Urban Precarity: Affordable Art Studios in Contemporary London

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Abstract

This thesis contributes to critical understandings of the changing geographies of artist studios by examining how political-economic change and urban precarity manifest themselves in different working conditions for artists in those studios. Against the backdrop of recent debates in geography about the status of the art studio, as well as a series of changes around the organisation and delivery of artists workspace in London since the mid-2000s, this thesis determines what effect a series of recent transformations in London's political economy is having on the availability and organisation of affordable studios and the consequences of this for the ways in which artists use, experience and value studios. Taking the growing precariousness of affordable workspace to be both symptomatic and expressive of London's political economic condition, it poses a number of questions about the spatial and material practices through which precarity is made present within the studio, and how urban precarity is being brought to bear in artists' everyday studio activities and practices. These questions are addressed through interviews with those involved in the organisation and delivery of affordable artist workspaces in London, and the visual artists who rent and occupy these spaces. Bringing these two sets of responses together, this thesis develops the argument that the relationship between the studio and the city is one that is not only economic but also affective, material and experiential, and as such, it is impossible to think about studio provision in London without thinking about urban precarity. In other words, we cannot think about the artist's studio outside of the political-economic specificities of its urban context.

Contents

1.0 Introduction 1
1.0 Rethinking artist studios 1
1.1 Research questions 4
1.2 London 8
1.3 Theoretical orientations 10
1.4 Thesis structure and chapter contributions 13
2.0 Literature review 20
2.1 Rethinking studio space 22
2.2 The political economy of the studio 30
2.3 Urban precarity 37
2.4 The micro-geographies of the studio 43
2.5 Conclusion 54
3.0 Methods 58
3.1 Methodology 60
3.2 Methods 65
3.3 Logistics: site selection and sampling 81
3.4 Coding procedures for analysis 91
3.5 Ethical and responsive research 94
3.6 Summary 96
4.0 The artist's studio and the political economy of London 98
4.1 Political economy of studio provision 100
4.2 Studio provision under leasehold tenure 112
4.3 New materialisations of precarity 125
4.4 Conclusion 140
5.0 The affordable studio: compromises in privacy 143
5.1 Privacy in the studio 146
5.2 Sharing a studio 158
5.3 Open studios 170
5.4 Conclusion 179
6.0 Temporal experiences of the precarious studio 182
6.1 Pace 185

6.2 Routine 195
6.3 Temporal place-identity 207
6.4 Conclusion 212
7.0 Atmospheric experiences of the studio 215
7.1 Industrial studios: 'the right kind of atmosphere' 219
7.2 Office studios: 'the wrong kind of atmosphere' 228
7.3 New build studios: 'no atmosphere' 237
7.4 Conclusion 247
8.0 Conclusions 252
8.1 Multiple forms of studio 253
8.2 Performing precarity 256
8.3 Spatial language for the studio 260
8.4 Re-situating the studio 264
8.5 Summary 267
References 272
Appendix A: London's largest studio provider organisations 2019 298
Appendix B: Studio groups property portfolios, showing change 2015-2019 299
Appendix C: Studio sites included in this study 306
Appendix D: Sample email invitation for participants 310
Appendix E: Sample verbatim interview transcript 311

List of Figures

Figure 1. The distribution of art studios in London 86
Figure 2. The distribution of art studios provided by ASC, ACAVA, Acme and SPACE ... 86
Figure 3. The distribution of art studios/interview sites included in the fieldwork 87
Figure 4. The growth in studio organisations and studio properties in London 118
Figure 5. Stockwell Road studios in Brixton (ASC) 121
Figure 6. Studios delivered through the planning gain mechanism 129
Figure 7. Galleria studios (Acme) 130
Figure 8. Matchmakers Wharf studios (Acme) 133
Figure 9. Studio at Deborah House (SPACE) 152
Figure 10. Closed door studio at Brickfield studios (SPACE) 156
Figure 11. Shared studio at Flying Angel (ACAVA) 163
Figure 12. (I) Shared studio at Haymerle Road (SPACE) 164
Figure 13. (II) Shared studio at Haymerle Road (SPACE) 165
Figure 14. ArtWest open studio event (ACAVA) 174
Figure 15. Studio at Orsman Road (Acme) 191
Figure 16. Studio at Childers Street (Acme) 193
Figure 17. The amount of time artists spend in their studios each week 199
Figure 18. Studio in a former ship propeller foundry (Acme) 221
Figure 19. Bridget Riley (Co-Founder of SPACE) at St Katherine's Dock (1970) 227
Figure 20. Office asethetic of Stockwell Road studios (ASC) 231
Figure 21. White cube interior of Galleria studios (Acme) 240
Figure 22. White cube interior of Matchmakers Wharf studios (Acme) 24443
Figure 23. New industrial asethetic of Grafton Road studios (ASC) 246

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Rethinking artist studios

In November 2015, Southwark Council received a bid from 'Bold Home Project' - a grassroots collaborative between successful cultural art institution 'Bold Tendencies', local gallery owner Hannah Barry and cultural venue 'Second Home' - to transform an abandoned multi-storey carpark in Southwark into 800 art studios. Southwark Council had asked for proposals for the car park that would increase local employment and provide space for cultural and creative uses. This would complement existing use of the car park by Bold Tendencies Arts, an arts organisation which had taken over the space nine years ago, using it to stage an eclectic programme of music and art events. The Bold Home studios were set to be affordable self-build spaces for the creative community, costing £100 a month before bills. Occupants were to be provided with the infrastructure and materials to construct their own spaces in the first six levels of the car park. Despite endorsements from leading London art figures, such as the Director of Tate Modern, Southwark Council instead opted for the development of a multi-use space by Carl Turner Architects and property developers 'The Collective' (a business targeted at community art spaces). For fear of the Bold Home bid creating an 'artist's enclave', the car park was instead developed into 50 artists' studios alongside multi-use event spaces, pop-up retail and a café/bar (Ellis-Petersen, 2015). Aside from highlighting a preference for open and accessible artistic spaces and mixed-use developments, the case of the Bold Home bid raises questions about how a mundane space like a carpark

can become an artistic space, under what conditions, and with what implications for artistic activity and production.

This thesis responds exactly to these kinds of reconfigurations of creative urban space by examining the different types of studios being developed in London and the new spatiotemporal relations they create for the artists using and inhabiting them. Across London similar questions have also been raised about the type of strategies being used to deliver new forms of studios as part of new build mixed-use developments. Southwark, for instance, is also home to the Galleria. Opened in June 2006, the Galleria is a mixed-use property development that was erected on the grounds of a former print works and consists of 98 residential flats of which 23 are reserved for low-cost social housing (NFASP, 2009). It also features four floors of purpose-built artists' studios for up to fifty artists, which are offered to applicants at low rent on flexible tenancy terms. It was the first project of its kind in London, where affordable studios were created as the result of a partnership between London-based arts organisation Acme, and a private sector partner - property developer Barratt Homes. It promised new forms of studio space, which combine 'traditionally endowed studio spaces with high ceilings, white walls and large windows coupled with modern amenities such as central heating and facilities for office and administrative work' (Moreton, 2013: 421). Since 2006 a number of new build studio mixed-use developments have also been developed at different sites across the city. Acme alone have worked with a range of partners (including private and commercial developers, educational institutions and housing associations) to develop seven new build partnership projects since 2006, resulting in 220 permanent studios (Acme, 2018).

Given these developments the question of what counts as an artist's studio appears extremely fluid. Drawing attention to the complexity of studio provision in London raises pressing questions about the changing forms and different guises of artist workspaces, inviting us to think about what now constitutes an artist's studio in London. It also prompts us to reflect on and investigate the forces shaping studios to be developed in increasingly varied forms and in many different spaces.

There is certainly an awareness of some of the developments at the level of urban government in London. Since the mid-2000s the Culture Team at the Greater London Authority (London's regional governing body, hereinafter referred to as the GLA) have published a series of reports on the current conditions of affordable artists' workspace in London. Whilst recognising that they are not academic studies so their frame of reference will always be different, these reports manage almost entirely to avoid the question of what constitutes and defines an artist's studio. The first in this series of reports, the '*Artists Workspace Study*' published in 2014, was particularly significant in establishing a political platform for discussing the importance of artists workspace to London. However, the parameters that it uses to define a studio are imported from the '*Montreal Metropole Culturelle Report on Artists' Studios*', which was published two years prior in 2012 by Montreal's task force on artists' studios. The report states that 'premises must provide for a minimum of at least five artist studios or support five artists (even if other workspace or living provision is included in the building)' (GLA, 2014a: 13). Even this borrowed definition does not seem to appropriately address the nature and ecology of the artist's studio within the specificities of the city in which it is situated. Instead it outlines basic quantitative

parameters for the purposes of conducting the study that are indifferent to its urban context.

Against this backdrop, the central aim of this thesis is to explore the types of studio spaces in operation in London and examine how these are shaped by the wider urban context and the types of political-economic processes happening within it. Approaching the urban studio as a geographically constituted plurality, I argue that there is not *one* studio, but instead a whole range of spatiotemporal specific studio spaces which cannot easily be extracted from the specificities of their urban context. I also contend that experiences of the studio vary significantly within the context of London. I argue that we need to ask how different forms of studio constitute different experiences for the occupying artist.

1.1 Research questions

This thesis contributes to critical understandings of the changing geographies of studios. It examines how political-economic change and urban precarity manifest themselves in different working conditions for artists in those studios. It examines this from both the perspective of those involved in the organisation and delivery of affordable artists' workspace in London, and from the perspectives and experiences of the visual artists who rent and occupy them. It brings these two sets of responses together, to produce a highly contextualised, situated and empirically grounded account of the shifting geographies of artists' studios in contemporary London. I contend that we need to devise new ways of thinking about how artists experience the studio within its urban

context, and how the artist-studio relationship is sensitive and responsive to phenomena within the political economy.

Whilst we know a little about what the urban context is and, in part, how this is changing, we don't yet know much about how this is affecting artists. In light of a recent series of changes surrounding the availability, organisation and provision of affordable studios in London, we need to investigate how the experience of the artist is being transformed in the city. How is the artist's relationship with the studio changing? What impact does this change have for the ways in which artists use and value their workspace? Through asking these questions, I seek to modify and add to the repertoire of existing concepts that we use to understand and interpret the artist's studio.

Our current geographical understandings are not enough to grapple with the kind of change taking place around the studio within the city and the implications for artists occupying these spaces. For instance, whilst there is an extensive amount of literature on the political economy of creativity within cities (Zukin, 1989; 1995) most accounts of the studio have been in quite calculative terms - by which I mean that the provision and use of studio space has been viewed as an impersonal, unemotional process subject to rational calculations and assessments about urban (re)development. But there is a vast amount more going on that exceeds this present set of observations. In order to understand how artists experience this change, I argue that we need to look at the micro-geographies of the studio in order to think about how this change is *felt* at the level of the body, affectively, atmospherically and temporally. This means thinking about the relationship between the studio, the artist and the city in economic, but also affective, material and experiential terms.

Hawkins' (2015; 2017) work in particular draws out the various sensory and felt processes, practices and spaces of creativity and is important when considering these questions. Throughout her work, Hawkins asks where and under what conditions can creativity happen? Having observed a growing number of art practices and operations that increasingly challenge and move away from more traditional art spaces, her work prompts us to rethink the parameters that we use to identify and define sites of creativity in the city. She also provides a critical reflection on the political, social and cultural imperatives of the geographies of creativity, including discourses about creativity in the city more broadly - yet rarely is this understanding of the political economy of creativity traced back through art practices and (work)spaces**.** Beginning with Hawkins, the thesis addresses some of the important conversations taking place within geography around changing art-site relations and proposes alternative ways of conceptualising the urban studio as a space that is open to change and constantly forming and deforming in relation to the city.

Within this context, I take the growing precariousness of affordable workspace to be both symptomatic and expressive of London's political economic condition. I also examine the different ways in which this precarity is spatialized and experienced within the studio. Recently Ferreri et al. (2017) have described precarity as an all-encompassing urban spatial process that is marked by mutually constitutive patterns of insecure employment and insecure housing. Feminist materialist approaches to social reproduction and labour have also revealed that precarity has come to describe both a subject position and the affective embodiment of that position, felt as a particular set of anxieties about the inability to predict and preside over the outcomes of one's life (Strauss and Meehan, 2015; Butler 2009; 2011). This is important because it suggests

that urban precarity is not just a backdrop for studio life but that it is also a lived and embodied condition that manifests across different affective registers. This condition in turn alters artists feelings, experiences and different potential fields of action in the studio. In short, I argue that it is impossible to think about affordable studio provision in London without thinking about the condition and experience of urban precarity. In other words, we cannot think about the artist's studio outside of its urban context. The key contribution that I seek to make is to geographical understandings of how studio spaces are transforming in conditions of urban precarity.

This thesis therefore sets out to achieve a greater understanding of the under-researched area of urban artists' workspace. It seeks to account for the ways in which individuals and their activities and experiences are affected by larger transformations taking place within the city, and how this is differentiated. In particular the thesis explores how artists experiences of the studio are being shaped by its urban context. Accordingly, this thesis is organised around a series of questions, namely:

1: What is the contemporary political economic context in which artist studios operate in London and what are the key changes to current workspace provision?

2: What is the temporal organisation and experience of the studio in light of these wider changes?

3: How are the material form and experiential qualities of the studio changing in response to these wider changes?

4: What concepts best allow us to address these questions and understand these changes within the studio?

Through these questions, I seek to add to geographers' understanding of artist studios and develop a context specific account of the affordable studio that is empirically grounded. Moreover, I present an understanding of the characteristics of the affordable studio in the contemporary city and identify a number of different ways in which the relationship between the artist and the studio is changing. In order to do this, I supplement understandings of the studio in literatures on political economy by including literatures from cultural geography in order to develop nuanced understandings of studio space.

1.2 London

A series of dramatic urban transformations have taken place over the last couple of decades, making London an excellent case study for examining the place of studios in cities. There are at least three reasons for this. First, it is an important political case - affordable studios have recently figured prominently in London's regional political agenda, as sites of social, cultural and economic value. Political interest in the contribution of studios to urban redevelopment and regeneration strategies and to the generation of 'buzz' in certain inner-city areas, has been gaining a great deal of momentum at different levels of local and regional government (Acme, 2006; GLA, 2018a; London Councils, 2015; 2019; Mayor of London, 2018a; 2018b; 2019).

Second, in London's affordable studio sector, studios are being increasingly managed by large, formally organised studio groups - 82% or 244 of the 298 studios identified in the 2014 GLA '*Artists Workspace Study'*, are managed by just five studio organisations (GLA, 2014a). These studio groups grew out of a small number of informal collectives of artists seeking an affordable means of working in central London in the early 1970s and have an interesting history of working closely with the regional government in order to rent semi-derelict properties for peppercorn rates. But in the face of a series of recent cuts to public sector spending and growing pressures on local authorities to divest themselves of the assets they own, this relationship appears to be in the throes of a major new transition. Specifically, the GLA is moving away from direct workspace provision and adopting more of a supportive role in sponsoring research and providing endorsement for the affordable studio sector as a whole. At the same time, studio groups are collaborating with a growing number and range of public and private partners to deliver new workspace - which raises some crucial questions about the impact such collaborations might have on future studio development.

Third, the affordable artists' workspace sector in London is at risk. As a whole it occupies premises with a range of tenures, but the most popular has been through leasehold tenure. This currently accounts for 70% of premises tenures among the 20 largest workspace organisations in London (GLA, 2014a: 35). Having initially provided a useful strategy for meeting the short-term needs for low-cost workspace, the proliferation of this model has left many studio properties vulnerable to change of use or (re)development. This trend of artists being 'squeezed out' and 'priced out' of the city has also been observed in other so-called global cities such as New York and Paris, and more recently in smaller cities like Berlin. However, the pressures of the property

market are particularly acute in London at the moment, which is due to lose 3500 artists and one-third of its existing studio spaces by the end of 2019 (GLA, 2014a: 5).

In light of these urban transformations, I argue that there is a pressing urgency to situate the artist-studio relationship within its broader political and economic context. The salience of London in discussions about the value of studio space and the acute pressures it faces makes the city an excellent case study. As such, my work asks about the consequence these changes have for the ways in which artists experience and assign meaning to the studio. I examine how these urban transformations resonate in different ways with the activities and practices of artists in their studios. I argue that artists embody, perform and produce their studio's situation in relation to the city and its precarities in a variety of ways. In other words, urban transformations manifest themselves in the very relationship between artists and their studios. In the process of making these urban transformations visible my aim is to contribute to efforts to understand and conceptualise them.

1.3 Theoretical orientations

Within this context, the thesis draws upon a number of different geographical approaches for thinking in different ways about the relations surrounding the contemporary studio. Firstly, it engages urban geography literatures on the political economy for rethinking the place of the studio within the city and for drawing out the conceptual salience of the political economy in the organisation of artists' studios. This includes work by Vasudevan (2015; 2017), Madanipour (2017) and Butler (2009; 2011) on the precarisation of the city and an assortment of works by Hall and Hubbard (1996),

Markusen et al. (2003; 2006; 2010) and Pratt (2008; 2009a) on the creative and cultural urban economy. It also includes literatures which examine the contribution of arts activities and creative sites to inner-city place-making, redevelopment and regeneration (Hall and Robertson, 2001; Landry, 2000; Landry et al., 1996; Lees, 2000; 2013) as well as literatures on arts-related gentrification and the processes of urban land-use change more broadly (Mels, 2004; Smith, 1996; Zukin, 1982; 1995). Alongside this, a small but growing body of work on the delivery and management of creative urban workspace (Moreton, 2013; Pratt, 2009b) makes an important contribution to the exploration of alternative trajectories for engaging existing literature on the political economy of creativity within the city.

Much of the literature above suggests that economic processes must be considered in relation to the social and cultural processes with which they co-evolve and that to this effect, culture and economy are co-implicated and cannot be separated nor reduced to each other. These literatures provide some orientation for my study here because they suggest the value of foregrounding how the political economic condition shapes the artist's experience of the studio with regard to small-scale politics within the studio and the economic and political factors that affect it. These literatures sensitise us to think about what forces and processes contribute to the production of artists' studio space. How might the studio be changing beyond the control of the occupying artist? And, what if the studio is not just a reflection of the artist but also the city?

This attention to the political economy of studio space is supplemented with literature that encourages us to think about the experience of studio space. Here elements of non-representational thinking outlined by Thrift (2007), McCormack (2003; 2014; 2018), Anderson and Harrison (2010) are helpful. These approaches orientate

understandings of studio space towards its material, embodied and minor configurations. They encourage us to engage with a variety of sensorial and embodied registers such as, affect, atmosphere and rhythm (Anderson, 2009; Anderson et al., 2012; Edensor, 2010a; McCormack, 2003; 2014; Thrift, 2007).

There is also a growing catalogue of work on the geographies of creativity positioned somewhere between non-representational theory and cultural economy (to list but a few: Crang, 2010; Creswell, 2014a; Crouch, 2010; Farías and Wilkie, 2016; Hawkins, 2015; 2017; Pratt and Johnston, 2013; Tolia-Kelley, 2012). This work directs attention towards the micro-geographies of the studio, including artists embodied apprehensions of the everyday performance and experience of creative workspace.

I develop these understandings of the relations surrounding the studio by drawing upon literature on affect and the concepts of assemblage, atmosphere and temporality to deal with the blurry qualities of studio experience and investigate different aspects of artist studios which, nevertheless, pertain to their organisation. In addition to this, Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) work on assemblage informs my approach to studio space as something that is always in the process of 'becoming' and continually being de-assembled, re-assembled and transformed in relation to the changing types of socio-material relations that surround it.

My work therefore resides at the intersection of these seemingly disparate literatures on the macro-and micro-geographies of artist studios. Whilst I do not seek to reconcile the differences between these different literatures, through immersive research and my attentiveness to urban precarity, I will demonstrate that they allow different perspectives on the same topic. Urban precarity is increasingly being taken up in geography as: (1) a state of being and insecure subject position within the urban

political economy, (2) an embodied experience of living in the city, felt as a vulnerability to change beyond the control of the individual and (3) both an obstacle and opportunity for change (Desmond and Gershenson, 2016; Ferreri et al., 2017; Waite, 2009). Given the ways in which precarity speaks to both a political economic condition and the embodied experience of that condition, I explore the ways in which urban precarity can help illuminate the research questions and open up new ways of reflecting on artists' experiences of the studio within its urban context. Rather than sidestepping the urban political economy to focus exclusively on how creativity unfolds in the studio, I explore how it actively shapes studio space not just with regards to rising rental costs but how the material and affective dynamics of artists' studios might be changing in relation to these broader urban transformations and precarities.

1.4 Thesis structure and chapter contributions

This thesis consists of four empirical chapters that are designed to speak to one another, moving from the wider political economy of studio provision in London and getting gradually closer to the micro-geographies of the studio and the ways in which this urban context is made palpable through them. Each empirical chapter is also designed so as to address one or more of the specific research questions, whilst keeping in mind the overlaps between them. The first empirical chapter focuses on the organisation, management and provision of affordable studios in London, i.e. the work of those providing the studios. The following three empirical chapters focus on those renting workspaces, i.e. the payers of the studios and the compromises that come through.

Chapter Two outlines the theoretical context of the project. It examines the different ways in which the artist's studio is currently being addressed within the

geographical discipline, as well as what can be added by bringing some of these approaches together. Bringing together a range of literatures, this chapter develops and interrogates a series of terms which have been employed to think about art studios. In particular the chapter foregrounds three approaches. The first is the political economy of studios. The second area is recent work on precarity and precariousness in cities. Here it explores urban precarity as a political economic condition bound up with gentrification and urban change, and as an affective experience of the city. The third area concerns the spatialities of creativity and creative production. Here it explores the concepts of affect and atmosphere, and temporality and rhythm as different ways of approaching creative workspace. It also explores how urban precarity might play out and become manifest across different affective-spatial registers. As such, it explores recent literature on urban precarity as a way of bridging the gap between different geographical approaches to the studio and demonstrate what can be added by this new approach.

Chapter Three describes the methodological approach. It sets out the ways in which this research was carried out; this includes the selection of qualitative methods and analysis, my approach for researching creative spaces, defining the field-site and parameters for the research and the research's ethical considerations. This is loosely aligned with and informed by grounded theory. It also draws upon a range of qualitative research techniques in order to develop an emergent and contingent reading of the studio, grounded in a thick analysis of its heterogeneities, differences and complexities. The predominant form of inquiry and primary method for the acquisition of knowledge for this research was through in-depth semi-structured interviews with 42 visual artists renting workspace in London, which were roughly divided between the city's four

largest studio organisations: Acme, SPACE, ACAVA and ASC (see Appendix A). In addition to this it also draws upon interviews with the Chief Executive Officer of SPACE and the Co-Founder and Director of Acme. Two interviews were also conducted with Senior Strategy and Policy Officers in the GLA's Culture Team - which is responsible for commissioning research and producing insights into London's affordable studio sector.

Chapter Four examines the changing dynamics of affordable studio provision in London. It begins by placing the recent growth of purpose-designed studios delivered through mixed-use, new build planning schemes since the mid-2000s in an historical context by juxtaposing it with a series of political economic transformations that have taken place since the 1980s. As such, this chapter follows the major changes to the methods and mechanisms used to deliver affordable artists workspace by the city's largest studio groups, to identify how this responds to the shifting obstacles and opportunities provided in the urban landscape. In particular it traces changing political-economic attitudes which have come to value studios as sites of added social, cultural and economic value. It also traces specific changes within the urban planning system (the introduction of the S106 planning system and planning gain mechanism), which it argues have been synonymous with this 're-valuing' of the studio. Drawing on Ferreri et al. (2017) and Madanipour's (2017) work on the different material and spatial manifestations of urban precarity, the proposition considered in this chapter is that the conditions of urban precarity have manifested into a hybridisation of the partners and processes through which affordable artists' studios are organised and delivered.

Chapter Five examines how precarity is shaping the experience of studio space through the notion of privacy. The chapter shows how privacy is valued by artists but is hard to sustain within this urban context. It investigates the conflicts that arise between

different visions of the affordable studio, namely the artist's requirements and expectations of the purpose of their studio, and 'official' representations which are designed to reflect the broader intentions and objectives of the political economy and London's creative city rhetoric. Drawing on Bain (2005) and Sjöholm (2013), it explores the ways in which artists identify, conceive and construct the studio as a private space for focused individual work. At the same time, it examines the practices of studio provider organisations in relation to a series of social and community objectives that they determine to be the wider contributions of the affordable studio - which also happen to be a pre-requisite of their public funding and support. This requires engaging with imaginaries about the artist's studio, such as popular depictions of the studio representing the artist's 'sacred inner-sanctum', as well as how the affordable studio is being reimagined within the context of London and its precarities. It is interested in two particular trends: (I) the financial pressure to share workspace and (II) the expectation for artists to participate in open studio events. It considers how these trends relate to the pressures and precarities of the studio's urban setting, as well as the impact they have on the artist's ability to maintain feelings of privacy and authorship within the studio. Drawing on Gieseking et al. (2014) and Madanipour (2003), it examines how these conflicts around privacy challenge and yet also contribute to the studio's spatial identity.

Chapter Six explores the different temporalities of the studio in relation to the situated activities and performances of artists within the conditions of urban precarity. It extends the logic of the previous chapter by asking how lived temporalities of the studio may be changing in the context of a wider transformation in the cultural and political economy. The proposition considered is that artists embody and experience

this situation, in relation to the amount of time they spend in the studio, and the ways in which that time is measured. Drawing on work exploring urban timespace, it argues that the studio takes on its spatiotemporal distinctness, through the different temporalities that are produced by the artist's embodiment of precarity and a personal politics of affordability. This manifests itself in different ways, although it can be best observed in relation to the pace of work and routine in the studio. In short, I argue that creative activity unfolds in direct relation to the task at hand, wherein the pace of production cannot so easily be 'sped up'. This chapter also notes that as a result of multiple job holding and labour-precarity, artists experience acute pressures on the amount of time they are able to assign to the studio; and that therein lies the conflict, between the inflexible timeframe of the creative task and the flexibility and variability of studio routine. I also discuss the effects of this on the non-synchronisation of studio routines and the production of a more subjective studio experience.

Chapter Seven presents an account of artists' experiences in navigating the changing material forms and administrative organisation of the affordable studio. The contribution of this chapter is its understanding of the ways in which the different forms of studio that the conditions of urban precarity manifest are made perceptible to the artist. Based on interviews with artists at a range of different studio sites, it explores the ways in which artists experience, sense and value different studio atmospheres differently, as well as how these atmospheric sensibilities are changing in relation to the different types of affordable studio that have been emerging since the mid-2000s, i.e. purpose-designed, new build studios, as opposed to more traditional studio conversions. Within this, it develops the concept of atmospheres of 'making do', which it argues arise from the artist's re-appropriation of space that was not purposefully

designed for studio use; and explores these atmospheres in relation to different types of studio with juxtaposing material histories (industrial space, office space and new build space). Drawing on recent debates in cultural geography about atmospheric sensibilities and the contribution of atmosphere to the production of distinct urban spaces and experiences (Blok and Farías, 2016; Gandy, 2017; Middleton, 2010; Stephens, 2015), it assesses the position of atmosphere in the ways in which artists identify, define and engage with the studio and navigate their way through its changing urban forms. In doing so, it demonstrates the relevance of the concept 'atmosphere' for the ways in which artists understand their experiences and construct personal and shared narratives of the affordable studio.

Finally, **Chapter Eight** brings the substantive sections of the thesis together into a discussion of the broader insights into the contemporary affordable urban artist's studio that can be drawn from these four chapters as a whole, as well as their contributions and significance to the discipline. It expands on the relationship between the processes and experiences of urban precarity to develop a new situated understanding of the affordable urban studio, grounded in a spatial-affective reading of the temporalities, atmospheres, conflicts and workspace transformations that were discussed throughout the empirical chapters. As each empirical chapter was designed to address a different component of studio space, moving from its wider urban spatial organisation and towards its specific micro-geographies, the conclusion reflects more broadly on the spatialities of the studio, and in doing so, develops a spatial vocabulary constituted of affect, atmosphere and temporality for better understanding contemporary artists workspace in context. Specifically, it contends that precarity is not just a context, but is enacted through the urban studio and that experiences of the

contemporary studio therefore demand a language that engages atmosphere and temporality, not just space.

This thesis therefore builds on existing geographical work to unpack the urban studio and the role that arts organisations and their shifting relations play in shaping the spaces and experiences of artistic practice in contemporary London. It is centred on a discussion of the ways in which the temporal and spatial organisation of studio space responds to broader shifts, transformations and precarities within London's political economy. The evidence and arguments presented in the thesis help us understand how artists' experiences of and relation with the contemporary urban studio is changing in London.

Chapter Two

Literature review

2.0 Introduction

This thesis draws upon a number of different geographical approaches for thinking the contemporary studio including: assemblage theory, political economy, urban precarity and non-representational theory. It engages urban geography literatures on the political economy for rethinking the place of the studio within the city. This includes an assortment of works on the creative and cultural urban economy, as well as literatures on arts-focused gentrification and the processes of urban land-use change more broadly (e.g. Lees, 2000; Ley, 2003; Zukin, 1989). It also adopts elements of non-representational thinking outlined by Thrift (2007), McCormack (2003; 2018) and Anderson and Harrison (2010) which orientates an understanding of the studio towards its affective, embodied and minor configurations. This involves engaging with a variety of sensorial spatial registers such as materiality, affect, atmosphere and time/rhythm (Lefebvre, 2013; Wunderlich, 2013). Whereas much of the existing work on affective intensities, materialities and atmospheres has looked at popular culture and everyday space (e.g. Adey et al., 2012), these investigations can be extended to artists' studios; particularly in light of the growing number of ways in which they are being incorporated into popular urban culture and politics.

The objective here is not to apply one perspective instead of the other, nor to reconcile differences between these literatures, but rather to demonstrate that the themes and concerns of these different literatures may not be as dissimilar as they

might at first have been thought. The ambition of this chapter is to examine conventional geographical approaches to the place of artists' studios in contemporary cities, including recent work on urban precarity, and think about how we might understand the experiences of artists' studios within this context. Specifically, it demonstrates how we can bring in elements of non-representational theory as a way of disrupting certain ways of thinking studios; such as how the urban context of the studio plays out across its various non-representational spatial registers. In doing so, the chapter elucidates in greater detail one of the main contributions of this thesis: to bring together different insights and geographical engagements with artist's studios into conversation with each other around the subject of urban precarity.

The chapter is organised into four sections, moving from the broader macro-geographies of artists' studios, gradually towards their more precise micro-geographies, whilst highlighting the types of conversations that can happen between these. In section one I address some of the important conversations taking place within geography about 'where' creativity takes place, and how best to situate the various processes and practices of creative production (Hawkins, 2014; Krauss, 1979; Rendell, 2006), as well as how best to (re)conceptualise traditional creative sites such as the artist's studio, as a type of assemblage that is constantly forming, deforming and open to change (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988). In section two I engage with literatures on political economy, to think about the wider forces shaping the studio and the broader urban relationships and processes surrounding artists' studios; such as the place of studios in creative urban placemaking, urban regeneration and gentrification. In section three I map out how recent work across the social sciences is foregrounding the different working and living conditions that urban precarity manifests. In section four I think about how we might

begin to understand the experiences of artists' studios within this context. Here, I explore how geographers have engaged with the micro-spaces and micro-geographies of creative spaces; specifically, the types of non-representational styles of working which have become associated with such approaches. I also suggest ways in which these engagements might be deepened within the studio, so as to better understand its lived space(s) in relation to urban precarity and situate the artist-studio relationship within its various sensorial and spatial registers. In the conclusion I draw together the various literatures that inform the thesis, to reflect upon how these support the overarching argument of the thesis - that artists' experiences of the studio are changing in relation to its urban context and the political economic transformations and precarities taking place within it.

2.1 Rethinking studio space

In this section I address some of the ways in which understandings of the studio within the literature are moving away from traditional notions of the artist's studio as a stable, static and neatly bounded entity, and towards more relational conceptions of studio space as constituted of a milieu of changing relations. Specifically, I explore how urban assemblage literatures can help illuminate and inform understandings of the studio as the relational subject of the artist and the city and help situate creative activity in a range of spatial relations.

2.1.1 From studio to situation

The historical point of departure for geography and art has been the study of landscape, specifically the iconography of landscape and what it can tell us about past territorialisations and distributions of power, politics and vision (Jacob and Grabner, 2010). Over the past few decades, geographers have routinely engaged in analysing and interpreting artworks (what Hawkins (2011) calls the 'dialogues of art') and are now actively involved in different forms of creative experimentation, curating exhibitions and becoming their own creative practitioners (what Hawkins (2011) calls the 'doings of art'), not to mention working with and alongside artists (see for instance, Dixon et al., 2001; Engelmann, 2017; Jellis, 2015). Blurring disciplinary boundaries by working alongside artists to develop creative new ways of experiencing landscape as sensuous lived and performed, geographers are developing new geographical themes on the nature and spaces of creative practice (Ash, 2016; Farías and Wilkie, 2016; Hawkins, 2015; Straughan, 2016; Houdart, 2016).

Geographers have also drawn on different artists for thinking about 'art-site relations',[1] specifically around matters of how best to conceptualise and situate creative production and creativity more broadly. Influential art critic and art historian Rosalind Krauss (1979) famously argued that the arts are moving beyond the category of 'traditional forms' to encompass a wide range of ways of working with different materials and at different sites, which extended beyond the traditional dichotomy of studio-gallery. Studying the movement away from object making per-se, towards more dematerialised performance pieces, Krauss observed that new forms of feminist, in-situ

[1] 'Art-site relations' is term developed by Hawkins (2012: 57) to denote the dynamic relationships of 'art and the material, semiotic and increasingly ontological 'making' and 'shaping' of places and people'.

art production were becoming increasingly popular within the arts. Krauss (1979: 30) called this change, 'arts expanded field' and argued that the shifting practices, materialities and temporalities and spatialities of producing and consuming artwork demanded new analytic frameworks. Almost 30 years later, architectural historian and art writer Jane Rendell (2006) observed not so much an expansion, as an 'explosion of the arts'. Arguing that artists operate on the edge of disciplinary territories, she called to question the existing parameters that we use to define creative sites.

More recently Harriet Hawkins has taken up these questions as an ongoing meditation on creativity's spatial practices and relations. Investigating the 'restlessness of art and its spaces' (2017: 8-9), Hawkins has observed a growing multiplication of art-sites, practices and operations which increasingly challenge and move away from more traditional art practices and places; such as the taken-for-granted as stable, sites of art-production and art-consumption (2017: 135). Hawkins therefore encourages researchers to adopt a mode of inquiry that allows them to situate creative practice more deeply within its multiple intellectual, affective, sensory and emotional dimensions and registers, moving the focus of artistic inquiry from 'studio to situation' (2017: 9). Unravelling more complex sets of relations involved in creative practice, Hawkins - among others like Jellis (2015), Engelmann (2017) and Dixon et al. (2011) - prompts artists and geographers alike to rethink the ways in which they conceptualise site, place and location.

The subject of the artist's studio has therefore been revisited with renewed interest in geography in recent years, in relation to these pressing questions being asked by both geographers and artists, about *where* creativity takes place. One response to this has been to think through the 'spatial patterning of creative production' (Hawkins,

2017: 18), which moves beyond specialised spaces of production and consumption (such as the studio and gallery) to consider the various locations of creative practice, and the range of scales and spaces in which we *situate* creativity. Bain (2005) for instance, explores vernacular creative production in the home, from the kitchen table to the garden shed becoming the artist's studio. There has also been a growing focus on different sites becoming temporary creative settings and making use of temporary available space, from the dining room between meals (Hawkins, 2017) to pop-up creative workspaces in the city (Madanipour, 2017; Vasudevan, 2015). This has sparked interest not only in the temporalities of creative spaces, but also their mobility - particularly around digital arts and laptop-based practices wherein the laptop itself becomes a studio transported around the city with the artist (e.g. Columbano, 2015). Such developments have led to other artists hailing in the new era of the death of the studio (e.g. Columbano (2015) and Jones (1996) on the 'post-studio' condition; Lacy (2010) on the 'street as the studio'; Relyea (2010) on 'studio unbound'). Hawkins (2017) argues, however, that this does not mark a straightforward argument for the erosion of the studio. Instead the studio becomes crosscut with tensions and hybrid practices that both challenge and preserve the studio in different ways.

Taken together this work injects critical energy into changing art-site relations in a manner that calls into question the value, status and nature of the contemporary artist's studio. The studio in this work is not a fixed space but is a mobile and fluid one, the boundaries and definition of which shifts and changes. Such an understanding of the studio frames my approach in this thesis.

2.1.2 Assembling the studio

Geographical work on art-site relations recognises the importance of space to how activities unfold within it, as well as the reciprocity between these activities and the different types of creative space that they produce (Hawkins, 2017). Farías and Wilkie (2016) for instance, present various ethnomethodologically accounts of the studio which instead of treating space as already there, present the studio as being dynamically shaped and produced by artists activities and practices as they unfold in action. Rejecting geometric views of space as a container for action, Hawkins (2017) and Farías and Wilkie (2016) direct us towards a relational view of creative space, which allows us to situate creative activity in a range of spatial relations. Whilst these approaches have come a long way in exploring creative sites like studios as relational entities, they have tended to do so in relation to artists' creative activities and personal choices about their creative practice, thereby prioritising the studio as the personal subject of the artist - i.e. a space for the artist to control and organise in accordance with their own preferences and needs. They have also often taken the studio to be the subject of the city and the types of political economic processes and transformations taking place beyond the control of the individual artist (albeit much less attention has been paid to this latter point). Very rarely are these two approaches brought together to reflect more broadly on the ways in which artists' experience and occupation of studio space are informed by its urban context.

I situate my understanding of the relationship between studio space and wider urban processes and forces in terms of some recent work within geography on urban assemblages (Anderson et al., 2012; Anderson and McFarlane, 2011; Farías, 2011; Jayne

and Hall, 2019). After McFarlane (2011a; 2011b) and others, I take the ontology of the urban to be a process that can be understood via the concept of assemblage. For McFarlane (2011b: 652) assemblage is a way of understanding the complexity of the city and is a particular conception of how,

> 'Urbanism is produced through relations of history and potential, i.e. of the multiple and interrelated temporalisations of capital, social relations, cultures, materials and ecologies- that produce the city, but that have been and continue to be resisted and subject to alternative possibilities.'

As McFarlane suggests, thinking with assemblage allows us to avoid separating the cultural, material, political, economic and ecological dimensions of cities. Instead, it 'seeks to attend to why and how multiple bits and pieces accrete and align over time to enable particular forms of urbanism over others' (2011b: 652). Drawing upon this, I will go on to examine how the studio is part of an urban assemblage and is actively constructed through a complex milieu of different relations and the coming together of different elements within its immediate and wider situation.

The theory and model of assemblage refers to complex constellations of objects, bodies and expressions coming together into productive and innovative arrangements (Anderson et al., 2012). Involving multiple and ongoing processes, it is characterised by an energetic reworking of socio-material relations in action. Neither reducible to its assembling parts nor identifiable as an organic whole, Deleuze and Parnet (2007: 52) argue assemblage may best be depicted as a 'multiplicity which is made up of heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons and relations between and across…different natures'. The figure Deleuze and Guattari (1987) adopt to make this point is 'the rhizome', which reinforces the principles of connection and heterogeneity - any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other and must be - which is very

different from the tree or root, which plots a point and fixes order. They present the relationships between tendencies to static and ordered space on the one hand, and the tendencies towards differentiating, multiplicities on the other. In this sense, the space we experience is only ever temporary and always in the process of becoming something different or new, changing in relation to the ever-changing relations that surround it. Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) thinking about assemblages of different bodies, materials, processes therefore emphasises the constant *becoming* of space, and its radical openness of space to change and alteration, as new elements are introduced and subtracted.

Often pitted in opposition to critical urban theory (e.g. David Harvey and Manuel Castells), assemblage theory demands a move away from social-structural explanations and towards the shifting connections and autonomous openness of a variety of components 'of people, networks, organizations…from buildings and streets, to conduits for matter and energy flows' (DeLanda, 2006: 5). In order to assess what assemblage can contribute to thinking about how the studio takes shape in the city, it can be broken down further into three main principles: connection, heterogeneity, and exteriority.[2]

Connection refers to the manner in which different elements become integrated into multiple and overlapping assemblages - creating complications when seeking to determine which system(s) to attribute a new productive function to (Anderson et al., 2012). This convergence and blurring of boundaries provide a point of entry for thinking about the ways in which the studio and its creative processes and outputs, might be

[2] These concepts are iterated in a number of works by Colin McFarlane (2009; 2011a; 2011b).

interacting with a multiplicity of other creative, political and economic assemblages across the city.

Heterogeneity explains how the assemblage, like an ecosystem, requires a rich diversity of components to sustain it. The co-dependencies, interactions and interrelations that develop over time between these components, begin to produce a territory for it giving the illusion of an internally homogenous set of operations (McFarlane, 2009) and of a stable and closed space. At the same time, through reciprocal interaction, these components transform one another's potential fields of action and in doing so are capable of generating new productive functions for the assemblage (Livesey, 2011). The outcome of which might, for instance, be a new means of expression, a new territorial or spatial organisation, a new behaviour, institution or realisation. We can therefore consider how the introduction of new relations (materials, bodies, and forces) around the studio might reconfigure, destabilise and ultimately produce new forms of studio space.

This brings us to the third principle of *exteriority*. Oriented towards the assembling and disassembling of space as relations form, take hold and endure, assemblage emphasises the radical openness of space and presents a conceptualisation of space as comprised of processes of movement, flow and change. Anderson et al. (2012: 124), drawing on Deleuze, explain that 'assemblage emphasises spatiality and temporality: elements are drawn together at a particular conjuncture only to disperse or realign, and the shape shifts.' Subsequently, we can think about how studio space emerges through wider processes of the urban assemblage within certain constraints. We can think about the different forces, materials, individuals, organisations and institutions in the city that interact to produce and sustain it. I am particularly interested

in relations that allow the studio to be constructed in new ways. For instance, when looking at London studios, it is imperative to consider the role that studio organisations play in the ongoing production and organisation of creative urban workspace.

Considerations of urban space as an assemblage therefore offers ways of addressing how the form and experience of the studio is constantly changing in relation to the different sets of relations that it comes into contact with. It allows us to think about the wider forces shaping the studio without making the study too rigid or dogmatic; for instance, it allows me to frame a number of relationships around the studio including the political economy, urban precarity, as well as body, affect, atmosphere and time (the latter of which I address in section four of this chapter). And it also reminds us of the importance of the work that goes into maintaining some sense of relative order, stability, and privacy in this context.

2.2 The political economy of the studio

This section unpacks some of the broader geographical conversations about artists' studios in relation to the city and its political economic processes. Focusing on the position of studios in creative place-making, urban renewal and regeneration strategies, and gentrification, this aspect of the literature relates to the political-economic facet of the research and situates the studio within its broader urban context. This is important because it introduces some of the relations, processes and forces that are organising studio space in the city and further develops this thinking about the city assembling the studio in different ways.

With respect to the treatment of creativity, within political economy literature the focus of late has been on the economic and cultural shift within a number of Western cities towards social and economic development rooted in culture and creativity (Lee, 2016; 2017; Markusen, 2006a), specifically the growth of the creative industries. The premise of this creative industries discourse is that human creativity is a distinctive input into the economic production process and is the core source of economic value generation. This discourse has become an important addition to cultural policy narratives, which present creativity as labour (Lee, 2016). The value of creative labour is also linked to features of the knowledge-based-economy (KBE), information society and post-industrial economies (Garnham, 2005). There seems to be broad agreement that the cultural industries are increasingly extending their visibility in cities and are making significant contributions to the economy of urban areas, boosting economic growth and employment, at the same time as altering the character and quality of different urban areas - otherwise known as creative placemaking (Ley, 2003; Markusen and Gadwa, 2010). Artist studios are tightly bound up with and effected by these ideas about creative-led urban growth and development, which has been a much more contentious issue within geography, particularly around the issue of gentrification (see Daskalaki and Mould, 2013; Mould, 2015).

2.2.1 Creative urban place-making and regeneration

Creative place-making is a process by which the arts are leveraged as a strategy to bring about a variety of social, community and economic benefits to urban areas, including but not limited to: community well-being and prosperity, engaging residents locally, enhancing public space and contributing to healthy sustainable communities - the

outcome of which is the change in perception of a particular urban area (Duif and Richards, 2018; Landry, 2000; Markusen and Gadwa, 2010). Recently, literatures on urban place-making have focused on some of the 'softer' benefits of cultural investment, including the immaterial contributions of artists to the 'feel' of cities and the atmospheric distinctiveness of urban places (Low, 2018; Markusen, 2013). Nicodemus (2013) for instance, pays attention to the 'fuzzy vibrancy' of creative place-making, in which he observes the contribution of the arts to the development of not only skills and knowledge but also to the 'buzz' and formation of a 'creative scene' - which in turn is capable of boosting the capacity of different urban areas to attract more cultural and creative individuals, activities and industries (Florida, 2002; 2014).

Alongside social and community development and urban liveability, a key focus of the creative place-making dialogue has been the contribution of artists to the economic revitalisation of urban areas. This economic facet explores how the presence of artists, and by extension their studios, can help a locality attract, capture and retain new investors, creative individuals and companies, bolster local employment and generate economic returns in multiple ways (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010). These ideas about the combined socio-economic transformative potential of arts and creativity ties in closely with geography literatures on urban revitalisation, renewal and regeneration. These literatures draw out the contribution of artists to animating and revitalising new and existing urban infrastructures, not only forming, but also transforming places across the city (Gentle and McGuirk, 2018; Landry, 2000; Lees and Melhuish, 2013; Rich, 2017).

Particular focus has been on urban areas that have previously been the subject of urban decline, decay and disinvestment, such as former industrial sites. For instance, studies have shown that sites which have fallen out of urban rhythms and are assumed

to be 'devoid of value', provide fertile sites for creativity (Edensor, 2005a; 2010c). In particular, artists have demonstrated their potential to animate semi-abandoned infrastructures (or sites awaiting completion), through the re-use of abandoned, redundant or semi-derelict buildings - giving formerly neglected spaces a new lease of life. Taking inspiration from Ley (2003), Mathews (2010: 660) for example, talks about artists' 'redemptive acts of creation' and their role in the 'aestheticisation of place'. He argues that through their use of discarded and obsolete buildings and by aesthetically reconfiguring left-over properties and transforming junk buildings into valued assets, artists have played an important role in restructuring urban space in cities affected by the de-industrialisation process.

2.2.2 Instruments and interventions

However, artist-led redevelopment and place-making is not an uncontested issue within geography. Whilst creative urban renewal has been seen by its proponents as an economic engine and social reform mechanism, it has been interpreted by critics as a mechanism for 'control' and linked to the onset of gentrification. Daskalaki and Mould (2013) for instance, have been critical of the ways in which local and regional governments have sought to co-opt creative activities (and their spaces) into their own political and economic agendas. They contend that creative activities previously considered 'alternative', 'subversive' or 'on the edge' have been intervened with and instrumentalised in different ways to bring them into the creative-led urban redevelopment agenda.

Mould (2015) provides examples of the ways in which skateboarding and parkour, which propose innovative ways of engaging differently with the urban topology and alternative ways of inhabiting and traversing urban space, have gradually been 'captured' by the state and gradually enrolled in to the 'capitalist project'. Skate parks and parkour areas have been turned into tourist attractions, featured in festivals and sponsored by large corporations and in doing so, have steadily become sanitised, commercialised and incorporated into the fabric of consumption and profit making. Daskalaki and Mould's (2013) critique is that as these types of urban activities are exposed to capitalist standardising forces and brought into the totalising urban discourse, they run the risk of becoming hollowed out and losing a certain quality that made them so appealing in the first place.

Daskalaki and Mould (2013) provide an alternative lens through which to view artist-led urban regeneration and the types of pressures that political and economic change can place on the studio. They show how art is instrumentalised in different ways by local and regional urban governments to purse their own agendas and have been implicated in producing marketable forms of social and economic capital to reflect some of the broader values and ambitions of the political economy. This can help us think about how artists' studios have featured at the forefront of a series of new London-based creative-place making strategies (GLA, 2016) and having gradually been drawn closer into the urban planning process, are being ordered and developed in new ways. Drawing on Daskalaki and Mould, we can therefore reflect upon some of the repercussions of some of these interventions for the organisation and delivery of artists' studios and how this may be affecting some of the qualities that made these spaces so attractive to artists in the first place.

2.2.3 Gentrification

Artists' studios have garnered the greatest attention within political economy literatures in relation to the subject of gentrification; this is in large part because of the claims that have been developed around the import of 'creatives' in theories of gentrification. Gentrification is generally thought of as a mixture of processes that involves the transition of an inner-city neighbourhood 'from a status of relative poverty and limited investment, to one of reinvestment and commodity' (Ley, 2003: 2527). It represents a process of reinvestment in depressed central city areas, marked by a demographic shift towards more affluent (and often higher educated, white residents) along with rising rents (Lees, 2000). Therefore, whilst some see gentrification as a potential vehicle for bringing improvements to disadvantaged neighbourhoods, transforming them into renewed sites of interest for speculative developers and investors, others focus on the gradual displacement of existing residents and socio-economic activity which cannot withstand the rising costs.

Artists' studios have played a part in the long-established theories of gentrification looking respectively at culture and creativity as key drivers of urban change (Zukin, 1989). Going back to Mathews' (2010) and Ley's (2003) ideas about the transformative aesthetic value of artists in urban areas, artists having been accredited with sparking neighbourhood change and transforming districts formerly low in socio-economic and cultural capital into areas of higher capital - the outcome of which has been increases in local property prices and the displacement of artists to cheaper districts. One way of looking at this is that this process clearly demonstrates the deficiencies of unrestrained arts-led urban revitalisation strategies. Another way of looking at it is that because of the types of urban landscapes that gentrification typically takes place in (i.e. depressed

and former industrial), the initial candidates for occupation and displacement are artists. For instance, when documenting the origins and evolution of artist agglomerations in the East End of London, Green (1999; 2001) highlights the appeal of disinvested industrial and poverty areas to artists, where space is abundant and rent is cheap. Due to the landscapes they occupy and their unwitting transformation of these areas into places of high cultural value, artists are simultaneously the pioneers and victims of urban gentrification.

In 2000, Lees called for geographers to re-evaluate their thinking on gentrification. Specifically, she contended that too much focus has been on the end products of gentrification (i.e. on displacement) and on spaces that have already been gentrified; and not enough on the experiences and subtle spatial manifestations of the *process of* gentrification itself. Stepping outside of the consensus to highlight important issues which have been side-lined within gentrification studies, Lees (2000) and more recently Kern (2012), Fiore (2018), Doucet (2014) and Phillips and Smith (2018a; 2018b), have called for a sensitive and spatial reappraisal of gentrification, as an evolutionary process of gradual spatial change experienced at the level of the individual. Turning our attention to its embodied and affective dynamics, they contend that the processes and pressures of gentrification are felt and diffused through different 'structures of feeling' - a concept developed by Raymond Williams in the 1970s to facilitate understanding of the 'affective elements of consciousness and relationships' and the 'general organisation of emotion and experience' (Calhoun, 2002). In other words, gentrification is not a one-off event of displacement, but is an affective and embodied experience of living with the pressures and anxieties of gradual rent increases and the looming risk of eventual displacement.

Taking this forward, we can begin to think about how the processes of gentrification can be interpreted as some of the drivers of change around the artist's studio. In particular, we can think about some of the ways in which artists embody and live with the pressures and anxieties of this gradual spatial change, and the impending danger of being priced out of their studios. This is of particular concern in London at the moment with so many studio leases due to be terminated over the next five years. Some of these ideas are also being explored in greater detail around the subject of urban precarity. In this thesis I use this to support further thinking about how different political economic processes and transformations might manifest spatially and affectively within different urban spaces, such as the artist's studio.

Following such thinking, I argue that these different political and economic processes and relations are not just the context in which studios are situated but that they enable particular forms of studio to take shape and actively inform how artists experience and value the studio.

2.3 Urban precarity

Within this section, I think about how recent geographical literatures on urban precarity might offer a point of articulation for the ways in which the political economic conditions and transformations surrounding artists' studios in London are lived and felt by the occupying artists. I also explore precarity as a way of pushing back against the dominance of gentrification as an explanatory trope within political economy literatures on the studio, and think about what attention to urban precarity can add to this thesis' efforts to situate artists' experiences of the studio within its broader urban context. My

argument is that urban precarity is an important way to understand the relationship between the studio and the city - it connects thinking about the wider political economic assemblage of the studio with thinking about how this context is lived and experienced spatially in the studio.

2.3.1 Precarity as a political economic condition

The terms precarity and precariousness have emerged in recent decades within geography (as well as other disciplines like gender studies, philosophy and urban studies) and whilst they have been contested and differentiated, they tend to signal two primary meanings: insecure labour and insecure housing. The first refers to the production of deregulated and privatised regimes of the individual, in relation to the growth in flexible, irregular and short-term employment and semi-permanent work (Desmond and Gershenson, 2016; Ferreri, et al., 2017). Not unrelated to the first, the second refers to the insecurity of housing and property more broadly and a 'widespread housing crisis on the one hand, and insecure tenure on the other' (Vasudevan, 2017: 249). It is important to note that much of the focus of urban precarity has been on living space and has not yet been fully extended to the types of workspace rented by creative individuals.

