The following all played a part in the realisation of this exhibition. It is by no means a conclusive list, but I wanted to share an overview of the resources that I drew upon whilst developing this project, so that others would be able to read more about the topics addressed. I also wanted to credit the many writers and creators whose work has informed this project. The list includes a range of novels, short stories, essays and YouTube videos.

Parable of the Sower, by Octavia E. Butler, 1993
Parable of the Talents, by Octavia E. Butler, 1998
Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?, by Mark Fisher, 2009
As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock, by Dina Gilio-Whitaker, 2019
The Paper Menagerie and Other Stories, by Ken Liu, 2011
Out of the Wreckage: A New Politics for an Age of Crisis, by George Monbiot, 2017
The Overstory, by Richard Powers, 2018
Daughntul Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist, by Kate Raworth, 2017
Call Them By Their True Names: American Crises (and Essays), by Rebecca Solnit, 2018
Climate Grief, by Oliver Thorn (Phisoposhy Tube), YouTube, 2019
The Apocalypse, by Natalie Wynn (ContraPoints), YouTube, 2018

Thank You:

It was important to me to include a section for thank yous, so that I could credit those involved who do not receive recognition elsewhere in this document. Any undertaking is the work of many hands, so I would like to thank: my Aunt, Eleanor Meade, for teaching me how to use a sewing machine and for being an utterly wonderful human being; my partner Emily Simpson for supporting me emotionally and intellectually throughout this process, and for being a near-daily sounding board for my ideas and artworks; my brother Matt Alton for his love, support, and the note he wrote me which I think of regularly; my Dad, Richard Alton, for encouraging me not to become an accountant like him; Niomi Fairweather (Programme Director, The NewBridge Project) for her facilitation of this project, her kindness and her generosity, and for being so understanding when the death of my Gran Betty and my poor mental health led to the postponement of this exhibition; Rebecca Huggan (Director, The NewBridge Project) for overseeing the amazing and vital work that The NewBridge Project does; Clare Gomez & Max Lee for providing me with accommodation whilst in Newcastle and making me feel welcome and at home; Eleni Vernaki & Suzanne Arvey (The Comfrey Project, Gateshead) for facilitating my workshop sessions with participants from The Comfrey Project; those who participated in workshops and cooked amazing food for our shared lunches at The Comfrey Project (Gateshead): Allstar Cameron (ReCoCo, Newcastle) for facilitating my workshop sessions with participants from ReCoCo; the self-dubbed ‘Geek Group’ at ReCoCo (Newcastle) for their participation and energy; Hannah Marsden, for valuable conversations in this project’s infancy; Toby Lloyd for a lovely chat over a cup of tea, and the ideas that flowed forth; Alessandro Vincentelli for being generous with his time and sharing his endless pool of references; my flatmates, Emily Collins, Gareth Isay, and Blair Hunwick, for not batting an eyelid when I turned the living room into my sewing station; and you, thank you for taking the time to visit this exhibition.

Produced for:
Throughout the Fragment of Infinity That We Have Come to Know
An exhibition by Chris Alton
7 March - 10 April 2020
The NewBridge Project
232-240 High St, Gateshead NE8 1DJ
Commissioned by:
The NewBridge Project, Newcastle/Gateshead
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Chris Alton: Throughout the Fragment of Infinity That We Have Come to Know
The NewBridge Project, Gateshead
7 Mar - 10 Apr 2020

Throughout the Fragment of Infinity That We Have Come to Know draws upon numerous, overlapping areas of concern and interest, including: climate change, economics, colonialism, classical mythology, and science fiction.

I have a bit of a thing for titles. Mine tend to be long and specific; although I think that this is the longest title that I've ever given an artwork or exhibition. The phrase is the opening line of a short science fiction story, which I've been working on; an excerpt is present in the exhibition as a video. The story is about different alien species and how their widely-ranging physiologies, experiences, and motivations have shaped their notions of value and their approaches to exchange.

