gallery attendants, however, she informed me that she encouraged people to enter the house and helped people to use the mouse. She was very enthusiastic about Home-Maker and had received lots of positive feedback from the visitors.

The comments book was also full of glowing reports (460 comments gathered from Aberdeen, Scotland, throughout the UK, Italy, Norway, Spain, Bavaria, France, Venezuela, Finland, Rome, Portugal, Germany, USA, Malta, Canada, Ireland, Netherlands, Russia, Japan, Brazil, Poland, Sweden, Bolivia, Argentina, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Slovakia, Croatia, Philippines, Libya, Malaysia, Korea, Australia, Denmark, New Zealand, Slovenia and Kenya.

'Very different and enjoyable, incredibly enlightening' (K. Jagger, Harion).

'Absolutely astounding, 11/10' J Morgan, Peterhead

'Interesting question of whether the home environment becomes a 'prison' of old memories with no new stimulus when you are unable to leave, very interesting work.' (London)

'Totally fascinating, I put on the slippers and loved the Japanese Lady' (Kate, Italy).

'Best, most enjoyable project Aberdeen Art Gallery has shown to my memory. Just listening to Aiko-san talk about clouds was a joy, very inspiring, thank you' (Craig, North Aberdeen).

'Enter for the Turner Prize' (Gerald, Aberdeen).

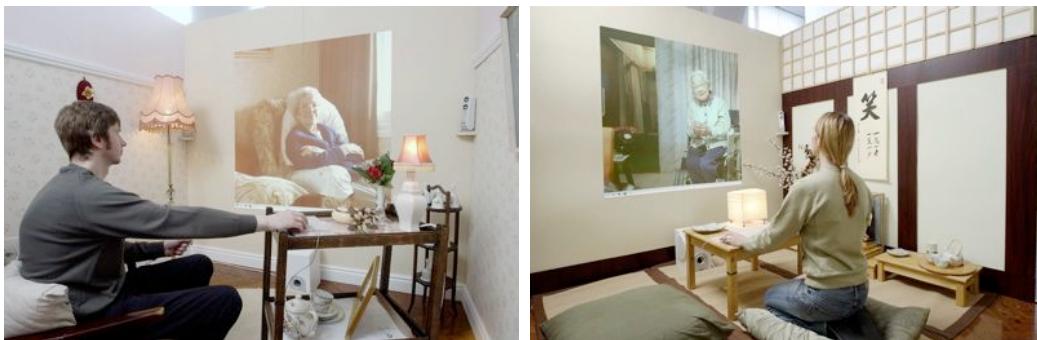
'Excellent work, come and be an artists in residence in Stavanger'.
(Martin Worts, Director Rogaland Kunstsenter, Norway).



Home-Maker Installation, Exterior and Home from Home cabinets – Aberdeen Art Gallery Photo: Mike Davidson

In the tall and wide gallery of Aberdeen Art Gallery, Home-Maker was more obvious as an object with a stark exterior and welcoming, decorated interior than at Folly where the installation was not much smaller than the gallery it was displayed in. Jason said he would have done away with the actual setting and focused on the footage as he found that much more interesting and initially felt the settings were cute but that the work itself was more impressive than the structure that housed it. Despite this, he enjoyed the challenge of building the 'set' in the gallery. Jason also suggested it would have been interesting to have the sides of the structure open so the audience could see the surrounding cabinets (explained below). Jason and Deidre suggested the printed matter accompanying Home-Maker (white on black) was quite difficult for some people to read.

The team at the gallery also mentioned that they had difficulty 'selling the work' (marketing Home-Maker) and that this was perhaps because the artist was not there. They did state, however, that they felt Jeanie was easily contactable and clear about what she wanted to happen.



Home-Maker Installation, interior details – Aberdeen Art Gallery Photo: Mike Davidson

The cabinets

Jeanie together with Heather Delday of On the Edge developed a project with a group of local older people and the Assistant Keepers of Applied Art at Aberdeen Art Gallery, Victoria Ward and Emma Thorpe. This resulted in a special display of pieces from the Art Gallery and Museum's collection, each cabinet representing a room in the home, housing items from various moments in time. Statements made by the group of older people were installed in vinyl on the glass cabinets. The cabinets surrounded the Home-Maker installation and provided another approach to thinking about the home and a link to the installation itself. The cabinets remained in the space until Spring 2006. Christine (Aberdeen Art Gallery) stated that Home-Maker was a catalyst for the cabinet project to happen but that this project could have happened on its own, without Home-Maker.



Heather worked with a group of older people to create the statements for the cabinets. Lesley Thomson, Community Arts Manager at Whitespace (a community arts outreach organisation funded by Aberdeen City Council) and Mary Anderson, Events Officer for Older and Disabled People at the City Council helped organise a group of 11 older people for Heather to work with. The group were made up of the Whitespace pottery class and were chosen because Lesley felt they were the most confident and vocal of the classes they hold there. She invited them for tea and biscuits and then Heather and Lesley let them know more about the project.

Lesley felt this was an opportunity for Whitespace to work with the Art College, as they have not done much work with them in the past. She mentioned that Whitespace would like to develop a better infrastructure for supporting artists in Aberdeen. There are few professional development opportunities for young artists and Lesley stated how through Whitespace they could work with graduates to develop opportunities for them in Aberdeen. There is a co-dependent relationship between Mary Anderson (at the Council), Whitespace and Aberdeen Art Gallery. They are all working towards similar objectives. While Aberdeen Art Gallery do not have much contact with community groups, Whitespace can offer the contacts and skills. Lesley and Mary agreed that this relationship seems to work.

