

# Classification...

Artists and Thinkers from different generations consider why it is important to talk about class?

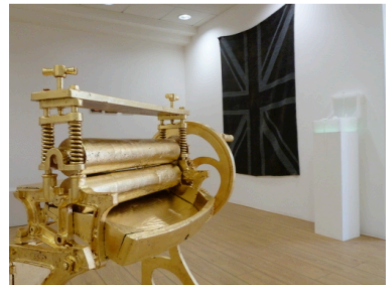
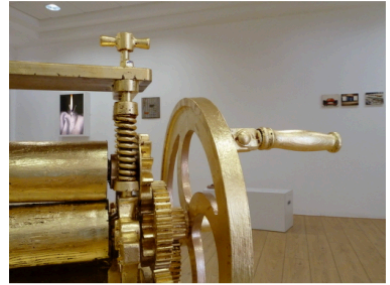
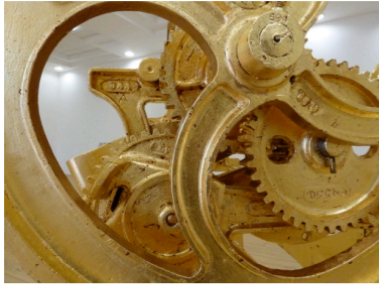
Richard Baker - George Buckfield - Kelly Cumberland - Steven Ellis - Jill Fernie-Clarke  
Sheila Gaffney - Stephen Gouldin - Maxwell Harper - Sarah Hawkins - Jade Long  
Lewis Paul - Joe Roberts - Allison Rowley - Sarah Taylor - Niall Williams Gordon

1-day symposium at Leeds College of Art  
15th July 2013. 10.30am – 3.30pm

The exhibition *Classification* is a major element of this event  
Opening Times: Monday –Friday 10:00am –4.00pm 16 July – 17 Aug 2013  
Leeds College of Art Gallery - Blenheim Walk, Leeds LS2 9AQ

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**Classification...**

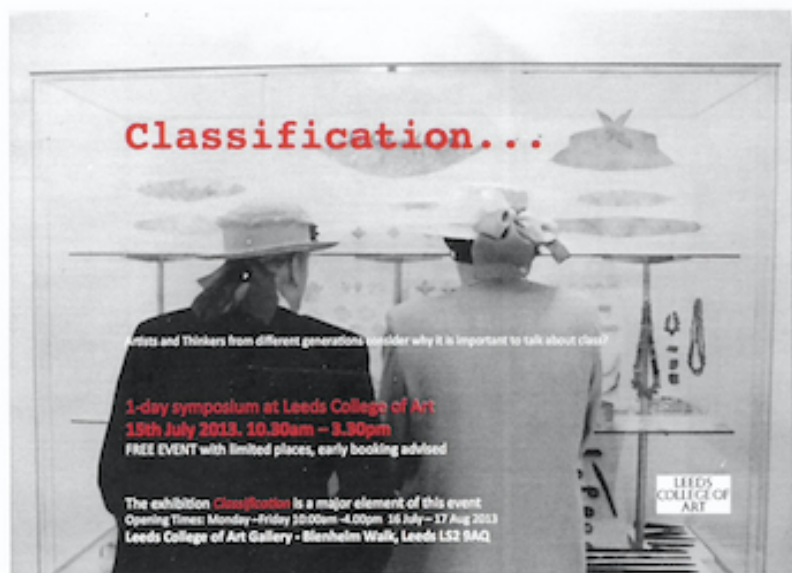
Fore-ground images: Joseph Roberts *Altar- Found Mangle, Gold Leaf (Schlag)*, 2013. The exhibition *Classification*.





### Classification...

Right to left : **Joseph Roberts** *Portrait of a Nation* Wool Army blanket, treacle, 2013  
**Jade Long**, Wax Box, Wax and ribbons, 2013.



### Classification: A one-day Symposium

Artists & Thinkers Consider the Importance of Discussing Class.

