

‘Lines of Becoming’ Misha Black and Entanglements through Exhibition Design

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In many historical accounts exhibitions are considered in isolation, in relation to specific political or cultural events. This article instead interrogates exhibitions as interlinked sites of personal and professional ‘entanglement’, connected entities that have capacity to sustain and develop multiple relationships, in this case across the career of a single designer, Misha Black (1910–1977). Through successive commissions, Black developed ideas about exhibitions as communication and propaganda, as well as developing his network and modelling formations for professional design practice. Exhibitions Black worked on which are discussed here included The Ibero-American Exhibition, Seville, 1929–1930; MARS Group Exhibition, 1938; Glasgow Empire Exhibition, 1938; New York World’s Fair, 1939–1940; Ministry of Information exhibitions mounted during the Second World War and the Festival of Britain, 1951.

Keywords: exhibition design—exhibition history—entanglement—Misha Black—network culture—professionalization—propaganda

Introduction—Misha Black and exhibitions as networks

Recalling the opening of the 1939 New York World’s Fair, designer Misha Black (1910–1977) described the ‘small body of rather pathetic men—the exhibition designers’, seen wandering amongst the excited crowds. As contributing designer to the British Pavilion, Black was by his own definition ‘a pathetic man’, conscious of the lowly status of the job. ‘Anyone would be proud to write the word “architect” against the “what profession” column in their income-tax form’, he reflected, ‘but no one even knows quite what to put down if they happen to make designing exhibitions their major activity’.¹ This situation was largely related to the fact that the design profession itself was still in formation but paradoxically, it was this lack of clarity that meant exhibitions offered the potential for designers of all types—architects, industrial designers, artists, engineers—to meet and collaborate, and for exhibitions to become incubators for new forms and formations in design.

Black was the most prominent exhibition designer of twentieth century Britain, working on exhibitions of every type and scale, from the start of his career in 1927, to his death five decades later.² The exhibitions Black designed were intended to perform many diverse functions from commercial to diplomatic, propagandist, inspirational and informational. They were produced for multiple clients across the world. Black was associated with pioneering the development of commercial exhibition stands in peacetime at trade fairs, agricultural shows, pavilions for world’s fairs and wartime propaganda exhibitions. This article considers the exhibitions Black worked on as connected entities that sustained and developed multiple relationships. In doing so it challenges the way exhibition histories are often linked to the interests of single institutions or nation states or their agencies and instead

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focuses on a single designer navigating his career through a series of exhibition commissions.

Thinking about exhibitions relationally allows for consideration of the way that visual languages and tropes were echoed across events and how ideas were transported and moderated for new contexts. Working on exhibitions allowed designers' personal and professional identities to shift across successive and interlinked jobs. In that sense, this work takes up Michel De Certeau's proposition in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) of a gap between those who dictate and direct culture through *strategies* and those who use and manipulate it through *tactics*. He writes: '...*strategies* are able to produce, tabulate, and impose...whereas *tactics* can only use, manipulate and divert...'.³ He goes on to explain 'I call a *strategy* the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army...) can be isolated...By contrast with a *strategy*...a *tactic* is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus'.⁴ Here De Certeau draws a distinction between those who are in the powerful position to impose or dictate culture and those who learn to operate or practise within it. I want to suggest that designers, such as Misha Black, who, in implementing the *strategies* of commissioning bodies and clients, were not only fulfilling the client demands (be they those of governments or companies), but also creating *tactics* to turn this work to their own ends and, in doing so, extracting some personal and professional value from the process. This is the diversionary element or *peruque*, in De Certeau's terms, 'the worker's own work disguised as work for his employer', that made such work not only productive in furthering the needs of the employer but also a space of pleasure and enjoyment, allowing the worker to perform required tasks while also taking something of their own from it.⁵ Through his decades of exhibition work Misha Black was not simply the handmaid of his clients, he was also conspicuously able to extract value from work that made it personally and professionally enriching.

Before exploring such linkages I will first introduce Black briefly. Misha Black—born Moisei Tcherny in 1910—arrived in Britain from Baku (previously Russia, now Azerbaijan) as a baby in 1912.⁶ He was brought by his parents, merchant Lionel Tcherny and Sophia Tcherny (née Divinskaia), who were in search of a stable and prosperous life [1].⁷ After leaving school Black started in practice at just 17.⁸ Throughout his career, from its start in 1927 to his death in 1977, exhibitions operated as 'domains of entanglement' (to use anthropologist Tim Ingold's phrase discussed below), which linked Black to clients, fellow designers, design organizations, inspired models of teamwork and gave him contact with exhibition-going audiences.⁹ Black worked for a vast range of clients including official and commercial ones, as well as using exhibitions as a mouthpiece for voicing his various and shifting political alliances, along with many of his activist contemporaries. Within a remarkably productive career working on a vast array of commissions: from book and magazine covers, to the visual identity of London Underground's Victoria Line, consultancies to UNESCO and the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) and multiple public interiors, Misha Black was also active as exhibition designer during all this time. By the end of his career, he had designed exhibitions for sites across many continents—Europe, North America, the Middle East, Asia and Africa—and on every scale, from tiny commercial stands at trade fairs and agricultural shows, to large national pavilions.

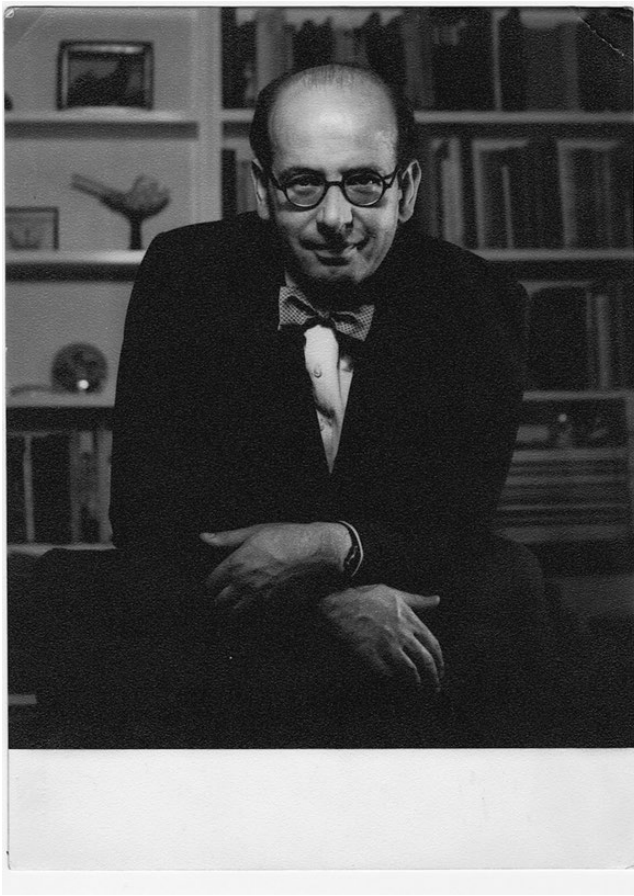


Fig 1. Misha Black in 1951. Photograph taken for professional use by Clifford Hatts. By kind permission of the Hatts family.