Whilst the causes of these precarities are multiple, in many Western cities, they have been largely attributed to a widespread neoliberal economic agenda that has produced new forms of labour organised around the individual. The growth of freelancing in cities like London, particularly in relation to changing modes of political economic governance towards the cultural and creative industries, has produced a novel situation in which increasing numbers of workers are engaged in insecure, casualised or irregular labour, wherein the 'the risks and responsibilities [of

employment] are borne solely by the individual' (Gill and Pratt, 2008: 3). These entrepreneurial working styles move away from stable notions of career, towards more insecure and discontinuous employment, in which individuals experience a disproportionate amount of economic uncertainty often as result of low, or unpredictable pay, part-time work and second jobbing (Pasquinelli and Sjöholm, 2015). Under these urban conditions, labour insecurity is not the consistent experience of unemployment,[3] but the normalisation of uncertainty among a city's labour force and the potential of being unemployed; Waite (2009: 320) describes it as 'the condition of vulnerability relative to contingency and the inability to predict.' Others have argued that this demonstrates a much wider patterning of unstable and insecure work in cities due to the erosion of traditional employment structures, and the replacement of career jobs within institutional frameworks with higher turnover rates, short-term and temporary labour needs and the rise of the temping and gig economy (Banks and Hesmondhalgh, 2009; Ferreri et al., 2017; Ferreri and Vasudevan, 2019).

The knock-on effect is that labour insecurity produces a demand for low-cost, flexible and rentable living space, in parts of the city that are already suffering from high demand- often as a result of population growth or gentrification (Banki, 2013). In a sense, the precariousness of urban labour and property are mutually co-producing, Desmond and Gershenson (2016: 48) explain: 'the concurrent escalation of both employment and housing insecurity means that many low-income workers today find themselves in a situation of double precarity: the job and the home are both on shaky grounds.' A growing body of geographical literature on urban precarity since the late

[3] This resonates with the idea discussed in section 2.2.3, that gentrification is not the constant experience of displacement, but the ongoing experience of living with the risk of eventual displacement.

2000s therefore asserts that cities are the principle sites of new social and economic processes associated with the production of precarious work and home lives. Precarity here is understood as an inherent dimension of the political economy of the city, and the city becomes a kind of laboratory for new precarious ways of being/doing and working/living. This is linked, in turn, with ideas of the city as a site of experimentation and a laboratory for field-testing new practices (Evans, 2016; Karvonen and Van Heur, 2014; Vasudevan 2015). Evans (2016: 429) explains that 'urban experiments are an important vehicle for not only understanding the city but also transforming it.'

Further whilst the terms gentrification and precarity are usually discussed separately as features of neoliberal capitalism, they are ultimately linked by various spatial processes and, more broadly, as a characterisation of contemporary urban politics. For instance, whilst precarity has become the norm in cities like London, so too has gentrification. As jobs have become increasingly insecure, due to the pressures of gentrification property has also become increasingly expensive, meaning that property increases/rent hikes and labour insecurity conspire to reinforce each other. Stein (2015: 3) explains, the processes of gentrification and precarity are bound up in a feedback loop, which produces 'an escalating circuit of cause and effect that amplifies each side of the equation'. This highlights the limited scope of simply thinking about artist's studio in relation to gentrification literatures as the pressures and processes of gentrification are just one aspect of the political economy equation contributing to the overall condition of urban precarity.

2.3.2 Affective embodiments of precarity

A growing number of geographers are also paying attention to the ways in which precarity saturates experience(s) and are concerned with how different ways of urban life are made liveable in relation to a myriad of forces that disrupt the conditions that allow liveable lives (Worth, 2016). Ettlinger (2007) for instance, has taken issue with how precarity has been primarily addressed as a political economic issue with little attention to its lived, personal and affective dimensions. She contends that precarious subject positions are also felt and embodied differently, by different individuals, as a series of affective experiences of intensified uncertainty, instability, fear and unease, and a general anxiety rooted in the inability to predict and preside over certain aspects of one's own life (Waite et al., 2014).

American philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler (2011) has also made huge contributions in this area. She writes that 'precarity is not a passing or episodic condition' rather, it is an 'ongoing experience' and a 'state of being' that individuals must live with (2011: xii). In this sense, precarity is not just about the loss of jobs and property, but also about the exposure to loss, which involves individuals living with a sense of potential job loss and the risk of displacement. Like Ettlinger (2007), Butler (2011: 13) therefore takes precarity as an ontological condition of vulnerability and an inability to predict, characterised by political, economic and social uncertainty which is performed and lived affectively as an embodied, felt and emotional state of being. She also detects in these developments, a new understanding of precarity as a 'structure of feeling', specifically, 'a heightened sense of expendability or disposability that is differently distributed throughout society' (2011: 13). More recently, Anderson (2017) has discussed these embodied and affective experiences of precarity. His concern is how

power relations and their effects are *lived* as part of the composition of human experience. Within this he contends that the body is the principle site where precarity is felt and resisted and focuses on critiquing the lived experiences of contemporary modes of power as part of a continued embodied engagement with the politics of different ways of life.

Increasing attention is therefore being paid to the ways in which precarity has come to describe 'both a subject position and the affective embodiment of that position' (Ferreri et al., 2017: 248). This resonates with concerns about living with the pressures of gentrification and helps to flesh out some of the embodied dimensions of these political economic processes. Taken together, Ettlinger (2007), Waite (2009), Anderson (2017) and Butler's (2009; 2011) ideas about the embodied everydayness of precarity hold clues for how people routinely and implicitly experience, struggle and navigate their ways through precarity. These thinkers guide the project towards a more sensitive spatial analysis of the studio in relation to its urban context. Such analysis holds the potential for enabling us to better understand how the different political-economic processes, pressures and transformations surrounding it, might be disrupting the liveable conditions of the studio and are made present to the occupying artist through different 'intensities of feeling'.

It follows that precarity cannot be limited to one specific context, such as that 'in which [it] is imposed by global events or macro-structures', as it is also 'located within the micro-spaces of everyday life' (Ettlinger, 2007: 321). Precarity therefore builds on ideas about the studio being shaped by political-economic forces, whilst also allowing us to think about how these forces are experienced by artists in the studio. This requires us, in turn, to think more about the experiential dimensions of studios. Work on the

micro-geographies of creative spaces can aid understanding of how the urban assembling of the studio (and the political and economic processes and pressures that this encompasses), informs and infuses artists experiences of the urban studio and the different spatial registers across which precarity is lived and felt within it.

2.4 The micro-geographies of the studio

In this section, attention to the political economy of the studio is supplemented with geographical literature that encourages us to think about the lived *experience* of the studio. Here elements of non-representational thinking outlined by Anderson (2009; 2016; 2017) and Thrift (2004; 2007) are helpful. These approaches orientate understandings of the studio towards its embodied and minor configurations and encourage us to engage with a variety of sensorial registers through which studio space is *felt* within the constraints of urban precarity**.**

Within geography, discussions of the studio and other creative settings as relational spaces, have evolved in a number of directions. One principle focus though has been the micro-geographies of creative practice, which draw attention to the various sensory dimensions and felt dimensions of the processes, practices and spaces of creativity (Farías and Wilkie, 2016; Hawkins, 2017). The main argument that emerges from such work, is that artists interact with and experience the studio in more than one way - materially, affectively, atmospherically and temporally. In this vein non-representational theory offers different ways for getting at the experience of studio space. Specifically, it provides a range of concepts for thinking about what passes 'in-between' the artist and the studio as different relations come together and assemble in

different spatially productive ways in the studio. In other words different elements of non-representational thinking on materiality, affective atmospheres and temporality can help situate experiences of the studio within its subtle and spatial dimensions at the same time as considering how urban precarity infuses these non-representational registers and experiences of the studio.

2.4.1 Body, materiality and studio space

Non-representational theories have stimulated and informed efforts to experiment with and examine how creative spaces are made and remade or rather, how they are continually (re)assembled through different practices that engage with the capacities of bodies and matter in ways that cannot simply be explained via a theory of representational politics (Thrift, 2004; 2007). The main claim is that space is distributed, relational and lively.

These theories have emerged in the context of questions of embodiment more generally, to embrace different ways of being in, and knowing place, and pay attention to the sensualities of lived experience. Middleton (2010) for instance, contends that the embodied subject is not separate to the space(s) through which they live, instead they are entangled within it; seeing, smelling, and hearing and touching it. Her work highlights the reciprocal interaction of body and space - not only is the body important for identifying and distinguishing spaces, but through action, interaction and the deployment of bodily energies it also contributes to the production of space, at the same time as action is influenced by it. For instance, creativity is an embodied practice - the artist does not paint with the hand, but with the entire body, painting, sculpture, designing and making involve the fleshy and sensing body, moving and expending energy in space and the activation of different embodied mechanisms and corporeal

sensations**.** A growing body of work has questioned the embodied experiences of creativity and creative practices in different settings, as well as how these settings might be capable of producing different embodied experiences (Entwistle, 2000; Hawkins et al., 2015).

Within geography, engagements with body and space have closely intersected with concerns and questions about matter and materiality. This is important because embodied creative practices also involve working with different materials within a material setting, comprised of different objects and tools. Sjöholm (2013) and Pigrum (2010) for instance, offer accounts of the coming together of the studio as a space full of materiality, but also as a space of and for immaterial processes (i.e. knowledge, ideas, reflection and memory). Sjöholm (2013) explores the artist as a collector of objects and an archivist of their own work. She examines the processes of collecting and categorising materials and things in the studio as a process of transformation wherein the artist transforms the studio into an archive, both for looking back over past work and for informing future work.

Pigrum (2010) on the other hand, explores creativity in relation to the processes of material layering that happen habitually within the studio. For Pigrum, the processes of collecting materials are an indispensable part of the artist's activity and is a process that is in itself, space/place productive - in that they produce a working environment for the artist to carry out their creative practice in, which is simultaneously an expression of the artist's creative practice. Pigrum illustrates this with a case study of Francis Bacon's studio, an artist who was known for his studio being thickly layered with different kinds of materials; 'ankle deep, strewn with old books, photographs, old shoes,

paint tubes, rags [it was] the physical manifestation of the mental compost [which] he subjected to continual attunements, transformations and adjustments' (2010: 229).

These two ethnographies of creative space point to the ways in which knowledges and experiences within the studio are co-produced alongside a range of objects (Farías and Wilkie, 2016) and draw attention to the reciprocal interaction between the artist's body, materiality of creative practice and studio space. In other words, such studies have demonstrated how different embodied and material doings are themselves capable of producing different types of creative space.

Whilst these accounts of the studio have gone some way towards situating creativity within its specific socio-material context, Ash (2016) contends they still tend to underplay the affective aspects of creative spaces. As a geographical concept, affect is positioned as the pre-personal intensity of relation between bodies and refers to a continuous formation that is held together through different affects and bodies of its emergence (McCormack, 2008: 414), in which 'body' might refer to any human or non-human subject, animal, technological device, sound, architecture etc. (Anderson, 2009). Yet when affect is discussed in relation to spaces of creative production it is often considered as a uniquely human product or relation between different bodies and as such the affective capacities of the non-human have largely been ignored. Ash (2016) explains that the consequence of this is that 'non-human objects become considered background props or tools that only have agency when utilised through human practices' (2016: 93). Recognising the importance of bringing affect into focus to examine how creative practices and spaces are also shaped by the non-human agencies of matter, I integrate the conceptual approach of Bennett (2004; 2010) and Böhme (1993; 2017) which, despite their differences, both draw attention to the capacity of

materials and matter to produce a range of different affects, atmospheres and ultimately, different spaces.

Bennett (2004; 2010) argues that the liveliness and affective quality of aesthetic objects produces various 'excesses' and 'overspills' which causes materials and matter to participate in the world in different ways. Importantly, she contends that different material assemblages are capable of producing enlivening sparks or dampening effects within a space (2004: 17). Böhme (1993; 2017) argues that materials 'go forth' from themselves in different affective ways to participate in expansive fields of sensory engagement and produce different complex relations with other entities. In different ways Bennett and Böhme argue that materials actively and affectively participate in the space around them and, in doing so, produce different affects, atmospheres and ultimately different types of space.

It follows then, that materiality and matter are a fundamental aspect of the ways in which artists engage with and experience the studio**.** Artists creative practices and activities inform and shape studio space and we know about this. What we don't yet know is how this is informed by the wider urban context. For instance, different material settings and spaces that are provided by the city might be capable of supporting different kinds of creative activities and ultimately different experiences of the studio.

2.4.2 Atmosphere

Having discussed studio space in relation to materiality, I now consider how ideas of atmosphere might help us understand its experience. My argument is that studios have atmospheres and there are lots of forces both within and beyond the space of the studio

that shape these atmospheres. My claim here is that atmosphere provides an important way of working through the changing socio-material relations within and around creative spaces and thinking about how this change is felt and embodied by artists.

The term atmosphere is often used to describe persons, spaces or natures. We might for instance, say that a building or piece of art 'radiates a certain atmosphere', which might then be described as 'uplifting', 'tense' or 'erotic' etc. (Böhme, 1993). Anderson (2009) develops the concept of atmosphere to discuss the ways in which spaces are loaded with particular feelings that do not seem to originate from any one persons or object. Instead, he contends they are produced through the coming together of different parts and the 'coalescence of sensuous elements' in particular geographical settings (Dufrenne, 1973: 13). In this way, atmosphere is bound up with debates about the affective capacity of different bodies and materials coming together in different socio-material assemblages to produce a range of atmospheric qualities, and affectively and sensually charged spatial experiences. In other words, atmospheres are perpetually forming and deforming as different bodies (both human and non-human and with different affective capacities) enter in relation to each other. This is crucial given the different types of relations surrounding the studio and the new materials and bodies that are being introduced into these types of creative settings.

Ash (2016) has applied certain ways of thinking about the atmospheres of the video game design studio. Within this, he draws attention to the interactions between bodies and objects which work to construct a particular sphere or atmosphere of activity and shape the different possibilities for the space. He argues that various non-human technical objects, in contact with human bodies, are the key to the construction of various co-existent spaces and atmospheres in the studio.

Comprised of different forces in transmission, atmospheres can be felt as light or heavy pressing down on the body and causing it to feel and act in different ways (Adey et al., 2012). Although not forceful in their manner of doing so, atmospheres contain the subtlest of intensities that open up and close down discrete fields of potential action, activity and performance for participating bodies (Thrift, 2004). In other words, different atmospheres cause bodies to feel and act in different ways, although, similar to that of air that is inhaled without critical reflection, atmospheres too often go unregistered. A number of geographers have reflected on this relationship between affective and meteorological senses of atmosphere (e.g. Anderson, 2009; 2017; McCormack, 2008a; Stewart, 2011). McCormack (2008a: 413) argues that meteorological atmosphere i.e. 'the turbulent zone of gaseous matter surrounding the earth…[through which] human and non-human life exists', brings us closer to how affective atmospheres are registered and understood as 'simultaneously processual, distributed and sensed'.

Further to this, through Thrift's (2004) work on the '*Politics of Affect*' we come to understand atmosphere as more precisely the medium or channel for the passage and circulation of affects, wherein it gives rise to a pre-conscious and corporeal way of sensing, experiencing and knowing the lived world and its different spaces. As an immediate and embodied way of feeling and knowing space, or rather 'a pre-personal intensity of relation between bodies and bodies-space' (McCormack, 2008a: 414), atmosphere provides a critical tool for exploring the visceral and ephemeral dimensions and experiences of artist studios.

Recent work in cultural geography on precarity and precariousness also combines attention to bodily intensities of precarity with a concern for how precarity

surfaces in and is dispersed through multiple everyday spaces. Worth (2016), for instance, addressing precarity as an affective experience of intensified fear, unease, uncertainty and an unevenly distributed mood of insecurity (Anderson, 2017: 504) suggests some of the ways in which precarity is affectively and atmospherically diffused in different spaces. As of yet, few geographers have directly addressed the idea of atmospheres of precarity. We can however draw on Anderson (2016) to argue that the processes and pressures of neoliberalism are diffused and actualised affectively and atmospherically differently in different spaces. Adding that, neoliberalism envelops and animates labour as it emerges and in doing so, imbues different occasions and sets the tone of different spaces. He explains,

> 'Neoliberalism [is made] present as dispersed affective qualities or senses…commonly felt as an identifiable mood, normally of fear and anxiety aligned to the insecurities of living precariously amidst a heightened sense of expectancy which has yet to come' (2016: 753-737).

In a similar manner, we can think about atmosphere as a medium through which precarity is expressed, actualised and felt by artists within their studios. We can also think about the ways in which different atmospheres are produced and reproduced through particular studio spaces**.** In other words, by taking atmosphere as a non-representational register through which the studio's wider urban context is made perceptible to the body of the occupying artist, we can explore how urban precarity saturates artists' experiences of their studios in London.

2.4.3 Temporality and rhythm

We can adopt a similar approach to thinking about the temporalities of the studio and the forces both within and beyond the studio that infuse and inform artists experiences

of time within it. A number of geographers have pointed out that we experience space not just through materiality, affect and atmosphere, but also through time and its various temporal registers such as rhythm, pace and routine. Massey (2005) for instance, reconfigures ways of thinking about space and place as temporal and fleeting constellations that are constantly being made and remade by different interacting elements coming together at different moments in time. Other geographers have set about trying to understand how different spaces can be distinguished through the geographies of time, as well as the role of time in making distinct places and spaces (Anderson, 2007; Edensor, 2010a; 2010c; Latham and McCormack, 2008; May and Thrift, 2003; Simpson, 2008; Wunderlich, 2008; 2013).

In particular, I am interested in Wunderlich's (2013) understanding of place-temporality, in which spaces are distinguishable and experienced through their unique temporal arrangements. For Wunderlich (2008; 2013), the repetition of activities, performances and interactions inscribe space with a particular rhythmic character. Following this, certain spaces in the city may be described as slower or faster paced, in relation to the rhythm and the rate at which different events and activities unfold. Wunderlich explains that people's movements, activities and encounters merge into 'expressive bundles of rhythms which give a place its temporal distinctiveness' (2013: 383). Within this literature, the body is the measure for proportioning rhythms *and* the sensor through which rhythms and temporalities are felt. Wunderlich explains that place-temporality 'is not an intellectual understanding of time' instead it is a 'distinctive embodied temporal experience' which engages the body in different ways with the affective, sensory and 'vivid qualities of time' (2013: 464).

These ideas about senses of time being location-specific and the patterning of space by the routines, repetitions and rhythms of everyday life, have been acknowledged by a range of scholars, most notable among which is Lefebvre (2013). Similar ideas about identifying space through time are particularly present in Lefebvre's later work, in which he contends that, 'everywhere there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm' (2013: 15). In this sense, Lefebvre is also concerned with the rhythmic and temporal character of place and how different temporalities pertaining to the repetition of routines, habits and schedules, contribute to the texture of the everyday experience of different spaces, and are generative of distinctive place-times. In the same way, it is possible to think about the various activities and relations that produce the temporal character of the studio, as well as how this might be changing in relation to its urban context.

To date, investigations into the temporalities of creative spaces have focused almost exclusively on the temporalities of creative practice, without consideration of how the rhythm and pace of these practices might be shaped and influenced by the studio's wider urban context. For instance, these studies have tended to direct us towards the specific temporalities of creativity, in which time is not something that continues to unfold in the background whilst the artist produces work but is something that is actively produced through the art-making process itself (e.g. Richardson and Walker, 2011). The unpredictability of creativity is a reoccurring theme within this literature. Hawkins (2017) argues that creativity arises through moments of rupture, sparks of inspiration and innovation, as opposed to being a continually unfolding and emerging process. Following this, we might think about creativity as containing a specific temporality that is not easily repeated. This in turn raises questions about the

temporalities and temporal identity of the studio as a contingent or consistent experience.

Whilst many geographers have attended to how the precarity of creativity shows up in different embodied politics, a growing number of geographers are starting to recognise that precarity is also bound up with the production of different temporalities and that time is another dimension through which individuals experience, embody and sense the precariousness of their everyday lives (Anderson, 2007; Arpagian and Aitken, 2018; Gill and Pratt, 2008; Sharma, 2014; Tsianos and Papadopoulos, 2006; Waite, 2009). Gill and Pratt (2008) for instance, focus on freelancing within the creative industries. Freelancing is a condition in which individuals often work in excess of working time agreements and cultural labour tends to be project-based and episodic, as opposed to other forms of more routinized work (see Chapter Six, section two). Cultural work tends instead to be project-based and takes place for a finite period of time (i.e. for the duration of the project), which produces imbalanced working patterns characterised by periods of intense activity followed by periods of inactivity - in which the individual holds little control over these conditions (Tasianos and Papadopoulos, 2006).

Urban precarity also manifests and is expressed through the temporalities of rent and tenure (Standing, 2011; Waite, 2009; Kern, 2016). The slow erosion of property security through gradual rent hikes and the early termination or loss of leases, means that property security is for a finite period of time, and that timeframe is becoming smaller. Under these conditions individuals find themselves waiting for rent hikes, and it is only 'a matter of time' until they are eventually displaced and priced out of the property altogether. In this sense, the processes and pressures of urban precarity

produces a lived time that is structured in specific political and economic contexts and lived at the intersection of a range of socio-economic differences.

If precarity is intensely temporal, this raises questions about how the temporalities and rhythms of the studio might also be overlaid or harmonized with the wider rhythms and temporalities of the city. It raises questions like: in what ways are the temporalities of the studio and artists experiences of time in the studio not only a matter of artists creative practices, but also influenced and governed the studio's wider urban context, specifically the types of precarities and pressures surrounding it? Put simply, we also need to consider how transformations in urban political economy, specifically the temporalities of precarious creative labour and creative workspace, interact with working rhythms and routines in the studio in ways that contribute to and alter the temporal identity of the studio.

2.5 Conclusion

Responding to questions that have been raised by Hawkins (2014; 2015; 2017), among other geographers and artists about the restlessness of art-spaces, my work addresses the nature and status of contemporary artists' workspace in London. Moving the analytical focus away from creative *sites* - which assume stability and closure, towards creative *situations* (Farías and Wilkie, 2016; Hawkins, 2012; 2017; Kaye, 2013), which instead assume openness and direct us towards a more complex set of relations involved in creative practice, this chapter has highlighted the processual becoming of creative spaces like the studio, its various felt dimensions and its continual openness to change. These literatures have placed a lot of emphasis on the agency and authority of

the artist over the type of activities that happen in the studio, the way that they experience their workspaces and the ways in which art-site relations may be changing. I argue that *too much* emphasis has been placed on the artist in the production of studio space and not enough on the ways in which the studio may be changing outside of their control - i.e. due to forces in the political economy that they are not able to preside over or predict the outcomes of.

What is distinctive about my approach is that looking at the micro-geographies of the studio does not entail a celebration of the agency of the artist in the studio in the same way that a lot of cultural geography has done. Instead I look at how studio space is changing beyond the control of the individual artist and the type of compromises that come through (which are addressed in Chapters Five-Eight). Further, I am interested in debunking myths about the studio as a finite and closed entity alongside Hawkins (2017) and Farías and Wilkie (2016). I explore how studio occupation is not just a reflection of the artist (i.e. their changing practices and activities), but also a reflection of contemporary urban life.

In order to address such questions, I draw together different conceptual approaches to the material, affective, atmospheric, temporal and rhythmic qualities of space. I mobilise these as resources for thinking about the various ways in which artists experience, value and relate to the studio, and the role that urban precarity plays in this. In other words, drawing together these non-representational concepts, I wish to focus on artist's experiences of the micro-geographies of the studio and how these may be changing in relation to its urban context. To this end, I propose a reading of the studio as a relational construction, and assemblage literature allows me to do this. It provides a good starting point for thinking about the distributed forces coming together across

various scales in the city to produce studio space and reflect on how changing urban conditions might be producing new forms of studio.

Furthermore, this chapter has highlighted the analytical value of precarity in addressing these ambitions; first as a political economic condition, a state of being and subject position, which talks to some of the different themes developed in literatures on the political economy about gentrification, urban change and the rise of the creative industries. Second, as an affectively embodied life condition and the experience of living with this insecurity and vulnerability, which is felt and expressed through a variety of affective, atmospheric, temporal and non-representational registers. In this way, I propose that foregrounding precarity helps us bridge the gap between these literatures, on the macro-geographies and political economy of creative workspace on the one hand, and the micro-geographies of creativity and creative workspace on the other.

Precarity also opens up new ways of reflecting on relationship between artists and gentrification. At the very least the literature reminds us that it is not just houses, but studios too that are linked to the processes and pressures of gentrification; and that gentrification is not just a one-off event of displacement but is an ongoing process that is lived with precarity in the studio. In focusing on precarity I am not trying to sidestep gentrification, but am trying to tease out a more complicated set of tensions between precarity and insecurity that artists face in the city. For instance, gentrification literatures tell us broadly what is happening with creative workspace, and whilst the sensitivities of gentrification are gradually being drawn out (Lees, 2000; Phillips and Smith, 2018a; 2018b), there is much more to be added by urban precarity (in expanding its spatial-affective scope), which doesn't just focus on the insecurity of property, but also the ways in which artists creative labour feeds into this insecurity. In this sense, my

work pushes back against the dominance of gentrification within political economy literatures on artists' studios, and brings together studies of gentrification and precarity in a more critically sustained and reflective manner to explore the ways in which the political economy's spatial, affective and temporal variations and expressions within and around artists' studios. Taking precarity to be symptomatic and expressive of London's political-economic condition, we can think about the ways in which it manifests spatially and affectively across the various felt dimensions of the studio and how in doing so, it imbues, enriches or detracts from the experiences and relationships with their workspace. Precarity is therefore not a term that has simply been co-opted to describe the same kind of issues being addressed within the social sciences, instead it offers a new space for discussion and a progressive way of thinking about how artist's experience the studio within its broader urban context.

The empirical chapters that follow reflect the structure of this literature review. They begin with the broader political economic processes and transformations that surround the organisation and delivery of affordable artists' studios in contemporary London, then move gradually towards the specific ways in which this urban context is felt through various non-representational registers and is expressed within the micro-geographies of the studio.

Chapter Three

Methods

3.0 Introduction

The research that informs this thesis was guided by a series of questions: how to tend to the highly personal and subjective nature of how artists experience and assign meaning to the studio, whilst simultaneously attending to the studio's broader situation within the city? How to explore the affective and lived immediacy of the studio, whilst examining how it is perceived, organised and delivered by studio groups in response to the transformations taking place within the urban political economy? And, how, therefore, to attend to a range of fragmented, and sometimes contradictory perspectives, on the form, function and meaning of the contemporary artist's studio?

This research draws upon a revised grounded theory methodology for guiding the collection of research materials[4] and analysis, and for addressing these concerns. The thesis also employs qualitative methods drawn largely from feminist and cultural geography, including semi-structured interviews, photographs, field-diary observations and reviews of secondary materials. The predominant form of inquiry and primary method for the acquisition of knowledge for this research is qualitative semi-structured interviews, undertaken over a six-month period. A total of 42 interviews were conducted with visual artists, which were roughly divided between London's four largest

[4] I use the terms 'materials' and 'data' interchangeably throughout this chapter to refer to the different types of materials (knowledge, insights and statistics) generated and used in the scope of this thesis. For the purposes of clarity when discussing grounded theory and its coding procedures (in section four of this chapter) I found that it is more appropriate to use the term 'data'.

studio organisations Acme, SPACE, ASC and ACAVA. Many other close-dialogue encounters with artists were also made. In addition to this, interviews with Anna Harding, Chief Executive Officer of SPACE, and David Panton OBE, Co-Founder and Director of Acme, were also conducted.[5] Two interviews were also conducted with senior members of the Greater London Authority Culture Team including Wilf Langridge, Senior Cultural Policy Officer for Cultural Infrastructure, and Kirsten Dunne, Senior Cultural Strategy Officer.

In addition, extensive situated observation was undertaken, with the material recorded in photographs and field diaries. Field diaries featured throughout the research as a means for communicating experiences in the field, recording personal accounts of events, as well as providing a means for observation and survey and documenting the nitty-gritty details of artists' studios during the interview site visits. Given my focus on how artists *experience* the studio and the non-representational themes of my research, I am interested in how conventional methods, such as the qualitative interview and field diary, might be tweaked so as to better apprehend affect and the other felt dimensions of artists' studios in the fieldwork and how I write about it; and where appropriate, I attempt to elicit some details and discussion of this within my methods selection.

All primary research material was subject to rigorous coding, which was conducted manually at first and followed using a chosen software program (NVivo) to check the consistency and reliability of themes. Additionally, a review of newspaper articles and other articles on the topic, as well as archival data from studio provider

[5] The thinking behind this selection is because SPACE (1968) and Acme (1972) are London's oldest registered studio organisations.

groups, offered insights into the broader public context in which studios operate in London. In addition, reports provided necessary statistical data and useful updated commentaries between various stakeholders within the city's studio sector.

The chapter is structured into four sections. In section one I address the rationale behind the grounded theory research design, as well as how some of its biggest strengths can be seen as rooted in its 'blurry qualities'. In section two on the methods selection, I give an account of why certain methods were selected over others. In section three, attention turns to the logistics of the research, including site selection and participant sampling**.** Here detail is given about the selection and recruitment of participants and how this coincided with the close selection of cases and selection of studio properties to be included in the study. Following this, in section four I address the coding procedures used for analysing all primary material and the related strategies used for handling researcher bias. The chapter closes with a discussion of the ethical considerations of the project.

3.1 Methodology

During the early stages of this thesis I met up with one of my DPhil colleagues to discuss how we were preparing to conduct our fieldwork. My colleague explained how she had spent the past few months tightening her methodological approach and was consequently thinking about starting to write her methodology chapter. It is not uncommon for researchers to strive to adhere as closely as possible and where appropriate, to the analytical method they feel is best suited to the focus of their

research - in other words, relying on their methodological selection to guide and structure the research process.

This idea that the research should be framed and guided by a pre-set methodological approach did not sit comfortably with me. I am of the opinion that too much close prescription to a specific methodological procedure makes it difficult to be flexible, to pursue unforeseen directions, and to adapt to new ideas and findings as they emerge on the ground. These ideas about embracing the research as an emergent construction resonated closely with what I had read about Haraway (1988) and Rose (1997), and their insistence that researchers need to remain sensitive to the needs of the research and that the priority should be to achieve substance of research and richness, rather than sticking to the specific boundaries of a chosen methodology.

Haraway and Rose have led a set of interventions into the ways of 'doing' qualitative research, responding to questions that have been raised about the instabilities, heterogeneities and irregularities of knowledge(s) and geographic subjects (see also: Castree, 1999; Hawkins, 2014; 2015; McDowell, 1992; McDowell and Sharp, 1997; Valentine, 2003). Concerned with the nature and production of knowledge, this work maintains that the origins of knowledge are located in actions, discourses and social relations. Accordingly, Haraway (1988) and Rose (1993; 1997) have argued that all forms of knowledge must be understood as 'situated-knowledge', in that it is relational to the specific social-cultural conditions under which it is produced.

Bound up with this has been a broader rethinking of traditional qualitative methodologies and their assumptions, to take into account these epistemological and ontological insights. For example, the ensuing commitment within the social sciences to the complexity and situatedness of knowledge has resulted in greater efforts being

made to enhance the capacity of the research process for grasping and interpreting the heterogeneities and complexities of knowledge empirically.

In addition, methodological design has also become more multiple. Different methodologies can be brought together to reveal varied dimensions of the phenomenon being studied (Bailey et al., 2005; Dowling et al., 2016; James and Millington, 2016; Sui and DeLyser, 2011). Singh (2015: 132) explains that, 'overlaps between methodological approaches can add different and new qualities to the research project, integrating methodologies in more meaningful ways, synthesising multiple perspectives and extending synthesis to create new forms of knowledge'. Whilst there is compelling reason to integrate multiple methodologies, grounded theory best explains my experience of the flexibility and adaptability of the research process.

3.1.1 Grounded theory

Grounded theory grapples with some of these blurry qualities and complexities of doing methodology. Arguably, one of its main strengths is the way in which it remains open to the influences and inputs of multiple other methodologies and themes from across the social sciences in the development of knowledge. Grounded theory is not about closing down other types of inquiry, but opening up the researcher and their field to different possibilities developing on the ground (Charmaz, 2014), and adapting to different situations as they unfold. Clarke (2005) explains how rather than adhering to a specific philosophical stance, a particular logic of inquiry, or a set of procedures, grounded theory relies on emergent processes and the researchers emerging constructions, that shape both process and product.

Developed by sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory is an interactive, inductive and comparative approach to qualitative research that involves the progressive identification and integration of themes and categories of meaning emerging from the research material. Unlike the more traditional theory verification models that have commanded a lot of attention in qualitative social sciences research, Walker and Myrick (2006) explain that the grounded theory design encourages the researcher to 'begin with an open mind' and follow the emerging routes of inquiry, as opposed to setting out to (dis)prove hypotheses or verify existing theoretical assumptions. Its orientation towards rupture, actualisation, and the temporal and processual construction of knowledge, fits well with the ethos and ambitions of this thesis and the dynamic and changeable nature of working with a large number of participants, such as the 42 visual artists included in this study.

The ideal of grounded theory is to develop new theory arising from the data to help explain emerging themes and findings, as Glaser and Strauss (1987: 2) explain: 'grounded theory methodology explicitly involves generating theory and doing social research as two parts of the same process.' Although the ambition of this thesis is not to develop new theories as such, I do nevertheless develop a context specific definition of the contemporary urban artist's studio that is empirically grounded in a range of different and sometimes contradictory perspectives. Grounded theory is therefore a broad orientation to my research.

Elements of grounded theory, such as its constant comparative analysis and coding practices, were particularly relevant for informing the ideas that drove forward the different stages of fieldwork in this thesis. Grounded theory is perhaps best well known for its integrated approach to data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2014b)

which involves researchers subjecting their inductive material to rigorous coding procedures that move the study away from 'concrete realities', towards rendering different conceptual understandings from the data (Charmaz, 2014). This practice involves simultaneous processes of data collection and analysis, whereby analysis begins as soon as the first research material is collected and coded (see section four of this chapter). Corbin and Strauss (1990) argue that this allows the social processes and phenomena under study to direct data collection. For Charmaz (1996), this blurring between theory and empiricism represents an action-centred approach to research, in that it keeps the researcher engaged with what is unfolding in the fieldwork. In this sense, grounded theory is capable of operating on two conflicting levels, ensuring both the openness of the research to new information emerging in the field, whilst also providing a rigorous framework for analysis (Bailey et al., 2005).

Since its inception in 1967, the legacy of grounded theory has therefore been an abstract and exploratory strategy for conducting and analysing research, that is responsive, flexible and easily modifiable to the input of new material at all stages of the research process. As well as its integrated processes of data collection and analysis which moves the project towards models of representation as intervention (rather than corresponding to a prior reality) and looks at new ways of producing and judging knowledge in a more action-oriented and performative vein.

Many contemporary social science research approaches are already engaged with these styles and themes of grounded theory; particularly the procedure for the treatment of research material that is about the iterative formation of research themes and ideas. Whilst many human geographers already apply some of the principles of grounded theory within their work, they have rarely done so in a way that makes full

use of the methodology's assets (Bailey et al., 2005). Instead, the term grounded theory tends to be widely, and often loosely, applied to a range of qualitative research processes. Other social sciences disciplines have been much more transparent in their dealings with grounded theory ideas for collecting and analysing data, particularly including sociology (where grounded theory was born), anthropology, nursing and psychology (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Nevertheless, it seems that for geography - which is a deeply empirical discipline committed to the complexities, inconsistencies and contradictions of 'doing' research - there is a necessity for closer engagement with these types of research designs that combine creative flexibility, with particular evaluative criteria that have relevance for the study. In this sense, I adopt a grounded theory approach as both a way of keeping my methodological approach open and adaptable, and as a way of formalising and understanding a range of methodological processes that are already prevalent within the social sciences.

3.2 Methods

The point of departure for this section is a recent set of interventions into the ways of doing qualitative methods in geography in light of some of the questions that have been raised in non-representational theory about how to access and apprehend some of the affective and fleeting and felt qualities of the subject when doing empirical work. Grounded theory is well poised conceptually, analytically and technically to address some of these more-than human aspects of the research. Bryant and Charmaz (2007: 274) explain that it is open to the inclusion of new subjects and 'it is the researcher's responsibility to get these subjects into the data.'

The ambition of this research is to explore the studio as a relational, processual and complex space, and give a sense of its 'not-quite graspable qualities' (Vannini, 2015: 6), spatialities and ecologies, as well as how these may be changing in relation to the city. In doing so, this research engages with a number of non-representational themes; including, affect, atmosphere and temporality, as well as other ways in which studios spaces are *felt* and the precarities surrounding them made palpable to the occupying artist.

Non-representational theory has become an umbrella term for diverse work that seeks to cope with these self-evidently more-than human, more-than textual, multi-sensual worlds (see for instance: Anderson, 2009; 2016; 2017; Anderson and Harrison, 2010; 2016; Thrift, 2004; 2008; Wylie, 2016). Non-representational theory is not just theoretical but is also deeply concerned with the methodological and has prompted difficult and provocative questions; such as what is intended by the conduct of research and what methods can best address these different forms of embodied and haptic knowledges (Vannini, 2015). There is plentiful evidence of non-representational thinking being put to work in different places and resurfacing in different forms of qualitative research (e.g. Anderson and Ash, 2015; Dowling et al., 2016; 2017; Latham, 2003; Lorimer, 2005; Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000; Vannini, 2015). These are the empirical commitments to doing near-at-hand research and close engagements with different performative, embodied and haptic knowledges and visual approaches. Much of the focus of this work falls on 'how life takes shape and gains expression in shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions' (Lorimer, 2005: 84). Attention to these kinds of

expression, Lorimer (2005: 84) contends, 'offers an escape from the established academic habit of striving to uncover meaning and value, which apparently await our discovery, interpretation, judgement and ultimate representation.'

One method that attaches particular attention to getting at the lived experience of the world (Yi'En, 2013) and has been explored extensively in recent years in relation to non-representational theory, is participant observation. Participant observation is a well-established ethnographic methodology which requires researchers to fully immerse themselves in the field(s) under study and it commonly involves lengthy fieldwork experiences that involve a high degree of exposure to the research subject (Gobo, 2008). Cook and Crang (2007) describe it as a qualitative method that exposes the researcher to the subtleties of relations within a research situation. Participant observation has also been the most popular method to be experimented with, in a series of recent geography-art interventions into the artist's studio (e.g. Farías and Wilkie, 2016; Foster and Lorimer, 2008; Ursprung, 2008).[6] Its ability to develop stronger sympathetic registers with the research group and a more intimate understanding of the research subject therefore seems highly contingent with the aims of this thesis, which includes examining the experience and meaning of the contemporary artist's studio from the ground up. Why then does the method not feature as part of the research? The answer is that, originally, it did.

My initial research proposal involved prolonged engagement with the everyday-ness of the studio to support the interview method. I anticipated that this might involve

[6] Farías and Wilkie (2016) present a set of empirical case studies that explore and examine the studio as a key setting for aesthetic and material production. A number of these cases involve geographers working alongside artists in a range of studio-based projects for extended periods of time, which breaks down barriers between geographers and artists and displays a number of geographers as creative artists.

spending several months working intensely with a smaller group of visual artists, observing and participating in their activities and practices, and gaining first-hand experience of the different sets of social and material relations that unfold in the studio. Despite these intentions, the reality of conducting this method on the ground was quite different. Having made contact with a number of potential participants, despite their interest in the project, they were strongly averse to the prospect of participant observation, in large part for one of two reasons. First, respondents were concerned that this method would be too disruptive to their art practice - the majority of artists involved in this study rent individual studios and expressed a preference for working alone. The few who do share their studio, were concerned about the disruption this method might cause to their peers. The second concern was about the compatibility of participant observation with the artist's flexible and ad-hoc studio routine - concerns were expressed about studio schedules being difficult to pre-plan, and thus the practicality of this method and the impact it might have on restricting the artists own flexibility. Despite reassurances about my willingness to accommodate flexible work schedules, and my offer to shorten the period of participant observation, these concerns persisted. These endeavours were not entirely fruitless; the reasons given as to the unsuitability of participant observation were used to inform some of the interview questions and became an interesting thematic of the study.

Non-representational approaches feature in a range of ways throughout this research. Whilst I had intended to conduct a participant observation and explore different non-representational methods for the reasons outlined above this did not work. However, the influence of non-representational work is still present in my approach to conducting interviews and the interview questions. Non-representational

work also sensitised me to different things within the research process, such as the non-verbal and embodied aspects of interviewing and the 'felt' aspects of the interview site.

3.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews

In recognition of the importance of a variety of positioned experiences to this project's central questions, the semi-structured interview method allowed a series of partial perspectives from a range of artists, to emerge and enrich the larger framework of examined relations. The use of semi-structured interviews was seen as an opportunity to examine the multi-layered experiences, perceptions and thoughts of visual artists, which would not have been possible through other more quantitative methods, such as surveys or questionnaires.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews are the most common manner of obtaining primary material within social science research, in part, because this style of interview allows the respondent to explain issues in more detail and in their own terms, leading to a far more wide-ranging discussion with the researcher of their experiences, than other methods would allow (Atkinson and Coffey, 1996). For instance, the use of semi-structured questions has also been well documented for allowing rich and detailed storytelling, whilst also providing interviewers with the tools for reconfiguring questions mid-interview. Valentine (1997) explains that this allows interviewers to engage in more detailed conversations about narrative constructions, and avoid participants from glossing over their responses. In this sense the semi-structured interview, 'combines flexibility and control over the construction of data' and has some of the benefits of ensuring some degree of conformity, whilst allowing for some measure of openness to explore unexpected and potentially important matters as and when they arise (Denzin

and Lincoln, 2017). In other words, it allows the interviewer to engage in partially directed conversation with interviewees, whilst allowing participants concerns and comments to shape the direction of the conversation. Atkinson and Coffey (1996) note that the outcome of his style of interviewing, is that the manner in which the interview unfolds, reflects the order of the priority of issues for the participant. As such, the order of the interview was analysed alongside its main content.

Therefore, whilst imposing a degree of 'structure' on the interview might seem contrary to the non-representational turn towards performance research, the objective in providing this structure, was to provide a basic narrative outline which remained open to change and re-direction around new topics and lines of inquiry as they emerged. In this sense, it had some of the benefits of ensuring some degree of conformity in the interview material collected for comparative purposes, whilst allowing for some measure of openness to explore unexpected and potentially important matters as and when they arose - thereby, fitting particular well around the ethos of the grounded theory methodology (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012).

In addition to this, interviews were also conducted with the CEO and Director of two of London's oldest and largest studio provider organisations, SPACE and Acme, as well as with Senior Cultural Strategy Officers at the Greater London Authority. The ambition of these interviews was to develop insights into the policy landscape and wider political-economic context that 'affordable' creative workspace provision operates in, in London. It was also to explore the agendas, strategies and adaptions, that are being made at the regional government level, and by studio organisations, to address some of the risks and vulnerabilities facing the city's supply of affordable studios. Given the nature of these informants, whose professions mean that they are well-rehearsed in

giving interviews, 'corporate' and 'elite' interview techniques were used to inform the interview design (Harvey, 2011; Kezar, 2003). Whilst, there is no clear-cut definition of what constitutes an 'elite', it is generally understood within social sciences research as someone wielding a significant amount of power and influence within a social group, or organisational system (Dexter, 2006; McDowell, 1998). Given the nature of these interviews, Smith (2006) notes that elite interviews tend to be closer to journalistic styles of interviewing, which have a tradition of exposing or challenging the actions of people in positions of power, causing them to rethink their perspectives (Kezar, 2003; Smith, 2006). Given the 'debate' style of these interviews, Harvey (2011) assumes elites to challenge the interviewer's knowledge of the subject, following which, it is easy to find the interviewer becoming the interviewee. In these situations, Harvey (2011) recommends, it is important for the interviewer to show that they have done their 'homework' and are well informed on the subject. He also recommends a flexible approach that allows the interviewer to adjust their style of questioning to the atmosphere of the interview and the tone of the conversation.[7]

3.2.2 Feeling behind the words

My investigation of atmosphere and temporality in the studios was primarily via interviews. The main issue raised by the interview method is that research is not just visual and spoken, it is also felt. Thrift and Dewsbury (2000: 420) explains that 'terms like discourse [which these methods place emphasis on] cannot fully capture the

[7] Where permission was granted by participants, interviews were recorded and accompanied by note taking. In most cases, interviews were pre-arranged and lasted approximately 1.5 hours with artists. Additional time was also spent with participants before and after the interviews and was documented in the form of a field-diary. Interviews with CEO's, Directors and policy advisors, were shorter at one hour.

excessive and transient aspects of living…nor can the variety of kinaesthetic vocabularies and imagination be reduced to such text-heavy models', adding, that to do so would be to have a 'deadening effect' on the research. In effect, Thrift and Dewsbury (2000) call for more innovative research and ultimately new methods. Other geographers, like Latham (2003) and Vannini (2015) on the other hand, have argued that non-representational theory does require us to abandon existing approaches and methods. Instead Vannini (2015: 11) proposes a 'manifesto for non-representational research', in which he argues that a non-representational methodology might best be interpreted and implemented as an 'ethos' towards research concerned with evoking the present moment, studying the un-said, and striving to create a sense of the mood and action in the research process and write up. Therefore, whilst Thrift and Dewsbury (2000) want to radically reconfigure what it is to do research, other geographers have argued that rather than abandoning existing methods, we should work towards revitalising and re-specifying these methods through the techniques that we develop (Latham, 2003).

What this work has demonstrated is that whilst there is no straightforward application or methodological appropriation of non-representational theory and no one-size-fits-all policy for accessing embodied knowledges and emotional responses in qualitative research (Gerlach and Jellis, 2015; Latham, 2003; Lorimer, 2005), there are minor tactics that can be adopted to pay greater attention to the interview as a kind of embodied and spatially situated performance. It is this approach that I take forward in thinking about how the interview method might be tweaked so as to better apprehend the felt dimensions of the studio in the fieldwork for this thesis.

Ingold (2015) and Anderson (2017) offer new ways of thinking about the affective, embodied and performative dimensions of the interview method. Concerned with the ways in which the physical performance of the interview tends to be stripped away, and interviews analysed separate to the bodies and spaces from which they emerge, Ingold and Anderson argue that greater attention needs to be paid to the lived dimensions of the interview and the breathing bodies behind the words. Ingold (2015) explains; 'behind the tapped-out words of ours, the beating heart of the tacit continues to animate our movements and feelings and show its hand in voice and gesture' (2015: IX). Such work, along with that of Vannini (2015), directs attention towards the 'noisy and turbulent bodily practices and performances' of the interview. This material formed part of a situational awareness that allowed the interview to take place.

I also paid attention to the interview's situation and the spatial aspects of the interview. Geographers are increasingly aware that interviews need to be analysed in relation to the physical contexts in which they take place. Thrift and Dewsbury (2000: 415) explain that the environment is not passive in the interview, instead 'it is a manifold of possibilities that shape its practice and performance' (see also Elwood and Martin, 2000; Evans and Jones, 2011). Where possible, interviews were therefore conducted in artists' studios so as to help improve understandings of artist's experiences, contextualise responses and better situate the interview performance. This also had additional benefits. Firstly, it helped participants to articulate their thoughts - it enabled artists to interact with and draw upon the studio as a resource during the interview to illustrate and exemplify points. It also gave artists the opportunity to comment freely on what they saw fit, occasionally pointing out different features in the work environment. Secondly, it provided opportunities for serendipitous and un-anticipated

descriptions of the studio, triggering context-sensitive reactions. Carpiano (2009: 266) explains how in situating interviews in context of the place/space of discussion, 'participants will often discuss issues or ideas of which they are not immediately aware. In other words, participants may more readily access the salient features of their lives during an interview, verses discussing the context in which their lives play out'. Thirdly, it had the benefit of allowing me to examine participant's interpretations of their studios, whilst experiencing these first-hand.

3.2.3 Photographs

Photographs were taken as part of the interview with artists and feature in the empirical chapters alongside the main body of text. Recent enthusiasm in geography for visual methodologies including photography (as well as film, video, painting, drawing, collage, sculpture, artwork, graffiti, advertising and cartoons) has demonstrated how they can enhance the richness of research materials by introducing additional layers of meaning and capturing rich multi-dimensional data (Barbour, 2014; Glaw et al., 2017; Gyest et al., 2013; Mah, 2015). There are also a number of advantages of photographs specific to this study.

Photographs allow participants to express their ideas and experiences in a non-verbal way. At times when artists were not able to articulate their feelings or experiences during the interview they would often point to certain features in the studio, or reference different parts of the studio to help illustrate a point they were trying to make. To demonstrate this, one artist when trying to articulate in an interview how her workspace *felt creative* explained: 'it's all of this really [arms wide open turning around the room]. It's those windows [points to old sash windows], it's the brick [points

to crumbling brickwork] its even that [points to paint splashed floorboard] it's this whole space'. Taking photographs of these reference points therefore allowed me to capture a certain depth and detail of the studio in the fieldwork, in some cases more so than could be expressed through words alone. In this way, photographs were an important channel for articulating and communicating artists experiences and tacit knowledges of the studio.

Following the interviews, I also requested that artists emailed me a photograph of their studio. This gave participants a chance to think about the studio after our conversation and express how they feel about it through their own chosen image. Knowing that the photographs would be used for the research, this allowed them to make decisions about how they wish to represent their workspace in the visual scene they have created, which could then be analysed alongside how they described their studio experience in the interview.

Photographs are also an important interpretative thematic of the thesis, in that they are used in the empirical chapters to illustrate arguments and experiences as presented in the write up of the thesis. The aim is to help connect the reader to the studio under study and help contextualise what the interview expresses about these spaces and experiences. Harper (2002) argues that they can also help evoke feelings, memories and information for the reader, which contributes to the them being able to draw out deeper meaning from the descriptions, statements and ultimately the work.

In this way, photographs add further depth and thickness to the research, as well as new insights into the verbal and written material. They were also a particularly effective way of understanding and capturing how studio space is organised, used and

feels. Observations and experiences of the studio were also documented and explored in a series of field diaries.

3.2.4 Field diary method

The field diary method has also been widely accredited within the social sciences and other related fields, as a rich source of qualitative material (Atkinson and Coffey, 1996; Denzin and Lincoln, 2017; Clifford et al., 2016; Gubrium et al., 2012; Punch, 2012). Whilst being regarded a useful method in its own right, it is most often used in conjunction with a variety of other methods, such as qualitative interviewing or participant observation.

Among other things, its common uses include: documenting and communicating experiences in the field, recording personal accounts of events, and providing a means for observation and survey (Baxter and Eyles, 1997; Latham, 2003). For instance, Punch (2012) who has argued that many methodological and ethical accounts of fieldwork become 'sanitised and smoothed over', because they tend to be written several months after the fieldwork has taken place, explains that the field-diary method of documenting research in action, can help guard against this, by 'preserving the immediacy, energy and emotional impact of doing fieldwork' (2012: 86). A recent set of creative inquiries into the intersection of art and geographical subjects (e.g. Hawkins, 2014; 2015), have also demonstrated that the field diary can be an important textual expression of events, actions and practice as they unfold.[8] Written in the midst of action, the field diary

[8] During a geographer-in-residence position within the Caravanserai project (a participatory arts project run by artists Annie Lovejoy and Mac Dunlop) in Cornwall, Hawkins (2015: 260) put the field diary to use as both a 'textual and visual expression…of record and of witnessing'.

provides a platform for documenting the research process in the making, and untangling the affective, subtle and ambiguous aspects of the fieldwork experience (Pratt, 2000) In this sense, field diaries, provided an important means for observing and analysing the performative dimensions of the fieldwork process; as well as for documenting the nitty-gritty details, and 'felt' aspects of artists' studios that might otherwise have been overlooked by the traditional interview method (Bondi, 2005; Moser, 2008).

Field diaries can also serve as the means for recording concepts as they become apparent in the field, prompting the researcher to question how they relate to the material, and what they illuminate about it. This goes back to the idea within grounded theory, about the research process supporting an on-going literature review and Glaser and Strauss' (1967) assertion that researchers need to be reflexive about the assumptions that inform their injury and constantly question, 'where does this concept take the analysis?' (Charmaz, 2014: 15).

Given the many uses of this method, field diaries feature throughout the research as a means for communicating experiences in the field, recording personal accounts of events, as well as providing a means for observation and survey and documenting the nitty-gritty details of artists' studios during the interview site visits; and served as additional tool, through which to document and explore the mood, texture and affective qualities of the research process and the artist-studio relationship, and write these into the research. They were therefore subject to the same coding procedures and analysed alongside interview material.

3.2.5 Secondary materials

A review of secondary materials on the topic, including news articles and other articles, as well as archival data available online and at the Whitechapel Gallery - which is home to SPACE archives - offered insights into the broader public context that studios operate in, in London. Reports also provided necessary statistical data and useful updated commentaries between various stakeholders within the studio sector.

Paul White (2010) discusses the uses of secondary material. He explains that exercises in data collection are stored in databases over time, and that the larger and more complex societies are, the more routine these reporting exercises are. White explains, 'the management and provisioning of complex societies give rise to data needs, while in certain cases government agencies wish to gain insights into the lives of citizens for reasons of control. These exercises all produce secondary data which, once collected for one purpose, may be used for another' (2010: 212). Similarly, as London's studio sector has grown in scale since the 1970s and studios have entered the city's political portfolio as sites worthy of support and investment, studio organisations' reporting and monitoring practices have become more formalised. ASC, ACAVA, Acme and SPACE publish regular news bulletins, information sheets and annual reports about their work, including up to date information on their studio portfolios (see Appendix B) and news of their community and educational outreach activities. It is also the case that the funding bodies that support these organisations, require reports as evidence of their investment. For instance, Arts Council England provide a great deal of charitable funding to artists and studio groups through their Grants for the Arts programme, National Portfolio, and strategic funds (ACE, 2018); one of the requisites of this funding is that organisations provide detailed feedback as to how these funds are allocated. Arts

Council England also conduct their own research in this area, most of the data for which is stored and accessed through the National Archive.