For me, the phrase 'throughout the fragment of infinity that we have come to know' is a prompt to remember that the way things are is not the only way that things can be. Whilst things may be done in a certain way in our fragment of infinity, there must be endless other options out there in the universe (and perhaps beyond that too). More specifically, I'm talking about the capitalist myth of 'infinite growth on a finite planet' (Kenneth Boulding, economist, peace activist, Quaker). There are many models that have existed, co-exist, and will exist, which are viable alternatives to capitalism.

In this exhibition, I'm trying to use science fiction as a license to simultaneously critique and imagine beyond the current, dominant capitalist model. Examples of this include: the Otring Pound, an imagined local currency with a twist; the CaCO₃ currency, whose value is linked to the health of the Earth's oceans and references the ancient use of seashells as currency; and the Carteass, intergalactic, whale-like creatures, who are simultaneously corporeal presences, maps, and a medium of exchange. I have also presented a selection of historical and contemporary currencies, which serve to widen the conversation and contextualise other aspects of the show.

There are three works that sit under the shared title of Throughout the Fragment of Infinity That We Have Come to Know; a banner, a short video, and a display of real and imagined currencies. I've paired these works with a video essay titled What Mortals Henceforth Shall Our Power Adore, which - via the symbol of the trident - draws connections between; classical mythology, British colonialism, nuclear weapons and contemporary tax avoidance. It was important for me to include a work that discusses British colonialism alongside work addressing economics and climate change. The histories of colonialism and capitalism are entangled; both are based on the exploitation of people, land and natural resources; and if we are to effectively address the climate crisis, we must face up to our colonial past.

As part of my process, I often make diagrams that link together different areas of concern. These usually stay in my notebooks, but I thought it might be useful to include one here. So on the next page you'll see a diagram, which I hope will help you navigate this exhibition. It includes key areas of concern, recurring references, and areas of research that might not be as explicit in the show.

Context:

In 2019 I was invited to undertake a commission with The NewBridge Project regarding the ‘solidarity economy’. The solidarity economy is defined by the shared pursuit of the following values: commitment to equal decision-making, active opposition to all forms oppression, ecological sustainability, acting in solidarity, fostering a variety of approaches, and system change. I led workshops with The Comfrey Project and ReCoCo – two organisations engaged with the solidarity economy – regarding alternative forms of exchange, climate change, and speculative fiction.

Bios:

Chris Alton (b. 1991) is an artist and curator. His Quaker upbringing is a key influence in his practice. Whether deploying disco music in opposition to fascism, recording a rhythm & blues album about tax avoidance, or proposing art schools be built over golf courses, his work addresses the interconnected nature of prevailing social, political, economic and environmental conditions.


www.chrisalton.com / Instagram: @chrisalton / Twitter: @iamchrisalton
List of Works

1. Throughout the Fragment of Infinity That We Have Come to Know, Textiles, 190x220cm, 2020

2 & 3. Throughout the Fragment of Infinity That We Have Come to Know, Shells, plaster, coins, banknotes, acrylic, digital image, display table, text, 110x110x92cm, 2020

Credits
3D Modelling: Chris Mewies (Mewies Design)
Furniture fabrication: Joseph Shaw

4. Throughout the Fragment of Infinity That We Have Come to Know, HD video with sound, 3 minutes 15 seconds, 2020

Credits
Artist & Director: Chris Alton
Script: Chris Alton
Soundtrack: Stevie Ray Latham
Voiceover: Louisa Todd
Sound Recordist, Voiceover: Craig Pollard
Furniture fabrication: Joseph Shaw

5. What Mortals Henceforth Shall Our Power Adore, HD video with sound, 17 minutes 53 seconds, 2020

Credits
Artist & Director: Chris Alton
Script & Voiceover: Chris Alton
Soundtrack: Stevie Ray Latham
Sound Recordist, Voiceover: Rob Aitken
Furniture fabrication: Joseph Shaw