Exhibitions as ‘domains of entanglement’

Focusing on the character, form and impact of individual exhibitions allows for productive consideration of how they have marked moments of political or economic continuity or rupture; how they operate as mechanisms for representing national, transregional, colonial and, importantly, postcolonial cultures and identities, as well as how they reinforce or challenge gender structures.¹⁰ Much museological literature productively follows this model, considering the role of an exhibition in relation to wider cultural politics and policy, the interests of particular communities or the politics of memory. There is also an important literature that considers national exhibitions and world’s fairs in relation to a set of cultural themes and problems.¹¹ But how might we consider the relationships and linkages between exhibitions across space and time? Anthropologist Tim Ingold’s concept of the ‘meshwork’ provides a useful model for considering dynamics of exchange and movement between individuals, organizations, sites and moments.¹² ‘Meshwork’ is a frame through which to consider relationships in spatial and temporal terms that go beyond the two-dimensional points and nodes of the Latourian Actor–Network–Theory model or the agent–object networks of material culture studies and instead allows us to conceptualize something messier, what Ingold describes as the ‘*meshwork as*

interweaving of lines’, knots in ‘*a tissue of knots*’, the environment as a ‘*domain of entanglement*’.¹³ Ingold argues for the importance of thinking about creative forms in a state of becoming, rather than simply in their final, fixed form.¹⁴ He discusses the importance of assigning primacy to processes of formation, rather than merely to final products, of moving ‘*along paths*’ rather than being ‘*in place*’.¹⁵ I use Ingold’s temporal metaphors, drawn from philosopher Gilles Deleuze, of ‘*real lines of life*’ or ‘*lines of becoming*’ and his spatial metaphor of ‘*lines of flight*’—the open-ended ‘bundle’ of lines, as Ingold explains, that prise an opening, even as they bind a species to the world.¹⁶ I trace the impact of Misha Black’s entanglements with exhibitions across fifty years and imagine them as nodes of interaction with people, forms and things, propelling Black through the movement and growth of his career.¹⁷

Developing in design practice

So what was the starting point for this life in exhibition work? From the late 1920s to the mid-1930s, Black took on commercial design work of all types: designing display stands for clients including Crosse & Blackwell, Industrial Rotherham, Cerebos Salt, De Villars chocolate, Keiller, Toblerone chocolate, Standard Motor Company, Kelvinator Refrigerating Machines and Esso Petroleum, alongside working on book and magazine covers (including those for *avant garde* magazine *Experiment*), posters (for Shell and the London Passenger Transport Board, among others), advertisements (for Lyons

Key exhibitions Misha Black worked on (individually or in practice):

- 1929-30 - Rio Tinto Company stand at The Ibero-American Exposition, Seville.
- 1936 – New Homes for Old Exhibition, London.
- 1937 – Peace Pavilion at Paris International Exhibition.
- 1938 –MARS Group Exhibition of New Architecture, New Burlington Galleries, London.
- 1938 – United Kingdom Pavilion at the Empire Exhibition, Glasgow.
- 1939-40- British Pavilion at the New York World's Fair.
- 1940-5 - United Kingdom Ministry of Information exhibitions.
- 1946 – Britain Can Make It Exhibition, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.
- 1951 – South Bank Exhibition, Festival of Britain, London.
- 1952 –United Kingdom Pavilion and South East Asian Territories Pavilion, Colombo Plan Exhibition, Ceylon.
- 1953 – United Kingdom Pavilion, Rhodes Centenary Exhibition, Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia.
- 1954 – British exhibit at the Tenth Triennale, Milan.
- 1958 – British Industry Pavilion, Expo 58, Brussels.
- 1967 – Ontario Government Pavilion at International and Universal Exposition, Montreal.

Fig 2. Significant exhibitions Misha Black worked on individually or in collaboration.

Corner Houses, for example) and product design (including radio cabinets for E.K. Cole Ltd. and Vek Heaters for the Gas, Light and Coke Company).¹⁸ Black's modes of working varied: at times, he was paid independently, at others he worked collaboratively. Some of his work was for commercial clients, while others was motivated solely by the wish to promote a political or artistic cause he supported, and there was a close relationship between his designs across these commercial categories: for example, the work Black did for shop displays was often echoed in his approach to exhibitions and vice versa [2].

Early in his career, Black was dependent on commercial display agents for a great number of his commissions. Wickham Limited and George Cuming Limited awarded him work and through a long association with London-based distributing agents Arundell Clarke Display Limited, who styled themselves as offering 'manufacturers, advertisers and retailers a complete window publicity service', Black—only 17 years old—was commissioned to work on his first international exhibition.¹⁹ This was a stand for a mining company, the Rio Tinto Company Limited, at the Ibero-American Exposition held in Seville from 1929 to 1930, which showcased Spain's cultural ties with its former colonies. Black demonstrated his embryonic interest in incorporating technology to create dynamic, eye-catching displays for serious subjects: he animated displays about mining using mobile, revolving photographic displays. Travelling home, Black stayed in Paris to study art before returning to England where he took evening drawing classes at the Central School, his only formal art or design education. He answered an advertisement in *The Times* inviting replies from 'anybody interested in learning shop-window dressing', which led to an apprenticeship under Hans Kiesewetter and work, much of it unpaid, for various commercial agencies.²⁰ Here he met and took commissions alongside Lucy Rossetti, who had also answered the same advertisement and, appreciating the benefits of collective working, they co-founded Studio Z, based at Black's flat in Seven Dials, just off London's Covent Garden, his first independent practice.²¹ Throughout the rest of his career, Black would continue to work in collaborative practice with artists, designers and architects, accumulating an increasingly complex and absorbing series of memberships, senior roles and affiliations as he went.

After working at Studio Z for only about a year designing bookplates, letter headings, window displays, exhibition stands and a bedside table, Rossetti fell ill from over-work

and Black continued on his own before joining the Bassett Gray consultancy based in London's Bedford Square.²² The Group, which, by the time Black joined, advertised itself as 'the distributing organisation of a body of artists who design for industrial and commercial purposes', had been founded by Charles and Henry Bassett with Milner Gray in 1920.²³ Bassett Gray had an ever-expanding scope: from packaging work to display, design and advertising more generally. Members shared the rent on office accommodation, which not only had a practical appeal in saving money but also allowed them to be based close together for easy access to each other and to clients.²⁴ In April 1934, an advert for Bassett Gray in *Shelf Appeal* explained that the twelve members of the Group, based in London's Bedford Square, 'work individually or collaboratively', 'their activities embrace...Advertisement Design and Advertisement Writing; Poster Design; Package Design; Product Styling; Illustration; Typography; Mural Painting; Interior Decoration; Display and Exhibition Stand Architecture' [3].²⁵ The firm existed to foster—in their own phrase—'team spirit and co-operative effort', in other words to formalize relationships within a network, and to provide opportunities for artists to apply their skills to many kinds of commercial brief.

