

# Professional Doctorate in Fine Art

## Rhythmic Abstraction and Uninhabited Space



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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a reflective report and a critical analysis of the exploration and redefinition of moving image production as an independent, fine art filmmaker. Examining key elements of filmic construction within the scope of research through practice, this study has been a re-evaluation of my own audio-visual productivity. The study has led to fresh, new pathways of creativity.

The ensuing work draws on traditional analogue film, including archival film footage as well as high-definition digital video. The report discusses each of the twenty-five films produced during that period, their chronological progression and the prime elements that shaped those films. At its core are seven specific films that were chosen for the final showcase. Beginning the Doctorate with a deconstruction of my former working methods, the report illustrates how, by combining the disciplines of research and practice, I produced and streamlined not only a new body of work, but also a fresh creative and pedagogical direction.

Continuous academic research into the theories and texts of historic and contemporary writers and practitioners, including Lefbvre, Bachelard and Bourriaud in conjunction with the production of these films, informed the subsequent audio-visual narratives and progression.

The prime elements of focused analysis are space, abstraction and rhythm which are then broken down into analytical subcategories. By employing a restricted technological means of production and postproduction, the cross-pollinated information generated with each film's combination of sonic and optical components has led to new channels of discourse.



With the application of archival found footage, I have continued to explore the re-animation of uninhabited space as well as the manipulation, reprojection and abstraction of the moving image, including new pathways in compositing imagery. Investigating the mathematical properties of rhythm has led to explorations into editing and the flow and tempo of audio-visual information, including the possibilities of remixing and regenerating existing material.

This thesis is a springboard into a fresh, dynamic filmmaking practice. It maps new creative pathways open to the independent fine art filmmaker.

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## **Dedication**

This Professional Doctorate in Fine Art report is dedicated to Trudi, my long-suffering life partner who somehow combines beauty, strength and wisdom. Also, my children Ben, Will, Scarlett, Sol, Seb & Gabe. Many thanks for your encouragement and patience during my time spent on the Doctorate.

I would also like to say thank you for your constant help and support to Dr. Michael Pinsky, Karen Rainey, Dr. Eric James Great-Rex, Dr. Jill Daniels, Dr. Lesley Logue, Dr. Debra Shaw, Professor John Smith and my friends and colleagues at the University of East London.

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## **Introduction**

My decision to study for the Professional Doctorate was a timely one: after many years of film production and teaching, both my creative and my educational output had become totally disparate and fragmented.

This academic and pragmatic reappraisal involved a deconstruction and critical interrogation of my working methods over the five years of research through practice, studying the Professional Doctorate in Fine Art. It included continuous investigation of contemporary and historical artists and theoretical analysis, and then using this methodology to analyse and inform my own work. It has resulted in a complete refocusing of my creative direction and my production skills within my professional filmmaking practice. I now incorporate the discipline and methodology of the pathways travelled within my teaching practice.

This report is a record of what I considered the essential elements of my work and an analysis of those components through the films I produced. My process of re- evaluation has included and also combined both analogue and digital methods of film production.

## 1 - Autobiographical Content

When I was nine, I received a Kodak Brownie Vecta box camera as a birthday present. It was a medium format, fixed focus camera and I was intrigued by its Kenneth Grange space-age, classic 1960s design. I enthusiastically recorded the imagery that surrounded me. This documentary process initiated the beginnings of my exploration of the frame and its contents. After high school, I was set to follow painting as an expressive medium, but I re-discovered photography in my Foundation year. When I had completed the year, my intention was to spend time travelling and building up my photographic portfolio. However, I secured employment as a musician and moved to Utrecht, Holland, where I eventually lived for four years. Much of my creative practice there was spent in recording studios, using sound as the principal creative medium. It was in this environment that I was able to explore composition, rhythm and structure, musical arrangement and sonic dynamics. There is a strong parallel between crafting film and crafting music in the way that form is constructed and in the way time and space are manipulated. I returned to England to undertake the BA (Hons) in Photography Film and Television at London College of Printing. The course focused on developing skills as an independent film and a media practitioner.



Fig 2: 'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?' 1987, 16mm, Colour, 6 mins.



After leaving L.C.P. I received my ACTT card as a Camera/Director. As well as promotional music commissions, I worked on in-house and large-scale, site-specific audio-visual productions which included cinematic and exhibition content for clients such as The Ministry of Sound. I moved on to become a producer of content and projects for the Music Video Company in West London. From there I was employed by the embryonic independent cinema organisation, City Screen, to work on programming and content.



Fig 3: 'Hung in The Playground' 4'17" 1987 Promotional music video. 8mm & Beta SP, Kasper Records.

In 2001, I moved back into academia and enrolled on the MA Film & Video Media Production degree at Christchurch, Canterbury.



Figs 4 & 5: 'Groove', 2002, Graduation Film, 16mm film, 12mins, Canterbury Christchurch College.

After completing the MA, I taught at both Central Saint Martins, on the MA Communications Design and at Poplar Sixth Form College, running the BTEC in Moving Image and heading up the Photography & Film department. This move into the academic environment was completed by joining the AVA school at UEL in 2004 to work as Programme Leader of the Moving Image and Animation pathway.

I was contracted as a 0.6 part time academic member of UEL. I formed Spontaneity as a small, limited partnership boutique production company in 2007, concentrating on developing and producing pilots for arts and music documentaries. This culminated with a commission and broadcast transmission of *'Beside Bowie – The Mick Ronson Story'* (2018).

Since 2019 I have worked as the MA Programme Leader, Acting Head of Curriculum and Link Tutor for the University of Gloucester at the Central Film School in London.

## **2 - Formal Education & Employment**

- 1975-76 Stourbridge College of Art Foundation Course
- 1977 – 81 Red Bullet/Polygram B.V. Records, Hilversum, Netherlands
- 1981-84, London College of Printing BA (Hons) Film, Photography & Television.
- 1985 -92 Freelance Camera/Editor
- 1993- 97 The Music Video Company, London SW6 4TJ, Video Producer
- 1997 -01 City Screen Ltd, London, W1D 3RY, Associate Manager, Independent film programming.

- 2001-02. Canterbury Christchurch College, MA Film & Media Production
- 2002-12. Central Saint Martin's School of Art & Design,  
Visiting Lecturer, MA Communication Design.
- 2003-07 Poplar 6<sup>th</sup> Form College, Head of BTEC Photography & Video
- 2007- 13. Spontanuity Productions Ltd., Shooters Way,  
London SE3 7AS, MD & Producer
- 2004-19 University of East London, Senior Lecturer, Programme Leader,  
BA Moving Image & Animation.
- 2019 – Central Film School, London E1 7SA, MA Programme Leader,  
LinkTutor University of Gloucester, Acting Head of Curriculum.

### **3 - Methodology**

In deconstructing my practice at the beginning of the Doctorate, I needed to construct a methodology that would allow me to analyse and explore the prime components of the moving image within my work. I wanted to form a fresh manifesto of artistic practice, the methodology of a diagnostic grid to test the strength and elasticity of an idea through the production cycle of moving image projects. The methodological grid consisted of three points of reflection:

My practical methodology was based around myself as a 'production unit', from the initial cinematography through to the edit and final film. Although not necessarily a scientific investigation requiring measured outcomes, there was a conscious decision to simplify the means of production, to give the results a greater visual and sonic clarity to the final films and subsequent reflective analysis. I decided on a limited

technical palette using limited technical resources and to work within those constraints. I work in both 16mm film and in digital HD video, using a Nikon DSLR with analogue prime lenses. I edit in Final Cut Pro 7 and Premier, both of which are digital editing programmes. Although not dependent on advanced video effects in digital post-production in crafting the aesthetic of my creative output, I decided to limit myself to the relatively simple effects filters that were included within my editing software.

My second choice of a methodological pathway was an exploration of the elements and prime components I had previously taken for granted as constituent parts of the filmic whole. These prime components included time, rhythm, the archive, appropriation, and the abstraction of the image as well as an exploration of their different combinations within the frame space. Investigating their integration into the structure and formation of the resultant moving image was essential in a stronger re-establishment of my creative film production.

The third methodological pathway I chose was the continuing investigation into specific artists and theorists and the academic frameworks that they have provided in underpinning my own creative practice through their examples and academic texts. Balancing my own filmic experimentation against the rigor of this professional field led me to renewed and continuing pathways of focused research combined with filmic practice.

## 4 – The Elemental Components

### (i) Space: The Screen and Hodological Space.

In my exploration of both physical and hodological space I include the projection screen or what Gillian Rose terms ‘the site of circulation’ or ‘the site of audiencing’ (Rose 2016:34) as an essential component in the process of audio-visual delivery. I chose the expression ‘the fluid canvas’ as a terminology that seeks to describe both the physical and perceived space that the moving image creates within the projection zone. In *‘Mapping New Media’*, Lev Manovitch states:

‘Visual culture of the modern period, from painting to cinema, is characterized by an interesting phenomenon: the existence of another virtual space, another three-dimensional world enclosed by Frame and situated inside our normal space. The frame separates two absolutely different spaces that somehow co-exist’. (2002:86)

This cinematic space is an optical artifice constructed within the frame and created by the elements of moving image within that liminal space. By reflecting on the frame as a threshold and a portal, my research sought to investigate the concept of mapping that space to underpin my redefined practice.

## Hodological Space

As a pathway of my exploration of cinematic space, I defer to the term 'hodological space'. Its linguistic origins are in Greek, 'hodos', referring to a 'pathway'. The term hodological space was first used by the American psychologist Karl Lewin as a way of describing non-Euclidean mathematical space. It is essentially a combination of both outer, topological, and geometric space that is related to an inner, psychological space journeyed by an individual or individuals.

Within the sphere of cinema and filmmaking, Tarja Laine described hodological space in the following way:

'Cinema is not some kind of objectified external universe cut off from the spectator by an impassable barrier that separates the corporeal from the intellectual or the private self from the public space. Rather, cinema is a matter of senses that emerges from a place between the inside of the self and the outside of the world'. (Laine 2006:129).

During this doctorate, I explored the concept of space in several different forms. I chose to use abandoned spaces and architectural ruins as potential tableaux: physical and metaphysical spaces in which to incorporate both imagery and sound in post-production. In doing so, I sought to discover the 'architectural uncanny', what Sigmund Freud called the '*unheimlich*'. Literally translated, it means unhomely, but '*unheimlich*' has a deeper resonance as a feeling experienced psychologically, a



combination of something that was previously concealed but then unearthed: a sensation of unease and uncanny.

My literary research began with the philosopher Henri Lefebvre's '*The Production of Space*' (1974). His writing became the initial foundation of my theoretical enquiry into the perception and mapping of space within my own work. According to Lefebvre, there are three dimensions of spatial practice: the perceived, the conceived and the lived. Although not a scientific enquiry, this report does acknowledge the effect of spatial practice in the imagery and narratives of the films produced as potential triggers within the emotional sensations and psychological interpretations of a receptive audience. As Lefebvre states in '*The Production of Space*', 'History and memory of specific place and space are bound up with the stories we are told about them' (1974:23). Indeed, 'Historical fragments and images are fused into an imaginary unity that creates the impression of a truthful history with unavoidable lessons for the present' (Schilling & Rowe:1991). To separate the physical and psychological elements of the films in this report would be pointless, as both elements are intrinsically bound. One final word on the different spaces studied in the report follows on from the idea of this duality of hodological space: it touches on the idea of cognitive mapping and the hippocampus. The hippocampus is the receptive part of the brain that retrieves memory and determines special relationships. Cognitive mapping is a mapping function of spatial environments by the human brain. In '*Memory and Space: Towards an Understanding of the Cognitive Map*', Eichenbaum and Stiller state;

'Historically, there have been two major views of the hippocampus. One view argues that the hippocampus is critical for our memory; our ability to retrieve both specific experiences and general knowledge gained from them. The other sees the hippocampus as the hub of a navigation system, supporting the brain's capacity to calculate routes for traversing physical space'. (2015: 143).

I must therefore acknowledge an awareness of the hippocampus and cognitive mapping as another determining, (although not necessarily investigated empirically during this report), spatial factor in my practice and research. Not only during the doctorate, but as a continuous research process.

I initiated my theoretical research starting with three artists who, in each of their own creative spheres, explore their individual concepts and practice of spatial relationships. I will discuss Janet Cardiff, Mathew Barney and Peter Greenaway in Chapter Two.

## (ii) The Archive

I decided to employ a limited technical palette at the beginning of my Professional Doctorate. This also applied to my choice of filmic material and subject matter. I had previously been working with found footage for some time. It was a readily available source of moving images which, in considering my time and budgetary restraints, was an ideal source material with which I could experiment.

Through both my artistic and my professional practice, I have accumulated a considerable archive of previously used and discarded analogue film. The source may have been purchased from the internet or it may be a plastic bag of spooled films bought in a street market. I take these films into a 16mm or 8mm film facility, clean and splice them, telecine (re-film) them and convert them into digital files that I can then work with in post-production. By exploring the filmic potential of this archive through this doctorate, I have pursued informed aesthetic and narrative possibilities either by abstracting the imagery or by relocating them within new contexts.

### (iii) The Abstracted Image

The optical realities of film can be changed, stretched, warped, and distorted by digitally manipulating the original source: remade and remodeled by abstracting the visual elements of the moving image. The image and its original structure can be modified and restructured.

Throughout my work as a musician within musical composition and production, I was engaged in the art of the remix. This is where an existing piece of music is stripped down and reconstructed into a new form but still embodies the elements of the original composition. In exploring the narrative potential of the archive and appropriated imagery, I was drawn to the visual possibilities of changing the shape and texture of the moving images by means of digital manipulation. This new pathway of abstracting imagery has become central in the redevelopment of my artistic practice.

‘Postproduction artists invent new uses for works, including audio or visual forms for the past, within their own constructions. But they also re-edit historical or ideological narratives, inserting elements that compose them into alternative scenarios. (Bourriaud, 2007: p45).

#### (iv) Rhythm/Time/Movement

Underpinning the creative output of the films produced was an exploration of three major elements that would shape and affect the resultant films: the combinations of rhythm, time and movement. In film production, all three elements are interwoven with each other. Screen time can be expanded or compressed, movement can exist within the frame of a fixed camera or movement can be introduced physically into the production process. Rhythm can influence the motion, the structure and the frequency of image accumulation and processing through pace and editing. It is something inseparable from an understanding of time and in particular, mathematical repetition. ‘Rhythm may also refer to a visual presentation as timed movement through space’ (Jirusek 1995: p167). There is an absolute relationship between the rhythmic binding of space and time in film production.

I explore these shared relationships and their variations. I investigate how modifying the quantities and distribution of these elements can affect the subsequent moving images; specifically, how

experimenting with the techniques of filming and editing can alter and craft a film's narrative and its reception within the screening space. The objective of this exploration was how creative intervention and modification of these components could affect the delivery of sonic and visual information.

## Chapter 1: Creative Practice and Theory

### 1: Researching the Initial Three Artists

I chose to research three artists at the start of the Doctorate: Janet Cardiff (1957-) Mathew Barney (1967 -) and Peter Greenaway (1942 - ). All three work in moving image. My initial attraction was each artist's interpretation of the medium, specifically their individual and unique explorations of cinematic space.

#### Janet Cardiff – Re-imagined Space

Janet Cardiff is a Canadian artist who works in both sound and vision, often in conjunction with her partner, George Bures Miller. These take the form of audio installations, short films and walk pieces. She was born in Brussels, Ontario in 1957.



Figs 6 & 7: 'The Muriel Lake Incident' 1999 (in collaboration with George Burres Miller)

*The Muriel Lake Incident* (1999) is an audio-visual installation produced as a collaboration between Cardiff and Miller. It is essentially an immersive miniature cinema. The viewer receives audio information



through headphones and visuals by viewing the screen through the viewing slit on the front of the installation. The narrative that unfolds is a murder mystery film-noir B movie set in Midwest America. As the on-screen film plays, the viewer gradually becomes involved in the plot and action. Cardiff, who plays the film's femme fatale whispers conspiratorially in the viewers earphones, whilst there is a gunshot and a murder seems to have taken place within the theatre.

Through her work combining different strata and sub-strata of both the aural and the visual, Cardiff gradually evokes a dislocated perception of space. She invades the listener's psyche and enters the dark unexplored spaces within the labyrinth of the sub conscious, the grey area that lies just beneath the surface of the everyday experience. It is this combination of elements, especially in her choice of the sonic components, that undermine the viewers' experience of their immediate space.

In his book *'The Poetics of Space'*, Gaston Bachelard analyses the psychological, spiritual and philosophical aspects of space. He divides his observations into the micro and macro, house and universe, nests, huts and shells. exploring both the differences and significances between these spaces. For Bachelard, human presence and interaction is what animates each type of space. In the introduction to the 1994 edition, Editor John R Stilgoe states that;

'Bachelard reveals time after time that setting is more than scene in works of art, that it is often the armature around which the work revolves. He elevates setting to its rightful place alongside character and plot and offers a new angle of vision that reshapes any understanding of great paintings and novels and folktales too.' (Stilgoe, 1994: (x)).

Janet Cardiff becomes the spectre, the shade, the chameleon, the spider woman of Film Noir B Movies, the voice of the temptress. By speaking directly to the individual she purposely crosses the fourth wall of theatre and cinema. This ever-shifting subjective focus on the isolated individual creates a special new sonic and temporal environment. Brandon LaBelle concludes;

'Cardiff's play relies on the head-ponic, as a psychological opportunity to literally split the listening body: to create an envelope in which to unhinge time and place, dislocate one's bearings.' (2006: p23).

If this is the effect of her creative output, then her exploration of the non-visual and essentially invisible makes her truly interactive with her audience. By experimenting with the space that the work has been created for, whether it is the forest environment of Louisiana or one of the gallery-based projects, the listener automatically participates in a discernible split of the perceived and the temporal.

Cardiff also retains an unpolished rural edge in her work. She works with materials straight from the lumber mills of her Canadian childhood; the unpainted boxwood of her *'Playhouse'* (1997) and *'The Paradise Institute'* (2001) installations. The woodland audio walks of *'Drogan's Nightmare'* (1998) reveal a rustic formality and stripped-down qualities of her early years: the walk in the woods, the country retreat. The old detective radio plays, small town single screen cinemas, the continual pull of town versus country; all are conjured up within the space Cardiff constructs by combining the twin palettes of sound and vision.