This thesis also comes at a particularly interesting time for London's studio sector. In 2012 Acme celebrated their 40th anniversary and in 2018, SPACE celebrated their 50th. In celebration of 40 years of Acme, the organisation curated an archival exhibition documenting its long history. This included a public display of photographs, film and artwork at the Whitechapel Gallery, alongside which Acme released a DVD documenting their origins and first decade in the East London (1972-1982) - most of the articles from the exhibition are now available online. Similarly, SPACE has released a number of online reports and case studies that documented their relationship with the East End. Taken together, these documents provide rich insights into the ways in which studio organisations have evolved over the last fifty years, including what different mechanisms they have used for securing affordable workspace, and the changing sources of funding and support that they have received to enable them to do this.

In addition to these reports, parliamentary papers and official records are also important secondary data sources and provided the current political economic context of the research. Involving political discourses, public opinion, policy discussions and commercial actions on a variety of scales, the breadth of coverage and detail of this secondary material provided a more robust data collection about the studio sector, than would have been possible to be carried out by an individual researcher (Church, 2001).

Despite the richness of these sources, it has been important not to lose sight that archival material tends to represent the visions and priorities of individuals, groups and organisations, who have chosen to preserve certain information and memories, whilst forgetting others (Church, 2001). For instance, Clifford et al. (2015: 387), note

that 'not everything from the past leaves a trace and not all traces produced are preserved.' It is therefore important to keep in mind when using and analysing these data sources, that they are collected and produced by someone with a propose and it is not unlikely that they may have been manipulated in some way to present the subject matter in a certain light (e.g. data boundaries may have been re-categorised or redrawn). Part of the analysis has therefore been understanding the significance of the events preserved by these organisations, particularly in relation to the type of work that organisations wish to be identified with.

Two essays by Nick Green (1999; 2001), have also provided essential secondary material for this project. His first publication *on 'The Space of Change: Artists' in the East End 1968-1980*' was soon followed by '*From Factories to Fine Art: The Origins and Evolution of East End London's Artists' Agglomeration 1968-1998*' - these two works are based upon archival research and scrupulously document the development of studio organisations in London up to 1998. Green pays particular attention to the geographical histories and conditions under which SPACE and Acme developed their workspace strategies, initially in the London Docklands areas, and later moving deeper into the East End, into the boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets. In some respects, my work continues Green's efforts to better understand the ways in which studio groups operate and deliver affordable artists workspace in London. Although, arguably the focus of my work is more orientated towards the *experiences* of the artists who rent and occupy the studios.

3.3 Logistics: site selection and sampling

Locating the research field is a contentious topic for geographers (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Massey, 2003). The term 'field-site' refers to 'the spatial characteristics of a field-based research project, the stage on which the social processes under study take place' (Burrell, 2009: 182). Over the course of several decades of methodological reflection, geographers have called into question the traditional conception of a field-site, as being a pre-given, bounded space or site containing a whole culture (Burrell, 2009: 182).

These debates have also been enlivened by a recent set of methodological interventions, into the intersection of arts expanding field of theory and practice, and geography's own expanding field of operations (Hawkins, 2014; 2015). Empirical engagements with art-site relations, have reworked what were previously taken-for-granted, as fixed and stable sites of creative production/consumption, such as the studio and gallery. Instead, emphasis has been placed on drawing out commonalities and resonances between different sites, based upon their events, activities, and more recently still, their similar rhythms and atmospheres. The result has been a more relational thinking about the ways in which the field is defined and constructed, which means moving beyond the static and territorially defined field-sites, towards something multi-variegated and dispersed (Clifford et al., 2016; 2010; Denzin and Lincoln, 2017; Katz, 1994).

In directing the researcher to think beyond the confines of the research subject, to locate it within its broader situation spanning across a range of different scales and spaces (Creswell, 2013; Katz, 1994), relational theories are challenging conventional thinking about field-site research. The benefit and consequence of this changing

orientation and new configuration, is that it engages a range of spaces - physical, virtual and imagined - which can easily be extended to incorporate other such spatial distinguishing features as atmosphere, rhythm or time for instance. But it also raises practical challenges, such as how to locate and define the research field so as to best explore the research subject. For instance, recognising that the field-site is constructed rather than discovered (Burrell, 2009; Massey, 2003) means that practical steps still need to be taken towards (re)constructing an appropriate field-site for the project. Whilst to a certain extent the field-site for this project is pre-determined as the artist's studio, there are still many factors that need to be taken into consideration when making this selection.

Within this project the practical work of constructing the field-site involved defining the parameters of the artist's studio and, simultaneously, identifying visual artists for participants. This was because the field-site and interview location were both the artist's studio- hence the selection of interview participants would determine the selection of field-sites/studios to be included in the study, and vice versa.

3.3.1 Artist studios

The creative industries literature calls attention to Hackney (a borough in the East End of London) as an appropriate starting point and field site for exploring artists workspace in London. Hackney plays an imperative role in London's policy framework and has provided a blueprint for the impact that artists can have in transforming and regenerating inner-city areas (Tongi, 2015). Hackney has also captured the attention of Moreton (2013) and Pratt (2009) who are among a growing number of academics, concerned with the increasing popularity of areas in Hackney like Hackney Wick, Dalston

and Shoreditch, and its effects on artists being implicated in producing marketable forms of cultural and economic capital (Moreton, 2013; Pratt, 2009b). In many creative workspace reports (e.g. 2014 *'Artists Workspace Study*' and '*Creating Artists Workspace'*), Hackney is also presented as the 'creative epicentre' of London. Statistically it is home to the largest number and highest concentration of artists' studios of any London Borough (GLA, 2014). It also contains the largest number and highest concentration of creative venues of any London borough (Destination Hackney, 2016). As the locus of much creative activity and political attention, Hackney appears to stand forth as an ideal frame for the study.

Yet, to limit the focus of the study to Hackney alone, would be to ignore the plethora of studio activity taking place in other parts of the city and the types of adaptions that are being made by studio organisations to cope with the pressures of property markets in these types of popular 'creative' inner-city areas. Taken together, London's four largest studio provider organisations (ASC, ACAVA, SPACE and Acme) represent 25.5% of all managed artists' studios in the city and operate 54 studio properties (approximately 1473 studios) across 17 London boroughs.[9] What this distribution suggests, is that we need another way of framing the field-site to account for the different types of studio activity taking place more widely across the city. Instead, five premises-specific criteria were considered to ensure a selection of different studio sites were included in the study and reflect the diversity of studios managed by these four studio organisations (see Appendix C).

[9] Based on figures available at the start of fieldwork in 2015.

I. Model of tenure: 73% of the combined studio property portfolio of Acme, ASC, ACAVA and SPACE are held under leasehold or other rental agreements; 15% of the properties are freehold purchases and 13% of properties are permanently secured under studio partnership development schemes.[10] This is roughly reflective of the balance of models of tenure more broadly across London's studio sector, wherein, 65% of the studio properties managed by the city's 20 largest organisations are secured on leasehold or other rental agreements (GLA, 2014a: 35).

II. Size: There is a great variation in the number of studios at each of the studio sites. ASC's Bond House provides 120 studios, whereas SPACE's Belsham Street studios only provides eight.

III. Property type: Among some of the property types managed by these four organisations, are a range of converted properties, including a former ship propeller foundry, a vicarage, library, carpark, Victorian school, laundry and a number of industrial workshops, warehouses and office premises. In addition to these are a small number of new build studio developments.

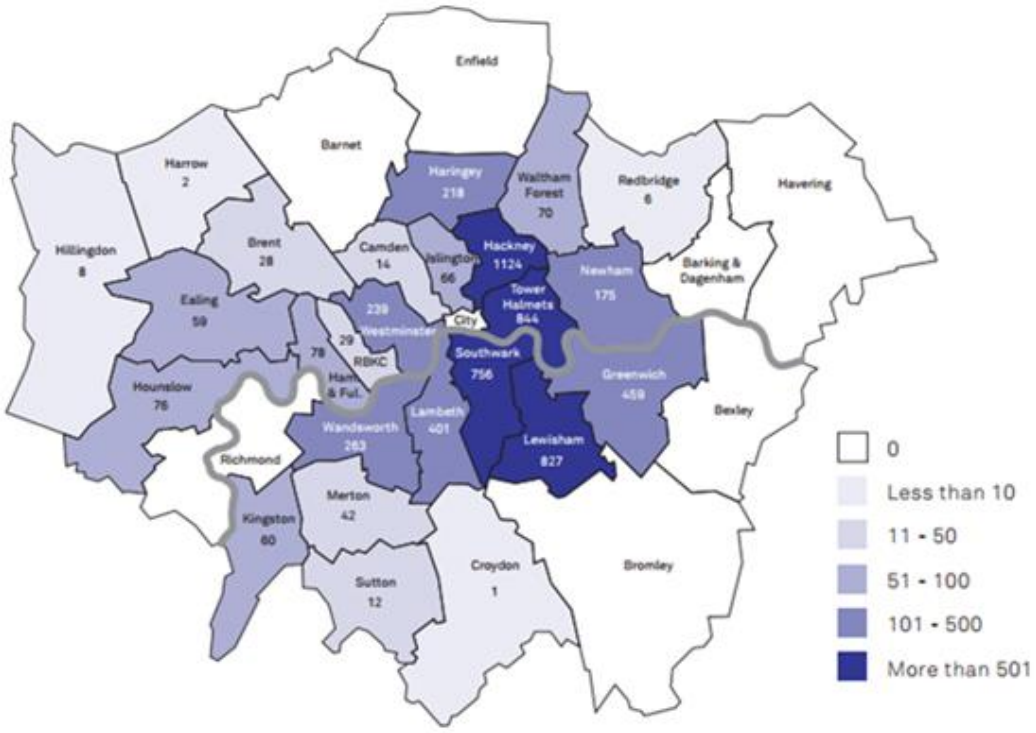
IV. Date established: Some of the studio organisations have been operating out of the same properties since for over 40 years, whilst others have only been established in the past year or so. In order to explore what effect, the maturity of the studio site

[10] Based on figures available at the start of fieldwork in 2015.

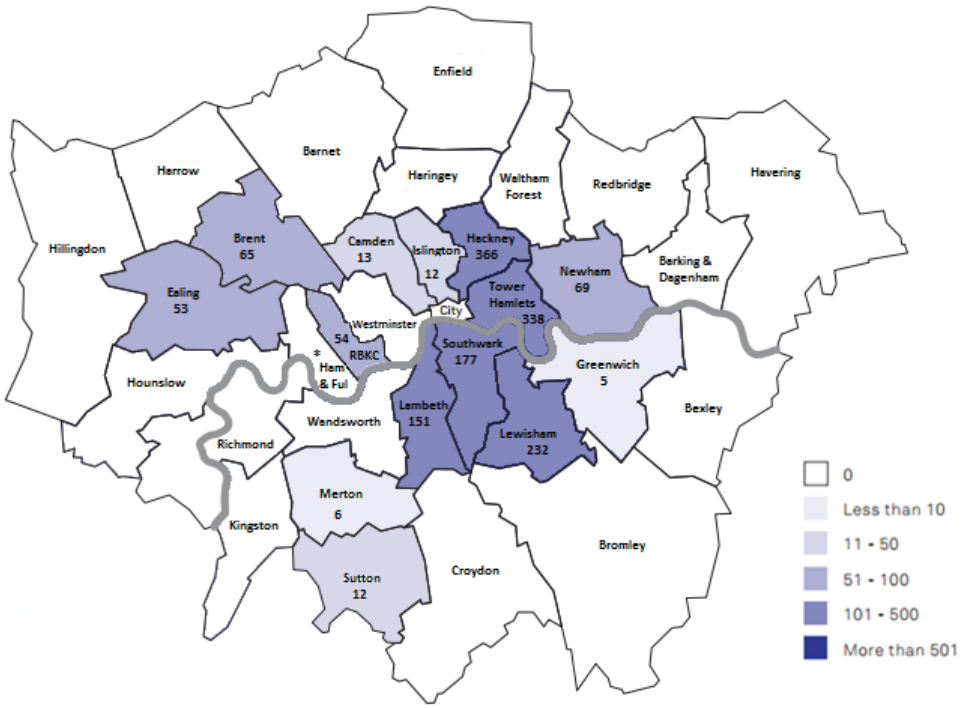
has on artist's perceptions of stability, security and its relationship with the surrounding local area, it was important to include a range of these sites.

V. Location: Site specific attributes such as past and present social and economic activities, among many other things, have been shown to have a significant influence on the ways in which people relate to and assign meaning to different sites and construct their place-based identities. Property type and former use also tend to vary with location and the different social economic activities that previously took place there (e.g. industrial studios tend to be clustered in the East End boroughs of London). The location of the studio was therefore taken to be of significance to the manner in which artists relate to and use their studio in relation to a specific locale; see figures 1-3.

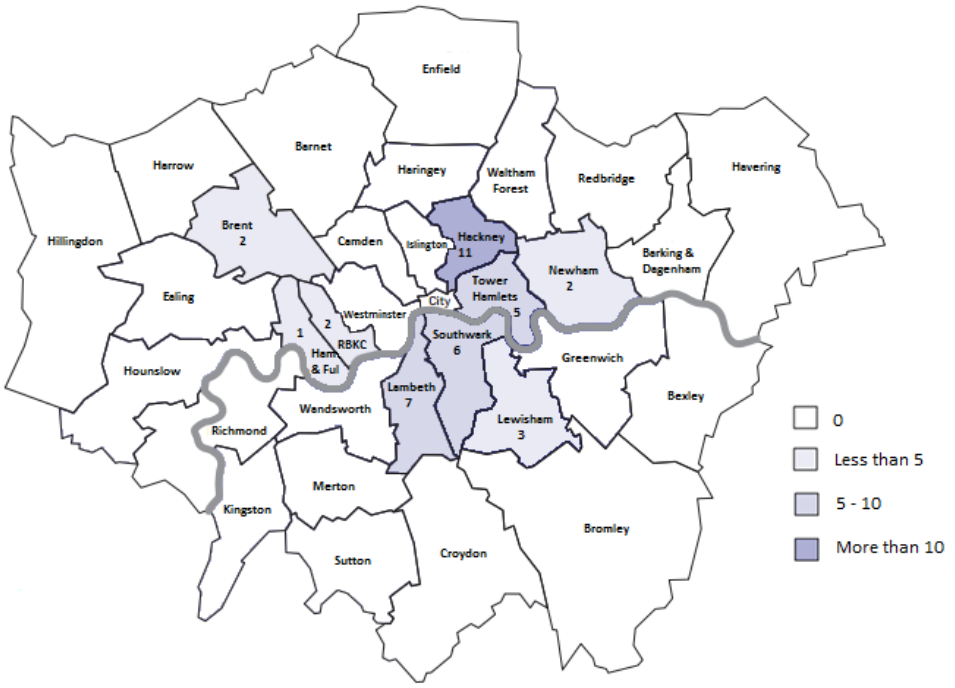
Following a detailed review of the studio properties managed by SPACE, Acme, ASC and ACAVA, it was important to ensure that the selection of artist participants allowed for a range these studio types to be included in the study.



[Figure 1. This map from 2014 shows the distribution of artist studios across 25 of the 32 boroughs of London. The map was created using data provided by 72 studio organisations in London. Image source: GLA., 2014a: 19]



[Figure 2. This map was produced for this thesis in September 2015. It shows the distribution of artist studios provided by ASC, ACAVA, Acme and SPACE at the start of the research project. The total figures include: 54 studio sites providing 1550 studios, distributed across 15 London boroughs. *The borough of Hammersmith and Fulham is home to ACAVA Hetley Road studios, but no data was available for this site. Data source: Acme, 2015; ACAVA, 2015; ASC, 2015; SPACE, 2015]



[Figure 3. This map was produced for this thesis in September 2015. It shows the distribution of artist studios/interview sites included in the DPhil fieldwork. Total figures include: 39 studios at 24 separate studio sites, distributed across 9 London boroughs]

3.3.2 Visual artists

The ambition of this thesis is to draw together a range of different perspectives, to engage with the studio's ongoing spatial production in London and the different relations bound up with this. Within this, particular emphasis is placed on the ways in which artists understand their experiences of the studio and interpret this change**.** Given the range of creative practices taking place in London some selection criteria were necessary. To be considered for the research, candidates were required to be visual artists who hold (individual or shared) studio contracts with either Acme, SPACE, ACAVA or ASC. Visual arts are a large and growing sector in London, comprised of a range of practices and material engagements, although visual artists, can be generally taken to include those working with 'painting, sculpture, the print arts, drawing, illustration, photography, textile arts, instillation, performance, digital arts, sound art, video art,

interdisciplinary arts, or any other form of expression of a similar nature' (GLA, 2014a: 14). As a group, visual artists were chosen on the grounds of the diversity of their creative practices, as well as their exposure to political economic change. According to a recent report by DACs (design and artists copyright society - a not-for-profit visual artists' rights management organisation in London), visual artists are among the lowest earners within London's creative industries, with typical earnings well below the UK national median wage. The DACS report states: 'visual artists have precarious careers, with typical earnings well below the UK national median wage of £21,320. In 2009/10, the typical photographer earned £15,000 (median), the typical illustrator earned £15,723 (median) while the typical fine artist earned only £10,000 (median)' (Kretschmer et al., 2011: 3).[11]

It was important to identify artists who would be capable of satisfying this selection criteria and open the study up to a range of different studio sites and practices. As opposed to selecting participants to represent a population, grounded theory's sampling strategies outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1997), seek the broadest range of variation within a given data source and propose that the researcher should be open to the inclusion of new participants, as new theoretical categories and paths of enquiry arise during the research process (Charmaz, 2014). In keeping with this, a combination of purposeful criterion sampling and opportunistic and snowball sampling techniques were used to locate a range of suitable field sites and individuals. Criterion sampling

[11] In 2011 the UK national average salary was £21,320/annum. The typical photographer earned £15,000/annum (median); the typical illustrator earned £15,723/annum (median) while the typical fine artist earned only £10,000/annum (median) (Kretschmer et al., 2011: 3). In 2018 the UK national average salary was £24,006/annum (ONS, 2019). There is no updated breakdown of national average salary for these different creative professions. Photographers, illustrators and fine artists are all grouped under the category of 'artists' for which average annual salary (median) is £25,632 (ONS, 2019). This does not reflect the salary variation that previous figures have demonstrated exist within this category.

consists of determining in advance certain features that differentiate the sites or participants and then making a selection based upon these criteria. This enabled an initial selection of sites and individuals which could purposefully inform and contribute to an understanding of the central issues of the study (Creswell, 2014b: 158). More opportunistic and snowball sampling techniques were used to follow up new leads and take advantage of any unexpected cases of interest as they emerged during the research process.

A source for potential participants for the research project was established prior to submitting the application for ethics approval for the research by CUREC. Following a series of phone calls and email requests, Acme and SPACE agreed to circulate my 'request for participants' email (see Appendix D) to the visual artists listed on their studio database. This allowed me to build interest in my project and select a number of participants from the responses (based on their art-practice and studio type). SPACE and Acme also provide an online directory with the names, email addresses and short descriptions of the artists currently renting studio space - this allowed me to identify and contact artists at specific sites that may not have been represented in the first round of email responses.

Artists recruited from ASC and ACAVA required greater efforts and persistence. Whilst some artists details were available online through records of their participation in past open studio events, I found that attending open studio events also helped with this. The ArtWest open studio event in 2016 was particularly instrumental in this. ArtWest is an annual open studio event where artists from across North West London, open their studios to the public for the weekend. This allowed me to introduce my work in person and exchange details with a number of artists at ACAVA. Following this, a

number of these artists put me in touch with their peers at other ACAVA sites - the more artists that I met, the more momentum the project gained in recruiting other new participants.

I am mindful here of authors who argue that there is no way of knowing when 'saturation' has been reached (Baxter and Eyles, 1997) or that such a concept is feasible given that it is always possible to generate new insights from additional material (Mason, 2010). Whatmore (2003) has also written on this in relation to 'generating materials'. Her argument is that 'data' is not 'out there' waiting to be collected, instead materials are co-generated during the research process, which makes it difficult to determine 'how much is enough' as there is no limitation to the potential data set. In selecting 42 visual artist participants, roughly divided between the four major studio groups, I have tried to maintain a balance between the intensity and extensity of the research endeavour and allow for different types of discussions between the interviews.

3.3.3 Senior cultural figures

In addition to this, my work includes representatives from two of the major studio organisations in London, as well as representatives from the city's regional governing body, the Greater London Authority (GLA). The reason for this is that we cannot understand urban artists' studios without consideration of the important role that large studio groups play within the city's creative landscape and the organisation and provision of affordable studios. Likewise, the basis for the inclusion of representatives from the GLA, was that London's regional governing authority have played a historically significant role in the early development of the city's studio sector, and continue to play a strategic role in the governing and development of creative spaces in London (Green,

1999; Moreton, 2013). To demonstrate this, in the run up to Sadiq Khan's election as Mayor of London in 2016, he made a pledge to his electorate to develop a 'Creative Infrastructure Plan' for London for 2030, which includes making provisions for a long-term supply of affordable inner-city creative workspace. It therefore seems pertinent to include representatives from the GLA in the conversation about the ways in which studios may be changing in relation to wider political economic transformations.

I contacted studio groups and the culture team at the GLA with a brief document outlining the ambitions of my work and the value of their participation to the thesis. The outcome of which is that the research includes interviews with Anna Harding, Chief Executive Officer of SPACE, and David Panton OBE, Co-Founder and Director of Acme, as well as senior members of the Greater London Authority Culture Team; including Wilf Langridge, Senior Cultural Policy Officer for Cultural Infrastructure, and Kirsten Dunne, Senior Cultural Strategy Officer. Kirsten is a particularly important figure in the GLA Culture Team. In 2014 she was the officer responsible for commissioning the '*Artists Workspace Study*'. This was the first official report to document the existing supply and current state of play for affordable studio provision for artists in London (GLA, 2014a).

3.4 Coding procedures for analysis

It is important to discuss how bias was addressed within the research. Bias has been flagged up as one of the pitfalls of the interview method. Baxter and Eyles (1997) and Crang (2002) recognise the interview's bias towards verification and its inability to develop general propositions. This mirrors broader concerns within the social sciences about researchers contriving situations for theory verification purposes, and for

pursuing their own research agendas. The methodological selection for this research - which involves the staggered unfolding of data collection and analysis, and encourages openness and flexibility - potentially exposes the research to greater research bias and presents a greater number of opportunities for the researcher to assert their own theoretical, epistemological and ontological assumptions at each stage of the research process. Despite these concerns, Butler (1990) and Rose (1997) have argued that it is hard to convincingly sustain the notion initially proposed by positivists, that the researcher might in some way be detached from their research and its outputs. Instead they contend that the researcher is always, already embedded within their work and cannot so easily be detached from it. In other words, bias is unavoidable, but it should be acknowledged. Grounded theory has a lot to offer in this respect, particularly in the way of its coding procedures.

Coding procedures have been used extensively as a method for analysing a range of research materials rigorously, methodically and transparently, albeit in a way that is more akin to an art form rather than a scientific procedure. Coding provides a framework for guiding analysis at each stage of data collection to inform the next stage of the research. Based on inductive and deductive approaches served by the purpose of axial coding (Charmaz, 2000; 2014), this opens the material up to all possible outcomes, whilst also providing ample opportunities to address some of the potential biases flagged up elsewhere by the research.

Coding involves the production of codes, concepts and themes, in which each line of 'data' is assigned a thematic category, with special attention being paid to the presence of repetitions (Glaser and Strauss, 1997). To give further detail of this; research material collected from primary sources was fully transcribed (see Appendix E), and then

subject to the first round of *open coding*. Designed to 'break open the data' (Walker and Myrick, 2006: 549), open coding involves going through the material segment by segment and extracting broad concepts which seem to 'fit' the material being extracted. In terms of this research, the identified codes were placed under 10 broad headings. After this the researcher determines if these codes appear elsewhere in the material and then elaborates their properties. As this process unfolds, broad provisional labels are gradually refined into a larger number of more specific sub-categories, which allows for more *selective coding* to proceed. In this manner, selective coding was used to elaborate and refine the 10 headings into 41 *sub-codes* or sub-categories. The sub-codes under each header are then pulled together and the content analysed for common themes. Corbin and Strauss (1990: 14-15) explain: 'as related codes evolve, they are 'densified' into more enduring categories'. The outcome of this process is a series of *linking categories* that hold the different themes and concepts together - or what otherwise might be considered the linchpin(s) of the data (Corbin and Strauss, 1990: 15).

As the relationships and patterns between these 41 sub-categories were teased out, this revealed a large amount of overlap between many of the original 10 data sets and led to the development of a smaller number of *higher order concepts* that could account for these patterns (Strauss, 1987). Further scrutiny of these concepts, enabled me to deduce four central categories around which artists' experiences of the studio hinged; and it emerged that a combination of these four categories could account for the most significant ways in which artists experience the affordable studio in relation to the broader political economic transformations taking place within the city, and its

precarities. The ambition of the four empirical chapters is to more fully develop these four central categories.

Coding procedures therefore allowed researcher biases to be addressed in that they provided different ways of exploring consistency and inconsistency across data points both within and across material sources and categories.[12] Themes emerging from each stage of coding informed the content of the next round of data-collection, allowing for themes and patterns in the fieldwork to be discussed and elaborated as and when they arose. Despite imposing a degree of structure on the research process, as a form of analysis, coding should be given more credit as the creative process that it is; particularly as it actually encouraged the processual construction of knowledge (through different inductive and deductive processes), at the same time as providing an effective check on limited or misleading data and fabricated accounts.

3.5 Ethical and responsive research

Given the methodological selection of the thesis and its qualitative methods, proactive management of ethical issues was required throughout all stages of the research and its dissemination. The research project drew upon multiple ethical guidelines to inform the different issues that were likely to arise during the fieldwork, such as the ethical research protocol set forth by the University of Oxford in conjunction with the RGS-IBG and ESRC. Following this, all participants received a full disclosure of the nature of the research and its objectives and were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study

[12] I interpret consistency to mean one line of argument maintained by the same respondent over the course of an interview, or a similar perspective or understanding expressed by multiple respondents to a particular subject matter during the fieldwork.

at any stage. Consent forms were also given prior to participation in written format via email, and again verbally at the beginning of the interviews. Given the demographic of the artists renting workspace from SPACE, Acme, ASC and ACAVA, this research did not engage with any persons under the age of 18 nor did it involve any persons who could be considered to have diminished autonomy over their actions nor easily coerced into involvement. The research was reviewed and considered to carry minimal risk to myself and to the participants. The Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) also approved the procedures of the research set out herein prior to undertaking fieldwork.

Whilst the project was not considered to be of specific therapeutic value to participants, its flexible methodological selection provided a relatively open platform for discussing experiences and concerns. As a result of this, the interviews covered a range of issues, which occasionally involved complaints and negative or controversial comments being made about studio providers or other artists. As such, the research process reflects consideration for the accountability of all of its participants, by taking special care to ensure that the material does not cause harm or reputational damage to them in any way. To ensure this, artist's names have been omitted from all interview extracts in the final copy of the thesis. All of the participants were asked to suggest a pseudonym for themselves that could be used in the write up. There were two results: participants gave the researchers a fake name which was used, or they didn't give one, whereupon one was allocated to them.

3.6 Summary

The overall purpose of the substantive chapters is to develop a new empirically grounded, spatial vocabulary for understanding the changing geographies of artist's studio in the context of contemporary London and the precarities surrounding it. I draw upon a revised grounded theory research design to help achieve this. Elements of Corbin and Strauss's (2008) approach were particularly relevant for driving forwards the different stages of data collection and informing the systematic development of ideas. For instance, the open coding of themes and relationships emerging from empirical data, involving identifying concepts and questions as they emerged, ensured that the research project developed in the direction that events and activities unfolded on the ground. This enables the research to contribute to other discussions of situated-knowledge within geography, such as Haraway (1988) and Rose (1993; 1997), who have argued that all knowledges produced during research, must be scrutinised in relation to the socio-spatial situations they were constructed in.

Further, I employ qualitative methods drawn largely from feminist and cultural geography and explore how these might be tweaked so as to better apprehend affect in the fieldwork and write up. The predominant form of inquiry and primary method for the acquisition of knowledge for this research was qualitative semi-structured interviews. Extensive interviews were conducted with artists and significant groups and individuals involved the organisation of London's affordable creative workspace. Photographs and field-diaries were also used to communicate experiences in the field, record personal accounts of research events, document the nitty-gritty details of artists'

studios and draw out some of the non-verbal, performative and 'felt' elements of the interviews.

A review of secondary material, including a range of newspaper articles and other articles, as well as archival material available online and at the Whitechapel Gallery (which is home to SPACE archives) also provided insights into the broader public context in which studios operate in London. Reports provided necessary statistical data and useful updated commentaries between various stakeholders within the studio sector. Rigorous coding procedures were then applied to all primary materials generated during fieldwork which enabled me to identify four central themes (or categories) around which artists changing experiences of the studio are hinged, and which informs the structure and development of the four empirical chapters that follow.

Chapter Four

The artist's studio and the political economy of London

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter I explore the place of the studio in the wider political economy of London. I explore the affordable artist's studio as conceived of by studio provider groups and organisations, the regional and local governments of London, city planners and private developers. I do so in order to demonstrate that the transformation of the political economy of London is affecting the space of the artist's studio in the city. In particular, I am interested in the ways in which studios are becoming increasingly situated within the city's political agenda, the effects of rapid inner-city land-use change, and the changes taking place within the urban planning system. I highlight the ways in which these transformations are taking place contemporaneously and are affecting the landscape of affordable studio provision in London; specifically, how they are affecting the organisational mechanisms used by large studio provider groups to deliver low-cost workspace and the different types of studio emerging from this.

Throughout the chapter, I foreground the issue of precarity as one that defines the organisation and provision of studio space in London. Over the last 13 years, a number of mixed-use property developments featuring purpose-designed workspace for artists have been founded in London as an alternative to the more precarious model of provision which currently dominates the city's studio sector. Currently 73% of the

studio properties provided by the four largest studio organisations in London, ASC, ACAVA, Acme and SPACE, are secured under temporary leasehold agreements, although, many are due to expire over the next five-ten years. The role of these new studio developments is to provide a low-cost and long-term alternative to meeting the growing demands for affordable artists' workspace. At the same time, these new build schemes enable private developers to gain planning permission for new development, and allow local inner-city councils to meet a series of social, economic and mixed-community objectives. I argue that this growth in new build studios is significant in two ways. Firstly, it marks the changing urban territory in which studio provider groups operate. Secondly, it represents the latest material manifestation of precarity within London's studio sector. This chapter therefore examines the variety of ways in which precarity manifests spatially and materially in relation to the artist studio and how this is changing and diversifying.

Further to dealing with the precarious analytical, administrative and property development processes through which affordable studios are delivered in London, this chapter also addresses the ways in which the artist's studio is conceptualised by the regional government, urban planners and studio provider organisations (SPACE, Acme, ACAVA and ASC). In doing so, it demonstrates the type of transitions undertaken by artist's studios as a result of the different opportunities and obstacles posed by the political economic landscape they operate in. This includes finding out how key players in the city's creative sector understand the current challenges of the studio situation and the transitions that must be made towards a more economically viable and sustainable workspace solution. Material for this chapter was gathered from a variety of sources, including the SPACE studios archives at Whitechapel Gallery in Tower

Hamlets and Acme's online archives, in addition to interviews with the CEO of SPACE and Director of Acme, and interviews with two Senior Cultural Strategy Officers Kirsten Dunne and Wilf Langridge at the Greater London Authority.

This chapter offers a thick description of the mechanisms through which studio provider groups like ASC, Acme, ACAVA and SPACE operate in London and how they must be understood on the one hand in light of political economic scholarship as responsive to their political-economic context, and on the other hand bound to the processes that are responsible for driving forwards change. It is divided into three sections. In section one, I present precarity as a central concept to the political economy of studio provision and explore what it means in relation to the artist's studio, as well as how this relationship has been recognised and given a political stage. In section two, I think about how we might begin to trace this vulnerability historically, through studio provision under the leasehold model of tenure and the temporalities it produces. In section three, I explore the growth in mixed-use studio developments since the mid-2000s and the collaborative, partnership-orientated methods they are delivered through and what these changes mean, for the ways in which sectoral precarity manifests and is expressed. It concludes with a summary of how the changing geographies of the artist's studio are both symptomatic and expressive of its position in London and the political transformations taking place within that city.

4.1 Political economy of studio provision

> 'I think the value of studios has been a lot more concentrated in the last ten, or maybe fifteen years, because of property prices. I only think they have received attention recently, because they have been under this pressure and I think most people recognise that fifteen years ago there wasn't the kind of crisis in creative workspace there is now in Greater London.'

(Wilf Langridge, cultural strategy officer, GLA - Interviewed 07/11/16)

Within the political portfolio of London, recognition and acceptance of the wider value of artists' studios has been contemporaneous with a better developed understanding of the precarious territories and spaces they occupy and operate in. This section on the political economy of studio provision explores the transformations that have prompted a re-valuation of artists workspace. It does so by bringing current work being undertaken by studio provider groups and organisations, into conversation with literature on the enterprise culture and the creative industries. It also draws on literature addressing the growth of precarious ways of living and working in cities in the Global North, like London, for considering the wider causes and context of the uncertainties and instabilities that studios face. In doing so, the aim is to present the valued yet precarious status of the artist's studio, and explore the conditions under which it has grown to prominence in London's political agenda as a site worthy of investment and support.

The provision of affordable workspace first gathered significant support in London during the 1980s, in line with the Conservative Government's ideological commitment to delivering an enterprise culture and developing a knowledge-based economy (Ferm, 2014). Conceptually, the enterprise culture has been extremely malleable to different political agendas, although it is generally taken to describe the process of growing a business or having a set of skills that are in some way expressed as 'entrepreneurial' (Greene et al., 2008). Under these conditions, small, independently owned businesses or organisations which were orientated towards (profit or loss) risk-taking and who compete by developing new ideas and cultural products in order to

survive, were seen as favourable to economic growth. The Thatcher administration of the 1980s, therefore placed a heavy focus on developing policies and agendas to increase the number of new small businesses in the UK economy. Initially, Montgomery (2007) notes, this involved identifying the problems restricting the growth of entrepreneurial activity. The Conservative government found that a limited number of affordable premises for hosting small business start-ups was one of the primary obstacles. Generally, start-up businesses did not have the finance nor the resources to commit to a long-term lease and often private developers displayed a reluctance towards working with small businesses, because of high property management costs and the insecurity of seeing returns on any investment (Ferm, 2014). Responding to this property-focused obstacle, in the late 1980s, the Conservative administration established the Greater London Enterprise Board to manage a new model of workspace that would be capable of offering low-rents and flexible in-out clauses for small businesses. Despite not directly targeting artist's workspace, the growing public sector interest in developing an affordable workspace infrastructure for hosting entrepreneurial activity was a significant result for the studio sector - it marked the first move in the direction towards recognising the formerly hidden value of small-scale innovative and creative activity to the political economy.

By the 1990s, the acknowledgement of the creative and cultural industries as an economic sector meant that public sector concern for the provision of workspace for entrepreneurial activities had expanded to include the provision of affordable workspace for hosting a more varied range of creative activities, including those of artists (Ferm, 2014). Building on the successes of the enterprise culture, the term 'cultural industries' was first taken up in the 1980s by policy analysts developing

'London's industrial strategy' at the Greater London Council, to denote the processes and products of the economy following the rapid de-industrialisation of the UK's major cities. In the time since, the creative and cultural industries have been better understood as 'those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property' (DCMS, 2001). Between the early 1990s and early 2000s, the creative industries achieved remarkable growth in London, and were seen as the key drivers of innovation and economic development (see Florida, 2002) and since 1998, they have been recognised in official UK government data on economic growth. Recent figures suggest that 1 in 6 new jobs created in the UK each year are in the creative industries (GLA, 2014a: 6). Others have calculated that the sector currently provides around 800,000 jobs in the capital (Mayor of London, 2015a; 2015b; GLA, 2015). In 2015, the Gross Value Added (GVA) of the creative industries in London was estimated at £42.0 billion, accounting for an estimated 11.1% of London's total GVA and just under half of the UK creative industries in total (GLA, 2018).

As the multiplier effects of the creative industries on economic development have been demonstrated, policy makers have set about trying to understand the trends and needs of the sector at a variety of national, regional and local scales. One of the outcomes of this ongoing quantification is that the creative industries sector has been divided into a number of smaller and more manageable sub-sectors (GLA, 2017).[13] It is within the sub-sector of the 'visual arts' that the contribution of artists and their

[13] The GLA (2017) report outlines the GVA (gross value added) for the different creative industries groups in London and the rest of the UK in 2015. These groups or sub-sectors include; advertising and marketing; architecture; crafts; design (product, graphic and fashion design); film, TV, video, radio and photography; IT, software and computer services; publishing; museums, galleries and libraries; music, performing and visual arts (2017: 7).

workspaces to London's creative economy has been recognised and has received greater attention within the new urban political economy focus on culture and creative-led economic growth.

Coinciding with the growth of London's creative industries has been a recognition of the economic value of the visual arts including artists' studios contribution to the city's economy, social and community development, and inner-city well-being (Capital Studios, 2006a; Landry, 2008; also see Chapter Two, section two). In an interview Kirsten Dunne, Senior Cultural Strategy Officer at the GLA, explained,

> 'What we talk a lot about now with the London Mayor is access to culture and that is where the community outreach comes in and those things that might spark younger people to get involved in the arts in some ways.' (Interviewed 07/11/16)

As a consequence, artists' studios have become entangled with the processes of urban regeneration and place-making effort, reflecting a broader tradition in contemporary political ideology of pairing economic growth with social development e.g. for growing mixed-communities (Warwick, 2006). Kirsten went on to explain that the conversation regarding the contribution of artists' studios to regeneration and place-making, had in more recent years moved from 'hard' social and economic measures, to recognise that they have a much more intrinsic and deep-rooted value in the urban landscape. She noted,

> 'We talk about character, we are trying to more and more, kind of say, what studios contribute to the character of an area. People talk about place making and what does that mean? And the vibrancy and creativity of a place is absolutely about the character of that place, there's a reason people go to Peckham, there is a reason that people want to live there. Art and artists add something to the everyday experience of that place, just like Hannah Barry's gallery adds something to that place and Antony Gormley's bollards on the roads in Peckham add something.' (Interviewed 07/11/16)

Although what precisely that 'something' constitutes, was not clear in the interview. To demonstrate this, when I asked Kirsten to explain further, she said: 'we are commissioning reports that ask just that and to gain some tangible evidence of what studios *do* for the city. We know they [studios] add something because you can feel it, but we now need hard evidence to support the case for keeping artists workspace in London.'

Bound up with the emergence of the enterprise culture and more recently, the creative industries sector, the work of artists has been reconfigured and opened up to include a range of social, cultural and economic activities. Following this, the presence of artists in urban areas has been celebrated and revered in a number of significant ways. Attempts are now being made to harness the transformative potential of artists, which is being calibrated within the political agenda as a mode of action and catalyst for change. The outcome of this has been the growth in artist's workspace being funded by regional and local authorities and other public institutions on the grounds that they will 'do' good social and economic work in a range of urban settings.

4.1.1 Studio sector advocacy

Interviews with the CEO of SPACE and Director of Acme and with cultural strategy advisors at the GLA reveal that the work undertaken by a number of studio organisations has also been instrumental in demonstrating this wider social and cultural value to the city. Senior Cultural Strategy Officer at the GLA, Wilf Langridge, explained,

> 'The GLA are recognising they need to have policies that are reflected around London and support the sector and that recognition has come from working groups, hosted by workspace providers, who are being more vocal, and certainly more professional, in proving their value.' (Interviewed 07/11/16)

In 1999, SPACE organised the first 'UK studio provider's conference' which brought together studio groups from across the city to discuss their shared work and ambitions. Given the success of these talks and the economic and political interest in uniting a voice for the sector, in 2003 Arts Council England - a major UK authority in cultural infrastructure planning - funded three further conferences; 'Creating Space' which was hosted at the Tate Modern in London, and 'Opening doors' and 'Making space' which were hosted a week apart, at Persistence Works in Sheffield. The major outcome of these events was something called 'Capital Studios', a new London artists' studios development programme which ran from 2005-2007. The ambition of the programme was to define the work of studio organisations and produce hard evidence that the work that they do goes beyond providing rentable workspace exclusively for artists. David Panton, Director of Acme, explains that,

> 'Through the threats of development and regeneration the largest arts organisations have grown together. We formed something called Capital Studios. We, SPACE and ACAVA decided that we needed to fast-track ways in which we could talk to local developers and the government. At Acme, it came about through a couple of national conferences at the Tate and another in Middlesbrough, where we were really trying to show the strength of the artist's studio sector. We needed to stand and be counted and show that it is not just one little organisation but that it's actually quite big. So Capital studios came about as a technique through which to demonstrate what we do, more broadly speaking, show our strength and through that strength be in a position for Local government or whatever, to say actually we do need something like this, we have got to look after this sector and protect it in some way.' (Interviewed 14/09/16)

As the Capital Studios programme drew to a close in 2007, Arts Council England launched a replacement advisory programme called the National Federation of Artist's Studio Providers (NFASP, 2010a; 2010b). For a number of years NFASP provided a framework for consolidating the different types of activities and work that was taking place across the sector. David Panton explained that NFASP was also for a short time

strategically important for demonstrating the scale of the sector and for providing a platform for studio groups to express their concerns about the growing obstacles affordable studio provision faced. Further to these efforts to communicate value and risk, Acme, SPACE, ASC and ACAVA produce annual performance reports which, among other things, demonstrate these organisations' shared commitment to outreach work. The annual report published by Acme studios in 2010 states that over 50% of all known studio buildings in London have public spaces for exhibition and/or host community outreach and education programmes (2010a: 11). A good example of this is the work undertaken by ACAVA. Since 1994 ACAVA have ran community projects such as 'Artspace' which provides projects for people experiencing mental health and substance misuse problems, and 'Education Business Services International' which involves hosting art workshops in schools for young people considering their career options (ACAVA, 2017). Similarly, Sarah Harding, CEO of SPACE explains,

> 'As an organisation SPACE is an arts and educational charity and we run a load of programmes that are about engaging local residents with the arts. Since the start of SPACE, we have always had a stronger educational remit. We are very proactive in developing programmes to help support people in being creativity and extending that creativity to other residents in the local area.' (Interviewed 09/12/16)

It therefore appears that a programme of evaluation, measurement and calculation grounded in the concept of 'benefit' has been applied to artist studios, as the result of two primary factors. First, a changing political ideology, specifically one that recognises the value and contribution of visual arts to social and economic development and to urban place-making. Second, advocacy work undertaken by studio organisations to demonstrate their value. The outcome has been a situation in which artists' studios are widely perceived as worthy of public investment, policy support and preservation

because of their ability to create 'public benefit' (Acme, 2006a). Although, it is not just the public sector who have come to recognise their value, the private and commercial sectors are also taking an increasingly positive view of them (discussed in greater detail in section two of this chapter). Arguably, the studio has therefore come to represent something more inclusive and meaningful to a wider range of groups and individuals, than just a physical space for artists to work in. As a site that has become endowed with value and benefit, the studio is also a powerful representation and reflection of the political, economic and cultural aspirations of London.

This section seems to offer quite a positive picture of studio space, but my findings suggest that the picture of studio provision in London is not quite as straightforward as this. For instance, another way to interpret these findings is in relation to the idea of institutions intervening in creative spaces for the purposes of city building. As discussed in Chapter Two (section two) Mould (2015) takes issue with the ways in which creative activities and spaces have been co-opted by urban governments into the urban political agenda in order to fabricate creative neighbourhoods or add to the desirability of urban areas. He argues that this results in the creative qualities of the space and activity being hollowed out or displaced from an area altogether. In view of Mould's (2015) work, another way to interpret this section, is that state policies have intervened in the types of creative activities (and spaces) already happening within London in order to promote other goals such as economic growth and urban redevelopment and ultimately increase profits, and that these types of interventions have had some unintended consequences for the security and longevity of artists workspace in the city.

4.1.2 Studio space and urban precarity

Accompanying this growing political interest in what artists' studios can 'do', has been recognition of the precarious territories that they operate in. Cultural strategy officer Wilf Langridge explains,

> 'The real concern at the moment is London losing its studios and its artists, because how can London continue to be seen as a 'creative city' if there are no longer any artists left in it?

A growing body of geographical literature on urban precarity since the late-2000s, assert that cities are the principle sites of new social and economic practices associated with the production of precarious work and home lives. This has led to geographers like Vasudevan (2015), Ferreri et al. (2017) and Gill and Pratt (2008) as well as Butler (2009; 2011), calling for the development of a new 'critical geography of precarity' that recognises precarity as an inherent dimension of the political economy and examines the city as a laboratory for new precarious ways of being-doing and working-living. These literatures can aid understanding of the vulnerabilities and risks London's studios are facing and which were evidenced by the empirical materials that I gathered.

As stated in the literature review in Chapter Two (section three), the terms precarity and precariousness have tended to converge around two primary meanings - insecure labour and insecure housing. Whilst the causes of this 'double precarity' are multiple, in many Western cities is has been largely attributed to a widespread neoliberal economic agenda that has produced new forms of labour organised around the individual, as opposed to for instance, the firm (Desmond and Gershenson, 2016: 48). Mould (2014) looks at the work profiles of freelancers in cities like London - a style of work that has become typical among the creative industries and that is characterised

by flexible and unpredictable labour regimes; such as ad-hoc working hours and contract or project-based work. Under these conditions, individuals experience a disproportionate amount of socio-economic uncertainty as a result of low or unpredictable pay and part-time work or second jobbing. The knock-on effect is that it produces a demand for low-cost, flexible, rentable work and living space in urban areas that are already suffering from high demand, as a result of urban population growth (see also: Banki, 2013; Pasquinelli and Sjöholm, 2015).

In light of this, the 'risks' facing artists' studios appear to oscillate between three inter-related causes. The first relates to consistent levels of demand. The high and continuous occupancy rates and long waiting lists for studios with SPACE, ASC, ACAVA and Acme that were documented throughout this research, indicate consistently high levels of demand. In an interview with visual artist Hannah Stuart (who rents an Acme studio), she explained,

> 'In London you can be on a waiting list for a studio for years. Say you want one [a studio] in a particular building, you might be waiting forever for someone to leave, because most organisations don't specify how long you can be there for and once someone's got a studio, they don't want to let go of it. So, the turnover is really slow.' (Interviewed 22/06/16)

The GLA estimates that 3500 artists are currently on studio waiting lists in London (GLA, 2014a: 8). Further to this, they also estimate that 35,000 students graduate from art and design colleges in London each year (Mayor of London, 2014a: 6). This, combined with high occupancy rates and long waiting lists, gives an insight into the sustained pressure on studio provision.

The second cause relates to affordability. Statistically, artists are among the lowest earners in the creative industries (Kretschmer et al., 2011 for DACS)[14] and rely upon there being a supply of low-cost workspace in which to conduct their practice. The average rent across the top 20 largest studio providers is £13.73 per sq. ft/year (GLA, 2014a: 7). Acme are slightly below this average at £11.86 per sq. ft/year, whilst at SPACE, depending on its size and location a studio can be between £11-£18.90 per sq. ft/year (Acme, 2018; SPACE, 2018); compounding the challenge of affordable workspace is the overall cost of living in London. In an interview with GLA cultural strategy officer, Wilf Langridge explained, 'everything is getting more expensive in London and artists earnings don't necessarily reflect that. It all adds to the strain of affording studio rent on top of everything else.' (Interviewed 07/11/19)

The third cause relates to insecurity of tenure. As a result of consistent levels of high demand for low-cost workspace, in order to grow supply whilst keeping costs low, the majority of properties managed by studio organisations are on rented or otherwise licenced terms**.** This has generated a sectoral dependency on fluctuations in the property market to produce under-used and low-cost workspace for studio organisations to lease. Increasing land values across London, particularly as a result of residential development, therefore places a large number of studios under threat, particularly as studio organisations are not always best equipped to negotiate rent reviews and lease renewals to secure their premises. The '*Artist's Workspace Study*' published in 2014 by the Mayor of London expresses this precarity in numerical terms,

[14] See chapter three, section three for a breakdown of artists earnings.

as an expected loss of 3,000 artist studios from the capital over a five-year period between 2014 and the end of 2019 (GLA, 2014a).

4.2 Studio provision under leasehold tenure

> 'A third of our buildings are freehold and the rest are largely leasehold. Obviously, everybody would like to own their premises to provide long-term stability.'
>
> (Anna Harding, CEO of SPACE - Interviewed 09/12/16)

Whilst it is known that the affordable workspace sector occupies properties with a range of tenures, the most common type since 1968 has been on rented or otherwise licenced terms (GLA, 2014a; 2014b). Even among the four largest groups in London, ASC, ACAVA, Acme and SPACE, security of tenure is a concern. 73% of their combined property portfolio in London operates on leasehold terms, with only 27% of their properties permanently secured either by freehold acquisition or secured long-term as part of a new build planning development.[15] Broken down, leaseholds account for 86% of ASC's London based studio properties, 84% of ACAVA's,[16] 79% of SPACE's and 33.3% of Acme's. Over the last two years (2017-2018) London's oldest studio organisations SPACE and Acme, who began their life in the city's industrial East End with the support of, what was formerly the Greater London Council (hereinafter referred to as the GLC)[17] celebrated their fiftieth and forty-fifth anniversaries respectively, at a time when the

[15] Figures for studio count in 2019.

[16] Figures for ACAVA vary with data sources from 84% to 94%.

[17] The Greater London Council (or GLC) was disbanded in 1986 under instruction from central Government. Following a local referendum in 2000 the Greater London Authority (or GLA) was established to replace the administrative work of the GLC.

city's leading model of studio provision appears to be in the throes of a major transition. This section examines the relationship between the longstanding uses of leasehold tenures for securing a provisional supply of artists' studios and the increasingly precarious situation this model of workspace provision places artists' studios in.

Since the late 1960s there has been a significant growth in the number of studio groups and organisations in London providing low-cost workspace for artists to rent. In what might be considered, the 'early years' for organised studio provision, 1968-1974, there were two major organisations, SPACE and Acme (Archer, 2001). Laying down their roots in the industrial East End[18] of London, they kick-started what would soon become a city-wide trend of artists renting disused and semi-derelict space, as an affordable solution to their workspace needs (Green, 1999; 2001). Shortly after registering as limited companies, under the recommendation of the GLC, SPACE and Acme, established themselves as registered charities. This move placed them in a more favourable position to begin negotiating rental agreements on properties directly owned by the GLC (Green, 1999). Following this, the two studio organisations established an arrangement by which leased empty and disused properties often in inner-city areas worst affected by industrial decline, for next-to-nothing. With the GLC gaining in return a form of informal security on properties that would otherwise be susceptible to squatting and decline. In a personal interview with David Panton, Director of Acme, explained,

> 'East London was a disaster, everyone else found it the most appalling problem, but Acme thought corr yeh! Can we have the whole house for a pound? And the GLC or local authorities would say, yeah course get on with it and we'd rent it for a peppercorn rate, and it gave us a lot of freedom.' (Interviewed 14/09/16)

[18] Whilst there are no official boundaries of the 'East End', it is commonly taken as the area of East London and the London Docklands, including the modern boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Hackney.

In legal parlance, a 'peppercorn rate' refers to a very small payment being made to satisfy the conditions for creating a legal contract and for enforcing the terms of a lease. In Acme's archives, the use of peppercorn rents and the special relationship with the GLC is particularly well documented. In 1972 the GLC first transferred two shops in Bow, in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, to Acme for a fixed period of 21 months. One year on, having recognised the potential for artists to keep otherwise disused properties in circulation and prevent them from such problems as decline and dereliction or squatting, the GLC transferred another 76 houses into their responsibility (Archer, 2001; Acme, 2013). In the years that followed, increasingly large numbers of houses were let to Acme on short-term leases as low-cost living accommodation and workspace for artists (Green, 2001). In a personal interview David Panton, with whom fellow art student Jonathon Harvey founded Acme in 1972, said 'the houses were someone else's cast offs and that's what happened with us in East London, the GLC owned all of these properties and didn't know what to do with them.' Four years prior to this, SPACE studios had also secured a number of warehouse properties in St Katherine's Docks in the central London Docklands area, under similar leasehold agreements with the GLC.[19]

By the end of 1974, a number of smaller independent groups, having emulated SPACE and Acme's strategy of occupying former light industrial properties, brought the total number of managed artists' studios in London to 350 (Green, 2001: 22). This model of flexible workspace occupation was colloquially referred to during the interviews with cultural strategy advisors at the GLA, as the 'borrowed infrastructure model' or

[19] Many of these transfers were part-funded by the Arts Council Great Britain (since 1994 Arts Council England or ACE). At the time the Arts Council was highly instrumental in providing small conversion grants for making these industrial spaces usable once again.

'meanwhile model'. Both of these terms invoke a sense of the unstable and temporal nature of properties supplied under leasehold tenure, and stress that this mechanism is only a stopgap solution to accessing low-cost workspace in otherwise unaffordable areas of the city, as opposed to a more permanent answer to the issue of artists studio needs.

4.2.1 Land-use change

It would seem that the initial success of this form of direct workspace provision and of the leasehold model of tenure was highly reflective of the basic condition of the property market at the time. During the post-war era there was widespread public ownership of land in London. This, combined with a crisis in spatial production (where supply far exceeded demand), meant that property transfers, such as these between the regional government and studio organisations, could take place with few bureaucratic obstacles (Archer, 2001; Clark, 2004; Vasudevan, 2015). The pattern emerging from Acme and SPACE's archival records is therefore that the large-scale and long-term vacancy of space, left over from London's industrial decline, provided a relatively secure base for artists in the mid-1960s and early 1970s. The production of disused space is tightly bound to the cycle of land-use change and can be analysed as part of the urban development process, with its temporal and spatial fluctuations revealing both opportunities for studio development and the sectoral precarities produced through it (Vasudevan, 2015). We might therefore best consider studio provision through the borrowed infrastructure model, in relation to the broader rhythms of urban land-use change and land-rent change; both of which, Ley (2003),

Landry (2008) and Low and Smith (2006) argue, are central organising concepts of the political economy.