In 1935, a few months after joining Bassett Gray, Black moved on to his next group venture.²⁶ With Milner Gray, Black co-founded design consultancy Industrial Design Partnership (IDP) alongside Jessie Collins, Thomas Gray, James de Holden Stone and Walter Landauer, based in the same offices as Bassett Gray at 4 Bedford Square.²⁷ Display stands had been key built components in commercial exhibitions from the nineteenth century, giving architects much-needed experience of working on small commissions.²⁸ Black, with no formal architectural training

experimented with them from the start of his career, thinking about their capacity to produce dynamic engagements with the public. A large, portable one he designed for Cooper, MacDougall and Robertson Limited of Newcastle, sheep dip makers, to use at agricultural fairs, was praised as a 'revolution' in *Shelf Appeal* magazine of August 1935.²⁹ Black had worked at several trade and industrial fairs by the time he succeeded in modernizing the old 75-foot wide stand by simplifying the structure while retaining echoes of original features, like the porticoed colonnade. Working with a range of others, Black continued to be commissioned to design commercial stands for trade fairs and agricultural shows. Nor did Black commit himself entirely to IDP. While working there, he also took on commercial work independently for Anglo-American Oil Company, Kardomah³⁰ and Ekco.³¹ He was appointed as Display Consultant to the Gas, Light & Coke Company in 1936, an appointment declared by *Shelf Appeal* 'probably the best display position yet held by any independent display man'.³²

In addition to making exhibitions, Black also expressed his ideas about them publicly through his regular speeches and articles in industry publications, using this opportunity to pass judgment on his contemporaries and to showcase his newly completed projects. In *Shelf Appeal* of June 1934, for example, Misha Black

Fig 3. Advertisement for Bassett Gray from *Shelf Appeal*, April 1934. Courtesy of the Estate of Misha Black.

BASSETT GRAY
INDUSTRIAL ART

MISHA BLACK • JESSE COLLINS • PAUL DRURY, R.E. • CLIVE GARDINER
MILNER GRAY • E.F. HERBERT • ROWLAND HILDER • J. de HOLDEN-STONE
E.B. HOYTTON, R.S. • JOHN MANSBRIDGE • ALAN ROGERS • GRAHAM SUTHERLAND

Bassett Gray is the distributing organisation of a body of artists who design for industrial and commercial purposes. The members of the association work individually or collaboratively, and their activities embrace the following fields: Advertisement Design and Advertisement Writing; Poster Design; Package Design; Product Styling; Illustration; Typography; Mural Painting; Interior Decoration; Display and Exhibition Stand Architecture. The Association on behalf of its members places these services at your disposal. Communications to Organising Secretary: Bassett Gray, 4 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1. Telephone: Museum 5120.

wrote about recent travelling exhibitions and detailed his own work on the Essolube Hydrogenation exhibition.³³ A few months later, Black wrote a scathing review of the 1935 Brussels Exhibition including criticism of Britain's 'mortuary'-like Pavilion designed by Howard Robertson and of the displays inside, one installation shot labelled 'It was not all quite as bad as this'.³⁴ By critiquing the work of his peers, Black created an important platform for himself and for his own practices; a way of publicly explaining and justifying his approach. As well as writing for magazines, his edited books *Exhibition Design* of 1950 and *Public Interiors* a decade later also operated as proto-advertorials, showing numerous photographs of work he or colleagues in practice had completed, reinforcing his own professional standing and strengthening his links by pointing to exemplary work by contemporaries.³⁵

While exhibitions provided Misha Black with an income, they were also nodes of another sort: allowing him to meet like-minded individuals and to extend networks of belief. In 1933, Black co-founded left-aligned Artists International Association (AIA), an organization set on mobilizing 'the International Unity of Artists Against Imperialist War on the Soviet Union, Fascism and Colonial Oppression', using exhibitions as their principal form of 'demonstration', as they described it.³⁶ Fellow AIA founder members included artists Clifford Rowe, Peggy Angus, Pearl Binder and James Holland, who aspired to mount exhibitions outside of the established institutions of museums and galleries, in order to democratize art audiences. A number of AIA members, such as painter Clifford Rowe, while aspiring to be self-supporting as an artist, had been forced in the 1930s to work on commercial exhibitions in order to earn a precarious living.³⁷ As AIA's chair for eleven years, Black organized several exhibitions and, with AIA artists James Holland, Betty Rea and Nan Youngman, travelled to France in summer 1937 to work at the Paris International Exhibition on the Pavilion for 'Peace Democracy and Cultural Freedom'—a series of painted murals combining peace slogans with statistics explaining the role of the League of Nations in maintaining world peace.³⁸ The act of working together on projects such as these was significant for AIA members in cementing bonds of international solidarity and friendship.³⁹

Also by dint of his sympathy with a cause—the need for better housing—Black was invited to design the New Homes for Old exhibition. One of a biennial series mounted in London, the 1936 New Homes was organized by the Housing Centre in collaboration with Modern Architectural Research Group (known as MARS) and a MARS splinter group known as the Architects and Technicians Organisation (ATO).⁴⁰ Black, the Secretary of MARS, was given overall control of the exhibition and asked to follow a theme, 'The Ages of Man'. Building exhibitions around themes would continue to be key for Black. Formally, Black's design owed a debt to earlier housing exhibitions mounted by Bauhausers, such as Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius and László Moholy-Nagy's highly acclaimed Exhibition of Building Worker's Unions of 1931, held in Berlin—some of whom Black met regularly and worked alongside in London at this time.⁴¹ In keeping with his belief in the importance of collaborative work (something that also echoed a Bauhaus precept), the 1936 New Homes exhibition was not attributed to any individual designer, as it had previously been, and accompanying texts were not authored, subsuming the individual worker into the 'collective professional organization'.⁴²

From 1937, Misha Black worked on another exhibition project with MARS where shared convictions were again paramount; this time advocating for Modern or 'the New Architecture', as its detractors called it. The MARS Group Exhibition of New

Architecture, held at London's New Burlington Galleries in January 1938, was coordinated by Black who had taken over the role from Moholy-Nagy upon his departure for Chicago.⁴³ The exhibition presented a story to the public about the elements of modern architecture using models and aerial photographs, maps and plans, as well as prototypes of new building elements, acting as a visual manifesto for Modernism; 'a propaganda exhibition', the *RIBA Journal* dubbed it.⁴⁴ Twelve MARS members contributed, with designers each assigned a section, including a corridor for recent arrival in Britain F.H.K. Henrion.⁴⁵ This was Black and Henrion's first work together and marked the beginning of a set of fruitful collaborations.⁴⁶ Black would later describe the MARS exhibition, along with the 1951 Festival of Britain's South Bank Exhibition, as having had the greatest influence on building styles within Britain.⁴⁷ But in another sense the MARS exhibition marked an important staging post in Black's practice: in demonstrating the impact of making text and narrative central to exhibitionary presentation. 'In one special type of exhibition, it might be considered that British design is...superior to the most efficient foreign competition', Black wrote in 1950. This superiority, he said, was in the 'informative and story-telling type of exhibition (as differentiated from the simple display of commodities)'.⁴⁸ Le Corbusier's 'Pictorial Record' of visiting the exhibition reinforced the textual and processional aspects of the exhibition, highlighting, for example, the presence of a first-hand edition of the book by seventeenth century diplomat and poet Sir Henry Wotton that had lent its theme to the exhibition.⁴⁹ Wotton's dictum, taken from this book—'Well building hath three conditions: Commoditie, Firmenes, and Delight'—provided the anchor for the whole exhibition and was displayed at the entrance, adding to the sense of a visual-textual reciprocity. The MARS Group exhibition of 1938 was, according to Black, 'the archetype of contemporary British exhibition design'.⁵⁰ British designers had, Black went on, fully embraced the communicative potential of exhibitions, shifting the form from their pre-war function as vehicles for display of commercial goods into viable forms of communication; hybrid visual-textual-spatial statements, efficient vehicles for promulgating persuasive ideas. In raising the profile of exhibition as reproducible in its own right, a medium of communication akin to radio and film and a form for the machine age to be assembled and reassembled across sites and scales, the Exhibition was, again, in this iteration, in the spirit of Gropius. Critics were not convinced, however: one magazine dismissing the MARS exhibition as 'largely, if not wholly unintelligible to the ordinary man'.⁵¹