Figs 8 & 9, *'The Missing Voice' (Case Study B)* 1999

In 1999 Janet Cardiff created a unique and site-specific walk using the library and art gallery in Whitechapel, East London as the starting point. Along the route, in which the listener walks the streets of the East End, a mystery unfolds: a missing woman, an investigator, a stranger confiding in the listener. Again, there is the split between the world of the narrator and the 'real' world, the slippage in time and events.

The environment in which the walks take place is much more than a narrative setting. They are not passive sets, but constantly transforming social, architectural and

commercial organisms. As the listener navigates the fictionalized version of the environment as presented in the audio, one is simultaneously navigating the factual physicality of the actual locale'. (Kim-Cohen 2009: p23)

The walk and narration also contain echoes of the Whitechapel murders of Jack the Ripper that took place in the same area over a hundred years earlier. The walks themselves wander across the borders and into the land of the psychogeography: Guy De Bord defines this as 'The study of specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals' (The London Review of Books, 2002, p24-28).

My analytical interest in Janet Cardiff lies in the re-contextualization of perception through her use of audio within both a gallery and cinematic environment but also through stepping outside those enclosed environments into the world at large. Through the development of narrative and how that narrative is delivered, the participatory audience is immersed within the work. The instinctive processing of audio-visual information that is received on a constant basis becomes confused with attempting to analyse what is 'real' and which information is being superimposed by the artist. This becomes an on-going paradox which creates a total reconfiguration of the given, and, in doing so, brings forward the second, and equally important interest in Cardiff: *the re configuration of space*.

## Mathew Barney – Combining Space, Scale and Ambition

Mathew Barney is an American multi-disciplinary artist who works within the medium of film but often as a way of framing the other mediums of creative expression he employs that range from drawing, through dance to sculpture, frequently staged on a spectacular scale. Barney's filmic output is of a performative nature; he appears in and performs in a variety of guises and characters, often in arcane costumes and prosthetics. Throughout his work there is the strong seam of creative attainment. His agent, Barbara Gladstone said: 'Mathew Barney uses photography, film & sculpture as states of the same piece' (Gladstone:2004).

Barney embarked on what became a series of films under the banner of the Cremaster. Cremaster One through to Five enjoy the full Barney spectrum of narrative: scale, imagery, costume, characters and self-originated mythology. Cremaster itself is the muscle that controls the ascent and descent of the testicles and the symbolism within each film is, for Barney, representational of the act of production and reproduction, both artistically and biologically. The series has never enjoyed a theatrical release but has been limited to occasional screenings and the limited edition twenty box set sold to collectors for \$100,000 per film.

Cremaster One (see figs. 10 & 11) is set on the blue Astroturf of the Bronco Football Stadium. It is a colour coded spectacular, with direct allusions to the extravagant choreography and camp aesthetics of

Hollywood and Busby Berkeley. *Cremaster Three* is set in the Guggenheim Museum. A desecration/celebration of the museum space with Vaseline and a thrash metal battle of the bands intercut with Barney climbing the inner spirals of the staircase from the outside whilst beset with assaults and traps. He has to solve a puzzle plus an attack of a feline, leopard-like creature played by the model and amputee athlete, Aimee Mullind. It also features sculptor Richard Serra. It is again a fetishistic display of not only being restrained by the physical encounters in the film, but also of arcane imagery interlaced with high production values.



Figs 10 & 11: '*Cremaster One*' (1995)

The costume, lighting, production design, prosthetics, the visual effects are all strong and lavish. Barney spreads out a feast of imagery. The focus is on the corporeal. The artist inhabits his own canvas, laying himself out on a conveyor belt of imagery previously inhabited by Jeff Koons. There is also a direct line to Guy De Bord within this audio/visual tapestry of Barney's:

In societies dominated by modern conditions of production, life is presented by an immense accumulation of spectacles. It is not a mere decoration added to the real world. It is the very heart of this society's un-reality.' (De Bord 1967, 2009: p3).



Figs 12 & 13: 'Cremaster Three' (1999)

Jean Baudrillard ascribes the idea of contemporary myth or new mythology to the rise of the consumer society. The Classical mythology of the pre-Christian world that Barney draws many of his images from what has been transformed by systems of production and conspicuous consumption.

'The historic emergence of the myth of consumption in the twentieth century is radically different from the emergence of the technical concept in economic thinking or science where it was employed much earlier. That terminological systemization for everyday use changes history itself: it is the sign of a new social reality'. (Baudrillard 1997:73).

My analytical interest in Mathew Barney lies within his grand ambitions in his use of space and scale, his appropriation and re invention of what is essentially a New World Mythology, the lavish, unbound material consumption and his bold approach to the image.

#### Peter Greenaway – The Frame

Peter Greenaway was born in Newport, Wales in 1942. He trained in both painting and film and went on to work at The Central Office of Information for fifteen years as an editor and director.

His early short films include *'H is for House'* (1973), *'Water Wickets'* (1990), *'A Walk Through H'* (1978) and *'Dear Phone'* (1976). His feature length films include *'The Draughtsman's Contract'* (1982), *'A Zed & Two Noughts'* (1985), *'Prospero's Book's'* (1991). His television commissions include *'Dante's Inferno'* (1990) and *'A Walk Through Prospero's Library'* (1992). He has also exhibited and curated exhibitions that include *'100 Objects to Represent The World'*, AFA, Vienna and *'Sex and the Sea'* at the Maritiem Museum in Rotterdam.



Figs 14 & 15: *'The Draughtsman's Contract'*, 1982, BFI/Great Britain



In Greenaway's early films lay the foundations, not only in terms of his style, but also of the codes and motifs that would repeat and re-occur throughout his work. His initial art school training as a painter allows these visual themes and processes to filter through into his filmic output.

*"H is For House"* (1971) is set in and around Greenaway's family holiday house in Wiltshire. It records the nineteenth century house and its environment through a long lens, giving intimacy and colour into a frame that links family life with a voice over from Greenaway's daughter. The spoken word lists words beginning with the letter 'H' over images of calligraphy, compositions of washing lines, ladders and axes, and the idyll of the rustic country retreat. This marks the beginning of Greenaway's recurring images and leitmotifs.; lists, maps, puzzles, drawing and painting.



Fig 16: Still from *'Nightwatching'* 2007, Content Films, Netherlands/Germany/UK

Greenaway's film *'Nightwatching'* (2007), is set in seventeenth century Holland and is Greenway's reading of Rembrandt's commission

and painting of 'The Nightwatch' (1642). The combinations of the cinematography, mise en scène and lighting design are rich and painterly. Greenaway assaults the audience with all elements of modern cinema (the film is shot in a high-resolution digital medium) but presented as theatre.

My analytical interest in Peter Greenaway lies in his evocation of the labyrinth and the arcane within the confines of the frame space. That frame space is also a stage. The painterly selection of imagery is embedded in Greenway's application of both the light and colour that he introduces into that space.

## 2: Genealogy – my filmic pathway into the Doctorate

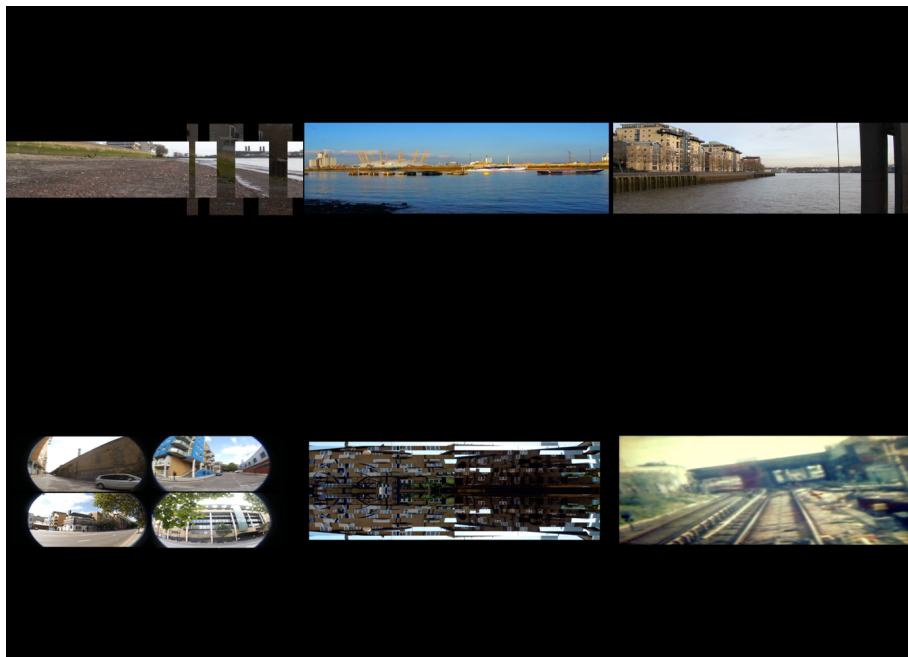
When I began studying for the Professional Doctorate in Fine Art at the University of London, I had two major projects in development that would form the structural pathways of my research and development over the course:

### 2(a) Scars on The Landscape

The first project was entitled '*Scars on The Landscape*' (2014-18). It was a mapping project based on the Ordinance Survey Maps produced by the then London County Council in 1946. These maps illustrate the collateral damage caused by six years of arial bombing to the capital and were intended as an architectural and planning guide for the re-building of post war London. The project focuses specifically on the impact sites of the V1 flying bombs and V2 long range rockets fired at London during the last year of the Second World War, specifically those missiles that landed

within the boroughs of Stepney, Bethnal Green, Poplar and the Isle of Dogs. These boroughs are now grouped together as the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The project involved documenting each of the ninety impact sites shown on those maps using digital cinematography. The project mapped how those spaces had been reconfigured after seventy years of urban reclamation and whether there were still visible signs or 'scars' within that landscape.

I lived in the borough of Tower Hamlets and was witnessing a major change in the demographic, financial and architectural structure of the borough. I wanted to explore each of the historic impact sites as separate, spatial zones that were linked to each other by virtue of a shared moment of random destruction. I was interested in discovering whether these spaces still resonated with any sort of discernable acknowledgement of their own violent past, through the new structures and architectural redevelopments in the intervening years.



Figs 17 & 18: 'Scars on the Landscape', 2014-2018, *Digital HD, Super 8* 30'08.

The project was principally a spatial mapping project. The Rachael Whitread sculpture 'House' (1992/3) had been constructed directly opposite my house in Grove Road, Bow, as we moved in during 1992. The house, or rather its resultant internal mould, addressed questions of domestic and social space. I was drawn to the idea of a site-specific statement of both an unknown space and a modern ruin (the sculpture was demolished after eleven weeks). There is also a blue plaque on the railway bridge further along Grove Road marking the first impact strike of a V1 flying bomb in 1944. In geographical terms, this initialized and contextualized my project.



Fig 19: 'House, Grove Road E3', Whitread, R., 1992-3

My historical research involved working with agencies outside of UEL. Firstly, in examining historical and geographical records through the Tower Hamlets Borough records department and then at The London

Metropolitan Archive in Clerkenwell. It involved historical research at the Imperial War Museum Archives, viewing the London Fire Brigade films shot during the flying bomb and rocket campaigns and captured Nazi filmed documentation of the weapons' development and tests.

With the aid of the contemporary maps from the LVA and Google Maps I began the investigative research into finding and documenting each space. The sites were all originally hand drawn and coloured (fig 20). The impact zones were indicated by circles which corresponded to the areas of destruction that denoted the blast zone. There was also, equally importantly, the decisions of how I would record each site through a filmic medium and then how to sympathetically edit the results. I decided to use a rotating head on which to mount my camera, a device that fits on top of a camera tripod. It gives a continuous 360-degree circular pan of any location. This technique was intended to replicate the location of the blast zone on relation to its epicenter. There was a total of 90 separate impact zones that existed across the borough, all of which would require different documentation and editing solutions. I pieced together the maps I had photocopied from LMA and placed them on the wall of my workspace.



*Fig 20: LCC map showing V1 & V2 impact zones in Stepney, London E1*

Recording all ninety sites entailed establishing a production methodology that combined disciplined cinematography with investigative research. This was not intended as a conventional narrative film, but essentially a formal documentation of each zone. The final footage would be an edited combination of 90 short films, each just over 1 minute long. The timings were a direct result of the rotating tripod head taking just over a minute to complete its 360-degree uninterrupted pan at 25 frames per second.

The diagnostic grid I imposed on this project was a simple, formalistic documentary approach in terms of the filming and editing. I soon discovered that each site had its own special characteristics and unique identity due to diverse factors of place, community, physicality and environment. A secondary layer of weather conditions, time of day, time of year and quality of light all affected my approach to filming. I wanted to 'depopulate' my zones into uninhabited spaces and spent time choosing moments that would eliminate human presence. I shot much of the summer footage during the festival of Eid when the Islamic community of Tower Hamlets was fasting and often absent during the day. The filmed documentation focused on each site's environmental space, not any contemporary inhabitants. I chose to document specific sites at certain times to achieve desired effects, such as early morning Winter frosts or April evenings as the sun set, the filmic Golden Hour.



*Figure 21: Saint Clemens hospital, prior to gentrification, showing the remains of the destroyed west wing.*

Once the footage was uploaded into the edit suite, each individual site was edited and manipulated into its own unique graphic visual identity. The amount of screen time for filming each site was initially one minute. The edited one-minute filmed sites are assembled in screen clusters of three for a single screen exhibition. There are ninety sites, and the film runs for thirty minutes. The volume of impact zones meant the process of recording and editing each site as a stand-alone film entailed a continuous line of production. This rapid turnover led to a sharpening of cinematographic skills and decision making but also to a fresher and more informed approach to the subsequent imagery. Rather than remain with a recorded document of the site, I began to explore the possibilities of abstracting the imagery within the edit, so that each individual space finally had its own unique visual identity.

I arrived at many of the sites as they were undergoing significant transformation by way of property development and housing initiatives. In some cases, such as Bradwell Street in Mile End, the site changed



dramatically over a period of two years; the original garages that had been filmed in both rain and snow were demolished and replaced by a new, rapidly expanding, social housing complex. Sites that were situated besides the Thames required solutions that relied on the tides and access to the river and its shoreline.



*Figs 22: 'Relationships' & 'Illuminations', The Boyle Family*

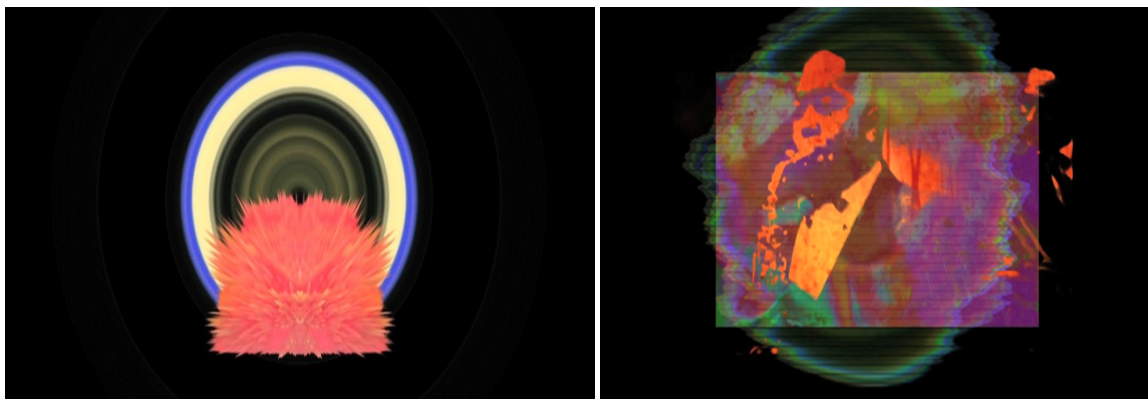
My historical research centered on the urban archaeology and the random nature of these spaces. My visual research was informed in part by the work of the Boyle Family, a collective, whose work involves randomly selecting and recording sites and subsequently reproducing them exactly, to scale, using resin casts and natural material from the actual sites. They re-interpret these everyday environments within a gallery context, but whatever the intentions for an exact and pure replication, there is often an unintended intervention and artistic subjectivity that is embedded within re interpretation.

'If space is produced, if there is a productive process, we are dealing with history. Social space, which is at first biomorphic and anthropological, tends to transcend this immediacy. Nothing disappears completely, however; nor can what subsists be defined solely in terms of traces, memories or relics. In space, what came earlier underpins



what follows' (Lefebvre 1974: p73)

## 2(b): 'My Top 10/Desert Island Digits'



Figs: 23 & 24: "Spark", 'Squint', 2014, 10 x digitally manipulated 16mm films

*'Desert Island Digits'* was the second research and development project that I took forward into the Doctorate. It was a project that used archival found footage as its visual source.

In 2014 I produced a series of short experimental films, initiated by hand painting onto clear 16mm film stock and then manipulating the transferred results digitally. Following on from those tests, I produced a series of eleven short films, using and then digitally abstracting found footage. Each film incorporated a unique, self-produced musical soundtrack. I experimented and tested different combinations of digital video filters in the edit and different modes of applying them. The soundtracks were the result of a collection of musical samples that I had taken from existing recordings and then mixed together in a 'mash up' or blend of sampled music that interact musically and rhythmically through the edit with the imagery. My self-imposed stipulation was that all films had to have a running time that was the equivalent of a 45-rpm vinyl

single, a medium that was designed to deliver a particular song of around three to four minutes in length. The results were *'My Top Ten / Desert Island Digits'*, a title taken and modified from the long running BBC Radio Four series *'Desert Island Discs'*, a program where celebrities choose their ten favourite songs that they would take if they were cast away on a desert island. I originally wanted to screen the short films as a gallery installation. The installation would involve using a projection screen or screens connected to a 'juke box' with a selection pad. An audience could then select whichever film option they chose to watch and listen to. The video juke box is still waiting for funds, but the films have since been projected in both gallery space and in clubs.

These films became the initial cornerstones of my research through practice and the practice of combining archival and documental film with experimental image manipulation. As my practice has expanded, I have continued to develop and produce more abstracted and manipulated moving images. These have expanded on the differing combinations of visual impact within the frame or screen space, combined with differing degrees of the elements I chose to explore in the doctorate; namely, time, movement, colour and rhythm.

## Chapter 2 – The Final Doctoral Exhibition

The showcase for the graduating year of the Professional Doctorate in Fine Art was held in June 2019 in the Architecture and Visual Arts building at the Docklands campus of the University of East London. I selected a large space within the faculty that was used for lectures, workshops and exhibitions. The task at hand was to transform this space into a conducive viewing environment for a representative selection of the films produced during the five years of the course. The space was a basic structure consisting of industrial breeze block walls, a high ceiling, and a smooth and polished concrete floor.