The process:

The pottery group visited Aberdeen Art Gallery and spoke to Victoria and Emma, the assistant keepers, who showed them the objects they were selecting for the cabinets. It was originally discussed that the group would select the objects for the display cases but there was not enough time and so the Keepers curated the cases. This became a really positive aspect of the project. Anne and Heather (On the Edge) stressed how it made the curators more visible in the institution and gave them a chance to present their methods of selection to the group. They sensed Emma and Victoria had taken ownership over the project.

Emma and Victoria felt it was unusual to develop a display in relation to an installation they had not seen. The project gave them an opportunity to purchase recent objects to build on the collection for this display. Included in the display was a Homemaker plate. At the time she

selected it from the collection, Victoria did not know how influential this 1950s design had been for Jeanie when she was developing her project and so she was glad she had made an additional link to the work. They decided not to label the objects in the cabinets and to have a hand list if people wanted to find out the date, makers and titles of the pieces. Victoria stated how it was 'such a diversion to what we usually do, to have [our display] as a spin off of Jeanie's project and to work with Jeanie'. They also felt it was an 'absolute treat' to work with Whitespace. They liked picking the wallpaper, which lined the backs of the cases as they felt, were doing something different. They said how it was usually the education department who worked with communities but they hoped they would get the opportunity to work with communities visiting the gallery more often.

'It's been really successful and really emotional'. Emma Thorpe

The group then took part in a workshop led by Heather. Jeanie gave Heather some tips on getting 'good quotes' that she had used in her conversations with the older people portrayed in Home-Maker. Heather used a 120 year old woven tweed blanket to stimulate debate within the group. She described her approach to working with the group as a hybrid of her own way of working as an artist and incorporating Jeanie's suggestions. The workshop was based on a set of questions (prepared by Jeanie and Heather). During the workshop Heather introduced her own home and then brought out the blanket. The ensuing conversations about the home were recorded and sound-bites were selected by Jeanie and Heather over email and phone. The group did not have the option of selecting the sound bites for the cabinets but were given the option of having their names next to the quotes or to be anonymous. They made a group decision to remain anonymous. Heather stated how 'it wasn't a documentary, it's an art piece' and therefore it was important that the quotes were not authored by the participants.

Heather stressed the importance of the workshop as an exchange of experiences and ideas about the home, that it was not a one-way process where the artist takes material from other people for their own work. She stated how each participant had a degree of autonomy. She was not asking them to swap roles (for them to become curators for example) but relied on their individual expertise. It was also significant that the participants were talking about the present and that it did not turn into a reminiscence project. Mary (Aberdeen City Council) and Lesley (Whitespace) said the feedback from the workshop was positive and felt Heather had led the workshop well. They also talked about the need for skilled people to deal with some of the issues that come out of the workshop and project as a whole. This is perhaps where Whitespace come in and issues could be fed back to them to pick up on.

Invigilation

The work with the older people began only 3 months before the opening of Home-Maker and this was considered a problem in that they were not able to work with the group in more depth on the project as a whole. Originally, there were plans for the older people to invigilate Home-Maker (focusing on the installation rather than the cabinets). After a training session with Jason Williamson at the Gallery. However, they did not return to invigilate. Heather and Jason felt this was because the group did not feel a sense of ownership over Home-Maker, as they were not involved in the making of it. Jason stated how the group had understood what Jeanie had done but could not understand why they were there as invigilators. They felt intimidated, although they did interact with some people. He said that the whole group did come to the training session and this reflected a strong sense of ownership over the project for the cabinets. A couple of people in the group returned but Jason did not pursue it.

Lesley and Mary felt it would have been better if they had been involved at an earlier stage and how it would have made a difference if the older people were also involved from the start rather than involving them in a project that was already 'sewn up'. Lesley said it felt like she was corralling them into the project and that there was little room for the older people to mould the project themselves. Lesley felt the link to the college was not as fruitful as it could have been and that it was more like employing a freelance artist to carry out the workshop. Lesley and Mary felt the reasons for the invigilation part of the project was not a success was because the group were not offered an incentive. Home-Maker and the cabinets project was something new and different for them and therefore would take some time for them to get involved 'It's something you should spend a year on' (Lesley). Also, Lesley pointed out, they are busy people and may have found it difficult to find time to continue their involvement. We also discussed the need for developing longer-term opportunities for older people to engage in projects where artists and older people can work together on an equal footing. This is part of the Council's agenda to shift the ways in which older people see themselves, creating a non-dependency culture.

Plans for Home From Home at Provost Skene's House

As an extension of Home-Maker in Aberdeen Jeanie worked with Heather of On the Edge to develop another project called Home from Home which unfortunately did not take place. The proposal for Home from Home was to develop a sound installation at Provost Skene's House based on interviews with employees of the City Council (based in the building opposite Provost Skene's House) and groups of elderly people living in Aberdeen. Named after one of the occupiers, the merchant Sir George Skene, this 16th Century house was going to be demolished in the 1930s as part of the 'rejuvenation' of the Guestrow, one of the main streets in Aberdeen. A group of campaigners saved the building, however, and following its refurbishment, it was opened to the public in 1953 as a 'Period House and Museum of Local History'. Home from Home would have introduced notions of contemporary living through sounds of the interviews with local people to lifestyles of the 17th and 18th Centuries reflected in the furnishings of the House.

Home from Home did not take place because the City Council could not secure match funding from the Scottish Arts Council. The application was made by Christine Rew (Aberdeen Art Gallery). One of the reasons for the failure of the application that Christine received from the Scottish Arts Council was that Aberdeen Art Gallery were reacting to a suggestion from someone else and that it was not a project they had developed together. They felt Aberdeen Art Gallery had not taken ownership over the project. As Christine pointed out, however, Aberdeen Art Gallery and On the Edge had worked together on the proposal. Another reason the application failed could have been the fact that Provost Skene's House does not have disabled access. Lesley also pointed out the inaccessibility of the Aberdeen Art Gallery itself and that this is something the Gallery must consider in the long term, especially as they are continuing to developing projects with older people.

