

COLLECTING MEMORIES: RACHEL WHITEREAD'S *HOUSE* AND MEMORY IN
CONTEMPORARY LONDON

by

STEPHANIE L. DUNN

A THESIS

Presented to the Department of the History of Art and Architecture
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

June 2015

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Student: Stephanie L. Dunn

Title: Collecting Memories: Rachel Whiteread's *House* and Memory in Contemporary London

This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture by:

Kate Mondloch	Chairperson
Joyce Cheng	Member
Keith Eggener	Member

and

Scott L. Pratt	Dean of the Graduate School
----------------	-----------------------------

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

Degree awarded June 2015

© 2015 Stephanie L. Dunn
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (United States) License.

THESIS ABSTRACT

Stephanie L. Dunn

Master of Arts

Department of the History of Art and Architecture

June 2015

Title: Collecting Memories: Rachel Whiteread's *House* and Memory in Contemporary London

Contemporary British artist Rachel Whiteread is celebrated for her ability to cast everyday objects that force the viewer to think about the spaces they typically ignore. *House*, one of Whiteread's most well known and written about sculptures was created in 1993. *House* considered issues of memory in contemporary London, specifically parts of London that are experiencing drastic amounts of change. Current scholars understand *House* as a memorial, and while this thesis agrees with this interpretation, it also considers *House* as part of a group memorial with Whiteread's other sculptural works created before and in 1993. This thesis begins by contextualizing Whiteread's artistic practice in current scholarship and argues for further evaluation of *House*. After a thorough examination of the creation, destruction, and reception of *House*, I analyze current scholarship on the sculpture and consider the similar themes through Whiteread's early work to prove their ability to act as a group memorial.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Stephanie L. Dunn

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater

DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Arts, Art History, 2015, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Arts, Focus in Art History, 2013, Oklahoma State University

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Contemporary Art History
Sculpture and British Contemporary Art

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Academic Excellence Scholarship, Oklahoma State University, 2009-2013

Medical Heritage Scholarship, Oklahoma State University, 2012-2013

Academic Competitive Grant, Oklahoma State University, 2010-2011

Member of Phi Beta Kappa, Oklahoma State University, 2013

Member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Oklahoma State
University, 2009

Sponenburg, M End Fund, University of Oregon, 2014

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express sincere appreciation to my advisor Dr. Kate Mondloch and committee members Dr. Joyce Cheng and Dr. Keith Eggener for their guidance and support throughout this project. In addition, special thanks are due to the wonderfully supportive ladies in my cohort, Meredith, Alex, Caroline, Christie and Mackenzie, who have cried and laughed with me during the last two years. Lastly, I would like to thank my mother, Tracy, who always answered my panicked phone calls during the middle of the night, who never told me I couldn't make my dreams come true, and who makes me laugh everyday.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother, Tracy Dunn.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION. RACHEL WHITEREAD'S <i>HOUSE</i> : A CALL FOR RE-EVALUATION	1
II. SECTION 1: THE LIFE AND DEATH OF <i>HOUSE</i>	8
III. SECTION 2: CONTEXTUALIZING THE LAYERS OF <i>HOUSE</i>	16
IV. SECTION 3: THE SCULPTURES THAT CAME BEFORE <i>HOUSE</i>	26
V. CONCLUSION: THE 1993 TURNER PRIZE	36
APPENDICES	
A. IMAGES	39
B. SUPPLEMENTAL SOURCES	45
REFERENCES CITED.....	47

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION:

RACHEL WHITEREAD'S *HOUSE*: A CAUSSE FOR RE- EVALUATION

Contemporary artist Rachel Whiteread has been celebrated for her ability to cast everyday objects. Popular items that Whiteread casts range from bathtubs, closets, and rooms to the negative space beneath tables and chairs. At first glance, Whiteread's sculptures remind the viewer of everyday activities and life, but upon further investigation it can be argued that Whiteread is more successful in displaying the death of these objects, rather than the life inside them. *House* (See Figures 1-5; see Appendix A for all figures), one of Whiteread's most well known and written upon sculptures from 1993, displays the casted space of the inside of a Victorian terraced house from Grove Road in East London.¹ After the casting of the house in cement was completed, the house that was once livable with open air was now solidified into a giant cement block. The physical space that Whiteread creates through her casting process changes the way in which a viewer can interact with the space. Before being cast, the house provided the occupant with a place to use and create memories. After being cast, the solid cement filled cube can no longer be used as a space to create memories, but rather as an object that encourages the viewer to reflect upon the previous memories created in the space.

¹ James Lingwood, "Introduction", in *House*, ed. James Lingwood (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1995) 7.

Today current scholars such as Adrain Forty, Charlotte Mullins, Anthony Vidler and Marcia Pointon see *House* and the majority of Whiteread's sculptures as either a death mask or a memorial. While this thesis is similar in its view of Whiteread's sculptures working as a memorial, I argue that when they are categorized and considered in a group together, the viewer is offered a more nuanced understanding. This thesis will use *House* and a selection of Whiteread's sculptures created before and in 1993 as a case study to defend this argument and illustrate how these sculptures work together as a group memorial to a specific time and place in London.

Rachel Whiteread was born in East London in 1963. In addition to being an artist Whiteread's mother was a supporter of the feminist party and helped organize the first feminist art show in London. Whiteread's father was a geography teacher and strong supporter of the Labour Party. Whiteread was influenced by her parents' political and social beliefs throughout her entire childhood.² After initially deciding to distinguish herself from her artist mother by studying science, Whiteread eventually switched her studies to art during her time at Creighton Comprehensive. In college Whiteread continued to study art and devoted her time to painting; however, even at the beginning of her artistic career, Whiteread's painting tended toward the three-dimensional, often moving off of the canvas and on to the walls and floors of the gallery. After graduating from Brighton Polytechnic, Whiteread was accepted into two graduate programs to work toward an MA in Fine Arts. One program was at Chelsea and would continue her focus in

² Charlotte Mullins, *Rachel Whiteread* (London: Tate Publishing, 2004) 7.

painting while the other was at Slade and would change her artistic focus to sculpture. Whiteread chose to attend Slade, a decision that would define the future of her artistic career.

It was during her time at Slade (1985-87) that Whiteread began creating cast objects. One of the first objects was a cast of a spoon; she pressed the spoon into sand and filled the impression with lead. This particular cast proved transformative for the artist's practice. The object that she had created with the spoon no longer held the same qualities as the original object: in contrast to the utility of the fork, the new object was an abstracted and non-functional metal form. The ability to transform an object both mentally and physically fascinated Whiteread and is a theme that is still present in her work today. Since her graduation from Slade, Whiteread has continued to produce cast sculptures of everyday objects that remind the viewer of the cycle of life. A later example can be seen in *Untitled (100 Spaces)* (See Figure 6) from 1995. This work consists of 100 cubes of cast space that were created from the negative space of 9 different chairs.³ Whiteread used various colors of dyed resin as the casting agent, allowing the end result to display a colorful room of negative space to the viewer. Similar to *House*, *Untitled (100 Spaces)* presents the viewer with a space that was once occupied by someone and a space that can no longer be used. The objects Whiteread has used to cast from throughout her career include closets, bathtubs, mattresses and negative spaces as well such as those under a table and chair.

³ Mullins, 72.