Figures 25 – 27: The initial installation space for the Final Doctoral Exhibition

Initially, I had originally planned a viewing area based on individual monitors that subdivided the viewing space into small booths. However, I eventually decided to design a bolder cinematic space that was a more immersive and visually stronger viewing experience. This would display my work in a more expansive, publicly accessible and traditional cinematic space. Based on the number of films and their running times, I decided to divide the space into two interlinked viewing theatres, each accommodating a large screen, seats and projection facilities. After

investing time in creating each film, the tonal quality and luminosity of the projected films was of prime importance. After researching the optimal screen colour, I decided on a grey toned screen to give the correct chromatic rendition (fig.30). For each theatre, the screens were painted directly onto the wall employing a screen ratio of 16:9, the optical format most of the films had been captured in. Sound pollution from both screens was a potential problem as the two spaces were not sonically independent, having a dividing wall that only reached half-way to the ceiling. The solution was to set up one screen with an amplifier and stereophonic speakers and install the second screen with headphones for the audience (which swiftly disappeared during the exhibition). The acoustic reverberation caused because of the building materials was partially solved by installing an absorbent carpet for the entire floor area and constructing a false padded ceiling above the main screen and speakers.



Figures 28 & 29: Screens 1 & 2

Two large, separate screens offered an opportunity to exhibit a chronological selection of films within a more spectacular context. The resultant choices would demonstrate firstly, the elements and subject

matter of the filmic mediums I had explored and secondly, the selection chosen would illustrate the progression of my creative pathway through the doctorate.



Fig 30: Samuelson's Greyscale guide for best projection screen reflective tone.



Figure 31, The viewing areas of screens 1 & 2

### **Choice of FilmsScreen 1**

1. 'When Gene Krupa Met Raoul Vaneigem'
2. 'Keep the Homefires Burning'
3. 'Home Movie'

<https://youtu.be/3AI97YWiWmY>

(internet link to Screen One film programme 21'19")

### **Screen 2**

1. "An East End Soap Opera in Three Reasonably Distinct Acts"
2. 'Big Al's Supercollider'
3. 'Spacer or the Dream Life of Debris'
4. 'The Shipping Forecast'

<https://youtu.be/dyNTQ447Yvo>

(internet link to Screen Two film programme 29'08")

Screen One: Film One – ‘When Raoul Vaneigem Met Gene Krupa’

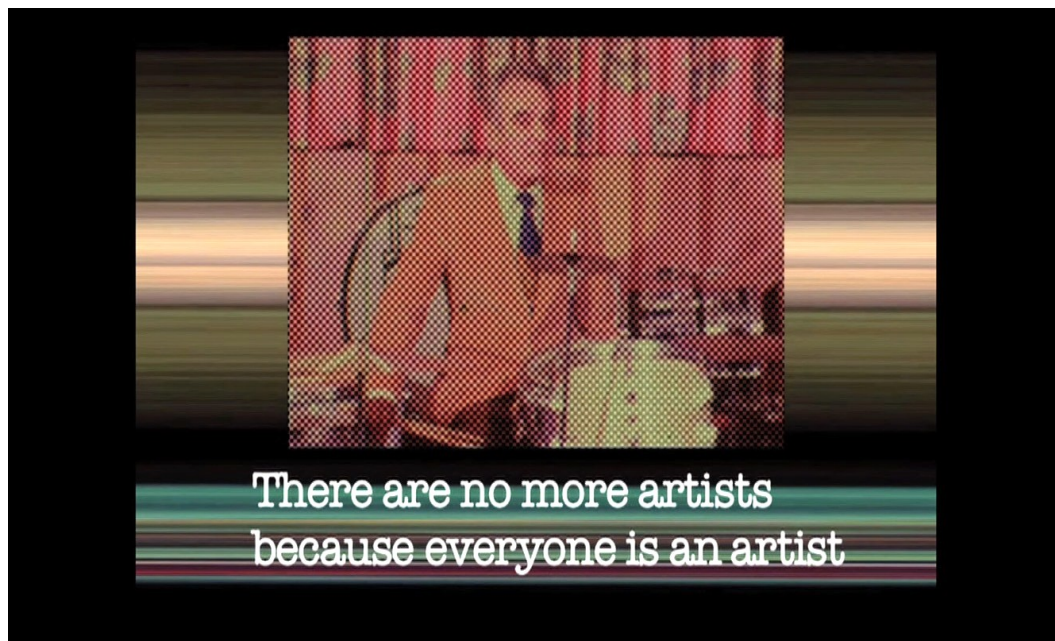


Fig 32: ‘When Raoul Vaneigem Met Gene Krupa’, 1’50”, 2014, super 8 film, found footage, text, sound.

‘When Raoul Vaneigem Met Gene Krupa’ (2014) has a traveling film background that comprises of four interlinked segments of Super 8 Ektachrome 64 film, all digitally manipulated footage shot from a moving car window. The dominant screen image is archival found footage of American bandleader and inspirational percussionist Gene Krupa (1) addressing an audience. I wrote the soundtrack using Apple’s Garageband software and the typed quotation that appears on screen is taken from Raoul Vaneigem’s book ‘*The Revolution of Everyday Life*’:

*‘There are no more artists because everyone is an artist.*

*In this way, the old specialisms of art have come to an end.*

*What makes an artist is his or her state of creativity, not art galleries. The work of art in the future will be the construction of a passionate life. People who talk about*

*revolution and class struggle without reference explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints, such people have a corpse in their mouth'*  
(Vaneigem 1967: p43).

In his essay '*Between Canvas and Celluloid: Painted Films and Filmed Paintings*', Gregory Zinman discussed the eradication of established and conservative barriers between traditional cinematic practice and the tradition of painting. Zinman states:

'Cinema has never been entirely constrained by its practices nor are its boundaries as a medium concretized. Painted films and filmed paintings, which occur between, while making use of, diverse media and mediums, provide reference points for rethinking the moving image in this more expansive capacity.' (2015:147)

Prior to the Professional Doctorate, the previous projects I had produced had both been indicators of the dual pathways I would continue to pursue: one based in the documentation of specific subject matter, the other based in the appropriation of archival found footage and the abstraction of those images.

This short film was a product of the latter creative route. The development of my filmic practice had gradually emerged from a



combination of painting, photography and screen printing. The concept of a moving image, one that was based on the projection of still frames travelling at a consistent or variable tempo, resonated not only visually, but also rhythmically. This rhythm resonated with a sonic potential that could be applied in conjunction with the moving image, but also how the frequency of visual information could be conveyed to the viewer and how that combination altered the viewer's received perception of that audio visual information. The use of Gene Krupa's image was also a direct reference to the centrality to my rhythmic exploration.

My delivery of abstracted archival moving imagery as short films, each combined with its own musical soundtrack that had been sampled and remixed, was the project *'Desert Island Digits (My Top Ten)'*, (page 31). The intention of that project was to produce ten (although eventually thirteen were produced) short films sourced from archival analogue footage for a gallery based exhibition, where an audience could, via an automated control pad, select any of the ten films for projection, as if it were a musical jukebox. The project involved each of the films having a unique soundtrack and each film had its own unique abstraction. The films were all between two and a half and three and a half minutes in duration, the normal running length of a popular 7 inch 45 r.p.m. record.



Figs 33 & 34: *'Splice' & 'Shank'*, (2014), manipulated 16mm found footage, sound.

The film was also inspired by the working practice and creative productivity of the filmmaker Jeff Keen, who's prolific output was marked by rapid editing, superimposition, drawing, painting and comic book imagery. His work 'incorporated collage, animation, found footage and live action – often all within the same film' (Fowler: 2012).



Figs 35 & 36: 'Gazwrx', Jeff Keen, film and video, 1973, 1998

*'When Gene Krupa Met Raoul Vaneigem'* was also influenced by the philosophers and theorists that formed my current area of research. Raoul Vaneigem (1934-) was part of the Situationist movement and a close ally of Guy De Bord (1931-94), both of whom took Marxist philosophy and the principals of personal freedom into the culture of the social and political upheavals of 1968. The film also addresses the veracity of the image; the juxtaposition of the silent found footage of drummer and bandleader Gene Krupa with the quote from *'The Revolution of Everyday Life'*, by Raoul Vaneigem is at first an appropriation of two diametrically opposite cultural icons. However, this was a deliberate strategy to meld what was a polemic and an initial personal manifesto with the archival footage of drummer Gene Krupa. Krupa embodied a revolution in the application of rhythmic progression within musical history. By including the strategy of

appropriating previously filmed images in the production within this film I was employing a technique known as detournement. This was a method of subverting existing popular iconography used to subvert the original intentions of specific graphic content into more politically ironic and socially challenging messages and slogans. The Situationists applied this practice to consumer advertising and established branding.



Fig 37: Jamie Reid's subversion and rebranding of the Union Jack for the Sex Pistols, 1977.

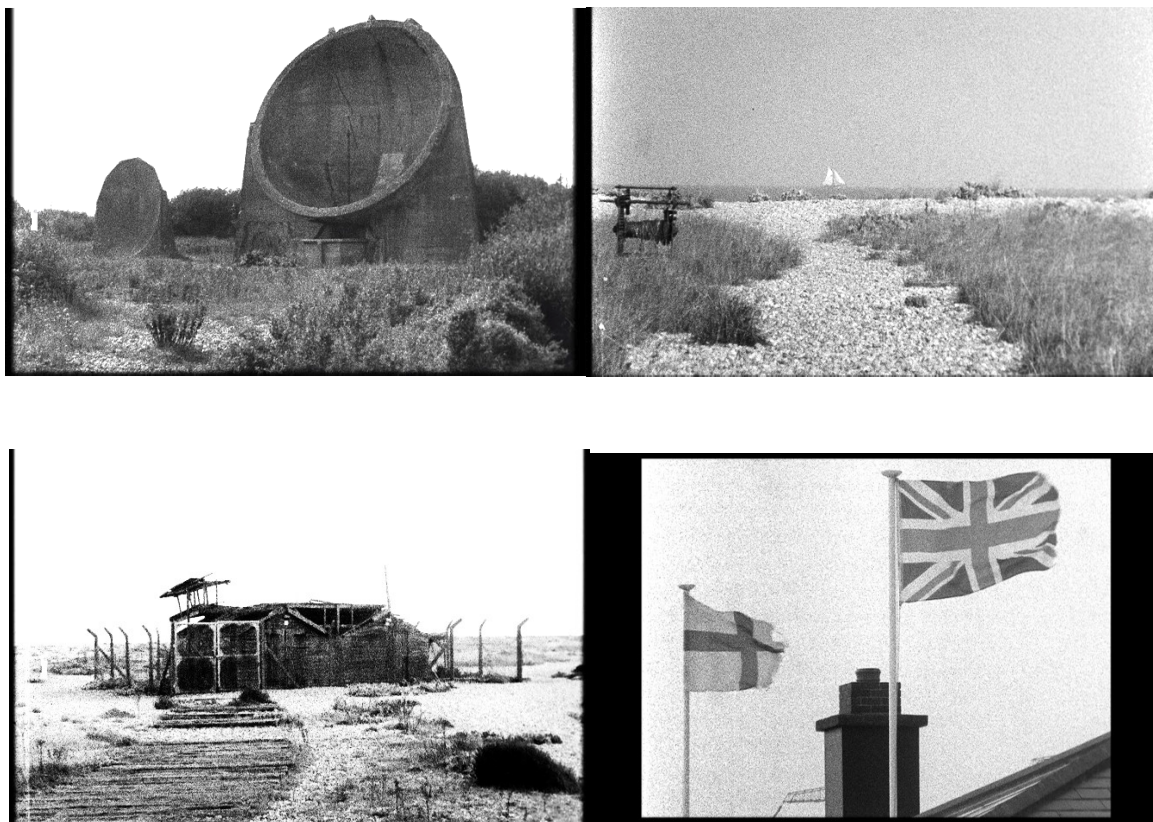
Peter Greenaway was a significant influence on this film. His experience as a painter and documentary editor are evident in his early films such as *'Windows'* (1974) and *'Dear Phone'* (1976) in which he challenges ideas of narrative, voice over and documentary into absurd juxtapositions and a prominence of decidedly unreliable narrators.



Fig 38 & 39: Peter Greenaway, *'Vertical Features Remake'* (1978),  
*'The Draughtsman's Contract'* (1982).

I included this film in the final doctoral exhibition as not only was it the first film produced on this pathway of research through practice, but it contains many of my own recurring elements including archival appropriation, abstraction of the image and the application of mathematical time, movement and rhythm.

Screen One: Film Two – ‘Keep the Homefires Burning’



*Figs 40 - 43: "Keep The Home Fires Burning", 2015, 9'45", 16mm, sound.*

*'Keep the Homefires Burning'* (2015) is a film shot on a Bolex 16mm clockwork camera using 100' rolls of Kodak 7222 black and white negative film stock. It was originally edited as a three-screen projection, but this Doctoral show version was edited as a single screen amalgamation of all three screens. All material was shot in and around

Dungeness on the English southeastern coast, specifically the beaches and marshland of the area, centering on the concrete ruins of the sound mirrors, a sonic early warning system built in the pre radar era of the 1920's. The soundtrack is a composite mix of ambient on-site field recordings, including aircraft from the nearby Lydd aerodrome, a sampled church choir, the sound of the Bolex clockwork camera and my field recording of The Heavenly Gateway Pentecostal Church in Stratford, East London, praying and speaking in tongues prior to their weekly Sunday service. The film's title is taken from a popular sentimental song of the First World War.

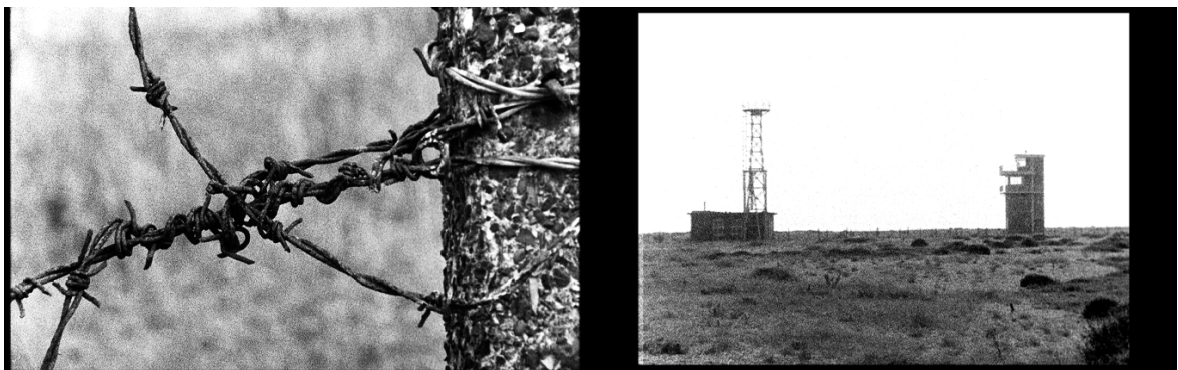
I had shot the first of my 16mm films around the stone circles of Bodmin Moor the previous Easter. The film dealt with the prehistory of, and the remaining architectural structures within the Cornish landscape and a vanished indigenous culture; a people that had adapted to the changes of climate, technology and time. Again, the subject matter of the film involved abandoned structures set in an uninhabited environment. Once I'd filmed selected spaces within the landscape, particularly the disused mines and the stone circles, I looked around for similar abandoned locations. The challenge was to document a place and explore its 'otherness', or 'architectural uncanny', through a combination of film and sound. My second major work of that year involved using the medium of black and white 16mm film, again with the intention of exploring the physical and temporal possibilities of a previously inhabited space. It was also important to explore the sonic elements, using field recordings and mixing the resultant audio in post-production.



In his introduction to 'A Short History of Decay', Brian Dillon states; 'Ruins embody a set of temporal and historical paradoxes. The ruined building is a remnant of, and portal into, the past; its decay is a concrete reminder of the passage of time.'

The intention was to evoke an emotional reaction from the viewer through a combination of both sound and vision. My methodology was to film a selected area in a purely documentary style, spending time there and filming chosen elements, whilst simultaneously recording the ambient environmental sound through field recording on a separate sound recorder.

I chose the area of Dungeness as a film location, specifically the country surrounding Lydd, the beach and the flooded quarry containing the abandoned sound mirrors, pre radar experimental sonic warning dishes. My chosen filmic medium of 16mm black and white stock was an attempt to conceal a received perception of contemporary time by shooting on a pre digital and video tape medium whose visual aesthetic is associated with the historical past.



*Figs 44 & 45: 'Keep The Homefires Burning' 2015, 16mm, sound.*

The opening shot shows a pathway leading to the sea, an image that is repeated at the end of the film the final, elliptical shot. The surrounding area is desolate and windswept, with abandoned military buildings and rusting barbed wire, reminiscent of abandoned zones of armed conflict. The isolation is punctuated with the sound of aircraft from the small aerodrome nearby. After the initial shots and an on-screen exploration of the immediate area, the sound mirrors are introduced.

The sound mirrors had been built in the mid 1920's as an attempt at an early warning defense against incoming fleets of enemy aircraft. The sound dishes are concrete and fixed and were soon rendered obsolete due to the emergence of a far more efficient system based on radio waves called radar. The dishes were abandoned and sank, literally, into disrepair amongst the water of a clay quarry, stranded and isolated by the surrounding marshes. They lie along the coast from the Martello Towers, themselves previously constructed attempts to stem the tide of invasive forces. The surrounding landscape of Dungeness is desolate. The sound mirrors, unreachable unless by boat, are the symbols of a useless, redundant technology designed to repel alien invaders. My project represented a desire to create a timelessness with the film that referenced the past by using black and white film stock, a medium associated with historic visual documentation.



Figs 46 & 47; Chris Welsby & William Raban 'The River Yarrow' (1972-3); William Raban, 'Thames Film', (2013).

The work of artists and filmmakers Chris Welsby and William Raban were important sources of visual research for this project. Their practice has constantly explored the English landscape. Especially significant were Welsby's '*River Yar*' (1972/73), a time-lapse film made in partnership with William Raban and Raban's '*Thames Film*' (2013), both shot on 16mm film.