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013  
 Arrival and Refreshments: 10.00 am – 10.30 am  
 Start Time: 10.30 am  
 Lunch will be provided: 1.00 pm – 2.00 pm  
 Finish Time: 3.30 pm  
 Venue: Leeds College of Art, Boardroom am & Gallery pm  
 Event Organiser: Sarah Taylor, [sarah.taylor@leeds-art.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.taylor@leeds-art.ac.uk)

### Classification: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013 Event Schedule

#### AM session / Speakers...

10:00 am – 10:30 am	Arrival and refreshments
10:30 am	Dr Sarah Taylor (LCA) Welcome – introduction and aims.
	Key Note Speaker: Dr Alison Rowley, Reader in Cultural Theory at the University of Huddersfield. Dr Alison Rowley will present an overview of her book <i>Common Gestures, Class Acts: Studies in 'young British art'</i> , (an analysis of the return in the 1990s of neglected histories of British social and political life since 1945 in the work by artists grouped under the yBa heading). To be published by I.B.Tauris in 2014
10:40 am - 11:20 am	
11:20 am – 11:30 am	Questions arising – refreshments available
11:30am – 11:50	Dr Jill Fernie-Clarke, Head of Research at Leeds College of Art will deliver work in progress on a paper titled: <i>The Exclusive Muse and the Creative Class: Representations of the Art School as instruments of social exclusion.</i>
12:00pm – 12:20 pm	Sheila Gaffney, Head of Fine Art at Leeds College of Art will present: <i>"The changing 'class' (not classification) of sculpture"</i>
12:30pm - 12:50 pm	Dr Sarah Taylor, Leeds College of Art will present an overview of her research <i>Aspirational Beauty: Backgrounds and Backdrops the Staging of Class</i> A Case Study.
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Lunch provided. To be served in the boardroom

#### PM sessions / Artists talks...

	Meet up in Gallery, Blenheim Walk. Introduction to the exhibition and aims of artist's session, Sarah Taylor.
2:00 pm	<i>Classification</i> offers the opportunity of considering artworks as material critical practices and to consider class representations and creative endeavors that are outside of, or marginalized from, established theoretical conventions and definitions.  <b>Participating Artists:</b> Richard Baker - George Buckfield - Kelly Cumberland - Steven Ellis Sheila Gaffney - Stephen Gouldin - Maxwell Harper - Sarah Hawkins Jade Long - Lewis Paul - Joe Roberts - Sarah Taylor - Niall Williams Gordon
3:10 pm – 3:30 pm	Closing discussion
3:30 – pm - 4:00 pm	Private view/Reception at the gallery. Opportunity to make informal connections

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**Start Time:** 10.30 am

**Lunch will be provided:** 1.00 pm – 2.00 pm

**Finish Time:** 3.30 pm

**Venue:** Leeds College of Art, Board Room am & Gallery pm

Sarah Taylor, event organiser. sarah.taylor@leeds-art.ac.uk

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Classification...



**Classification: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013 Event Schedule PM sessions / Artists talks...**

2:00 pm	<p>Meet up in Gallery, Blenheim Walk. Introduction to the exhibition and aims of artist's session, <b>Sarah Taylor</b>.</p> <p><b>Classification</b> offers the opportunity of considering artworks as material critical practices and to consider class representations and creative endeavors that are outside of, or marginalized from, established theoretical conventions and definitions.</p> <p><b>Participating Artists:</b> George Buckfield - Kelly Cumberland - Steven Ellis Sheila Gaffney - Stephen Gouldin - Maxwell Harper - Sarah Hawkins Jade Long - Lewis Paul - Joe Roberts - Sarah Taylor - Niall Williams Gordon</p>
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Classification...



## **Classification: A one-day Symposium**

### Artists & Thinkers Consider the Importance of Discussing Class.

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#### **Introduction Dr Sarah Taylor.**

Welcome, many thanks to you all for participation in our day which aims to open up a discussion of why in 2013 it is important for us as creatives, artists and thinkers, to talk, think, write about and make art works around the sometimes fraught, and often complex notion of class. The exhibition in the university gallery and the symposium, share the title of *Classification*. The aim of *Classification* is to consider the relationship between class and the visual arts, exploring the relevance of class for different generations of artists & thinkers & to continue an exploration of Class in the contemporary situation.

#### **Defining Class.**

Current debates in relation to defining class claim that either it does not exist or that it is in decline and is no longer relevant. Equally convenient is the opinion that 'we are all middle class now' that has been a useful mantra of rhetoric for politicians, journalists and commentators from both the left and right of the political scale. The consequence of such a claim is that it changes how class is perceived or more accurately, covered up.