Rachel Whiteread is not the first artist to ever cast the space beneath a chair, American artist Bruce Nauman cast parts of his body in wax, similar to that of a death mask, as early as the 1960s and from 1966-68 he worked on completing the sculpture *A Cast of the Space Under My Chair* (See Figure 7). As the title suggests, this sculpture presents the viewer with the negative space beneath a chair that activates a conceptual dialogue between the negative space that is present with the absence of the chair from which it was cast.⁴ Early in Whiteread's career, she was able to see Nauman's *A Cast of the Space Under My Chair* at the Whitechapel Gallery in London. While comparisons can easily be made between Nauman's cast spaces and those created by Whiteread there is a conceptual difference. Nauman's work challenges the viewer's psychological and perceptual experiences of time and space.⁵ In contrast, Whiteread argues that her spaces are made with an entirely different intention. She claims that Nauman's spaces are conceptual and psychological while her spaces are focused on the connection between the casted space and the body, making them physiological.⁶ Whiteread's explanation illustrates the difference between the conceptual ideology of her work and that of Minimalism to which her work is often compared. Even though Whiteread was inspired

⁴ Kenneth Baker, *Minimalism: Art of Circumstance* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988) 82-83.

⁵ Kristine Stiles, "Process", in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2 edition, 2012) 689.

⁶ Mullins, 72-73.

by minimalist artists such as Donald Judd and Carl Andre at the beginning of her career, it is important to understand that her sculptures cannot be interpreted in the same way.⁷

The way in which Whiteread describes the purpose and creation of her work opposes the way in which minimalism was viewed in the 1960s. This difference is important in understanding how Whiteread's work differs from minimalism conceptually and illustrates why her sculptures cannot be interpreted in the same way as minimalism. Minimalism started as an American art movement in the 1960s and was in part a response to mass production in America and the overabundance of industry.⁸ In her essay "Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power" Anna Chave argues the Minimalism was not seen as the art of social change, but as detached from politics and above personal feeling.⁹ Chave's statement argues that it was not necessary to consider current politics and one's personal feelings when interpreting a minimalist piece of art. As can be seen with Nauman's *A Cast of the Space Under My Chair*, the interpretation between the artwork and the viewer is determinate on the specific space and time that the viewer engages with the work. The politics and cultural events outside of the gallery and museum setting do not matter to the overall interpretation of the work.

Due to the comparisons made between Whiteread and Minimalism, it is easy to view her work in the same way that one would analyze a minimalist work. However, as it

⁷ *Ibid*, 8.

⁸ Baker, 9-10.

⁹ Anna Chave "Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power", in *Art in Modern Culture: An Anthology of Critical Texts*, ed. Francis Frascina and Jonathan Harris (New York: Harper Collins, 1992) 266.

will be argued in this thesis, *House*'s interpretation relies on more than the negative space of a home, it is strongly connected to the physical location of 193 Grove Road in the East End of London, the socio-political climate of London during the 1990s, and Whiteread's broader artistic practice.

When *House* is compared to Whiteread's other artworks created during the early 1990s the viewer can see that her sculptures are connected through their identification with domestic spaces and objects such as rooms, closets, and beds. It is this connection that allows these specific sculptures and *House* to work as a group memorial of a collective memory. In Maurice Halbwach's 1925 essay "Space and the Collective Memory" Halbwach, with reference to Auguste Comte, claims that because the physical objects of our daily lives vary little through one's lifetime, they provide one with a sense of stability, order, and permanence.¹⁰ In his essay Halbwach theorizes why people become attached to physical objects and argues that one's physical surroundings hold both our own and others' imprints. Furthermore the permanence of domestic objects in a home suggest the notion of continuity. It is for these reasons that spatial images and the objects within them play an important role in collective memory.¹¹ One's memories are attached to the space they were created in and to the objects within that space. Therefore when the space or objects is removed or destroyed, the memory attached to it is lost. By creating a cast of the space, as Whiteread does with all of her sculptures, she is reminding

¹⁰ Maurice Halbwach, "Space and the Collective Memory" in *Memory* ed. Ian Farr (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2012) 47.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 48-49.

the viewer of the loss of memory associated with that specific space or object and providing them with a way to remember that loss, similar to the way a memorial or a death mask works.

CHAPTER II

SECTION 1:

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF *HOUSE*

Whiteread's sculpture *House* is perhaps her most famous work to date. *House*, a sculpture that is no longer standing, was created in 1993. At its creation *House* stood at 193 Grove Road in East London. It stood on a street where the houses were being torn down one by one, in an effort to clear space for a park. Whiteread's project started two years before any sculptural form began to take place. In order to complete a project of this size, casting the entire space of a house, Whiteread teamed up with the Artangel Trust, a foundation based in Britain that commissions contemporary art projects across the world.¹² With her project idea in mind, Whiteread began to search northern and eastern parts of London with Artangel co-director James Lingwood for the right house to use.¹³ While Whiteread and Lingwood found other houses that would have worked for this specific project, they fell through either because the proper agreements could not be made with the neighborhood association, such is the case with a house in Islington, or the house was knocked down before an official agreement could be made, which was the case with the potential house in Hackney.¹⁴

¹² "About Us" *Artangel Trust*, March 2015. http://www.artangel.org.uk/about_us.

¹³ Lingwood, 7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

The house that was chosen for the project due to its availability and location in East London was a Victorian terrace house located on Grove Road in the Bow Neighborhood. The terms for *House* were negotiated between the Bow Standing Neighborhood Committee and the Artangel Trust, who was being represented by their co-director James Lingwood during this project. The terms for the project were lined out in a contract written by the neighborhood council. The contract, which was created on the 18th of March, 1993, states that construction on the site of 193 Grove Road should start no later than March 31, 1993. Rachel Whiteread and Artangel proposed that the entire project would take a total of four to five weeks to be finished. Once completed, *House* would stay standing for a time between eight and twelve weeks. After that time had passed, *House* would be demolished and the debris cleared away to make room for a future park. The Bow Standing Neighborhood's original contract states that *House* must be completely knocked down on or before October 31, 1993 and the debris should be gone and turf laid out by November 30th of that same year.¹⁵

However, official construction did not begin until August of that year and, as is the case with most construction timetables, the estimated project time took longer than anticipated. The sculpture was finished on October 25, 1993, just six days before *House* was originally meant to be torn down. Even though the sculpture was never meant to be permanent, a request was made to push back the demolition date of *House* since the entire timeline for the project had been shifted and delayed throughout 1993. While the initial

¹⁵Bow Standing Neighborhood Council, "Contract Guidelines between Artangel Trust and the Council regarding *House*" (London, March 1993) Item 3.25.

request and debate did cause delay in the demolition of the sculpture, on November 23, 1993 the Bow Standing Neighborhood Council decided *House* should be demolished at the next possible date.¹⁶ This decision caused the already steady press on the sculpture to increase and resulted in much debate on the meaning and significance of *House*.