As technological architecture, the sound mirrors were concrete structures originally built to capture audio signals. I was interested in creating a corresponding soundtrack that echoed the aesthetic qualities of these structures and their surrounding environment. I gave the sound waves that would have been associated with the sound mirrors a visual echo by filming the patterns of the waves in the surrounding marshes. The waves in the water became sonic manifestations of invasive alien voices when synchronized with the final sound design. I also decided to incorporate the ambient sound of the camera's 28 second 'take' and use it as a bridge between the temporal and the formalistic within the distorted film sequences.

The artist Tacita Dean had explored the site previously in her short film '*Sound Mirrors*' (1999) and had recorded the ambient sounds collected from the listening holes situated in the center of the parabolic structures. This is how she describes the environment.

'The land around Dungeness always feels old to me:  
a feeling impossible to explain, other than it is just 'un-

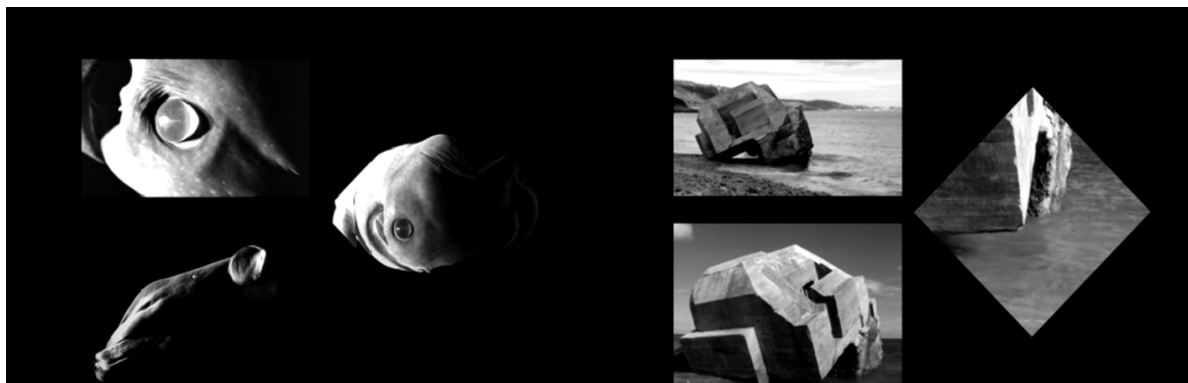


modern'; to me it feels nineteen seventies and Dickensian, pre-historic and Elizabethan, Second World War and futuristic. It just doesn't function in the now'. (Dean 1999: p119).

Shooting this film entailed disciplined cinematography by choosing and adapting to the light and environment as well as times of day, of the year, the selection of the image, shooting and processing 16mm stock and transferring and grading the results into a digital medium. The process then involved arranging images and groups of images into a structured narrative. I wanted the results to be screened as a triptych, attempting to balance a harmonious filmic structure built on pace, rhythm and impact and combining both sound and vision to enter the emotional paradigms of the viewer.

The Bolex camera records moving image but not sound and is limited to a continuous run of 28 seconds at 24 frames a second. This timing was the yardstick of my long takes. I recorded the ambient sound of the environment on a digital field recorder to include in the final film. There was also a technical problem with the camera; it did not always transport film through the gate properly, and therefore resulted in incorrectly exposed footage, something that was not apparent until the rolls of film were processed at the NoWhere laboratory (formally the London Filmmakers Co-Operative). I returned to the Lydd and Dungeness site once more a week later to re shoot the 'lost' footage.

Once I arrives at the editing stage, I decided to incorporate the distorted footage using it as an optical bridge between the temporal and the formalistic within the final film. The concept of narrativestructure, both physical and temporal, needed to be deconstructed and restructured within this investigation of spatial awareness. What was the product of accident and malfunction became a main structural component within the final edit.



*Figs 48 & 49: Jane and Louise Wilson 'Sealand', 2006*

Jayne and Louise Wilson have explored abandoned spaces during the course of their creative productions. Their large-scale photographs of the Atlantic Wall defense bunkers situated on France's Northwest coastline were the residual remains of Nazi Germany's attempt to deter invading forces. They had also produced a single screen film divided into three separate screens entitled 'Sealand' where they juxtapose shots of broken and decayed bunkers with a one-eyed vampire squid. As Darian Leader wrote:

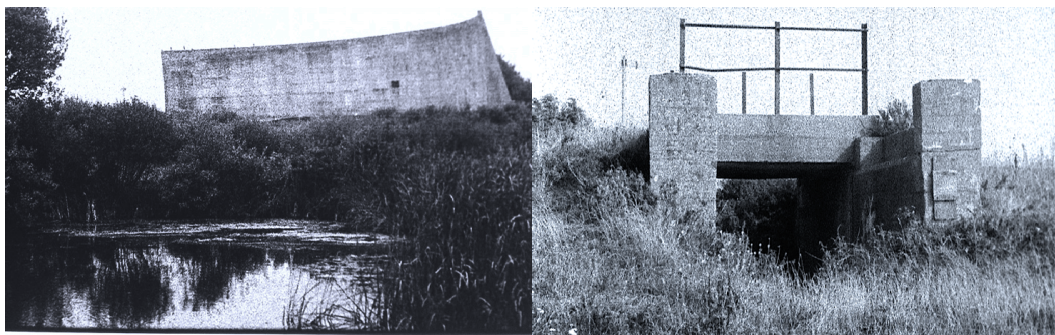
'Both the bunkers and the squid have something otherworldly about them. Just as the bunkers index a period that seems long past, so the squid remains

suspended in an ancient, inaccessible time'. (Leader: 2006).

The contrast between the ruins and the ancient creature create a powerful sensation of a dark 'otherness'.

I transferred my rushes digitally for the picture edit. The process involved arranging images and groups of images into an organically structured narrative: endeavoring to balance a harmonious structure built on pace, rhythm and impact and combining sound and vision, in an attempt to enter the temporal and emotional paradigms of an audience. The rushes of both Dungeness shoots revealed an emerging narrative of an isolated and disconnected community flying threadbare Union Jacks from their roofs and gardens.

I employed a more organic, impressionistic and less scripted methodology to this film's post-production. By documenting the place visually and field recording the audio meant that the final film's structure and rhythm should gradually form in post-production, not as a preconceived and scripted artifact.



*Figs 50 & 51: "Keep the Home Fires Burning" 16mm 2014/5*

Whilst editing, I decided to incorporate the accidentally distorted developed footage with an on-site field recording of the duration of the camera's 28 second clockwork motor's run. By including this in the edit, the combination of sound and vision create a bridge between the temporal and the formalistic within the film.

I explored the sound mix to evoke what Anthony Vidler called the 'architectural uncanny' (1992:12). The sound mirrors were designed as sonic receivers, and therefore, I needed to re animate them *visually* within the film.

The choices of sound added in post-production was a combination of a sonically abstracted choir that had been sampled from a compact disc, rice shaken within a tin with added reverberation and my own field recordings of an African Presbyterian Church congregation, captured as the congregation prepared for the main Sunday service. The members were scattered around the building and entering, as individuals, into collective prayer known as 'speaking in tongues'. I used fragments of these recordings as well as overdubbing the sounds of wind in the reeds that surrounded the sound mirrors. I then digitally manipulated these components, balancing and mixing them in postproduction using Apple's Final Cut 7 audio software.

The soundtrack to this film was as important as the visual content. Whilst on location for the three days of actual filming, I recorded the field sounds of the environment on a digital field recorder. This included the bird

calls of the marshland and the sounds generated by the aircraft that were flying from the small airfield at nearby Lydd. These were all small, propeller powered aircraft that would match historically when aligned with the black and white footage.

The problems encountered during this project were primarily technical. The camera's internal film transport became faulty whilst on location. The optics, as in the quality of the lens, was poor. The camera itself was heavy and required a sturdy tripod that had to be carried on location. The rolls of film were bulky and lasted for a maximum of 3 minutes at 25 frames per second. The exposed stock had to be kept in total darkness and was at the mercy of the chemical processing it underwent to produce an image. The film was then physically spliced and wound in a dedicated space. Finally, the film was digitally printed into a file that was compatible with edit software. Incorporating these time consuming and often negative elements within the project production cycle was costly and required dedicated patience.

I was also interested in exhibiting the final film as a multi-screen presentation. This was a combination of attempting to visualize the spatial characteristics of the environment and to investigate the juxtaposition of images. John Akomfrah had presented a triple screen presentation at The Imperial War Museum that focused on the military contribution of colonial soldiers of both sides during the First World War. The film incorporated archival footage as well as newly filmed digital imagery.



Fig 52: John Akomfrah, 'Mimesis: African Soldier', (2017).

Not only was I exploring in the combination of digital and archival film, but also the dynamic and optical balance of a three-screen presentation. Akomfrah's rationalization of the film's content and theme of military imperialism resonated with my own subject matter:

'There's a way in which we talk about this country now which assumes it's always been this fortress alone in the sea, doing its own fighting. But it's not true. Absolutely untrue. And to remind people of that, it's not about causing trouble or making mischief. It's simply stating some of the historical facts that allow people to understand why we are where we are now'. (Akomfrah:2016).

Repeat viewings should allow the viewer to discover new elements within a frame space. There are meta-narratives within the grand narrative of the everyday, small moments embedded within the rhythm of daily life that become apparent with repeat viewings. This opens the possibilities for rich, interwoven texts that contain both visual and narrative elements

that can become a two-way conversation between artist and audience.

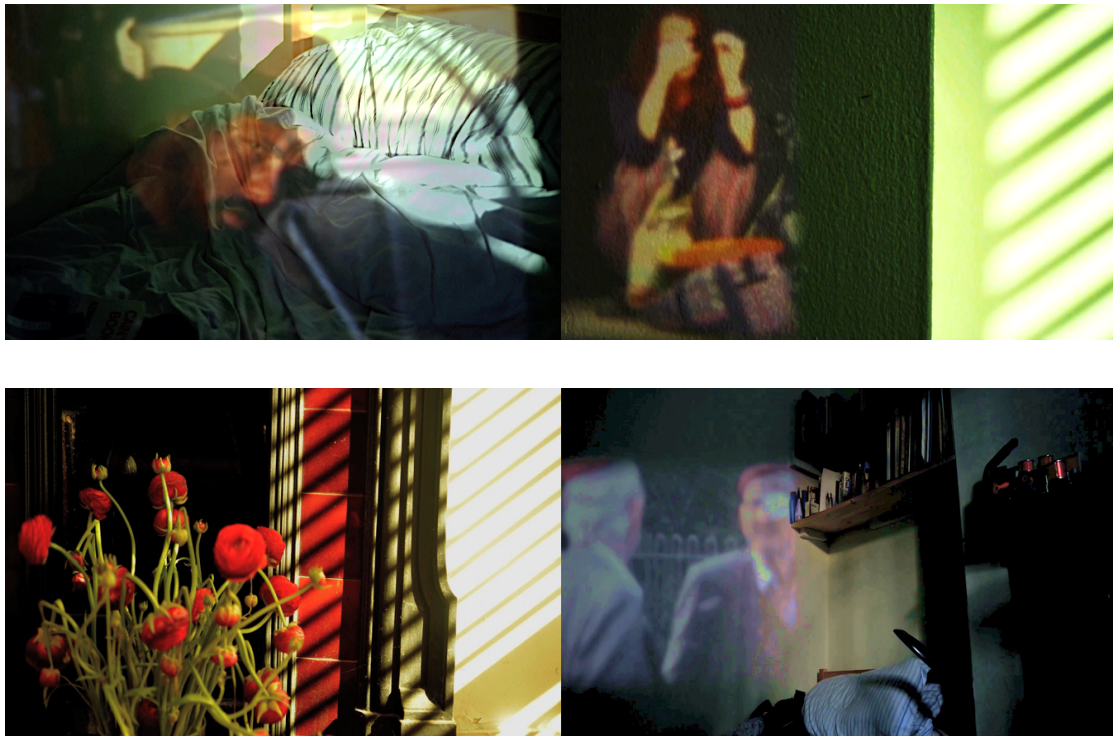
This project is important in the production of work in a practical research environment, but also as a starting point of reflection. It was also a complex project. It was a continuation of my practice of working with 16mm analogue film that is transferred to digital files for the postproduction stage. It incorporated the interplay of documenting ruined structures in a barren landscape and the dynamics of the sound design; the visual suggestion of rhythms with the waves in the water around the ruins of the dishes as if the dishes are still receiving coded warnings. It also incorporated an intervention onto the screens of the distorted images caused by the film physically slipping through the camera gate, one that fractured the illusion of a contained and enclosed film screen space.

'Ruins stand as reminders. Memory is always incomplete, always imperfect, always falling into ruin; but the ruins themselves, like other traces, are treasures: our guide to what came before, our guide to situating ourselves in a landscape of time. To erase the ruins is to erase the visible public triggers of memory; a city without ruins and traces of age is like a mind without memories'. (Solnit 2007: p22)

*'Keep the Homefires Burning'* is a film that addresses both space and process. It is a project about the links between interior and exterior architecture and landscape and of maximizing the impact of a piece of

work. Filming the abandoned and desolate space around the archaic architecture of the sound mirrors, combined with an embedded sound design was an experiment in summoning up an experience: the uncanny, the *unheimlich* and an historical concept of England as an island defending against an invasive and invisible threat.

#### Screen One: Film Three – ‘Home Movie’



Figs 53 - 56: ‘Home Movie’ 2016, 9’05”, time lapse digital photographs, super eight film, no sound.

‘Home Movie’ (2016) is a time-lapse film of an empty house in Bow, East London shot on a Nikon 600 DSLR camera. The resultant images record the movement of reflected light within house’s interior and its exterior as time passes. The additional images are a variety of slow motion Super 8 documentations of the homeless and dispossessed in and around Whitechapel and Aldgate in East London. These elements are then composited in the digital edit. There is no audio content.



I was preparing to leave the familial house in East London after twenty years of living there. Before leaving, I took the opportunity to document it as an abandoned domestic space and explore ideas of collective memory and previous histories within that space. This project was intended as a visual enquiry into a space due to become un-inhabited. It was not a nostalgic or romantic quest for lost time. Tangible memories arrive in the form of discarded signifiers of the past: toys, photographs, letters, old shoes. I employed a strategy of condensing the spatial qualities of the house as a beacon of poetic and atmospheric images with a combination of time lapse photography and compositing archival imagery.

I was experimenting with both the re-projection and compositing of archival imagery and of time lapse cinematography, compressing and stretching screen time, restructuring the past into new montages. With any moving image, each frame is a fragment of captured time. Time-lapse photography and cinematography are accentuations of that process. My intention was to highlight another time, one that passes un-noticed in the everyday world, an alternate way of seeing. One that does not necessarily register because it exists in its own frozen moments that are scooped up and animated in time in the form of linear motion.

'If I were asked to name the chief benefit of the house, I should say: the house shelters the daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace'. (Bachelard, 1958: p6).

I explored the poetic spaces of Gaston Bachelard; of shells, nooks and crannies. The house had been built in the latter Victorian period. I wanted to gather up the dust of the house's history, the fragments that slip through the daily routine in order to animate another realm of the everyday. As a family we were leaving behind the light and the shadows, the insubstantial weightlessness of the familial shell. The lived history of previous tenants, leaving behind a husk that would again be transformed into a different living space by the new inhabitants. I had researched the artist and filmmaker Peter Greenaway at the beginning of my doctorate. His short film "*H is For House*" (1971) is set in and around Greenaway's family holiday house in Wiltshire. It records the nineteenth century house on analogue film and its surrounding environment through a 'long' lens, giving intimacy and colour to a frame that links family life with a voice over from Greenaway's daughter. His film captures a very English rural idyll. Greenaway employs the conventions of the formalist and structuralist film makers of the early 1970's that would be developed by his contemporaries, William Raban, John Smith and later, Andrew Köttling. Like each of these filmmakers, Greenaway also has a very particular Englishness in his use of an intellectually ironic humour, as in the written and performative tradition of Jerome Kerr, Ivor Cutler and Vivian Stanshall.

Using my DSLR, I ran tests with different types of camera movement, tracking both inside and outside the house. Using the time-lapse method, I recorded the light and shadows moving around different room spaces as the sun moved around outside the house. I wanted to

include this constant movement within the film. I also recorded the changes of weather, different times of day and night and different lighting conditions. I also decided against any human presence in order to focus on the spaces within the house itself, a desire to incorporate a deliberate appropriation of the environmental mis-en-scene. The absence of any audio or sound design in the final film was a deliberate strategy to draw attention to this absence of inhabitants.

However, I did want to include extra imagery within the frame and 'repopulate' the house in the form of composited film. These evocative images were of the street people and rough sleepers of East London that I had previously documented in my Super 8 diaries. Although a potentially complex process, by careful manipulation of layers in the edit software, these individuals became an integral part of the vacant household's architectural form.

'On the one hand, conferring a casual relationship between memory and the sighting of ghosts suggest a sediment of unfinished personal history discolouring our experience of the world, such that once that history was subtracted, then that vision would be restored. To 'see' would mean to unconsciously remember that which is dead but has yet to move on'. (Trig 2012: p283).

In 'The Architectural Uncanny', Anthony Idler states:

‘Space, in contemporary discourse, as in lived experience, has taken on an almost palpable existence. Its contours, boundaries and geographies are called upon to stand in for all contested realms of identity, from the national to the ethnic; its hollows and voids are occupied by bodies that replicate internally the external conditions of political and social struggle and are likewise assumed to stand for and identify, the sites of such struggle’. (Idler, 1992:165).

The resultant time-lapse footage of both interior and exterior was effective in exploring an animation of the spaces. The combination of the two image systems, the time-lapse cinematography, and the compositing of the Super 8 footage, was successful in conveying the juxtaposition of the home and the homeless.



Figs 57 & 58: *'The Street of Crocodiles'*, 1984, 21 mins, 35mm, Channel 4 GB

A time-lapse based film that greatly influenced my on-screen renditions of the nuances of atmospheric space was *'The Street of Crocodiles'* (1984), a stop motion film by the Brothers Quay. Its story revolves around a character's odyssey through endless corridors of a dark, Eastern European labyrinth, a surreal quest for enlightenment.