Stuart Hall (a Jamaican-British academic, writer and cultural studies pioneer, born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1932 and died in London 2014) studied the social divisions between the working classes and confirms that Britain in the 1980s, under the conservative government, witnessed acute social divisions between the working classes. Aspiration in political discourse has been instrumental in dividing the respectable working class from those of the 'underclass'. Aspiration under Thatcherism 'meant yearning for a bigger car or a bigger house'<sup>39</sup> success was measured by what an individual owned. Owen Jones the writer of *CHAVS; The Demonization of the Working Class* (2011), considers that 'aspiration is no longer about people working together to improve their communities; it [has been] redefined as getting more for yourself as an individual, regardless of the social costs'.<sup>40</sup> Jones states that not only have '[t]he working-class majority... been airbrushed out of existence'<sup>47</sup> but that what has replaced them is 'the 'chav' caricature'.<sup>48</sup> In his book *CHAVS*, Jones accounts for the shift that has occurred in obscuring the reality of the working-class majority. He considers that class hatred has become so ingrained within British culture that the perceptions of the working class have changed from 'salt of the earth to scum of the earth'.<sup>49</sup>

Beverley Skeggs is a British sociologist, noted as one of the foremost feminist sociologists in the world. She currently works as a "Distinguished Professor" in the

Sociology Department at Lancaster University, developing a Centre for Social Inequalities in the North West of England. Skeggs states that 'attributing negative value to the working class is a mechanism for attributing value to the middle-class self (such as making oneself tasteful through judging others to be tasteless)'.

The very classifications and relevance of class have been disputed over the last three decades. Writing in 1995, John Frow proposes that it is useful to think of class as a process 'played out through particular institutional forms and balances of power ... through desires, and fears, and fantasies.

As Skeggs asserts: 'Respectability is one of the most ubiquitous signifiers of class'.<sup>162</sup> What is of particular significance, in relation to respectability, is Skeggs' understanding that it is considered central to developing an appreciation of the notion of Englishness. She writes that respectability was 'a key characteristic of what it meant to belong, to be worthy and to be an individual'.<sup>163</sup> Providing a wider framework from which to consider notions of Englishness, Skeggs confers the claim made by Marilyn Strathern, a British anthropologist, who maintains: 'The first fact of English kinship is the individuality of persons'.<sup>164</sup> Skeggs' proposition is to define the social strata that could afford to be individual, she states: this individuality was only available to the genteel middle classes. They were defined against the lack of individuality of the masses. "Individuals" were the respectable, the moral, the worthy, the English, the white and the nonworking class, who could sit in judgment of others.<sup>165</sup>

*The novel Jipping Street* provides a rare expression of a young, working class woman's account that documents both her mother's life and their relationship. Woodward's mother plainly had no desire to love or mother her and their bond is written off as one of resentment. Steedman's initial reaction to Woodward's narrative was one of shock, stemming from being 'one who had never seen what she knows written down before'.<sup>201</sup> The writer and journalist Kathryn Hughes in turn acknowledges a similar reaction to first reading *Landscape for a Good Woman* exclaiming that 'if your story doesn't fit the universal formulae ... then there's something wrong not with your story, but with those who think they know what it means'.<sup>202</sup> Character was the mask that people were expected to don in the face of power, it seems more than a coincidence that from the time ... when modern criticism took shape, a "character" was a statement in which one employer described to another ... the habits and qualities of a servant.<sup>213</sup>

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. <sup>161</sup> K. Allen & J. Osgood, *Young Women Negotiating Maternal Subjectivities: The Significance of Social Class*, Birkbeck University of London, 2009, p. 7, accessed 26 April 2011, <[http://www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/back\\_issues/issue\\_two/allen-osgood.html](http://www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/back_issues/issue_two/allen-osgood.html)>. <sup>162</sup> Skeggs, op. cit., *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable*, p. 1. <sup>163</sup> Ibid. <sup>164</sup> M. Strathern, *After Nature: English Kinship in the Late Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, in B. Skeggs, *Formations of Class and Gender*, Sage Publications, London, 1997, p. 3.