Djanogoly Theatre, Lakeside Arts Centre, Nottingham 1-11 September 2005

Background to the exhibition

The third venue for Home-Maker was the Djanogoly Theatre, Lakeside at the University of Nottingham. As well as a theatre, Lakeside has an exhibition space, pavilion and recital hall hosting a programme of visual art, music, theatre, dance, comedy and literature performances and a variety of workshops for young people. Home-Maker was installed on the stage of the theatre space. The theatre space was used because the gallery was already pre-programmed with touring shows. Despite not being able to use the gallery, the theatrical staging of Home-Maker offered a new way of experiencing the work. Unfortunately the exhibition was only on for ten days which Jeanie felt effected audience numbers in that people were unable to return to see the work, which is what has happened in the other venues.

It was important for Jeanie to showcase her work in her hometown and invite an audience of local press and interested public to experience Home-Maker. She comments:

'There's a lot happening in Nottingham now and it's very important that, although I want to develop my work nationally and internationally, my peers in Nottingham know my work. I wasn't initially going to do it, but Lakeside was a good venue to show at in terms of their programme and location. They also have a good marketing department. I wanted to my peers to see my work.'

Showing the work in Nottingham also allowed Jeanie to spend time with the work and talk to people about the piece.

Jeanie had initial talks with the education team to work with older people on the invigilation of Home-Maker but this did not happen. They had planned to talk to the Friends of Lakeside, Age Concern and other older peoples groups in the area. While Age Concern were contacted by Lakeside, no groups came to see the exhibition. One of the reasons it may have difficult to engage older people at Lakeside is because the education team were over worked and that unless it was a priority for them it was not going to happen.

Event

To coincide with the exhibition there was a screening of the feature documentary Unmade Beds by Nicholas Barker at Broadway Cinema, Nottingham.

There was also an event, No Place Like Home at Djanogoly Theatre during the exhibition, during which Jeanie and documentary film maker, Nicholas Barker were in conversation (chaired by writer and director Chris Cooke). This event was web broadcast live. The conversation focused on how making work about the home can reveal intimate truths and how 'apparently trivial matters of taste 'can reveal crucial expressions of private & social identity'. They also discussed Barker's controversial working practices, the relationship between subject and filmmaker and the role of storytelling in documentary. 28 people attended this talk.

Jeanie states how

'The talk went well. I really enjoyed meeting Nicholas Barker and hearing what he had to say about my work.'

Some of Nicholas' remarks included:

'I don't think you value your work as much as you should'

'I look forward to seeing your work in the future because I think you're doing something really unique.'

There were technical difficulties with the web broadcast for this event and it was not possible to find out how many people were watching the conversation online. Jeanie reflected that perhaps the technical problems and amount of money spent on the broadcast outweighed its benefits.

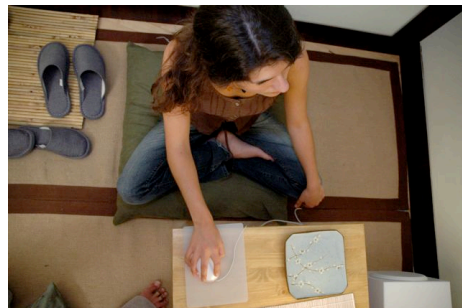
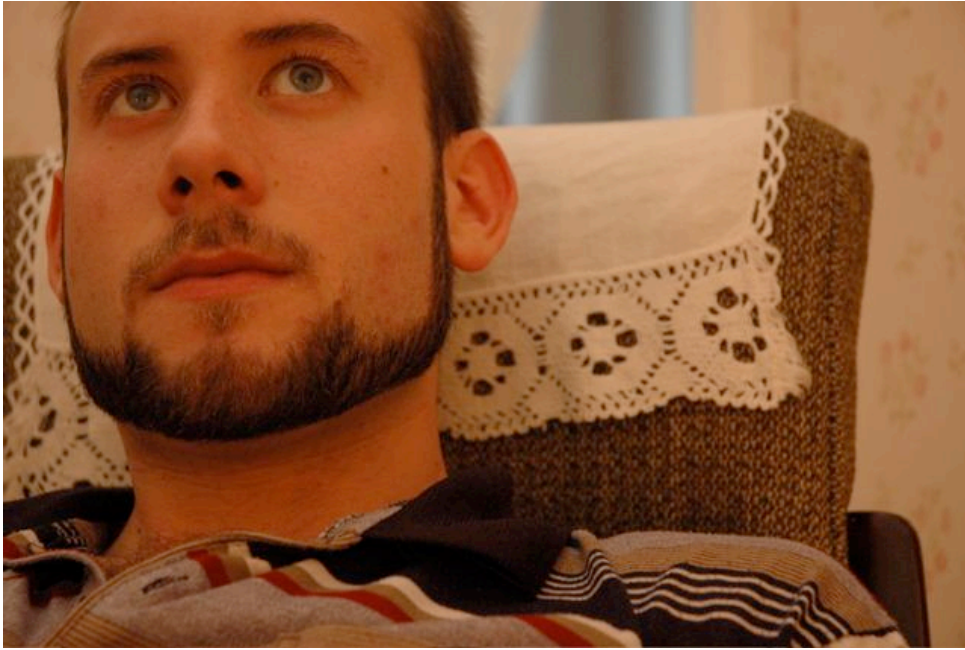
Audiences and Marketing

Jeanie was disappointed that none of the funders of Home-Maker came to see the exhibition while it was on in Nottingham, despite invitations and reminders. She would have appreciated feedback from the supporters of project.