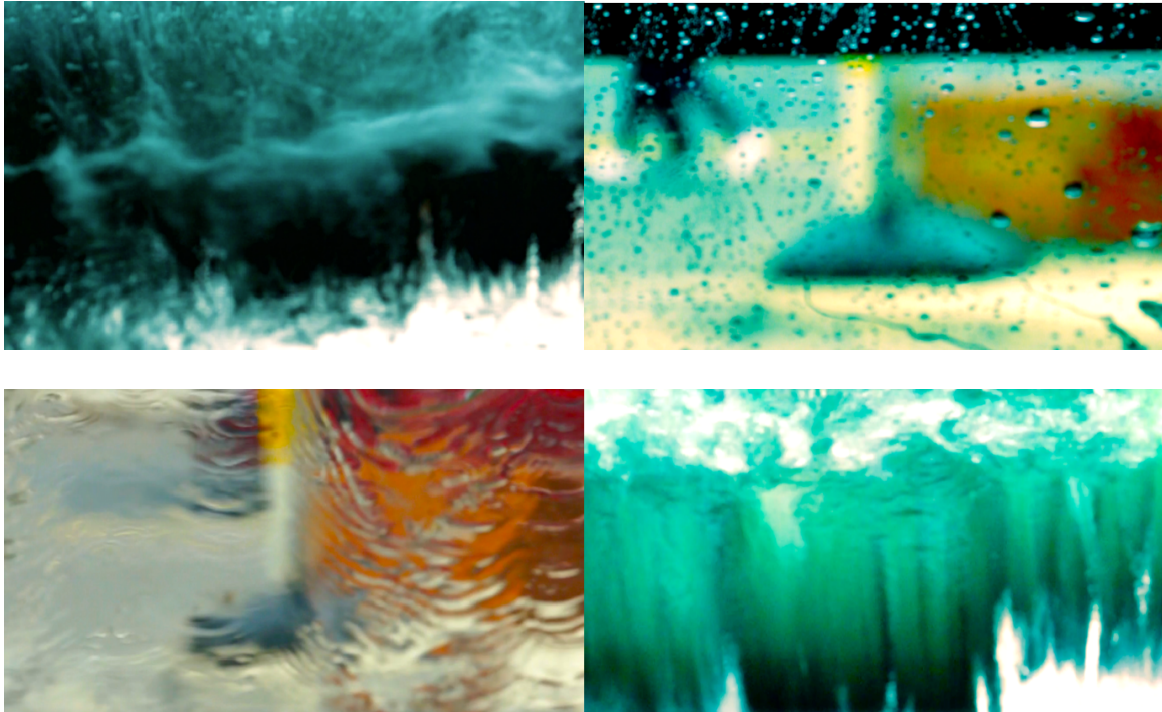
During my research, I had also discovered the work of photographer Shimon Attie. I uncovered his work through his *Writing on The Wall* project, where he projected historic photographs of Jewish pre-war Berlin onto the surviving shop-fronts and houses in one of Berlin's Jewish Quarters. The visual contrast between past and present was a powerful bridge between both, especially strong given the tragic historical memories they invoked.

In terms of project production, this was an important film. It involved mastering the technique of time lapse photography as well as exploring the technique of compositing imagery. My research pathways were practical in terms of discovering relevant artists and of further exploring Lefebvre, Antony Idler and Bachelard to construct this project.

'If we have retained an element of dream in our memories, if we have gone beyond merely assembling exact recollections, bit by bit the house that was lost in the mists of time will appear from out of the shadow... it is as though something fluid had collected our memories, and we ourselves were dissolved in the fluid of the past'. (Bachelard, 1958:57).

## Screen Two: Film One

### ‘An East End Soap Opera in Three Reasonably Distinct Acts’



Figures 59 – 62: ‘An East End Soap Opera in Three Reasonably Distinct Acts’ 2015, 4’23”, digital HD, sound.

*‘An East End Soap Opera in Three Reasonably Distinct Acts’* (2015) is a digital film shot in 16:9 screen format in a single take. It captures the mechanical process involved in an automated car wash located in Bethnal Green, East London. The camera is mounted on a tripod within the car with a single fixed view and focused on the car’s windscreen. The single take was edited slightly in post-production in order to compress the time taken within the car washing process into a more dynamic film. The sound was captured during filming using the onboard camera microphone and the soundtrack was mixed utilizing the audio filters in Final Cut Pro 7.

During the Spring and Summer of 2015, my filmic output consisted almost entirely of the research and development of long-term projects. However, as a creative counterbalance, I wanted to create a fresh and spontaneous film as a new project that would be quick and easy to produce. I reduced the potential of a complicated technical production by deciding to use a static, locked off video camera and to document animated but less complicated subject matter. This methodology would also reduce the time in post-production editing into a simple and straightforward process.

I chose to film a motorized, functional process that car owners take for granted. I had recently used an automated car wash and was struck, whilst sitting in my car when the mechanical process was in action, of how totally immersive this experience was. I chose to re-visit the car wash. I set up a fixed camera on a tripod in the car and adjusted it so that it would be filming in the forward direction. I focused the lens on the windscreen and reduced its depth of field. I wanted to negate the sharpness of the High-Definition image and bring out the colour palette within the frame. I drove into the car wash, entered my pre-paid code and let the camera roll un-interrupted. I repeated this entire process once again just to make sure I had captured the automated process of the cleaning and drying of the car completely.

The concept and practicality of a fixed camera recording specific subject matter with the purpose of re-examining the everyday has been a

central theme of filmmaker Chris Welsby's films. Both in *Park Film*, (1972) and *Seven Days*, (1974), he uses fixed cameras to record events that occur in front of the camera. In a subsequent film, '*Streamline*' (1976), Welsby rigs a vertically directed camera to a motorized line running above a stream and slowly tracks it along its course, gradually chronicling its course as it flows over the bed and rocks. The critic and filmmaker Peter Wollen said that:

'Welsby's work makes it possible to envisage a relationship between science and art, in which observation is separated from surveillance and technology from domination' (Wollen: 2001)



Figure 63 & 64: Chris Wesley, '*Seven Days*' (1974), 20 mins, 16mm, colour,

*'Streamline'*, (1972), 20mins, 16mm, colour, 20 mins

As well as the title being a conscious affirmation of a long running television serialized melodrama, '*An East End Soap Opera in Three Reasonably Distinct Acts*' does follow the dramatic structure that it alludes to. In the first act, the film begins with the camera, which is static



throughout, focused on the windscreen of the car. The focus has a shallow depth of field and the lens slightly zoomed in, in order to convey a more immersive connection between audience and subject matter. Through the windscreen we see the mid and long distance outside of the car reduced to blocks of colour; the red buses, the orange brick wall, the yellow and white bollard, all slightly out of focus. The windscreen begins to collect drops of water that gradually gather in intensity. This, as well as the soundtrack, build to a crescendo until the intrusion of the second act, the envelopment of the car in the green circular rollers foaming and washing the car. The water seems suspended at times upon the windscreen and the sound changes, becoming deeper and more encompassing. The rollers complete their automated cleansing cycle, leaving the streams of water droplets to form moving patterns. This aquatic display is intensified as the third act of this operation begins, the descent into frame of the motorized hot air dryer. The droplets take on a life of their own and scatter with the intense airstream, defying gravity in sharp focus on the car's windscreen. The drier device continues its activity until finally rising out of frame.

The filmmaker John Smith had used a fixed camera to film '*The Girl Chewing Gum*' (1976), where he juxtaposes the everyday banalities of a Hoxton street corner with a fictitious soundtrack that documents the instructions of film director apparently giving orders to the director of photography. The initial mystery of the film and subsequent humour on the discovery of the fictitious artifice lies within the contrast of the soundtrack and the on-screen activity.

‘A primary aim of the film was to undermine its inherent illusionism, drawing attention to its own artifice. The film draws attention to the cinematic apparatus by denying its existence, treating representation as an absolute reality in its own right’. (Smith: 2007).

He employs this technique of false perception throughout his canon, notably in ‘*Worst Case Scenario*’ (2001-3), and ‘*Om*’, (1986). The writer Michael O’Pray described him as ‘having a reputation that rests on a quite unique sensibility which has successfully married three traits – humour, documentary and formal ingenuity – into an indissoluble whole’. (O’Pray, 2002.)



Figure 65 & 66: John Smith 'The Girl Chewing Gum' (1975), 16mm, b/w, 15 mins & 'Worst Case Scenario' (2001-3), 35mm slides onto SD video, b/w & colour, 18mins

During the editing process, I manipulated the film and timescale with montage and layering of images so that it would appear as one long, static and uninterrupted 4-minute take. As I had filmed the process focusing specifically on the car windscreen using a wide aperture, the

resultant short depth of field meant that the colour palette within the frame became strong and vibrant. It seems to be a film shot as a continuous shot and begins in real time. However, the roller washing sequence is a gentle montage and the final heat drying sequence is also edited. This was a practical solution to compressing the time frame of the cycle but also to give each section of activity a greater balance of screen time. The sound was recorded on the second wash and then manipulated in post-production. I boosted the top end audio frequencies of the soundtrack by adding the sound of a closely miked effervescent digestion tablet dissolving in a glass.

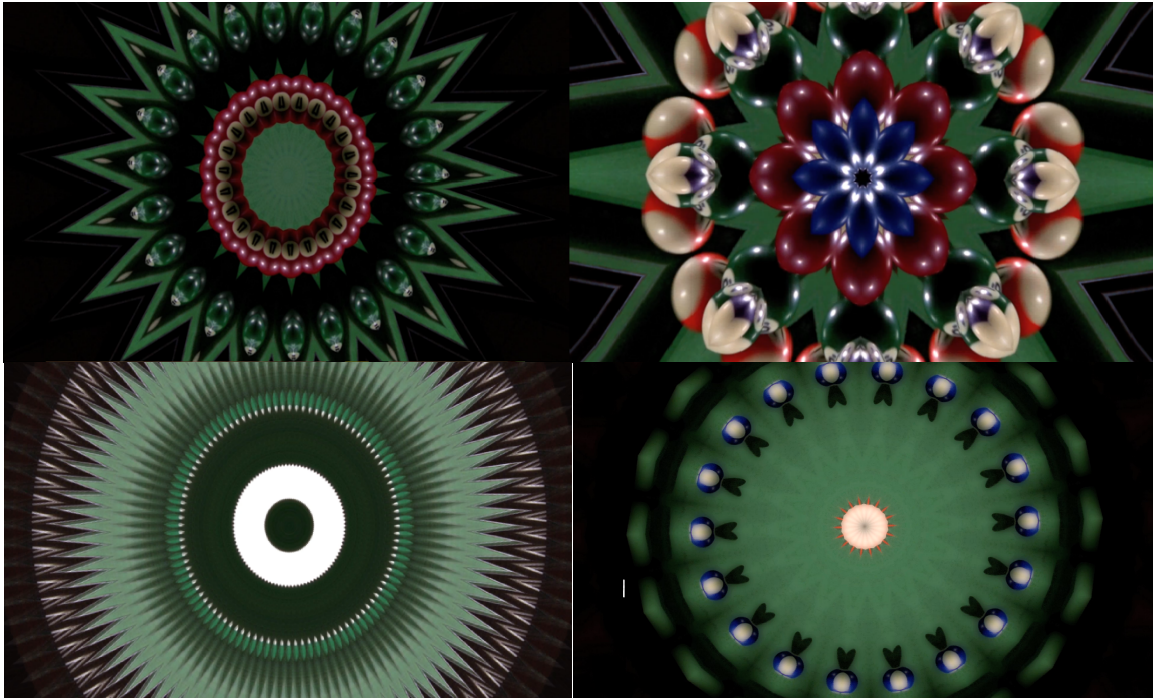
The commonality that binds this short film is process: once the camera has been set up, it is really the action of documenting the programmed movement of the automated car wash as it executes its continuous stages of operation. In terms of space, it is an immersive event, the viewer experiencing the procedure as an audio-visual incursion from a fixed perspective within the car. The film presents a car windscreen within the projected viewing screen, a screen within a screen.

The final result was a short and simple stand-alone film. My intention was to produce a film that re-examined an everyday physical process and presenting it as an abstracted process.

How can everyday life be defined? It surrounds us, it besieges us, on all sides and from all directions. We are inside it and outside it. It is at the heart of the everyday

that projects become works of creativity. (Lefebvre1991: p334).

#### Screen Two: Film Two – ‘Big Al’s Supercollider’



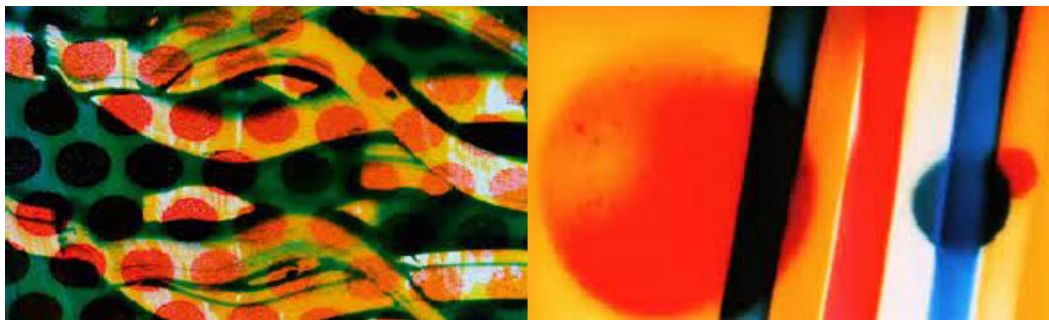
*Figs 67 - 70; 'Big Al's Supercollider', 2016, 5'18", digital video, sound.*

*Big Al's Supercollider* (2016) is a visually abstracted game of pool, shot on digital video on a 16:9 aspect ratio and optically manipulated in post-production using a combination of photographic filters within the edit software of Apple Final Cut Pro 7. The soundtrack comprises of two sonic sources, the audio captured by the on-board camera microphone that is then mixed with an ambient field recording of an audience waiting for a film to begin in Hackney Picture House, East London.

Whilst exploring the parameters of image abstraction, I had been working with found footage that was almost exclusively analogue film.

Image formation in analogue film is a chemical process involving the reaction of silver nitrate particles when exposed to light. But I was also working with digital video, an image capture process where light is converted into binary electronic signals. This project was an exploration of the aesthetic qualities in abstracting the digitally based video image. It was based visually and sonically on a game of pool between two players and was filmed in a day.

My research into image abstraction had led me to the animator Len Lye. He had developed an experimental style that he had termed 'film sculpture'. This often involved drawing and painting directly onto film, sometimes using stencils and mesh grills to form the images. These images were often sparse and geometric but were made in conjunction with specific soundtracks.

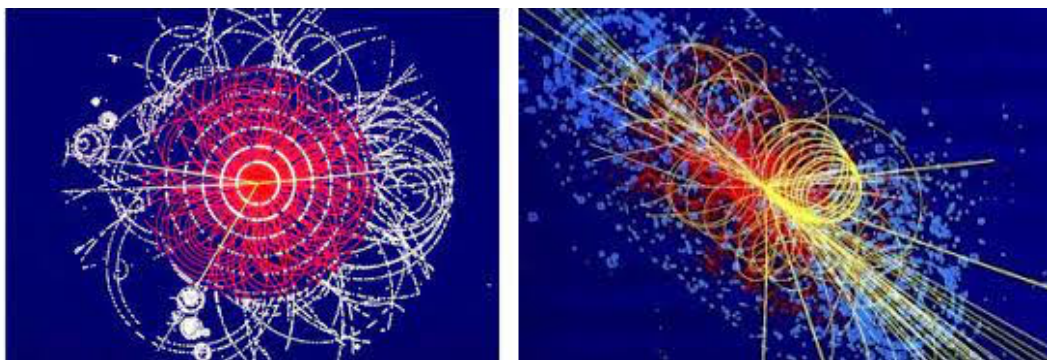


*Figs. 71 & 72: Len Lye, 'Colour Box', 1935, 16mm film*

Lye was part of a progressive and experimental animation that included Lotte Reineger, Stan Brackage and Norman McClaren. His work incorporates dynamic visual rhythms. He once said; 'All of a sudden it hit me – if there was such a thing as composing music, there could be such a thing as composing motion. After all, there are melodic

figures, why can't there be figures of motion?'(McClaren:1935).

*'Big Al's Supercollider'* focused on the action and interaction of the coloured balls when struck by the individual players. The execution and rhythm of each strike was central to the production of this film. 'Most music, dance and oral poetry establishes and maintains an underlying "metric level", a basic unit of time that may be audible or implied, the pulse or tactus of the mensural level'(Berry 1987: 349). In most of my work, the internal rhythm of a film is almost always central within the timing and delivery of the moving images. In *'Big Al's Supercollider'*, rhythm is externalized in the visual abstraction of patterns, sometimes random and progressive, often flowing or alternating. Visual rhythms can be seen in mosaics, mandalas, spirals and fractals: visual rhythmic unification and symmetry are a key feature of a constantly changing moving image. The act of striking the balls within the game of pool is determined by the angles of shots to pocket the balls. However, the choice of shots by these players do not follow a pre-determined pattern. The striking of the balls follows Newton's Third Law where each action will have an equal and opposite re-action. The struck ball goes on to strike other balls in turn in a chain reaction, gradually slowing down as the energy is dissipated.



Figs 73 & 74; The Higgs Boson, <https://www.scientificamerican.com>

Viewing the subsequent footage within the edit suite, I was struck by the similarity of the pool balls and their behavior in mirroring the behavior of atomic matter. Researching different texts on spatial environments had led to my own exploratory pathways of scientific theory of the sub-atomic world, especially the theories of Quantum Mechanics. When writing on Quantum Electrodynamics, the physicist Richard Feynman examines how light and electrons not only interact, but that light exists both as particles and waves. My research also embraced Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle where, in Quantum Mechanics, it is never possible to predict the movement of particles, the building blocks of matter and life. Simplified, things are rarely what they initially appear to be. But the decisive factor in the background research and eventually the naming of this project was the discovery of the Higgs Boson particle. This is an elusive, elemental particle in the building block of the known universe, finally sighted by scientists at the CERN particle accelerator, the Large Hadron Collider.

I abstracted the balls in post-production, interacting with the tabletop footage by applying various filters so that the action and reaction of the coloured balls became unified, creating unique symmetrical configurations whose organizational patterns changed once a force had been applied to them. I was seeking a harmonic result from the percussive action of the pool cue. My inspiration was motivated by attempting a visual parallel to the atoms and particles that were being observed in the huge Lucerne particle accelerator.



The soundtrack was a key factor in the construction of this project and was heavily influenced by the audio projects of Janet Cardiff (chapter 2). In order to give this film a depth combined with a sense of wit, I wanted to contrast the visual poetics of the screen with a sound design incorporating the earthy humour of the competitors. The audio content of was recorded from the actual game and layered over a field recording of an audience I recorded in a cinema whilst waiting for the film to begin. Both separate recordings were then split and, on the film, are repeated three times with a slight variation on the third rotation to give variety to the film's denouement.