Eric Clark (2004) has suggested that the built environment is not without its own set of rhythms and has argued, that despite their robust and stable appearance, buildings are punctuated by the rhythmic flux and flow of capital, investment and disinvestment. More specifically, he asserts that these rhythms and movements are conducted by changes in land-use and land-rent. In the rent-gap literatures (see Clark, 1995; Ley, 1996) land-rent is described as the regulator of flows of labour and capital applied to the built environment and is an important mechanism for connecting societal rhythms at various scales (Clark, 2004: 150-155). According to these literatures land-rent goes through different cycles of increase and decrease in certain areas across the city, in relation to the size of the rent-gap. Clark (2004) has described the rent-gap as the difference between actual land-rent and potential land-rent, which corresponds with the different types and volumes of capital investment fixed to a specific site, for example;

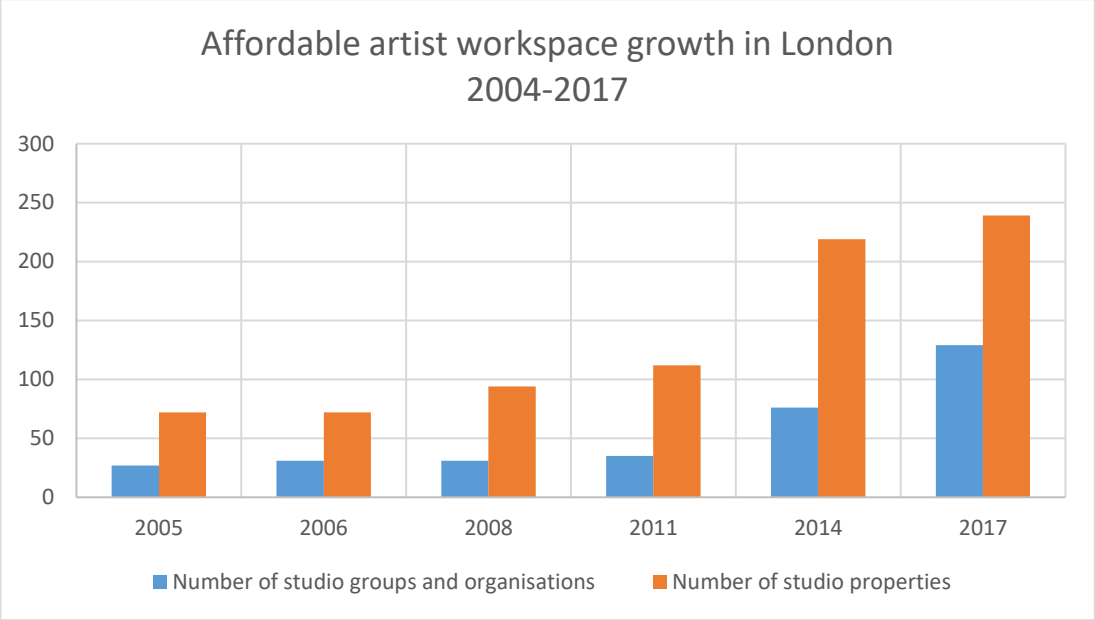
> 'As a regulator of flows of labour and capital applied to land, in agriculture and in building, land rent has been a central concept of the political economy from its beginnings over three centuries ago… (it is) a mechanism connecting societal rhythms at various time scales, from daily rhythms geographically orchestrated in land-use patterns, to the long-term cycles of urban development and redevelopment' (2014: 147).

The interplay between actual and potential land-rent organises and shapes the cycle of investment and disinvestment in the urban landscape by highlighting the areas of highest value and best use. Land-rent therefore provides a synchronic comparison across spaces with differences in capital investment in terms of normal and above normal rates (Lefebvre, 1996). It could therefore be argued that the early production of

artists' studios in London is historically bound up within this economic urban ballet that takes place between different rent rhythms and cycles of investment. It emerges that early studio provider groups may have tailored their model of workspace provision to fit around and utilise the different spaces produced by these urban cycles. For instance, by operating out of the disused properties found in the landscapes of decline that had been left over from these processes, studio groups were able to access property at below-market rates in areas of the city where the rent-gap had not yet been realised. Phillip Xie (2015) in his work on industrial heritage and tourism notes 'old factory spaces emerged as a prime real estate for artists, deriving their appeal from the open spaces, lowered rent and authentic aesthetics' (2015: 111).

By 1998, due to the widespread success of the leasehold model of tenure, Green (2001) reported that there were 40 studio properties being run by independent groups in London in addition to the 22 already being managed by SPACE and Acme (2001: 116). By 2006, the Capital Studio's program (a London artist's studio development programme led by Acme and part funded by Arts Council England), had reported 27 registered studio organisations, managing 72 buildings for over 2000 artists in London (Capital studios, 2006: 7). By 2010 this figure had risen to 35 groups operating 112 buildings (NFASP, 2010a: 1). By 2014 the figure had grown to 76 organisations operating 219 properties, providing studios for an average 8,600 artists in the capital (GLA, 2014a: 15). And by 2017 the figure had grown again to 129 organisations operating 239 studio properties (GLA, 2018). In a personal interview with Senior Cultural Strategy Officer at the Greater London Authority, Kirsten Dunne stated that this is roughly where the figure for London still stands (see figure 4).

The wider implication of this figure is that these 76 studio groups have largely grown around one model of studio provision and rely on leasehold tenure to gain access to properties which they can then rent to artists at cheap rates. Any challenges that arise around the leasehold model are therefore felt widely and deeply across the studio sector.



[Figure 4. A bar graph showing the growth in the number of artist studio organisations and studio properties in London between 2004 and 2017. Data was not available for regular intervals. The graph was created using composite data from a number of sources: Acme, 2005; 2006c; NFASP, 2008; 2011; GLA, 2014a; GLA, 2018]

4.2.2 Changing economies and urban structure

Operating in the gaps in the urban landscape left over by urban change, early studio provision in London appears to have been specifically aligned to the rhythms of disinvestment and to low-cost properties they provisionally provide in areas worst affected by land-rent change. But, whereas on the one hand these spatial fluctuations have revealed an opportunity for studio development and sectoral growth, on the other hand, they have also revealed the precarity of the artists' studios provided by this method.

As new channels of investment enter the urban landscape and the potential land-value of certain urban areas is realised by investors and developers, local property prices and ground rents increase. It has been well documented in gentrification literatures that certain types of socio-economic activity can only withstand so much rent-increase before they are forced to relocate (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Clark, 2004). As studio organisations are forced to compete with developers for the same space, this has produced the well-known pattern of artists moving from site-to-site across the city in search of latest landscapes of decline to have been left over from the land-rent cycle. David Panton, Director of Acme, explains,

> 'We have moved many, many times into different parts of London, because it was the bit that someone had forgotten about, because it was cheap. So West London in the sixties. Chelsea then becomes ridiculously expensive. Then East London, which everyone at the time found really horrifying and we go great! No one else wants it, we can we have some of that!' (Interviewed 14/09/16)

In recent years the forces of the property market, shaping the landscape of studio provision in London, have been compounded by a growth in the number of properties being leased from private landlords. This has to be understood in the context of the stock transfer from the public to the private sector. By the turn of the 1980s, due to a global recession, perceived public failure of the welfare state and an aggressive marketing campaign by the Thatcher administration, neoliberal free-market ideologies were gaining widespread prominence in the UK and London economies (Greene et al., 2008). During the same period of time the role of the market and the private sector rose to prominence for developing property, allocating resources and driving forwards economic growth (Kemp and Keoghan, 2001; Lees, 2014; Watt, 2009). As part of this transfer of responsibility to the private sector, local government authority finances faced major cuts and large portions of publicly owned land and properties were sold off

to private sector buyers. Compounding this effect, over the last decade, as a result of major cuts to public spending since the 2008 financial crash and 2010 spending review, public sector spending has been rolled back. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, driven by reductions to central government funding to local authorities, there has been a 20% reduction in spending by local authorities in England between 2009 and 2010 and again in 2014-2015. And, between 2010 and 2015, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) reported that total spending by councils in England on 'the arts and cultural development and support' had suffered a 16.6% reduction (New Local Government Network - Harvey, 2016: 7-9). Kirsten Dunne explained that as a result of these cuts, 'the pressure has been enormous for local authorities to kind of divest themselves of stuff they own. To sell it, or monetarise it in some way, to pay for the resources they need to provide and I think some of that pressure has also been on the GLA and the properties they own.' (Interviewed 07/12/16)

Since the turn of the 21st century, cuts to public spending and the decline in publicly owned properties in London, have stimulated the gradual movement away from public sector direct provision and funding to place greater onus on the private sector to deliver development, infrastructure and studio services. This has resulted in a greater number of studio organisations negotiating leases for properties owned by profit-oriented private and commercial landlords. I found that the growing presence of the private sector in the apparatus of studio provision, has produced a range of ambivalent experiences for studio organisations. It has enabled studio groups like Acme, SPACE, ASC and ACAVA to continue their work and provide a supply of different workspaces, but, it has also raised concerns about the security of their studios (Kemp, 2011).

Without the GLC providing a buffer against land-rent change, the growing presence of private landlords has led to a greater exposure of artists' studios to the fluctuations of the city's rapidly changing property market. It has been well-documented in a range of gentrification literatures (see Ley, 2003; Lees, 2000), that private sector landlords are orientated towards pursuing the most profitable uses for their property. In regard to artists' studios in areas undergoing new investment and redevelopment, this has led to landlords not renewing leases with studio groups or terminating them early so as to pursue new development opportunities. The uncertainty that this produces for artists' studios is best illustrated by a short case-study of the events that took place a few years ago at ASC's Stockwell Road studios in Brixton (figure 5).[20]



[Figure 5. ASC's Stockwell Road studios in Brixton. Photo credit: ASC, 2019]

ASC's Stockwell Road studios are situated opposite Brixton's well-known O2 Academy, on the top floor of a three-story building that was formerly the local housing

[20] Details of this event are not available online and exact dates were not given during the interviews.

benefits offices. Whilst the lower two floors continue to be rented by the benefits agency, ASC have converted the top floor into 40 artists' studios. I interviewed three artists at this site and during the interviews they explained that a few years ago, having received an offer from a potential developer to turn the studios into residential use, ASC, who lease the floor under a rolling contract with the landlord, were asked to vacate the property. The artists were given a month's notice for artists to pack up their studios and gather their belongings**.** But just hours before the deadline for the move, the developers retracted their offer and ASC were told that they could stay. Jasper Lewis, recounts the story of artists being told that they should unpack their things and continue as before;

> 'Just before I moved here several years ago, this whole floor of studios was cleared out and it was going to be sold and literally two hours before, they said, oh no it's not going through… It's frightening, it's horrific, but unfortunately you kind of get used to it in a weird way and you try your best not to think about it. Losing space can be really traumatic, I mean, I think it's messed everybody up.' (Interviewed 20/07/16)

Will, also explained,

> 'The studio is not fixed, because the contract we sign is for a limited time. So, I think ASC managed to secure a contract for another two years or so, but that means in another two years they might kick us out, like they tried to before. So, who knows, I don't feel secure, I wish I could afford to buy a studio.' (Interviewed 14/07/16)

The case of Stockwell Road demonstrates how private landlords, whose activities are primarily orientated towards profit-making, shape the market for studio space. Because of the lack of security for studios provided under this type of tenure arrangement, the presence and provision of studio space is often dependent upon the landlord's decisions about development.

4.2.3 Permitted development rights

Compounding this issue of unpredictable landlords, Edensor (2010a) suggests that cycles of investment and the urban land-rent cycle are speeding up, which translates to a shorter window of opportunity for studio groups to lease space at a low-rate. Edensor (2010a) demonstrates that urban activities and movements are moving at a greater pace.[21] He argues that investment cycles and product lifecycles are shorter and just-in-time delivery is now the most prevalent mode of production in the post-industrial city. Included in this change, he also notes that a heightened competition for urban space is speeding up the pace of inner-city re-development and re-branding strategies. This translates to a shorter gap between the period of urban decline and disinvestment, and new channels of investment entering the landscape (Edensor, 2010a; Harvey, 1989). For studio organisations, like Acme, SPACE, ASC and ACAVA who rely on their being a supply of cheap property to lease, this translates to fewer opportunities to secure affordable rates before the landlord performs a rent-review or opts to put the property to a more profitable use. Director of Acme, David Panton, explains,

> 'Ineluctably over the year's studios have become more and more expensive as property in London ceases to be redundant and not needed, it becomes much more sought after. So, organisations are left with a smaller window of opportunity [in which to rent and occupy cheap space].' (Interviewed 14/09/16)

Contributing to this quickening pace of change is the growing ease and flexibility of inner-city conversions. In 2013, the UK government introduced a temporary planning measure to facilitate the conversion of an oversupply of a particular type of space into residential use through permitted development rights. These new rights build upon the housing development agendas of the 1990s and, essentially enable developers to

[21] See also, Harvey (1989) on the speed up of flows of capital.

convert former offices and other workspaces into residential property without having to go through the conventional planning procedure. In 2015, justified as a solution to the city's housing crisis, this measure was made permanent (DCLG, 2015). Between April 2015 and March 2016, 189,650 dwellings were added to the housing stock in England, up 11% on the year before (DCLG, Housing Statistical Release, 2016); and the number of new build properties rose by 8,860 units to 163,940. But, the most marked increase, was in 'change of use', with 30,600 units being converted into residential use, compared with 20,650 the year before. Of this figure from 2016, 12,824 represented office buildings being converted into residential flats (DCLG, 2016: 5). Among this frenzy of conversion activity, a number of former-office buildings have been re-vamped into residential apartments. Among London's four largest studio groups, after industrial/factory space, office space is a common property type; for example Acme's Carlew House, SPACE's Arlington studios, ACAVA's Park Royal studios and ASC's Bond House and Stockwell Road studios are all former office premises (albeit the leases for Park Royal and Bond House have since expired in 2018 and have not been renewed). Permitted development rights have therefore exacerbated competition between studio groups and developers, who compete for the same type of space. Kirsten Dunne explained,

> 'In a bad way there has been the widening of property development rights. The establishment of property development rights, which is a central government policy, of course it is meant to enable house building because of the overall housing crisis in the UK, but the unintended consequences in London is that you can convert offices into residential without it going to planning permission which means you can simply change a property into residential without planning rights. For many artists that is an absolute disaster because they are in those types of properties and they might just be turfed out for property development and nobody cares because there is no planning requirement there is no checking of this happening.' (Interviewed 09/12/16)

Artists' studios therefore occupy a unique position within a much broader affordable property crisis in London, in that such a large portion of the city's 'affordable' studios are currently at risk of displacement. The gradual withdrawal of direct workspace support from the GLA, growth in private sector landlords and the speed up of land-use change, have had the ubiquitous effects of obstructing strategic planning and contingency across the city's studio sector. For SPACE, Acme, ASC and ACAVA, whose 73.68% combined property portfolio is still provided under leasehold tenure, this places the status of their studios is an increasingly precarious position relative to their inability to predict and secure long-term space.

4.3 New materialisations of precarity

> 'Our aspirations go beyond just standing still. There's still a job to be done and that is much the same job; that we need to be working out new ways of collaborating to help bring more affordable space into being.'
>
> (David Panton, Director of Acme - Interviewed 14/09/16)

The literature on precarity offers valuable ways for thinking about different spatial responses to urban precarity, such as the range of ways in which it is expressed in relation to the artist's studio. In this section, I put forward for consideration the argument that, in more recent years sectoral precarity has extended beyond its primary expression of rent-reviews and the early termination or loss of leases. I argue that in addition to these, it is also being expressed in different spatial and material ways, as a new partnership-oriented method of workspace delivery and a new mode of new build, purpose-designed studio.

Gill and Pratt (2008) propose that despite commonly being expressed as an obstacle, urban precarity also opens up and reveals new opportunities and potentials, including new spaces, subjectivities and schemes for development. Madanipour's (2017) work on the growth in pop-up spaces in the city demonstrates this particularly well, as he examines how precarity helps initiate new innovative approaches to working and living in the city. Between 2007-2008 office vacancy in the heart of London's financial district grew by 50%, at the same time, empty shops were also changing the character of the city, 10.7% shop vacancy in London was publicised as 'the decline of British high streets' (2017: 5). These over-supplies of office and shop space provided new temporary opportunities to smaller studio groups and individuals, who were able to respond and adjust to the quickening pace of urban change by speeding up their own processes and enhancing their mobility to gain access to a range of disused sites. At the same time, a government agenda to encourage pop-up and interim use of empty high street units was seen as good practice against urban decline. Over the past 15 years the government has therefore introduced 'meanwhile leases' and guidance for landlords to encourage the temporary occupation of empty retail and office premises by non-commercial occupiers who might be otherwise unable to afford their rents (Deezen, 2017; Meanwhile Space, 2017).

Likewise, Ferreri et al. (2017) have observed that urban precarity has manifested in a growth in guardianship schemes in London over the last fifteen years. Operating at the intersection of informal occupation, the security industry and housing, guardianship schemes have tended to involve 'young individuals, usually in precarious employment, applying to intermediary companies to become temporary 'guardians' in metropolitan areas' (2017: 246). The schemes allow guardians to pay below market rent to live in

unusual locations while 'performing' live-in security arrangements that are not considered to be a form of 'work'. Included in the range of visual artists interviewed for this research, a number were familiar with guardianship schemes and described them as a popular way for young, newly graduated artists to gain fast access to affordable workspace in otherwise unaffordable parts of the city. Visual artist, Tom Gillard explained,

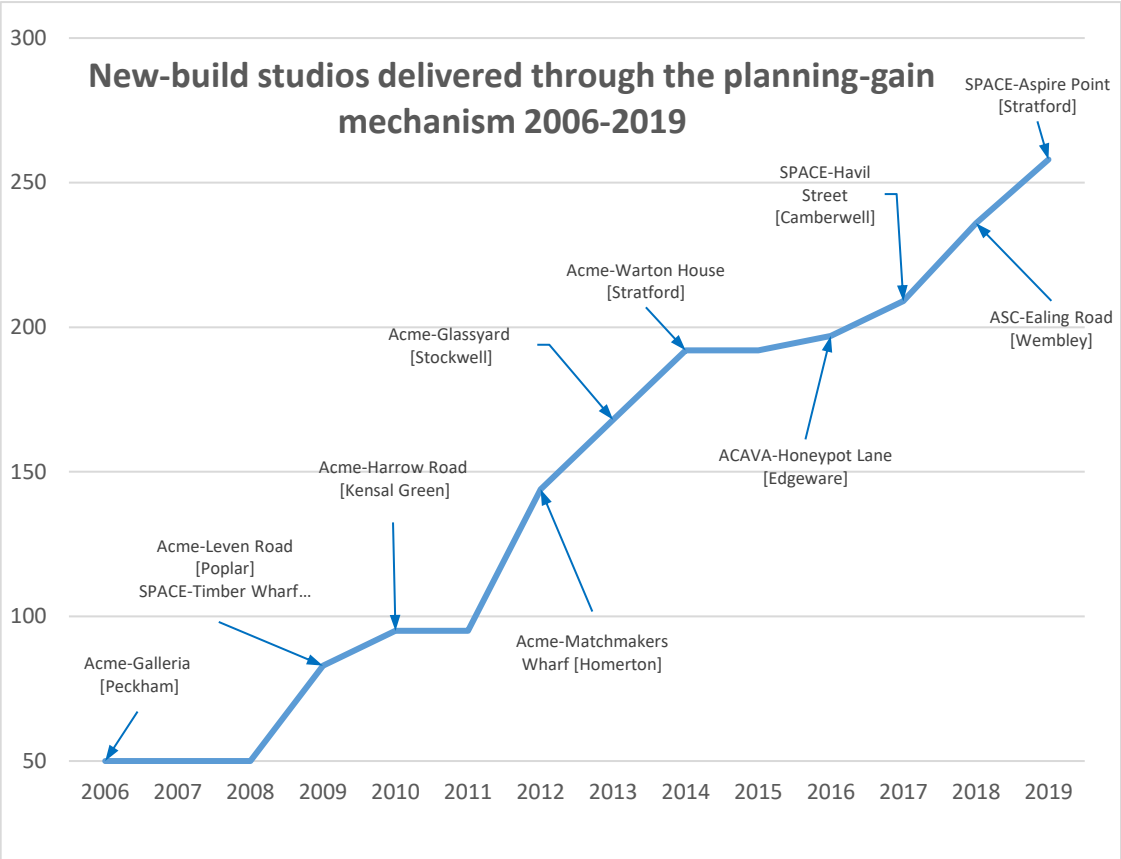
> 'I've got some friends who were struggling to get a studio space, like this one (Acme, Highline building). So, they are part of this guardianship scheme on the main road in Peckham. These schemes are essentially for anti-squatting, but they are quite popular now and I've got friends who have just graduated and are living in old pubs. I've also got a few mates in one at Herne Hill in South West London [near Brixton] and they're making work whilst they're there, jewellery, clothes, painting etcetera and they're paying such cheap rent. But they also have no protection, I think they've got something like a 72 hour get out notice period.' (Interviewed 18/07/16)

This recent growth in pop-up and guardianship schemes in cities like London, has been interpreted by a number authors of urban precarity (such as, Madanipour, 2017; Vasudevan, 2015; 2017; Waite, 2009), as an enhanced spatial flexibility expressed as a growth in the temporary use of urban space, and as an increased city-wide mobility of tenants seeking low-cost alternatives to living and working (Madanipour, 2017; Vasudevan et al., 2017). These schemes have been interpreted by Vasudevan et al. (2017) as a collective response to lack of affordable residential and workspace in the city and as a method of temporary and unstable occupation that exacerbates these precarities. In relation to what has been discussed (in section two of this chapter) about the land-use cycle, these schemes might also be interpreted as more flexible revision of the borrowed infrastructure model; wherein individuals and small groups are speeding up their occupation activity and adapting to the quickening pace of urban change by seeking more flexible and shorter-durational workspace opportunities. For larger studio

groups like SPACE, Acme, ASC and ACAVA, who manage approximately 1,500 artist studios in Greater London (combined figure), due to the scale of their workspace operation, these temporary schemes are not as feasible. Instead of adapting their workspace strategies to make use of temporary gaps in the built environment left over from disinvestment and land-use change, these larger groups have, over the last eleven years, cultivated a strategy that effectively requires them to re-direct the focus of their activity to make use of the new channels of investment entering the built landscape in different parts of the city. Instead of 'speeding up' their workspace provision process, these groups have used the studio's position in the political economy of London, as leverage for demonstrating the value of artists' studios to the residential and commercial property development process.

4.3.1 Studio development partnerships

Since the mid-2000s, there has been a growth in the number of new build studio developments in London that have been delivered through studio development partnerships. This has involved studio organisations like Acme, SPACE and ACAVA working closely with commercial developers, housing associations and local government, to negotiate studio provision to be included in the property development process (see figure 6). The outcome of this collaboration has been a number of new, purpose-designed studios being delivered as part of inner-city mixed-use property developments.



[Figure 6. This chart shows the growth in the number of new build artist studios developed by Acme, SPACE, ASC and ACAVA (in London) using the planning gain mechanism between 2006 and 2017. Data source: Acme, 2006c; 2019; ASC 2019; ACAVA, 2019; SPACE, 2019]

A good example of a studio development partnership is the Galleria studios on the Pennack Road in Peckham (see figure 7). The Galleria is a mixed-use residential development, which combines affordable housing, private apartments and fifty subsidised cost 'affordable' artists' studios. It was developed in 2006 through a partnership between Acme studios and Barratt Homes PLC (Acme, 2006b; 2010). With Acme's purchase part-funded by Arts Council England's 'grants for the arts-capital programme', the Galleria is London's first 'planning gain', studio development case study. Over the last 13 years, Acme has worked with a range of partners including, private and commercial developers, educational institutions and housing associations

to develop seven new build partnership projects since 2006, resulting in 220 permanent studios (Acme, 2019).

The emergence of this new mode of studio has been contemporaneous with the identification of the studio's wider value in the urban political economy, but also, importantly, with changes to the city's planning structure; specifically, the introduction of the S106 planning system and planning gain mechanism.



[Figure 7. Galleria building on Sumner Road, in Peckham. Photo credit: Barratt Homes, 2017]

In response to the loss of affordable housing and workspace on protected employment land, due to a series of market-led housing development and conversion strategies, a series of planning obligations were introduced to help mitigate the impacts of unacceptable development (Gov.UK, 2016). These planning obligations constitute a reason for granting planning permission if the proposal meets the requirements that are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. They also require developers to comply with any conditions attached to their planning permission.

Planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, commonly known as S106 agreements, are focused specifically on site-specific

mitigation of the impacts of development.[22] They are also often referred to as 'developer contributions', along with highway contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy (Gov.uk, 2016; Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2016). The common use of S106 planning obligation has been to secure financial contributions to provide infrastructure or affordable housing. For residential developers on employment land, this also tended to include that provisions be made for a percentage of low-cost, subsided workspace. However, these are not the only uses for the S106**.** It can also require specified operations or activities to be carried out on the land, and that the land is used in a specific way. Common among these specifications, are that provisions should be made for social housing or community facing assets to contribute to the social and community wellbeing of the surrounding area and help offset some of the negative social or economic effects of development. According to Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research (2013) the name given to this process by which provisions are made by a developer to include in a proposal, projects beneficial to a community, in exchange for permission for a commercially promising, but potentially unacceptable development, is 'planning gain'. The most common outcome of planning gain has been a number of new mixed-use developments, these allow providers to balance the demand for housing, workspace and community facilities by including a blend of residential, commercial, workspace and cultural uses in a single building or complex of buildings (Local Government Association, 2019; RCIS, 2018).

[22] See Town and Country Planning Act., 2015.

Having demonstrated their potential to deliver social, community and economic benefits in a range of different urban settings, artists are seen to meet the Section 106 requirements to provide employment use and community benefit and, at the same time, offer a ready-made creative community as part of a new development (Acme, 2007). In the following chapter (Chapter Five) I explore the pressure that this places on artists to occupy the studio in a certain manner so as to reflect and perform its wider socio-cultural value. What this means for large studio organisations like SPACE, Acme, ASC and ACAVA is that their ability to develop new workspace in the city, is affected by their willingness (and ability) to collaborate and work in partnership with a range of potential developers. David Panton, Director of Acme explains,

> 'To survive means you've got to be more skilful with finance than ever, you've got to be skilful in property development. Up until recently it has been all running around London trying to find cheap empty buildings and so on, and as that gets more challenging, it's about finding who you can work with.' (Interviewed 14/09/16)

These studio organisations' continued ability to adapt and respond to change is one of the reasons for the studio's survival. This dynamism means that the geographies of studio provision have evolved according to necessity and to the sustained demand for affordable workspace, and continue to do so. Studio development partnerships are gradually teasing open the processes of studio provision to include a greater number and more diverse range of partners; which have so far included private and commercial developers, housing associations, higher education institutions and local authorities. For groups like Acme, who have delivered the largest number of studios through this method, the S106 has allowed for a considerable degree of strategic planning compared with operating opportunistically within the property market under the leasehold model. As a result of the workspace security offered by this, since April 2015 Acme became

financially self-sustaining, operating for the first time in its history without the support of Arts Council Revenue Funding (Acme, 2018). Although this does not mean that artist's workspace is becoming less precarious**.**



[Figure 8. (Left) Acme's Matchmakers Wharf Studios, B block which includes 49 affordable artist studios arranged over six floors. (Right) The interior of typical corner studio on third floor. Photo credit: Acme, 2017b]

Rather, what we can take away from this change is that artist workspace precarity in London has manifested into two principle new geographies for the artist's studio. First, there is a new mode of operation that is deeply partnership oriented. Second, there is a new mode of purpose-designed, new build studio (see figure 8), which is arguably quite different from its 'leased studio' counterpart. In contrast to new purpose, designed studios, the leasehold model of studio provision has typically involved existing spaces being converted into artists' studios. Among ASC, SPACE, ACAVA and Acme, this includes a range of properties with distinct material histories being temporarily re-

appropriated as creative workspace; former factories, offices, industrial workshops, garages, markets, schools, town halls, a library, a nursery, a potting shed, a vicarage and a fire station.

4.3.2 Funding studio development

Despite this growth in new build studios it seems that not all studio groups are in the same position to be able to make use of the planning gain mechanism. For instance, whilst Acme have developed 7 new sites in London with the assistance of the S106 policy (the Galleria- SE15, Matchmakers wharf- E9, Harrow Road- NW10, Leven Road- E14 and Glassyard SW9), SPACE has developed 2 and ACAVA and ASC have both only developed 1 (SPACE's Timber Wharf, E2 and Aspire Point, E15, ACAVA's Honeypot Lane, NW9 and ASC's Ealing Road, HA0). ASC have developed two new build properties, Grafton Quarter in Croydon and Ealing Road in Alperton, both of which opened in January 2018.[23] Whilst this marks a huge milestone for ASC towards securing a more permanent supply of studios, both of these developments are situated outside of Greater London and do not address the sustained demand for affordable and secure workspace within the city. ASC's response to the studio crisis in London has been with more of the same, more rental agreements and leasehold tenures.

Probing further into this disparity, it seems access to finance is currently the major drawback of this new mechanism. For instance, the Galleria studios in Peckham are currently held under a 155-year lease with the private developer, Barratt homes, and were purchased by Acme at 60% of the actual build cost. Despite requiring much

[23] Aggregate data from ASC (2019), ACAVA (2019), Acme (2019) and SPACE (2019) property portfolios, available online.

less than a freehold purchase might, Acme's part-purchase on this build was part funded by an Arts Council England grant and the remaining balance was 'topped up' with a bank-loan that Acme was able to draw out against the value of their properties - at the time Acme had made three freehold purchases: Copperfield Road, Orsman Road and the Fire station in Bow (Acme, 2006b; 2018). According to Kirsten Dunne,

> 'The Galleria in Peckham, it was a good partnership. Acme had money to put on the table, they put money in and they got it built to costs and to their specifications pretty much, plus developers benefitted because they got to promote the thing as artists. They called it the Galleria because of the artists in the block, so that was obviously a beautiful collaboration between Acme and the developer and the local authority, because they insisted on this as part of the Section 106 agreement. That's a great example of where it works very well, but the dangers are always the same, some may have a better bargaining position than someone else, and you may not always get the deal you need, or there may be unintended consequences.' (Interviewed 07/12/16)

What quickly becomes evident is that precarity of the leasehold model continues to have an effect on studio development. For instance, the planning gain mechanism appears to discriminate studio groups on the basis of the security of their existing properties - specifically the number of freehold properties that they own and their ability to raise funds against them. This disparity has also arguably been compounded by reductions to capital funding over the past-ten years, which had previously been available for studio development and conversion. David Panton, Director of Acme, explained,

> 'To have done it ourselves completely, would have involved large injections of other people's money and that's a big part of the problem now. You have all of these opportunities, but the question holding lots of organisations back, is, ok how do you finance them?' (Interviewed 14/09/16)

In 2010 the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) announced that the money it gives to Arts Council England would be cut by 29.6% by 2014; equating

to reduction in funding from £452mn to £350mn (Guardian, 2011). Arts Council England responded to this by immediately imposing a 6.9% cut to their regular funding to their portfolio of arts organisations. In addition to this, funding pressures on councils also remain intense, as their grant budgets have been cut by more than 30% over the past seven years (LSE- Calver and Wainwright, 2017). Local governments have also experienced a 33% cut (in real terms) to service funding from central government between 2009/10 and again between 2013/14 (LSE- Fitzgerald and Lupton, 2014: 2). With the added uncertainty of European funding, this has had a significant effect on the finance capital available to organisations to cover the costs of their share of the development. In recognition of these obstacles, Senior Cultural Strategy Officers at the GLA disclosed the details of a 'new hybrid-funding model' that the GLA is currently trialling as a possibility for raising the funds needed to grow the studio development partnership model. Kirsten Dunne explained,

> 'The trust funding model that we are proposing to set up was one of the recommendations of the Creative United report. So, we envision that it will be made up of lots of different pots of public and private money. What we are doing at the moment, is we are looking into money that is public sector money, or charitable contributions of some kind, or people who are giving philanthropic money, in the first instance.' (Interviewed 07/12/16)

In 2015 the GLA and Arts Council England commissioned a number of independent studies to examine the pressures on studio buildings in London under the current leasehold model of 'find space and occupy' and make some recommendations for developing and financing new workspace. One report in particular, that was discussed in great detail during the interviews, was '*Making Space: Developing and Sustaining Affordable Artists' Studios and Creative Workspace'* by Creative United (2016). Funded by Arts Council England - Grants for the Arts and the Mayor of London,

this report fleshes out the details of what a new funding model might look like for developing artist's workspace and bridging the planning gain funding gap. Based on a consultation with 100 stakeholders, including studio organisations, property developers, local authorities, policy makers and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), its core recommendations included the development of a stabilisation trust fund for studio provision and a series of peer-to-peer lending schemes.

The stabilisation trust fund is a form of incubation model that combines a shared ownership model with a deposit fund approach. The report draws upon the example of the Community Arts Stabilisation Trust (CAST) in San Francisco, as a starting point for this (Creative United, 2016: 4). CAST works by acquiring properties in selected neighbourhoods, which it holds in perpetuity and then leases back to local creative groups at subsidised rates. In addition, CAST manages a funding pot through which it provides cultural organisations fast access to a range of public and private funding. Building on this example, the Creative United report recommends that a multi-agency donor approach, including a number of peer-to-peer lending schemes, could be used to generate an investment pot for the initial acquisition of assets that would be held by the trust.

Feeding into this, peer-to-peer (P2P) lending commonly describes a network in which peers share resources with one another without the use of a centralised intermediary. In financial terms, it refers to a form of social lending in which people borrow and lend money without a central administrative body, such as a bank (Langley, 2016). By bypassing traditional bank lending procedures, P2P lending is capable of providing easy access to cheap capital, whilst also allowing lenders to receive higher returns in interest than they would with a typical bank savings account (Creative United,

2016). Wilf Langridge and Kirsten Dunne said that they envisaged that P2P lending could be combined with the stabilisation fund to create a more networked lending infrastructure that would be capable of growing a lending pot to feed back into the trust. Kirsten Dunne's interpretation of the fund, is that over time it would work by drawing together a diverse range of donors and investors, she explained,

> 'One of the things we had wanted to do in the beginning of this, was to create something that would work for social impact investors. We are taking a slight pause on that at the moment, because we were worried that if we create a model for a fund that is from the beginning geared towards a social impact investment, then we run the risk of not achieving. Because if we have to pay back money to social impact investors at any rate above one or two percent, then we run the risk of not achieving the cheap rents we had hoped for the studios. Instead, what we are doing at the moment, is looking at public sector money, or charitable contributions of some kind and individual people who are giving philanthropic money, and then once the model becomes established, we might then open it to social impact investors.' (Interviewed 07/12/16)

This recent set of inquiries into the development of a city-wide hybrid funding model has potentially interesting outcomes for the number and diversity of partners involved in the studio funding and provision process. Further to the studio development partnership model, which has opened the processes of studio provision up to a number of commercial and private developers, HEI's and housing associations, the development of this new hybrid funding model that is currently being pursued by the GLA as a strategy for addressing London's studio crisis, points towards a further expansion and diversification of the partners, groups and individuals involved in the organisation and delivery of artists' studios.

Despite senior figures in the Culture Team at the Greater London Authority, the CEO of SPACE and Director of Acme recognising the benefits of opening up studio provision to new channels of investment, very little was said about what types of investments might work well and which might not. The interviews lacked clarity about

what procedures are currently in place for selecting and vetting investors and preventing potentially 'bad' or 'unhealthy investments'; by which I mean those who might see investing in the hybrid funding model as an opportunity for offsetting their taxes. This raises questions about how much say investors should have over how their investments are spent. It also raises concerns about the impact different investors with different priorities and motivations for their investments might have on the type of studios being developed.

As the studio has become more deeply embedded within the political portfolio of London, this has provided a nuanced opportunity to examine its precarious and temporal geographies. As this chapter has demonstrated, the precarity of artist's studios has been articulated and expressed in a number of different conceptual and material ways over the past fifty years in London; as the pervasiveness of leasehold tenures and the borrowed infrastructure model, and as the transience of studio sites across the city in relation to the unpredictability of rent reviews and the potential loss of leases or early termination of leases. In more recent years this has also included the development of a new mode of purpose-designed studio, and a new organisational strategy for studio development that is oriented towards collaboration with a diverse range of groups and individuals.

New build studios and studio development partnerships are therefore the recent manifestation of workspace provider practices that are emerging after the gradual collapse of the leasehold 'find space and occupy' mechanism, which was one of the main features of London's studio provision. Along with deregulation and privatisation of the studio property market, the last couple of decades have demonstrated that creative workspace is particularly susceptible to these precarious conditions. New builds deal

with some of the facets of precarity, helping studio organisations to secure permanent workspace in the city. On the other hand, since studio development partnerships seek to reconstruct the artist's studio alongside the private and commercial sector and a growing diversity of potential partners, the type of studio emerging from this is also evidence of a new material manifestation of workspace precarity. Furthermore, in light of recent precarity literature (e.g. Ferreri et al., 2017; Madanipour, 2017), these practices contribute to a shifting focus in geography towards acknowledging the role of precarity in the ability of the contemporary political economy to actively produce new forms of creative space.

4.4 Conclusion

Studio provision operates at the confluence of three overlapping developments. The first is a condition of heightened urban precarity (which has produced ambivalent and contradictory experiences for studio providers, offering low-cost workspace but little security). The second is a change to the urban planning system (the emergence of the S106 planning system and planning gain mechanism). The third is a recognition of the value of artist's workspace to the city. The outcome is that the latest iteration of the affordable artist's studio delivered via studio development partnerships, engages an increasingly hybrid assemblage of groups and individuals in the process of negotiating the delivery of the artist's studio. As such, the studio emerges as a site that is expressive of a variety of aims and ambitions, which have somehow found common ground through the studio.

While the notion of precarity has been applied to labour patterns and housing, in London the patterns and processes of precarity have also significantly affected the ways in which studios are delivered. Prompting different ways for thinking about the artist's studio in relation to an ever-changing urban setting, on the one hand the chapter speaks to the potential vulnerability of urban precarity, including insecurity of tenure, the ensuing risk of displacement and a heightened workspace mobility. On the other hand, it points to the potential for urban precarity to initiate new ways of thinking about creative space, that involves partnership and collaboration between seemingly disparate individuals, groups and sectors. In both instances, precarity can be interpreted as a force for change for the artist's studio. What these transformations also demonstrate is that the artist's studio is not a fixed entity with a rigidly assigned value and meaning, but rather, that it represents a fundamental openness to change relative to its position in the city and to the political-economic transformations taking place within it. At the very least this reminds us that, like residential property, studios are also affected by gentrification. Equally, it reminds us that gentrification is not a one-off displacement but a process of living with precarity.

Following this, we need to think more about the implications of these partnerships and the types of compromises that shape the studio as a result of these changing styles of studio provision. In particular we need to think about how this situation in which artists are expected to 'do community work' and deliver a range of social, cultural and economic benefits to urban areas, might be altering the types of studios available, as well as how these are used and experienced by artists. We also need to consider how these different perceptions of the studio align with artists visions and aspirations for the studio, as well as their preferred ways of inhabiting their

workspace. In the following chapter I address these questions by focusing on the issue of *privacy.*

Chapter Five

The affordable studio: compromises in privacy

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter I ask how might the conditions of urban precarity mapped out in the last chapter be shaping experiences of studio space in the city - and one way I address this question is through the subject of privacy. I use privacy to mean a state in which the artist is not observed or disrupted by other people when at work in the studio. I argue, that the familiar boundaries of the studio that artists have worked within, committed themselves to, and which have allowed them to achieve the level of privacy that they desire for their creative practice, in recent years seem up for (re)negotiation because of the precarities and pressures that affordable studios are faced with in London - specifically those that relate to the pressing matter of affordability. As such, this chapter draws attention to two central themes; first, the notion of the studio as a space for privacy and self-containment, and second, the different forces and processes that are complicating this and causing the experience of privacy in the studio to come apart in ways that are beyond the control of the occupying artist. My argument is that privacy is valued by artists but is hard to achieve and sustain in the types of 'affordable' workspace provided by studio organisations like Acme, SPACE, ACAVA and ASC.

In order to make this case, I draw attention to two salient issues that emerged during interviews with visual artists at a range of studio sites. The first is the growing pressure that artists face in finding alternative affordable solutions to the studio though

strategies such as sharing - i.e. sharing workspace in order to reduce and stabilise rental costs. The second is the growing pressure that these artists' face to 'open up' their studios and make their workspaces accessible to the public. For instance, many large studio organisations that are in receipt of public sector finance and support (such as through Arts Council England, whom are the largest public sector contributor to the city's affordable studio sector) are required to fulfil a range of social and community criteria, including social-community outreach objectives and demonstrating public engagement as a way of evidencing social returns on public sector investment (Acme, 2006a). One of the principle ways in which artists fulfil this requirement is through hosting open studio events, during which artists are encouraged, and in some cases obliged under the conditions of their studio contract, to make their otherwise 'private' workspace accessible to the general public.

Accordingly, I reflect on the type of tensions and anxieties that arise between artist's personal requirements and expectations of privacy within the studio, and these different forms of facilitated 'social' engagement that take place on site. I also explore the conflicts that arise between different visions of the affordable studio; namely the artist's requirements and expectation of the purpose of their studio and 'official' representations of the studio, that are designed to reflect the broader intentions and objectives of studio organisations. This requires engaging with imaginaries about the artist's studio, such as popular depictions of the studio as representing the artist's 'sacred inner-sanctum' as well as how within the specific context of London, the affordable studio is being re-imagined as a space for engaging the public in the arts.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. Section one draws on interviews with artists to furnish the concept of privacy in relation to the studio. Drawing on Bain

(2005) and Sjöholm (2013) I assess the importance of privacy to the ways in which artists imagine, conceive and construct the studio as a 'private' space for focused individual work. Following this in sections two and three, I explore two processes that are making privacy increasingly harder to achieve and sustain within the contemporary 'affordable' studio. Firstly, I explore the shared studio model, and the financial pressure that artists face to find alternative ways of reducing studio costs and stabilising rent - such as through the strategy of sharing. Within this, I look at the various boundary setting exercises that artists undertake within this shared workspace environment, in an attempt to distinguish a workspace of their own and achieve the privacy that they desire for their work. I also look at why these types of boundary setting activities tend to fail and drawing on the work of Madanipour (2003; 2004)**,** the types of anxieties that arise from this. Secondly, I explore the pressure for artists to participate in open studio events and the issues that participation raises for artists being able to maintain feelings of privacy in the studio and feelings of authorship over their workspace. Here I draw on the work of Ursprung (2008), Butler (2009; 2011) and Ettlinger (2007) for understanding this perceived loss of privacy and control, and how this relates to ideas about urban precarity as an embodied experience.

The conclusion brings together the ideas discussed in these sections to examine how the processes and forces of urban precarity are both closing down and opening up different possibilities for the urban studio. I show they produce new forms of creative space that move increasingly away from more traditional notions of the studio as being the private space of the individual artist. The contribution of the chapter to the development of the thesis is therefore its exploration of how the precarities surrounding the urban 'affordable' artists' studio are felt and experienced as a series of tensions and

anxieties rooted in a loss of privacy in the studio, as well as its broader reflections on the forces of urban precarity in the processual disassembling and re-assembling of creative urban space.

5.1 Privacy in the studio

> 'We do have some collaborative space, but privacy is still the main demand. Most artists need space to be alone with their practice.'
>
> (David Panton, Director of Acme - Interviewed 14/09/16)

Though its meaning is far from uniform, within geography, privacy is commonly used as the opposite notion of publicness. Where public might be used to define spaces of approved social interaction, private often refers to more intimate and personal encounters and spaces (Amin, 2008; Madanipour, 2003). Many geography studies have explicated the notion of privacy in relation to the home - a space in which it is assured that individuals are able to regulate and find privacy for both the body and the self (Madanipour, 2003). Gieseking et al. (2014: 183) for instance, presents public and private space as social constructs that conceptualise different domains of everyday life; 'from the interiority and privacy of the individual body and home. To the publicness of the city streets and public space'. In other words, a private space represents that in which the individual can be alone and a space that the individual is able regulate for their own personal uses.

Numerous art scholars have clarified similar ideas about the importance of privacy to the studio. Ideas about privacy in the studio have been dated back to the 17th century by Zakon (1978), who argues that during this period the studio was the designated place of study and learned refinement, suited to quiet reflection and self-contemplation of the individual artist. Geographer Bain (2005) adds that a series of

cultural shifts throughout the 18th and 19th centuries helped to elevate the status of the studio as the private and personal realm of the artist - gradually adopting the identity of being a space in which artists seek to realise the 'true vision of themselves' and their work by distancing themselves from others. She adds that the hold of this imaginary was so powerful that by the end of the 19th century 'separateness' and 'privacy' was regarded the essential quality of any 'authentic' studio and dedicated artist. Sjöholm (2013: 507) likewise suggests that privacy is deeply embedded in historical and contemporary narratives about the art studio and its proper use,

> 'The contemporary artistic workspace of the studio has been conceptualised as a private site for artistic knowledge, an imagination chamber and a room for study…[it] reflects the idea of contemporary artists as scholars and art being a practice based on privacy, material production and learned scholarship.'

In recent geographical literature on the status of the artist's studio (such as Farías and Wilkie, 2016; Hawkins, 2015; 2017) there has been a lack of detailed discussion on privacy. Little attention has been paid to how artists occupy and use their workspace in the contemporary city. The focus of these literatures has been on the ways in which artist's studio practice is changing and the various types of studio displacements that are taking place as a consequence of this. Hawkins (2014; 2015; 2017) for instance, has argued that artists are coming together and collaborating in new ways both within and beyond the studio. Focusing on these changing art forms, Hawkins (2017) among others such as (Doherty, 2004; Farías and Wilkie 2016; Houdart, 2016; Kaye, 2000), pays particular attention to the recent proliferation of dematerialised art forms and performative art practices that see artists moving away from the idea that art only takes place in traditionally endowed creative sites, like the studio, and moves towards the idea that the studio can be wherever creative activity unfolds - be that at a

laptop in a busy café or a public street (Jacob and Grabner, 2010). On first reading, these literatures seem to imply that privacy is becoming potentially less relevant to the ways in which artists perceive, value and use the studio. This is primarily because of their failure to address the subject of privacy head-on. It is also because of their emphasis on art as a *performance*, which underscores the studio as an open process constituted of various multi-sensuous bodies coming together and interacting in a range of different and unpredictable ways, which suggests that the artist is not alone in the studio. One key term that is often explored in relation to changing art-site relations is that of 'experiment', i.e. embracing the openness and unpredictability of creativity, including the multifaceted social encounters that this entails. Yet on second reading and closer inspection, one finds privacy appearing in unusual places throughout the work, and subtle hints that privacy still matters, particularly in the language of 'intimacy' and 'solitude' that Farías and Wilkie (2016: 21) use to describe the artists experience and relationship with these different creative sites.

In the interviews I found ideas about privacy playing a central role in the ways in which a large number of artists involved in the study understood and interpreted the function of the studio to above all else allow the artist privacy with their creative practice. Visual artist Jenny McGrath explained;

> 'Above all else, the studio is a private space. Privacy is its main appeal, I come here to get away from everyone and everything else and just focus on my work.' (Interviewed 21/11/16)

Whilst privacy was interpreted in different personal ways for each artist and means something slightly different to each individual, ideas about the need for privacy in the studio tended to converge around two inter-related ideas: the need for social isolation in the studio and the ability to oversee the material organisation of the studio.

5.1.1 Social isolation

During interviews artists drew upon a range of terms and phrases to describe the studio as a space in which they could achieve the necessary levels of social isolation required for their work. A number of artists drew upon different metaphors to describe the studio as a 'hideaway', a 'sanctuary', and a 'shed' to illustrate that the studio for them represents an important space in which to be alone with their practice and remove themselves from others. Lizzy Holloway explained,

> 'Here I can be alone with my work, I don't have to worry about anyone else, it's like my own personal shed, that I can come to, to be away from everyone.' (Interviewed 15/11/16)

Similarly, visual artist Claire Hutton reinforced these ideas about the need for distance from others when at work in the studio,

> 'I think if I was to have a big studio, I would still need partitioned walls to be separate, because that is very important. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that's one of the main reasons artists pay for studios, rather than working from home, because you share that space with your family, whereas here you can be alone.' (Interviewed 14/12/16)

For many artists the studio therefore represented a space in which they felt able to minimise unwanted social interruptions and to a certain extent regulate the types of social interactions that take place during their studio time. Karen Whitelaw explained,

> 'The studio is the one space where I know I can go where I don't run the risk of being disturbed, it's where I come to get away from everyone else. I've tried working from home before, and to be honest that would save a lot of money, but it's just not the same. There are always family and friends around, or the postman or delivery guy and it's hard to find the space to be truly alone, which I need for my work.' (Interviewed 21/11/16)

Previously Bain (2005) has observed the difficulties in artists working from home, because of the types of social encounters and intrusions that can happen there. In particular, she has looked at the types of social distractions that women with families

face when working from home. She found that few women artists find the 'necessary isolation, privacy and freedom to allow their artistic practice and identity to find expression' (2005: 29).

So why is privacy, in terms of social isolation (i.e. the ability to social isolate oneself and their practice), considered important by artists? Why is it necessary for artists to have a space in which to remove themselves from others? A common response to this question is related to ideas about the artist being able to shield their work and themselves from others. Similar ideas about the studio providing a space in which the artist can work without the 'critical gaze of others' have also been explored by Bain (2005: 174) who claims that a 'room of one's own' allows artists to work un-self-consciously, and thus gives them 'more freedom to experiment' and make mistakes in the process. Bound up with this, were also ideas about artists feeling free to 'make-mess' in the process. Emily Wilson explained,

> 'Because it is just me in this space, and because it's my private space, I don't have to consider anyone else in my process, I can make mess and that's fine. I enjoy working with a bit of mess around me, and I'm able to do that here in ways that I'm not able to when there are other people around. Like at home I have to consider my partner. But because this is my own space, I have more freedom to do what I want with it and I can make mess and leave things lying around, because I don't have to consider anyone else here, just my work.' (Interviewed 11/11/16)

In other words, Emily conflated privacy with having a space of her own, which also offered her the benefits of being able to work in the style that was best for her personal creative practice. For many artists, the studio likewise represented a space in which they were able to suspend domestic norms such as cleaning and tidying, and make mess without having to consider how this might affect others. Many artists also valued being able to leave the studio in whatever condition it is in and return to it in the same

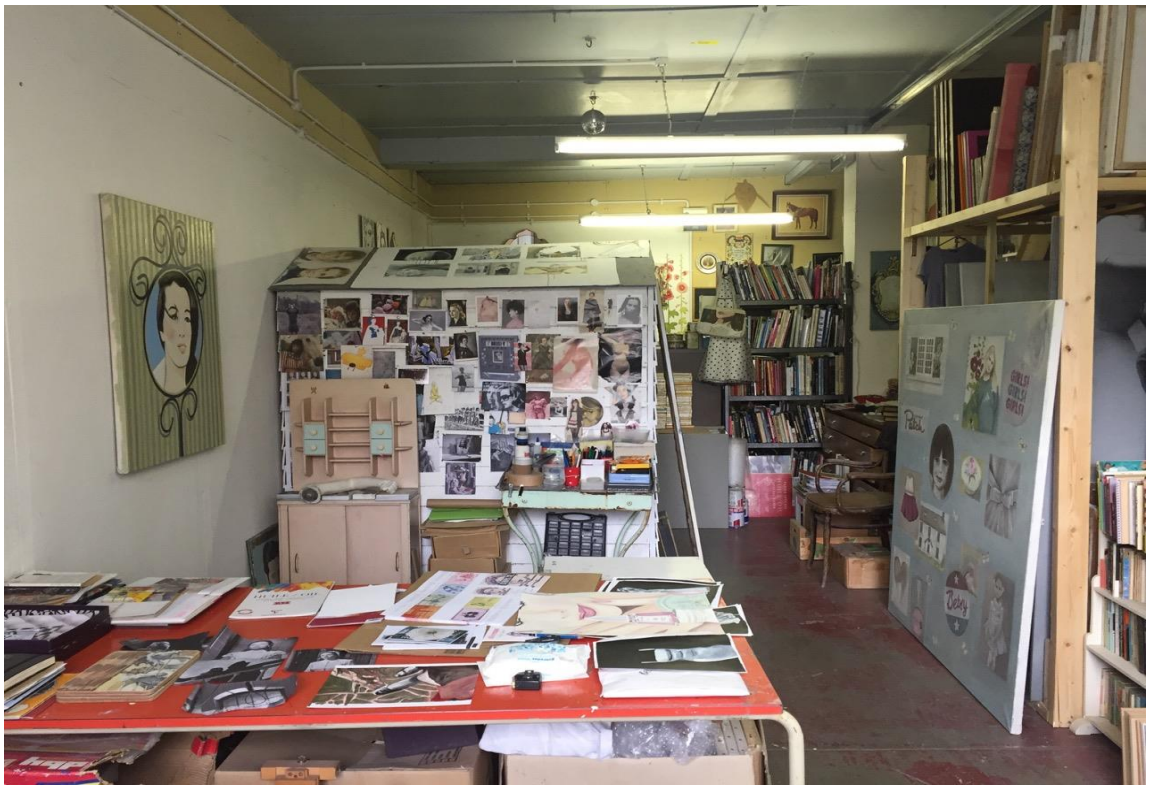
condition. 'This is my private space' visual artist David McCloy explained, 'I know that I can leave my work in whatever state it is in, and my materials as they are and know that when I come back to the studio, because no one else will have been in, everything will be in the exact same order. So, I can just pick up easily from where I left off.' (Interviewed 15/11/16)

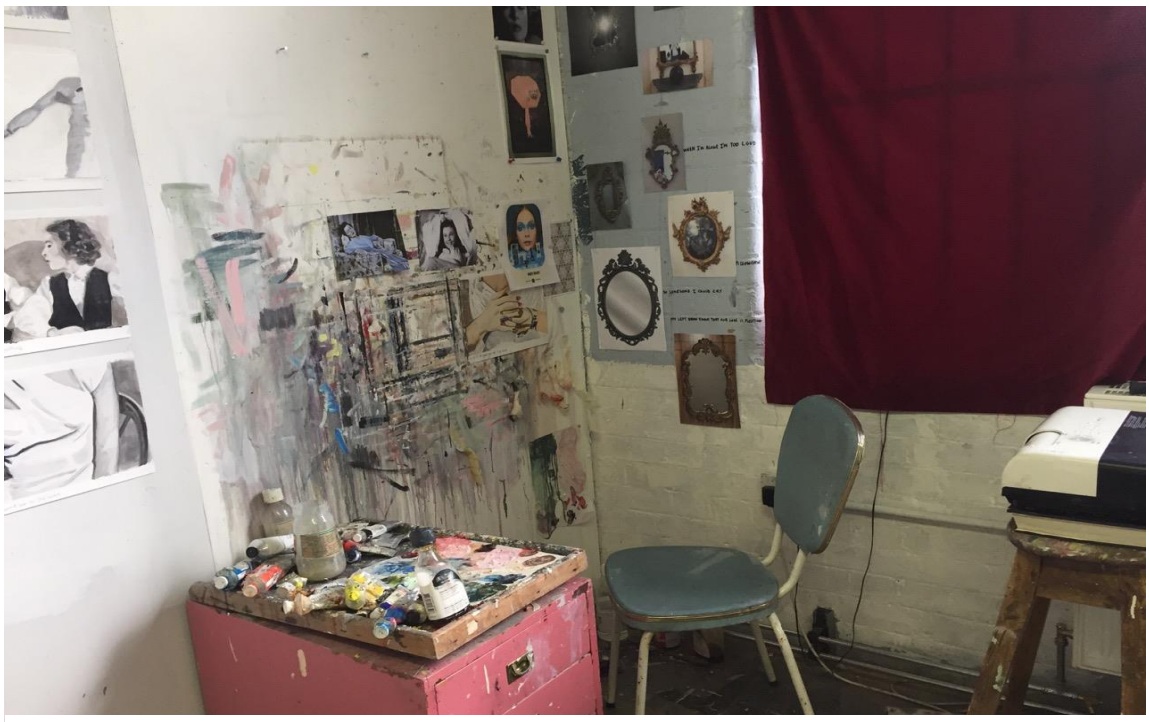
Sometimes the creative process is not complete by the end of the day and if it is a particularly long process or project it is important to be able to pick up from where they left off and setting up and taking down work can disrupt this workflow. Whereas the privacy afforded by renting a studio of one's own allows the artist to set out their materials in a certain arrangement and come back to the studio after a period of time knowing that it will be in the exact same state that it was left in. In this sense, the significance of privacy and the necessary social isolation that it offers, allows artists to pick up from where they left off, thus giving a certain continuity to their studio experience.