The Glasgow Empire Exhibition in the same year was another significant node in Black's career, giving him, and IDP, their first major international platform. The trade fair, led by Scottish industrialists with British government support, was intended to showcase Scottish industry and provide visually persuasive evidence of 'the progress of the British Empire at home and overseas' with particular emphasis on Scotland.⁵² Its overall coordinator was architect Thomas Tait and the UK Government pavilion—the largest national building, designed by architect Herbert Rowse—was devoted to showcasing British industries. Black designed displays for the Steel, Coal and Public Welfare halls with a section on 'Fitter Britain'. Flow-charts, photomontage, text, models, dramatic cascading lighting and illustrative vignettes were set in streamlined cabinets to illuminate scientific and industrial research. Echoing recent display stands that had been lauded in the trade press by designers such as Richard Levin, Black incorporated type as a structural element through titles and foregrounded explanatory text to create a narrative arc, a device that had worked well at the MARS exhibition earlier that year.

In Shipbuilding, for example, back-lit photographs showed the shipmaker's craft and abstracted elements of the ship [4]. These were accompanied by titles with filmic qualities that propelled the visitor through the exhibit. A colossal model hull, looming over visitors' heads and the Yarrow Testing Tank were spectacular additions. For this job, Black and Milner Gray drew in IDP Associates such as Henrion, who again joined them to work on the designs and artist Clive Gardiner, whose vast, domed Cubist-inspired *Coal* mural depicting abstracted wheels and platforms of mining machinery semi-shrouded in smoke—the heroic subjects of leftist artists—provided the backdrop to Black's displays about coal processing techniques and a model blast furnace in which carefully-integrated text and type were structural elements.⁵³ Black was adept at meeting the requirements of his commissioners. This work allowed Black and Gray to demonstrate their ability to create visually engaging spectacle from important industrial subjects, to unveil production processes or, more precisely, the means of production for general public consumption. While industrial displays had been a central plank of international exhibitions since 1851, these displays, as Black explained, were a chance to shift the emphasis with which production was shown away from '...the glory of the machine; the glory of capitalism; the glory of mass-production; the glory of human expansion measured in the terms of international capitalism', to 'relate production to the needs of the people', in other words, to give audiences direct access to the means of production, if not control over them, and to allow consideration of how such production was socially meaningful.⁵⁴ This focus on revealing the means of production Black would repeat in multiple contexts including New York 1939–1940 and the Festival of Britain 1951. *The Evening Dispatch* newspaper praised the UK Pavilion as 'the finest contribution which His Majesty's Government has ever made to any exhibition'.⁵⁵



Fig 4. Shipbuilding Hall at Glasgow's Empire Exhibition, 1938, with back-lit photographs creating a narrative detailing ships being made, set in a seascape and elements of a ship itself. Image courtesy University of Brighton Design Archives F.H.K. Henrion collection.

Soon after Glasgow, IDP's work gained a more prominent platform when they were commissioned to design displays for the British Pavilion at the New York World's Fair. This extended Black's international 'lines of flight'—to borrow from Deleuze's metaphor expressing perpetual motion in-between points—from exhibitions in Spain, France and Britain to North America, where his professional networks grew.⁵⁶ The vast pavilion, which fitted 13,000 visitors, provided Black with another opportunity to show that he and his contemporaries could create engaging displays about trade and industry for public consumption. Black, Gray and Landauer—with IDP Associates Thomas Gray and Kenneth Bayes—designed the Public Welfare Hall, the Maritime Hall and china, leather and woolen trade sections.⁵⁷ In the Maritime section, Black represented 9,000 ships with tiny models on a gigantic world map. His work on the Public Welfare Hall, with Gray and Bayes, included a section entitled 'The Child is Father to the Man', echoing William Wordsworth's dictum and again making a literary theme his central structuring device, with displays making clever use of mechanical tricks. In one, designed by John Barker, three revolving drums contained prosceniums concealing four illuminated, photomontaged 'sets', with descriptive lettering passing over to conceal set changes, charting information about infant and maternity welfare.⁵⁸

This was to be IDP's last major piece of work, the group disbanded at the outbreak of the Second World War. Working on such major events had given IDP a highly visible platform as a design partnership when such collaborative practices were in the process

of emerging.⁵⁹ They also, importantly, allowed Black to experiment with the possibilities for varying the type of contracts: to work with permanent partners, as well as with occasional 'Associates', a model he would continue to use in practice and which came to fruition in his next venture, Design Research Unit, which he co-founded in 1943. Collaborations between artists and industrial designers, working towards an integrated life, Black had understood early on as a symptom of modernity, but he was discovering that it also made increasingly good business sense.⁶⁰ How to divide teams in order to be efficient, cost effective and to get 'good' results, bringing in different skills and testing divisions of labour, were questions Black continued to concern himself with throughout his career. At the same time as communicating with the public, exhibitions provided Black with the opportunity to work within an international community of designers, to develop both networks and ideas about design practice and to consider future directions.

For Black, exhibition teams were laboratories for structuring professional practice. Exhibitions work formed a spine through all periods of his evolving practice and a point of continuity, linking different phases in his career. The roles he took in creating these multiple exhibitions were varied, following what was a standard route for designers gaining in seniority: from hands-on drawing of each element for his earliest commissions, to taking what was, increasingly, a co-ordinating role overseeing teams of designers by the end of his career. Black's successive jobs and commissions were, then, in Ingold's terms, mobile 'lines of becoming', which allowed for a process of self-actualization through time. Certainly Black's identity formed through the work he was commissioned to do and those he worked alongside. His National Registration card reflected this, showing his professional identity was in flux over years, correlating with the particular type of work he was doing. For example, from April 1930 Black described his occupation as 'Artist', then from 1937 he added an 'additional occupation' as 'Commercial Designer'.⁶¹ This, perhaps, reflected Black's early hope that commercial art practise would merely be a way of supporting himself until he made it as a fine artist and, as autobiographical accounts state, it was only later he saw the benefits of being a designer.⁶² By 1939 (the year after the MARS Group exhibition and Glasgow Empire Exhibition and the year in which the New York World's Fair opened), Black had become a member of the Institute of Registered Architects and, despite his lack of formal training, he was now able to change the profession in his identity card to 'Architect'.⁶³

Exhibitions as Propaganda

Black was used to being commissioned by a wide variety of clients—both commercial and state—and adapting his work to their needs, whether for advertising or national projection. From 1940 to 1945, he had experience of designing exhibitions in a different context: as employee of the British government's wartime Ministry of Information (MOI). Here he made exhibitions for use as propaganda during the Second World War, instructing home audiences with practical information and inspiration and sending messages to enemies and allies. The exhibitions he produced with the MOI team were shown in public sites around Britain: travelling to train stations, shop windows and halls. Many also went abroad. Exhibitions were created for Latin America, USSR, China, Portugal, Sweden, the Middle East, French North Africa and 'Empire countries'. Shop windows were used to display material in Latin America and Portugal, while exhibitions of enlarged photographs of bomb damage in enemy territory were sent to the USA and USSR. The most ambitious coverage was a large-scale exhibition with drawings, maps and photographs about the campaigns leading up to the liquidation of the Italian