In order to fully understand the meaning and both positive and negative opinions attached to *House*, one must begin by assessing the explanation and comments presented during the creation of the contract between Artangel and the neighborhood council. During negotiations Lingwood was asked about the purpose and goal of the artwork. In response he stated, “That it would be a monument to memory, to something that was both present in our minds and yet distanced by time.”¹⁷ The intention was not for Whiteread to make a sculpture in remembrance of the current occupier of 193 Grove Road. Instead, it was designed as a way to take what is private and place it in a public setting.¹⁸ Two years later in an written introduction for *House*, Lingwood describes the structure as an open memorial that has a closed architectural form that is able to absorb all of the thoughts, feelings, and memories from others into it.¹⁹ This definition is important in understanding that *House* is unique from the typical memorial that commemorates a specific event or person. *House* acted as a memorial that each individual who viewed it could associate

¹⁶ Lingwood, 7.

¹⁷ Bow Standing Neighborhood Council, Item 3.25 Contract Negotiations.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Lingwood, 8.

their personal thoughts and memories with; it was a memorial for everyone seeing it in this specific time and place. When considered in relation to Halbwach's argument on collective memory, the house is a domestic space where one imprints their personal memories. Therefore the structure of a house is an object that every person can immediately relate to and results in a collective memory.

Although Whiteroad and Lingwood's initial proposal was approved of by the council, there was almost an even amount of council members voting for and against it. Councillor Dr. G. Glover believed that *House* would provide viewers and the Bow Neighborhood the chance to comment on "the postwar social development of the area and the wasted opportunities and mismanagement of the previous administration".²⁰ Glover even proposed the council release a statement as to why they chose to support the project in the first place, although it is unclear as to whether or not this statement was ever released. Opposing this view within the council committee was Councillor B. Baunton. Baunton did not think the neighborhood should be looking to the past, because the years of the war could bring up negative thoughts for citizens and instead they should be looking toward the future.²¹

During its time in East London, *House* became a popular tourist attraction for people to visit, leaving many angered when the Bow Neighborhood came to the decision

²⁰ Bow Standing Neighborhood Council, Item 3.28 Contract Negotiations.

²¹ *Ibid*, Item 3.31

to not extend the life of the sculpture.²² After Whiteread won the Turner Prize more than 6,000 people visited the sculpture in two days.²³ In Ulla Kloster's article titled "Rachel's Joy Falls Flat as Well as Her House" for the *Daily Mail* published November 25, 1993, Kloster provides further comments from the councillors against the sculpture. Councillor Flounders argued that while there has been much press on the sculpture, the neighborhood has not benefited from the press nor has he read anything concerning the sculpture that was positive.²⁴

In another article by Kloster published December 2, 1993, Kloster reports on efforts to stop the destruction of *House*. The efforts ranged from those writing to the neighborhood council to youths chaining themselves to the fence in front of Whiteread's sculpture. Karl McCarthy, a twenty-three year old man from Fillebrook Road, Leytonstone, argued for his actions by stating, "We're doing this because *House* represents the destruction of not only homes but whole communities in East London. 350 homes are being pulled down to make way for the M11. There was a row of houses here but now there's only one piece of art, and we don't want them to demolish this one."²⁵ McCarthy's statement brings awareness to the fact that citizens of London were not only concerned with the specific house that was at 193 Grove Road, but entire neighborhoods

²² Ulla Kloster, "Rachel's Joy Falls Flat as Well as Her House," *Daily Mail* (London: England) November 25, 1993.

²³ Ulla Kloster, "Have an' Art Bow," *Daily Mail* (London: England) December 2, 1993.

²⁴ Kloster, "Rachel's Joy Falls Flat as Well as Her House".

²⁵ Kloster, "Have an' Art Bow".

in London that were being torn down. This supports the argument that *House* works as a memorial for collective memory, not an individual one.

Near the end of *House*'s life petitions were made both in favor and against its destruction. It was reported that Jacqueline Morris, a resident of Russia Lane in Bethnal Green, was able to find 300 residents in East London to sign her petition for the destruction of the sculpture. In contrast, Karsten Schubert, Whiteread's agent, was able to get 3,500 signatures in favor of keeping the sculpture.²⁶ While it would seem obvious that more citizens are in favor of letting the sculpture stay, the opposing side argued that the majority of those signatures on Schubert's petition do not belong to residents of the East End in the Bow Neighborhood.²⁷ However, it is important to consider whether or not the petition signers from that are still living in the East End ever had the status of their homes threatened. If not then perhaps for them *House* stands as a reminder of the potential future to their homes and is seen as a threat rather than a memorial.

In addition to the petitions, letters were also written to the Bow Standing Council pleading for an extension on the demolition date. One of the letters was from Jeanne Wiseman on behalf of the Resident's Forum of Area 3. The letter states that the residents represented in Area 3 are joining the area 4 residents in an effort to prolong *House*'s time on Grove Road. Wiseman claims that whether or not one likes or dislikes the sculpture, it cannot be denied that it has spurred debate in a positive way that is beneficial to the area.

²⁶ *Ibid*

²⁷ *Ibid*, In his defense Schubert says that he collected 140 pages of signatures and 1/3 of those pages did belong to residents in the East End.

Wiseman pleads for the demolition to be extended so the greater public is not denied the opportunity to view the work: “It would be a pity to spoil this for the sake of a few weeks marginally insignificant park development gain.”²⁸

However, in a meeting to discuss the matter of an extension the Chair of the committee called the sculpture a “hideous monstrosity and a complete joke. It was a lump of concrete in a park...” Furthermore he had already discussed the matter with three other committee members who agreed with him making a majority rule for the council of seven and solidifying the vote to not extend the demolition deadline.²⁹ Those in favor of the sculpture were undeterred by the council’s decision and continued to fight for *House* and on Whiteread’s behalf. Their fight did not go unrewarded and eventually *House* was granted an extension until January 12, 1994.³⁰ Today, 193 Grove Road is an empty space that is a part of a park and there is no indication that a home or a sculpture once stood there; the physical memory has been erased.

The positive and negative opinions of *House* display the opposing views on the importance of memory and identity in the East End of London. There are those who believe that the citizens of London should be looking toward the future of the city instead of to the past, such as Councilor Baunton. On the opposing side are citizens similar to Karl McCarthy who are determined in their preservation of the East End of London.

²⁸ Jeanne Wiseman, “Letter to Bow Standing Neighborhood Council” (Tower Hamlets Archive, London, 1993)

²⁹ Bow Standing Neighborhood Committee, “Meeting Minutes” (Tower Hamlets Archive, London, November 23, 1993) Item 3

³⁰ Mullins, 54

Regardless of whether one views *House* as a positive or negative sculpture, both sides of opinion are viewing *House* in the same way, which proves that the structure of the house is an object that holds collective memory. *House*'s ability to work toward a collective memory also gives it the ability to work as a collective memorial, rather than a memorial for a singular memory.

CHAPTER III

SECTION 2:

CONTEXTUALIZING THE LAYERS OF *HOUSE*

While the sculpture of *House* had a short physical life, its critical legacy is ongoing. *House* survives in discussions concerning memory and nostalgia in contemporary London. Acknowledging its role in society and history is crucial to defining how *House* operates as a memorial for collective memory, especially in consideration with Whiteread's other sculptures produced before it. The following section will discuss what contemporary scholars have written about *House* in order to contextualize *House* within a socio-political and its physical process of creation.

Similar to Whiteread's other sculptures, *House* is the cast negative space of an everyday object. The house is a space where one grows up and lives- it is where we make memories that last a lifetime. Additionally, like Whiteread's other artworks, the object from which *House* was cast triggers a sense of recognition in viewers. The house is a place for one to go inside, walk through, reside in, and, presumably, to create memories. One cannot enter through the doors of this house, however; in the process, its memories have been embalmed forever outside of time.