5.1.2 Material organisation

Ideas about social isolation in the studio therefore appear to relate closely to ideas about the artists ability to preside oversee the material organisation of their workspace; i.e. to make mess or arrange it whatever manner that they see as most conducive to their personal creative practice. Whilst for some artists, privacy constitutes the ability to make-mess, it also enables them to order and organise their material workspace according to their own individual needs and tastes to support their creative endeavour. Janet Harper explained;

> ‘Because it is just me here, I can arrange it in whatever order seems fit for my work. So, I’ve created these different workstations around the studio for different stages of my work. So, for me privacy means being able to spread out my work in this way.’ (Interviewed 07/11/12 - see figure 9)





[Figure 9. Janet Harper’s studio at Deborah House (SPACE) exemplifying various nest building and mess-making expressions in the studio. The top image shows a shed in her studio. The bottom image shows her painting corner. Photo credit: Artist whose studio it is]

Other artists discussed similar freedoms of the private studio in relation to 'nest-building'. Karen Whitelaw for instance, analogises the studio to that of a bird's nest. Just as different twigs and branches are gathered to constitute a nest, the artist gathers and brings together different materials and tools within the studio to construct the various material supports of her practice;

> 'Privacy is really important for me to be able to work in the style that I do, because I need to be able to build a nest around me and have all of my resources on display around me, and if I had other people in the studio that wouldn't be possible in the same way, I'd have to tidy away or restrict that practice in some way.' (Interviewed 21/11/16)

A similar metaphor of nest building has been taken up by Sjöholm (2013) to describe the ways in which, through the artists use of the studio, it becomes it becomes a material expression and *archive* of the occupying artist. Sjöholm (2013) describes the different types of conscious and unconscious sorting activities and arranging of materials that can happen in the studio, both purposively and as a by-product of the artists practice. She argues that through these different activities the studio gradually comes to bare the imprint of the artist and develops into a unique material archive of the artist, i.e. a documentation of all of their previous work and activity.

Sjöholm discusses the ways in which the studio as a material archive of the artist, not only provides a resource for looking back over past work, but also provides a material resource for informing future work. She explains that 'the studio can partly be read as a text and being as revelatory as the artwork itself…the personally set up active archives of artists are like tool sheds, feeding further exploration and understandings' (2013: 511-513). As well as expressing the choices, decisions and character of the individual artist and being an archive of their past work, Sjöholm also demonstrates the

ways in which the material environment of the studio influences and informs future creative practice in different subtle and obvious ways - providing a resource for different ideas and inspiration. The artist's ability to oversee the material environment of the studio is therefore of interest because it provides insights into the question of how artworks come to be and also the experience of the studio as a place of work and experiment.

Furthermore, these material-compositional practices that the artist undertakes in the studio consecrates the studio as an individual creation and as an act connected with the authorship of their workspace and, by extension, the creative products that emerge from this space. Given the ways in which the material environment of the studio is seen to inform the artist's practice (and provide inspiration for future projects), the artist's capacity to oversee the material organisation of the studio, to some extent reflects their ability to oversee the ways in which it informs their practice, and the future direction and outcomes of their personal creative practice. For instance, during the interviews a number of artists conflated the ability to control the material environment of the studio with their ability to control their own art-practice. Siobhan Ford explains,

> 'It's really important to be able to control your work environment and set it up in a way that is personal to your practice, because ultimately it informs your work, so you want to make sure you get to choose what informs how your practice develops.' (Interviewed 28/07/16)

In other words, for artists like Siobhan, authorship over the studio, was bound up with feelings of authorship and agency over their creative practice. Whilst artists cannot predict the specific ways in which the material environment of the studio will inform their practice, having a workspace of one's own in which they can maintain feelings of privacy, gives them a perceived sense of control over their own studio practice.

The experience of privacy in the studio was therefore conflated with the artists' perceived control over the range of social and material phenomena that constitute the environmental supports of their creative practice. In this way, we must consider concepts of privacy in relation to the artists authorship of the studio and the ways in which the studio is conceived of as the interior world of the artist's own making.

5.1.3 Closed-door practice

Ultimately the need for privacy was seen as important for the artist to be able to achieve an optimal working environment based upon their own personal ideas of what this constitutes and being able to socially isolate themselves from others, was seen as essential to this. Privacy is often regarded a legal and administrative matter expressed through the formal language of rent. In that rent determines the space of the individual artist and renting a studio of one's own ensures separation from others. In addition to the spatial politics of rent, I found that a number of artists have also created their own studio-based tactics and gestural systems to fulfil this need for privacy and communicate this to other artists within the studio building. Across a range of studio sites, I observed a style of working in the studio that was colloquially known among artists as a 'closed-door practice' or 'closed-door arrangement'. The closed-door practice describes a rather simple and shared practice of artists closing their doors when at work in the studio. Ruth King explained,

> 'We have a sort of informal closed-door arrangement here, because we all really value our privacy in the studio.' (Interviewed 16/06/16)

Likewise, Peter Rooke explained,

> 'When I am in my studio I need to focus. Lots of artists are in the same position, we all need our privacy to concentrate and make best use of our studio time and

> I feel like this closed-door way of working has kind of evolved from that, our shared need for privacy.' (Interviewed 18/11/16)

For many artists like Ruth and Peter, closing the studio door necessarily constituted the ability to isolate themselves and reduce unwanted social interruptions, so as to enable them to focus unfettered on their practice.



[Figure 10. Peter Rooke's studio at SPACE's Brickfield Studios. The studio has an external door which remains closed when Peter is at work in his studio. In addition to this he has constructed a second barrier from the rest of the building in the form of a second inner door, which he tends to close when he has a work deadline and needs to focus more on his work. Photo credit: Author]

What follows is that the seemingly mundane and trivial practice of closing the studio door, discloses a whole complex host of social, spatial and political relationships between the artist and the studio. For instance, we might think of the closed-door practice as a form of threshold maintenance that allows artists to preside over rights of access and entry into the studio and determine who does and doesn't belong. In this way it allows them to determine the types of social encounters and activities that take place in the studio and minimise those types of encounters (and social interruptions) that they do not regard as conducive to their work. A number of artists were of the

opinion that access to the studio should be by invite only because it represents the private and personal space of the artist. Artist Emily Wilson provides a good illustration of this;

> 'I lived in Berlin for a few years and was going to a church that had a little gallery space that they wanted someone to run. So, I had the studio next door and ran the gallery. Downstairs from the studio as the church office and the people there didn't seem to understand the sacredness of a studio. They just thought it was all very fascinating, and I remember coming back to my studio one day and they were all in there. They were just looking and wanted to see what I was up to, but I had to explain to them, that it's not the same as if I like go into your office, that's not really a big deal. But if I went into your office and opened up your computer and started to look at your files, then that wouldn't be right because it's private. So, I found it hard to explain that I don't have a problem with people coming into my studio, but that I need to be the one to invite them in. And I feel like that's quite a common feeling among artists, hence the closed door.' (Interviewed 11/11/16)

To this end, the closed-door practice gives way to the appearance of the separation of spaces and is bound up with the invention of discrete spaces, specifically the invention of a discrete space of and for the individual artist (see figure 10). It involves erecting a mental and physical boundary between the interior space of the studio (within which the artist can maintain feelings of privacy and authorship) and the rest of the studio building which is shared by other artists.

One way to interpret this is that the closed-door connects ideas about privacy with practices of privacy, and imagined constructs of the private studio with a physical construction of it. Within geography, Madanipour (2003) has reflected on ideas about boundary construction processes. He contends that boundaries between inside and outside, public and private, whilst being maintained for different purposes, are ultimately bound up with the construction of power. In the same way, the closed door distinguishes a space that is navigable and familiar for the individual artist, whilst keeping others out; thereby allowing the artist to maintain feelings of privacy and

control within the studio despite being in such close proximity to other artists within the shared studio building (Emily, Ruth and Peter's respective studio buildings contain over fifty studios). The closed-door is therefore an expression of the shared need among artists for privacy within the studio *and* is one of the principle ways in which artists construct this privacy.

Given what we also know about the artist's self-expression through the material organisation of the studio, the desire for a strongly defined private space of one's own seems to resonate with these ideas about the artist shielding and protecting their workspace, along with certain elements of the 'self' that are expressed through it. Privacy therefore plays an important constitutive part of the uses and experiences of artist workspace and closely informs some of the ways in which artists conceive the value and function of the contemporary studio.

5.2 Sharing a studio

Despite the importance of privacy to the ways in which artists conceive and use their studios, privacy is becoming increasingly harder to achieve and sustain in studios rented within the affordable studio sector in London because of the type of precarities in the sector. Affordability is a major concern for artists and one of the main deciding factors when choosing a studio to rent. The average cost across the 20 largest studio provider organisations in London is £13.73 per sq. ft/annum, with the cost of utilities added on top of this (GLA, 2014a: 7). The average cost of an Acme studio is slightly less, at around £12.49 per sq. ft/annum - or in other words, £312 per month for a 300ft^2 studio (Acme, 2018). Whilst this cost is low compared to other rents for the same size and type space

on the open market, where average costs are around £30 per sq. ft/annum - or rather, £750 per month for a similar sized studio (GLA, 2014a: 7), affordability continues to be an issue for artists. Added to the overall costs of living and working in London, as well as the often low and unpredictable earnings of visual artists is the unpredictability of rent reviews (particularly for leasehold properties, where rent change is determined by the private landlord), which compound these uncertainties around affording studio rent.

Sharing offers a useful strategy for artists looking to reduce the costs of studio rent and in doing so can provide a much-needed buffer to help absorb some of the costs of renting workspace, as well as the financial shock of any sudden rent hikes - which are a particular concern for artists renting workspace from studio groups, wherein their properties are held under leasehold tenure (as detailed in Chapter Four). In this way, sharing provides an important strategy for financial resilience at the level of the individual. It also provides artists access to spaces that may not ordinarily be affordable for the individual, but which become affordable through the increased economic power of artists coming together and sharing their workspace. In recognition of this many large studio organisations like SPACE, Acme, ACAVA and ASC have a series of procedures in place for artists wishing to share their workspace.

Shared workspace strategies also feature as part of a much wider debate within the creative industries literatures about how cities are adapting to the conditions of urban precarity. As the age of secure and full-time salaried employment declines, and is being replaced by insecure, casualised or irregular jobs - nonstandard work, also known as ‘flexible work’, which includes part-time work, self-employment and temporary, which is particularly prevalent within the creative sector - this is producing a rapidly

growing demand for flexible and affordable workspace alternatives in the city for the creative freelancer (Madanipour, 2017). One response has been the growth in shared workspace strategies for creative individuals, start-ups and SMEs - which is particularly visible in London through the practices of hot-desking, third-spaces, pop-up workspace and the explosion of co-worker, incubator and accelerator spaces (DePuter et al., 2017; Nathan, 2017). In 2014 there were at least 132 of these types of spaces in London, 50% of which had arrived since 2012. Today there are at least 156 co-working spaces alone (Nathan, 2017). These types of ventures represent new social organisational forms of workspace in which individuals (typically freelancers) come together to share facilities and amenities to reduce the costs of renting workspace. This financial pressure to find these types of shared workspace alternatives as opposed to renting alone, raises concerns about how 'sharing' a studio sits with artists notions of privacy discussed in the previous section.

For some artists, sharing represents an opportunity for greater social interaction, collaboration and exchanging ideas. For instance, Phoebe Evans' decision to share space was driven by her desire for a more social working environment, she explained,

> 'I went really solitary for ages in my studio and it became my cave, and I didn't fancy sharing it with anybody for about seven years. Then I did an artist residency where I worked alongside other artists and I loved it. I don't think that I noticed that I had got lonely in my studio cave. So that's when I began sharing because it's nice to have the company.' (Interviewed 02/08/16)

She also acknowledged the financial benefits of sharing which 'means that I don't have to spend all of my earnings on it [the studio]'. For many others, sharing was borne out of economic necessity and given the choice many would prefer a workspace of their own. Amelia explained that in order to gain access to studio space she had no option but to share,

> 'I simply couldn't afford a studio if I didn't have someone to share it with and help pay half of the rent.'

In other words, the conditions of urban precarity are forcing artists into a situation in which sharing is becoming one of the only viable ways of accessing affordable studio space in London - even within the affordable studio sector where studio costs are already very heavily subsidised.

23% of the forty artists included in this study share their workspace. Most of these situations involve two artists sharing, but occasionally involve three or more. For instance, three artists that I interviewed rent studios as part of Acme's shared workspace initiative at the Highline Building in Southwark. The Highline is a joint venture between Acme studios and the University of the Arts London (UAL). Opened in 2015, it contains largely student accommodation for UAL students as well as three large open-plan studios on the ground floor each of which is occupied by four artists (Acme, 2017a). Within this space, Acme and UAL run an associate graduate program which is designed to help newly graduated artists (from UAL- Central St Martins) gain access to affordable workspace in the centre of London. Artists selected for the program receive tenancy for two and a half years at half the standard studio rate,[24] equating to an average weekly rent of about £26 per artist (Acme, 2018). Whilst Acme market the scheme as an 'affordable route into a professional studio space in a mutually supportive environment' (Acme, 2018), the collaborative element seemed a necessary must for such low-cost workspace. Jess Anderson explained,

> 'If it wasn't for this space and this program, I don't think that I would be able to have a studio, because it's so heavily subsidised here - and one of the necessary evils of that is we have to share [laughs]. Although we share this space, we all

[24] The average cost of an Acme studio is 2019 is £12.49 per sq. ft per year or £312 per month/£72.5 per week for a 300ft^2 (or 28m^2) studio (Acme, 2019).

> kind of do our own thing, we host a show together at the end of the program because it's required, but for the most part we keep ourselves to ourselves and maintain as much privacy as possible, which is obviously difficult when you're only a stone's throw away from another person.' (Interviewed 01/08/16)

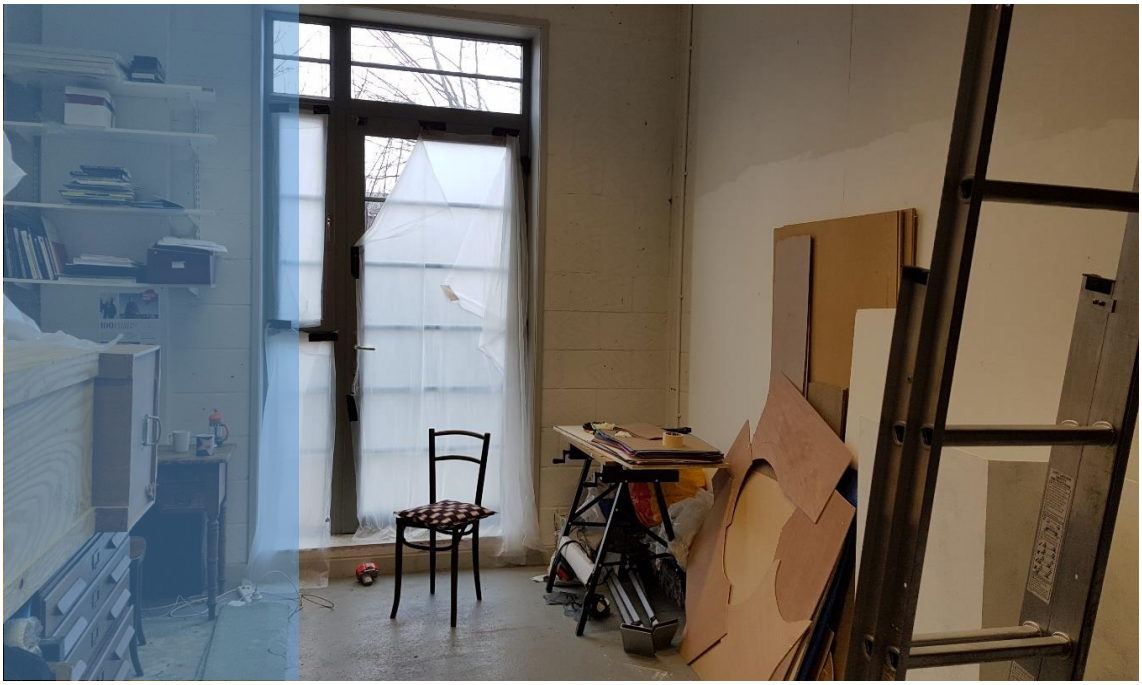
5.2.1 Strategies for privacy

Within the shared studio privacy is not expressed in the formal language of rent or closed-door practice, as it is in the studio that is rented and occupied by one artist. Instead, I found that privacy is constantly under negotiation between the artists sharing their workspace and working in close proximity to one another. In recognition of the basic problem of shared workspace, specifically the enduring need for privacy and a space of one's own, I found that artists draw upon a repertoire of signs, symbols and objects to sub-divide the workspace and create a series of smaller workspaces (one for or each artist). This produces situations in which artists work alone, together and in 'separate spaces' within a larger shared space.

One of the most common techniques used to divide up workspace between artists was through the placement of furniture. A range of bookshelves, desks, boxes, chairs, sofas, etc. were used to devise boundaries between artists and mark out personal workspace. Jess Anderson, who shares her studio with three other artists at the Highline studios explains;

> 'It was really tough when we first arrived here because the studio was just a huge empty room. The Director of the program ordered tables and chairs for us, but they took a really long time to arrive. But when they did arrive, that's when we started to mark out our own spaces and the territory claiming began [laughs]. Not in a bad way, but people just felt that they could finally create a space for themselves. Recently we have also been talking about wanting to build in movable walls to reinforce our spaces. Which is strange, because although we are all signed up to this shared open space, it's become this weird thing where we all want each other, but at the same time we don't, because we need our privacy.' (Interviewed 01/08/16)

In Jess's situation the four artists had used furniture to devise boundaries around their personal workspaces and demarcate a space of their own in which they felt more able to maintain feelings of privacy, which Jess felt was necessary for her work.[25] Within the shared studio set-up the need for privacy therefore took on a distinct physical and territorial form. Objects and furniture were used in the same way in a number of other shared studios that I visited. In Amelia's studio at ACAVA's Flying Angel building, a half-rolled up Persian rug marks the dividing line between the spaces of the two artists who share the workspace (see figure 11).



[Figure 11. Amelia's studio at ACAVA Flying Angel. The blue shading indicates the second artist's workspace. Amelia's part of the studio is on the right. Photo credit: Author]

Whilst in Jane Stokes' studio at SPACE's Haymerle Road (which she currently shares with one other artist) the studio is not large enough for furniture to be used to divide up the

[25] Unfortunately, no photos were taken of this space, due to all four artists not being present to consent to their workspace being photographed.

space. Instead a thin line of masking tape on the floor separates their workspaces. Jane explains,

> ‘Originally there were three of us sharing this tiny studio, can you imagine that? [Laughs] The way that that worked was that we each effectively paid for a wall. But now it’s just the two of us, so what I’ve decided to do is just split the rent in half and the space works slightly better. But you can still never really make too much mess, because there isn’t the space and you are always wary that you don’t want your practice to overflow into the other person’s space because you need to respect their space and privacy as much as you want them to respect yours. So, to make sure I do that I stuck that piece of masking tape down on the floor, see that line? This side is my studio, that side is hers.’ (Interviewed 06/11/16 - figures 12-13)



[Figure 12. Jane Stokes’ studio, showing the masking tape that draws the line between the two artists workspaces. Photo credit: Author]



[Figure 13. Jane Stokes' studio. The blue shading indicates the second artist's workspace, Jane's part of the studio is on the right with the open window. Photo credit: Author]

Different strategies for partitioning and dividing up the studio into a series of sub-sections and smaller spaces for each artist, demonstrated the necessity for artists to be able to identify a space of their own within which to maintain feelings of privacy. This reinforced the impression that privacy and having a space of one's own are critical to the ways in which artists imagine and conceive the contemporary studio. Isabelle Elliot at Highline studios explains,

> 'I don't think the problem every truly goes away, privacy is always at the forefront of my mind when I'm here. I can imagine it's different if you were to have your own studio, but here, my personal strategy for how I manage to have feelings of privacy and legitimacy, is very much related to my practice and material labour which draws its own boundaries in a very physical way. And of course, I have my desk and sofa which separates me a bit, but those boundaries aren't set in stone, so that challenge is always very present.' (Interviewed 01/08/16)

5.2.2 Invasions of privacy

These attempts at fashioning a space of one's own and a sense of privacy within the shared studio almost always inevitably fail because of the constant presence of the 'other' - by this I mean the second, third or fourth (etc.) artist sharing the workspace. Firstly, the individual artist has little control over the social organisation of the studio with regards to the type of social interruptions, encounters and activities that take place there. To demonstrate this, my interview with Tom Gillard at the Highline studios in Southwark was interrupted on three different occasions despite our attempts to communicate the need for privacy during the interview by turning our backs to the room and talking in hushed voices. One of these interruptions was by an artist greeting us as he arrived at the studios. Another was by a different artist asking the whereabouts of a mutual friend. And the final interruption was by an artist who asked what we were up to and pulled up a chair to join in with part of the interview. At the time Tom seemed indifferent to these interruptions but later went on to explain;

> 'You've seen first-hand what it can be like here. Whilst there is generally a solidarity and respect for one another's privacy, there is still a huge element of unpredictability to all of that. Sometimes that kind of spontaneous interaction can be good for talking through an idea, but it can be quite challenging when you just need to be private and in your own headspace, because you can't really prevent those kinds of things from happening.' (Interviewed 18/07/16)

A similar thing happened during an interview with Benjamin Knapp at SPACE's Deborah House studios. Despite his efforts to schedule the interview for a day that his studio partner Ella is usually off-site, part-way through the interview Ella showed up because her plans for the day had suddenly changed. Proceeding this Benjamin suggested that we go somewhere private to continue with the interview and directed us to a local café.

During the interview I pointed out the irony that at the time we were interrupted he was telling me about the importance of privacy within the studio;

> 'I guess that's kind of funny that I'm telling you how private the studio is, and we've ended up here in this relatively public place to talk in private.' (Interviewed 07/11/16)

These interview experiences highlighted a pressing contradiction about the ways in which Benjamin and Tom conceive the need for privacy in the studio compared to the lived reality of that privacy. It highlighted their inability to preside over the social organisation of the studio and the type of social intrusions that take place there. More importantly, it also highlighted the *unpredictability of privacy* within the shared studio. Despite creating strategies to maintain feelings of privacy, the artists were not able to determine or predict when and how long that privacy would last for. This seemed to produce a type of mental unease induced by the lack of everyday predictability and continuity of privacy. This resonates closely with Ettlinger's (2007) work on precarity as being a condition of vulnerability relative to the inability to predict, and the anxieties that are produced as a result of this, i.e. the individuals 'existential anxiety'. Interviews about the unpredictability of privacy seemed to flag up similar concerns for artists about not being able to predict social encounters. In turn this raises questions about the artist's authorship over their workspace and their ability to maintain an optimal working environment according to their own needs.

In other cases, a number of artists had established strict timetables to try and avoid this situation by ensuring that only one artist is in the studio at any given time. Robert Priest for instance, who shares his studio at Deborah House explained,

> 'We both need our own space and privacy when we are working and we don't want to feel limited by each other, and actually you don't want what they are

> doing to inform what you are doing, so it works better this we that we divide up our time.' (Interviewed 03/08/16)

The issue with this strategy is that even when the other artist is not physically present within the studio, their presence is felt through the various material traces that they leave behind in their section of the workspace. Isabelle Elliot, who shares a studio at Highline, explained,

> 'Even when I am here on my own and I've got the studio to myself for a few hours, I'm still surrounded by everyone else's things.' (Interviewed 01/08/16)

In other words, even within the private spaces that artists construct for themselves within the shared studio it is difficult to avoid the material intrusions of the other artist(s). The 'other' is made present within the space in different material ways through the various material traces they leave behind. In this sense, despite developing strategies to 'remove the other' (and socially isolate oneself), within the shared studio the artist is always exposed to the 'other' in different subtle material and affective ways and is therefore never able to fully exclude them from their own space nor their studio practice.

This suggests that the type of relations that develop between the artist and their workspace is therefore not as straightforward as in the individual studio, as in the shared studio responsibility for the arrangement of the material environment becomes a negotiation of different styles, tastes and needs. The individual artist is therefore not able to regulate the ways in which the material environment of the studio informs their practice in the same way as if they were to rent a space of their own. Jane Stokes explains;

> 'If you think about it, everything the other person does goes into your work. I shared a space with a person's whose paintings I didn't like at all, because of the colours and the way that they made their marks, and yet I found that I was using

> the same colours and the same marks. A tutor of mine always said, surround yourselves with colours, paintings and things that you like, because they will feed back into your work, and they really do!' (Interviewed 16/11/16)

The experience of not being in control over privacy or the organisation of the studio raises a pressing question about the artist's authorship of the studio, and the ways in which sharing diminishes the artist's privacy, in that it highlights a failure to anticipate the interactions, encounters and outcomes of the studio. Throughout the interviews these concerns were reflected in artists describing sharing as 'giving something up' and 'surrendering a degree of privacy'. Linda Wright explains,

> 'I'm fortunate that I can afford my own studio because I would hate to share and have someone else's work informing my own work. Here it is just me and my practice, and I get to decide exactly how I want that space to inform and support my work, I'd hate to give that up.' (Interviewed 15/07/16)

Madanipour (2003) has linked concerns for privacy with fears of violation, intrusion and loss of control (2003: 46) and has argued that intrusions of privacy into the individual's personal realm can subject the individual to pain and distress. He contends that threats against privacy can cause spatial boundaries to become more rigid and for individuals to act more defensively and undertake practices that more strictly mark out physical boundaries when they feel that their privacy is being threatened. In other words, when privacy is contested this can result in spatial behaviours becoming more competitive than collaborative, amplifying in turn, the design for privacy (2003: 32).

Working in such close proximity to other artists poses a continual challenge to the maintenance of feelings of privacy within the shared studio, as well as feelings of authorship over their workspace and their practice. But for many artists sharing workspace is an economic necessity and giving privacy up is a consequence of pressing

practical matters like affordability, which is challenging artists assumptions of the type of privacy that the studio should offer. One way to think about the shared studio then is as a social-spatial assemblage of different artists and their materials coming together and interacting in different and contingent ways. At the very least this challenges the possibility of easily constructing a private work environment in which things are familiar and controllable.

5.3 Open studios

Privacy in the studio is also being challenged by growing pressures for artists to demonstrate the social value and returns of public sector investment in artist's workspace. Increasingly they need to show willingness to participate in public outreach events that see artists' studios being temporarily transformed into sites of social engagement - such as the annual open studio. In this part of the chapter I will elaborate on the relationship between the precarity of the studio's urban situation and the pressure for artists to participate in the annual open studio event. I will also explore the ways in which these events challenge notions of privacy within the studio.

5.3.1 Returns on social investment

In previous chapters I foregrounded the issue of precarity as one that defines the organisation and provision of studios in London. I contended that within this context there has been a growing pressure for affordable studio provider groups to demonstrate the studio's wider social, cultural and economic value to the city (as discussed previously in Chapter Four). Coinciding with this, the studio has also featured in discussions about

the growing political interest in expanding access and deepening participation in the arts in London which has added further momentum to the ambition of making art studios more open and accessible to the wider urban public.

Geographers Stallings and Maudlin (2016) have argued that a growing culture of participation in the arts in London has been part of a political economic shift towards the cultural and creative industries. They contend that given their scale and influence, it is no longer possible for the creative industries to operate under the assumption of public interest or social utility. Equally, a recent proliferation of participatory politics around the arts seems to recognise that the new cultural base of the economy needs to be accountable for a wider range of individuals, and subject to wider civic scrutiny. Chilvers and Kearnes (2016) likewise explain that the ambition of arts engagement is to enhance liberal modes of democratic participation in the creative sector, to ensure that the arts do not adopt a privileged and exclusive position.

The ongoing political campaign to 'make the arts accessible to all' - this is a phrase which is used regularly by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 2016; 2019) and Mayor of London (2015c; 2019) - has led to a broadening definition of what counts as 'participation'. Most notable about this campaign has been the shift in emphasis away from professionalised arts and cultural delivery systems and settings (such as galleries, museums, libraries and cultural heritage sites), towards the wide range of creative activities taking place at the local level. This relates to concerns that have been raised about the types of 'culture' being consumed in the city, not least because they appear disconnected from everyday urban creativity. In particular, local arts events and spaces with low expenses or no charge for access are seen as capable of

lowering socio-economic barriers to participation and attracting more diverse audiences (Mayor of London, 2019).

Within this context, the art studio has gained recognition as an important mediator for informal arts experiences in a non-commercial setting and has been included in these attempts to diversify channels of 'participation in the arts' and integrate arts into daily urban life at the grassroots level. Major studio organisations like Acme, SPACE, ACAVA and ASC, have also demonstrated their capacity to enhance these outcomes. A growing number of studio groups are hosting community workshops, social outreach programmes and open studio time at different sites across the city (Moreton, 2013). These attempts to increase the studio's social and cultural relevance by attracting new audiences must also be seen in relation to the type of requirements and conditions set out by their funding.

A common source of public funding for studio development, conversion and rent subsidy is Arts Council England's (ACE) National Portfolio Fund, Grants for the Arts, and National Lottery Fund (ACE, 2016b). For instance, with ACE's funding and support, Acme have been able to make a number of permanent freehold purchases: Acme's Fire station and Copperfield Road sites were purchased in 1997 with National Lottery Funding. Acme's new build developments, Galleria (2006), Harrow Road (2010), High House (2013), Leven Road (2009) and Matchmakers wharf (2012) were also part-funded by ACE through their Grants for the Arts- Capital programme. As a means for providing value for public money, this financial support has been coupled with various social-community objectives. ACE (2016a: 2) explain, for instance, that 'we want as many people as possible to engage with the arts and every grant application must engage the public.' The studio organisations that rely on this funding for studio development and

rent subsidy must therefore endeavour to demonstrate how the studio is a public asset worthy of investment and support, and the open studio event has received particular attention as an opportunity for demonstrating this. This is significant given what we know about artists' preferences to work alone in the studio and the types of issues raised by artists sharing their workspace with others.

5.3.2 The open studio event

Open studios happen when a group of artists open their workspace up to the public during an agreed period of time (usually one weekend a year). Usually the artists themselves organise these events with the support of the relevant studio organisation. Whilst they tend to take place in one building at a time, they are becoming increasingly collective events in which different studio buildings and arts organisations combine their activities to present an array of workspaces throughout a locality. A good example of this is ArtWest, 'a loose collective of artists and makers in various buildings in the NW10 postcode of London. Each year and for one weekend only, we open our doors to the public…it is a fun and friendly weekend which is free to all' (ArtWest, 2018; see figure 14). In recent years, local councils have also played an instrumental role in promoting open studio events; for example 'London Unwrapped' was London's first city-wide open studio event which involved 40 studio buildings providing workspace for over 1,000 artists and designers, opening their studio doors to the public over here weekends in November 2015 - attracting over 14,000 visitors. ACE has also published figures on the growing audiences that open studio events capture. In a report entitled '*Open studios: A Gem Worth Polishing'* (2003), figures show that 32 events across England in 2001 saw over 3000 artists opening up their studios to attract over 250,000 visitors (2003: 4).



[Figure 14. ACAVA's Hythe Road studios being opened to the public in October 2016 as part of the Art West event. Photo credit: Author]

Despite evidence that open studios are attracting growing audiences, they are not a new initiative. Studying the origins of studio provision in London, Green (1999) has dated the open studio event back to the early days of organised studio provision in city's East End in the early 1970s. Green explains how 'in 1979 the East End was already home to several hundred artists. In the last two decades since then the number of studio blocks and artists has grown apace, to the extent that the manifestation of this phenomena is the bi-annual open studios, where artists open up their studios to the

public for a few days over a month or so' (1999: 21). I interviewed a number of artists who were around at this time renting workspace in London in the 1970s, many of whom explained that they felt that the intention of open studios had changed over the years. Tim Birks explained,

> 'Back then it was about building professional networks, selling artwork and gaining recognition. Now that is only a very small part of it because the reality of it is that the type of audiences these events attract aren't at all interested in buying work. The emphasis is now a lot more on community outreach and ticking funding boxes.' (Interviewed 26/08/16)

The open studio event seems to have acquired a new meaning in relation to the studio's urban setting i.e. the urban culture of participation in the arts. It also seems to satisfy the conditions of funding and support for affordable studio provision that many studio organisations like ASC, ACAVA and SPACE have come to depend upon. As a consequence of this, open studio events have become a regular fixture of a number of managed studio buildings, and in a number of cases artists participation in these events has become a contractual obligation of them renting subsided workspace from studio groups. This is the case for ACAVA and ASC. One artist from ASC explained that 'in order to have a studio here and have access to such cheap workspace, you have to participate in open studios, it's written into our contracts'. In the case of SPACE, participation is not obligatory, but it is strongly encouraged. CEO of SPACE, Anna Harding explains;

> 'We take part in Hackney WickED every year, which involves artists opening their studios up to the public. Generally, the artists love it and increasingly more studios are doing it. It's nice to think that we can support people who find it a positive experience. Plus, it's part of their obligation to SPACE to do it to contribute to the work of the charity.' (Interviewed 09/12/16)

The pressure for artists to participate in open studio events is therefore entangled with wider urban processes and pressures relating to urban precarity. These

include the growing unaffordability of artists workspace in London, the studio sector's reliance on public sector funding and support, and the public sector's ambition for the studio to become a *more* socially inclusive local art space. This flags up a series of issues with the type of privacy that a great number of artists have come to expect from the studio.

5.3.3 Suspending privacy and control

Twenty three of the forty artists that I interviewed said that they had participated in the latest open studio event, although such a count reveals little about their feelings and attitudes towards participation. Responses to the open studio event ranged from those who were pro-active in their participation and organise their own additional open studio events, to those who actively resist participation. Tessa and Joshua, for instance, run their own open studio events. Based at ASC'S Stockwell Road site in Brixton, Tessa is part of a small group of artists who run their own open studios programme known as 'Art Licks'. Tessa explained, 'I think open studios are really important, because otherwise our studios run the risk of becoming these really closed off spaces'. Based at ASC's Streatham Hill site, Joshua (in collaboration with another artist at the site) also runs his own public outreach programme called 'DOLPH'. He explained how 'the open studio events we run as part of DOLPH are a great opportunity for local people to come and see what goes on in studios.' (Interviewed 19/07/16)

Others simply saw participation as a prerequisite of renting subsidised workspace. Frankie Davis explained, 'I'm not particularly bothered about open studios,

they're just part and parcel of renting this type of workspace.'[26] Finally, there were those for whom the open studio event flagged up some major concerns about their preferred closed-door style of working. For example, Catherine explained,

> 'To be told that you have to open your studio up like that completely goes against the grain of what the studio is meant to be about. It's meant to be your own private space, where you decide who gets to come in and see it. I always work 'closed-door', so I really don't enjoy doing them.' (Interviewed 15/06/16)

Catherine was among a large number of artists that I interviewed for whom the open studio raised concerns about their capacity to decide how and in what ways the studio is used, and by whom. For Catherine the open studio is incompatible with her ability to maintain feelings of privacy within her workspace. Similarly, Emily Wilson expressed her dislike for the open studio event;

> 'Open studios are really exhausting. The last one I did we had over 500 people in over one weekend because it was part of the Hackney Wicked festival…I would sit here all day having all of these people coming into what is usually my little sanctuary. It's a really gruelling exercise and doesn't really fit with how I normally run my workspace.' (Interviewed 11/11/16)

In order to understand this particular set of reactions to the open studio event we might think more about the type of social interactions that it entails. Most open studio events attempt to be inclusive and therefore do not select participants, they are open to the entire public. During these events the studio is therefore transformed into a site of social interaction, in which different people come together to exchange ideas and experiences about art. Whilst this goes a long way in demonstrating some of the 'social-returns' of artists' studios, for the occupying artist the open studio requires them to temporarily suspend control over the studio's threshold, and their ability to regulate

[26] Interviewed 25/07/16.

the people entering the studio and the types of social interactions and encounters that take place within it - instead the emphasis of the open studio is on maximising participation and ensuring diversity and difference. Ursprung (2008), whose work includes an immersive study of Danish artist Olafur Eliasson's studio, argues that the visitor/spectator never simply plays a passive role in the studio; instead 'the whole body of the viewer becomes enlisted in the configuration of space' (2008: 10). As different bodies (with different affective capacities and dispositions) enter the open studio, they bring with them different practices and encounters that alter the balance and store of action-potential, expressions, capacities and practices experienced within the studio. In doing so, they produce a myriad of new affective and embodied connections which simultaneously open-up and close-down different fields of action and possibilities for the studio. In this way, the open studio event impels similar questions to sharing workspace about the artists' authorship of the studio, such as their ability to control the types of bodies, activities and encounters unfolding within it. It undermines the artist's capacity to regulate the studio according to their own needs and expectations of privacy, specifically ideas about unfettered social isolation.

Despite in most cases only being for one weekend a year, the open studio event seems to conjure some deep-seated anxieties about invasions of privacy and the erosion of control over the studio. Such feelings have an interesting place in some of the recent debates taking place in geography about urban precarity's various *felt* manifestations. Whilst not geographers themselves, Ettlinger (2007) and Butler (2011) have sparked some interesting debates within geography (see Ferreri et al., 2017; Vasudevan, 2017) about the ways in which urban precarity is embodied as a particular set of anxieties that revolve around feelings of 'being out of control' and fears about 'losing control' over

certain aspects of one's life. A couple of artists reaction to these feelings was to refuse to participate in open studios despite the expectation and pressure for them to do so. These include Richard Gaskell,

> 'I'm not crazy about open studios, unless you have an appointment with someone that you think is worth showing your work to, otherwise having people into your studio is too disruptive and isn't what the studio is about…I feel like opening my studio up detracts from it being purely focused on my practice, it becomes about something else. My studio process is generally quite private, so I won't open it up to the public and I actively avoid open studios because I don't like putting myself through the anxiety of it all.' (Interviewed 13/07/16)

The financial pressure for studio groups and artists to participate in annual open studio events is therefore complicating notions of containment and privacy within the studio. It is giving rise to a series of confrontations around the ways in which artists imagine, conceive and experience the studio to be a private space for their creative practice and the lived reality of this experience.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the studio represents a space in which the individual artist can both spatially and ideologically enact the type of private working conditions that they desire. However, the processes and pressures of urban precarity are undermining this. Urban precarity is placing competing demands on studios within the affordable studio sector. On the one hand and at the level of the artist, there is evidence of a desire for the studio to be private and closed-door. On the other hand, and at the level of the studio organisation, urban precarity places a greater pressure on the studio to be *more* open, accessible and public facing. These different ideas about the studio do not sit comfortably with each other and highlight a disjuncture between the ways in which the

affordable urban studio is conceived by those responsible for its funding, organisation and delivery, and is conceived and used by those occupying it. It also demonstrates the type of compromises that result from studio organisations being in a position in which they must account for both the needs of the artists renting their studios, and the objectives of those funding their development.

This raises a series of questions and concerns. The first is about artist's authorship of the studio and the artist's ability to organise their workspace according to their own needs and expectations. The annual open studio and the financial pressure to share workspace has given rise to a situation of porous and precarious spatio-temporality in which a number of artists feel overloaded, anxious and stressed about the different violations and infringements of privacy in the studio.

A second question concerns how far these different types of social engagements with the studio can be taken before privacy is no longer sustainable within the types of studios provided by London's affordable studio sector. It also raises questions about how far artists' expectations of privacy (and to a different degree, control over their workplace) need abandoning altogether? The studio's precarious urban context combined with the pressures of London's culture of participation in the arts are making it more difficult to define the studio as a private, individual space. Another way to think about this is that the familiar boundaries of the studio to which artists have attachments and in which they are invested, are now up for negotiation because of the types of pressures and precarities that the affordable studio is faced with in London. This might be another example of what Marx called the creative destruction of urban modernity.

Thirdly, urban precarity gives rise to a situation in which artists with a more stable financial background have more access to privacy because they can afford to rent

a studio for themselves alone. This contrasts with those for whom sharing is the only affordable way of accessing workspace in the city. This also signifies a much wider economics of privacy at play across studios in London in which artists who can afford to rent workspace on the private market are not forced to confront the same types of challenges to privacy as those renting through an affordable studio organisation like SPACE, Acme, ASC or ACAVA, each of whom expects artists to participate in and host different social and community outreach events like the open studio. As such, artists in a more financially stable position are not forced to confront the types of concerns and anxieties about a loss of privacy and control within the studio as those artists who depend upon the support of the affordable studio sector. In the next chapter I explore the temporal dimensions of this situation.

Chapter Six

Temporal experiences of the precarious studio

6.0 Introduction

In this chapter I propose a critical reframing of urban precarity that is grounded in the temporalities of the artist's studio. Throughout this thesis I argue that artists embody and perform their studio situation in relation to the city and its precarities in a variety of subtle ways; and in doing so they allow the effects of these urban transformations to become visible and understandable. In this chapter I focus in particular on the distinctive transformations of the temporalities of the studio. In doing so I propose that these transformations can be observed as an increasing flexibilization of the temporalities of the studio.

Understanding artists' different modes of being in the studio, including the work routines and the pace of art production and studio activity more broadly, assists in decoupling the studio from dominant imaginaries about the ways that artists experience and assign time to their practice. It also moves us towards a critical reframing of the studio's temporalities. The term 'imaginaries' imply a collective imagining of the studio's purpose and significance, a topic on which I have touched in earlier chapters (e.g. on imaginaries of the studio in Chapters Four and Five). One popular understanding of studios imagines 'artists slaving away in their garrets' (Davdits and Paice, 2009; Hoffman, 2012; Jacob and Grabner, 2010; Waterfield and Postle, 2009). The assumption here is that artists spend long and unchecked periods of time in their studios. In this

chapter I suggest that the temporality of occupation and residence is not nearly so linear or continuous. Drawing on Butler's (2011) premise that precarity indicates an ontological condition of vulnerability and exposure to change, I argue that in the studio a condition of precarity has been normalised through flexible workspace routines, and the discontinuous ways in which artists organize and experience time in relation to their creative practice.

In order to help me think more about Butler's description of precarity in relation to the lived space of the artist's studio and its temporalities, I draw on the work of a number of thinkers and researchers to identify a series of themes related to temporality that guide the chapter. The first theme is that of *the social organisation of time*, by which I mean how time is structured and organised through everyday temporal practice and activity. Taking a non-representational approach to popular culture and everyday life for thinking through the various empirical registers that transcend representation, Thrift (2007) and Edensor (2010a) present everyday life as organised and lived through different temporal patterns involving pace, routine and rhythm. The second theme underscores the importance of *time as an intrinsic property of space.* Here Thrift (2007), Massey (2005) and Buttimer (1976; 2015) present space and place as comprised of everyday temporal practices and processes involving the deployment of various rhythms and bodily energies. The third theme revolves around the *experience of space* and *place-temporality.* May and Thrift (2003) and Wunderlich (2013) for instance, argue that spaces and places are made distinguishable by their unique temporal arrangements in a way that is sensorial and meaningful for their inhabitants. This view of space incorporates ideas about human perceptions of time and how time might feel to be passing faster or slower in different spaces (Flaherty, 1999). It also incorporates urban

planning perspectives that draw on various empirical and sensorial registers for examining the intersection of place-temporality, rhythm, performance and the built environment (Wunderlich, 2008). These three broad themes link the concepts of time and temporality (i.e. the state of existing within or having some relationship with time) with aspects of lived-space, experience and embodiment. Drawing these themes together, this chapter explores the ways in which urban precarity plays out through the lived-space and day-to-day temporalities of the artist's studio.

The chapter is organised into three sections. Section one explores the temporalities of the studio in relation to the concept of pace, defined by Wunderlich (2008: 127) as 'the manner of movement and activity and the rate at which it happens and develops' that contributes to 'the tenor of everyday life, to which normally people give no reflective attention'. Here I demonstrate that the pace at which productive activities unfold in the studio can be conceived in terms of Mulíček et al.'s (2014: 311) 'pacemaker concept'. In short, pacemakers constitute the sources of a particular type of rhythm, which orchestrate individual lives. Mulíček et al. (2014) argue these are divisible into two groups. The first are the 'clock-time pacemakers', which determine specific space-time points bound by fixed beginning and end times. An example might be the beginning and end of work hours, in relation to the close of business. The second are the 'event-time pacemakers', which involve the structuring of time units around individually delimited durations, applicable to certain situations or activities. I argue that the latter type of pacemaker is useful for thinking about how artists structure and experience everyday studio practice.

In section two, I explore the temporalities of the studio in relation to the concept of routine developed by Lefebvre (1991a) to describe the habitual repetitions of daily

life that produce both familiarity, and order. In particular, I explore the increasing flexibilization of studio routines as a consequence of the multiple job holding status of artists, and demonstrate how a combination of precarious employment and workspace insecurity, are affecting the ways in which artists allocate time to the studio. In section three I confront the conflicts that arise between the event-time pacemaker of studio practice, and the flexibility of studio routines. I also explore the consequences of this for how artists experience and construct the studio's temporal identity differently in relation to their socio-economic position and employment status. I conclude with a summary of how the temporal organisation, occupation and experience of the artist's studio is being shaped by its position within the city and its precarities.

6.1 Pace

> 'Sometimes I can make a painting in a few hours, and then sometimes it will take months and months, or even longer, because I was not quite happy with it, and I would go back to it and change it…I think most people would say that it has taken a lifetime to make a painting and for others it might actually happen in the space of an hour or two, but usually, for me it is a few weeks.'
>
> (Richard Gaskell, artist at Matchmakers Wharf (Acme) - Interviewed 13/07/16)

Pace is a term commonly used to describe the manner of movement and activity and the rate at which it happens and develops. For Wunderlich (2013) pace is an embodied practice to which people usually give little reflective attention to. Similarly, Tuan (n.d.) has described pace as a multifaceted mode of experiencing place that engages different embodied ways of feeling and knowing. Pace, and the speed of activity, have therefore been taken up in geography as important to the ways in which people experience and

recognise different places and spaces (see Thrift and May, 2003).[27] Wunderlich (2013) explains that different paces are associated with different types of activity, and become a part of the temporal pattern of everyday social and economic life, which is performed as different speeds in different places. Pace also contributes to the ways in which space is rhythmically constructed, experienced and identified. Following Lefebvre (2013), this section investigates the distinct pace of studio practice and activity. I subsequently discuss how studio practice facilitates a certain temporal order in the studio.

The studio is the principle site of the artist's creative practice. Whilst there are many more ways in which authors have thought about the 'higher level' functions of the studio (see Bain, 2004; Davidts and Paice, 2009; Hoffmann, 2012; Waterfield and Postle, 2009) underlying these different layers of interpretation, the studio is a place of work. Artist Frankie Davies explains, 'yeah of course the studio is multifunctional, but essentially it's just really important to have somewhere to go to make your artwork.'[28] As a valued site of work for artists, I argue that the type of work activities that take place in the studio can be conceived in relation to the 'event-time pacemaker'. This term describes types of highly localised work activities typically associated with pre-industrial work and agrarian communities (Harvey, 1990; Mulíček et al., 2014).

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, Mulíček et al. (2014) describe pacemakers as the sources of particular rhythms which orchestrate individual lives, and argues that these may be divided into two groups. The first group determines specific

[27] Thrift and May (2003: 120-132) state that time-space compression is affecting the pace at which routines move. In chapter six entitled 'winning territory: changing place to change pace', Jenny Shaw addresses the longstanding association between pace and place, and the popular belief that the pace of life varies geographically, and demonstrates that time-space compression is differentially affecting the pace at which socio-economic activity unfolds in different locations.
[28] Interviewed 25/07/16.

time-space points which must be processed. These include the beginning and end times of certain activities such as, the beginning and end of work hours in relation to the close of business, or the close of restaurants, shops and so on. He refers to these as clock-time pacemakers. In contrast, the second group expresses a certain minimal or maximum duration of an activity which is not pre-determined, but highly relative to the context in which the activity is taking place. Unlike clock-time pacemakers, these types of pacemakers are not bound by specific beginning-end times but are associated with the structuring of time-units around socially or individually delimited durations, applicable to certain situations or activities (Mulíček et al., 2014: 311-312). Under this type of pacemaker measures of time are therefore anchored in locally specific, social and economic activities, and time is structured in relation to the amount of time required to complete a certain task. This concept is known as the 'event-time pacemaker'; and depicts the division of a working-day into units of variable activity-durations.

The event-time pacemaker is not an unproblematic concept. A pacemaker is usually something that sets or regulates the pace of activity, whereas the event-time pacemaker describes a certain type of activity that lacks a regular pace. It denotes a certain experience of time in which the pace of work varies with the task being performed *and* throughout the undertaking of that specific task. With this in mind, the contribution of the event-time pacemaker to this work is not as a totalising concept to capture the messy contingency of the studio, but as a concept that helps to convey a sense of the irregular pace of creative work as a way of understanding how artists experience and organise their time in the studio.

Throughout the research I found that the duration of artists work activities in the studio draws upon a highly situation-specific measure of time relative to the activity or task at hand. Mulíček et al.'s event-time pacemaker concept therefore offers valuable ways for thinking about the pace of studio activity and the different ways in which artists organise and experience time in relation to their practice. Artist Lizzy Holloway illustrates this well,

> 'What really sets the pace of work, is the work itself. With the murals I make, each one is a different year of my son's life, so each contains 365 rectangles. Each rectangle is one day, and each day has a different colour code for something that happened, and, each colour has to have a number of layers and I have to wait for each layer to dry. So, although it has to be planned and precise, it's not really something that can be timed, and actually that process is an important part of it.' (Interviewed 15/11/16)

What emerged was that the pace at which activity and art practice unfolds in the studio is directly related to the type of activity and artwork at hand. Whilst this finding is not unexpected, it is important to understand the significance of this style of working to how artists assign meaning and value to their time in the studio, as well as manage the growing pressures on their studio time.