Empire, sent by fast transit to Cairo for distribution to India, Abyssinnia, Palestine, Iraq, Iran and New York (for re-transmission to Latin America and China), to Canada, South Africa and Russia.⁶⁴

Black's writings show that he saw the commercial work he had done pre-war and 'storytelling' exhibitions such as the MARS Group show in 1938 as providing the persuasive visual language for this very different cause of wartime exhibition propaganda design.⁶⁵ Moreover, even within this restrictive wartime context Black's networks continued to expand as he worked alongside designers, some of whom he had an established relationship with, others for the first time. Kenneth Bayes, who had been an IDP Associate, came to work at MOI.⁶⁶ Under Milner Gray, who led the MOI's initial exhibitions team, Black worked with Peter Ray, James Holland, Henrion, Bronck Katz and Richard Levin and architects Peter Moro and Frederick Gibberd. Black was employed on a 'fee basis' at MOI because he was not yet a naturalized citizen.⁶⁷ Several MOI exhibition designers, like Black, were not born in Britain and worked under the wartime legal status of 'Aliens'. F.H.K. Henrion, for example, had come to work at the Ministry from internment in a camp on the Isle of Man. These newly arriving designers were influenced through training and previous work by crosscurrents within European Modernism: Constructivism, Surrealism and the New Typography. MOI exhibitions relied on photography as the central medium, using the expanded photographs and collage that had become hallmarks of pre-war international exhibitions reported in the architectural press since the late 1920s. Working together on exhibitions both in MOI and elsewhere, through organizations like The Free German League of Culture (1938–1946) in London, provided a wartime meeting point for refugees from different artistic traditions who could show work together. Henrion later described how in this wartime context exhibition techniques 'evolved rapidly and successfully'. For all its privations, necessities and restricted budgets, this government department was, he recalled, 'a very creative nucleus, where things were discussed, and appropriate techniques developed'.⁶⁸ Henrion's idea of new exhibitionary contexts prompting novel creative solutions is important in relation to the 'overflowing boundaries' of Ingold's meshwork⁶⁹: in each successive exhibition commission, designers were learning to solve problems and developing skills they would carry on to the next job.⁷⁰

Of the many exhibitions Black worked on at MOI, the most ambitious was The Army Exhibition: The equipment of a division. This had various formal hallmarks of Black's earlier work including its reliance on text, script and storytelling and its focus on new technologies both as content and for enhancing displays. Held in 1943 on London's large John Lewis Oxford Street bombsite, The Army Exhibition then toured to Birmingham and Cardiff. A large, introductory panel [5] explained the premise of the show with a huge eye-catching yellow and grey map showing the African battle area viewed from the Mediterranean and the way men and machines were moved around a vast area. Designed

Fig 5. Army Exhibition Ministry of Information [© IWM (TR 1146)].



by a team of MOI exhibition staff overseen by Misha Black, collaborating with architects, including Bronek Katz for the exterior, Frederick Gibberd (engineering section), Peter Moro (clothing and signals) and F.H.K. Henrion (the concluding section), the 23,000 exhibits included full-sized Churchill tanks and optical lenses. According to *Architectural Review*, it was 'the most ambitious and successful of all exhibitions so far staged' by MOI and 'as up-to-date' as the 1938 MARS Exhibition and 'yet in no way high-brow', referring to the earlier show's criticism as being out of touch with the interests of the public.⁷¹ All these influences and previous collaborations provided an impetus for the next: Milner Gray later observed that 'the impulse from the MARS Group exhibition in 1938 was considerably developed in the work of the Exhibitions Branch at the Ministry of Information during the war'.⁷² And Black continued to work with many of these designers in other contexts after the war.

Exhibitions as laboratories for professional design practice

From 1943, Black's collaborations and his exhibitions work would develop in a new context, his most long-lived practice. While still employed on war work at Ministry of Information, Black and Milner Gray were invited to join a practice recently founded by art critic Herbert Read and advertising executive Marcus Brumwell: Design Research Unit (DRU).⁷³ Black would remain at DRU until his death in 1977. They took some colleagues with them from the Ministry including Dorothy Goslett, campaigns officer at Exhibitions Branch who became DRU's formidable office manager and went on to write a well-regarded guide for embryonic design offices published as *Professional Practice for Designers* in 1961.⁷⁴ As Fiona MacCarthy observes, DRU's raison d'être was to establish 'contacts' between industry and specialist designers that could design anything, from 'banks' to 'exhibitions'.⁷⁵

Soon after joining DRU, Gray and Black were asked by the recently formed Council of Industrial Design (COID) to contribute a section to the Britain Can Make It exhibition, to be held at the Victoria and Albert Museum from September to December 1946. With its subtitle 'Good Design and Good Business', Britain Can Make It set out to show Britain's manufacturing capability through the display of British goods, reflecting the British government's belief in well-designed products as a key element in post-war recovery.⁷⁶ While the exhibition was framed through narratives of progress and recuperation, this commission to work on an exhibition closely allied to national economic recovery allowed DRU to position themselves as the designers of the early welfare state. Their section, entitled 'Birth of an Eggcup', aimed to enlighten visitors on issues of production. It showed how something as seemingly simple as an eggcup was created following a system of complex problem solving, demonstrating that even an eggcup created marketing, production and other problems, which designers were trained to resolve. It acted as a vehicle for explaining the 'principles' of industrial design and also for showing the significance of including designers in the manufacturing process. This presentation echoed ideas Black had discussed in his 1945 *Picture Post* article 'Design in Everyday Things', where he had explained designed objects as part of a network of choices, reflecting his view of design as essentially collaborative and networked.⁷⁷ The displays again relied heavily on text: storyboards related how the object came to exist, alongside visual displays, using storytelling techniques that owed a debt to wartime MOI exhibitions [6]. At the entrance to the display projected lettering with the title 'Birth of an Eggcup' appeared and disappeared on the giant egg, combining Black's playful lettering with mechanical devices.

'So you see
designing me
Is as tricky
As can be...'

Little light-hearted poems such as these provided an anthropomorphized narrative about the eggcup, echoing earlier MOI displays like 'Off the Ration' at London Zoo, which had included poems with chickens and rabbits describing their conditions.

But as well as carrying out the COID's brief at Britain Can Make It, Black also performed a De Certeauian *perruque*—'the worker's own work disguised as work for his employer'—when he, with Austin Frazer and Bronck Katz, developed a sales pitch for DRU's own services; seizing the opportunity to further their business. They created a booklet entitled 'Industrial Design', funded by Brumwell's Advertising Services League, announcing: 'It was to bridge this gap between the manufacturer and the designer and to bring about intelligent co-operation that the Design Research Unit was formed'.⁷⁸ Britain Can Make It thereby provided a space through which the practice could be presented as aiding in that process of recovery, for the development of an increasingly confident design profession.