Clearly not all viewers have the exact same reaction to Whiteread's work. The sense of nostalgia, however, is consistent and has been recognized and is illustrated by the statements made by the Bow Standing Neighborhood Council members mentioned previously. Scholar Wendy Wheeler defines nostalgia in the Postmodern era as a type of

nostalgia that returns to the repressed aspects of modernism, a “desire for communal identification”.³¹ Nostalgia allows individuals to reminisce in way that is not alienating, but instead helps one remember with a sense of community.³² This concept is important to consider in understanding why *House* can provide such a wide range of memories. The viewer is not only confronted with their own associations of the home, but what ‘home’ means on a macro level. Nostalgia encourages the viewer to think about the entirety of the community, the location, and the other citizens around them. By inspiring viewers to think about the community of the East End and Grove Road, *House* is permanently attached to it.

Before Whiteread began to fill 193 Grove Road with cement, the house belonged to a man named Sydney Gale, or, as the some press would label him, “Sid the War Hero.”³³ Before Mr. Gale’s house was the only Victorian terrace house left standing on Grove Road, the street was filled with lines of Victorian terrace houses.³⁴ During World War II Grove Road was one of the first locations in London to be hit by a bomb, affording the location historical significance.³⁵ Furthermore, as Doreen Massey points out in her article, “Space-Time and the Politics of Location,” the area in East London had

³¹ Wendy Wheeler, “Nostalgia Isn’t Nasty— the Postmodernising of Parliamentary Democracy” in *Altered States: Postmodernism, Politics, Culture* ed. Mark Perryman (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1994) 99

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Ian Sinclair, “The House in the Park: A Psychogeographical Response” in *House* ed. James Lingwood (London: Phaidon Press, 1995) 18.

³⁴ Kloster, “Have an’ Art Bow”

³⁵ Lingwood, 11.

recently undergone further alteration since the immediate post-war era. The docks were altered and closed, as was the South Canary Wharf. While it would appear those in charge of the area were making an effort alter East London, Massey argues these changes are actually being used as political stakes, showing the community what could be rather than what has been.³⁶ Looking back upon the comments made by the councillors of the Bow Standing Neighborhood Committee, it is important recall Baunton's statement suggesting to look to the future, rather than back at the past.³⁷ While *House* once was a place to create memories, Whiteread ended its full ability to do this when she cast the object. By filling the structure from the inside out, Whiteread is preventing further memories from taking place within the structure while preserving the memories that have been buried on the inside. In her article, Massey further points out that Whiteread's sculpture was titled "*House*" not "*Home*." This word choice distances the viewer from personalizing the object. A home is a personalized space on an individual level while a house is a structure in the public sphere.³⁸ This distinction points to *House*'s work as a way to memorialize collective memory, rather than a personal memory. Furthermore, by standing for collective memory *House* positions itself in a way to preserve domestic life in the East End and not only life on 193 Grove Road.

³⁶ Doreen Massey, "Space-Time and the Politics of Location" in *House* ed. James Lingwood. (London: Phaidon Press, 1995) 41

³⁷ Bow Standing Neighborhood Committee, Contract Negotiations, Item 3.30

³⁸ Massey, 42

Due to its casting process and ability to preserve memory, the cast has suggestive affinities with the death mask and a memorial. Marcia Pointon's article "Casts, Imprints, and the Deathliness of Things: Artifacts on the Edge" discusses the history and contemporary uses of the death mask. Originally death masks were taken after the subject had died, in an effort to preserve their memory.³⁹ However, in Whiteread's artistic process she has reversed the order of events and chooses to cast the object and then destroy it, therefore choosing when to end the object's existence as if she is burying the memories alive. Although the process is similar, Whiteread's sculptures differ from the death mask in their individualized quality. The death mask quotes the unique features of one specific person, whereas Whiteread's casts quote the vague details of commonly replicated objects. Whiteread's decision to cast objects that are common to all of us support the claim that her sculptures work toward a collective memory. If her work's were meant to memorialize the single memory, her sculptures would need to have identifying marks to make each one individualized. Pointon argues that in the case of *House* the imprint that Whiteread has presented the viewer with is disturbing because it is the negative of the object rather than a cast of the outer details. This is what Pointon calls the "Crusoe" experience. Pointon's claim refers to Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe*, in which Crusoe finds himself on an island and sees the imprint of a cannibal's foot. After realizing the footprint cannot be his because it is too large, Crusoe is filled with fear upon the

³⁹ Marcia Pointon "Casts, Imprints, and the Deathliness of Things: Artifacts at the Edge." *Art Bulletin* XCVI, no. 2 (2014) 171-172. It wasn't until the 19th century when artist started to make the cast for a death mask before the person had died. The process was done in an effort to avoid post death distortion of the face, although it was dangerous and could result in actual death if not carried out properly.

realization that something out there is like him but not exactly the same.⁴⁰ The Crusoe experience is similar to that of the uncanny. Both present the viewer something that is recognizable and should be comforting but instead causes fear. Pointon's claims are important in understanding *House*'s physical and psychological transformation through the casting process. The house that once stood at 193 Grove Road can no longer allow for individual humans to live inside, no more personal memories from Sid the War Hero and his family can be made. Instead the negative physical characteristics of the house are presented to the viewer. Theoretically these physical characteristics should be similar, if not identical, to the previous Victorian terraced houses that lined Grove Road. By casting the space of a house, Whiteread is able to take the private space and turn it into a public space, creating the possibility for collective memory through this casts, in contrast to the individual memory that typically is associated with a death mask.

Scholar Anthony Vidler's writing about modern architectural space and the uncanny is helpful for appreciating Whiteread's practice. In his essay "Architecture Dismembered," Vidler argues that Freud supports two sources that create the uncanny. In both cases an unexpected return or a sense of prior repression must be necessary.⁴¹ If, as Wheeler claims, postmodern nostalgia acts by returning to repressed aspects of modernism, then Whiteread's *House* is the perfect encapsulation of the architectural uncanny. The homes on Grove Road were being torn down one by one as if to eliminate

⁴⁰ Pointon, 178.

⁴¹ Anthony Vidler, "Architecture Dismembered" in *Ruins* ed. Brian Dillon. (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2011), 63

the postwar era that was present before. *House* is a cement cast of a house that is attached to postwar London, therefore becoming a physical reminder of the previous era and bringing it into the present. *House* refers to the repressed history of postwar London that is slowly being destroyed and displaced and places it on the public street to be viewed.

In another essay by Vidler, “A Dark Space,” he theorizes the negative reaction the Bow Neighborhood council members had to *House*. Vidler claims that open spaces are the solutions to the agoraphobia and claustrophobia that were created by nineteenth century urbanism. To create a green space, the end goal of destroying the homes on Grove Road, would get rid of the dangerous and phobia inducing areas of the city. Vidler therefore claims that Whiteread’s *House* stands as a reminder of an unhealthy past and stopping the area from providing a safe and spatial phobia free place to live.⁴² Vidler’s interpretation of *House* views the sculpture as memorializing a specific time period in London, urbanism that began in the late nineteenth century. Vidler’s understanding of *House* categorizes the sculpture as a collective memory and not one for the specific location of 193 Grove Road. This claim ties into the claims made by both Pointon and Massey and adds another level to understanding *House* as a collective memorial.