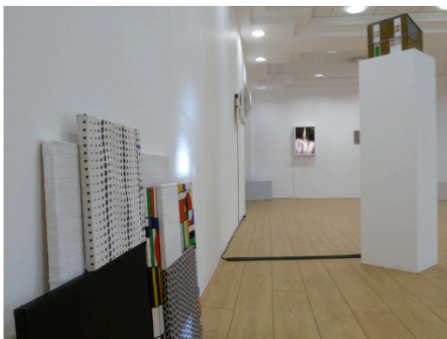
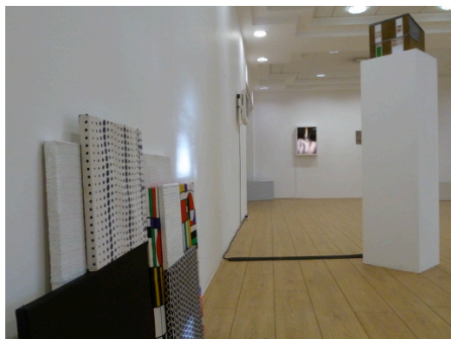
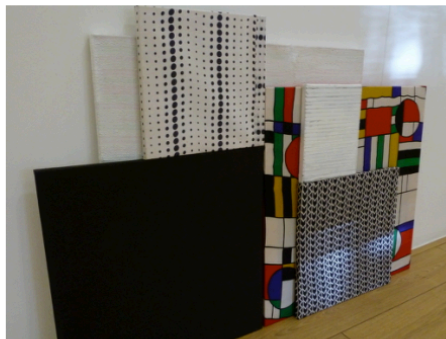
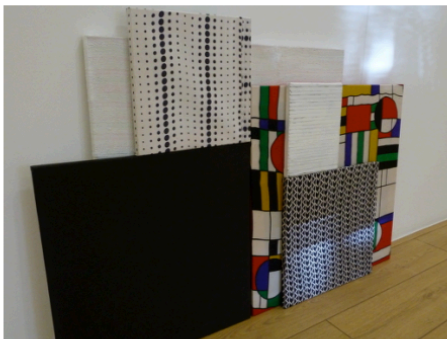


*Informal Education* is an open declaration of the satisfactions of fakery. Stacked against the wall and each other, not randomly but carefully composed, six stretchers covered variously with recycled fabric or oil on canvas form an assembly that taken together add up to a picture of art history learned piecemeal at art school and in the studio, fueled by a productive mixture of admiration and envy. Second hand silk scarves picked up here and there over the years imitate on one stretcher an early black and white Bridget Riley, on another generic, geometric modernism; a mélange of Mondrian, Vaserely, and Russian Constructivism, a reference sustained by the adjoining canvas which is a version of Malevich's *Black Square*. *Informal Education* is Taylor's interpretation of both of her inheritance and her desire as a painter, including at the level of materials - the dishcloths, silk scarves and head-squares - feminism's challenge to the exclusions of high modernism: the domestic, fashion, popular culture. *Informal Education*, however, is more than that it involves what Carolyn Steedman has described as a 'proper envy', the desire of those who possess only their labour for 'the things of the earth'.

Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives*, Virago Press, 1991, p. 7

Sarah Taylor, *Informal Education* 2011





Classification...The exhibition. Installation views





Classification...The exhibition. Installation views



Classification...The exhibition. Installation views

**Titles of work:** Clockwise from the gallery door.

1. **Niall Williams Gordon** *nothing more, nothing less.*
2. **Stephen Gouldin** *coal prints*
3. **Sarah Taylor** *Informal Education*
4. **Sarah Hawkins** *Class No Longer Exists, Card, watercolour paints, light. 27cm x 32cm x 35cm x 35cm*
5. **Lewis Paul** *Documentary Evidence (we are not your audience) (2001) 35mm film work, commissioned by Southeast Arts, UK.*
6. **Sheila Gaffney** *Micklethwaite duratrans print, 52 x 72 x 8cm 2009*
7. **Steven Ellis** *Paper Chase. Electric Bill on carpet.*
8. **Joseph Roberts** *Shits*
9. **Richard Baker**