DRU—with Black at the helm—worked on a plethora of commissions including numerous exhibitions during the 1940s. But their next major focus was the Festival of Britain in 1951 when the practice, led by Black, was invited to design the major exhibition filling Ralph Tubbs' impressive Dome of Discovery building and the Regatta Restaurant. Meanwhile, Black also worked as joint lead architect with Hugh Casson for the South Bank Exhibition. This again placed Black within a tangle of evolving exhibitionary forms, unfolding relationships and working methods. Clifford Hatts, who worked with DRU on the Dome, later described their working practises: Black divided them into eight small teams, each taking a different focus, including teams designing displays on 'The Living World', 'Polar' and 'Outer Space'. Their work was dictated, he said, by the knowledge of a 'science convenor', Arthur Garrett, who shared his knowledge to dictate forms.⁷⁹ For Black, leading this Festival team, there was a strong reciprocity between working formations while making the displays and his work in design practice. Indeed, the Festival provided a testing ground and an opportunity for consolidating his work in practice. In a 1967 essay for Michael Middleton's book *Design in Practice*, Black wrote at some length about his, by then, four decades of experience. Significantly, he used this experience of working with DRU on major elements of the 1951 Festival of Britain exhibitions as indicative structures for collective working, which he detailed in organizational charts [7]. In charting the South Bank's design organization, for example, he showed the way in which the micro-design of each individual section, with teamwork carried out by 'theme convenor', 'architect', 'designer', 'subsection designer' and 'caption writer', had been overseen at the macro-level by the Director of Exhibitions, answering to the 'Design Group', answering to the 'Presentation Panel'. In his accompanying essay, he discussed the best ways of carrying out such work, showing that he had seen the teams that worked on the Festival of Britain as prototypes for future professional relationships.⁸⁰ For him, there was a key element which had to be present in any group design situation: shared and

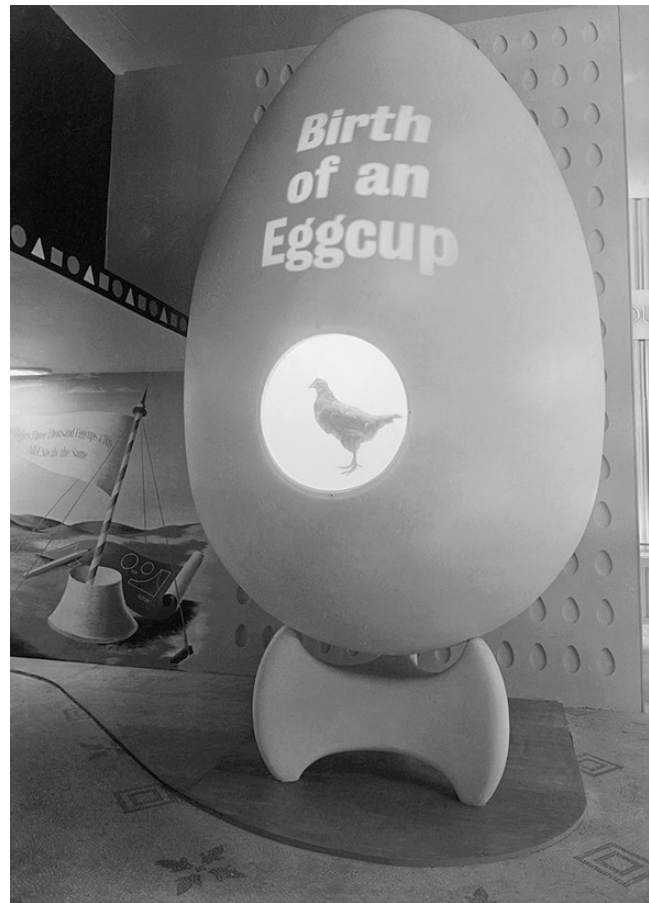
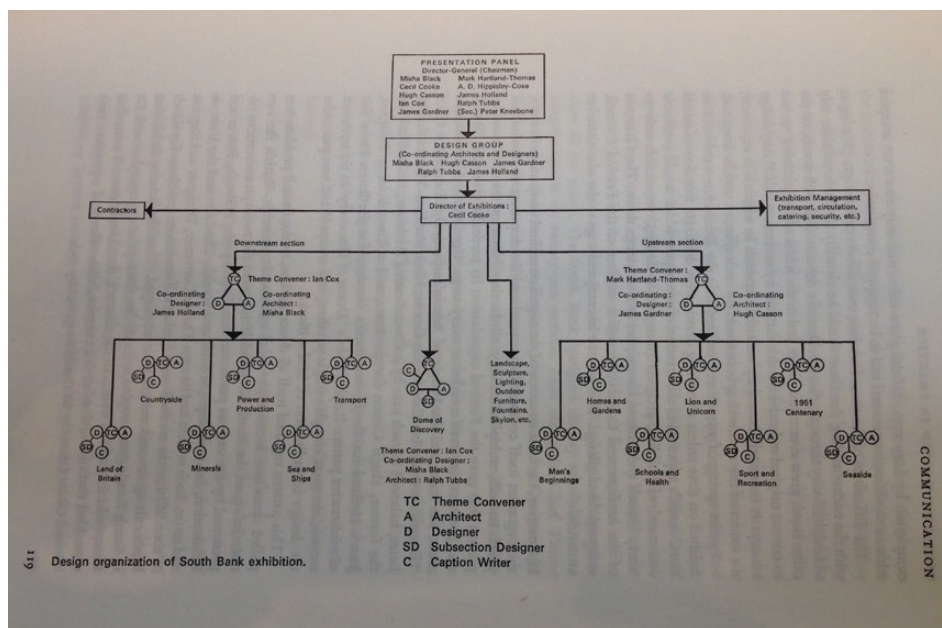


Fig 6. DRU design for Birth of an Eggcup at Britain Can Make It, V&A, 1946. Image courtesy of University of Brighton Design Archives Design Council collection.

Fig 7. Misha Black 'Design organization of South Bank Exhibition' from Michael Middleton. Reprinted from Michael Middleton, *Design in Practice*, London: The Architectural Press, 1967. Reproduced courtesy of Elsevier and the Estate of Misha Black.



distributed creative responsibility, which he considered 'the basic requirement of group organization'—the office must not, he said, 'be an association of a creative queen bee with draughtsmen executants diligently obeying the royal command'.⁸¹ In this sense, the Festival of Britain, with its central organizing structure of designers and architects, fulfilled the criteria for group design, being entirely reliant on a creative network. This idea of avoiding the 'creative queen bee' Black related to his belief in the importance of avoiding personal credit and valuing teamwork so that the contributions of all team members were valued: 'I prefer the system of individual acknowledgement under the group umbrella'.⁸²

Collaborating on major exhibitions like the Festival provided another opportunity for Black to extend his professional design networks spatially, something US designer Arthur Pulos later corroborated when he reflected on the role of Britain Can Make It and the Festival in creating global design networks.⁸³ The types of exhibition projects Black engaged with continued to be varied, but the geographies of Misha Black's exhibition engagements were expanding as he pursued his connections as distributed 'lines of flight'. From his early work on exhibitions representing Britain abroad, he continued to do work across Europe, North America and beyond: on the 1952 Colombo Plan Exhibition Black acted as consultant to the Government of Ceylon (which had gained independence from Britain four years earlier) and designed the United Kingdom Pavilion and the South East Asian Territories Pavilion. With DRU Black designed the UK Pavilion at the 1953 Rhodes Centenary Exhibition in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia (which was still at this point under British colonial rule), with interiors designed by DRU's Jock Kinneir; and the next year exhibits for the Tenth Triennale in Milan. Also, as consultant to UNESCO, Black contributed to exhibitions in Mexico in 1939 and Israel for the Conquest of the Desert exhibition in Jerusalem in 1953. With Misha Black as architect, DRU also contributed a vast exhibit on Power for Progress to the British Industry Pavilion at Brussels Expo 58, telling the story of electricity, with extensive treatment of nuclear power stations.⁸⁴

The reach of Black's design network continued to expand through the assemblage of design and cultural organizations he was involved with: he was elected Royal Designer for Industry in 1957, he was at different times President of the Society of Industrial Artists, Design and Industries Association and the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID). He spoke regularly at design conferences through ICSID and UNESCO during the 1960s. There was, again, reciprocity to this work: while furthering the design cause by arguing for its relevance and usefulness in numerous contexts Black was gaining opportunities for regular contact with designers from Europe, North American and also Asia, Africa and Central and South America, whose views and experiences shaped him and his work.