In his essay “Lights Out for the Territory,” Ian Sinclair describes the process of creating *House* as the mummification of the space. Whiteread describes the process of creating *House* as an embalming process due to the necessity of filling in cracks in the walls and floors. It was also necessary to remove any additions the Gale family added to

⁴² Vidler, “A Dark Space” in *House* ed. James Lingwood. (London: Phaidon Press, 1995) 65-66

the original structure, a process Whiteread describes as removing the internal organs of a body.⁴³ However, the mummification analogy, like the death mask, does not quite capture the true nature of Whiteread's objects due to its association with individualization rather than the commonality and easy recognizability of the everyday objects that Whiteread chooses for her artworks. Further in his essay Sinclair states, "The achieved work was anonymous, it didn't feel like a 'Rachel Whiteread.' It had developed its own agenda, an urge towards obliteration, forgetfulness."⁴⁴ Sinclair's claim illustrates *House's* ability to represent more than one memory. *House's* anonymity stops the sculpture from being categorized as a specific memorial.

Whiteread's *Ghost* (1990) resulted in Whiteread's Turner Prize nomination. *Ghost* is the cast of the negative space of a living room made from plaster. It is stark white in color and, according to Sinclair, creates allusions to Egyptian and Assyrian plunder that can be found in the British Museum. Sinclair argues that the whiteness of the material represents the whiteness of an idealized past.⁴⁵ A past where the ugly details are ignored in order to create a pretty picture for the viewers. Although *House* is cast from a grayish concrete and stood outside in the dirt rather than in a stark white gallery like *Ghost*, it mirrors the goals set forth by *Ghost*. Both sculptures were made with the attention to bring awareness to the role of history, how it is viewed in contemporary society, and the

⁴³Mullins, 52.

⁴⁴ Sinclair, 27.

⁴⁵ Sinclair, 22-26

role of the individual in preserving and understanding this history. *House* brings awareness to the times in London that may not have been the best to date, but that nonetheless should not be forgotten.

Scholar Adrian Forty investigates Whiteread's *House* in his book *Concrete and Culture* in which he attributes the materiality of the sculpture as playing a critical role in its ability to be understood as a memorial. Concrete lacks a definitive history that makes it hard to decipher its relation to memory. In Forty's book chapter "Memory or Oblivion" he references philosophers such as Gaston Bachelard who complained that due to the use of concrete, Paris had become a hostile geometric cube. He also mentions Henri Lefebvre who objected to the use of concrete in building in Paris because it made it difficult to see how old the buildings were. He argues that since concrete did not deteriorate at a similar rate to other building materials commonly used the line of history is blurred.⁴⁶ Forty goes on to question the overwhelming use of concrete in the construction of memorials, arguing that the material of concrete is often regarded as "the material of oblivion , erasing, and obliterating memory, cutting people off from their past, from themselves, and from each other."⁴⁷ Curiously, however, the many memorials created in the wake of the many wars that took place during the twentieth century are routinely made out of concrete such as the *Monument to the Märzgefallen* (1921-22) in Weimar designed by Walter Gropius and the *Memorial to the Martyrs of Deportation* (1953-62) in Paris

⁴⁶ Adrian Forty, *Concrete and Culture: A Material History*. (London: Reaktion, 2012) 197.

⁴⁷ *ibid*

designed by Georges-Henri Pingusson.⁴⁸ It is possible that concrete's ability to stand for long periods of time without deteriorating played a role in choosing the material to create a memorial that would not deteriorate and crumble over time.

Due to concrete's association with memorials, it is more than plausible that Whiteread's *House* acted as a memorial of the past, rather than a disruption on Grove Road as some critics have called it. Similar to what has been illustrated by the earlier analyses of *House*, Forty argues that *House* is not a memorial in the same sense as other memorials produced in the twentieth century because *House* is not commemorating anyone at all.⁴⁹ *House* also differs from other memorials in regards to the process of construction. Memorials conventionally are made after an event and mark the loss of something or someone. In the case of Whiteread's sculpture, however, the original house at 193 Grove Road provided the cast, meaning that the house had to be destroyed in order to create the sculpture. This suggests that *House* is emphasizing the absence of the real house that once stood there instead of preserving its memory.⁵⁰ However, I argue that because Whiteread often makes multiples of the same object that *House* has the ability to stand as a memorial for all of the homes that had been torn down on Grove Road and in the East End of London. The connotations of concrete discussed by Forty only help in blurring the line between a memory of permanence and the notion that an idea or memory has been cast into oblivion. When the literature on *House* is considered together it is easy

⁴⁸ Forty, 204-213

⁴⁹ *ibid*, 215

⁵⁰ *ibid*, 217

to see that scholars agree that *House* is not a memorial in the traditional sense. *House* does not remember one specific location or memory, but acts as a memorial to collective memory for Grove Road in East London. While I do not disagree with these scholars in their understanding of *House*, I argue that by considering *House* with Whiteread's sculptures from 1990-1993, the viewer is offered a more nuanced understanding of her sculptures. Whiteread's artistic practice of casting domestic items and spaces is repeated in her other sculptures. I argue that this similarity is what allows her sculptures to work together as a group memorial rather than standing alone.

CHAPTER IV

SECTION 3:

THE SCULPTURES THAT CAME BEFORE *HOUSE*

With the exception of her earlier works that were created during her time at art school, Whiteread's cast sculptures act as an extension of human life.⁵¹ Their forms remind the viewer of common activities and spaces that humans use on a daily basis. However, the material and way in which Whiteread chooses to create and display her works creates a connotation of death that is attached to the sculpture. As mentioned in discussion with *House*, Whiteread's process of casting a space is comparable to that of creating a death mask or even mummification. Both of these processes preserve the physical memory of someone or something. Furthermore, the objects, forms, and materials Whiteread uses in her process create a visual and psychological dialogue of memory by confronting the viewer with a space that holds past memories, in addition to one that can never hold future memories.

Closet and *Shallow Breath*, both from 1988, are two of Whiteread's well-known early works. *Closet* (See Figure 8) was created by filling a wooden wardrobe with plaster. Once the plaster hardened, the exterior wooden panels of the wardrobe were pulled off from the plaster, creating the form and the sculpture while simultaneously destroying the original object in which the sculpture is working to duplicate. After the original wardrobe exterior was disposed of Whiteread covered the sculpture in black felt. In everyday life

⁵¹ Mullins, 7-12.

the closet is a place typically used by people to store clothes or other household objects. While this is the same for a child, the closet can also be used as a hiding place from grown ups, a place to tell secrets in the dark. For a child the closet can be more than a tangible object, it can hold precious memories. The closet being used as a memory holder is the case for Whiteread. Whiteread has stated in interviews that for her, the closet was a dark and scary place that she was locked in by her older sisters.⁵²

Whiteread's personal memory can be seen in the way that she chose to depict a closet in her 1988 sculpture of the same name. The title informs the viewer that the object they are looking at is meant to be a replication of a wardrobe, bringing attention to the potential use-value of a closet. The conventional purposes of a closet are rejected in this sculpture, however, since Whiteread has filled the spaces that are meant for storage with plaster, thereby taking away and changing their original purpose. Once the shelves of the closet have been filled with plaster, there is no longer a space to put clothes or belongings on, the use of that specific function has been altered both physically and psychologically by Whiteread's actions. One can argue that Whiteread has taken the intended purpose away from the closet. Furthermore, by covering the plaster with black felt, Whiteread brings attention to the inner darkness that the closet held for her.⁵³ The process used to create *Closet* is almost identical to the creation process of *House*. Both sculptures are were taken from a domestic space, the empty area from the space is what is physically

⁵² Mullins, 18-19

⁵³ *ibid.*

being shown to the viewer, and the psychological reading of the space has been altered. Lastly, the finished sculpture is not specific to Whiteread, but stands as a representative for closets in general. Even though the sculpture was inspired by a personal memory, there is no physical marker to let the viewer know that they might be looking at the same closet Whiteread was locked in as a child. Similar to *House* the ambiguity of the space allows for the sculpture to work as a collective memorial rather than a individualized one.