<i>Collection Only</i>	007	Oil on Gesso panels	(Red Chair)
<i>Collection Only</i>	051	Oil on Gesso panels	(4 Chairs)
<i>Collection Only</i>	059	Oil on Gesso panels	(Sideboard)
- 10 **Joseph Roberts** *Portrait of a Nation*  
*Wool Army blanket, treacle, 2013*
- 11 **Jade Long** *Wax Box,*
- 12 **Kelly Cumberland** *Operation Gown & Superfluous, printed cotton. Odv approx. (24 x 24 cm)*
- 13 **Stephen Gouldin** *cigarette cards*
- 14 **Maxwell Harper** *Untitled* Materials: Screen Print from photograph printed on sugar paper. April 2013

## **Centre of Gallery**

- 15 **Joseph Roberts** *Altar* Found Mangle, Gold Leaf (Schlag), 2013
- 16 **George Buckfield** *Blackpool Rock* 2012

**Classification...**





### Classification...

Foreground

**Sheila Gaffney** *Micklethwaite* Duratrans print, 52 x 72 x 8cm 2009

**Steven Ellis** *Paper Chase*. Electric Bill on carpet.





## Classification...

Foreground **Sarah Hawkins**: *Class No Longer Exists Card*, water - colour paints, light. 27cm x 32cm x 35cm x 35cm



Classification...

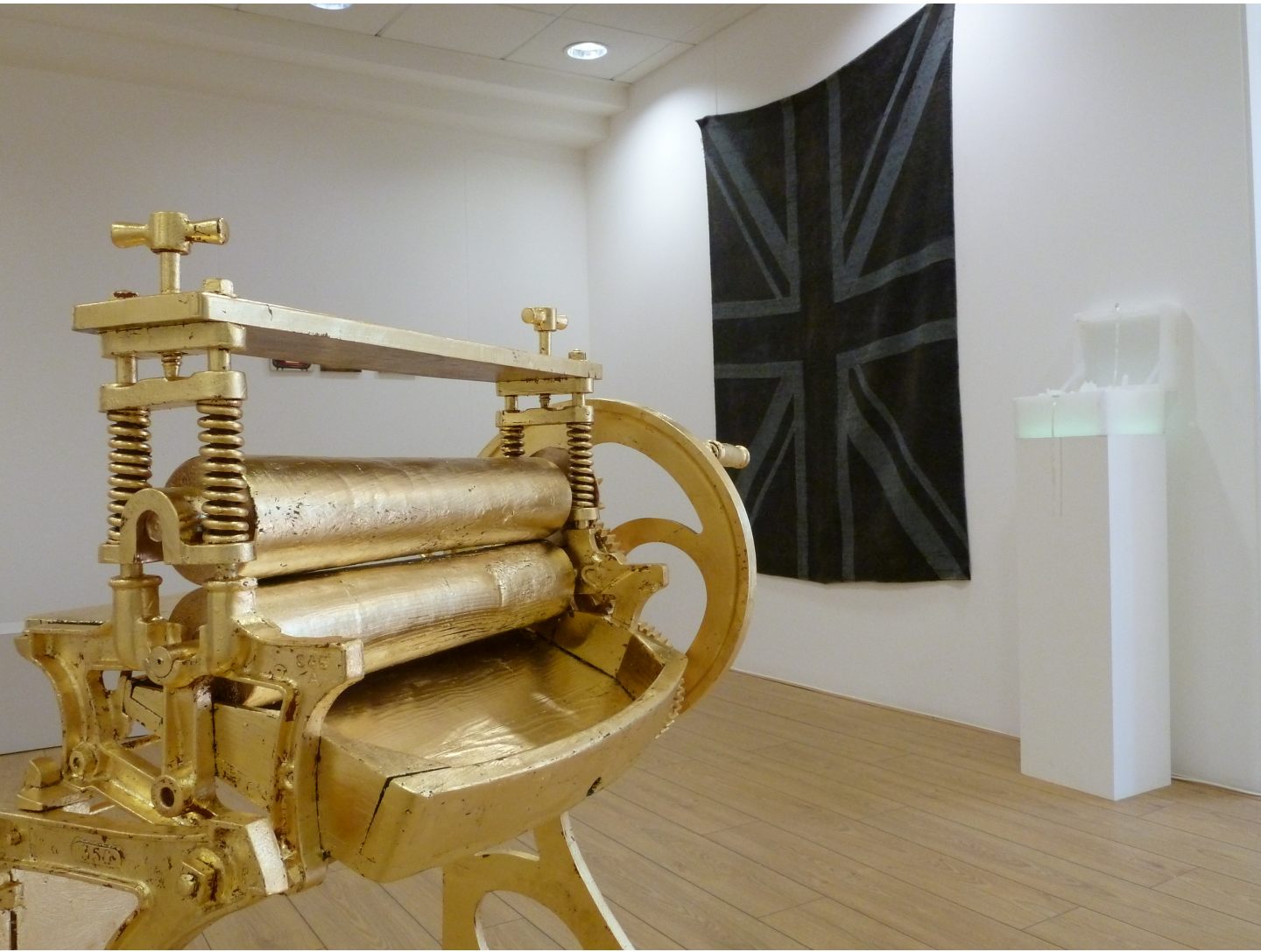
Foreground: George Buckfield *Blackpool Rock* 2012