I found that even when the same or similar type of task was repeated - i.e. when two similar size artworks are produced using the same materials - the pace at which the task is completed, and the amount of time required to complete it is incredibly varied. As artist Jenny McGrath demonstrated,

> 'The pace of work totally depends on what I am working on. When I start working it's like, okay, today I'm going to start working on that, and also start on a drawing, and once I get them all started, I can come in and go okay, this needs this, that needs that and its completely varied each time. Even when I am painting portraits, which are all quite small compared to the bigger canvases I do, the rate that they progress is totally varied. So, at the moment because my work is going in a different direction, it just needs more time.' (Interviewed 21/11/16)

The pace at which productive work activity unfolds in the studio is therefore heavily task specific. This also has to be understood in relation to the artists' subjective measure of what constitutes a complete task, or a finished piece of work. For example, artist Ruth King explained,

> 'You see that painting over there, that plastic thing, it's about eight and a half meters long, by three and a half meters high. This was my sort of response to the Iraq war, and I did that painting in this tiny little space. I had these different rolls of paper. It's the same size as Picasso's Fresco! So, I would have these rolls of paper coming down, so I would paint a bit, unroll it, and paint a bit. It took a long time, but then again something like that [points to smaller painting hanging on the wall] took me just as long to finish and get it how I wanted it.' (Interviewed 16/06/16)

As this suggests, the timeframes of creative work cannot so easily be pre-determined by the artist. Even tasks of the same variety, can require vastly different amounts of time to complete. Artist Eileen Briscoe notes, 'it's incredibly changeable. Sometimes I can make a painting in a few hours, and then sometimes it will take months, and months, or even longer because I was not quite happy with it, and I would be going back to it and changing it.'[29] The pace of production is therefore extremely variable and highly relative to the context and specificities of the creative task at hand. There is no objective set maximum or minimum duration for it; instead the duration a task is dependent on the artist and contingent on how they envisage the final artwork should look and feel.

6.1.1 Speeding up studio practice

Moreover, with no fixed timeframe the pace of studio activity cannot so easily be 'sped up' to increase the artists productive output. Mulíček et al. (2014) explain that the

[29] Interviewed 18/07/16.

concept of speed up relates closely to the clock-time pacemaker and Harvey's (1990) labour theory of value. In Harvey's (1990) work on time and industrial capitalism, he examines the pervasiveness of the clock-time pacemaker in the socio-economic organisation of the city. He notes that the advent of industrial capitalism and urbanisation in the late 18th and early 19th centuries marked a radical time-space reorganisation of the city around the concept of mechanical clock-time, in which the duration of work can be broken down into more abstract units of time, such as hours and minutes. Harvey (1990) proposes that clock-time is inherently bound to the labour theory of value - which states that a reduction in production time contributes to the generation of greater profit per unit of labour time. Within this system the turnover rate of capital is significant because 'speeding up' is seen as a powerful means for augmenting profit, particularly when faced with competition. Mulíček et al. (2014) also explain that the logic of 'speed up', and aspiration to shorten productive, economic time-horizons, has permeated and organised all manner of time-spaces and activities in the city, which has resulted in the speeding up of capital, exchange and the pace of urban life more broadly. Flaherty (1999) and Tuan (1975; 1979) have also noted that the speeding up of social and economic urban processes has had a profound effect on the ways in which individuals structure their daily lives and perceive different uses of time as productive or wasteful. Included in this, is the way in which different places are distinguished in the city as 'productive' or 'non-productive' depending on the pace of their activity. Generally, places that display a faster pace of activity are regarded as more productive and thus of greater value to the political economy, than those where activity unfolds at a slower rate (Flaherty, 1999).



[Figure 15. James Russo's studio at Acme's Orsman Road site, in Hackney. Marquette's on the wall are made of MDF wood and paint. Photo credit: Author]

In the studio, given the dominance of the event-time pacemaker, speeding up activity to increase productivity is not feasible, nor is it desirable. Instead, artists appear to value their time in the studio in different ways. What constitutes a productive use of time for each artist does not necessarily relate to the rate at which tasks or artworks are completed, or to the number of tasks completed within a given timeframe. For instance, visual artist James Russo explained that what he considers to be a productive use of time varies throughout the various stages involved in producing an artwork. He explained that when beginning a new project, a productive use of time might include

activities like producing rough notes, brain storming and producing mind maps. Equally it might be taken to include spending time reading about a new topic of interest or visiting museums and galleries to develop new ideas. The further into a project James gets though, the more a productive use of time becomes measured in relation to *specific* activities, such as producing mock-ups of the final artwork and marquette's (small drafts of a finished sculpture - see figure 15). James explained,

> 'For me this is very much a workshop space, I'm using tools all the time, I'm using, resistant materials and quite slow processes for getting this level of formal finish, but I'm not always working on this kind of thing. Sometimes I come in here, and I just sit and look at what I'm doing. You really need that in the beginning. Sometimes you need to just sit and think, or go and visit a museum, or something to build your ideas. A friend of mine who works in a very Francis Bacon way, he's a wonderful painter, but he actually uses plasterer's tools to paint. Well, he sometimes wears clean clothes and takes a clean chair into the studio, and he calls it 'having a beer with my paintings' and he sits with a can of beer and looks at his paintings, which for him is a really valuable part of the art process.' (Interviewed 16/06/16)

Other artists drew on an equally varied vocabulary of activities to describe what for them constitutes a productive use of time. For painter Linda Wright this included sitting with a coffee looking at her work around the studio. For painter Jenny McGrath this included meditation and yoga in the studio to prepare her mind for work. For many other artists this included a wide range of activities such as, reading, producing sketches, sending off funding applications, prepping paint boards, washing paint brushes, or cleaning and reorganising the studio. Portrait painter, Jane Stokes explains,

> 'If I was coming in today, I would be cleaning the surfaces, I would be tidying away, I possibly might be cleaning the floor. I just clean before I work, everything has to be in its right place and then that gets me into the mind-set of working.' (Interviewed 16/11/16)

For a large number of artists using studio time 'productively' actually involved slowing down the pace or allowing for moments of complete stillness. This is best exemplified

visually by the organisation and appearance of artist Catherine Mabbutt's studio (see figure 16). At the time of the interview Catharine was between two art projects. Evidence of her previous work had been cleared away and all that remained in the studio were a couple of books and an office chair ready for the next project to begin. The studio was therefore arranged in a manner which illustrates the period of stillness that studio activity goes through between different bodies of work.



[Figure 16. Catherine Mabbutt's studio at Acme's Childers Street site in Deptford. Photo credit: Author]

Artists therefore demonstrate different individualistic approaches to the relationship between time, pace and productivity. There was also little economic motivation to speed up the pace of activity, as the faster pace of productivity does not necessarily translate to greater economic output and profit. For instance, Menger (1999) conducted an extensive study of 3,000 artists and examined the different inputs

of time in different artworks and the value of this work. He found that the price that artworks are sold for 'does not derive from the quantity of working time at a given wage rate' (1999: 552). Instead he notes that artists' 'income reflects whether their works are in demand, that is whether they are sold and at what price' which is independent from the input of time into a work. Artist Jack Roberts explained that,

> 'Things can happen really quickly. I can do this stuff really quickly; this digital stuff can take like 15 minutes. It's kind of terrifying the speed at which I can actually produce something and then get it printed. It might be shit, but then again, it also might sell for the same, if not more, than something that I have hand collaged and screen-printed and that's taken me god knows how much more time, probably something more like two months to produce.' (Interviewed 10/11/16)

It seems that artists' value and experience 'productive time' in the studio, in relation to the task-time pacemaker and the temporal specificities of a particular artwork and task. We might then ask about what happens when the artist has a work deadline approaching. How do they compensate for the inability to speed up production? Artist, Isabelle Elliot responded, 'you just have to spend as much time in the studio as you can, and make up the time where ever you can.'[30] Strategies for increasing productive output, therefore requires artists to increase the amount of time they spend in their studios. In the build-up to a work deadline, such as a show or exhibition, a number of artists explained that they experience an 'intense period of work'. Intensity here refers not to a change in pace of work, but to more hours and longer periods of time spent in the studio. Artist, Iain Newman explains,

> 'My work happens in different periods. When I make my films for a show that is quite scheduled, because they tend to be produced in the studio in one or two long days. So, if I'm gearing up to making a film, I have a particularly intense studio time. Like now, I might have a show in this exhibition in January, so, I don't have much time to finish my work. So, I know the next few months will be quite

[30] Interviewed 01/08/16.

> full on, and I will have to put a lot more hours in to get it all done in time.' (Interviewed 07/11/16)

Studio organisations, ASC, ACAVA, SPACE and Acme permit 24-hour access to all of their studio sites. This all-hours access effectively enables artists to cater to the specificities of the studio's event-time pacemaker by extending the amount of time spent there. The pervasiveness of the event-time pacemaker (where time is structured in relation to the amount of time required to complete a certain task and cannot easily be altered) is therefore the first important contribution to the studio's temporal identity and experience. In the next section I look at how the artists ability to extend studio time is under growing pressure as consequence of the labour and workspace precarities that they are confronted with.

6.2 Routine

> 'I don't have any set routine. I try to come in here when I don't have to do anything else. But I hate just popping in. I also really hate it if I have anything else to do that day. I find it really hard to relax into the studio mind-set and get work done. For instance, if I have to be somewhere in the afternoon I find it really hard to be here, which sounds crazy because you have the whole day but ideally I like to have it where I don't have anything else on that day. Of course, it doesn't usually work like that.'
>
> (Janet Harper, artist at Deborah House studios (SPACE) - Interviewed 07/11/16)

Lefebvre's (2013) rhythmanalysis helps us think about the situated nature of routine. His work demonstrates that the social repetition of material practices contributes to the production of place and space. Cohen (2007) also observes the way that routine and repeated 'ordinary' experiences, produce the everyday aesthetics of place. Cohen draws upon the earlier work of John Dewey to develop an aesthetics of routine, which he argues is comprised of two types of experience; 'ceaseless flow experience' - which are

the unconsciously experienced continuous and repetitious everyday routines and, 'experience events' - which are the routines that stand out from the former, and are vividly remembered. For Cohen, both routine experiences constitute and represent the experiential continuum of everyday life. Lefebvre (2013) adds that routine can also help define the sensorial and affective, temporal senses of space and place, and allow us to understand the different ways that we experience them.

The notion that routines or schedules are important to the construction and maintenance of place-identities has been refined further by a number of authors, such as Wunderlich (2013) and Buttimer and Seamon (2015). Such work has demonstrated that it is through the repetition of routines, habits and schedules, that familiar places become the unquestioned and unchallenged settings for certain activities which constitute our everyday lifeworld's. Lefebvre's (2013) work on the relationship between people's daily realities, rhythm and place provides also provides a similar way of understanding routine in relation to the body-in-space. Lefebvre (2013) developed rhythmanalysis, as a mode of analysis for examining the ways in which social practices associated with certain places are constituted through the repetition of relations and habitualised routines. For Lefebvre (1991b; 2013), routine is therefore in many ways intrinsic to the production of perceived space,[31] and is bound up in the temporal experience of place. It follows that *routine* is essential to the ways in which individuals simultaneously experience, produce, identify and connect to place (Goonewardena et al., 2008; May and Thrift, 2003).

[31] According to Lefebvre's (1991b) spatial triad there are three types of space that contribute to the production of social space. I) Perceived space - constituted through social practice, action and the deployment of bodily energies. II) Representational space - lived through discourses (symbols) of space, which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. III) Representations of space - discourses on space, as conceived and conceptualised by planners and urbanists through map making and models.

During interviews artists were asked to describe what a 'typical day in the studio' looks like, including any particular routines that they have in place - this question of 'routine' elicited two responses. The first described the repetition of activities and certain repeated methods of working in the studio. The second described the frequency that artists visit and spend time in their studios. This points to the dual usage and meaning of routine. Whilst both types are significant to artist's studio practice, in this section I demonstrate how it is the latter type of routine - relating to the amount and frequency of time spent in the studio - that is increasingly placed under pressure by the precarity of artists' studios in the city.

6.2.1 Multiple job holding

Workspace and labour precarity effect the ways in which artists allocate time to their studio practice. The vulnerabilities produced by work-related insecurity (low pay and income insecurity) and workspace insecurity (rising studio costs and the unpredictability of rent reviews) has led to confrontations between the *amounts* and *frequency* of time that artists spend in their studios.

As discussed in the literature in Chapter Two, precarity has long been deployed as a term for describing different forms of irregular work (Ferreri et al., 2017; Madanipour, 2017; Vasudevan, 2017). This type of precarity has been sedimented in patterns of self-employment and new freelancing styles of working, which are particularly characteristic of the creative and cultural industries (Mould, 2014). Menger (1999) explains that self-employment is the most frequent work status of the artist, meaning that like entrepreneurs they must adapt and respond to work opportunities as and when they arise. It has also been well documented that security of income and the

financial rewards for artistic practice are persistently lower and less predictable than other occupations within the creative industries requiring similar levels of human capital (Kretschmer et al., 2011).

For artists, productivity is therefore associated with occupational independence and a high variability of earnings involving discontinuous employment with long spells without working. Menger (1999) notes that the main response to the income variability of this profession, is occupational risk diversification involving the managing of the insecurity of earnings through secondary employment. The resulting need for artists to supplement their creative income with income from other sources, means that the labour market profile of many artists tends to be characterised by multiple job holding on the individual level (Menger 1999; Thorsby and Zednik, 2011). My findings were consistent with this assertion; 73% of the artists involved in this study were employed in part-time or full-time positions in addition to their studio practice. The majority (93%) of these secondary jobs were in arts-related professions which make use of artistic skills and training in some way. This included an assistant art librarian, gallery owner, gallery assistant, remote artist residency assistant and an arts services executive who works for DACS.[32] A number of these artists also held jobs within the arts-education sector. They included an art college assistant, mentor for international artists, online arts tutor, university arts lecturer and head of university art department. Further to this, the small percent (7%) of the artists working in additional non-arts related professions were restaurant waiters. The full-time artists that were not included in these figures, were

[32] DACS is a not-for-profit organisation based in London, that campaigns for the rights of visual artists and pays them royalties to help sustain their practice.

either retired or earned enough from the sale of their work for their creative practice to be financially self-sustaining.

With the majority of artists relying on a portfolio of earnings from different sources to sustain their studio practice, it was generally understood that artists must allocate their working time between different jobs which operate within related or different labour markets. The most immediate effect of the division of worktime was a reduction in the amount of time that artists were able to allocate to their studio practice. As figure 17 shows, full-time artists spent on average 32 hours in the studio each week over an average duration of five days. Whereas artists in secondary employment spent on average ten hours less in the studio each week.

	No. of hours spent in studio/week			**No. of days spent in studio/week**		
	Mean	Range	Mode	Mean	Range	Mode
Full-time artist (27%)	32	8-45	36, 40 & 42	5	3-6	5
Artists employed in part-time and full-time work, in addition to their work as an artist (73%)	22	4-40	20	3	3	2

[Figure 17. Sample size of 42. The average number of hours and days artists spend in their studio per week (rounded up to nearest whole number). It is important to note that number of days does not translate to a full day as the artists visits may vary in length]

6.2.2 Workspace pressures

Compounding the challenge of labour and income insecurity is the affordability of workspace and the overall cost of living in London. As stated in the Greater London Authority's (2014a: 8) '*Artists Workspace Study*', 'while many artists make their living

through a variety of related occupations, it is important to recognise the potential for all artists to fully support themselves through their artistic work'. In this sense, artists' workspace should be regarded as part of the wide spectrum of low-threshold enterprise space in a large city like London. Creating conditions in which artists can dedicate more time to their artistic career can increase economic success and contribute to London's cultural capital. My findings reflect what is implied by this statement, which is that low and unstable incomes, compounded by unaffordable and fluctuating studio rent, and the cost of living in London, are impacting the amount of time that artists are able to allocate to their studio practice. For example, Artist, Jack Roberts explained,

> 'Generally, just living in London is a lot more expensive and studios are a lot more expensive, so you have to work a lot more. Like when I first started working, I would be able to make my rent in a week. So, if I needed to make my rent I could get it in a week, so that would mean my rent in some way was 25% of my potential overall income. Now it's more like 60% so I can't do that. Now I actually have to look ahead towards a certain target and look like I'm on target well before it, and on top of that I have to factor in the cost of materials on top of all of the other living costs.' (Interviewed 10/11/16)

Such accounts were not unusual. Artist Philip Bloom also reflects on this relationship between the cost of the studio and the amount of time that he is able to spend in it. In a personal interview with Philip, he explained how after having graduated from Falmouth University in 1988, he started out as an artist with a group of friends in a squat on Jeffery's Road in Stockwell (South London). Squatting has been explored by authors such as Vasudevan (2015) and Madanipour (2017), as a spatial and material expression of the precarity of affordable housing in the city. It has also been well documented in a number of literatures (e.g. Green, 1999; 2001; Moreton, 2013). This work shows how before being formally criminalised in 2012, squatting in semi-derelict residential and warehouse properties provided an affordable means for artists to access

free or low-cost workspace in areas of the city that would otherwise be unaffordable. Philip believes that this studio arrangement, for which he paid little to no rent, afforded him more time to develop his creative practice than his current situation does;

> 'In the squat it's anarchy. There is a prominent quarter of people who refused to pay the bills, which created stressful financial tensions. In that sense, Acme offers stability. But I believe I got into the RCA [Royal College of Art] on the strengths of being in a squat. If I had had any other studio space, like the one I am in now, I would have to work full-time to afford it and then I wouldn't have had the time to have produced as much artwork to show…because I now have this type of studio, I need to work alongside my practice. I was teaching until last year on and off at Camberwell College, although not on a permanent basis, and it kept interfering with my studio and I wanted to go to New Orleans for instance, to do a project, I couldn't because of the responsibility for my students.' (Interviewed 21/06/16)

Taken together, the labour and workspace precarities that artists confront produces a situation in which artists experience increased pressure on the amount of time available to allocate to the studio. One of the consequences of this is that artists with dual or multiple-occupations pay proportionally more in rent per unit of studio time than do full-time artists. Artists appear to experience studio time in relation to a personal politics of affordability and undergo a self-evaluation in which they ask 'how much am I willing to pay in rent for my studio, compared with how much time I am able to spend here?' Artist Ruth King, demonstrates this time-affordability dualism,

> 'The reality is, who can pay £270 a month, plus accommodation, plus eating, plus materials, not many people can and that's the problem, and so the only way to do it is getting a full-time job and if you have a full time job what are you going to use the studio for, Saturday and Sunday? Are you going to pay £250 a month for that?' (Interviewed 16/06/16)

These experiences of studio-time relative to affordability are arguably also aggravated by the insecurity of the leasehold tenures under which the majority of artist's workspace is managed by SPACE, ACAVA, ASC and Acme. As Chapter Four

demonstrated, the pervasiveness of the leasehold model of tenure within the city's affordable studio sector grants studio organisations like Acme, SPACE, ACAVA and ASC, little systemic control over changes in ground rent. In order to safeguard themselves (and their workspace) from the unpredictability and inevitability of rent increases, artists find themselves relying more on other forms of work to absorb the shock of any sudden spikes in rent. Artist Emily Wilson described her experience of this,

> 'When I took the studio on the lease that SPACE had on this building was up in like three years. So, my contract with SPACE is permanent as long as I need it within those three years and when I took it, I knew that they didn't own it. They might be able to renew the lease, but it's very unlikely because the landlord keeps on hiking up our rent because he knows that it's worth a lot of money now. He knows he could make a lot of money if he turned it into flats or knocked it down. So, if I could ever buy a building and make a studio set up that would be amazing, just to have that security and not to be working all the time to afford the rent. So, I feel this frustration, I love my studio but every year the rent goes up and every year you think can I keep doing this? Is it worth it for a few hours here and there?' (Interviewed 11/11/16)

The key point emerging here is that labour and workspace precarity effect the ways in which artists allocate time to their studio practice. The precarity of artists earnings, combined with unaffordable and unstable studio rent, engenders a situation in which artists feel compelled to top-up and stabilise their earnings by taking up additional employment. One of the consequences of this is that artists are dividing their time between different types of work activities, which significantly affects the amount of time they are able to assign to their studio practice, resulting in a series of discontinuous and flexible studio routines that are highly contingent on the individual artist's employment status.

6.2.3 The flexibilization of studio routines

Time-space routines maintain continuity in people's lives and are regarded an essential part of daily living (Edensor, 2010a; Thrift, 2007). Buttimer and Seamon (2015) note that repetitive aspects of daily lives and time-space routines which involve continual and regular human activity generate a strong sense of place. Routine therefore joins people with space, place and time. It also produces a familiarity with place to which, Tuan (1975; 1979) notes, individuals have a tendency to become attached. Yet, as a consequence of artists undertaking secondary employment, studio routines tend to be organised around artists' commitments to 'other work' and are therefore more ad-hoc, irregular and flexible. This absence of routine is often felt by artists. Tessa Burrows explains,

> 'I think at the moment I don't have a routine, because I'm working so much. What I do when I'm working, is I come here in the evenings after work for a few hours when I can. So, I'm working full-time doing scenery and sets for opera and ballet, and I try to come in a couple of evenings a week and weekends, but it changes depending on how much work I have on.' (Interviewed 14/07/16)

Of the artists that I interviewed, 73% hold permanent positions in other part-time or full-time work. As a result of this, I found that their weekly work schedules are divided temporally and spatially, between different types of work activities, and different workspaces. But this is not an equal division. There was a tendency for studio-work routines be secondary to other work. There is a certain inevitability to this unless the artist has enough independent means, but what is not known is how this impacts artists' studio routines.

The types of 'other work' that artists were engaged in generally involved contracted hours and fixed days. By way of accommodating their studio practice, in the

working week studio time was made flexible around other work schedules. The underlying experiential patterns of the studio therefore transcended its particular temporal-spatial order and included the temporal patterns and structures engendered by participation in other more structured work. By exploring the lived space of the studio, we therefore gain a picture of the stabilising and habitual forces structuring studio time, pertaining to the artists other work schedules. Artist Ruth King demonstrates this well,

> 'Why do I teach? Mostly because of money. If artists could survive by selling our work, we would. Everybody has got to have a little bit of a job to be able to come here. So, from Monday to Wednesday I teach at a public school. I arrive here between four and five on a Wednesday and I came straight from the college, so I get on my dirty painting clothes, go to Tesco to buy some food, so I'm ready to sit down and start clearing my head about seven, and then I eat and then by eight thirty I work. Then I go home and comeback very early the following morning…I've been working on this painting for a year and a half, its advancing very, very slowly, because by the time I'm really getting into something, it's already Sunday and its midnight and then I work again on Monday.' (Interviewed 16/06/16)

Similarly, artist Emily Wilson explained,

> 'I feel that my studio routine is so variable. I do some teaching, so it has to fit around that. I guess I spend on average probably two or three days here a week. I'm thankful for my part-time job, even though I wish I didn't have to do it, I feel like I would be a better artist if I could spend more time here.' (Interviewed 11/11/16)

As Emily and Ruth demonstrate, as a result of the precarities surrounding the studio (such as insecurity of tenure, unstable and unaffordable rent, low wages and unstable earnings), artists relate to the perceived need for greater flexibility around how they allocate time to their creative practice. Just as labour flexibility is the ability for artists to increase their employment and wage levels, the flexibilization of studio routines is the ability to accommodate a studio practice alongside other employment. Artist Matthew Denham also noted,

> 'I have to teach, so I have to try and fit in my practice around that. So, my time is often broken up into different periods, sometimes I might work a weekend, other weeks I might work every day, from ten am until five PM if I'm not teaching.' (Interviewed 26/08/16)

Flexible labour has been a topic of much academic research and debate, alongside non-standard work and contingent employment, and has come to dominate mainstream debates about the pervasiveness of precarity in contemporary urban societies (Butler, 2011; Vasudevan, 2017). The reduction in studio time and corresponding flexibilization of studio routines, can therefore be interpreted as the spatial-temporal manifestation of the studio's position within the city and its precarities. Contributing to this flexibilization is the perceived need to extend studio time in order to increase the artist's productive output. As established in section one of this chapter, the pace of production cannot so easily be sped up. Instead artists try to extend the amount of time spent on their studio practice. They find themselves adding or gaining more studio time where they can which contributes further to the irregularity of the studio's workspace routine. Labour and workspace precarity, combined with the inflexible time demands of the creative task (i.e. the event-time pacemaker of studio activity), have made the temporal experience of the studio more unpredictable and contingent.

Another way that this flexibilization can be observed is through the artist's relationship with the difference between week and weekend. Mulíček et al. (2014: 307-313) note that time-space dichotomy of week-weekend in modern society, has emerged from the social reproduction of dominant routines and daily programmes that relate to the prescribed working hours of capitalist economies. Keightley (2012) adds that week routines tend to be established in relation to standard business hours and work

schedules, such as the typical five day, nine to five working week. Associated with these different routines are the different spaces of work and home. Whilst the workspace dominates the week, home tends to be the spatial realm of the weekend. Aquist (2004: 168) explains, 'the time-space rhythms emerging from our culture are to a large extent set by the hours of paid work, which often dominate our daily program…usually we do much the same things every day from Monday through Friday…the routines of weekends are usually different from those of weekdays.' This week-weekend dichotomy is therefore not only embedded in the ways in which individuals structure and organise their daily lives, but also in the ways in which they assign certain activities to different times and settings - i.e. work activities to the workspace, during the week and personal activities to the home during the weekend.

Despite the pervasiveness of this dichotomy in modern urban society, artists' studio practice does not appear to adhere to these same spatial-temporal boundaries. Instead, I found that the distinction between *week* and *weekend* becomes blurred in order to compensate for the amount of time spent on 'other work' during the week. This blurring can be understood in relation to Menger (1999: 554) who explains that the ideological dimension of creative practice has been turned into an inherent cultural trait, 'a kind of occupational characteristic that goes along with artistic life, or to be more precise that blurs the boundaries between occupation and private life.' Menger (1999) suggests that this blurring is in some way part of the lived character of the artist's creative practice. But I would argue that the blurring that Menger describes has been exacerbated by the increased pressures on studio time during the working week. As artist Frankie Davies reflections on her own studio schedule demonstrates,

> 'I don't really have that thinking of weekdays being separate to weekends. You know, it's like I have a break from teaching at the weekend, which makes me feel like I should be here. You just try and fit things in.' (Interviewed 25/07/16)

This flexibility is also made possible by the 24-hour access that SPACE, Acme, ACAVA and ASC permit to all of their studio sites. This allows artists to be more versatile with their time and make up the hours when they can. When I asked artist Isabelle Elliot how she manages a full-time job as an assistant art librarian in addition to her artwork, she explained, 'I work all day in the library, so am in here every evening to make up for that. But naturally that means I don't get as much social time I would like, so I try to bring my friends here. My boyfriend comes over quite a bit, and I quite often share some beers with some of the other artists, or a friend might drop around.'[33] The flexibilization of studio routines, therefore reflects artists' collective attempts to manage their different work-commitments. Within this flexibility therefore lies a deeply embedded relationship between precarity, affordability, and time.

6.3 Temporal place-identity

Wunderlich (2010), Buttimer and Seamon (2015) and Edensor (2010a; 2010b) address the production and experience of place-temporality as a process that occurs in everyday space. In this section, I discuss how the flexibilization of studio routines, and the event-time pacemaker and the tensions that arise between these, contribute to the unique temporal identity of the studio. Further to this, I argue that the studio's temporal identity is lived and produced in a highly subjective and individual manner, relative to the artist's socio-economic position and work status. To illustrate this, I begin by

[33] Interviewed 01/08/16.

exploring how the flexibilization and individuation of studio routines prevents artists from developing shared temporal experiences of the studio.

Wunderlich (2008; 2013) argues that in urban workplaces, time is experienced and performed collectively and is jointly perceived and shared. Most workplaces, for instance, have a shared work routine, such as a set start and finish time, and a set lunchtime break. Workplace activities are therefore commonly structured around the clock-time pacemaker**.** Mulíček et al. (2014: 311) note that clock-time pacemakers 'collectively constitute shared, often institutionalised, and above all stable sources of particular rhythms. They include institutions, structures, technologies or activities that set the timing for a given urban environment'. The temporal identity of a workplace is therefore often portrayed as shared or inter-subjective. However, as discussed in section one, the studio's event-time pacemaker is established in relation to local activities, and subjective measures of what constitutes a finished task. This makes it harder to group together the pace of different artists' studio practices.

Further to this, Tuan (n.d; 1975; 1979) explains that synchronised rhythms, routines and experiences of time have an importunacy effect on the qualities of place. In his 1975 work, entitled 'place: an experiential perspective' he notes that simultaneous participation in a certain time-order (i.e. a certain place-based routine) is one of the most important sources of rhythmic consistency for place, and contributes to its unique temporal quality and character. For Tuan, the synchronisation of routines, rhythms and the shared temporal experiences these produce, allow individuals to immediately recognise the purpose and intention of a place and therefore instantly be included and feel that they fit in. Likewise, Buttimer (1976) argues that everyday synchronisations of rituals, habits, routines and schedules produce powerful

intersubjective experiences of place, and that simultaneous participation in these temporal activities is one of the central principles of social organisation. Together, Buttimer (1976) and Tuan (1975; 1979) assert that conformity to the repetitious activities and routines of certain places produces powerful feelings of familiarity which in turn contributes to the production of a distinct temporal place-identity. Yet, artist's studio routines are far from synchronised.

Artist Jess Anderson rents a studio at Acme's Highline Building, which is provided through University of the Arts London, Central St Martin's (CSM), 'associate studio programme' (as detailed in Chapter Five, section two). The programme was a collaboration between CSM and Acme, to provide arts-graduates access to affordable workspace. As part of this programme, Jess shares an open-plan studio in Stockwell with four other recently graduated artists. Yet, according to her, despite this shared arrangement,

> 'We are all in at different times, so quite often I will be here, and I will be the only one in at all. So, I guess when it's just me my studio expands and becomes the whole room. So, for me it works quite well that we are in at such different times, often there might be one other in for part of the time but that's not that often.' (Interviewed 01/08/16)

From the largest studio property included in this research (ASC's Bond House site in Deptford which contains 120 studios) to the smallest (SPACE's Belsham Street site, which contains only 8 studios), artists' workplace routines were so varied that they rarely overlapped. Artist Joshua Briggs explains,

> 'There's forty odd studios here and as you have probably seen today, there are only a handful of people in, and I don't think there's usually more than a handful of people in at any one time. Other people probably come and go in the evenings, other people do weekends.' (Interviewed 19/07/16)

Similarly, artist Lance Drummond said,

> 'There are forty-nine artists working here, I never see anybody. Saying that, I'm not here as much as I would like to be.' (Interviewed 27/07/16)

Together, the irregular task-specific pace of studio activity and the flexibilization of studio routines produce an asynchronous experience of the studio's temporalities. This means artists experience and define the studio's temporal identity on a subjective and individual basis, in relation to their practice and other work commitments.

6.3.1 Subjective temporalities

Precarity is therefore experienced and located physically and conceptually in the studio's temporalities and in the social relations and practices that unfold there. As sections one and two of this chapter demonstrate, temporal experience occurs in response to two interrelated factors. The first is the labour and workspace precarity which places studio time under increasing pressure, particularly as artists are required to take up 'other work' in order to sustain their studio practice. The second is unpredictable start and end times of art production and studio activity. The latter has meant that instead of responding to pressures on studio time by speeding up the pace of activity and shortening production time-horizons, artists have been forced to increase their studio time whenever possible.

Experiences of the temporal identity of the studio are therefore largely contingent on the socio-economic status and work-profile of the individual artist. The outcome is a series of disparate experiences of studio time among artists; those who are not required to undertake additional work expressed a more continuous, steady and routine experience of the studio. For example, Steven Miller is a former principle lecturer in Fine Art at Central St Martins' University of the Arts London. Having retired

in 2015 he is now a full-time artist and explains the dramatic change to his studio routine following this,

> 'My routine has really changed dramatically, because in summer 2015 I left my post at Central St Martins, I was principle lecturer in fine art, and I'd come to the point where I was actually 66 and I got to the point where I said I want to talk about retiring. Up to that point it was a demanding job, in term-time I would perhaps come here once a week, or perhaps once a week, but then I would come in here in the vacations. Now, it's a totally different studio experience. I get to come in here pretty much every day, which is absolutely brilliant and a huge change for me as well.' (Interviewed 22/11/16)

27% of the 42 artists that I interviewed were full-time. Of this figure, just over half were retired (55%) and the rest earned enough from the sale of their work to sustain their studio practice. Among this selection I found that many organised their studio-time in relation to the more standard 9am to 5pm, five-day working week. For example, Tim Birks describes his studio routine thus:

> 'I usually come here about eleven, because first thing in the morning is basically admin stuff, or washing, and the day-to-day domestic chores, and there are sometimes bits of writing I have to do and send out and stuff like that. So, I come in at about eleven, and I will stay here in the winter months until about four, and then walk home. That's usually every weekday. In this building, I would say there is probably about forty-five percent use most of the time, which is really good. I just feel really sorry for people who are not coming in. I know the people who are here a lot. But a lot of artists are having to work other jobs to afford the space, so the economy of the city is, in a way, killing the essence of the studio. But I happen to like this studio, because next door I've got Chloe who is a good pal, Peter who is another pal, Lucy another pal and they are very nice people, who are also here quite often as well, so I'm lucky.' (Interviewed 16/08/16)

For Tim Birks, being a full-time artist translates to a particularly regular and immersive social experience. Whilst I found that artists respond to this social synchronisation differently, what really matters here is that the opportunity to develop a shared workspace routine presents itself to full-time artists in a manner that is not possible for artists involved in other employment. What this demonstrates is a differentiation of temporal experiences grounded in the artists socio-economic position

and work-profile. To refer back to Butler (2009), different artists in different positions of employment are affected by precarity in different ways, and in the studio these differences manifest as a range of different temporalities. Workspace and labour precarities have therefore transformed artists' lived experiences of the studio. They have also shaped how artists conceive and express the studio's temporal identity in a subjective and individual manner.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter rethinks the contours of the studio in relation to precarity through the different temporalities it engenders. Through the three sections, I have explored how the space of the studio is understood and experienced by artists in relation to the temporal measures of pace and routine. The temporal has been used in this context to denote time structured in a specific political and economic context and lived at the intersection of a range of different socio-economic differences and forces including capitalism. I have argued that in the studio, the temporal produces difference, particularly where artists are differently affected by precarity and have developed different strategies for making studio time productive in distinct ways. This signifies that precarity is not just experienced by artists as an economic reality, but that it is also experienced and lived as a series of embodied temporalities.

Furthermore, the concept of precarity as a way of understanding working conditions, relates to other flexible, intermittent and contingent forms of employment and work. The temporalities of the studio therefore offer a new strategy and target for urban precarity as well as a new way of observing how it is actively experienced in

everyday life. Lefebvre (1991b) suggests that the production of space occurs through social practices and material conditions, meaning that time and space are contingent upon and shaped by macro-scale situations and everyday routines. This chapter has demonstrated that the structuring of the artist's studio also takes place in relation to the studio's urban situation and its precarities which are expressed and reflected in artists' everyday studio routines and practices.

Two concepts which have expressed important aspects of the studios lived space are pace and routine. The chapter has demonstrated that the studio's temporal organisation, occupation, and experience is co-produced through an uneasy reciprocity between the two. The increased pressure on studio time as a result of other work commitments has produced complications for the ways in which artists manage their studio practice. Section one of the chapter established that studio practice is organised around the event-time pacemaker, which refers to the non-distinct input of time, or end-start time of an art task or artwork. Following this, artists' strategies for increasing the studios productive output, involves extending the amount of time spent on their practice as opposed to the more common strategy of 'speeding up' the pace of production. A reduction in studio time and the flexibility of studio routines therefore poses an apparently untenable challenge for the event-time pacemaker. Whilst the scale of this challenge varies among different artists in relation to their socio-economic and work-status, the common response has been the further flexibilization of studio routines to 'make up' for lost studio time wherever possible. Pace and routine are therefore of primary interest as they contribute to reworking our understanding of how artists use and experience time in the studio in increasingly intermittent and non-continuous ways.

Precarity has therefore produced a normalising temporal order for the studio, which is largely grounded in discontinuous, irregular, segmented and flexible experiences of time. It has also contributed to a number of artists feeling that they don't spend enough time in the studio, and that the time they do spend in the studio lacks routine. While historical comparisons are difficult to establish, we do know that the precarities around studio provision are intensifying in London, particularly with regards to the rising cost of studio rent and growing unpredictability of rent reviews. We also know that this is increasing the pressure for artists to increase and stabilise their earnings through different forms of work, which places a greater strain on the time artists have available to allocate to their studio practice. Precarity consequently exacerbates existing vulnerabilities, whilst producing new ones in the form of ambivalent experiences and relationships with studio-time. In the next chapter I look at how the atmospheres of the studio space are produced and experienced in relation to these conditions.

Chapter Seven

Atmospheric experiences of the studio

7.0 Introduction

Based on interviews with visual artists working in a range of studio properties across London, this chapter provides a detailed account of artists' experiences in navigating the changing administrative and material organisation of the affordable studio in London and the different studio forms that these conditions give rise to. I frame this in terms of the atmospheres of studio spaces, using this concept to understand how artists experience, sense and value the urban studio. I also consider how the atmospheric sensibilities of the studio may be changing in relation to the increasingly diverse range of property types that artists' studios are operating in, including the new type of purpose-designed affordable studio that has emerged since the mid-2000s, as opposed to its more traditional studio conversion counterpart. In short, this chapter looks at how the conditions of urban precarity are organising different forms of studio in the city and looks at how this change is experienced and interpreted atmospherically.

Visiting a range of these studios during the fieldwork highlighted the immediate visual and material differences between these different workspaces, and raised the question of how working in these different environments with such strikingly different material characters, might produce a range of studio experiences as well as different (possibly contrasting) interpretations and understandings of what the affordable artist's studio *looks* like and *feels* like in London. I found that a number of artists draw upon a

language of 'atmospherics' and various atmospheric terms such as 'feel', 'air', 'mood' and 'tone', to help conceptualise and articulate their 'felt experience' of this material change in different work environments. Following this, my argument is that artists not only experience and interpret this material change visually as a changing studio aesthetic, but also do so through their felt sense of the studio's atmospheres.

Within geography, atmosphere is seen as important part of the way in which people experience and register different places and spaces at the bodily level (Anderson, 2009; Stewart, 2011; Thrift 2004; 2007). The idea is that space is defined in terms of intensity of experience, wherein the body senses and reacts to different types of space pre-consciously, felt as a certain shift in mood or tenor. In this way atmosphere is also critical to the ways in which people experience (as much as identify) different spaces; certain types may be described as inviting or unwelcoming and moving from one space to another might be felt as a shift in atmosphere (Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2008a; 2018). Atmospheric terms have also been deployed frequently within the creative industries literatures around the artist's studio, often with regards to their contribution to the 'buzz' of inner-city areas and to the production of distinct urban areas and place-making (e.g. Blok and Farías, 2016; Gandy, 2017; Landry, 2008; Markusen, 2006; Middleton, 2010; Stephens 2015). Recent geographical inquiry into the daily life and practices of creative workspaces has also began to engage with and apply atmospheric concepts to the studio but has tended to do so in a manner that assumes that the material arrangement of the studio is purposefully selected and presided over by the artist. Ash (2016) for instance, has studied the atmospheres of the video game design studio, and has done so in relation to the different types of equipment (e.g. headphones, servers etc.) used by the artist in the video production process. Likewise,

Sjöholm (2014) presumes the agency of the artist in constructing a material archive of themselves and their work within the studio (as we saw in Chapter Five, section one) and looks at the atmospheric experiences that arise in the studio as a result of this process of collecting and ordering. Despite illustrating the importance of atmosphere to the studio, both studies overlook the atmospheric presence of materials that have not been purposively selected by the artist, but which are no less present within the studio. These might include, for instance, the material infrastructure of the workspace itself and how artists interact with and respond to the specific *form* of the studio that they are working in.

Empirical work in a variety of contexts has demonstrated that individual buildings and their architectural forms can also produce different affective, tactile and sensual effects, and that the material performative details of space are important to the ways in which space is inhabited (e.g. Adey and Kraftl, 2008; Amin and Thrift, 2002; Ingold, 2013). In particular Kraftl and Adey (2008: 213) inform my approach to how different buildings and their internal architectural features are imbued with the power to make a difference to their inhabitants. In particular how they might engender or limit particular atmospheres from developing, which can enable and constrain different creative practices, activities and styles of inhabitation for artists in the studio.

Taking my lead from this work this chapter asks: what role does atmosphere play in the ways in which artists experience their studio? And how do these atmospheric experiences relate to the specific form of studio that the artist is working in? (i.e. its specific material character and identity). In asking these questions, I assess the relevance of atmosphere as a concept for making sense of how different studios *feel* and for understanding the ways in which visual artists renting workspace within

London's affordable studio sector construct personal narratives of the urban studio and value different studio forms based on the atmospheres that they support. Specifically, I argue that artists are already primed to *feel* a certain way about different types of studio and interpret their atmospheres in a particular way. In making this argument, this chapter speaks back to more conceptual discussions around atmosphere as an emergent experience of space.

Looking at how different studio forms are experienced atmospherically also allows me to think about how studio atmospheres respond to forces beyond their immediate material construction, such as the effects of urban precarity and affordability. In other words, it allows us to think about how broader political economic transformations manifest themselves and are rendered palpable on an affective register in the studio; that is to say I am interested in asking how a studio atmosphere is conditioned by a broader structure of feeling like precarity?

The chapter is structured into three parts to reflect the three broad categories of studio in operation in London: the inherited industrial studio, the office studio and the new build studio. I explore the ways in which different atmospheric terms are deployed and engaged with around these different studio forms and the comparisons that artists make between them. In part one on the industrial studio I look at the role that spatial imaginaries and memory plays in giving 'creative' value to the type of atmosphere the industrial studio supports, and why artists feel it supports the 'right type of atmosphere' for creative work. In part two I turn to another common type of converted workspace, the office studio, and explore the processes of re-appropriating these types of properties for creative use. I focus in particular on how artists 'make do' with different types of workspace and the different atmospheric experiences that these

activities engender. In part three I look at the atmospheric qualities of the new build studio when compared with other kinds of studio space. The conclusion draws these sections together to discuss the changing language of atmospherics deployed around the urban artist's studio and what this might mean for the different ways in which artists experience and value contemporary creative workspace in London.

7.1 Industrial studios 'the right kind of atmosphere'

> 'This kind of industrial studio has a certain air about it that's ideal for artists. Just look at the old windows and the exposed brick, it has just got this special kind of atmospheric quality feels really creative.'
>
> (Linda Wright, artist at Childers Street studios (Acme) a former ship propeller foundry in Deptford - Interviewed 15/07/16)

During the interviews artists were questioned about their different studio experiences in London. They spoke about the different types of studios that they have worked in and, along with the various merits and attractions of different types of workspace (such as cost, location and ease of access), participants turned almost without fail to a language of sensations and feelings. They often explained that different spaces felt 'better' or that certain types of studio space 'just feel right' or 'feel like a studio', in that they inspire the right kind of atmosphere for thinking and acting creatively. These discussions about the 'right kind of atmosphere', seemed to focus almost without exception on the industrial studio. What also emerged from these discussions was that many artists like Linda, drew upon specific industrial materials and architectural or structural features within the industrial studio to help articulate their felt experience of it.

Industrial studios form a large portion of the current supply of artists' studios within the affordable studio sector in London. A lot of these are former industrial buildings, warehouses, factories, and garages left over from the processes of urban land-use change and the collapse of London's industrial sector in the wake of World War II. For instance, 43% of the combined studio property portfolio of London's largest studio provider organisations, SPACE, Acme, ASC and ACAVA are in former industrial premises (ACAVA 2019; Acme, 2019; ASC, 2019; SPACE, 2019). Included in this study were Childers Street studios (formerly a ship propeller foundry), Britannia Works (formerly Percy Dalton's peanut manufacturers), Orsman Road studios (formerly Players Cigarettes manufacturers), Deborah House and Brickfield studios (two former print works), as well as a number of smaller industrial workshops.

Often the histories of these buildings can be detected from the building's exterior, as its architectural form discloses its past function and expresses its former industrial life. These traces are also often visible in the building's interior, wherein the industrial aesthetic has been preserved both purposefully and accidentally in different ways. In most cases, the industrial features of the property were left untouched and the original components of the industrial space were left as features in the studio. These included industrial steel windows, exposed brick, concrete flooring, exposed pipes, wire tubes, skeletal girders, joists and ventilation shafts visible in the walls and (often double height) ceilings (see figure 18). This might be a combination of factors. Leaving things exposed often *costs* studio organisations less than a full-refit and refurbishment of the space. There may be an unwillingness to invest in the costs of refurbishment for properties where the security and duration of *tenure* is in question. Refurbishments also

take *time* and studio groups facing a high demand for workspace may wish to get artists into the studios as quickly as possible. David Panton, Director of Acme explained,

> 'The kind of semi-converted workspaces that you find are the result of a combination of factors, chief among which is cost…It doesn't always make sense financially to do a complete re-fit if the lease isn't secure, so you end up with these types of industrial studios where its past still feels very present.' (Interviewed 14/09/16)



[Figure 18. A second-floor studio at Acme's Childers Street studios, a former ship propeller foundry in Deptford. Photo credit: (top) Acme, 2018; (bottom) Author]

Even in the few situations in which renovations or alterations had been made to the industrial studio, such as where windows had been repaired or replaced and parts of the brick walls replaced, these modifications also seem to attest to the industrial past of the property in that a replacement signifies the absence of the original. This is significant because Adey and Kraftl (2008: 214) have drawn attention to the capacity of buildings and their architectural features to engender different affects and atmospheres that allow for different types of inhabitation to take place.

During the interviews artists would often draw upon and reference these particular industrial features that have been 'left behind' so as to help illustrate and exemplify the atmosphere of the studio. Emily Wilson rents a workspace at Britannia Works, a former Percy Dalton's peanut factory owned by SPACE. She explained,

> 'There is some kind of special quality to this space that makes it feel like a studio. It's everything really, the sash windows, the concrete floor, the exposed pipes. It's hard to explain but it just has this sort of *air* about it that makes it feel more creative than some of the other kinds of workspace out there.' (Interviewed 11/11/16)

Similarly, Peter Rooke, who rents a studio at Brickfield Studios, a former print factory for the *Socialist Worker, Morning Star* and *Private Eye,* draws out specific features in the studio that help to set the tone of the space,

> 'This space has defiantly got certain *tone* to it. I mean how can it not, it's full of history! Look at the glazed bars on the window, [points] or the floor where you can see the bolts still that would have once held down the printing press [points].' (Interviewed 18/11/16)

Emily and Peter's treatment of *air* and *tone* in this way, aligns with ideas about the capacity of architectural settings and their material compositions (of bodies and objects) to evoke different feelings, atmospheres and experiences of space (Anderson and Wylie, 2009; Bennett, 2004; 2010; Kraftl and Adey, 2008). For instance, Anderson and Wylie (2009: 326) contend that different compositions of objects, materials and matter are

capable of producing 'different spatial and temporal tunings, different atmospheric qualities and ultimately different types of space'. Ingold (2012) and Bennett (2004) likewise understand that different constellations of things, objects and materials resonate in different ways with each other and in doing so are capable of producing a range of affectively, emotionally and sensually charged spatial experiences. Bennett (2004: 17) contends that objects are not simply 'mute carriers of information' but are 'lively participants' in the ways in which we experience space. In other words, we might look to the presence of the industrial aesthetic, and specific industrial materials or features within the studio as setting a certain tone and evoking a certain type of atmosphere in the studio that is valued highly by artists.

Despite all of this talk about the 'special feel' of the industrial studio artists struggled to articulate how exactly the industrial studio atmosphere supports and shapes their creative practice. Benjamin Knapp, who rents a studio at Deborah House (a former light industrial factory in Hackney), tried to grapple with this;

> 'All I can say is that the building I am in now, it affects you. I think subconsciously it affects you and I'm not sure how to articulate it, it just *feels* very different to some of the newer studios. It has this special kind of *atmosphere* that helps my practice.' (Interviewed 07/11/16)

Alistair's comment demonstrates some of the difficulties of talking to people about affects, atmospheres and the impact different spaces can have on them. In particular, because it seems that many artists experience their studios through an embodied sensibility - a form of perception that works incredibly quickly. In other words, they are affected by certain spaces before they understand them or may not understand them intellectually at all. Despite this, many artists engaged with and articulated the 'feel' of the studio through its atmosphere and used atmospheric terms to describe how they

experience the studio in a diffuse, peripheral and unconscious manner. Following what Emily, Peter and Benjamin have said, I am therefore assuming that atmosphere can be used as a kind of shorthand for how the studio feels more broadly, i.e. its 'air', 'ambience', 'tone' and 'mood'.

Further to this, Alistair's comment also demonstrates how industrial atmospheres are frequently conflated with and interpreted along the lines of creative atmospheres. Jack Roberts, who rents a small studio at Belsham Street studios (a former joinery workshop in Hackney) also demonstrates this well,

> 'This kind of industrial studio just feels right for my practice, I can't quite put my finger on precisely what it is, but it just seems to ooze this this kind of creative air.' (Interviewed 10/11/16)

In particular, Benjamin and Jack's attempts to grapple with the atmospheric qualities of the industrial studio and articulate why they seem to more persuasively enrol the body in this type of studio than others, reflected the sentiments of a much larger group of artists during the interviews, who expressed their appreciation for the (concrete and) visceral qualities of the industrial studio and its ability to support a creative atmosphere and encourage certain forms of creative thinking, practices and activities. This is surprising, given that these former factory spaces would not have been in the least bit 'creative' (at least not in the sense that artists understand it) prior to their conversions. Whilst being a space with a history in which things are 'made', the types of assembly line production and highly ordered manufacturing systems that would have been in place, are far from the types of creative play, innovation and freedoms of experimentation which are key to the studio (Bain, 2005).

7.1.1 Spatial imaginaries

Throughout the interviews, this relationship between the industrial studio and its ability to support a creative atmosphere and set the 'right kind of tone for creative work' continued to unfold in different complex ways around different spatial imaginaries of the urban studio. One of the ways in which to understand and unpack this relationship between industrial and creative atmospheres is through the various spatial imaginaries and processes of remembering that are bound up with artist's interpretations and engagements with the industrial studio. Edensor's (2005b; 2005c; 2007; 2008) work on memory and industrial ruins underscores this. It points to the necessity of critiquing understandings of matter as brute reality because of the various immaterial resonances such as memory, imagination and value that are also inextricably bound up with material matters.

We might therefore also think about the different processes of remembering and spatial imaginaries that feed into and inform artists' experiences and interpretations of the industrial studio and its atmospheric qualities. There is a powerfully embedded artistic memory and creative identity associated with the industrial studio in London and its various industrial features. These spatial imaginaries imbue the industrial studio with a certain 'special quality' and helps validate it as a creative workspace. During an interview, artist James Russo explained that 'there is something about the quality of the industrial studio that urges you to be creative and artists have always worked in this type of space in London'. Relatedly, Bain (2005: 147) notes that historical models of the artist's studio have 'a remarkably strong influence on expectations of what constitutes a 'real studio'. Whilst Bain's work refers to early 19th

century depictions of the 'artist's garret',[34] for the artists that I interviewed different forms of remembering around the studio were bound up with ideas about the types of properties that were being occupied by artists in the early days of organised studio provision in London in the 1960s. These include the factories, workshops and warehouses situated in the industrial East End and Docklands areas (Green, 1999). Whilst historically artists have occupied a range of property types in London, over time the industrial studio has been occupied by successive generations of artists seeking an affordable space to work in the city. These types of industrial properties are therefore among some of the best remembered and most celebrated within the affordable studio sector, particularly by groups SPACE and Acme, whose origins are deeply embedded in these industrial properties and defunct manufacturing sites.

The history of artists occupying industrial spaces is particularly well documented in London and continues to inform and shape artists' ideas about what constitutes a real studio and what it should look and feel like. Tim Birks, a visual artist based at ACAVA's Hythe Road studios, a former light industrial workshop and Players cigarettes manufacturing site, explained,

> 'This studio is the real deal. It feels like the kind of studios that you would have found in the sixties, where you would have found artists like Bridget Riley [one of the Co-Founders of SPACE] painting a massive canvas with the same industrial backdrop…so there is a special atmospheric quality to these kind of [industrial] spaces.' (Interviewed 26/08/16 - figure 19)

[34] A habitable attic or small and often dismal or cramped living space at the top of a house or larger residential building (Bain, 2005).



[Figure 19. Artist Bridget Riley, Co-Founder of SPACE, in her studio at St Katherine's Dock in about 1970. Photo credit: Tapper, 2018]

Artists therefore appear to have inherited both a material and imagined legacy of industrial workspace in London, meaning that many artists were already oriented towards the industrial studio and were already primed to experience it and interpret its atmosphere in a certain way - as conducive to particular forms of inhabitation that are good for their creative practice. In other words, artists are more easily disposed and attuned to this type of industrial space because it resonates closely with the cultural values, experiences and backgrounds of artists working in London. Another way of interpreting this is that artists' experiences of the industrial studio are shaped by a strong foreknowledge of industrial space, which also primes them to anticipate and apprehend its atmospheres in a certain way as more creative. The powerfully embedded social memory and artistic identity associated with the industrial studio in London

resonates with and enhances artists' experiences of the studio and adds 'creative value' to the type of atmosphere it supports.

In the geographical literature on atmosphere, atmospheres are often presented as emergent experiences of space (Anderson, 2009). In other words, they are not static and develop in the moment. Anderson (2009: 79) explains that 'atmospheres are unfinished because of their constitutive openness to being taken up in experience'. Instead what seems to be happening here is that these spatial imaginaries of the industrial studio cause artists to anticipate how the studio feels prior to their experience of it. These spatial imaginaries of the urban studio therefore complicate and blur the boundaries between atmosphere, emotion and memory in the experience of the studio.

7.2 Office studios 'the wrong kind of atmosphere'

> 'This [office] studio is full of atmosphere, just the wrong kind. I really struggle with how office-y it still feels with the suspended ceiling and the lino flooring.'
>
> (Eileen Briscoe, artist at Thurlow Street Studios (ASC) a former mixed-use building including offices - Interviewed 18/07/16)

Where the leftover interior features of the industrial studio were interpreted as contributing to the 'creative tone' of the studio, those of the office studio were seen as constraining certain types of desired creative atmospheres from emerging**.** Artists deploy atmospheric terms differently in other types of converted studio; they describe the studios differently *and* interact with the spaces in different ways**.** During the interviews a number of artists communicated that these other types of converted workspaces do not immediately 'feel creative' and that different material adaptions and modifications are necessary to alter its atmosphere and make the workspace 'feel more like a studio'. In this section I explore some of the different attempts to modify the

studio's atmosphere to make it feel more creative and reflect on the unique studio experiences that arise from this kind of making-do activity. I also demonstrate how other forms of converted property not intended for artistic use are also capable of supporting powerful atmospheric experiences. These are not valued in the same way as the industrial studio, but more than the new build studio.