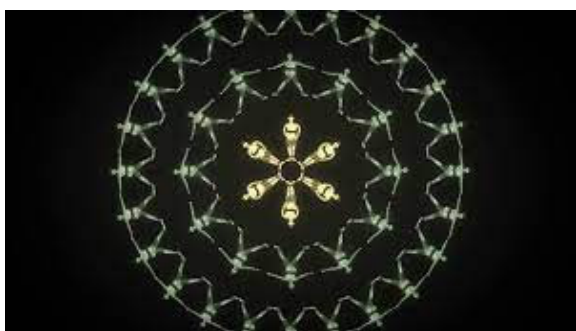


Fig 75; Max Hatler 'Spin', 2010.

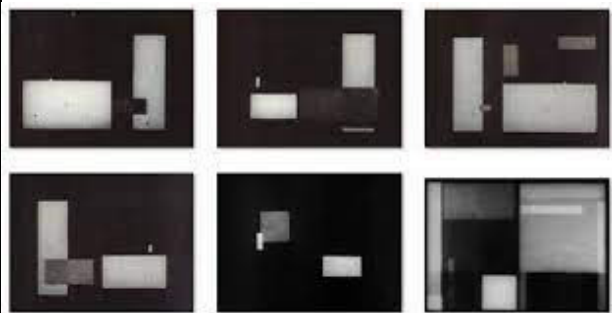


Fig 76; Hans Richter 'Rhythmus 21' 1921

I researched the work of animator Max Hatler in my pre-production. Much of his work is computer generated and enjoy a plethora of rhythmic patterns such as '*Spin*', (2010). I was drawn to his work in the accumulated and animated imagery of his thirty second film '*Striper v0.1*' (2006) where he re-assembled digital photographs taken by looking down at the road surfaces he traversed daily on his bicycle. Hatler is a contemporary practitioner in the lineage of patterned and rhythmic non-figurative animation. His work can be seen as a direct line from Hans



Richter's work such as *'Rhythm 21'* (1921). His is an arena of filmic expression where space is explored and visualized as crafted graphic images.

Although not using analogue found footage, this project led on from *'Surge'* (page 108) as a conceptual progression in terms of an approach to mirroring imagery as well as introducing visually symmetrical patterns. My intention in the edit was to establish an abstraction that unified the moving snooker balls into cohesive patterns which, in turn, mimicked the generally perceived imagery of the atomic and sub-atomic world. I chose this film as part of my final doctoral exhibition as the verification of a major progression in my exploration of abstracting the underlying rhythm of moving images.

#### Screen Two: Film Three – *'Spacer'*



*Figs 77 - 80: 'Spacer', 2018, 5'12", 16mm b/w film, digitally manipulated 16mm film, sound*

*'Spacer'* (2018) is a film constructed from black and white Super 16mm material I had filmed whilst in Cornwall plus additional fragments of 16mm archival film that had previously been used as *'spacer'*. This is random footage used within the analogue editing process as leader to bulk out A and B roll edits of 16mm films. It refers to the process of using previously filmed sequences that are eventually discarded during their own film productions, unused and consigned to the waste bin. This material is then employed to physically augment a film during its reductive mechanical edit so that the mathematical synchronization is kept constant between tracks. The spacer material is not seen in the final edit.

This also applies to the soundtrack as sound and vision are recorded separately in analogue film production. The sound design of *'Spacer'* is a montage of field recordings of electronic photocopiers in motion. The edit points of the film are determined by the sonic length and rhythm of the photocopier's process cycle.

During my work with 16mm archival footage, I have accumulated a variety of diverse material. The majority of this material consists of unrelated reels of film. There is a wide variety of subject matter including scientific process films, public information films and documentary films. Within those films is often *'spacer'*, the augmentative material described earlier that has become reallocated as fragmentary components in my film archives. Their connotations and significance have been eradicated with the loss of their original context, but when incorporated within a new narrative, they undergo a fresh contextual analysis in reinterpreting their

newfound connections to each other. Both Bourriaud and Manovitch write extensively about this appropriation of material by artists:

‘Postproduction artists invent new uses for works, including audio or visual forms for the past, within their own constructions. But they also re edit historical or ideological narratives, inserting elements that compose them into alternative scenarios’. ( Bourriaud 2007: p45).

*Post-production* is a terminology that is used in both film and audio production and a wide variety of industrial processes. By implication, post-production is tied to the concept of a society’s constant material consumption. The concept of the remix originated with the transformation of digital music technology and culture from its analogue foundations: remixing references the idea and practice of music having a multiplicity of potentially different versions. Bourriaud sees the prime movers in this new creative landscape as the DJ’s, music producers and studio programmers that fuse recorded musical products into a fresh creative sphere of remixing and reimagining original works using a cross collateral of two or more sound sources as a base. It also responds to the question of ‘When Is A Painting Finished?’ by replying, in effect, that ‘The Painting Is Never Finished’; the initial creative work can be constantly reworked and remixed if so desired.

‘The art of post-production seems to respond to the proliferating chaos of global culture in the information

age, which is characterized by an increase in the supply of works and the art world's annexation of forms ignored or distained until now. It is no longer a matter of elaborating a form on the basis of a raw material but working with objects that are already in circulation on the cultural market'. (Bourriaud 2007: p13).

Bourriaud acknowledges and affirms active connective and reciprocal relationships between the artist and the audience: production and consumption. There is an historic and symbiotic engagement with the Everyday (Quotidien) of Michel De Certeau and Henri Lefebvre, but one that has moved on to the world as a global community which enjoys an instant connectivity via the internet and the digital revolution. In '*Spacer*', this is evidenced in the sound design which accentuates the idea of constant electronic and mechanical production through its continuous sonic repetition. Using various electronic photocopiers in motion as a sound source was also a slightly knowing reference to Walter Benjamin and '*The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*' (1935).

The staple moving imagery of '*Spacer*' is a collection of celluloid shards that have had previous incarnations as components of larger, complete narrative forms. They are underpinned in this new filmic construction by the addition of my own black and white 16mm footage, filmed in the Cornish landscape and unused in any of my current projects. Through its construction and delivery, '*Spacer*' explores the ideas of convergence and slippage within the screen of space and time as

anchoring elements. Lefebvre acknowledges this disjuncture in his book, *The Production of Space*:

‘What term should we use to describe the division that keeps the various types of space away from each other, so that the physical space, mental space and social place do not overlap? Distortion? Disjunction? Schism? Break?’ (Lefebvre 1970: p14).

‘*Spacer*’ continues to explore the concept of a *suggested* narrative previously investigated in ‘*Home Movie*’ (page 54), ‘*Close Ups, Let’s Get A Few Close Ups*’ (page 107) and ‘*The Letter ‘C’*’ (page 104); that is, it assembles a random collection of filmic components that are intended to develop cognitive connections within the audience, not following a definitive, ‘conventional’ storyline, but whose meanings are assembled in post-production, reconstructed and mapped by the viewer’s perception and interpretation of the moving image when viewed within the screen space.

‘*Spacer*’ also continues in Bourriaud’s concept of a marketplace of lost and abandoned cinematic images, sifting and sorting out visual components into a repurposed archive. The film explores the narrative and optical possibilities of selecting a lexicon of new and previously owned visual elements into shared and freshly constructed environment. They are moving images remixed and therefore reconfigured in a new, dynamic process. The film is an application of a post-production aesthetic where the accumulation and arrangement of disparate moving images within a

manipulated space simultaneously illuminates the rhythmic undertow and the harmony created within it. The intention of the re-constructive and re-configurative creates a new cartography, mapping out alternative narratives of moving imagery within the fluid canvas of the screen.

#### Screen Two: Film Four – ‘The Shipping Forecast’



*Figs 81 - 84: 'The Shipping Forecast', 2019, HD Digital Video, Super 8 film, sound, 12'48".*

‘*The Shipping Forecast*’ (2019) is a film shot digitally in seaside locations along the Thames and Southeast English coast, specifically the ruins of the costal fortress on the Isle of Grain and the beach at Canvey Island. This footage is composited with imagery taken from archival found footage holiday films that have been re projected at a reduced speed of 12 frames per second. The soundtrack is a mix of location fieldrecordings of the sea and the B.B.C.’s early morning radio broadcast of the shipping forecast.

*'The Shipping Forecast'* was the last of the films produced for the Doctorate and was the apogee within the context of combining archival footage with abandoned or deserted landscapes and locations. The film opens on the South Eastern English shoreline. The sound design mixes the BBC's daily broadcast of the predicted weather conditions around the British coast over the sound of breaking waves whilst found footage of two horse riders fade in and fade out over the scene. More images of family holiday films are superimposed over the seaside buildings and beaches. The styles of the participants' bathing costumes indicate that these are historical images. The images are historically linked by generational familial bonds and the onscreen timespan indicate holidays that were recorded over the passing years by members of that family. The on-screen projection of archival material is slowed down and merge within the contemporary HD video footage. The seaside locations drop out of the frame half-way through the film, leaving the isolated family films running independently on screen. These images gradually combine the different time periods within the frame to accentuate the historical line linking the subjects as a family unit. The second half of the film 'returns' to the present-day coastline, to the ruin of the Isle of Grain's defensive fort and the extensive mudflats that surround it. As the camera enters the decaying shell, archival moving images appear and disappear.

Having viewed those archival images prior to filming the contemporary footage, I was able to film specific locations and control the subsequent framing once in post-production. This enabled me to unify the combinations of found footage and present-day sites in a much more

aesthetically harmonious pathway than in previous films.



Fig 85: Kahlil Joseph, 'Until the Quiet Comes', (2013), HD Video

Whilst *'The Shipping Forecast'* was in production, I had researched the American filmmaker Kahlil Joseph after viewing his film *'Flypaper'* (2017) as part of the *'Strange Days'* exhibition in London's 180 gallery. He 'conjures the lush and impressionistic quality of dreams with particular reverence for quotidian moments and intimate scenes' (Bell:2018). Joseph exhibits his films in galleries and works in both long and short form music videos. His style incorporates montages of different formats, religious and spiritual video diaries and collective memories. It was his use of colour, exploration of race and culture, fragmentary narratives and 'intellectually and emotionally dense short films' (Guardian:2018) that resonated with my own exploratory pathways towards a new, streamlined approach in compositing spatial memory and archival character.

*'The Shipping Forecast'* repeats the concepts of Britain as an island



race first shown in *'Keep the Homefires Burning'* (page 40) but also in exploring how the architectural uncanny, particularly with the inclusion of the abandoned sea fort at the Isle of Grain, activates the interplay between specific environments, place and memories. Dylan Trig states: 'If our experiences of the world are founded in the depths of memory, then gaining a sense of memory's scale becomes more problematic. Neither beginning at one point nor ending at another, memory surrounds us from all sides' (2012:270)

Shimon Attie has continued to explore this juxtaposition of architecture and imagery in his work in order to activate and demonstrate collective memory, most notably in his installation project, *'The Writing on the Wall'* (1994). Attie re-located from California to Berlin where he projected photographs of the Jewish community, taken before the Second World War, onto the original shops and locations where they had originally been taken. This work took place over a period of months, with Attie saying that he wanted to;

'Peel back the wallpaper of today and reveal the histories buried underneath. For The Writing on the Wall project, I slide projected photographs of Jewish street life in Berlin where the photos were taken sixty years earlier. By using slide projection on location, fragments of the past were thus introduced into the visual field of the present' (Attie:2001).



Figs 86 & 87: Shimon Attie, 'The Writing on the Wall' (1991-92), Berlin, Germany

Whilst at a local street market I bought a collection of Super 8 and 16mm film spools. When reprojected, it became apparent that they were an historical archive that covered a period of fifty years of family life. These films contained the record of affluent domesticity, including society weddings, sea cruises, biplanes and village fetes from the nineteen twenties. The discovery and the implications of a family home movie archive had a significant impact on *'The Shipping Forecast'*. It has added the extra dimension of a referential timeframe when applying its image content and subject matter to contemporary environments. Dylan Trig discusses this visual juxtaposition as an essential mechanism for the viewer's subjective cognitive processing:

'Experiencing place is not reducible to a set of objective properties. But nor does the experience of a place depend wholly on socio political content. Instead, a third way can be mapped out in which attention can be drawn to the existential significance of place'.(2012:289)

*'The Shipping Forecast'* is a major step forward in refining my process of the contrasting and juxtaposition of imagery, specifically contemporary digital film and historic archival film. The moving images chosen for this film from the archival collection incorporates family beach holidays in the nineteen sixties and seventies back to pre-war collective activities such as bi-planes, tug of war and donkey rides. This technique of image juxtaposition had been a major factor in my previous work, first with *'Home Movie'*, *'Close Ups, Let's Get a Few Close-Ups'* and *'The Letter C'*, but far more refined in *'Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven (But Nobody Wants to Die)'*. In this last film the images were composited together into much a more visually enhanced 'whole', laying down what has become a defining personal style for future creative work. This film is key to the logical and fundamental progression in establishing a style through methodology in my creative filmmaking.

### Chapter 3: A Chronology of the films produced during the Doctorate.

Chapter Three of this report charts the chronological order in which films were produced during the doctorate and analyses how the films informed and progressed from one to the next. They are divided into two main areas of exploration, firstly Space and secondly Abstraction, although the dividing line is not always apparent as elements of both pathways can be discerned in many of the films.

Space: One – ‘Bodmin Moor’



*Figs 88 & 89: 'Bodmin Moor', 2015, 16mm B/W film, 12'00"*

I had been drawn to the scale of Mathew Barney's productive practice. I was inspired by his ambitious use of space within the film frame. The spatial environment I chose for my project were the open spaces of the pre-historical stone circles and burial chambers of Cornwall, specifically those located within the vicinity of Bodmin Moor. I documented these sites, deciding to film them and the environment on analogue 16mm film, a medium I had not used for some years.

Like *'Scars on the Landscape'* (page 24), this project involved physical geographical mapping to find these remote sites. I immersed myself within the landscape and filmed the material over the space of a week. The stone circles and burial chambers are the architectural remains of a previous culture. As I filmed them, the environment and the elements re-enforced an awareness of the transformations that time had imposed on these structures. There was a primal element that belonged to the earth around there. I had begun a doctoral study exploring space, time and the moving image; immersion in this special environment emphasized the balance between space and structure and cinematic space and an appreciation of the relationship between each of them.

Ben Rivers is a contemporary filmmaker who films and processes analogue 16mm film. His films are concerned with isolation and central characters that live within challenging environments, outside of the boundaries of society. *'Slow Action'* (2011), is his multi-screen post-apocalyptic film focusing on fictional island utopian communities whereas *'Two Years at Sea'* (2012) is a single character study of an ex-sailor living alone in a remote Scottish house.



Fig 90: Ben Rivers *'Two Years at Sea'*, 2012, 16mm, B/W, sound.

'I'm interested in worlds people have created – very specific, hermetic worlds that haven't needed to conform to perceptions of a way we should live' (Rivers: 2012)

Rivers employs long takes and a filmic language that often references the in-camera techniques of the Lumière Brothers, rather than using contemporary digital post- production methods.

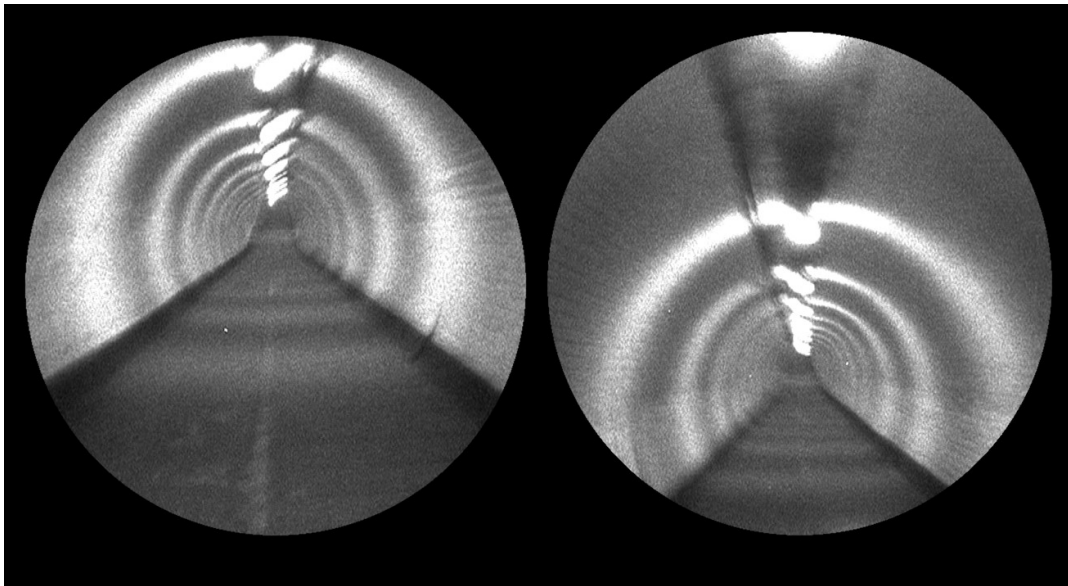
When I returned to London, I processed my film negatives. I took the rushes and re-acquainted myself with the Steenbeck, the flat-bed film editing platform used for viewing and splicing analogue film. The rushes exhibited all of the hallmarks of the analogue film process: uneven development patterns, flash frames and light leakage. There was also a technical problem with the film occasionally 'slipping' when filming and passing incorrectly through the gate making subsequent footage blurred and indistinct. I edited the film by splicing it together in the traditional method. The first cut was an exercise in continuity; the film begins on the tor and the 'cheese stones' on the top of the mountain, Brown Willie. The camera gradually follows the stream that emerges from a spring in the mountain. The stream passes through the landscape, eventually ending in a waterfall that flows into the sea near Tintagel Castle.

I used Kodak 6222 black and white negative film stock. The stock itself was very sensitive to the light in those open spaces as the Easter weather was excessively hot. However, it was ideal when filming close-ups

of the stream especially in capturing the detail of the flowing water. I constructed the sound in post-production. It is a simple mix of my field recordings made on location with a separate digital recorder.

This project was especially important as not only did it signify a personal return to using analogue 16mm film as a filmic medium but also established a mode of working that would involve discovering unique abandoned spatial environments and architecture in which to position my work. This project was very much about the process as well as the final film.

