

DRAWING CONVERSATIONS: WHAT AND WHERE IS HOME?

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Isabel Young's ongoing research explores the cultural dynamics of the home, vernacular architecture, ancient buildings, integrated environments and the people who lived in them. It investigates ancient practices and how they can be applied to 21st Century challenges to discover new and novel solutions whilst fostering community engagement and local cohesion.

This study refers to 'The Lararium Project' (2023) which saw the design and installation of a Roman shrine to the household gods in the Roman Villa at Butser Ancient Farm, a living museum of experimental archaeology and re-enactment that tests "theories about the technologies, building techniques and ways of life of ancient people by reconstructing elements of their homes and lives". As a permanent fixture of the museum, the Lararium is used for education and re-enactments gaining further insight into religious practices and associated rituals, and to explore the cultural dynamics of the Roman home. The Lararium Project and associated development of the Roman Villa, involved drawing in three forms: the making of the Lararium, communal clay drawn votive offerings created by museum visitors, and the installation of the Roman mosaic in the new Roman Formal Garden constructed at the entrance to the Roman Villa.

Focusing on the conference theme that asks "what and where is home and belonging, and how does this differ for individuals, families, nationalities" I consider more specifically how this has differed across time, and how drawing research can intervene into human experiences of belonging through the lens of ancient practices. Here drawing acts as a catalyst to form new relationships with home as a communal site. For our purposes the communal site of 'home' is the Roman Villa at Butser Ancient Farm.

In conclusion, this paper is a critical discussion of 'The Lararium Project', and evidences how drawing can be used as a tool to celebrate concepts of 'home'. It focuses on 3 drawing outputs: the making of the shrine, associated communal offerings and the installation of the Roman mosaic. It demonstrates how the merging of drawing and ancient practices can be applied to issues of our time, specifically investigating how drawing can develop communal and collaborative responses to 'home' and the cohabitation of space.