Shallow Breath (See Figure 9), another plaster sculpture created by Whiteread in 1988, shows the casted negative space from underneath a bed. Similar to the *Closet*, *Shallow Breath* brings attention to a common space that is used on a daily basis. During the cycle of life, the bed is used when one is going to sleep, it is where one can lie down when ill, and it is where most people lie down to die.⁵⁴ *Shallow Breath* denies the uniform functions of a bed through its material make up and display. Beds are meant to be soft surfaces that are comfortable to lie on. *Shallow Breath* is made of hard plaster that will not offer the user comfort and that will also easily break when used.⁵⁵ When displayed *Shallow Breath* is not horizontal across the ground as beds are traditionally used but rather leaned up against the wall. Together the material and display of *Shallow Breath* reject and do not allow for the intended purpose and use of a bed. *Shallow Breath*

⁵⁴ Mullins, 12.

⁵⁵ Mullins, 22-33. Later in her career Whiteread experiments with various material in casting the space of a mattress or bed. She has said that her earlier works made from plaster, such as *Shallow Breath*, were both troublesome in their massive weight that made it difficult to move around her studio and in the fact that the plaster would easily chip away upon being moved.

was created in memory of Whiteread's father, who had died from heart failure earlier in the year. In Whiteread's sculpture, the bed acts as a mirror for the end of the cycle of life.

Not all of Whiteread's works are connected to personal memories from her past. *Untitled (Amber Bed)* (See figure 10) made in 1991 was inspired by the current state of London. Due to the argument that Whiteread's work requires more than simply analyzing the object in the interpretation of her sculptures, the viewer needs to understand the social and political context of London during the time that her works were being created. Conservative party leader Margaret Thatcher was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during Whiteread's upbringing and early career in London. Thatcher's time in office there was characterized by tension between the Conservative and Labour parties.⁵⁶ Thatcher's reforms created many problems for underprivileged parts of town, such as east London, as it eliminated proper environmental care and other key city services in those areas. *Untitled (Amber Bed)*, a cast made from orange rubber that physically presents the negative space from underneath a bed confronts the problem of inadequate street cleaning during this period.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ John Campbell, *Margaret Thatcher: The Iron Lady* (London:Jonathan Cape, 2003) 315. On a domestic level the conservative party was considered to be made up of hard working and law abiding middle class citizens while the Labour party was associated with socialists and trade unionist. According to scholar John Campbell, the Prime Minister felt as though she always needed an enemy to work against and beat. On the local level this enemy was the Labour party and Thatcher worked to take power away from the local governments. By cutting down on local government, Thatcher took the power of local authorities and spread their power to other power agency holders. This forced departments such as housing to sell their stock and then denied them the opportunity to use the profit to by something else for their department. In addition to the housing problem, cleaning services and refuse collection were forced to turn to competitive tendering.

⁵⁷ Mullins, 50. Whiteread would later refer to *House* as being located in an area she calls, "one of Thatcher's troubled economic babies, originally envisaged as an urban Utopia."

Whiteread has stated in an interview that she was inspired to make this particular cast by viewing the numerous discarded mattresses one could find on the streets of London at the time.⁵⁸ In particular, Whiteread recalls viewing a documentary about an old man who died in his apartment in the East London and whose decaying body went undetected for over two weeks. Upon removing the body, the authorities simply tossed the mattress on the side of the street; as detailed in the film, children were later found playing on the discarded soiled mattress. Whiteread is often inspired by the history of objects, including this one.⁵⁹

Unlike her previous sculptures, *Untitled (Amber Bed)* was not made from plaster, but with a burnt orange-colored rubber. Whiteread describes the color of the rubber as similar to that of a fleshy skin tone, an attribution that suggests a connection to the human bodies that sleep, recline, reproduce, and die on these everyday surfaces.⁶⁰ As the viewer looks at *Untitled (Amber Bed)* it is difficult to not think about one's own physical and psychological relation to the common surface that is presented before them and to consider our own uses and relationship with that object. *Untitled (Amber Bed)* illustrates

⁵⁸ Ann Gallagher and Andrea Rose, *Rachel Whiteread: Venice Biennale*, (London: The British Council, 1997) 29-35.

⁵⁹ Mullins, 34-35 In order to find the objects from which she will cast her sculptures from during the beginning of her career, Whiteread would place ads in a buy and sell newspaper called *Loot*. Items procured from *Loot* often came with a very specific history as the owners selling the items would inform Whiteread's of the object's past. After wishing to receive less historical information on the items she cast from, Whiteread switched from placing advertisements in *Loot* to traveling to various thrift shops to buy items to cast from. This new purchase method still promised items that would have a history attached to them, but in a way that allowed Whiteread the opportunity to uncover the past of the object through her own investigation of the object.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

the importance of taking the social and political context of London into consideration in relation to the sculpture's understanding. The importance of time and space is a theme that continues through Whiteread's work to *House* and connects this pair of sculptures together. In contrast to *Shallow Breath* the rubber cast of *Untitled (Amber Bed)* slumps and slides down the wall. The flexibility of the rubber has an anthropomorphic quality lacking in the plaster casts and increases the sculpture's ability to act as an extension of the human life cycle.

These three sculptures from Whiteread's early career suggest that her casted spaces act as an extension of life. This claim can be proven through their common and easily recognizable form, their purpose and use in everyday life, and the inspiration from actual life events. This theme is continued throughout Whiteread's career, regardless of the size or materials of the sculpture (While the majority of her early works were cast from plaster, her later sculptures display a variety of different materials such as plastic, resin, iron and concrete.) I argue that it is the common themes of process, displaying the negative, and showing common domestic objects and spaces that allow Whiteread's sculptures to act together as a whole unit in an effort to memorialize a specific time and place in London.

Ghost from 1990 (See Figure 11) is a sculpture created from the negative space of a rundown Victorian house in north London. The large cube of plaster holds evidence of the life once lived in the space through the display of electrical outlets on the walls and the soot that was left in the fireplace and that can now be seen mixed into the plaster.

Similar to *House*, *Ghost* does not hold any physical markers that inform the viewer of the exact room from which it was cast. The physical space of a room from of a Victorian terraced house could have been taken from a number of homes in London, however the style of the room does suggest to the viewer a particular area of London. The ambiguity of the space allows for the sculpture to represent many potential spaces and memories, not just a specific room. These themes allow for *Ghost* to work together with *House* and Whiteread's other sculptures as a collective memorial.