7.2.1 Office conversions

The financial pressures and precarities faced by the affordable studio sector require studio groups to make do with whatever space is available. Over the years, as industrial property ceases to be redundant and affordable, studio organisations have been forced to diversify their search for other suitable properties. In London, industrial properties are often found in areas undergoing gentrification, particularly as many defunct manufacturing sites and industrial areas have been reimagined as trendy spaces to live and work (see: Ley, 2003; Moreton, 2013; Zukin, 1989). The outcome of this activity is the growing demand and rising cost of industrial property. The transformation of older industrial sites to bring about capital investment to neglected parts of the city through various redevelopment and regeneration programmes is also compounding the demand for this type of space (as was discussed in detail in Chapter Two). The outcome of this is that studio groups now occupy a diverse range of converted property types in London. The second most common property type in London after industrial properties (43%) are

former office premises which account for around 10% of the combined property portfolio of ASC, ACAVA, Acme and SPACE (2019).[35]

As with the industrial studio, many of these office spaces remain relatively rudimentary spaces. The original structural features and materials are often left behind and have not yet been cleaned up or formalised. Take for instance ASC's Stockwell Road studio site. This was formerly social housing offices. The studios here are separated by thin stud-walls and have low suspended tiled ceilings and hard-wearing carpet floor tiles. In the entrance to the studios an office clock hangs on the wall next to a glass uplighter lamp, whilst upstairs, metal slider nameplates still remain on the front doors of the offices/studios. A similar aesthetic is detectable at ASC's Thurlow Street studios which are also former social housing offices. Here the original blinds still hang from the windows and the so called 'break-out room' provides a good illustration of the dated office aesthetic (see figure 20). In both cases the property's previous function has left a distinct imprint on the character of the space, which to the untrained eye still renders the workspace more easily recognisable as a series of offices than as studio complexes hosting somewhere in the region of 40-55 artists.

[35] January 2019, the combined property portfolio of Acme, ASC, ACAVA and SPACE was 58 studio premises in London: 43% former industrial property (manufacturing workshops and factories and warehouses), 10% former office premises, 8% former residential and 39% other (including new builds).



[Figure 20. Top: Office asethetic at ASC's Stockwell Road Studios (left to right) i) entrance hall at Stockwell Road Studios compared with ii) first floor studio at Stockwell Road. Bottom: break out room at ASC Bond House Studios. This provides a good illustration of the type of dated office aesthetic that artists described as having to confront in their studios. Photo credit: Author]

Artists here often referenced specific features to help illustrate their view about the 'overbearingly formal' and 'office-y' tone of the studio. For instance, visual artist Eileen Briscoe who rents a studio at ASC's Thurlow Street Studios explained,

> 'Ideally, I'd choose an industrial studio because it has this really special quality, but these types of spaces can also be quite atmospheric, albeit in a different way. This one still feels very office-y and sometimes that can be a bit overbearing.'

She added,

> 'My old studio was in a warehouse with high ceilings and large windows and it was really old, so it kind of instantly felt creative, where this space to me is more of an ongoing challenge to make it feel more like a studio, because that's not something that the office naturally feels like.' (Interviewed 18/07/16)

Eileen reflected the sentiment of a number of artists. The character and atmosphere of the office studio is not consistent with the type of 'creative atmosphere' that they had come to expect of the studio; and was therefore seen to a challenge their ability to think and act creatively within the studio.

7.2.2 Engineering atmospheres

I found that whilst the 'creative atmosphere' of the industrial studio was often taken-for-granted, artists were a lot more pro-active and involved in adapting their office-like workspace in order to make it 'feel more like a studio'. I found that artists invest a great deal of time, energy and effort in making adaptions and modifications to the office studio to achieve the 'right kind' of atmosphere for thinking and acting creatively. Will Grundy, who rents a studio at ASC's Stockwell Road, a former social housing office, explains,

> 'It has taken ages for me to get rid of that formal office atmosphere, literally months of moving things around, adding shelving, taking pins out of the wall and

> just finding a way to make this space work for me and feel less like an office.' (Interviewed 14/07/16)

One of the common ways in which artists like Will endeavoured to alter the studio atmosphere was by removing evidence of its past. This included covering over the office aesthetic and removing material traces and specific features that attest to its former life. Will Grundy went on to explain,

> 'I remember there being some dodgy lino carpet tiled stuff when I moved in, so the first thing I did was rip that up, it still feels very office-y. No one can deny that its full of atmosphere, but perhaps not the ideal type, you know, it's got a distinct feel, but it's become a bit of an ongoing task trying to make this feel right, I'm constantly stripping stuff out.'

Claire Hutton who rents a studio at Stockwell Road likewise explained how her reaction to the office studio was to remove evidence of its past,

> 'When I first moved in here there was still that hard-wearing dark blue office carpet on the floor, so one of the first things I did was put chipboard down over the floor. It also has really low ceilings which are an issue for me as a painter, because it's not very lofty and it made it really hard for me to accept this as a creative space, because it didn't immediately feel like a studio. I've tried to make what changes I can to make it less office-y.' (Interviewed 14/12/16)

Therefore, unlike the industrial studio, artists often responded to the office studio form by seeking to eliminate its material-history in the hope of subduing its office atmosphere, which was deemed necessary for their creative practice. These attempts to alter the studio's atmosphere and set the conditions in which the studio atmosphere appears by managing the office-aesthetic and making material modifications, might best be interpreted as a form of atmospheric engineering. The treatment of atmosphere in this way has been addressed in geography in relation to ideas about 'staging atmospheres'. This concept refers to designers seeking to 'tune spaces with tones, hues and shapes' and manage spaces so as to 'produce a particular feel, mood or ambience'

(Edensor and Sumartojo, 2015: 253; Thibaud, 2014). The focus of this work has often been on strategies for staging and engineering creative atmospheres in the workplace through altering the architecture, lighting and the various sensuous qualities of space (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Edensor and Sumartojo, 2015; Latham and McCormack, 2004; Sørensen, 2015). Within this work the affective significations that the aesthetic object proposes are recognised and harnessed to organise environments that stimulate innovation and creativity. Similar sentiments about the material components of space are echoed by Böhme (1993), who defines the 'presence of things not as their mere factual existence as subjects or objects, but the ways in which they make their presence perceptible' (Sørensen, 2015: 64) and 'goes forth from itself' (Böhme, 1993: 121). In other words, material objects participate in the production of atmospheres.

Arguably this kind of engineering is not a feature of all studios but is related to the type of precarities associated with the office studio. Despite the preference expressed for the industrial studio over other forms of converted studio, due to the precarities facing affordable studio provision in London - such as sudden hikes in rent or studio leases being lost or terminated early to make way for more profitable uses - artists must 'make do' with what space is available and what they can afford. In many cases this means working in spaces, such as the office studio, that are not necessarily conducive to creative atmospheres nor maintaining feelings of 'creativity'. During the interviews, I found that the office aesthetic serves as a reminder for artists of the pressures and precarities their workspace is faced with, and of the underlying temporariness of their occupation. Visual artist Tessa explained,

> 'The reason that the studio is left looking like this with all of the office stuff, is because we moved in quickly when it became available and we will probably have to move out quickly at some point soon. So, there isn't much point in

> investing in this kind of property and you know gutting all this stuff out [points to suspended ceiling tiles].' (Interviewed 14/07/16)

Tessa reflected the sentiment expressed by a number of artists in the interviews - that the office aesthetic attests to the studio's vulnerability to change. In this sense, attempts to remove or cover over the office aesthetic in the studio might also be interpreted as an attempt by artists to engineer a certain atmosphere of stability and security in an otherwise temporary workspace.

Following this, the type of mundane material modifications that artists make to the studio, such as the removal of carpet tiles, can be interpreted as a strategy to stabilise the sensory atmospheres of a studio space. They are an attempt to disrupt the material-composition of the studio in order to transform the studio's atmospheric qualities and cultivate a different type of atmosphere. And these efforts can be detected in the ways in which artists remove certain objects and materials from the studio, and cover them up.

7.2.3 Making do

Another way to think about the types of atmospheric engineering that take place in the office studio, is by focusing on how property conversions, as opposed to purposely designed creative workspace, are adaptively re-used by artists. They offer a unique opportunity for artists to 'roll up their sleeves' and get stuck in with re-ordering and re-arranging the work environment to produce more desirable outcomes. In this way the converted studio lends itself to potentially more hands-on, purposive and direct engagements with the material composition and atmospheric conditions of the studio.

One common adaption that artists make in converted properties is to paint the studio walls white. The simple process of painting is an important part of making the studio their own and involves the artist engaging with the uneven textures, surfaces, various dents, bumps dips of the walls as they do so. In this way, as artists expend energy trying to fix up workspace and make it 'feel right' they are compelled to engage more closely and directly with the studio's distinct material properties. The various processes of making do that happen in the converted studio therefore require the artist to be both physically and affectively engaged with its materials, objects and matter. In other words, attempts to manage, dispose of, or control the 'atmosphere' of the converted studio and negotiate its complex material properties through different processes of adaption, reuse and re-appropriation, requires artists to constantly revisit the fragments, vestiges and traces of its 'past life' that they are (more often than not) trying to remove or cover up. It follows that in order to alter the atmosphere of the studio, one must first engage with its unique material and atmospheric qualities even to remove them. For instance, within the office studio, these types of close material engagements arguably enhance the atmospheric presence of the office aesthetic within the studio before it can be removed. This demonstrates another way in which artists struggle with the atmosphere of the office studio and the feelings of precarity that they have come to associate with this particular spatial experience.

Artists frequently interpret and understand the atmosphere of the office studio (just one example of a converted studio type) as being inconsistent with feelings of creativity, or at least, with the type of industrial creative feel that they have come to expect. Despite this I found that the office studio often encouraged more direct, hands on and conscious engagements with the studio's atmospheric qualities. It follows that

the activities of making do and the different types of atmospheric rendering that take place within the office studio requires artists to think and interact more directly with the material character of their workspace and the type of atmosphere that it supports. In contrast, the industrial studio requires less adaption because it already supports the type of atmospheric conditions that artists have come to expect and value in their workspace.

7.3 New build studios 'no atmosphere'

> 'If you look around, they [new build studios] have no character, they are just these smooth new spaces that feel completely devoid of any atmosphere and sometimes that can feel quite suffocating.'
>
> (Matthew Denham, artist at Matchmakers Wharf (SPACE) - Interviewed 23/07/16)

As seen in Chapter Four, new build studios make up a growing portion of the studio types in operation in London. This growth has been part of a much larger shift in the type of mechanisms and methods of delivery used within the London's affordable studio sector since the mid-2000s. Studio organisations like Acme, SPACE and ACAVA have worked closely with a range of commercial and private property developers to deliver a number of purpose-designed and permanently designated studios as part of new build mixed-use property developments. In comparison to converted studios which are described as being 'full of character' and 'highly atmospheric' (albeit not the 'right type' of atmosphere), new build studios have been described in terms of their lack of material character and 'lack of atmosphere'. Visual artist Lance Drummond, who rents a studio at Matchmakers Wharf, one of Acme's new build sites in Hackney, explains,

> 'I've always worked in converted studios, so I remember the initial shock of moving into this white cube, it just felt so devoid of any life or atmosphere that I seriously thought about giving it up.' (Interviewed 27/06/16)

In this section, I explore some of the different ways in which the new build studio is understood to be 'lacking in atmosphere'. I also think about the white cube analogy that a number of artists used to describe their experience of the new build and convey its lack of atmosphere.

7.3.1 The 'white cube'

During the interviews a number of artists analogised the new build studio and its lack of character and atmosphere with that of the 'white cube'. Visual artist Richard Gaskell, who is also based at Matchmakers Wharf, explains;

> 'It hasn't got an atmosphere, it's been so meticulously planned out and hollowed out, and that's quite daunting because you are just confronted with this perfect white cube.' (Interviewed 13/07/16)

The 'white cube' is a term that is usually deployed in relation to pristine gallery settings. Few essays have approached the subject of the institution of the 'white cube' as directly as Brian O'Doherty (1986). A number of the artists that I interviewed were particularly well versed with O'Doherty's essays, particularly his work on the white cube convention of gallery design.

O'Doherty contends that the ideal form of the white cube that modernism developed for gallery space, (i.e. white walls, floor, ceiling and often square) is an attempt to produce a 'neutral' container for artwork. In this way, he conceives the white cube as a space 'free of context' in which time and social space are thought to be excluded from the experience of the artwork; O'Doherty (1986) writes 'it is only through the apparent neutrality of appearing outside of everyday life and politics that the works

within the white cube can appear to be self-contained…it is only through being freed from historical time can they attain their aura of timelessness. Enter the white cube…a sacred space that resembles an ancient tomb, undisturbed by time and containing infinite riches' (1986: 8, 49, 79). O'Doherty's vision of the white cube is a neutral space in which the artwork can stand untouched by the vicissitudes of its surrounding environment.

The white cube represents a vision of a controlling spatial structure that bleaches out and minimises the background influences of its surrounding environment. Where material histories are smoothed over or deliberately hidden and disguised to construct a supposedly 'neutral' space. O'Doherty explains that 'the white cube was a transitional device that attempted to bleach out the past [it] represents the ultimate blank space...the sterilised operating room…transcendence of pure form' (1986: 12). In this sense, the white cube might also be interpreted as an attempt to recreate the laboratory environment within the gallery. It reproduces a highly controlled (clean and hygienic) environment in which contextual ingredients are stripped back and elements that are likely to interfere with the work are removed (Dixon and Hawkins, 2011; Latour and Woolgar, 1986).



[Figure 21. (As seen before in chapter four, section three) Galleria Studios in Peckham, established in 2006 by Acme and Barratt Homes PLC. Right to left: I) The building's modern exterior and, II) inside a typical studio on the third floor. Photo credit: Acme, 2007]

The new build studio displays many similarities with the basic principles of the white cube as representing a space existing *outside* its location - in that its modern materials and stripped back aesthetic speaks of no specific material history. Any potential material excesses or sensual clutter have been removed, sanitised and polished over through different 'modern' design processes (see figure 21). The outcome is that the formal language of the new build's modern aesthetic lacks the richness and variety of materials of its converted studio counterpart, which by comparison, is full of various messy materialities left over from its past uses. Lance Drummond at Matchmakers Wharf explains,

> 'When I first got this studio I thought, oh my god this is completely lifeless. My last studio was this big industrial space, and there was just so much character and atmosphere there. So, I struggled with this because it seemed so clean and modern, as though all of its character had been ironed out and all the life sucked out of it.' (Interviewed 27/07/16)

Edensor (2007) has also written about the 'deadening atmospheric effect' of modern architecture and materials in the city. He contends that the sheer smoothness of the type of materials that are used to construct the modern city (such as glass skyscrapers), as well as the constant maintenance of space and objects through the processes of cleaning, polishing and disposal efficiency, minimises confrontations with complex textures and other messy material agencies. In other words, it is the clean modern aesthetic of the city that restricts and regulates sensory experiences. Edensor (among others) calls this the 'de-sensualised urban realm of the modern city' (2007: 218). He understands this act of banishing material and sensual clutter in relation to attempts to create seamless transitions between spaces so as to coerce the body to move and perform in appropriate, ordered and rational ways. The reproduction of 'smoothed over space in the modern city' and its sanitised modern aesthetic, involves control over matter and conforms to ideas of how the modern body *should* conduct itself in the city in accordance with efficiency - in doing so it limits the variety of ways in which to experience urban space.

Applying this thinking to the more tamed modern aesthetic of the new build and its sheer, smooth surfaces, provides insight into the ways in which this type of workspace might not envelop or engage the body in the same diverse and immersive ways as that of a space with more messy material overspills. New build studios are purpose-designed for creative use and therefore do not have the same feel as those that originally had other uses. Instead, its material properties have been carefully selected and planned, and thus lack the same complexity and aesthetic richness of converted studios. During an interview, Ruth King at Acme's Galleria explained,

> 'There is just something about its lack of features that makes it clinical and hospital like…it's this slippery smooth kind of space with no atmosphere, nothing to draw you in or hold your attention for too long.' (Interviewed 16/06/16)

Yet it also seems that it was precisely the stripped back modern aesthetic and character of the new build studio that artists were so struck by. A number of artists described the effect of the modern aesthetic as feeling clinical', 'sanitised' and' hospital like', or 'overly formal', 'functional' and 'precise'. These terms communicate the new build's supposed lack of atmosphere and lack of strongly marked or positive characteristics or features.

7.3.2 Designing creative space

One way of thinking about the non-atmosphere of the 'white cube' new build**,** is in relation to questions of the design of creative space. The new build studio has been designed to reflect and facilitate a diverse array of practical, technical, professional and personal uses, and in order to do so its material character has been simplified and standardised.

Moreton (2013: 421) contends that 'the model of the studio block housed in a former industrial building, pioneered by early studio provision groups was both a convenient and practical solution to artists workspace needs' and that 'the affordable studio sector came to imagine the new affordable studio, as requiring similar characteristics present in those early buildings [such as] good ceiling height, natural light [and] unfettered walls.' In addition to these traditional basic features, studio organisations have also sought to modernise artist's workspace. The Galleria Studios for example, established in 2006, were the result of a partnership between Acme and property developer Barratt Homes and involved four floors of purpose-built artists'

studios providing 'modernised' workspace for up to fifty artists (Acme, 2006b). David Panton, Director of Acme explained that 'studios at the Galleria contain a lot of the more traditional studio features, like high ceilings, white walls, good light, at same time, they also have a lot of modern amenities, such as central heating, double glazing and WiFi…they also tend to be sound-proofed.' The new build studio therefore combines certain elements of the traditional model of the industrial studio of popular imagination, with some of the more modern techniques used in spaces of contemporary creative labour which are designed to stimulate innovation and shape working practices (Kristensen, 2004). Moreton (2013: 421) thus describes new build's as 'traditionally endowed studio spaces…coupled with modern amenities.'

Designing spaces to deliver certain creative outcomes is not uncommon within the creative industries. Kristensen (2004) has observed that commercial creative enterprises are paying increasing attention to how work environments and physical space can be used more diligently to generate creative outputs and innovative ideas. In a similar manner, studio organisations imagine, divide and regulate the spatial and material arrangement of the new build studio based on their assumptions and knowledge about creative workspace and the 'ideal' affordable studio. In order to achieve this, technical processes of measurement and calculation have been undertaken with maximum and minimum durations to do with what amount of space and facilities can be provided for the most affordable annual rent.

In other words, the new build studio has been rendered calculable and subject to intervention by studio organisations and is the product of an intentional design and blueprint for creative workspace. The outcome is that, opposed to the mismatched interiors and variation of converted studios, the new build clearly bears the traces of a designer, as it tends to pertain to a certain standardised shape, size and form, and in doing so represents an ordered space for creativity (see figure 22).



[Figure 22. (As seen before in chapter four, section two) Matchmakers Wharf Studios in Hackney, established in 2012 by Acme and Telford Homes PLC. Left to right: I) The building's exterior and II) the enterance to the studios. Photo credit: Author]

In contrast to the messy material character of the converted studio, the material conditions of the new build are contingent upon various technical, calculative and regulatory procedures. Designed to be functional creative spaces and support the production of creative work, the new build does not invite the same processes of making-do as other types of 'left over' workspace. On the one hand, this type of work environment arguably allows artists to dedicate more time to their practice and focus less on 'fixing up' or making amendments to their workspace. When taken in relation to some of the time-pressures that artists face around the affordable studio (see Chapter

Five) this type of design may be particularly useful. On the other hand, unlike the converted studio which invites different atmospheric engagements through the processes of re-appropriation, conversion and making-do; the functional design of the new build seems to banish ambiguity about the different uses of the space and in doing so narrows–down its possibilities for use by the occupying artist. Richard Gaskell explains;

> 'I definitely don't have the same kind of relationship with this space as I've had with studios in the past. I've worked in factories, markets, all manner of kind of atmospheric-y spaces, but this feels very different. For starters there's nothing that needs fixing or mending, or any carpet that needs ripping up or anything.' (Interviewed 13/07/16)

The functionality of the new build and its modern aesthetic, limits the different interpretive and practical possibilities for artists, thereby closing down opportunities for closer material and atmospheric engagements with the studio. Its formal design means that its materials already have a strictly assigned purpose and function to support the artists practice, and in this sense, it does not invite the same processes of re-appropriation as other workspaces, where their material overspills need managing and taming. Hence, in contrast to the purposive re-appropriation of converted workspace by artists, during the interviews artists frequently described their passive contemplation of the new build studio and its atmosphere. For example, Matthew Denham at Matchmakers Wharf explains;

> 'It was a bit of a shock when I first got the studio, you know it required minimal effort to make it workable, and I kind of didn't like that because it means you don't really interact with the space in the same way, it's almost a little too functional [laughs].' (Interviewed 23/07/16)

Perhaps it is precisely the efficiency and reproducibility of the modern aesthetic that makes the new build studio feel so featureless, anonymous, impersonal and distinctly

non-atmospheric for certain artists. As Denham explained, it is almost too functional, too meticulously planned out and too utilitarian, meaning that artists don't interact with or develop the same type of connections with the new build in the same way as converted studios that require adjustments and 'making do'.

It was therefore interesting to find subtle attempts at replicating the 'industrial feel' within the new build studio. Highline is a new build studio site established in 2013 through a partnership between Acme and the University of the Arts London (UAL). It features three-open-plan studios on the ground floor of the UAL halls of residence in Southwark. Despite having been built only a little under 6 years ago, it contains features that one might expect to find in a warehouse (see figure 23). These features include an open ceiling design (which exposes various steel girders, pipes and fans) and a large-scale lofty design with double width doors (commonly found in warehouse spaces for the easy movement of large goods).



[Figure 23. Due to the open-plan, shared workspace design of Highline Studios and the complications around gaining multiple photo permissions, no image is available of the industrial asethetic at this site. ASC's Grafton Road Studios (a new build in Croydon) provides a good illustration of the type of industrial asethetic that can be found at Highline. Photo credit: ASC, 2019]

There are a number of ways in which to interpret these features including in relation to the cost of developing a new studio. In light of what has been discussed in this section about strategies for 'designing creative space', the presence of the industrial aesthetic in the new build might also be seen as an attempt to stage an industrial-creative atmosphere, and imbue specific atmospheric qualities into a space which might otherwise be considered as lacking in them. Isabelle**,** an artist who rents a studio at Highline explained,

> 'It could all be cost related, but I think it's more likely a way of trying to convince us [artists] that this is in fact a studio and not just the ground floor of a block of student flats. Maybe that's what they [Acme] are trying to do by making it seem more industrial to make it feel arty, but I'm not sure that works because it *is* a modern space and you can't just ignore that.' (Interviewed 01/08/16)

As such, the reproduction of the industrial aesthetic within the new build might best be interpreted as an attempt by those in charge of delivering artists workspace to codify the new build studio as a 'creative workspace' by making it look and feel more industrial-like. In this way, Acme's aesthetic appreciation of the industrial at Highline implies that they recognise some of the ways in which the new build studio design might lack the same kinds of atmospheric qualities as some of their converted studio counterparts.

7.4 Conclusion

Urban precarity has been the driving force behind a series of material changes within the artist's studio. Pressures on studio organisations to diversify the search for affordable studio premises in the city has resulted in artists operating in a range of

different forms of studio with distinct material characters, identities and histories. In this chapter, I have broken this down into three distinct studio forms: the industrial studio, the office studio, and the new build studio.

Throughout the research artists consistently engaged with these different studios through the deployment of atmospheric concepts and vocabulary. For instance, artists often described their experience and perception of these different studio forms in relation to the way they *feel* and specifically their different 'moods', 'tones' or 'airs'. Atmosphere was therefore often used as a kind of shorthand for how the studio feels more broadly, and for comparing and contrasting experiences of these different studio typologies. During the interviews what emerged was a hierarchical ordering of artists' workspaces, from those considered to be 'most atmospheric' and therefore most valued as a creative work environment, to those considered to be 'least atmospheric' and therefore least valued as a creative work environment. Industrial workspace was seen to support the most powerfully immersive atmospheric experiences, followed by other types of studio conversions, such as office space. New build workspace was considered the least atmospheric. However, there is an underlying issue with the ways in which artists interpret these atmospheres. One issue with this hierarchical ordering of the urban studio based on the *intensity* of its atmosphere, is that despite a number of artists frequently referring to the new build as 'distinctly non-atmospheric' and 'lacking character', they followed this up by describing its atmosphere as overly 'clinical' and 'hospital like'. Likewise, many artists also described the 'overbearing' atmosphere of the office studio.

Instead of classifying and valuing these studios based on the *strength* of their atmospheric experience (i.e. as more or less atmospheric), what appears to be

happening here is that artists experience these environments differently and as more or less atmospheric, more or less creative, and as feeling more or less like a studio, based on their own ideas of what a studio *should* look and feel like. There is a clear link here between atmosphere and creativity - not only does a certain studio feel right (because it reassuringly echoes conventional ideas of the studio) but it is valued as conducive for creative thought and practice. Within this, the industrial studio serves as somewhat of a benchmark for how artists think a studio *should* feel, and against which all other studio atmospheres are compared and valued.

The issue this raises is that in recent years new builds have become a popular option for studio provider groups looking to secure affordable and permanent workspace in the city, meaning that increasing numbers of artists are having to adapt to these kinds of 'white cube' environments. As seen in Chapter Four, new builds tend to be delivered through studio development partnerships, which involve studio groups partnering up with property developers looking to offset the impacts of their development on the local area by providing a supply of low-cost and permanently designated workspace for artists. Despite providing a considerably greater amount of tenure security than their converted studio counterparts - the majority of which are still leased from private sector landlords - the recent addition of the new build looks and feels radically different to the 'inherited' industrial studio. This is in large part because it is a purpose-designed space that does not require the same sorts of creative 're-appropriation' or 'making do' as other types of leftover space. The introduction of the new build in recent years, along with the growing range of property types that studios are being developed in, raises serious concerns for artists about the *feel* of their workspace and thus the quality and value of their studio experience.

It is important to qualify these findings by acknowledging the difficultly of translating participants' self-described experiences of atmosphere and atmospherics, with a more philosophical notion of atmosphere. Participants tended to use atmosphere as a shorthand for lots of things within the studio including its material character, history, legacy and cultural expectations of what a studio should look and feel like. The former of which was clearly demonstrated in the interviews by artists pointing to the 'industrial window', 'metal blind', 'carpeted floor tile' and other material features, as evidence of the studio's atmosphere. In geography the relationship between material objects and atmosphere is not nearly as straightforward as this. Atmospheres are ambiguous and only ever tangentially related to objects. As Anderson (2009: 79) explains; 'atmospheres are singular affective qualities that emanate from but exceed the assembling of bodies…they are not reducible to the individual bodies [human and non-human] that they emerge from'. In other words, aesthetic objects (or features like the industrial window) help establish the conditions for atmospheres to occur but are themselves not the source of atmosphere. Therefore, whilst artists may seek to *modify* how the studio feels by removing or adding certain objects or features, it is possible that the inability to *control* the atmosphere of the studio in the way that tenants want amplifies the feeling of working in conditions of precarity. As such, it was productive to use a more philosophical notion of atmosphere to make sense of how artists invoke atmosphere in a looser fashion, and so as to better understand the uncertainties evoked by not being able to fully-locate precarious feelings within the studio.

Atmosphere, even if it is vague, is therefore essential to the ways in which artists interpret and engage with the new build studio and other contemporary forms of creative workspace. It serves as a critical point of comparison across different types of

studio space in operation in London. It also provides an important means of observing and understanding the ways in which the urban studio is changing and how artists experience and articulate this change. In other words, it is through these changing and contrasting material conditions and atmospheric dimensions of the urban studio that urban precarity is lived and experienced by artists in the studio at a more visceral level.

This chapter therefore extends the ways in which we think about atmosphere in the studio. These atmospheres are certainly shaped by the specific arrangements of different bodies (human and non-human) and materials that come into contact with each other within the studio (Ash, 2016; Sjöholm, 2013). But the atmospheres of the studio also emerge and are conditioned by wider forces beyond the control of the individual artist. In particular, it demonstrates how precarity produces contrasting atmospheric experiences of the studio that are interpreted and valued in different ways by artists.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

8.0 Introduction

At the beginning of this thesis I set out with four research objectives. Taken together these expressed the ambition to explore how artists' experiences of the studio are being conditioned by its urban, social, and political-economic context. Beginning with the wider political economic context of studio provision in London, I gradually narrowed down to focus on the specific ways in which this urban context is made present and palpable to the artist when at work in the studio. The first substantive chapter focused on the organisation and management of creative workspace within the city's affordable studio sector and the work of those providing the studios, which included how studios are designed and the calculative rationales that studio groups and their partners confer to them. The following empirical chapters (Five, Six and Seven) focused on those renting workspaces, the tenants and their experiences. Throughout these four chapters I unpacked artists' studios in relation to their urban context and the role that urban precarity plays in shaping these spaces and experiences of artistic practice in contemporary London. I now want to bring these chapters together to underline the broader insights that can be drawn from examining the geographies of art studios. My broad finding is that it is impossible to think about affordable studio provision in London without thinking about urban precarity. In other words, we cannot think about the artist's studio outside of its urban context. Following this I make four more specific

points about how this relationship between urban precarity and the studio is illuminated by the thesis and how we can see art-space provision and the studio in London changing.

8.1 Multiple forms of studio

Urban precarity is reconfiguring the shape and provision of the contemporary art studio. It is opening up many possibilities for interconnecting new groups and individuals around the artist's studio that may not ordinarily be placed together. These new relations coming into view around the studio are having a practical effect on their management, as well as the ways in which studio groups imagine and constitute creative workspace. This is particularly evident in the case of affordable studios as I demonstrate.

As was discussed in Chapter Four, the leasehold model of tenure (under which the vast majority of studio properties are currently managed) is becoming increasingly risky and studio groups have needed to find more sustainable alternatives to delivering on their promise of the affordable studio. Studio development partnerships which make use of changes in the urban planning system (namely the introduction of the S106 policy and planning gain mechanism) have been a popular response to this since the mid-2000s. The organisation of studios via this mechanism has meant that, alongside artists and studio provider organisations like Acme, SPACE, ASC and ACAVA (which have been the focus of this study), new and multiple actors are involved in financing and delivering affordable studio space. To date these studio organisations have worked closely with a range of public and private partners including commercial property developers, schools, local councils, and arts organisations. As we saw in Chapter Four, the regional government's plans to develop a hybrid-funding-model (in brief, a pot of money that

different groups and individuals can invest in, to assist with the quick purchase of property for use as creative workspace), means that a potentially larger number and more diverse range of partners will gradually become involved in studio delivery. This raises questions of how creative spaces are made and used in London.

Consequentially, urban precarity is connecting a diverse range of groups and individuals that may not ordinarily be placed together, but who are collectively responsible for shaping the conditions that frame artistic practice within the city. As studio provision becomes an increasingly distributed process, we might therefore best approach the urban studio as an emergent entity resulting from the coming together and assembling of different relations in the city. As such, the urban artist's studio is not located in any one structure or organisation but is the outcome of an increasingly complex set of relations in which precarity is the coordinating element and the condition of their interactions. This can be understood in relation to the three main principles of assemblage outlined in the literature review in Chapter Two (section one).

- *Connection*: the studio is the outcome of different overlapping urban assemblages, including (but not limited to) the city's arts, cultural and creative sectors and planning sectors.
- *Heterogeneity:* the studio requires a rich diversity of components to sustain it including artists, planners, studio groups, landlords and politicians.
- *Exteriority:* these previous two points about connection and heterogeneity demonstrate the openness of the studio to urban change and how forces beyond the studio shape the internal space and experience of the studio.

As I have also demonstrated throughout the thesis, these new relations are not only shaping the practical and physical delivery of artist's workspace. They are also

responsible for (re)defining and mobilising new imaginaries and potentials for the urban studio. For, whilst these partners find common ground in their ambition to secure affordable creative workspace this is not their only desire. What we see is different stakeholders conferring their own visions, ideas and calculative and organisational rationales to the studio for the realisation of their own goals and different outcomes. Within the literature discussed in Chapter Two (section two) Daskalaki and Mould (2013) offer a critical interpretation of this kind of 'intervention activity' as an attempt by different groups and individuals to co-opt artists workspaces into their own political agendas, to deliver on their own ambitions and promises. The consequence is that these new partners are altering perceptions about what the affordable urban studio is, what it looks like and what it should do (i.e. its wider functions). In Chapter Four I discussed how London's regional government have explicitly outlined three roles for the affordable studio in the form of value, which are often presented under three headings; 'cultural benefit', 'economic benefit' and 'community benefit'. I also looked at how private property developers are using the S106 mechanism to deliver studios and fulfil their own development agendas. In Chapter Five I looked at the expectation coming from public funded arts organisations, such as Arts Council England, for the studio to serve as a platform for extending public engagement in the arts. Artist studios are therefore part of multiple relationships and whether labelled as social, relational, connective or collaborative, this suggests that we need a new way of framing and conceptualising studio space in the city.

As the ideas and values of these different groups and individuals come together in different ways through the studio they manifest and materialise in different ways to produce different types of creative workspace. In other words, the affordable studio is

materially and ideologically shaped by those funding, organising and governing it and becomes the spatial expression of these different values, hence meaning that different relations configure different types of studio space. As such, there is no one linear progression of the contemporary affordable urban studio in London, but many changing configurations branching out in different directions.

The changing geographies of art-space provision in London are therefore detected in the many variations of studio that are currently in operation in the city. This change can also be detected in three other ways that are worthy of our attention because they underscore the ways in which the lived space of the studio is changing in London.

8.2 Performing precarity

Urban precarity is not exogenous to the studio. It is not just the context which studios are situated in, but is actually enacted and re-produced in different ways through the studio and the types of embodied creative practices, activities and performances that take place within it.

Throughout the research I have demonstrated the ways in which urban precarity affects artist's experiences of the studio and how they use and interact with their workspace. In Chapter Five we saw urban precarity contributing to the gradual erosion of privacy in the studio and the types of workspace strategies that artists are developing to compensate for this. This included the closed-door arrangement and the use of furniture to distinguish individual workspaces within the shared studio and produce separate territories for artists to maintain feeling of privacy and control in. In Chapter

Six, we saw how urban precarity shapes studio routines and structures the artist's use of time in the studio. In Chapter Seven, we saw how urban precarity establishes the architectural and material conditions of the studio and shapes the types of atmospheric engagements and experiences that can happen within it. In particular I explored this in relation to the different strategies of adaption, modification and making do that can happen in the different studio forms in operation in London. These chapters demonstrate some of the ways in which urban precarity infuses the studio's spatial-affective registers and in doing so opens up, closes down, and ultimately alters the artist's different potential fields of action within the studio and different strategies for using and occupying their workspace.

In Chapters Five, Six and Seven I also argued that artists embody the lived, personal and affective dimensions of urban precarity through different structures of feeling in the studio, particularly those related to feelings of anxiety, insecurity and the inability to predict and preside over the outcomes of their workspace. In short, I have exemplified the complex ways in which urban precarity is re-structuring the artist's occupation and experience of the studio.

The danger with this understanding is that it plays into the trap of causality. It suggests that urban precarity is *causing* the changing conditions of the studio and is in some way governing the artist's use of their workspace. What is actually happening here is that urban precarity is conditioning (rather than causing) artists' day to day use of the studio and is being actuated and reproduced in different ways through the artist's studio activities, practices and performances. Put differently, urban precarity is accustoming artists to accept certain conditions within the studio and these conditions allow certain styles of studio inhabitation to happen, rather than determine them. For instance, as

artists' studio timetables are becoming harder to predict and studio routines are becoming more flexible and ad-hoc, it is within this change that artists reluctantly perform and reproduce the types of labour and workspace precarities that they face, and which are affecting the studio's spatiotemporal configuration. Similarly, the closed-door practice of working that I addressed in Chapter Five, expresses not only the desire for privacy in the studio but also draws attention to an existing lack of privacy and re-performs the conditions that are making privacy harder to secure and sustain in the studio.

In other words, precarity is not only felt and lived through the micro-geographies of the studio but is also re-made through the different styles of studio inhabitation and practices that these micro-geographies enable. Urban precarity affects and is affected by studio practices, and it is through these changing practices that the individual reproduces and feeds-back into these cycles of urban precarity. This signals the ongoing making of the studio's urban context and its precarious conditions at the level of the individual artist and the personal strategies they develop for occupying the studio. Similar ideas about the everyday re-composition of urban precarity from the bottom-up have been explored by Ettlinger (2007) and have gone on to influence works by Vasudevan (2017) and Ferreri et al. (2017). Drawing on the Foucauldian concept of bio-power, Ettlinger (2007) argues that precarity's reproduction at the scale of the individual and the everyday re-composition of precarity 'from below', connects with processes operating at other scales (2007: 321). My thesis extends such work by rescaling precarity from the macro-structures of the city and its political-economic systems, to the micro-geographies of daily life in the studio. It also contributes to this expansive view of urban precarity as operating within and across scales in the city, by underscoring the ways in

which the city, studio and artist are intimately interconnected through conditions of precarity.

Whilst the conditions of urban precarity exist prior to the occupation of the studio (in that they exist as part of the political-economic condition of the city), they are also lived and re-made through this occupation. Urban precarity must then be contextualised in terms of its own historical reproduction around the artist's studio, evident in the interweaving of historic and economic conditions and the extensive use of leasehold tenure in London. The condition of precarity is continually unfolding and reproduced within the studio. As such, urban precarity is experienced in the studio at the nexus of historical contingency *and* its ongoing re-articulation in studio practice. These ideas reflect broader ideas within geography about the processual reproduction of precarity and the claim that precarity is never a finished product but is a process that is continually being remade in the city.

Where this departs from previous work is that a lot of geography studies have focused on the home as the principle site through which urban precarity is experienced. Vasudevan (2015), Ferreri et al., (2017) and Ferreri and Dawson (2018) have been particularly attentive to insecure forms of low-cost and informal housing - including squatting, property guardianship and other makeshift approaches to housing and shelter - as spaces of intensified precarity. There is limited research on how precarity can be spatially generative and co-constitutive of urban life in other spaces beyond the home, such artist studios and other types of creative workspace. This feels particularly deserving of consideration given that recent work by economic and labour geographers has highlighted the precariousness of work within the creative industries (e.g. Desmond and Gershenson, 2016; Ferreri, et al., 2017; Gill and Pratt, 2008). This research

demonstrates that precarity also unfolds and finds and produces difference in other types of (work) spaces in the city, including those that are highly valued as social, cultural and economic producers within the creative urban economy.

Indeed, my aim in this thesis has been to provide a nuanced reading of the ways in which the urban context and concomitant precarities unfold and are re-made in the studio, offering a way to appreciate their micro-spatial manifestations as well as their performative politics. In doing so it also demonstrates the intertwined processual making of urban precarity and urban studio space, which suggest that the studio is not just a reflection of the artist (their activities and practices) but also a reflection of contemporary urban life and its precarities.

8.3 Spatial vocabulary for the studio

The artist's studio is enmeshed in a particular urban development paradigm in which the idea of the creative economy has become highly influential in shaping ideas about the studio. But the studio's restructuring is not just a political project, as Chapters Five, Six and Seven demonstrate: it is also bound up with the *experience* of urban space. Whilst the studio may be the subject of regeneration strategies (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010; Ley, 2003) and a part of a toolkit for urban place-making (Landry, 2000), it is also a space that is lived and felt. We must not overlook how its inclusion in such strategies (like the S106 strategy and planning gain mechanism) affects experiences of the studio. Talking about the changing place of the studio within the political economy of London is therefore not enough. We need a spatial vocabulary for understanding how this change is experienced by those renting and using the workspace.

My claim here is that ideas of atmosphere and temporality currently offer some of the most useful ways of thinking about how transformations in the studio are *felt* and made perceptible to the occupying artist. Within geography the concepts of atmosphere and temporality provide different ways of perceiving space and help to get at the felt experience of space by asking how does that space feel (see for instance: Adey et al., 2012; Anderson, 2007; 2009; Bennett, 2004; 2010; McCormack, 2008a; 2008b; Wunderlich, 2008; 2013)? In doing so they help us to conceptualise the studio not just as a space where artwork is made, but also as an experiential environment of sensations and affects that are lived and felt in different ways by the artists who occupy them.

Atmosphere provides a critical way of making sense of the changing constellations of interactions and relations within and around the artist's studio and the ways in which urban precarity is altering the (spatial) qualities that are taken to define the studio's creative space. The findings of this thesis also contribute to the literature on atmosphere. First, they complicate understandings of atmosphere as indicative of some kind of pre-reflexive experience of space**.** In Chapter Seven I found that a number of artists engage with studio atmospheres based on a culturally inherited set of ideas about what studios *should* feel like. In particular, I found that spatial imaginaries of the industrial studio primed artists to anticipate the atmosphere of a certain type of studio prior to their actual bodily experience of it. This suggested a kind culturally shaped response to a particular type of space and its atmosphere, which complicates the way in which we think about atmosphere as being an emergent, and a not yet articulated pre-conscious experience of space (Anderson, 2017; McCormack, 2008a; Thrift, 2004). The way that artists talk about atmosphere therefore generates friction between what they are saying about the studio (i.e. the narratives they create for it) and how it is lived

and felt. By the time that artists talk about atmosphere they have already translated sensations into emotions, which can be contrived in order to fulfil social and cultural expectations of what a studio experience *should* feel like. This highlights the difficulty in disentangling sensations of studio space, from emotions and judgements concerning the character of the studio.

Second, my work contributes to current understandings of the relationship between atmosphere and precarity. In the small but growing body of geography literature on precarity's affective life there is a risk that precarity is understood as a single atmospheric quality, often as an air of 'unease' or a distributed feeling of 'insecurity' (Anderson, 2017: 504; Stewart, 2011). Chapter Seven demonstrated that the relationship between atmosphere and precarity in the studio is not nearly as straightforward as this: it manifests instead in various complex and discrete ways that are no less meaningful to how artists use and experience their workspace**.** In particular, Chapter Seven demonstrated that urban precarity has forced studio organisations to widen their search for affordable studio premises, leading to artists working in a range of atmospheric conditions. Here precarity is not expressed and experienced as a singular atmospheric quality of the studio, but as a series of juxtaposing atmospheres (e.g. 'industrial', 'office-like' and 'clinical') that involve and evoke a mixture of feelings.

Atmospheres are not therefore just shaped by bodies in the studio but by wider factors in which those studios are found - so too are the temporalities of the studio. Temporality - and specifically pace and routine - provides a way of interrogating the everyday temporal structures and processes that reproduce the connections between the artist and the studio. It is also useful for thinking about how these relationships and

the everyday rhythms of studio practice and creative labour are being altered by urban precarity.

The thesis also contributes to thinking about the temporality of atmospheres. Atmospheres are created in the relation between bodies, space and time, but they are also highly temporal (Gandy, 2017; Anderson, 2009). Comprised of shifting negotiations between bodies and their environments, atmospheres are constantly forming, deforming and being altered as new elements enter their composition (McCormack, 2018). As we have seen in Chapters Five and Seven, this can involve new materials, objects and bodies entering the studio in surprising and unpredictable ways during the open studio event and in shared workspaces.

The broader value of temporality to understand the artist-studio relationship is that it foregrounds the studio in relation its inherent processuality, relationality and indeterminability in the city. Put another way, paying attention to temporality draws attention to the unpredictability and in-consistency of spatial experience in the studio, which arguably heightens feelings of precarity for the artists occupying them (May and Thrift, 2003; Wunderlich, 2010; 2013; McCormack, 2008b; Anderson, 2017). Examining the temporality of atmospheric conditions helps us to get closer to the type of unpredictable conditions and outcomes that urban precarity manifests around the studio. It also allows us to theorise studio space as an emergent and relational entity and take seriously the micro-geographies that constitute it.

My claim in this section is therefore that temporality and atmosphere help to get at the immediate contingencies of spatial experience and the ways in which artists attune themselves to their surroundings under conditions of precarity. They also help us to understand how studio space is inhabited and used by artists, whilst keeping in

mind how this is changing beyond the individual artist's control. In doing so, these concepts make us more attentive to the disparities between the ways in which artists conceive and imagine studio space, and use it.

8.4 Re-situating the studio

The subject of the artist's studio has been revisited with renewed interest in geography in recent years in relation to questions about *where* creativity takes place. As stated in Chapter Two, one response to this has been to think through the 'spatial patterning of creative production' (Hawkins, 2017: 18). This takes us beyond specialised spaces of production and consumption (such as the studio and gallery), to consider the various locations and range of scales and spaces in which creativity can happen (e.g. Bain, 2005; Columbano, 2015; Dixon et al., 2001; Engelmann, 2017; Farías and Wilkie, 2016; Hawkins, 2015; Jellis, 2015; Lacy, 2010; Relyea, 2010). These literatures call into question the value, status and nature of the contemporary studio and have raised questions about how best to 'situate' the types of creative practice and production that take place in it. My argument is that the best way to understand the nature and ecology of the studio is not just through the artist's embodied practices within it, but through the artist's embodied practices within the specificities of the city in which it is situated - which demands including the perspectives of artists, as well as studio groups and regional government.

Studio space is caught between the managerial invocations of the creative class and creative industries discourses and the question of the individual artist. As this work makes clear, neither role can be presumed and suggests that instead the studio must be

negotiated as an emergent space that reflects and effects the configuration of continuously changing and assembling relations.

In short, due to the processes and pressures of its urban context the studio is becoming a space whose relations are increasingly contingent on precarity, at the same time as becoming a space in which the responsibility to manage that precarity is individualised. It is relational in that so far that the success of the artist's studio has been contingent on the evolution of organisational practices and strategies for delivery that are reflective of the conditions of the political economy at the time. The once straightforward relationship between the regional government and studio organisations - to whom they would lease empty properties for use as studios - has gradually been replaced by a greater number and more diverse range of partners becoming involved in the production of creative workspace.

Yet experiences of the studio are also contingent with the specific socio-economic status and position of the individual renting and occupying the workspace. In Chapter Five we saw this with regards to the effect that the artists' socio-economic status has on their ability to maintain feelings of privacy and authorship in the studio. It was necessary for some artists to share their workspace with others. In Chapter Six, we also saw this with regards to the individualised temporal experiences of the studio, whereby the necessity to take up additional forms of work in order to manage the un-affordability of studio rent and un-predictability of rent hikes is producing disparate experiences of studio time among artists. Studio experience is shaped by the socio-economic status of the artist and their individual ability to withstand and manage the various workspace and labour precarities that they face.

It seems obvious that the best way in which to situate and understand the nature and status of the contemporary studio in London is, therefore, by engaging with those who seek to respond to and ameliorate the political economic conditions in which affordable creative workspace provision takes place (i.e. the regional government), those involved in the organisation and management of creative workspace within this context (i.e. studio provider organisations like SPACE, Acme, ACAVA and ASC), as well as those occupying and using the workspace (i.e. artists). It is important to include these different groups and individuals otherwise one runs the risk of a one-sided account of the studio, particularly with regards to what its function and value is. For instance, whilst the focus of the regional government is on the function and value of the studio in the context of the creative economy, artists look at the studio in relation to their own individual needs.

Less obvious or recognised is the value of engaging with studio provider organisations in these attempts at 'situating the studio'. Studio provider organisations recognise the needs of those funding the studio and those renting it and act as something of a mediator between the two; they also mediate the relational and individual aspects of the studio and we see this dynamic coming through in different ways in the thesis. For instance, on the one hand the types of workspace that studio groups provide often consist of large spaces divided up into smaller partitions which define private individual workspaces, in order to allow artists to create a workspace in the style that they require for their own creative practice. On the other hand, we also see this dynamic coming through in the (sometimes compulsory) requirement for artists to demonstrate the wider social value of their studio by participating in annual open studio events. Despite their scale and significance within the affordable studio sector in

London, these studio provider organisations have been widely overlooked in much geography literature and in-depth engagements with their work is rare. But as this work makes clear, alongside artists and the regional government, we also need to take seriously the role of studio organisations shaping the contemporary urban studio.

8.5 Summary

Over the course of this thesis, I have made a number of claims about the changing geographies of affordable artist studios in contemporary London. **Firstly**, new relations are coming into view around the affordable studio and the different studios these relations manifest. Financial pressures on studio organisations to diversify the search for affordable studio premises in the city, has resulted in studios being delivered through an increasingly hybrid assemblage of groups and individuals, and in a range of properties with distinct material characters, identities and histories. **Secondly,** urban precarity is not just a context but is actually enacted through the studio**.** Urban precarity manifests in the different ways that artists inhabit and use the studio, from the flexibility of studio routines, to the popular closed-door style of working and the material modifications that artists make to their work environments; and it is through these different styles of inhabiting workspace, that urban precarity is both lived and re-made in the studio. **Thirdly,** experiences of the contemporary urban studio require a conceptual vocabulary that engages not only space but atmosphere and temporality**.** Such terms, used in conjunction, help get at the immediate contingencies of spatial experience in the studio. They are also necessary for understanding how mundane everyday moments in the studio are generative of sensory and affective forms of

engagement with the studio and its wider urban context. **Fourthly,** and methodologically, the best way to understand affordable art studios is by engaging with the perspectives and experiences of those occupying and using the studios *and* the perspectives of those involved in their organisation, delivery and management.

The whole context of these changes is one of precarity, and this work makes clear that it is impossible to think about affordable studio provision in London and artist's studio experiences without thinking about urban precarity. Precarity has become a key word for our time (Butler, 2011; Ferreri et al., 2017) and this work explores how it can do analytical work for thinking the affordable studio.

This research is important because geographical literature on artists' studios has somewhat exaggerated the dividing lines between political economic and creative understandings of the studio. A focus on urban precarity can bridge the gap between these perspectives and bring them into conversation. This opens up new ways of reflecting on the lived space of the studio in relation to both the micro-geographies of the studio and the artist's creative practice, and its wider political-economic context. In other words, it demonstrates how urban precarity can provide analytical purchase on the ways in which we currently understand and approach the artist's studio and contextualise artist's studio experiences in geography. The style of this research is therefore also a kind of contribution, in that it demonstrates how employing precarity as a multi-dimensional conceptual framework can help tease out more complex relationships between people and the spaces that they inhabit in the city.

This research is particularly timely because of the pressing urgency to situate the artist-studio relationship within its broader political and economic context given the scope and pace of urban change. London's affordable studio sector is undergoing a

series of rapid transformations, largely related to concerns about the security and longevity of affordable creative workspace in the city. In Chapter Four, I explored this in greater detail around the issue of leasehold tenure - 70% of the properties managed by London's 20 largest studio organisations is currently held under leasehold tenures, many of which are due to end by the end of 2019,[36] or are at risk of being terminated early in order for landlords to pursue more profitable uses for their property. These risks, along with the new opportunities being explored for long-term, sustainable and affordable studio development, have brought to question the status of the artist's studio and its contributions and importance to the city. In this context it becomes increasingly important to think about how studios are used, by whom, and in whose interests.

Similar questions have been raised by geographers in relation to changing art-site relations and the role and place of the studio within the creative process. Pushing back against ideas about creativity as taking place in pre-designated sites dedicated to creative production and consumption (i.e. resisting the studio-gallery dichotomy), geographers and others (see Farías and Wilkie, 2016; Hawkins, 2011; 2012; 2017) are demonstrating the growing number and variety of sites that creativity can happen in. Responding and contributing to these types of enquiries into the type of change taking place around and in the artist's studio, this thesis demonstrates that the studio remains fundamental to research striving to understand creativity in the city. Alongside work that is seeking to move 'beyond' the studio to situate creativity within a range of

[36] In a short report published at the end of 2018 entitled '*artist workspace annual data note'* (GLA, 2018b) figures suggest that 87% of London's total supply of affordable studio premises (239 sites) operate on rented or leasehold terms.

different relations and contexts, this thesis demonstrates the importance of asking how the studio is itself changing within this broader set of shifting relations.

This thesis opened with two contrasting vignettes of the kinds of reconfigurations of creative urban space that are happening in London. The first was a bid to convert an abandoned multi-storey car park in Southwark into affordable art studios. Almost four years on, there is now a combination of bars, yoga studios, shared working spaces and offices - as well as affordable artist studios. This seven-storey car park is now better known as 'Peckham Levels'. The second vignette was of the Galleria, a mixed-use property development also in Southwark containing a number of purpose-designed low-cost art studios. The Galleria remains much the same today and is a leading example of how a development partnership can work in London by utilising the requirements of planning permission for a mutually successful outcome - Southwark got continued employment use on the site, Barratt Homes got their planning consent and Acme got its studios. Of course, these vignettes only gesture to the many instances of affordable artist studios in London. Even as I write this conclusion, I regularly see newspaper articles about the redevelopment of this or that former industrial building and how it has been repurposed for 'creative' use. Often affordable art studios are considered to underline the 'creative surroundings' (White, 2019) of such redevelopments. Such articles tend to focus on property investment and identifying 'hip' urban areas. But they also point to the ways in which affordable art studios - and their precarious tenants - are wrapped up in wider narratives about contemporary urban space (not to mention the glib ways in which 'creative' is deployed). This thesis has investigated in detail how such art studios also tell us a great deal about urban precarity. In doing so it has examined the kinds of artist studios that are being developed

and how these call for a new understanding of the studio: it is not only a site of creative practice but of precarious urban life.

Over the course of many interviews and hours spent in such spaces, it is clear that the affordable urban art studio in contemporary London allows for a sustained engagement with precarity. This was evidenced in the fieldwork by different discontinuous experiences of the studio relating to privacy, time and atmosphere. What runs through the thesis as a thread, then, is an examination of precariousness not simply in terms of politico-economic logics, but as an existential state. As Lorey (2015: 19) notes, 'precariousness relates not to life itself, but rather to the conditions of its existence'.