The marketing at Nottingham was relatively successful due to the high profile of the location and the rewarding work done by the marketing team there. Approximately 20 people a day went to see Home-Maker. In terms of local and national press it was the most successful of all venues on the tour. For example, Home-Maker appeared three times in the Metro and was also reviewed in the Guardian Guide. Laura-Mae Brown, Head of Marketing at Broadway, Nottingham felt the reaction from the press in and around Nottingham was supportive because Jeanie has a good reputation locally. She felt her reputation grew due to the longevity of the tour - it had a long 'shelf-life'. Posters and information about the project appeared at Broadway and Lakeside for a long time.

Sofia Nazar, press officer at Lakeside also stressed how Jeanie has a 'good following' in Nottingham and that it was beneficial for Lakeside to tap into this audience and to bring them together with the more traditional audience that regularly attend Lakeside events. They advertised the exhibition through their website, brochure (of which there were 35000 distributed) and direct mailing and targeted local Japanese audiences. The exhibition was visited by people using the café at Lakeside, which is next door to the theatre space where Home-Maker was exhibited. Audiences who usually attend performances at the theatre also saw the exhibition. This meant that new audience who do not usually experience contemporary art went to see Home-Maker. Some of the visitors to the Lakeside art gallery which is in a separate building over the road, made the journey to see the installation. There was signage in the gallery space to encourage people to do this although Sofia felt they could have done more to advertise the exhibition to people in the café. Instead they relied on people on the front desk to inform people about the installation.

Overall, Sofia felt that it would have been beneficial to have clarified her and Laura's roles in terms of marketing. Sofia would have preferred to have managed the marketing purely because of her knowledge of the venue and relationship with press contacts. In hindsight she felt that more could have been done on their part to push for press and to give Home-Maker the attention it deserved. There could also have been a wider poster campaign around the city. She acknowledged, however, that this comes down to budgets. She was very positive about the project and hopes to work with Jeanie again in the future.



Home-Maker Installation, audiences at Lakeside Arts Centre, Nottingham. Photos: Tom Martin

Hatton Gallery, Newcastle

January 14 - March 14 2006

Background to the exhibition

The Hatton Gallery is situated within the Department of Fine Art at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. The Gallery's permanent collection consists of Renaissance to Modern European paintings, watercolours, drawings and prints by John Charlton and William Henry Charlton and a collection of Indian Miniatures and West African Sculpture as well as a body of contemporary British art that was donated by the Contemporary Art Society. Also installed in the gallery is the *Elterwater Merzbarn* by Kurt Schwitters, which was donated to the gallery in 1965. The gallery runs a programme of contemporary art exhibitions and workshops.

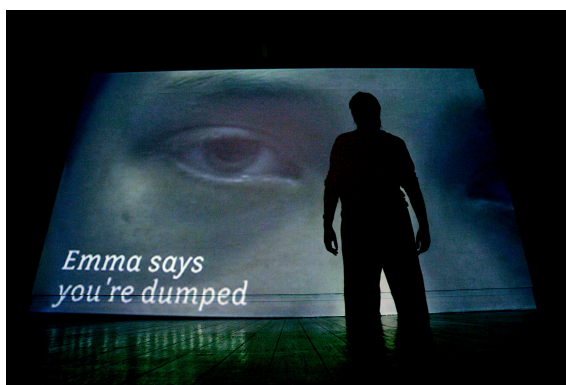
Jeanie approached the curators (Lucy Whetstone and Karen Chapman) with the idea for an exhibition in September 2004. She also met the curators at the Reg Vardy Gallery and Northern Gallery of Contemporary Art in Sunderland. Based on the information Jeanie gave Hatton Gallery (her website and portfolio) and a follow up meeting, they decided to offer Jeanie the opportunity to show *Home-Maker*. They contributed £5,000 towards the exhibition (£1000 of which went on painting the gallery; £2000 on Jeanie's fee and £2000 on exhibition expenses such as transport and insurance).

Following further conversations with Jeanie, Hatton Gallery decided to develop a solo show of Jeanie's work. Alongside *Home-Maker*, two video works by Jeanie were projected in separate rooms of the gallery:

When was the last time you said I love you? (2005), a video work constructed from hundreds of responses to an online questionnaire about love.

Love Takes (2003) which charts the places that love takes us and leaves us, as we fall in and out of love over a lifetime. (www.lovetakes.co.uk)

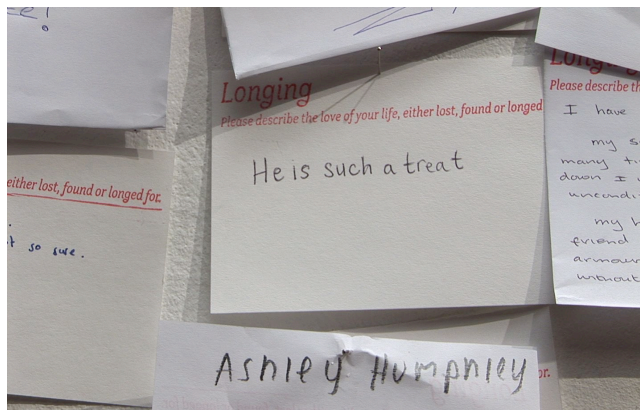
The gallery did not receive extra funds to commission a new piece of work (they had applied to the AV Festival, an international festival of digital arts and music, electronic art, games, film and new media). Despite this, Jeanie made two new works for the exhibition: *Longing* and *Belonging*.