#### Space: Two - 'Tunnel Vision'



*Figure 91: 'Tunnel Vision', 2015, 16mm film 4'06" looped, sound*

As an architectural space, the Greenwich Foot Tunnel is a damp and sonically resonant pedestrian footway under the Thames River that links the Isle of Dogs in East London and Greenwich in South London. As a unique subterranean space, it is not necessarily abandoned but

uninhabited. As an exploration of that space, I filmed a journey through it with my Bolex 16mm camera. I mounted my camera on my bicycle and rode through the tunnel. As a clockwork powered device, the camera has a maximum continuous 'take' of around thirty seconds if filming at 24 frames a second. I set the camera to film at 8 frames a second which gave me a continuous shot of one and a half minutes, enough to ride the length of the tunnel. The effect of my imposed frame rate was that the footage became sped up when reprojected at the standard projection rate of 24 frames a second. Playing and altering the time base of a film is an optional intervention in mechanically based time lapsed moving image, the slow and fast motion process initially associated with the hand cranked films of the early twentieth century.

I split the image into two identical images in the edit and added a circular mask to both. Both film images gradually lose synchronization with each other over the course of the loop, the journey through the tunnel becoming more manic and distorted. As a loop, the journey is never completed, giving the tunnel an endless quality. I recorded ambient sounds in a public swimming baths and from various aquatic sources on a digital field recorder and mixed them together as a sound design for the digitized film.

I was screening this film as part of an exhibition in the UEL gallery space (page 135). I decided to exhibit the short, looped film in a more sculptural context as an installation as opposed to my other films that were being exhibited on screens. As I split the image into two circular images. I



built two large circular screens with diameters of two meters. The film was then projected onto the circular screens. The image projected onto these freestanding screens was slightly too large for them, illuminating the wall and ceiling behind them.

This film continued the exploration of filming and processing analogue film begun with the *'Bodmin Moor'* project. It was also an investigation into the spatial potential of screening the expanded moving image within a gallery environment.

#### Space: Three – 'Marble Run'

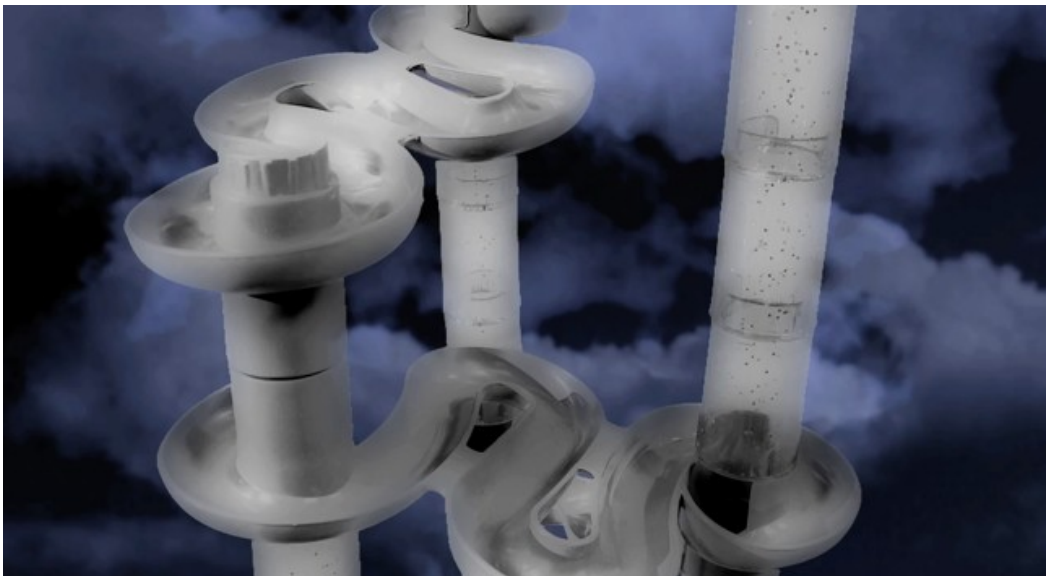


Figure 92: *'Marble Run' (Night Vision Mix)*, 2014, digital HD, sound, 12'56"

During the post-production of *'Bodmin Moor'* I decided that my next experimental project would be one that informed my concept and practice of continuity editing. I bought a marble run, a children's toy. Once constructed, it becomes a suspended architectural labyrinth of interlinked

plastic chutes. Marbles, powered by the force of gravity, are then rolled down these interconnected pathways. I would film this digitally and use the footage to advance my camera and editing skills.

I constructed different combinations of the marble run, filming each different assembly on video, complete with descending marbles, in front of a green screen (1). It was a relatively simple and straightforward project in its concept and execution. I concentrated on the filming process, applying different camera angles and concentrating on the framing of the subject matter. The resultant footage gave me a wide variety of choice of shots from which to edit. By using the green screen, I could determine the architectural model's visual backdrop. I decided to alter the chromatic aspect of both the marble run and the background by negating nearly all colour reference and, applying specific software filters, produce an optically radiant marble run. This first edit follows the various marbles rolling down the chutes to their collection point at the bottom of the supporting structures. I filmed and then applied a keyed background, an underlay of sky and clouds. The balance of those elements in the composite mix gives the final moving imagery an iridescent, moonlit glow.

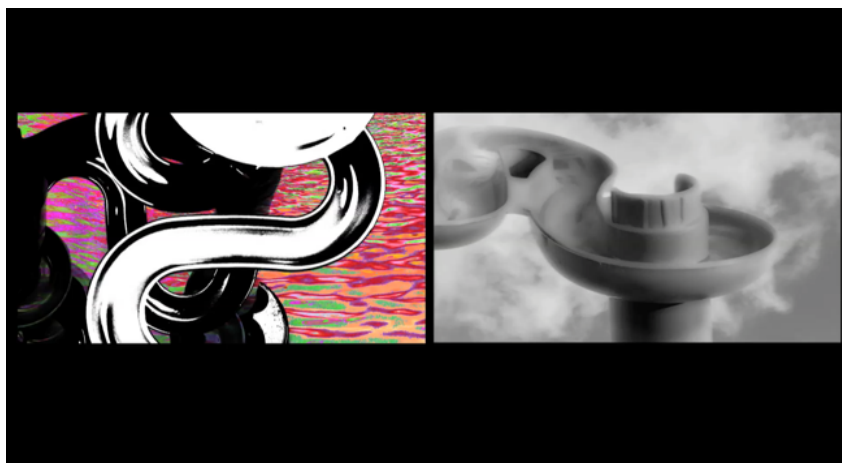


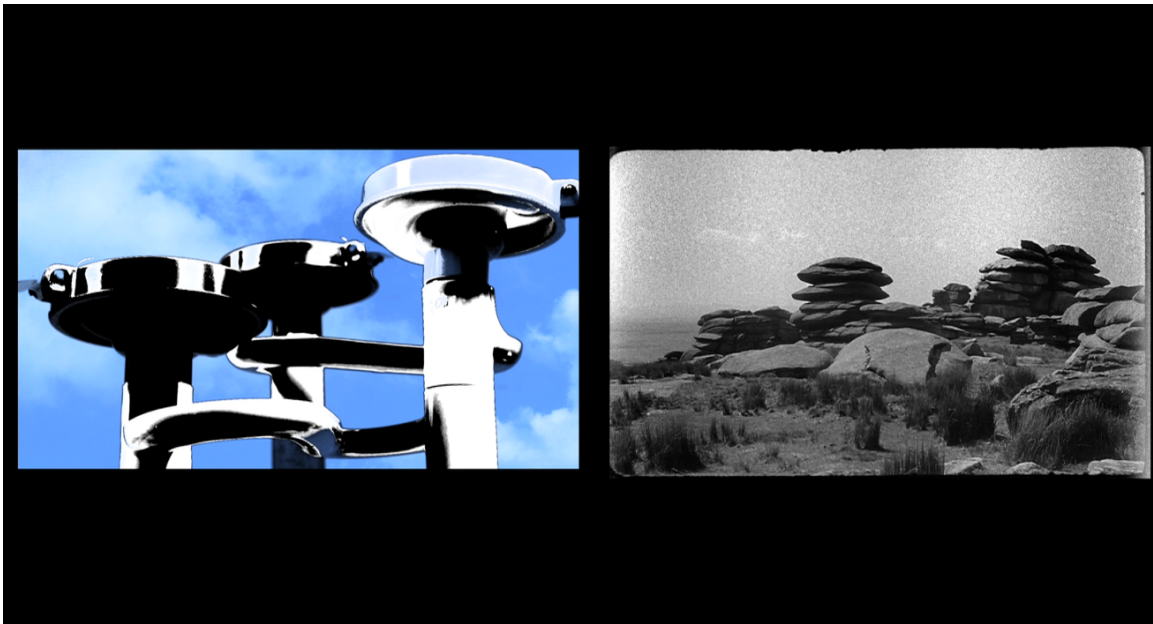
Figure 93: 'Marble Run', 2014, *Paradiso é Inferno Mix*, digital HD video, sound, 10'00".

I also produced a second re-mixed film which was, again, a split screen project. One screen was edited into a very soft monochromatic framework whereas the second screen edit was diametrically opposite in tonality. The filters applied in this new mix of the marble run resulted in a very high contrast black and white structure set within a lurid colour environment. I had recorded the sounds of a summer fayre on a digital field recorder. By mixing that audio with rhythmic patterns programmed on a drum machine, I established a sound bed for both films.

At this point in the doctorate, I was researching the ideas and theories of Nicolas Bourriaud and the re-mix culture. As well as focusing on the ability to explore cinematic space in terms of the continuity of motion within the frame, the marble run was also an architectural project that expanded the dynamic possibilities and opportunities in re-editing and re-mixing a project.

1. Green Screen – Filming with a green screen involves filming a person or adding visual effects in front of a solid colour, usually a light green hue. Then, by digitally removing, or 'keying out' that colour, you can drop that scene into a background of choice in post-production. Removing the coloured background is also known as 'chroma keying'. <https://adobe.com/video/discover>

Space: Four – ‘You’re Going To Wake Up One Morning and See Which Side of the Bed You’re On’



*Figure 94: “You’re Going to Wake Up One Morning & See Which Side of the Bed You’re On”, 2015, 7’50”, digital HD, 16mm b/w film*

This film project was the third re-mix of the marble run footage and was a combination of the two visual mediums that I was experimenting with during the initial stages of the doctorate: analogue film and digital video. I had already experimented with alternative edits of the marble run film and with the faulty 16mm footage of film that had slipped through the camera gate of the Cornish analogue film *‘Bodmin Moor’*, each of which explored different aspects of those chosen mediums.

I re-edited and produced this composite two screen film for the Summer doctoral show. The aesthetic contrast between a digital approach to making films and an analogue approach and their comparative visual diversities was demonstrated by projecting both films simultaneously on two opposing screens. This dual screen document is a record of both films

edited onto one split screen.

The commonality of both films was the onscreen representation of rhythmic flow; the spheres of the marble run descend along the chutes and the water flows down from the mountain spring, both finally terminating in their respective seas. Gravity is the driving force in both films.

The internal rhythm of both films comes from the editing, the pacing of each shot. The digital film has a construct of fast, dynamic cuts whereas the analogue film incorporates long, considered takes. The edit patterns of both films draw attention to the materiality of each other; the digital with its green screen artificiality, the analogue with its flash frames and inconsistent processing. The digital edit employs a lurid electronic colour, focuses on an architectural structure, an artificial artifice complete with a toxic 'lake'. The analogue edit belongs to a black and white organic reality, Neolithic stone circles within a natural, elemental environment.

The combination of both films was an attempt to show the contrasting materiality of both mediums set in abandoned spaces but also signposting two material pathways of creative composition that I could select when developing film projects.



Space: Five – ‘Swinging London 66/95/15’



Figs 95 - 98: ‘Swinging London 66/95/15’, 1995, 2015, Super 8, sound, 5’30” looped.

I developed my interventionist experiments with the transformation and abstraction in editing archival found footage. The research and practice of appropriation had led me to re appraising and re appropriating my own film archives. Amongst my research, I had been preparing pre-production notes and ideas for two projects that were based around existing feature films. They were both British films of the 1960’s; Nicolas Roeg’s *‘Performance’*(1970) and Michelangelo Antonioni’s *‘Blow Up’* (1966).

'*Swinging London 66/95/16*' was a film project that revisited and appropriated Antonioni's take on 1960's London. '*Blow Up*' follows a photographer who tries to ascertain whether he has been witness to a murder. At one point, whilst re-visiting the scene of the potential crime, the actor pauses in his search for clues that could verify his obsession for the truth. He watches a tennis match 'played' by stereotypical hippies with imaginary rackets and balls. This becomes a metaphorical (non)-visualization of his inconsequential odyssey.

I'd shot Super 8 footage in that same location previously as part of a promotional music video that referenced the Antonioni film in style and its tennis scene and setting of the murder mystery. I had also filmed an actor within a photographic studio. In the event, the record company and the artist parted company before the video was complete, the product was not released and all material I had shot for it ultimately became part of my film archives. This un-edited footage still contained the essential elements for a new project. The medium of choice was Kodak Super 8 film, both colour and black and white stock, in order to give an authenticity to the overall look of the film. I had filmed the tennis court both with and without the actors and filmed the 'murder' location with and without actors. Their dress code was authentic and historically accurate. I also shot additional stock in both locations with film shot at 8 frames a second.

I was not interested in replicating the film *per se*, but in re-visiting the location as a space that referenced Antonioni's film. The video artist Douglas Gordon has appropriated and re-contextualised popular films

such as *24-Hour Psycho* (1993), slowing down Alfred Hitchcock's original film so that it took an entire day to complete its narrative cycle. In *Through a Looking Glass* (1999), he manipulates a scene involving actor Robert de Niro from Martin Scorsese's film *Taxi Driver* (1976). The French artist Pierre Huyghe was the filmmaker who recreated Hitchcock (again) in *Remake* (1994-95) which revisits *Rear Window* (1953). After *Remake* he then used the real-life perpetrator of a bank robbery, originally produced as the film *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975) by Sidney Lumet, to produce *The Third Memory* (1999).

I originally discovered Antonioni's *Blow Up* locations of the tennis court and murder scene (a plateau above the park and tennis courts) in South East London. I considered these sites as zones of filmic and mnemonic possibilities. Firstly, I was re-visiting the spaces I had already visited twenty years previously to film what had become my archival footage. The feature film '*Blow Up*' had already been shot there thirty years before that. It was a project that could function on its own merit but incorporating the recognition and integration of viewers' memories of the original film was a prime function of my intention. '*Swinging London 66/95/15*' should be seen to be in a space where memories of the original filmic event reside and the mis-én- scene of my archival Super 8 footage collide. This introduces the possibilities of a stratification of events, of characters and location and a multiplicity of interpretation of a fictional event that may or may not have occurred.



This project is intended as a gallery-based project. The footage is edited into a screen that is divided up with the markings of a tennis court. The clips each have a duration of around five seconds. The change of the characters' positions within the on-screen tennis court grid is determined by the noise of the striking of the tennis ball. The clips of film appear, each illustrating a sequence of moving images as the invisible 'ball' travels backwards and forwards across the on-screen tennis court. The large television monitor on which the looped film is displayed is clad in a frame of the synthetic 'grass' that is used in modelling and is marked and cut so that the sections of the tennis court display the moving image. The metronomic sound of the ball being rhythmically struck is the recording of an analogue camera shutter. It marks the shots and marks time as the scenario is endlessly played out. The sound repeats every five seconds, setting up a constant rhythm. The title is a synonym of Richard Hamilton's print '*Swingeing England*' (1967), itself a play on words of the popular phrase 'Swinging England'.

The concept of producing a film that combines space, memory and participation with clues embedded within the narrative continued the original ideas of mnemonic confusion, the main thread of story in Antonioni's film. It was also heavily influenced by the intentions of Janet Cardiff's '*Muriel Lake Incident*' (1999), her gallery-based film tableaux that contains the elements of a crime film noir and a narrative for the viewer to piece together.

‘While the chaotic proliferation of production led conceptual artists to the dematerialization of the work of art, it leads post-production artists towards strategies of mixing and combining products’ (trans. Herman:2002).

Space: Six – ‘The Beach (Boys) Beneath the Street’



Figs 99 & 100: ‘The Beach (Boys) Beneath the Street’, 2017, digital HD loop, 3’49”

After quoting the words of Raoul Vanteigem in ‘*When Gene Krupa Met Raoul Vanteigem*’ (page 37), the initial reading of Henri Lefebvre’s writings as part of my literary research had led onto other philosophical and academic papers on space and the *quotidian*. As a founding member of the Situationists, Guy DeBord had written a Marxist critique of the then developing post war West, ‘*The Society of the Spectacle*’. It is a manifesto for revolutionary freedom from what he viewed as the capitalist military industrial complex of the dominant world order. I decided to work on a project that would celebrate the fifty years since its publication.

I produced a visual piece that was not a totem to the ideology or rhetoric but an oblique tribute to the dreams and aspirations of the

Situationists, a reflection from their Utopian manifesto and quest, '*the beach beneath the streets*'. The title of my project is a wordplay on this poetic aspiration of theirs, combined with the vocal harmony group forever synonymous with a Californian lifestyle of leisure and conspicuous consumption. The films produced were also inspired by the large canvases and the 360-degree screens I had seen at the Tate's David Hockney retrospective in 2016. The images are filmed reflections of water from below floor level through the windows and up onto the walls and ceiling of a darkened room. Several images from the same fixed camera are montaged and gradually fade into each other on each screen. They have been colourised in the edit to render an vivid blue tonality. There are four separate moving image movies. They were produced for exhibition, intended as four large scale single stand-alone screens that are arranged in a square configuration facing each other for an immersive experience. There is no audio content.

The project explores the space of the frame as a fluid canvas in the truest sense given the nature of the moving images and is a developmental acknowledgement of a move towards producing work that is potentially large screen in its ambition.

## Space: Seven – ‘Caliban’s Song’



Figure 101: ‘Caliban’s Song’, 2017, mobile phone footage, 4’13”.

‘Caliban’s Song’ is a document of a citizen who is establishing his own rhythms and social space within an Everyday environment. I came across the subject whilst walking along Kensington High Street. He was more than happy to be filmed. I captured his performance on my mobile phone. At this point, I was his only spectator, with an occasional pedestrian walking by, unconcerned and disregarding this public performance.