The “death” of the object is further continued in the way that viewers are able to interact with the sculptures. These objects—table, chair, stairs, etc.- are ordinary, familiar objects one uses everyday and each one has its own apparent use-value.⁶¹ The table and chair immediately suggest a place to sit and eat a meal with others. The room is where one can take a pause, live in. Stairs are a means to travel from one floor to another. However, in Whiteread's cast versions of these objects, the viewer's habitual understanding of the items is exposed and undermined. For example, while the sculpture *Table and Chair (Clear)* (1994) shows the negative space from underneath a table and chair, the overall appearance is similar to the cast objects and elicits the same sense of familiarity and reaction as one would get upon approaching an actual table and chair. In distinct contrast to the case objects, however, the viewer's expectation of use and purpose of *Table and Chair (Clear)* is rejected altogether. Due to the filled negative space, it is impossible for anyone to use the table and its original purpose.

⁶¹ Mullins, 116.

The same notion can be applied to the cast of a room and a house. In the object's original form and context, it is the negative space that allows for the usage of the room. However the cast, by bringing attention to the negative space via its own physical form, eliminates the possibility of the object's use. After the expected physical interaction between the viewer and the object has been altered, the viewer is encouraged to reflect from a distance on the object and what they are not able to do with it. Whiteread's sculptures allow the viewer to reflect upon their everyday relationship to domestic space and objects that Whiteread is presenting to them.

Whiteread's cast objects are uncanny because they change the psychological character of the source objects. In his influential essay "The Uncanny" (1919), Sigmund Freud defines the uncanny as: "What one calls everything that was meant to remain secret and hidden and has come into the open".⁶² By showing presence via absence, Whiteread's sculptures bring attention to the private spaces that we use to live our lives in. It takes the space of a room, where private moments occur, and places it in the gallery for public consumption. Whiteread's monumental sculpture, *House* (1993), is perfect example of the uncanny. The sculpture is the negative space from an entire home, a private space, that was exhibited on the public street of Grove Road for everyone to see as they walked

⁶²Sigmund Freud, *Writings on Art and Literature* (California: Stanford University Press, 1997) 194, 201-202.

Another German psychiatrist who was influential on Freud's development and essay on the Uncanny writes, "In telling a story, one of the most successful devices for easily creating uncanny effects is to leave the reader in uncertainty whether a particular figure in the story is a human being or an automaton, and to do it in such a way that his attention is not focused directly upon his uncertainty, so that he may not be led to go into the matter and clear it up immediately." Freud describes various instances that work to create the feeling of the uncanny and states, "To these he adds the uncanny effect of epileptic fits, and of manifestations of insanity, because these excite in the spectator the impression of automatic, mechanical process at work behind the ordinary appearance of mental activity."

down the sidewalk. As Scholar Anthony Vidler explains in “A Dark Space” the fear of domestic confinement can be traced back to literature from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by writers such as Henry James and E.T.A Hoffmann.⁶³ Vidler claims that the cast of the house extinguishes the traces of life that were once there and leaves a feeling of ‘unhomeliness.’ Furthermore, the now blocked windows in *House* can be connected back to blocked vision or the “uncanny effect of mirrors that cease to reflect the self,” therefore permitting the viewer to only imagine the secrets inside of the house rather than to actually know and see them.⁶⁴

The above discussion of death and the uncanny are further examples of the multiple similarities that are present in Whiteread’s sculptures created before *House*. *Closet*, *Shallow Breath*, *Untitled (Amber Bed)*, *Ghost*, and *House* all display the negative space of a domestic area or object. Each of the sculptures is ambiguous in indicating the exact object or space from which it was cast and the process in which they were created suggest the loss of an item or memory. It is these similarities that allow for Whiteread’s sculptures to act as a memorial for the collective memory of a specific area of London. When considered together the viewer sees the recognizable objects from within the home, the sectioned spaces within the house, and the house itself. All of these items work

⁶³ Vidler, “A Dark Space”, 69. Hoffman’s short story *The Sandman* is a tale about a character who falls in love with an automaton that he thinks is a real person. This love drive him to insanity and leads him to jump of a tower and falls to his death. The story illustrates the fear of interacting with something that is so life like, but not a true part of our reality and thus this object becomes uncanny.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 69-71.

together within an actual home that is in current use, so it should be no different in remembering a past home or era.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION:

THE 1993 TURNER PRIZE

In 1993 Rachel Whiteread was nominated for the Turner Prize award. The Turner Prize has been compared to the Wimbledon for the art world. The award was created with the hope of bringing awareness to British contemporary art.⁶⁵ During Thatcher's government, beginning in 1979, museums and similar institutions were encouraged to seek out and increase their private funding in an effort to reduce financial dependence on the government. Alan Bowness, director of the Tate during the 1980s, worked to establish new patrons that would support British art of their own time. These new patrons developed into The Patrons of New Art and eventually became the founders of the Turner Prize.

Since its establishment in 1984 the Turner Prize has gone under various modifications to become what it is today. Currently, in order to qualify for the prize the artist must be under fifty years old and British. The award would be for an outstanding exhibition or other presentation of the artist's work that had taken place in the previous twelve months before the official closing date for nominations.⁶⁶ If an artist made it onto the shortlist, which comprised of all the nominated artist, their work would be included in

⁶⁵ Virginia Button, "The Turner Prize" (London: Tate Publishing, 2005) 15.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 27

an exhibition during the month before the winner of the prize was announced. Lastly, the winner of the Turner Prize would be awarded £20,000.⁶⁷

Whiteread was nominated for her “continuing development of her work as shown at her retrospective exhibition at the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, the Sydney Biennale, and Galerie Claire Burrus, Paris.”⁶⁸ The three other artists that made the shortlist with Whiteread were Hannah Collins, Vong Phaophanit, and Sean Scully. In the exhibition that accompanied that award, Whiteread was represented by her sculpture *Untitled (Room)* created in 1993 (See Figure 12). Similar to her other sculptures, *Untitled (Room)* was the cast of the negative space from a room. However, this particular room was created by Whiteread in her own studio in contrast to the found spaces and objects that she traditionally used for her other sculptures.⁶⁹

Whiteread was officially shortlisted for the Turner Prize during the summer of 1993. This meant that anything Whiteread created after the time she was shortlisted would not be considered by the Turner Prize jury in their final decision for the award. *House* was not completed until October 25, 1993 and therefore falls out of range for the Turner Prize. However as Virginia Button argues in “The Turner Prize” the jury was unable to ignore that wide variety of press and debate that was created in reaction to the sculpture and undoubtedly took *House* into consideration with their final decision. On

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁶⁹ Mullins, 48-49.

November 23, 1993 it was announced that Whiteread was the winner of the Turner Prize. This is the same day that the Bow Neighborhood Council announced their decision to demolish *House* and that Whiteread also won a £40,000 prize for the ‘worst’ artist of the year from the K Foundation. Whiteread split the £40,000 between a shelter for the homeless in London and a fund for young artists.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 54.