Love Takes (left) and *When was...* (right) at Hatton Gallery

New work

Longing



Longing: Jeanie left cards with the note 'please describe the love of your life, either lost, found or longed for' stamped on them. People wrote on the cards and during the exhibition one wall slowly filled with comments. Approximately 400 hundred cards were filled in. Here are a selection of comments from the Longing wall:

'I thought it was art, but now I'm not so sure'.

'We have a love unspoken, not even to the best of friends, because the day our love in spoken is the day our love ends'.

'My dad the doctor who does not cut out organs but sews in souls'.

'My love is just around the corner – but the street is never ending'.



Belonging



Jeanie requested the assistance of the Friends of the Hatton Gallery to create a new installation. All of the Friends were asked if they would be willing to loan an object from their home, alongside an accompanying 30 word text, which would explain why the object was of significance to them. The resulting display of approximately 25 objects included an eclectic range of items, from an ice pick, to an aloe plant, to an unfinished painting, all of which evoke intimate memories and sentiments from their owners. Approximately 10 people from the Friends of the Hatton Gallery participated in Belonging and came to the opening.

A label attached to a small wooden carving of woman read:

'My sister was in the process of finishing this when she was killed in a road traffic accident at the age of 24. It expresses for me a hiding away of sorrow, feelings that of course, were evoked by her death' (Mrs. S. Tideswell).



Events:

Longing and Belonging (21 February): A lecture to the Friends of Hatton Gallery during which Jeanie presented her work in the exhibition and introduced how making work about the home can reveal intimate truths and how 300 strangers shared the intimate secrets of their love lives with her. She also previewed her new documentary for BBC4 Teenland. Approximately 33 people attended this event.

Valentines Day (14 February): Due to the many references to love in the exhibition, Hatton Gallery hosted a valentines evening in the gallery. Approximately 380 people attended this event

House Clearance
14 March 2006



To mark the end of her show the Home-Maker set was stripped and removed by local house clearance company Heaton Used Furniture. The event was filmed and made into a short film for the Home-Maker web site.

5 people attended this event (including a research fellow working on the design of older people's homes).



Relationship between artist and gallery:

Working with Jeanie fulfilled the galleries aims of working with new media and promoting the work of new artists. It was important for them to maintain contact with the artist, enabling Jeanie to constantly develop the ideas for the show.

'The work was really accessible...everyone could relate to it...
it appeals to people on different levels' (Karen Chapman).

They did not make a contract with Jeanie as it 'worked well to do this informally'. Usually they only do contracts with artists they are commissioning, although Jeanie did make two new works for the exhibition.

'Jeanie was good at responding to emails quickly and responding to technical queries'
(Karen Chapman).

'It was good to work with a living artist and develop work with them' (Karen Chapman).

Audiences and Marketing

Hatton Gallery have many strong links with schools and held workshops during the exhibition so many children got to experience Jeanie's work (approximately 1238 children saw the work). Staff at the gallery have been trying to make more links with University students and the Valentines Day event was a way of doing this and proved very popular. They also stated that more people turned up to Jeanie's talk than normal. Approximately 9087 (about 178 per day) visited the exhibition.

Working with the Friends at Hatton Gallery was a real success in that people felt ownership of the project and there was a sense of genuine involvement.

The Gallery usually work with the University marketing department to promote exhibitions but are trying to do more in-house marketing. For this final venue of the tour Jeanie and Hatton Gallery invited Alan Sykes, an independent marketing consultant to work on press coverage for the show and events. He approached Women's Hour, the Culture Show, Front Row and the Guardian among others and unfortunately none of them covered the exhibition or events. He was employed on a no win no fee basis. Some of the reasons given by the media for not being able to cover the exhibition included the fact that it was not in London and that Jeanie was an emerging rather than established artist.

'This largely unprecedented, highly novel approach to portraiture brings up all kinds of touching details of life as it is lived between four walls, amid the dreadfully small collections of significant belongings, haunted by the enduring presence of lost loved ones....'

Mick Martin, The Guardian.

Home-Maker publication and website

The publication

Once the tour was underway, Jeanie began work on the Home-Maker publication. It was decided that this should play a longer lasting role than a straight forward exhibition catalogue and become a new site for reflecting on Home-Maker in relation to Jeanie's practice more widely, contemporary art and notions of home. Following our conversations about the content and purpose of the publication, Jeanie invited me to edit it.

The publication became an exciting opportunity to invite people who had been involved in the project to revisit the work, reflect on their involvement and their specific interests. For example, Monji Kimiaki, Emi Akutgawa and Roy Witham, three of the homemakers in Jeanie's work wrote about their involvement in the piece. Jeanie also made a new link to curator and writer Hitomi Hasegawa who was commissioned to write a piece for the publication.

Although sales have been lower than expected the publication has been a valuable marketing tool. Copies have been used as exhibition invites, thank you gifts to participants, placed in art libraries and distributed to curators and artists.

The publication was available to buy at Aberdeen Art Gallery, Lakeside and Hatton Gallery. It is also available through Jeanie's website, Amazon and will be soon available to buy at Waterstones. Ruby, Jeanie's company has now registered an ISBN number and is now able to publish further publications.

The website

The Home-Maker website provides an online version of both the exhibition and the publication. It now serves as an archive and active virtual exhibition of Home-Maker where you can find information about the history, context and concept of the project. Jeanie collaborated with Gareth Howell on the design and production of the website which Jeanie found extremely fruitful as it opened up another form of collaboration to her. The website has been made to a high specification so that the Home-Maker interactive projection can be used in presentations and exhibitions in the future.

Segments of the Home-Maker installation can perhaps now only be found in various charity shops, car boot sales and on eBay following the House Clearance when the work was dismantled. The publication and website now provide an even more important role in disseminating information about the project post-tour. In fact, they become the exhibition, the next step on Home-Maker's ongoing journey.