Conclusions

Black continued to write about the disciplinary distinctions between design and the field of art, engineering and science, persisting in describing himself as 'designer' and 'architect' and working in multiple contexts: in the successive design practices I have described, in the architectural practice Black Bayes and Gibson (1963–1977) and as Professor of Industrial Design Engineering at Royal College of Art (1959–1975). Black's interest in professional identities was also manifest in his active self-fashioning.⁸⁵ The carefully planned witty photographs and illustrated annual Christmas cards he designed to send widely to friends and colleagues, for example, performed a key role in developing and sustaining his extensive networks.⁸⁶ Practice photographs for Design Research Unit were also carefully constructed: one showed thirteen DRU members and associates including Milner Gray and Herbert Read all with eyes down on a chess board, with Misha Black sitting centre-stage about to play a piece, as if engaged in a group game with individual opponents unclear. This image was constructed to suggest, at its most obvious level, DRU's prowess as consummate tacticians who were able, collectively, to find solutions to a potential client's most complicated problems. But in its construction of group identity the metaphor of a chess game was even more resonant: it acknowledged an interdependent meshwork of actors, their various roles playing out in deliberations through time and across chequered space.

By the mid-1960s, Misha Black's work had largely moved away from exhibition commissions. Black's characterization of a 'small body of rather pathetic men' with uncertain professional status who he had described creating exhibitions of the 1930s, appeared an increasingly distant idea as the design profession in which he was entangled gained in confidence. In fact, despite such self-deprecating comments, exhibitions had evidently been the making of Misha Black, propelling him professionally from his early work in commercial art on to an international design stage, ever-increasing nodes in an extensive meshwork of relationships. For Black, design for exhibitions—large and small, local and international—provided entanglements that allowed him to experiment with forms and materials, bringing him into contact with a very wide range of clients across business and government. His role in designing them created models for his work in professional practice and allowed him to develop ideas about the relative merits of individual versus collective working. Black developed *tactics* for using exhibitions work to connect with other designers, allowing him to pursue particular beliefs and causes, providing him with a platform from which to show off his prowess to future clients and giving him spaces for experimentation with models in practice.

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Notes

- 1 ‘Propaganda in Three Dimensions’, in *The Black Papers on Design: Selected Writings of the Late Sir Misha Black*, ed. A. Blake. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1983, 119.
- 2 Black’s personal archive is held at the V&A’s Archives of Art & Design AAD/1980/3 and Milner Gray’s at AAD/1999/8.
- 3 M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, 30.
- 4 de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 35–7.
- 5 de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 24–5.
- 6 Misha Black’s name was changed by deed poll on 3 December 1953, V&A archive AAD/1980/3/130.
- 7 A. Blake, *Misha Black*. London: Design Council, 1984, 13.
- 8 In an essay on failure that Black wrote for the Royal College of Art’s *Ark* magazine in 1971, he recalled playfully that art was the only thing he showed any promise in at school, M. Black, ‘Misha’s Failure’, 12 January 1971 in *ARK48*, 19. His inability, he explained, to draw accurately meant early on he pursued commercial commissions for posters and exhibition stands.
- 9 T. Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. Oxon: Routledge, 2011, Part II, op. cit., 71.
- 10 Accounts of individual exhibitions are often akin to the cultural biography of a thing, for which Igor Kopytoff suggests that similar questions can be asked to human biographies, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process’, in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. A. Appadurai. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 66. For accounts of individual exhibitions in relation to the state of the nation, see, for example, J. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999, or H. Atkinson, *The Festival of Britain: A Land and its People*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2012.
- 11 For example, D. Raizman and E. Robey (eds), *Expanding Nationalisms at World’s Fairs: Identity, Diversity and Exchange, 1851–1915*. London: Routledge, 2017.
- 12 Ingold, op. cit., 63–94. The best-known model for interrogating relationships is Bruno Latour’s ‘Actor Network Theory’, which considers the relationships between human actors and non-human actors in an effort to bypass the distinction between agency and structure. B. Latour, ‘On Recalling ANT’, in *Actor Network Theory and After*, eds J. Law and J. Hassard. Malden: Blackwell, 1999. Philosopher Gilles Deleuze’s and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari’s articulation of *agencement*, commonly translated as ‘assemblage’, describes a method for analysing social complexity, while political theorist Jane Bennett’s idea of ‘vibrant matter’ shifts the focus to non-human participation in events, theorizing a ‘vital materiality’ that runs through and across bodies, both human and non-human, J. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.
- 13 Ingold, *Being Alive*, op. cit., 71. The ‘meshwork’ as well as Bennett, Deleuze and Guattari’s formulation of ‘assemblage’ are used in relation to museum collections in *Reassembling the Collection: Ethnographic Museums and Indigenous Agency* edited by R. Harrison, S. Byrne