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Appendices

Appendix A: London's largest studio provider organisations 2019

Over the past fifty years there has been a significant growth in the provision of managed studios by large arts organisations in London. There are currently 129 registered studio organisations in operation in London, operating 239 properties and providing studios for, on average 7000 artists in the capital (GLA, 2018b: 7) and ASC, ACAVA, Acme and SPACE are the four largest groups among these. The principle function of these groups is to provide low-cost workspace for artists who are generally on low incomes (NFASP, 2009). Whilst costs vary in relation to condition of building, occupation period and location, they provide studio rents that are on average one third of that available on the open market for a similar size space and location. In this way studio organisations play a vital role in the production and continuation of artists' studios in London.

1. **ASC**, Artist's Studio Company is a registered educational charity which was founded in 1993 by CEO Peter Flack. Today they are one of the largest providers of affordable workspace for artists in London, operating 700 studios across 9 buildings in London and surrounding London areas (ASC, 2019).
2. **ACAVA**, the Association for Cultural Advancement through Visual Art is an educational charity, which was founded in Hammersmith in 1984, to support the development and practice of the visual arts. It provides space for more than 500 artists across 24 buildings, most of which are in London (ACAVA, 2018).
3. **Acme** was founded in Bow in 1972 by Co-Founders Jonathon Harvey and David Panton. It differs from the other studio groups; in that it operates as a charitable housing organisation. Acme studios supports over 700 artists in 564 studios in London and has received ACE funding grants over the years which have enabled the purchase of a number of permanent properties (Acme, 2018; GLA, 2014a).
4. **SPACE** is one of the largest and the oldest providers of affordable artist's workspace in London. Established in 1968 in London's Docklands, whilst supporting over 700 artists in 20 buildings across seven boroughs, it has had a sustained presence in East London, where its HQ 'the triangle' currently is. SPACE receives core funding by ACE and receives capital lottery funding (SPACE, 2018).

Appendix B: Studio groups property portfolios, showing change 2015-2019

This data provides an overview of how workspace provision for London's artists has changed over the duration of this DPhil. It tracks the changes in the supply of studios provided by Acme, ASC, ACAVA and SPACE from when I began preparing for fieldwork in November 2015 and finished writing the thesis in summer 2019. **Light grey** indicates the loss of a property**, light blue** indicates the acquisition of a new property and **white** indicates no change.

Acme: Property portfolio Dec 2016- Feb 2019 [London Only]						
Property name	**Date established**	**Number of studios**	**Local authority**	**Tenure type/partners**	**Property type**	**Current rent**
Carlew House London SE27	1996	13	Lambeth	Leasehold: end date 2021 Landlord: Charles Hewlings and Gina Medcalf	Former build workshop and office premises	£12.83 per square foot per year
165 Childers Street London SE8	1990	132	Lewisham	Leasehold: end date 2028 Landlord: Donovan Brothers	1920's brick-built ship propeller foundry	£11.32, £12.38 and £13.83 per square foot per year
42/44 Copperfield Road London E3	1992	51	Tower Hamlets	Freehold purchase (1997) Partners: London Arts Board, Arts Council England Lottery Fund, the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	1920's concrete and steel-built factory on Regents canal Matt's Gallery on ground floor, Acme studios on 4th floor	Ranging from £12.38 per square foot per year, inclusive of VAT
The Fire Station 30 Gillender Street London E14	1997	6 Studios 12 live/work studios	Tower Hamlets	Freehold purchase (1997) Partners: Foundation for Sport and the Arts, ACE lottery fund and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	Former LCC Fire Station built in 1911	£12.38 per square foot per year, inclusive of VAT
Galleria Pennack Road London SE15	2006	50	Southwark	New build/Planning gain	New build	£13.24 per square

				Partners: Barratt Homes/purchase part-funded by Arts Council England, Grants for the Arts Capital Programme		foot per year
The Glassyard London SW9	2013	24	Lambeth	New build/Planning gain Partners: Spiritbond in partnership with University of the Arts London	New build	£13.93 per square foot per year
733 Harrow Road London NW10	2010	12	Brent	New build/Planning gain Partners: Catalyst Housing group/ purchase part-funded by Arts Council England, Grants for the Arts Capital Programme	New build	£15.80 per square foot per year
40 Leven Road London E14	2009	21	Tower Hamlets	New build/Planning gain Partners: Swan Housing/ purchase part-funded by Arts Council England, Grants for the Arts Capital Programme	New build	£13.24 per square foot per year
Matchmakers Wharf London E9	2012	49	Hackney	New build/Planning gain Partners: Telford Homes Plc/ purchase part-funded by Arts Council England, Grants for the Arts Capital Programme	New build	£14.74 per square foot per year
15 &33 Orsman Road London N1	1983	48 (8 live/work)	Hackney	Freehold purchase (2000)	1930s brick and concrete-built factory site, originally Players Cigarettes and then Research Engineers	£12.38 and £10.08 per square foot per year
15 Robinson Road London E2	1981	47	Tower Hamlets	Leasehold: end date 2030	Mid-19th Century brick	£11.56 and £10.08

				Landlord: Peabody Trust -studios initially developed with support from AC Great Britain	built former Brush factory - includes Acme project space and a housing unit	per square foot per year
1 & 3a Rowse Close London E15	2001	35	Newham	Leasehold: end date 2022 Landlord: London borough of Newham	1970's brick built light industrial units	£9.29 per square foot per year
Warton House London E15	2015	27	Newham	Planning gain Partners: Genesis housing	1930's building Now mixed-use residential, retail and commercial space	£14.92 per square foot per year
Old Stable Block, Oaks Park, Woodmansterne, London SM7	1992	12	Sutton	Leasehold: end date 2021 Landlord: London Borough of Sutton -studios initially developed with support of London Arts Board and London Borough of Sutton	Georgian brick built stable block	£10.79 per square foot per year
No net change: 2015 and 2019: 14 studio sites/547 studios						

SPACE: Property portfolio Dec 2016- Feb 2019 [London Only]					
Property name	**Date established**	**Number of studios**	**Local authority**	**Tenure type/partners**	**Property type**
Martello Street E8	1971	44	Hackney	Leasehold	Previously housed Matts Gallery and Genesis P-Orridge
Belsham Street E9	1981	8	Hackney	Leasehold	Industrial workshop. Formerly WECCA Wonderful fashions
Britannia Works E3	1983	62	Hackney	Leasehold 55 studios leased since 1980, ground floor since 2000	3 storey building once Percy Dalton's peanut factory
Deborah House E9	1985	34	Hackney	Freehold purchase (2010)	Owned since 2000, redesigned by Sarah Wigglesworth architects in 2014
Victor House E8	1985	25	Hackney	Leasehold	2 storey former shoe factory
Azof Street SE10	1987	5	Greenwich	Leasehold Landlord: Greenwich Council	Grade 2 listed building former congregational mission for Russia. Also houses arts organisations Emergency Exit Arts and STREAM
Eastway Laundry E9	1996	15	Hackney	Leasehold	Former 1960's laundry converted by architects

					Hook, White and Standway in 1993 for Hackney Council in partnership with SPACE
Sara Lane Court N1	1994	40 (8 live/work)	Hackney	Leasehold Landlord: Hackney Council	Ground floor and basement carpark converted in 1994 by Avanti architects and phase 2 in 2000
Bridget Riley E3	2000	37	Hackney	Leasehold	Former factory printing bank notes
The Triangle E8	2001	58-60	Hackney	-	SPACE HQ - former clothing manufacturer 1932
Stoke Newington Library N16	2002	5	Hackney	Leasehold	Former library
Timber Wharf E2	2008	12	Hackney	Leasehold	2 storey mixed use complex leased since 2008 and railway arches since 2010
Arlington NW1	2010	13	Camden	Leasehold Partners: One housing group	Opened as Hostel for homeless in 1905- landmark of social housing (George Orwell lived here for a while)
Peabody Yard N1	2010	12	Islington	Leasehold	2 small Victorian workshops built for artisans and craftsmen, funded by London Borough of Islington
Haymerle Road SE15	2011	69	Southwark	Freehold purchase	Former industrial site
The White Building E9	2012	6	Hackney	-	Former Candy factory Now a creative Lab Studios, hire space, café, project space. Conversion by David Kohn Architects in collaboration with Exploration Architecture. Funded by London Legacy Development Corporation and Bloomberg.
Brickfield E3	2014	50	Tower Hamlets	Freehold purchase	Former print factory for the Socialist Worker, Morning Star and Private Eye
Aspire Point, E15	Summer 2019	22	Newham	Planning gain Partners: Alumno Developments	Purpose built artist studios
Havil Street, SE5	2016		Southwark	Freehold/Planning gain Nov 2016 Partners: Alumno Developments and Southwark council	Mixed use project
Redbridge Town Hall, IG1 1DD	Summer 2019	38	Redbridge	-	Former town hall

Net Gain: +60 studios/+3 sites	2015: 17 studio sites/505 studios and 2019: 20 studio sites/565 studios.

ASC: Property portfolio Dec 2015- Feb 2019 [London Only]					
Property name	**Date established**	**Number of studios**	**Local authority**	**Tenure type/partners**	**Property type**
Brixton Village Market	-	23	Brixton	Leasehold	Market store rooms circa.1900
Empson Street	-	48	Tower Hamlets	Leasehold	Print works circa.1960s
Bond House- Goodwood Road	-	120	Lewisham	Leasehold	Factory circa.1960s
Hawks Road	-	60		Leasehold	Joinery factory circa.1950s
Stockwell Road	-	40	Brixton	Leasehold	Housing benefits offices circa.1930
Streatham Hill	-	47	Lambeth	Leasehold	Former factory/garages circa.1960
Thurlow Street- The Chaplin Centre	-	54	Southwark	Leasehold	Mixed use property circa.1960s
Worsley Bridge Road		35	Lewisham	Leasehold	Former office building circa.1950s
Rotherhithe Police Station, SE16	2018/2019	32	Southwark	Leasehold	Former police station circa.1960
Ealing Road	2018	26	Brent	Freehold (sept 2018 first permeant building)	New, purpose built permanent property
Grafton Quarter	2018	104	Croydon	-	Purpose built studios
Net Loss: -16 studios/0 sites			2015: 8 studio sites/427 studios and 2019: 8 studio sites/411 studios.		

ACAVA: Property portfolio Dec 2015- Feb 2019 [London Only]					
Property name	**Date established**	**Number of studios**	**Local authority**	**Tenure type/partners**	**Property type**
Mare Street	-	12	Hackney	-	-
Lombard Road	2016	27	Merton	Leasehold: end date 2031 (Break clause 2026) Landlord: Global Property Investments Ltd	Industrial building
Nine Elms, New Covent Garden Market	2014	4	Wandsworth	Leasehold: end date 2018 Landlord: New Covent Garden Market Authority Notice received for August 2018	Covent Garden Fruit & Vegetable Market

Phipps Bridge	2004	8	Merton	Leasehold: end date 2034 Landlord: Merton Council	Converted laundry building in a housing estate
Wandsworth Plain	2011	15	Wandsworth	Leasehold Landlord: Minerva (Wandsworth) Limited Notice received for 2016	Central Wandsworth premises with a garden, opposite the old Ram brewery site which is being developed into affordable graduate studios
Barham Park	2014	31	Brent	Leasehold: end date 2029 Lanldord: LB Brent in the capacity of Turstees of Barham Park	Georgian Mock Tudor buildings in Wembley
Blechynden Street	1997	21	Kensington and Chelsea	Freehold: End date 2057 Land leased and owned by RB Kensington and Chelsea	Purpose built artists' studio complex completed in 1999
Colville Road	2001	12	Ealing	Leasehold: end date 2020 Initial lease 2001-2011, renewed and extended for 9 years Landlord: MAC properties	A first-floor industrial space
Honeypot Lane		5	Brent	Freehold/New build	New build ACAVA have recently acquired five new live/work studios in the Honeypot Lane development in Kingsbury
Maxilla Walk	2015	24	Kensington and Chelsea	Leasehold: end date 2017 Landlord: Westway Trust	A former nursery
Park Royal	-	6	Ealing	Leasehold: notice received for 2017 Landlord: Park Royal Property Limited	First and second floors of a building in Park Royal industrial estate
Stewkley House	2008	26	Ealing	Leasehold: end date 2028 Landlord: R&R Parmer	Development was completed in late 2008
Whitefriars	2017	14	Harrow	Leasehold: end date 2022 Landlord: Altomart	World renowned colourmen Winsor & Newton, established in 1832, set up their factory in Wealdstone in 1937. In 2017 the offices were converted to provide creative workspace.

Borthwick Street	2016	5	Greenwich	Leasehold: end date 2026 Landlord: David Cotterrell	Newly converted studios in riverside premises
Vale Grove	2006	15	Ealing	Leasehold: up for renewal every 5 years Landlord: Foxley Estates Limited	Industrial building, previously a print works shared with spice importers and music businesses
Flying Angel, Victoria Dock Rd	2011	10	Newham	Leasehold: end date 2021 Landlord: Look Ahead Housing & Care Ltd	Purpose-designed studios in ground floor of mission to seafarers building
Hythe Road	2007	16	Hammersmith and Fulham	Leasehold: end date 2017 Landlord: Etad Ltd, Libya	First floor of a building located in an industrial estate
Hetley Road	1976	20	Hammersmith and Fulham	Freehold The second of the two buildings originally set up as studios in 1976	Converted vicarage with a large garden
Faroe Road		9	Hammersmith and Fulham	Freehold First of the two buildings originally set up as studios in 1976	Previously a small Victorian school
Potting Sheds, Cannizaro Park	-	6	Merton	Leasehold Landlord: London Borough of Merton	Old potting sheds in Cannizaro Park
Limehouse	2013	10	Tower Hamlets	Leasehold: property sold in 2016 (more data needed) Lease start date 2013 for 21 years Landlord: Scylla properties Ltd	Originally Poplar Technical College. Used by artists since 1994.
Norman Road	2018	-	Greenwich	Leasehold 21st Dec 2018-31st March 2019 Landlord: sub-leased from Creative Pioneers who have a lease with Purelake	Corner premises close to Greenwich Station Lease initial up to Jan 31st 2019, negotiated a 2 month extension
Net Loss: -25 studios/-2 sites			2015: 18 studio sites/250 studios and 2019: 16 studio sites/225 studios.		

Appendix C: Studio sites included in this study



Glassyard, Lambeth
Acme 38 studios open-plan
New-build development



Highline Building, Southwark
Acme 24 studios open-plan
New-build development



Matchmakers Wharf, Hackney
Acme 49 studios
New-build development



Fire Station, Tower Hamlets
Acme 20 live/work studios
Former LCC Fire Station built 1911



The Galleria, Southwark
Acme 50 studios
New-build development



Orsman Road, Hackney
Acme 42 studios
1930s-built factory site



Childers Street, Lewisham
Acme 132 studios
1920s-built ship propeller foundry



Bond House, Lewisham
ASC 120 studios
Former industrial workshops



Chaplin Centre, Southwark
ASC 54 studios
1960s-built mixed-use property



Streatham Hill, Lambeth
ASC 47 studios
1960s-built factory



Stockwell Road, Lambeth
ASC 40 studios
1930s-built housing benefits office



Empson Street, Tower Hamlets
ASC 48 studios
1960s-built print works



Deborah House, Hackney
SPACE 48 studios
Former workshops/factory



Belsham Street, Hackney
SPACE 8 studios
Light industrial workshop



Britannia Works, Hackney
SPACE 55 studios
Percy Dalton peanut factory



Victor House, Hackney
SPACE 26 studios
Light industrial workshop



Brickfield Studios, Tower Hamlets
SPACE 50 studios
Former print factory



Haymerle Road, Southwark
SPACE 70 studios
Industrial workshops



Sara Lane, Hackney
SPACE 40 studios
Former ground floor car park



Flying Angel, Newham
ACAVA 10 studios
Mission to seafarers building



Hythe Road, Brent
ACAVA 16 studios
Industrial property



Limehouse, Tower Hamlets
ACAVA 60 studios
Poplar technical college



Faroe Road, RBKC
ACAVA 9 studios
Small Victorian school



Hetley Road, Ham & Fulham
ACAVA 18 studios
Converted vicarage

Appendix D: Sample email invitation for participants

Dear [enter name],

Invitation to participate in postgraduate research.

My name is Rhian and I am a DPhil student at the University of Oxford. I am conducting a study on 'The Changing Geographies of Artist Studios in Contemporary London'. In this I wish to explore how studio experiences may be changing in light of new city-wide approaches to their organisation and management.

As a professional artist with first-hand experience of studio space and creative labour in the city, I am keen to hear your personal experiences. I would like to use the insights that you provide to develop a deeper understanding of the 'feel' and function of the different types of creative workspace currently in operation in London. I am particularly interested in creative spaces ran by arts organisations such as [enter studio organisation].

I would be very grateful if you would consider participating in a 60-minute interview at some point in the next few weeks as part of this project. The interview will be confidential and none of your comments will be attributed to you in the final report. It is important to note that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary, so that should you choose to participate and later wish to withdraw your participation at any stage, for any reason, you may of course do so. In return for your time I would like to offer a helping hand where it may be useful around the studio, or with any art-related events that you may have coming up.

I do hope that you will enjoy participating in the research, as I feel that it provides a crucial platform for exploring the everyday-experiential aspect of your workspace, which is often overlooked in the more statistical-styles of reporting on London's studios.

Thank you in advance for taking part in this research, your time and feedback are greatly appreciated.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,
Rhian

Appendix E: Sample verbatim interview transcript

Please note that certain parts of the transcript have been omitted and personal names replaced to preserve the anonymity of the interview.

Interviewee: Artist, Ruth King

Interviewer: Rhian Scott

Date of interview: 16.06.2016

Location of interview: Ruth's studio. New build in Peckham.

List of Acronyms: RK= Ruth King, Interviewer= IN

[Begin Transcript]

IN: As explained in the research invite, the purpose of this research is to engage with visual artists, studio provider groups and key figures involved in the delivery of artists workspace, to understand their views and experiences of the studio, and how, if at all, this is changing. To kick things off, it would be really helpful if you could briefly introduce yourself and tell me a bit about your background as an artist.

RK: I'm Ruth, and well I came to London in nineteen-seventy-three and at the time Franco was in power, so life was very difficult in Spain in those days. I was lucky, an opportunity came up and I left Spain. Basically, I was really fed up of being there with a dictator and so I came here and soon after I realised there are opportunities here that I didn't have in Barcelona, for example studying. I hadn't even finished my A Levels in Spain, so I was about twenty and enrolled in secondary school and did some A Levels and thanks to that I qualified to apply for a BA in Chelsea on a foundation course for a year, and then a BA for four years.

What I did then [pauses] I went to Rome for a year and came back and applied to the Royal College and got in! So, I did a three-year MA and while at the Royal College I won an important scholarship that allowed me to go to Amsterdam for two years at the Rijksakademie. So, all together, my sort of university and arts school training was huge. All together it's about nine years or so.

I also had another scholarship given to me by the Royal College of Art to be in Paris for three or four months and that was incredible, because I had a studio provided by the College and I was part of a generation that as artists we were extremely well looked after, not only in London, but also Amsterdam. The facilities at the Rijksakademie were incredible. Sometimes they would take us on trips. I remember being driven once to Cologne and they paid for everything, the hotel, entrance to the Miró exhibition. They even gave us pocket money and paid for our meals. It was absolutely incredible. I'm not convinced they invest in artists in the same way anymore.

IN: What makes you feel that that's not the case anymore?

RK: I think that in London you could say that it was the case before Thatcher. At the time when the Labour party and Socialism still had a big grip on the country, education was seen as very, very important and lots of interest and money was invested in that. I mean, of course you had to win competitions, they didn't just give funding to anybody. But you know, you had the chance if you worked hard enough and if what you did appealed to the people giving the awards and the scholarship. So, I had complete training and through that I met very interesting people and that's how I created my art world.

So, to answer your earlier question, why did I start doing art? When I was a child I was always painting but the immediate idea of becoming a professional painter was only something you would dream of in Spain. [Laughs] who became an artist? Unless you were Picasso, which when you are young you believe that you are. So, it wasn't easy unless you came from a well-to-do background that could cover the expenses and support you, which wasn't the case. So, coming here [to London] was an awakening.

IN: So, you say that you've been well supported as an artist in London and all the different countries that you've practiced in, has that support allowed you to make art your full-time occupation?

RK: I teach, always have, still do. It would be impossible without it, especially now in London! I mean there was a time when I left the Royal College that I was selling paintings very easily and had little need of doing other work. It's the same at the Rijksakademie, I had a very generous scholarship. When I was in Italy, I was married to someone and his grandmother died, and she was a very wealthy lady and so he got an awful lot of money and we were able to travel and work for a bit with that. After that there was the Royal College again with a grant. I left the college in nineteen-eighty-six and after that I was selling paintings quite easily for maybe five or six years. But life as an artist isn't easy and selling paintings wasn't easy. I had a few exhibitions here and there, but nothing ever really came from that, so I started teaching English language. I would work in the evenings as an English teacher and in the day, I was in the studio painting.

IN: And would that be every day, that you visited the studio?

RK: Near enough, as and when I could. At one stage I have lived in the studio. I had a studio in a sort of run-down set of studios, which I also turned into living accommodation, to try and get as much time in as I could between work and such.

IN: How about now? How frequently do you come to the studio?

RK: So, in the last ten or twelve years I have become a very secluded person. Well from Monday to Wednesday I teach at a public school, so when I can around that. So, you know, I come here on Wednesdays and I'm solidly here until I leave on Sunday evening. I come in and work solidly so sometimes I stay in here, because of the sofa, otherwise I go home to sleep and come back the following night.

IN: Are [name of studio organisation] flexible with that kind of live-work arrangement?

RK: Well it isn't official, but I know many people here do the same thing as me to try and make it work around their teaching. But in the studio contract it doesn't say that you're allowed to do that, so I think that [name of studio organisation] is flexible as long as it's not officially known. In reality nobody lives here, but occasionally I stay a night to get my painting done.

IN: Your tone suggests that you aren't completely happy with that arrangement, is that the case?

RK: Well, you have to make it work, there's no other option. Why do I teach? Mostly because of money. If artists could survive by selling our work, we would. Everybody has got to have a little bit of a job to be able to come here. So, from Monday to Wednesday I teach at a public school. I arrive here between four and five on a Wednesday and I came straight from the college, so I get on my dirty painting clothes, go to Tesco to buy some food, so I'm ready to sit down and start clearing by head about seven, and then I eat and then by eight thirty I work. Then I go home and comeback very early the following morning…I've been working on this painting for a year and a half, its advancing very, very slowly, because by the time I'm really getting into something, it's already Sunday and its midnight and then I work again on Monday….So if we [artists] could survive by selling our work we would. There are people here [in the studio block] that do that. Julie is a sound artist, I mean, she lives from the money she earns. She makes music and she becomes especially involved in local communities. She takes money to do a project with a local community which could be very close to the studio or the other side of London. That could go on for three, four, five months and when that's done, she will get another project. But I mean, as far as I know she earns all her money from those projects. I mean, obviously she would like to be able to create completely freely, but she's got to adapt to whatever the requirements are.

IN: And you?

RK: I mean I'm only here except during the holidays. The other half the year is holidays, public schools have a lot of free time. And so, I mean for example now on the seventh of July to the first of September I'm free to come in [to the studio] as I choose.

IN: So, could you tell me a little bit more about what you use the studio for when you are here?

RK: I do painting and I do videos [*gestures to an Apple screen*] so recently I brought myself a four-K camera, very sophisticated [laughs]. Hopefully I will be going to Turkey next summer with a colleague who is also a painter. And you see for me, I go out and gather information then go back to my studio and do something with all the information.

I mean I talk about my video, at the moment I tend to dedicate an awful lot of time to the video making, but I mean I'm basically a painter and that's what I've been for many

years. It's only now that I'm starting to branch out and move towards film, although not leaving painting.

IN: Your history as an artist, it seems that you have moved around quite a lot, not only between studios in London as you were explaining before the interview, but also moving between countries…
[RK interrupts]

RK: It all depends what kind of person you are. You have to remember that I'm talking about a time when I was young, and when you are young you are strong, you have an awful lot of energy and all of this happened. Now I am sixty-four so it's a bit different, I need a set workspace to come to.

IN: And how do you find this workspace set up, you know, renting a studio from [name of studio organisation]?

RK: Well at the moment I think there are lots of set ups quite similar to this one in London. When I was younger it wasn't like that and I think that was something quite unique about London. It still is in a way, because you know, something like Acme or like SPACE, or the other ones like APT studios and well, I can think of about seven or eight, that's extraordinary!

I mean in Barcelona these things don't exist in such big numbers. We have two, we have Paragon which is a similar set up to this one, but you have to give a painting every month, can you imagine! It's ridiculous. I mean sometimes I do a painting every six years, because the paintings all take their own time! But that's how they do it there. There are other set ups not as sophisticated as Acme, SPACE or APT, but the idea is more to do with finances than anything else, because I think that in Barcelona, they would very much like to be able to have this kind of set up. Over here there is the lottery money and there is a tradition, London has always been very pioneering in creating these kinds of things. The same kind of things exist in Berlin, Amsterdam and um Rome. I mean I was also in Rome for a year between my BA and MA with my husband who was also a painter, but we didn't encounter any set up of artist studios like this, but now I would be surprised if there isn't something like this.

IN: I'd like to talk a little bit about your relationship with [name of studio organisation]. What has been your experience of the pros and cons of renting a studio from an organisation like [name of studio organisation]?

RK: Well this is my first proper studio in the sense that there is an association behind it that looks after it as a professional organisation. But when I was studying at Chelsea, when I finished my BA, I had a studio in Wapping and in there, there were studios and if I remember right, they were not part of any association. Maybe some artists had actually put some papers together or something. I suppose someone must have run it, but to tell you the truth I don't know who they were. But as far as I know not any association, but that was one of my first studios. Then I had another one in Wapping, and then temporary studios on a couple of occasions, but I forget where they were.

In Wapping I had different studios for maybe two or three months, and it was nothing to do with anything like Acme or SPACE. They were normally quite run down, cold in the winter and sometimes the windows were broken, they were not really proper places like this. I mean you don't even need heating in the winter here because the double glazing is very good, so these are really good studios in that kind of practical sense.

My studios before in Wapping weren't like that. In the winter it was absolutely freezing cold and of course if you had an electric heater, but that was extremely expensive. So, you know it was the classic thing, it was an awful lot of hardship to be able to paint especially in the winter.

This [new build] offers me comfort. Well I know that's what [name of studio organisation] offers me. The main difference is that [name of studio organisation omitted] is a very respectable organisation, it's run by artists and nobody is going to cheat you. Nobody is going to do a dirty trick.

IN: That's interesting, what do you mean by that?

RK: This is a new build so [name of studio organisation] actually own it through some agreement with the people that developed the rest of the building. So, it's not like the other ones [other studios], we know in advance if any rent is going up. They let you know in advance so you're ready. They even say do you need a little job; we will give you a little job to help you pay the rent.

IN: What kind of jobs might they offer and have you ever taken them up on that?

RK: Not me. But it might be cleaning, a bit of caretaking, hosting events and things like that.
So your question about my relationship with [name of studio organisation] it's difficult to say because by it being cooperative, you know, you're going to get the benefit out of it. So, there's an incentive to be even more cooperative out of it on the one hand. The other thing is obviously gratitude, you know, I think [name of studio organisation] is doing a fantastic job, so you know if [name of studio organisation] says we are thinking of doing this or that, everyone tries to help because there is this gratitude. But you see, that is me being very rational about it. But you know, really and truly if it could, I would have my own studio completely independently, and nothing to do with [name of studio organisation], I have no need to be part of a community of artists you see. I already know and have very good friends which are painters all over the world, so if I need to exchange ideas or whatever, I know where to go because they are people I have known for many years. They are interested in the same things I'm interested in. That doesn't mean that if someone completely new enters the building and you see them in the corridor and they're interesting that you wouldn't get to know them. But only if you have the time you see.

Everybody has got to have a little bit of a job to be able to come here. So, because time is so precious it becomes even more important and precious, so you really have to focus,

there is no time to do other things. So, you see, in theory the idea of getting together and doing community things like [name of studio organisation] want, is nice, but I mean I arrive here between four and five on Wednesdays, and ok, I just sort of come as soon as I leave the college, get changed, get on my dirty painting clothes, go to Tesco, buy some food, so then I'm ready to start sitting down and clearing my head by about seven. Then I have a little bit to eat and by about eight-thirty I'm ready to start organising my time. Then you know, if I go back home, then I sort of come back very early the following morning and I'm ready to go, but by the time I really get on with editing a particular painting- I mean I have been working on this for a year and a half and its advancing very, very slowly- by the time I'm really getting into something its Sunday and its midnight. So off I go, you know? So, time gets so reduced, so that whenever you spend time doing anything else which is not working in the studio…you see time is very precious, and how you invest your time.

IN: Can you expand on that a bit?

RK: You either go and see your friend who is the same wavelength as you are, and you are really going to benefit from the conversation and that's fine. But to actually start a fresh and invest in getting to know the studio 'community', the 'group' is different, even if there is someone new coming into the building you wouldn't say 'let's go and see what he does' not in a million years! In fact, quite the contrary. But that doesn't mean that if you know, something is going to happen you can't invest a little bit of your time, you vote for it, you defend it and if you had to go to a demonstration because the studios were going to close down or something, of course, I'd be the first one to go! But you see, that's a chore, it's a pain in the ass, but you do it. You might go to an open studio somewhere to show some solidarity, and solidarity is a very important thing. You do lots of things out of solidarity because it is good to do, but it doesn't benefit you immediately as an artist. What benefits my practice most immediately and directly is my time in my studio [laughs].

IN: Do you think that [name of studio organisation] understands those time pressures, and if so do they do anything to support that?

RK: [Name of studio organisation] kind of helps you from a distance. I mean you trust [name of studio organisation] and they help you where they can by doing the publicity for an open studio and send it to your own contacts. But on a personal level, whilst I think what they are doing is spot on in paper, the reality is who can pay 270 pounds a month, plus accommodation, plus eating, plus materials, not many people can and that's the problem, and so the only way to do it is getting a full-time job and if you have a full time job what are you going to use the studio for, Saturday and Sunday? Are you going to pay 250 pounds a month for that? Just for two days? You can't and that is the reality of it! So, you have half a week if you're lucky. I mean I consider myself one of the lucky ones, because of the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year I would say that at least forty percent are free because I have half-terms, mid-terms and you have Easter and every few months there is at least two weeks holiday.

IN: So, when you come into the studio, so you have a work plan or structure for the week?

RK: It sounds strange because normally if you have limited time you learn to plan more efficiently, but things don't happen like that. I feel like things happen for a reason you know. I was doing this series of paintings which I exhibited in this gallery in Barcelona not that long ago. The interesting thing is that all connected with a project that I started maybe about ten years ago, which was um…well there is a pigment called royal purple molluscs which exist in the Black Sea and Mediterranean. So, I got some pigment and I splashed it all over this paper, so I got spotty bits of this very precious colour and I had this on a pile for two or three years. Then I started writing a book and I thought, of course, this could become the ground of the paintings, inspired by the story which is really gruesome and gothic. So, this all came together, also with some work I was doing in Tunisia and some translations.

IN: Going back to what you were explaining a moment ago about [name of studio organisation] telling you in advance about rent changes and you said they own the studios, does that kind of security change your relationship with the studio in any way?

RK: Of course! You know that as long as you keep paying the rent it's not going anywhere. You see, when I came back to London in 1995, the first studio I had was in Borough, and that was a temporary studio because the building, like lots of others, was being sentenced to be knocked down. I think whoever owned the building had the lease for maybe a year, so they were offering it at really low rates and I was there for a year I think, until it was knocked down.
Then, when I left that, which was a very tiny studio [and] freezing cold, I mean I remember when I had the gas heater it was very humid. So, it was the usual story of an artist having a hard time in a factory space. But it was cheap and I was young, so you have an awful lot of resistance. When I was in Borough I was also very good friends with a photographer who died, but he was a very interesting person. Then I also met a painter who also had a studio now either in APT or one of those, I forget because I haven't seen him for years. He was originally from the Caribbean and his wife was also a painter, and I think they both had studios in the same institution, and they are part of the Randall-London group. Then I met two or three other people, you see I made quite a lot of friends in that set up.

IN: What was it about that set up in particular that lent itself to making friends?

RK: Youth, I think that was a very important part. But also, necessity; the spaces weren't official so you worked very close to everyone.

Then from there I rented a flat with a very big living room and bedroom, so I turned the living room into a studio, and so I think I did that for a year or two and then, uh, I discovered that in Peckham, 135 Rye Lane in front of the train station, as you cross the road there is a little corridor and I think that at the end there used to be a textile factory, a huge, huge building. In there you had the first floor, the Chinese and their sowing machines being paid fifty pence an hour, at the time there was a lot of extortion going

on in those buildings. The ground floor was mainly sculptors and a few painters. Then on the first floor were lots of immigrants and the next floor was studios again and the next one. So, I went from Borough to Peckham to this tiny studio in this set up between 1996, 1997, 1998. So those were the exploited immigrants and churches! There was the church of the holy spirit and this and that around the studio. Every Sunday there were these extraordinary celebrations, lots of people coming in because a section of the building was turned into a church. So, you had grandparents, children, everybody dressed in their impeccable white clothes and there was lots of singing.

IN: Wow, it sounds like there was a lot going on around you in the studio block! Is it the same here? Are you exposed to all the different uses of the building in the same way?

RK: No! In that Peckham set up I was aware of all this because it was impossible not to hear it! But, in here because of all the soundproofing I do not hear a thing. Which is really, really brilliant because people could be killing each other in the studio next door, and you wouldn't hear it [laughs]. So, this kind of privacy that this studio gives me is absolutely gorgeous.

IN: If you don't really hear what's going on in the next studio and you have your own studio here, what's your interaction like with the other artists here, in this kind of set-up?

RK: It depends on the person. I mean all of the time I would never rent a studio which I had to share the door with anybody else, so you know, that's me. I mean they [previous studios] were very run down or whatever, but there was usually a door and a key. But here, once I enter my little kingdom and I lock the door, that's the end of the story. So yeah, sure, I mean times differ too, some people like working during the night you know? So I mean whenever I was in all those studios that I mentioned before, I mean the latest I'd stay at the studio would be eight o'clock and I would just go back home, because I was scared to go too late at night, they were dodgy areas, so my maximum was always eight. But you know other people started at eight o'clock, they would come in at eight and stay until midnight or whatever, whatever was most productive for them. But they tended to be people who live very local to the studios.

IN: So, there's 50 studios here, could you maybe give a specific example of the type of relationship or interactions you have with people here?

RK: This type of studio provides a sanctuary from the outside, absolutely. When I come here, I lock the door and that's it, it's like having my own little castle, and um, often you know, I go out to go to the toilet, and of course if I meet someone in the toilet I go, 'oh hello tony' or 'hello this' or 'hello that', but I mean to tell you the truth I don't know the name of a lot of people here because I keep myself to myself.

I know the people on this corridor and anyway people change very, very often. I mean Lisa has been there [points to door to gesture studio opposite hers] for as long as I've been here, so for ten years. And in here [points to one of studio walls to gesture studio next door] there was a fella first, I forget his name but now he is in Stockholm doing

painting, very material like, with waxes and very, very thick paintings. And there [points to other studio wall], well to be truthful I have never known who works there [gestures to door]. And in one of the other studios a couple of doors down, I think I seen about five or six people renting out the studio.

IN: So, like those interactions are more practical than perhaps social?

RK: I mean there is this lady here she got internet and um, and we decided to help her pay the internet, so I got internet too. So, there's little things like if there's a problem you knock at a door and immediately people will assist you, or if someone knocks at the door you help them too. So, I mean there's a great solidarity and an extraordinary respect for privacy you see. So, we have a sort of informal closed-door arrangement here, because we all really value our privacy in the studio.

I mean, I remember at one point there was a fella working there, he couldn't hear, and he couldn't talk very well, so um, so to understand him was very difficult and I suppose me with my accent was more difficult. But he was a very interesting person and I think on two occasions he knocked at my door and said 'look, I really want to show you something', and so I went there and he said, 'look I started this new stuff' and he would say 'how do you feel'? And I would say 'well I respond to these and I do that' and dah-dah-dah. One occasion I did the same thing and said, 'hey what do you see here?' And he would say 'blah-blah-blah-blah'. But that's actually quite unusual. I mean I did that with him because I said I went to his studio two to three times and he came to my studio once or twice, when he would need a saw or something, but not very often because people are very, very careful here.

IN: Careful in what way?

RK: Well, just respectful of each other's privacy.

IN: Do you feel that is unique to where you are now?

RK: I think it's probably more now. Because, well everyone works so much to just be in the studio, so when we are here we just need the privacy to work. You know, because for some people they may only be able to come in one day a week or a few evenings or whatever.

IN: You say that you invited that artist in a couple of times, do you ever invite friends or family here?

RK: Well I must admit that I don't invite many people in. I mean I very occasionally invite my friends and people I trust you know. I read about your PhD and you are young and interesting and young people are fresh, they have this freshness that as you grow older you don't have. There is no question about it, you are like a little flower that is just beginning to bloom, you possess an energy that is extremely valuable and I like to share this, you look at the world with a freshness, that once you are older you don't have, you have other things.

IN: I'm keen to know a little more about your relationship with the immediate area surrounding the studio. So firstly, do you live locally?

RK: No, not at all. It takes about an hour each way. I don't drive, I have a licence, but besides I don't have a car. So, to be able to get from West Dulwich to here on train takes me, if I'm lucky, about fifty minutes. I'm sure if I was to walk it, it would take me at very most an hour.

IN: Have you ever tried to work from home before to save time on the commute?

RK: I couldn't really. Home for me is just a room, I have a bed, a table a computer and um, books. I rent a room in a house with a lady and that's my home, my little room. I have access to the bathroom and kitchen and whatever, but I mean the house belongs to this lady who is three years older than me. She's retired now, before we never saw each other because she was working. A bit like here [in the studio building], very often days would go by and we wouldn't see each other. We still don't see each other a lot because she is very busy.

IN: So, when you were looking at studios, what was it about this one in Peckham that made you prompted you to choose it?

RK: I mean when I first came to Peckham that was the first time I'd been to Peckham. Peckham sounded to me poor, rundown and dangerous. That was my idea of Peckham. But I knew that if I wanted a studio, I had to go wherever the studios were. You know, I mean I can't afford a studio in Mayfair. Not that I would want a studio in Mayfair. I would be very happy to have a studio in Islington or in um, well, even Brixton now. They are nice areas, you know? Islington especially, it's very comfortable and there is a lot of activity going on in Islington and Hoxton. They are places you feel comfortable and they aren't the 'poshy' Mayfair street.

I think Hackney also has a lot of artists working there. I mean I've got a lot of friends working there off the top of my head I can think of Tracy who is in a community of studios and then there is Jay who is a writer, who has got a very beautiful apartment. Hackney is packed full of these people.

IN: What made you chose Peckham over Hackney or Islington?

RK: There was more availability. There was also this [gestures with arms open to space around here] where you know you aren't going to be kicked out anytime soon.
I mean why did [studio organisation' build a studio in Peckham, because Peckham is a very cheap. Well I mean nothing is cheap in London, you know? But they couldn't possibly build that this [gestures with open arms to the studio] in Mayfair, so they look for the areas where it is possible to do something and they try to do, that's what [name of studio organisation] has done here.

IN: On [name of studio organisation] website, there are quite a few articles about the social and economic contribution that studios make to their local areas and the communities there. What is your experience of this?

RK: You see, in here you have a great variety of artists, there are people who are very, very involved in the community like Lisa and I seem to remember the fella that was over there before, he was part of this community thing. So, you know, all these people they are very, very important because they do lots of community outreach. But there are also lots of individuals like me. I mean there is also this lady upstairs who I think is also very much like me. We do our work; we work in our little niche. Of course, if someone decides they want to do an open studio you take part you know.

IN: What's your take on open studios, do you enjoy doing them?

RK: I mean in terms of actually trying to sell any work it is not that useful for the artist or anything like that, that doesn't happen.

IN: Do you get a lot of local people coming to it, or is it mainly artists from other areas?

RK: They [local residents] do come to it, some people from the flats [above] come in here and children. I mean, there are some artist set-ups where they put effort and money in trying to publicise the open studio and see if actually something gets sold. But in here, I mean whenever there is an open studio its really just like a social gathering. I remember that the previous open studio was the first time that I actually went around the building and I walked into people's areas to see what they were doing. But that was more like an effort than an opportunity.

But you see it's a combination here, because the first floor of studios, is part studios and part accommodation. The second floor and third floor are all studios. The fourth floor I think again is accommodation and the fifth floor I think again is studios, so it's a combination of the two, although we never ever have anything to do with them.

IN: When I was trying to find my way to the studios earlier, I asked someone who was taking his bins out to point me in the direction of the studios, and he didn't know what I was on about, even though he lives directly opposite here. Do you think that that was a one off, do you think that local residents know that there are studios here?

RK: Oh yeah, yeah, definitely. In fact in the lifts, especially the kids, they sort of say 'ooo you're an artist'. And so, you see we stick out as artists [laughs] and so people know there is this strange breed of people are here and that we are the artists [laughs]. We have got a reputation of being quite friendly and unusual and you know, not stiff upper lip. So, yeah we see them in the lift, or sometimes if there is a problem. If the lift stops working, or there is a fire alarm or something.

And yeah, people do come along and see what you're doing at open studios and I suppose it is a good thing. But in reality, to educate and actually encourage people to truly enter the art world, that bit is fading away. It doesn't matter if they are studios are

not, the bridge is so huge and it's getting bigger and bigger. The people who come here may have heard of Damien Hirst or Tracy Emin because of the papers, but they don't have a hope of understanding or entering into this world.

IN: What in particular do you think they would struggle to understand?

RK: Well, just about the cost of a studio, and artists being turned out of their studios, it's too far removed. Property prices will keep going up, I'm already on the verge. So I mean if this goes up, every two years there is an increase, the rent goes up by between fifteen or twenty pounds, but you know if it continues going up, I don't know until when I will be able to afford it. I mean at the moment I am on the council flat list to see if I could find a place to live, because if I did find a place to live which is cheap compared to rents in London, then I would I be able to pay my rent on this [gestures around with open arms to the studio].

IN: Thinking a little more specifically about this type of new-build studio. So, you said earlier that 10 years ago you chose Peckham due to affordability and availability, was there anything about this specific model of studio that particularly appealed to you at the time?

RK: Quite the opposite actually. I don't think I would have necessarily chosen a new-build and found it difficult to adjust. But it was a matter of what was there at the time. I suppose the heating and insulation did appeal.

IN: You say you found it difficult to adjust at first, in what way?

RK: Well remember when you move into a studio the first thing you do is you paint the walls you know? In the previous studios I had, what you would do is paint the walls and make it your own. So, you try to remove all these marks, that are references to previous lives and previous people, you want to clean all this. At least that's what I do.

When I came here, of course that was brand new, so I didn't have to paint anything, it was all impeccably clean. So, you see, I really had second thoughts about accepting this building. There is just something about its lack of features that makes it clinical and hospital like. it's this slippery smooth kind of space with no atmosphere, nothing to draw you in or hold your attention for too long. I also found out that it was available a bit later, so all the best studios had already gone. People had taken them all and I had a limited budget, so I wanted a small studio, but it was essential that it had natural light. Like these scuzzy studios in Peckham Rye, they were scuzzy with a marvellous view and fantastic natural light, I never had to switch the lights on in there. In here, I'd you look, if I switch the lights off [gets up and switches lights off] it's very dark. So, there is no way you can work here with natural light, and considering that I am someone who all my life has worked with natural light, that was a very big challenge.

So, I remember that I came in and the woman showing me around said to me 'look take your time', you know? 'Sit down', and she said she 'I'll give you an hour'. I remember I switched off the lights and I sat there on the floor [gestures to where I am sat on the

sofa]. Obviously, it was all empty, and I tried to imagine the space, I really tried to communicate with the space, and sort of say, well can I really work here? There is no light, this is an artificial environment. I remember hearing her coming back down the corridor, and I still wasn't sure if I was going to say yes or no. I think it was as I saw her at the door and she looked at me and I sort of said 'I'll take it'. But it's not because I had decided that, it's just what came out [laughs].

IN: So, you said that you didn't need to paint the walls white, but after taking it, did you do anything to try and make it feel like your own?

RK: Well, unlike with my previous studios, because when I moved here, I was already working for this private school, so I had money. I went to Ikea and I brought myself a proper table and a proper set of shelves and uh you know. So, I sort of started saying this is not going to be going to the skip, and sort of collecting rubbish from the skip and bringing the rubbish into the studio.

IN: Do you think you might have had a different response, if it was a different type of studio, as in not a new build?

RK: It's hard to say. Because when you walk into a brand-new place, I guess everyone responds like that. Like, this is new so you want new things in it, and if it can't be new things then it needs to be things exactly that you want. I mean, in the skip you find really good things that are exactly what you want, and if you had to buy them you wouldn't know where to find them. So, it's not so much the novelty of not wanting things from the skip. It was that I wanted particular things, you know. I mean for example, that thing over there [gestures to long desk that her Apple computer stands on]. That thing is very narrow, I brought it from Ikea, but that's actually for a king size bed, cus it's got wheels. So, when you are in bed having breakfast you would be able to take this thing and pull it up as a breakfast table. So, it's got these wheels that I never use because its stacked against the wall. But I thought it would be the perfect thing to put my brushes and paints on. First, I brought it thinking that, but then I realised it was not very convenient, so this is why I got my writing desk. This is a proper desk from Ikea. Then I found this on the skip [points to a sheet of glass on top of her writing desk] which is a perfect pallet you see. So, I moved all of my pens here and then that became the computer section.

So, whenever I do my editing or anything, I go to that corner and this is my painting corner, where you are sat is where I sit when I paint. So, whenever I do stay the night, I cover the floors with this carpet thing, so the sofa doesn't lean on the floor and get paint on it.

IN: The furniture makes the space look quite a homely set up, do you see it in that way?

RK: I never think of this as a home, you know, it's my workspace. And I would love to have a studio home but at the moment I can't afford it. Because although I'm well paid and at the moment and I can just about pay for this studio and my room, I couldn't possibly pay for an apartment. But I think that you know, a separate space is very important, very important. But what I think what's most important is what's in your

head you see. Because when I have a clear idea of what is it that I want to do, I could do it you know in the toilet. It doesn't matter you see, once you have a clear idea. What you need is just the space to move, and where you have brushes or whatever it is you need, and you just get on with it because you know what you want to do.

But, I recognise that that kind of situation is very rare, at least for me it takes a long time to reach that point in which you clearly know what it is you want to do, so that's when the space is important. I mean for example, having this studio which is small but it's a small studio.

IN: Does the size of the studio have any impact on your practice?

RK: I mean, if I had a studio four times the size of this, I would certainly do a very different kind of work you know, but I have adapted myself. These paintings [points to large rolls of canvas under a cupboard] are quite big, so you can't possibly be working on two at the same time; although I created this kind of device. So, If I want to work on more, I have to take that one put it there, take that one put it here, so you know [acts out holding up one of the rolls, pinning it up to the wall, taking it off and pinning a different one up]. But I'm lucky, I mean this is at the moment my biggest size, most of the time I tend to do stuff a lot smaller.

IN: Can you think of any other ways that this specific type of new-build studio might affect the way you use it?

RK: I mean definitely it affects me. I mean the space has a great impact in all you do, it has this strange kind of atmosphere to it. But again, it depends on what's in your mind.

When I was younger, you know my ideas were sort of all over the place, and there was an awful lot of things to embark into and whatever, because there was this chaos in my head I suppose. For example, I remember the studio in Borough, I had a window, it was rectangle and it wasn't very big. I remember feeling extremely claustrophobic in that. Because of that, I used to go and visit other artists all around. I'd knock on their doors and say, 'let's have a cup of coffee' and so I would go in and talk for a while and sometimes this wound go on for hours and then it was time to go home and you would have done nothing. So, you know, this claustrophobia was sort of kicking me out of the studio. Then when you came back to the studio, of course it was actually very much influenced by everything you actually picked up from outside that claustrophobic unit and so I tried to concentrate on whatever it is I wanted to paint. So, I could only stay in the unit for as long as I was clear of what I wanted to do. So, when the confusion started to come I, I would go for a walk or go and see somebody, or go to the library, the British library. I would spend many hours in the British library, looking at things. The marvellous national gallery was my second home. It was a refuge when things got really difficult in the studio.

IN: What do you do now if things get difficult or claustrophobic in the studio?

RK: Well I don't have the time to do that anymore. You just stay here and work through it, or not and feel frustrated. But you know, I remember my being in the Borough studio, the one that I didn't like it at all, partly because it was very cold and partly because, yeah I had a door and I had a key, but I could feel that there was all these people around me. So, you know, sometimes I was very glad that they were there cus I could go and talk to them, but other times no. Then I moved to Peckham, 135 Rye Lane and I think there were two or three people murdered in the corridor during the time I was there, so that was it really, that's why I went. That one had central heating funny enough, I had a radiator and it wasn't horribly cold like in Wapping, but it was very, very tiny. But I had a complete window to the city and had this extraordinary view of the city on the third floor. That's where I did my big paintings.

You see that painting over there, that plastic thing, it's about eight and a half meters long, by three and a half meters high. This was my sort of response to the Iraq War, and I did that painting in this tiny little space. I had these different rolls of paper. It's the same size as Picasso's Bradesco! So, I would have these rolls of paper coming down, so I would paint a bit, unroll it, and paint a bit. It took a long time, but then again something like that [points to smaller painting hanging on the wall] took me just as long to finish and get it how I wanted it. It's the same size as Picasso's Bradesco. So, it was crazy. But this space has given me the height, is very important, very, very important, because a studio with a low ceiling is not good.

IN: Taking everything together that we've talked about in the interview, so, pressures on studio time, your relationship with [name of studio organisation] and the local area, and the feeling of working in a new build that you've just described- how reflective do you think your experiences of the studio are, of other artists in London?

RK: Well, the hardships have not gone, not at all! I mean, you see, we are the privileged ones, we were on a waiting list and when the buildings were finished we were lucky enough to be offered the studios and somehow we managed to earn the money to pay for them. Although it's very cheap for London standards, I think I still pay for this, two hundred and seventy pounds a month, plus my accommodation, which is a lot of money, so you can only pay that if you work with a full-time job and if you have a full-time job when are you going to use the studio, you see what I mean it's a sort of catch twenty two! Then you have the people who can't possibly pay two hundred and seventy pounds for a studio, which I think is a huge majority. So, I think we are the privileged ones, um, I really feel that.

There's a whole sector of poverty-stricken artists, who every year you have hundreds of these people coming out of art colleges and what do they do? Now you can't even get dole money or now it's very difficult to get dole money you know? So how do they do it? It gets me. I suppose a great majority of them they start doing, squatting, but again squatting is not as easy as it was before.

IN: I know that artist squatting was big in the 1950s and early 1960s, do you think squatting is still something that artists do to access workspace now a days?

RK: I would think so, not completely squatting, because the laws are very severe. But there are still artist squats. Someone the other day was saying that he knew someone who had this huge space in Hackney, and she lived there very poorly, and she paid two hundred and forty pounds a month and I thought goodness me! So that must be half illegal otherwise how can someone have a studio for that cost a month, you know? That must be some company which has this building which probably has no windows or something like that, and they know they are going to knock it down in a few years' time or are waiting for it to sell. So, there are lots of these different ways of getting even cheaper workspace than what [name of studio organisation] can offer, because for lots of artists it's still too expensive, but you have to make compromises.

IN: There is quite a big movement in London at the moment with 'guardianship schemes', which might possibly be what you are describing, where a building maybe has a couple of months left before demolition and the landlord rents it out at very cheap rates on the proviso that you won't be there for long…

RK: [Interrupts] That's not dissimilar to how it used to be. Set ups like this offer protection against that, which I am incredibly grateful for, not having to work with that hanging over me again. But well, the place I was before, perhaps you could go there, it's just as you come out of the train station at Peckham Rye, there is a little corridor and uh, which I think they have now finally kicked out the people that were there. Not kicked out, but they put the rent up so high that nobody could pay it, so everybody's gone. So, it's now turned into a very trendy yoga, um, you know, sort of this kind of stuff, healthy eating. But before, um, there was this fella who rented the unit which is a huge textile warehouse and then they started building divisions, which was what I rented, one of those divisions. Each division had a sort of door and a little padlock. So, in there, there were people that were really, really poor, there were a couple that lived there and it was almost a squat. Before that actually, I forgot to say in 1975 or 76, which is just before I started doing my foundation, I sort of met this girl who lived in a squat in Whitechapel and she had an empty room, and I didn't live in London at the time, so twice a week I would stay a night and I would give her, well we had these machines where you had to put coins in to get electricity. So, the agreement was that if I stayed there, I would take care of the electricity. There were hundreds and hundreds of artist squats, I think they are seen in this kind of rosy way now, but they were really hard spaces.

IN: So, I guess my final question, and probably a good way to wrap up the interview is to ask you about what motivated you to agree to an interview about how studio space in London is changing?

RK: Well, I think the answer to that depends on who you ask. But it's all very important, because I think the better you do it [studio provision], the more you know about it, then the better you are going to be able to help these people. I mean yeah, if I could have a studio three times the size of this I would do very different work than I do now and of course if I could afford a studio three times the size of this it means that I wouldn't be working for this job that I'm doing. So, it's the story of the milkman, if, if, if, if. But in reality, all of these if's don't exist you see, as far as I'm concerned what you need is

space, for me as comfortable as possible, but when all is said and done, does it look right, is it close to home, blah, blah, blah, you take what you can.

[End transcript 01:11:00]