Home-Maker website, screen shot. www.home-maker.org.uk

Conclusions

Has the tour developed new audiences for Home-Maker and work by Jeanie Finlay?

The tour of Home-Maker has meant that audiences in Scotland, East Midlands, North West and North East England have experienced Jeanie's work. Beyond the usual gallery visitors, the talks, workshops and events have meant that new audiences have been introduced to the galleries as well as Jeanie's work. Home-Maker is an extremely accessible art work, which has appealed to a wide variety of generations at different levels

At the beginning of the tour there were plans to involve older people in the invigilation of the installation. With each host venue Jeanie had conversations about who and how to involve people. Unfortunately this did not happen at each venue, mainly due to Jeanie not being there to remind staff or work on contacting people herself. Aberdeen Art Gallery and Hatton Gallery were successful in involving older people in the exhibitions, but not invigilation. It was thought that to involve older people in the invigilation of Home-Maker would have meant more preparation and commitment from the gallery at an earlier stage. The projects that did happen (at Hatton and Aberdeen) were possible due to the existing close links the gallery (or Whitespace in the case of Aberdeen) had with a group of older people.

How have the different venues reached different audiences for the work?

Folly, Lancaster: Unfortunately Folly were not actively engaged in targeting audiences for Home-Maker. This was due to time-scale and confusion over responsibilities for marketing. There was, however, a large online audience for the talk Jeanie gave about her work at the gallery.

Aberdeen Art Gallery: The development of the cabinets project in Aberdeen proved very successful in working with a local group of older people, the in-house curators and the Art College. The success of this element of the project lies in the respect given to the individuals taking part and not relying on reminiscence as a tactic for working with older people. The project would have been even more successful if they had had more time to work with the group. It was also an issue (understandably) that the group did not take ownership over the Home-Maker installation as much as the cabinets.

Djanogoly Theatre, Lakeside, Nottingham: Again, audiences were not targeted specifically for Home-Maker although Lakeside succeeded in bringing in a large audience for the event (with Nicolas Barker) and the exhibition had a steady flow of people.

Hatton Gallery, Newcastle: Both the events (Jeanie's talk, Valentines Day, House Clearance and workshops with young people) and the new pieces of work developed especially for the exhibition were successful in bringing in different audiences. The fact that the gallery is located in the University campus meant that students were able to view the work and come to the events. The Friends of Hatton Gallery (who are mainly older people) were also actively engaged in the making of Belonging.

Has the profile of Jeanie Finlay been heightened beyond the East Midlands Region through the tour?

An important aspect of the tour was to raise Jeanie's profile and to get her work seen beyond the West Midlands. By taking Home-Maker on tour, Jeanie has raised the profile of her practice and has gone on a fascinating journey that has enabled her to reflect on the ways in which her practice is shifting from community practitioner to individual artist and how a growing

understanding of documentary film making plays a key part in that shift. The Home-Maker publication and website have contributed to the success in getting Jeanie's work known more widely, both nationally and internationally.

Laura-Mae Brown, Head of Marketing at Broadway, Nottingham worked with Jeanie on planning the marketing and publicity for the tour during its initial stages. As the project grew in scale, however, she felt she was unable to commit to the overall marketing campaign due to other work commitments. She helped Jeanie produce the first news item and liaised with Folly, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Lakeside to make sure they had the print material they needed.

Laura also worked with Jeanie initially in planning venues for the tour. She originally approached the ICA in London to present Home-Maker as part of their digital programme. Having a London-based venue on the tour would have perhaps increased the profile of the work and attracted more press coverage. The ICA were keen to show the installation but felt it was not interactive enough and therefore did not fit perfectly with their remit.

The Home-Maker tour has received positive reviews and has been covered predominantly by local media (see appendix). The marketing, in terms of reaching national media, however, has not been as successful as it could have been. This is due to a number of factors:

- The original marketing consultant, Anne Denman was unable to carry out the marketing due to illness and miscommunication between Jeanie and Anne about what was expected.
- The marketing was taken over by Broadway Cinema who were over stretched and unable to dedicate specific time to the project.
- At Hatton Gallery Alan Sykes tried to get coverage for Home-Maker, which he failed to do.
- There was no overall marketing strategy from the beginning of the tour and no one person responsible for carrying it out and liaising with the host venues.
- There was confusion between the venues as to who was responsible for marketing.
- Barriers to marketing the tour (or aspects of it) have been identified as the regional location of the venues and emerging status of the artist.

Laura (Broadway) also felt that the lack of national press was due to Jeanie's work not being known nationally yet and also the fact that the venues did not necessarily have such a high profile beyond their locality. The exhibition was perhaps also difficult to market because it was not an obvious concept but a hybrid project using different mediums with many layers of interpretation. She stressed that unless one has a track record with editorial staff it is always difficult to get coverage. She felt that a more successful marketing campaign requires more resources and commitment from someone who can manage the whole campaign and this needs a good budget. If there had been time Laura says she would have worked more on the overall strategy.

Despite these setbacks the tour has enabled Jeanie to present and showcase her work in four well-known and respected venues and this will enhance her career as a serious, professional artist.

What partnerships and contacts have developed for future collaborations and exhibitions through the tour?

One of the key contacts developed through Home-Maker was On the Edge. As a research unit interested in developing critical discourse around art that engages with social situations, the partnership between Jeanie, Heather and Anne has proved invaluable. Home-Maker in Aberdeen also encouraged organisations there to work together for the first time.

By getting to know Jeanie through her exhibition at Lakeside, MOOT, an artists studio network in Nottingham have invited Jeanie to their events and so she feels she has got to know a new artistic community in her hometown.