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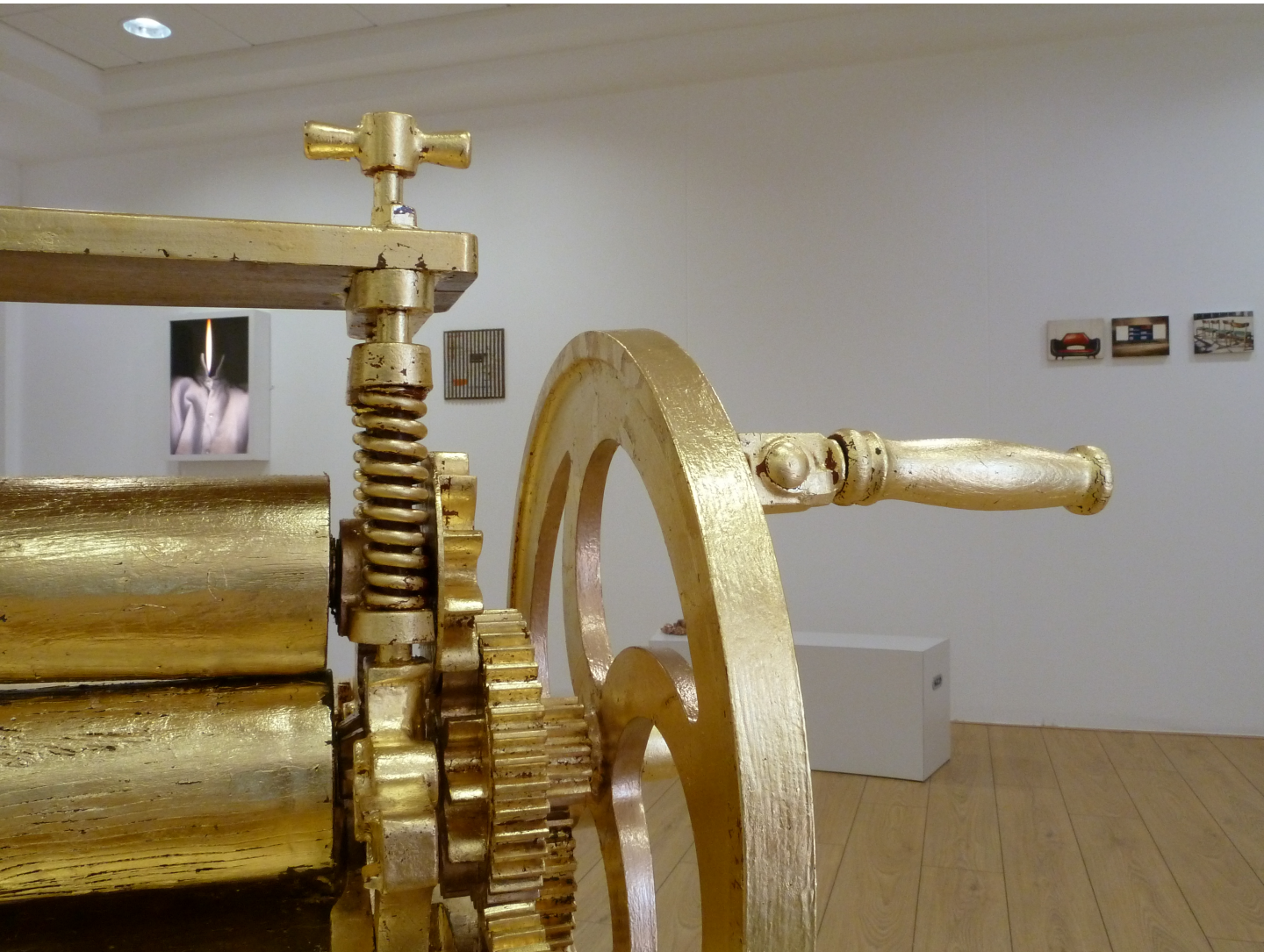
Joseph Roberts *Shits*, Bronze in foreground of *Portrait of a Nation*  
Wool Army blanket, treacle, 2013