APPENDIX A

IMAGES



Figure 1

Rachel Whiteread, *House*, 1993

Artangel.org.uk, http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/1993/house/installation/the_installation_image_1 (accessed June 2015)



Figure 2

Rachel Whiteread, *House*, 1993

Artangel.org.uk, http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/1993/house/installation/the_installation_image_3 (accessed June 2015)



Figure 3

Rachel Whiteread, *House*, 1993

Artangel.org.uk, http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/1993/house/installation/the_installation_image_4 (accessed June 2015)



Figure 4

Rachel Whiteread, *House*, 1993

artangel.org.uk, http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/1993/house/installation/the_installation_image_7 (accessed June 2015)



Figure 5

Rachel Whiteread, *House*, 1993

[artangel.org.uk](http://www.artangel.org.uk), http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/1993/house/installation/the_installation_image_12 (accessed June 2015)



Figure 6

Rachel Whiteread, *Untitled (One Hundred Spaces)*, 1995

[saatchigallery.com](http://www.saatchigallery.com), http://www.saatchigallery.com/aipe/rachel_whiteread.htm (accessed June 2015)



Figure 7

Bruce Nauman, *A Cast of the Space Under My Chair*, 1966-68

[phaidon.com](http://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/picture-galleries/2014/february/26/the-bruce-nauman-picture-gallery/?idx=7), <http://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/picture-galleries/2014/february/26/the-bruce-nauman-picture-gallery/?idx=7> (accessed June 2015)



Figure 8

Rachel Whiteread, *Closet*, 1988

[independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk/migration_catalog/article5177016.ece/alternates/w620/4869863.jpeg), http://www.independent.co.uk/migration_catalog/article5177016.ece/alternates/w620/4869863.jpeg (accessed June 2015)



Figure 9

Rachel Whiteread, *Shallow Breath*, 1988

[luhringaugustine.com](http://www.luhringaugustine.com/artists/rachel-whiteread#/images/52/), <http://www.luhringaugustine.com/artists/rachel-whiteread#/images/52/> (accessed June 2015)



Figure 10

Rachel Whiteread, *Untitled (Amber Bed)*, 1988

[historyofourworld.files.wordpress.com](https://historyofourworld.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/untitled-amber-bed-1991.jpg?w=720&h=1015), <https://historyofourworld.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/untitled-amber-bed-1991.jpg?w=720&h=1015> (accessed June 2015)



Figure 11

Rachel Whiteread, *Ghost*, 1990

[saatchigallery.com, http://www.saatchigallery.com/aip/rachel_whiteread.htm](http://www.saatchigallery.com/aip/rachel_whiteread.htm) (accessed June 2015)



Figure 12

Rachel Whiteread, *Untitled (Room)*, 1993

[artfcity.com, http://artfcity.com/2010/10/19/img-mgmt-the-cube-show/](http://artfcity.com/2010/10/19/img-mgmt-the-cube-show/) (accessed June 2015)

APPENDIX B

SUPPLEMENTAL SOURCES

Batchelor, David. *Minimalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Bloemink, Barbara J. *Design -is Not Equal to - Art: Functional Objects from Donald Judd to Rachel Whiteread : Exposition, Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution, New York, September 10, 2004 - February 27, 2005*. London: Merrell Publishers Limited, 2004.

Cooke, Lynne. *Doubletake: Collective Memory & Current Art : Hayward Galley, London, 20 February-20 April 1992*. London: South Bank Centre, 1992.

Fer, Briony. "Treading Blindly, or the Excessive Presence of the Object." *Art History* 20, no. 2 (1997): 268-88.

Feldman, Melissa E. *Secret Victorians: Contemporary Artists and a 19th-century Vision*. London: Hayward Gallery Pub., 1998.

Freud, Sigmund, and David McLintock. *The Uncanny*. New York: Penguin Books, 2003.

Krauss, Rosalind. *Under Blue Cup*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2011.

Kwon, Miwon. *One Place after Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002.

Lash, Scott. "Deforming the Figure: Topology and the Social Imaginary." *Theory, Culture & Society* 29, no. 4-5 (2012): 261-87.

Meikle, Jeffrey L. *American Plastic a Cultural History*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995.

Pesenti, Allegra, and Rachel Whiteread. *Rachel Whiteread Drawings*. Los Angeles: Hammer Museum ;, 2010.

Saltzman, Lisa. *Strategies of Remembrance in Contemporary Art*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Stroud, Marion Boulton, and Kelly Mitchell. *New Material as New Media: The Fabric Workshop and Museum*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002.

Tickner, Lisa. "Mediating Generation: The Mother-Daughter Plot". *Art History Vol. 25 No. 1* (2002): 23-46.

Weber, Rachel . Interview with Rachel Whiteread by author. Personal interview. , March 1, 2004.

Welsh, Marjorie. *Signifying Art: Essays on Art after 1960*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Whiteread, Rachel, and Catherine Wood. *Embankment*. London: Tate, 2005.

Williams, Gilda. *The Gothic*. London: Whitechapel, 2007.

REFERENCES CITED

- Artangel Trust. "Artangel Trust: About Us" *Artangel Trust*, March 2015. http://www.artangel.org.uk/about_us.
- Baker, Kenneth. *Minimalism: Art of Circumstance*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1988.
- Bow Standing Neighborhood Council, "Bow Standing Neighborhood Council Meeting Minutes" Tower Hamlets Archive, London, England, 1993
- Bow Standing Neighborhood Council, "Contract with Artangel Trust and Bow Standing Neighborhood" Tower Hamlets Archive, London, England, 1993
- Button, Virginia. *The Turner Prize*. London: Tate Publishing, 2005.
- Campbell, John. *Margaret Thatcher*. Vol. 1-2. London: Jonathan Cape, 2000.
- Dillion, Brian. *Ruins*. London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2011.
- Farr, Ian. *Memory*. London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2012.
- Frascina, Francis and Jonathan Harris. *Art in Modern Culture: An Anthology of Critical Texts* New York: Harper Collins, 1992.
- Forty, Adrian. *Concrete and Culture: A Material History*. London: Reaktion, 2012.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Writings on Art and Literature*. Edited by Werner Hamacher and David E. Wellbery. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- Gallagher, Ann. *Rachel Whiteread: British Pavilion XLVII Venice Biennale*. London: British Council, 1997.
- Ulla Kloster, "Rachel's Joy Falls Flat as Well as Her House," *Daily Mail* (London: England) November 25, 1993
- Ulla Kloster, "Have an' Art Bow," *Daily Mail* (London: England) December 2, 1993.
- Mullins, Charlotte, and Rachel Whiteread. *RW: Rachel Whiteread*. London: Tate Pub. ;, 2004.
- Perryman, Mark. *Altered States: Postmodernism, Politics, Culture* ed. Mark Perryman. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1994.

Pointon, Marcia. "Casts, Imprints, and the Deathliness of Things: Artifacts at the Edge." *Art Bulletin* XCVI, no. 2 (2014): 170-195.

Stiles, Kristine, and Peter Selz. *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art Ed. 2*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.

Wiseman, Jeanne. "Letter to Bow Standing Neighborhood Council" Tower Hamlets Archive, London, November 22, 1993

Whiteread, Rachel, and James Lingwood. *House*. London: Phaidon, 1995.

Whiteread, Rachel, and Lisa Dennison. *Rachel Whiteread: Transient Spaces*. New York, N.Y.: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2001.

Vidler, Anthony. *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000