- and A. Clarke, Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2013.
- 14 T. Ingold, 'Bringing Things to Life: Creative Entanglements in a World of Materials', a paper presented at 'Vital Signs: Researching Real Life', University of Manchester, 9 September 2008.
 - 15 Ingold, *Being Alive*, 12.
 - 16 Ingold, *Being Alive*, 83.
 - 17 Ingold, *Being Alive*, 63.
 - 18 As Misha Black's archive at V&A confirms AAD/1980/3/139.
 - 19 *Commercial Art*, vol. III, no. 13 (July 1927): XVI.
 - 20 I have not been able to find further information about Kieseewetter. Blake, *Misha Black*, op. cit., 15–16.
 - 21 Blake, *Misha Black*, op. cit., 17.
 - 22 Blake, *Misha Black*, op. cit., 17.
 - 23 The founding date is 1920 according to unpublished handwritten notes by Milner Gray, discussed in his *Early Memories of Paul Drury and the Bassett Gray Group*, 1992, referenced in M. Cotton, *Design Research Unit*. London: Koenig, 2020, 104. There are differing accounts of when Black joined Bassett Gray: A. Blake suggests it was 1933, op. cit., 17.
 - 24 Blake, op. cit., 12.
 - 25 *Shelf Appeal*, April 1934.
 - 26 Ingold, *Being Alive*, op. cit., p. 64 or what Ingold, using the metaphor of a spider's web, describes as a 'thread' through life.
 - 27 Walter Landauer, who later changed his name to Landor and founded Walter Landor & Associates in the US, had been born in Munich in 1913. He collaborated through IDP on designing the British Pavilion at the New York World's Fair 1939–1940. <https://www.aiga.org/aiga/content/inspiration/aiga-medallist/medallist-walter-landor/> (accessed 8 June 2020).
 - 28 D. Dean, *The Architect as Stand Design: Building Exhibitions 1895–1983*. London: Scolar Press, 1985, 13.
 - 29 'Shepherds, Farmers & "The County"', *Shelf Appeal*, August 1935, 13.
 - 30 *Shelf Appeal*, September 1936, 35. Black redesigned cafes for Kardomah in London and Manchester.
 - 31 *Shelf Appeal*, August 1936, 29. Misha Black's television cabinet for Ekco shown at Radiolympia in 1936 was described as 'far and away the best in its field'.
 - 32 *Shelf Appeal*, August 1936, 29.
 - 33 *Shelf Appeal*, June 1934, 462.
 - 34 'Misha Black Reports on the Brussels Exhibition', *Shelf Appeal*, July 1935, 47–50. Milner Gray's piece 'Exhibitions In or Out' in *Art & Industry*, October 1952 included many images of commissions carried out in practice by Gray, Black or their Associates.
 - 35 M. Black, *Exhibition Design*. London: Architectural Press, 1950; M. Black, *Public Interiors: An International Survey*. London: Batsford, 1960.
 - 36 Tate Gallery Archives, TGA 7043. The organization was initially known as Artists' International until 1934. Also motivated, no doubt, by shared beliefs Black designed a photomontage book cover for fellow AIA member's F.D. Klingender's 1935 study of employment *The Condition of Clerical Work in Britain*.
 - 37 R. Radford, *Art for a Purpose: The Artists' International Association 1933–1953*. Winchester: Winchester School of Art Press, 1987, 16.
 - 38 Black was elected chair at the second meeting in October 1933 according to Radford, *Art for a Purpose*, 21.
 - 39 L. Morris and R. Radford, *The Story of the Artists International Association 1933–1953*. Oxford: MOMA, 1983, 37.
 - 40 E. Darling, "'Enriching and Enlarging the Whole Sphere of Human Activities": The Work of the Voluntary Sector in Housing Reform in Inter-War Britain', in *Regenerating England*, eds C. Lawrence and A.-K. Mayer. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000, 149–178.
 - 41 Gropius moved to Britain in 1934, Moholy in 1935. Black worked alongside Gropius again in December 1936 on the 'Design in Education' exhibition, *Shelf Appeal*, January 1937, 47.
 - 42 E. Darling, "'To Induce Humanitarian Sentiments in Prurient Londoners": The Propaganda Activities of London's Voluntary Housing Associations in the Inter-war Period', *The London Journal* 27, no. 1 (2013): 58.
 - 43 E. Mumford credits Black as consultant to the exhibition in his *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928–1960*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2000, 122, while A. Blake credits him as MARS Secretary in *Misha Black*, op. cit., 23. According to John Gold around 12 of MARS's 83 members contributed, J. Gold, 'New Architecture and the Search for Modernity', in *Exhibitions and the Development of Modern Planning Culture*, eds R. Freestone and M. Amati. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014.
 - 44 'The MARS Group Exhibition: Some Considerations of Exhibition Technique', *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architecture* 150 (February 1937): 28–42.
 - 45 Mumford, op. cit., 122.
 - 46 As Henrion discussed in his interview with Richard Hollis, Imperial War Museum archive, F.H.K. Henrion Catalogue 9592/1986-11-12. <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009378> REEL 1.
 - 47 Black in 'Notes on 1951' in the Misha Black collection in AAD/1980/3/4 File 2/3.
 - 48 Black, *Exhibition Design*, op. cit., 11.

- 49 Le Corbusier, 'The MARS Group Exhibition of the Elements of Modern Architecture: A Pictorial Record', *Architectural Review* 83, no. 496 (1938): 109–116.
- 50 Black, *Exhibition Design*, op. cit., 2.
- 51 *RIBA Journal*, 24th January 1938, 23.
- 52 P. Kinchin and J. Kinchin, *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions*. Bicester: White Cockade, 1988, 129.
- 53 Blake, *Misha Black*, op. cit., 28.
- 54 Misha Black Collection, V&A AAD/ 1980/ 3/ 4, 1 of 3.
- 55 Blake, *Misha Black*, op. cit., 27.
- 56 Ingold, *Being Alive*, op. cit., 83.
- 57 Blake, *Misha Black*, op. cit., 28.
- 58 *Display*, June 1939, 109.
- 59 P. Sparke, *Consultant Design*. London: Pembridge, 1983.
- 60 In J. and A. Blake, *The Practical Idealists: Twenty-Five Years of Designing for Industry*. London: Lund Humphries, 1969.
- 61 M. Black, 'National Registration Identity Card', V&A AAD/1980/3/130.
- 62 M. Black, 'Misha's Failure', *ARK48*, op. cit., 19.
- 63 Thanks to Neal Shashore for clarifying the requirements for claiming the status of architect in the 1930s, from the first Architects Registration Act of 1931 restricting the use of the title 'Registered Architect' and amending Act of 1938, which limited this further to 'Architect'.
- 64 G. Kallmann, *Architectural Review*, October 1943, 97.
- 65 See, for example, Black's essay 'Propaganda in Three Dimensions', op. cit., 119–129.
- 66 F. MacCarthy, *All Things Bright and Beautiful: Design in Britain 1830 to Today*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1972, 142.
- 67 F.H.K. Henrion interview with R. Hollis, op. cit. Discussions about employment of Black are at National Archives, INF 1/132, Displays and Exhibitions Division, 19th December 1940. Black did not receive British citizenship until 1950.
- 68 Henrion interview with Hollis, op. cit.
- 69 Ingold, *Being Alive*, op. cit., 83.
- 70 Curator Lawrence Alloway's notion of art networks is developed in *Network: Art and the Complex Present*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984, 3.
- 71 'The Equipment of a Division', *Architectural Review*, August 1943.
- 72 A. Blake, *Milner Gray*. London: Hyperion, 1986.
- 73 Cotton, op. cit.
- 74 Blake and Blake, *The Practical Idealists*, op. cit., 24.
- 75 F. MacCarthy, op. cit., 142–143.
- 76 P. Maguire and J. Woodham (eds), *Design and Cultural Politics in Post-war Britain: The Britain Can Make It Exhibition of 1946*. London & Washington: Leicester University Press, 1997.
- 77 Misha Black, 'Design in Everyday Things', *Picture Post*, January 1945.
- 78 Cotton, op. cit.
- 79 C. Hatts, interview with the author, London, 1 April 2004.
- 80 M. Middleton, *Group Practice in Design*. London: Architectural Press, 1967, 118–119.
- 81 M. Black, 'Leadership and Rewards', Middleton, *Group Practice in Design*, 285.
- 82 Black, op. cit., 289. Indeed, the artificial process of seeking to describe Black's networks and relationships in this current article is made even more complicated by his career-long pursuit of anonymity in group work.
- 83 Arthur J. Pulos, *The American Design Adventure, 1940–1975*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1988.
- 84 Blake, *Misha Black*, op. cit.
- 85 The process of designers' self-fashioning—including Black's—is the focus of L. Armstrong, 'A New Image for a New Profession: Self-image and Representation in the Professionalization of Design in Britain, 1945–1960', *Journal of Consumer Culture* 19, no. 1 (2017): 104–124.
- 86 Hatts, op. cit.