Through researching venues and building links with galleries Jeanie has sustained professional relationships with curators of Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, the Northern Gallery of Contemporary Art, Sunderland and the Photographer's Gallery, London.

How did the tour link into the research and development of Teenland?

Organising the Home-Maker tour has helped Jeanie both conceptually develop Teenland and also in terms of planning. She describes Teenland as a teenage version of Home-Maker. It is a portrait, mirror and canvas for the people she is working with to express themselves through. The visual style of Teenland very much came from making Home-Maker to the extent that she was going to build a set for the Teenland portraits (this did not happen in the end but the home-from-home scenes came from this idea). Teenland is a development on from Home-Maker in terms of Jeanie's practice but has been a different production process (for example, Teenland was produced with a professional team and crew).



Immy 16, still from Teenland a 60 minute documentary for BBC4.
Photo: Tom Martin

Successes, questions and opportunities of the tour

There have been a number of key factors that have risen from the relationship between Jeanie and the host organisations. Jeanie has worked hard to co-ordinate the overall tour and be in close contact with the key partners. These partners have been impressed with her professionalism and clarity. A crucial element of the touring process was the flexibility that was required in terms of the choice of venues. There were many changes to the original proposed sites and Jeanie found that many galleries were not so interested in presenting existing work, for them it was more interesting to develop work with an artist.

I have outlined below suggestions, which may make the development of future tours of Jeanie's work even more successful.

- **Contracts:** It would be useful for Jeanie to finalise contracts with each of the host organisations clearly stating roles and responsibilities.
- **Curating:** Jeanie has felt that the negotiation with galleries is much more convoluted than she originally thought. It could be interesting for Jeanie to work with an independent curator to oversee and co-ordinate the overall tour, sourcing venues, negotiating with them and acting as an advocate for the project.
- **Marketing:** As well as devising an overall marketing strategy, an independent marketing consultant would bring editorial exposure and raise the profile of the tour as a whole. It is essential that the marketing strategy be communicated to each of the host venues so as to centralise the overall campaign and therefore increase its effectiveness.
- **Audiences:** It is important that Jeanie and the organisations she is working with understand what is possible in terms of targeting specific audiences. For example, in the case of Home-Maker, more could have been done by Folly and Lakeside in reaching audiences of older people but it was unclear as to whose responsibility this was. I would suggest the gallery has an opportunity to take this on, linking it to their long-term audience development strategies.

Finally, the Home-Maker tour was extremely successful in creating opportunities for Jeanie to make new work, such as the cabinets in Aberdeen and Belonging, Longing and House Clearance in Newcastle. This certainly brought the tour to life and has added to the development of Jeanie's work overall. The talks and presentations also created valuable moments on the tour for Jeanie to reflect on her practice with other curators, artists and filmmakers. The Home-Maker tour has been a fantastic opportunity for Jeanie to test the presentation and understandings of Home-Maker. The symbolic dismantling of the installation during House Clearance marks the end of a long and impressive journey and the beginning of new exciting developments in her artwork.

Home-Maker

Jeanie Finlay

Hatton Gallery
University of
Newcastle upon Tyne

House Clearance

Live Event

Tuesday 14 March 2006

1pm

Free entrance

www.home-maker.org.uk

Audience Figures for Home-Maker Tour

Folly, Lancaster		
Visitors to the gallery	(42 days @ approx 20 per day)	840
Private View		150
Talk		2
Online Audience		250
Total		1242

Aberdeen Art Gallery		
Visitors to Gallery	(126 days @ approx 555 per day)	69,982
Private View		150
Lecture at Grays School of Art (maximum attendance)		60
Workshop attendees		12
Total		70,204

Lakeside Arts Centre, Nottingham		
Visitors to Gallery	(10 days @ approx 20 per day)	200
Private View		100
Screening and Q+A at Broadway Cinema		80
Talk		30
Online Audience		100
Total		510

Hatton Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne		
Visitors to Gallery	(51 days @ approx 178 per day)	9087
Private View		400
Talk		33
Valentines Event		380
Education / Schools Events		1238
House Clearance		10
Total		11,148

www.home-maker.org.uk		
Relaunched in January 2006	(120 days @ approx 50 per day)	6000

TOTAL AUDIENCE **89,107**

Taking Part Figures for Home-Maker

Folly		0
Aberdeen Art Gallery		27
Lakeside Art Centre		6
Hatton Gallery	Longing cards completed aprox	400
	Belonging objects	25
	Education groups	1238
	House Clearance	10
Total		1706

APPENDIX: Press coverage for Home-Maker Tour

Lancaster
Visitor

Aberdeen
Inside Housing
BBC Radio Scotland, arts show

Nottingham
The Guardian Guide
Nottingham Evening Post
Metro x 3

Newcastle
02.06 #212 The Crack
Metro x 2
City Life Magazine
The Evening Chronicle
The Evening Chronicle

Additional
Arts Council East Midlands Magazine (yet to be published)
Crossfields the home edition – feature on Home-Maker publication (yet to be published)

Metro, Nottingham, Wayne Burrows
HOMEMAKER

Modern culture's long-standing obsession with youth makes Nottingham-based artist Jeanie Finlay's interest in the lives and voices of the elderly something of a rarity. *Homemaker* is an exploration of the lives of seven people, four from South Derbyshire, three from Tokyo, seen through the lenses of their memories and homes.

"Homemaker came about after I'd worked on a participatory digital arts project called *Tea-Toast-Technology*", Finlay notes. "That had involved three years' work with older people, and afterwards I was interested in doing more. There's something fascinating about those with so many stories to tell, and such rich life experiences to pass on."