**Classification...**

foreground **Joseph Roberts** *Altar Found Mangle, Gold Leaf (Schlag)*, 2013 *Portrait of a Nation*. Wool Army blanket, treacle, 2013  
Jade Long, *Wax Box* 2012



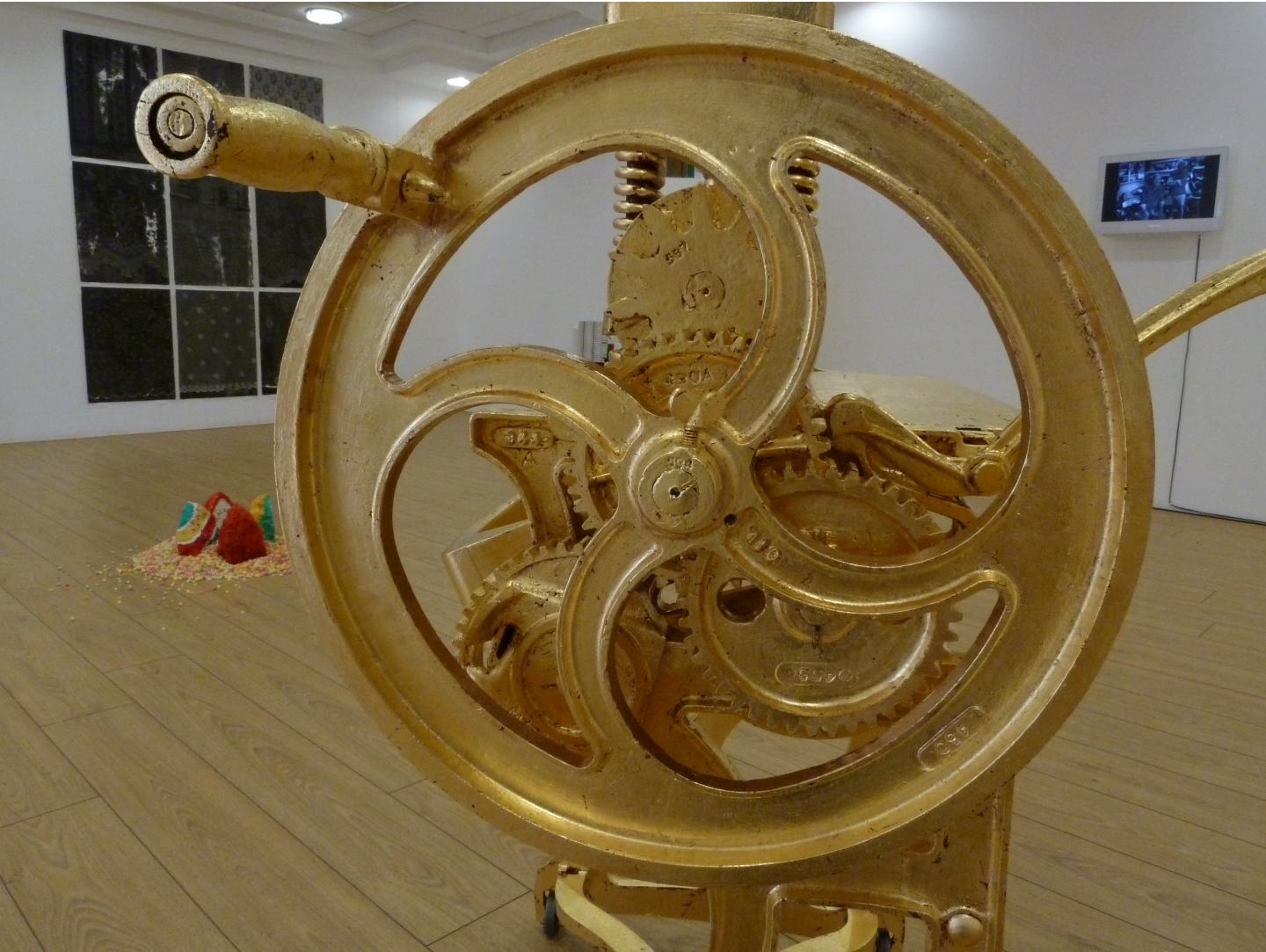


**Classification...**

*Foreground:*

Joseph Roberts, *Altar Found Mangle, Gold Leaf (Schlag)*, in the foreground. 2013





### Classification...

Left to Right :

**Stephen Gouldin** *coal prints* Coal on paper 2013

**George Buckfield** *Blackpool Rock*, 2012

Joseph Roberts, *Altar, Found Mangle, Gold Leaf (Schlag)*, 2013

**Lewis Paul** *Documentary Evidence (we are not your audience)* (2001) 35mm film work, commissioned by Southeast Arts, UK



### Classification...

Left to Right :

**Stephen Gouldin** *Coal prints* Coal on paper 2013

**Sarah Hawkins** *Class No Longer Exists, Card*, Water-colour paints, light. 27cm x 32cm x 35cm x 35cm

**Sarah Taylor** *Informal Education*. 2011

**Lewis Paul** *Documentary Evidence (we are not your audience)* (2001) 35mm film work, commissioned by Southeast Arts, UK





**Classification...**

Left to Right :

**Niall Williams Gordon** *nothing more, nothing less*. Bronze Trainer

**Stephen Gouldin** *Coal prints* Coal on paper 2013

**Sarah Taylor** *Informal Education*. 20



### Classification...

Left to right Left