The original idea was a small-scale piece, documenting the lives and memories of four housebound people in South Derbyshire using a mix of digital video footage and panoramic photography, showing each person in a living room, and using the contents to tell the life story of its inhabitant.

"It would be someone talking about a thimble collection", she explains, "but that would lead to other stories. Because they were housebound, they'd often had to move from a large house to a small flat or bungalow, so there'd be a lifetime's possessions, and a lifetime's material contained in a single room".

The initial work's reputation spread, and the piece eventually made its way to Japan, where Finlay was offered the chance to expand it.

"I lived there for around a month, trying out my terrible Japanese, and managed to make three additional pieces with elderly people in Tokyo. What's happened now is that the two pieces of work have come together in a two-room set, a bit like a doll's house.

The Derbyshire room is modelled closely on that of an elderly lady named Florrie, while the Tokyo setting requires that viewers remove their shoes and kneel on a traditional *katami* mat to interact with the films, which are screened near life-size. Finlay hopes that the distinct settings will emphasise the cultural differences, but also allow parallels to be drawn.

"It was intriguing to see that Japanese people, or at least those with Buddhist beliefs, have shrines dedicated to people who have passed on in their living rooms. It struck me as not unlike the way Derbyshire people had mementoes of partners and parents on their mantelpieces", she says. "At the same time, there are very big differences, such as the way that the Tokyo people, even in their mid-eighties, live entirely crouched at floor level."

One of the Tokyo women, Aiko-San, explained to Finlay that she had photographed the clouds from her window every day for over 30 years, not as an art project, but simply to 'preserve the moment'. Having herself died six months after the project ended, Finlay notes that many of the participants were motivated by a desire to leave a record.

"Four of those who took part are now gone", she points out, "so the work over time becomes a memorial as well as an exploration of our ideas about home. But others are still very much with

us, and Ray, one of the Derbyshire men, is so stylish, entertaining and open that I think of him as an 'anti-pensioner' because he's so unlike the stereotype".

Finlay also suggests that the Tokyo pensioners seemed less isolated than their Derbyshire counterparts, but wonders how much of that difference might be due to particular, individual circumstances, how much culturally based.

"People seem more prepared to listen to and learn from the old in Japan than they do in the UK", she says, "but this work is about creating portraits of seven very different individuals. In the end, I hope the work will nudge viewers to think about their own lives, to reflect on where they might be in old age, and to consider what makes a home".

Wayne Burrows

1 – 11 Sept, Djanogly Theatre, Lakeside Arts Centre, University Park, Nottingham, Mon – Sat 10am – 5pm, Sun 12pm – 4pm, free, 0115 846 7777, www.lakesidearts.org.uk

EXHIBITION REVIEW

Metro, Nottingham

Home Maker

(three stars)

Walk into the Djanogly Theatre and you find yourself looking at a large plywood box, like the back view of a film set. Enter the doorway on one side and it's as though you've stepped into the flat of a grandparent.

A small armchair, made comfortable with cushions and antimacassars, invites you to take a seat. Pictures, doilies and knick-knacks are carefully positioned, and a computer mouse sits like a TV remote control next to the chair.

Once settled, the mouse allows you to navigate your own way through a set of panoramic photographs of elderly people in their flats, clicking on random objects to view films of each talking about the things that surround them.

Mementoes of the past loom large, and the recollections can be moving. But there's also 92 year-old Betty Craxford and her irresistible demonstration of a 'chuckling chimp', or Roy Witham's readings from the racier moments of his ongoing historical novel.

A few technical glitches aside, the experience is warmly intimate, engaging and wistful, just like those on screen. The variety of stories and characters is extended in a second room, where South Derbyshire gives way to Tokyo, and three more senior citizens offer us glimpses into their lives.

Much closer to the characters than a standard documentary would allow, the format makes the prospect of being offered a cup of tea and asked if we're 'courting' yet seem only a moment away.

Wayne Burrows

To 11 Sept, Djanogly Theatre, Lakeside Arts Centre, University Park, Nottingham, Mon – Sat 10am – 5pm, Sun 12pm – 4pm, free, 0115 846 7777, www.lakesidearts.org.uk

EVENT PREVIEW
Metro, Nottingham

Jeanie Finlay & Nicholas Barker

To coincide with Nottingham based artist Janie Finlay's Home-Maker installation at Lakeside's Djanogly Theatre, she and self-styled "bad boy of British documentary" Nicholas Barker will be meeting to talk about their differences and common ground.

Finlay's Home-Maker takes the domestic space as a way of uncovering intimate truths about private and social identity, while Barker's hugely influential Signs Of The Times series used the apparently whimsical device of ordinary people talking about their interior décor to expose all the class and gender prejudices of the British.

In another film, Unmade Beds, Barker turned four New York singles into quasi-fictional characters, and the audience into voyeurs, in a work that straddled fiction and documentary, asking real people to perform versions of their own lives for the camera. Unashamedly manipulative, Barker, like Nick Broomfield, has decisively changed the way that documentaries are made.

Jeanie Finlay's approach is gentler, and more traditional in intention, listening closely to her subjects and showing them as they might wish to be seen. In Home-Maker, seven very different elderly people from South Derbyshire and Tokyo sit in their living rooms, and use their possessions to tell their own stories.

Both film makers use digital video and draw on factual subject matter, but their very different approaches and results should make for a fascinating session. Chaired by writer and director Chris Cooke, the event will also mark the official launch of Finlay's Home-Maker website and book.

Wayne Burrows

8 Sep, Djanogly Theatre, Lakeside Arts Centre, University Park, Nottingham, 7pm, free (advance booking essential), 0115 846 7777, www.home-maker.org.uk