**Sarah Hawkins** *Class No Longer Exists*, Card, Water-colour paints, light. 27cm x 32cm x 35cm x 35cm

**Lewis Paul** *Documentary Evidence (we are not your audience)* (2001) 35mm film work, commissioned by Southeast Arts, UK.

**Sheila Gaffney** *Micklethwaite Duratrans* print, 52 x 72 x 8cm 2009

**Steven Ellis** *Paper Chase*. Electric Bill on carpet.





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# Formations of Class & Gender

Beverly Skeggs



Class, Self, Culture  
Beverly Skeggs

ESTATES  
AN INTIMATE HISTORY  
new edition  
LYNSEY HANLEY



LANDSCAPE FOR A GOOD WOMAN



The Moral Significance of class

Andrew S.

CAROLYN STEEDMAN



An Everyday Life of the English Working Class  
Work, Self and Sociability in the Early Nineteenth Century

REALITY  
TELEVISION  
AND CLASS

Edited by Helen Wood and Beverly Skeggs

CHAVS

THE DEMONIZATION OF THE WORKING CLASS

OWEN JONES



Labours Lost  
Domestic Service and the Making of Modern England

CAROLYN STEEDMAN

CAROLYN STEEDMAN  
Past Tenses

Essays on writing, autobiography and history

The making of the English working class

"An extraordinary work of imaginative scholarship, which re-examines the period with the author's insight."

Richard G. Carr  
American Historical Review

by E.P. THOMPSON

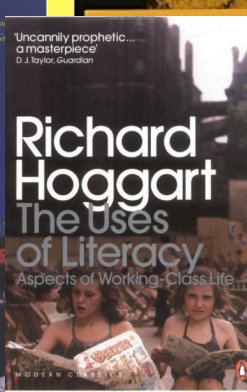
CAROLYN STEEDMAN  
Master and Servant

Love and Labour in the English Industrial Age



THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE OF THE  
British Working Class

JONATHAN ROSE



Richard Hoggart  
The Uses of Literacy  
Aspects of Working-Class Life