I had responded to a brief set for an exhibition entitled ‘*Tempest*’. I wanted to produce work for it that used Shakespeare’s final play as a springboard. On the island where Shakespeare’s ‘*Tempest*’ takes place, Caliban is the indigenous friendly savage who does not adhere to any social boundaries. In my self-imposed brief, I could only select my subject matter from daily life.

I filmed using my mobile phone's slow-motion facility. When filming, the software begins at a normal speed and then slows down to a half speed. I transferred the footage into my edit software. I'd also filmed vertically with the camera and so turned the image around horizontally into a more conventional cinematic frame. Once I had completed that, the image became elongated and distorted it in such a way so that when combined with the slow-motion effect, it gave the performer the illusion of being made of rubber, his limbs twisting and vibrating as if they were elastic.

An uninhibited public performance such as this citizen's are not normally an everyday spectacle, unless, perhaps, if he were a bone fide street performer. The public's general reaction to his presence on this occasion was not to outwardly react at all.

'While there has been a concerted media campaign against the increasing surveillance of motorists, the increasing surveillance of pedestrians over the last decade has largely gone unnoticed. Pedestrians tend to be watched for individual signs of 'deviance'. (Moran 2005: 32)

Filming the dispossessed, the abandoned and the isolated is not a new phenomenon but an historic photographic tradition. There is an attraction in the freewheeling individual leading a baggage free lifestyle, throwing off the shackles of social convention. It is '*Nostalgie de la boue*';

the nostalgia of mud. Essentially a romanticizing of the 'other', of people who are considered primitive or of a lower caste but have a high spiritual value.

In his paper '*Walking With: A Rhythmanalysis of London's East End*', (2013), Yi Chen analyses the social and temporal/special relationships in '*Fergus Walking*', William Raban's 1978's 16 millimeter film of a man walking along Bromley Street in Whitechapel. Yi Chen uses Henri Lefebvre's text on the rhythms of the body in conjunction with the rhythms of everyday life as a method of analysis. The parallels with '*Caliban*' and '*Fergus*' lie within their 'bodily rhythms', which are 'points of contacts of social and biological rhythms' (Yi Chen: 2013). The editing strategy that Raban employs means that, although there is a definite rhythm to Fergus's steps, objects, windows and doorways appear, disappear and re-appear. Because of this effect, it seems that the protagonist never actually arrives at his destination. Yi Chi states that this means that 'the viewer reflects on the possibilities of the film medium in unveiling the spatial-temporal dimensions of experience'. Raban himself states that his practice is about 'making films that show people things, not telling them how to interpret the world' (Raban:lux Online Archive).

'*Caliban's Song*' is a film that highlights an individual who presents a visible (and rhythmic) social schism within an affluent social environment. But as a moving image it is less than straightforward. My strategic intervention of the moving image comes in the form of an inherent technical glitch: the slow-motion software within the camera/phone only

triggers after two or three seconds of filming giving the effect of slipping out of 'normal' time into slow motion. Equally importantly, in turning the moving image into landscape format from portrait mode, the figure and image become elongated. Combined with the slow motion this gives the performers body a loose, rippling quality of motion.

This film follows on from the isolationism and feral qualities of characters inherent in Ben Rivers films. It can be considered a crossover piece since it reconfigures a social space but in recording it, the image becomes abstracted.

Space: Eight – 'The Hero's Journey'



*Figs 102 - 105 : 'The Hero's Journey', 2017, digital HD, 6'15"*

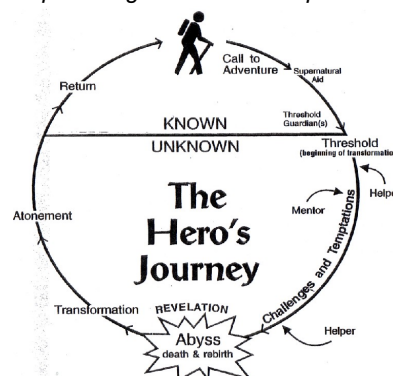
After completing 'The Letter 'C'', I wanted to continue the exploration of narrative on screen and the narrative form within my practice. My research and my pedagogy focused on both the classical

three and five act narrative structure as vehicles for film storylines. I decided to re-examine *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (Vogler:2003). This is a book that started out as a seven-page memo written by Christopher Vogler when he was an executive within the Walt Disney organisation. His corporate instructions were to find a commonality of historic story patterns, which could then be adapted into successful formulae for films using his conclusions as a narrative template. The subsequent book was itself a diluted analysis of Joseph Campbell's '*The Hero with A Thousand Faces*' (1949). Both books examine the stories and legends of global cultures, reducing the many stories gathered into shared narrative patterns.

The Hero's Journey involves a central character who is challenged and forced to leave his or her everyday existence on an odyssey that involves many gateways of trials and danger. The hero battles their way through each stage, solving the problems that beset them, eventually resulting in their redemption and transformation. I decided to employ the narrative pattern of this journey in a film that follows the hero's quest, and Vogler's prescriptive key stages.

According to Vogler, there are twelve key stages of this journey.

Fig 106 - Christopher Vogler's circular map of the Hero's Journey



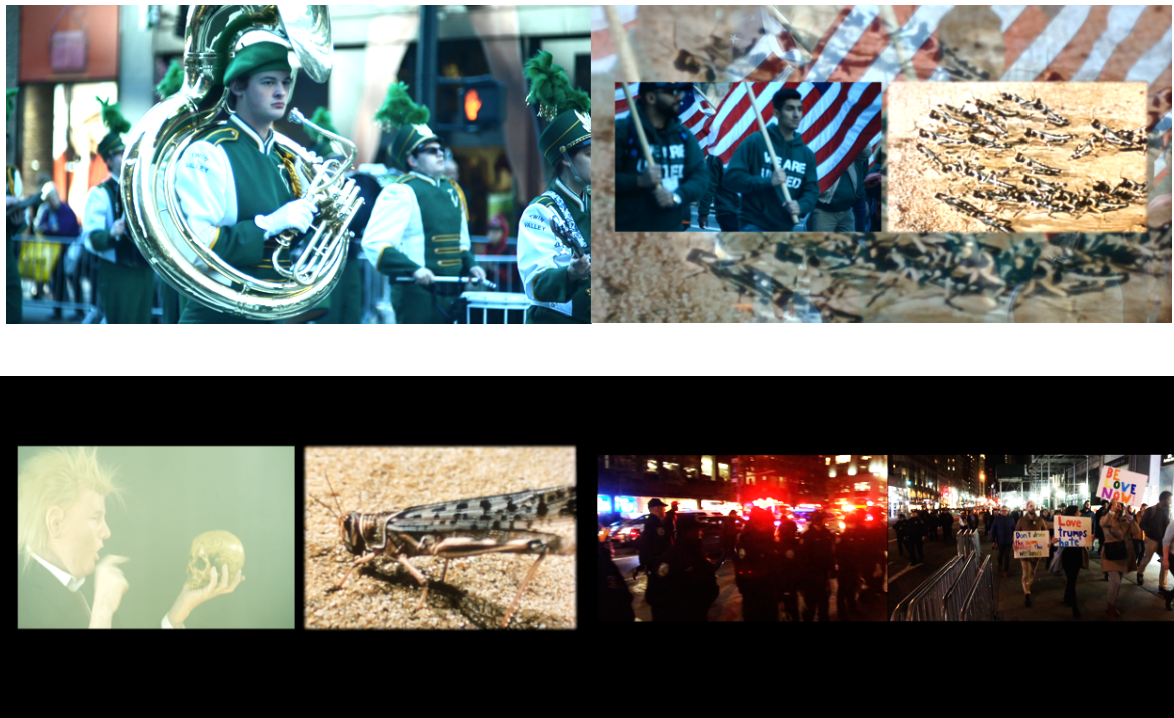


I filmed the footage for this project within the confines of several fields that had been left to fallow and were overgrown with grass and vegetation. The camera travels through this undergrowth without rising above the foliage. The viewer only sees the hero's, and therefore the camera's point of view. The journey is almost entirely obscured by tall grass. Each of the twelve stages of The Hero's Journey are signposted onscreen; the transitions between these chapters are marked by explanatory flash cards and a jump cut to a different configuration of vegetation.

At the very end of the film, the camera/hero finally sees glimpses of civilization over the top of the grass in the form of distant houses, but no final end to this journey is reached. This abstraction of Vogler and Campbell's Hero's Journey on camera juxtaposed with the chapter headings transforms it into an abstracted and intangible concept.

The sound design was integral to this project. I mixed in non-diegetic sounds of the African bush and rainforest with the existing diegetic sound recorded during filming by the on-board camera microphone in order to give a broad, jungle-like ambience to the experience. As an experiment in on screen narrative progression, the film followed on from *'The Letter 'C'* by visually documenting the everyday and abstracting the final film construction visually and sonically.

Space: Film Nine – ‘The Letter ‘C’”



Figs 107- 110: ‘The Letter C’: 2017, digital HD video, 16mm archive film, mobile phone footage 6’23”.

‘The Letter C’ began as a film diary. I was in New York on the day that Donald Trump was officially sworn in and entered the White House as the 46th President of the United States. This event also coincided with Veterans’ Day, the American version of our Remembrance Sunday, when combatants who served in the national armed forces are honoured in a gesture of salutation and public parades.

I filmed the parades with a DSLR camera on the streets of New York as an act of documentation. The previous night I had filmed the public anti Donald Trump demonstrations, that were taking place on the streets of Manhattan with my mobile phone. I had been surprised by the degree of disaffection and animosity from both the demonstrators and the police,

something which continued to manifest itself throughout the next day, the day of the public marches. I have always filmed on the streets, but I was subject to a degree of visible security scrutiny whilst filming the marches. I used a variety of different lenses to capture the faces and characters on the street and in the parade. I filmed that night in a Times Square that was vibrant and almost hyper-real in terms of light and imagery.

Once I returned to London, I reviewed the footage. I decided to use it to construct a film that reflected this politically charged situation. I re-discovered a film in my archives which was a short 16mm public information film dating back to the 1950's. Its subject matter was how the application of new scientific methods were eradicating the threat of the locust in Africa. It was produced as an almost Disney-esque production, with women plotting charts of attack, animated sequences and some footage of scientists in white laboratory coats experimenting with different chemical poisons for killing locusts. There was also some close-up footage of the locusts either individually or en masse, relentlessly moving forward, consuming everything in their path.

When the footage of the march, complete with flags and marching ex-warriors was combined with the locust film, there was a definite line of narrative that suggested international hostility, with both factions moving inexorably towards each other. They appear as contestants in an act of mutual aggression. Rather than editing between the narrative visual imagery on a single screen, I made the decision to sub divide the screen

space as a more dynamic and balanced form of visual narrative. Both of the 'protagonists', the Veteran's Day marchers and the locust footage share a much more intimate on-screen connection with each other.

There was also the footage I had shot at night with the protesters and riot police in the streets of Manhattan that I wanted to include. But there had to be a visual balance with this and an additional visual element. That extra element became a personal performance as the newly elected Donald Trump in a variety of poses, shot in a studio environment. There were now four different visual elements to edit together. The screen space was divided and subdivided to maintain its visual dynamics and narrative themes.

The audio material and subsequent sound design came from a choice to use a text that would be diametrically opposed to the visual material, one that would require an audience to engage with the potential of an audio-visual combination. A hostile polemic would be too antagonistic and direct, I wanted subtlety, something that was more perceptive and less obvious. I had been experimenting with opening the Oxford English Dictionary at random and reading and recording whatever happened to emerge. I hired an American speaking narrator for a voice over, as an English-speaking voice would be too detached and divisive in terms of the screen elements. Using the recording studios at UEL Stratford, I recorded five different random selections with an American born narrator. What developed however, once I had opened up the dictionary at the letter 'C', was that many of the words quoted were

related to war, Capitalism and suffering. I decided to keep these choices that had emerged and ingested them into the project timeline, almost all in the order that they were recorded in.

The film was a much more complex construction than many I had previously executed. It was a combination of abstracting the everyday documentation of New York's streets with an intervention of found footage and a performative piece and then attempting a sympathetic rhythmic balance of on-screen elements. The final version has been edited to show as a single screen film, but I would like to return to explore it as a remixed multi-screen gallery installation.

Space: Film 10 – 'Close Ups, Let's Get A Few Close Ups'



*Figs 111 & 114: 'Close Ups, Let's Get A Few Close-Ups', 2017, digital HD, 16mm film, sound, 11'30"*

'What if the assumption is abandoned that space and time are mutually excluding opposites? What if space is the sphere not of a multiplicity of inert things, even one that is thoroughly interrelated? What if, instead, it presents us with a heterogeneity of practices and processes? Then it will not be an interconnected whole but an on- going product of interconnections. It will also be unfinished and open. This arena is not firm ground on which we stand. In no way is it a surface'. (Massey 2005: 107).

In the chapter '*Slices Through Space*' in her book '*For Space*' (2005), Doreen Massey proposes a re-orientation of commonly held models of time and space. Her theoretical re-purposing of spatial perception introduced the idea of creating a project that demonstrated a random and playful multiplicity by splicing or intercutting past, present and future. This proposal resonated with my exploration of narrative vehicles that involved the invasive effects of disturbing the rhythmic balances within the projected screen space. A principal springboard of the project was a desire to produce work by using the sonic components as the primary source and the sound design as a bedrock for the visual elements.

In film production, clapperboards are used to mark the point on film rushes where the audio and visual material are synchronized. The film making process records sound and picture separately. As part of a larger documentary project, I had been synching 16mm analogue film, allying the

magnetic audio tape with the film rushes. The footage for this project had been shot in 1974, in New York. It documented the rehearsal process for an off-Broadway revue that featured the American singer, Wayne/Jayne County. This material had eventually become a part of my archive: it was not needed for the intended project and had been discarded as unwanted by the artist's management company.

I began by listening through the audio rushes which contained the director's instructions, clapperboards, background noises and comments from cast and crew. The dialogue came from on-camera improvisations of Wayne County and Cherry Vanilla, both of whom, along with the director and most of the cast and crew, were part of the Andy Warhol's Factory coterie, still active as a creative collective force in 1974. What became evident on listening and selecting was the strong musicality and fluidity of the recorded dialogue. It also contained a hard-core element of droll wit and absurdity in its explicitly gay New York humour.

I began by editing out phrases from the recorded dialogue and organising them into groups. The criteria set for each group was either selecting specific phrases or simply taking a slice of dialogue that had an attendant rhythmic quality. By refining these two groups through the digital editing process it was then possible to establish unique phrases. Those phrases were edited together in musical 'bars' and the audio constructed along the lines of a song structure; (for example AAAABBBBAABB). This evolved into a rhythmically propelled sonic assembly that then became a foundation stone in linking together other similar structures within the

project. Still working purely with the audio component, I assembled a timeline for the film's sound design that I gradually built upon using this modular process. After cutting down the original assembly, I constructed a 10 minute timeline of musically and rhythmically structured audio.

The study of the rhythmic patterns of speech within linguistics is called prosody. This examines various elements of the spoken word within sentence construction, concentrating on pitch, duration and rhythm. The audio content of this film came from the recordings of the rehearsal for the revue, which were committed to magnetic tape via a Nagra tape recorder, the standard machine used for recording sound with film at the time. By isolating the different slices and sections of the recorded dialogue, it was possible to build up these rhythmic structures into individual units. The speech patterns of the performers and participants often ran whole sentences together into one word; this is known as 'chunking' where blurring or rushing the articulation of separate words changes the open spaces between words into closed ones. There were also off mic sounds, such as audible bangs and crashes that were often embedded as part of these structures. These added to the percussive rhythms of the repetitive phrases. This was a new territory of practical enquiry. It was a very mechanical yet musical way forward in terms of creativity with an emphasis on the intonation and stress of repetitive dialogue.

When constructing the project's moving images, I edited together two separate films, both of which were documentary projects. The first film was a visual essay I had shot on the beach and shoreline of Daymer Bay



in Cornwall. The second were the appropriated documentary rushes of the 1974 musical review. Both projects collide within the mutually shared space of the screen. I edited and intercut the images of both films to the prepared soundtrack using a repetition of imagery that matches each 'bar' or phrase. I included the markers and clapperboards as a direct reference to the film making process, or rather the mode of documentary film production from 45 years ago, reinforcing the artificiality of the artifice. The viewer can see the means of production within the frame in conjunction with the mechanical rendering of time and space.

This is the space as the sphere of dynamic simultaneity, constantly disconnected by new arrivals, constantly waiting to be determined (and constantly undermined) by the construction of new relations. It is always being made and always, therefore unfinished (except that finishing is not on the agenda). If you were really to take a slice through time it would be full of holes, of disconnections, of tentative, half formed first encounters. (Massey, 2005: 68).

Massey's conception of space as a place of playful accidents and fractured possibilities prompted a re-examination of linear narrative and led to this project's inception and production. This is the frame as a fluid, reconfigured space of parallel narratives and as an experiment with the on screen rendition of time and space as a rhythmic non-linear experience. It also marks the emphasis on potential sonic pathways for my future film productions.

Space: Film Ten – ‘Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven (But Nobody Wants to Die).



Figs 115 – 118: “Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven (But Nobody Wants to Die)”, 2018, HD Video/Scanned Photographs, sound, 12’.00”.

I wanted to produce a film that would re-populate abandoned spaces with archival imagery. This project would develop the material process of film production begun with ‘Close Ups, Let’s Get A Few Close Ups’ (page 107) and ‘The Letter C’ (page 104). Incorporating images with a strong and harmonious aesthetic in relation to their new environment would be the visual challenge. I also decided on filming spaces that were thematically interlinked. In this film, there are two component structures in terms of imagery. The first is a selection of graveyard locations, all shot with a constantly moving DSLR camera that pans either right or left. These

panning shots are bookended by images of two abandoned churches, Roche Rock Chapel near Saint Austell and Saint Cohan's Church in Merther, near Truro: both of these locations are in Cornwall.

The second component is a selection of historic portraits and photographs I had collected from markets and shops that specialise in house clearance. I bought these into the project with the intention of mixing these images in with the graveyard locations. As the frame pans around these photographic images float upward and off screen, presumably, as popular imagination would have it, to heaven. The film is grounded in the concept of conspicuous and continuous consumption embodied within the all-consuming inevitability of linear time.

I wanted the project to pivot on a combination of re-cycling the dead and gallows humour. I documented the selection of secular spaces on HD video. In this film, still moments of appropriated photographic portraits are illuminated within a rich and colourful landscape. There were aesthetic considerations in filming those landscapes. Light was the major consideration; I required a series of bright, well-lit spaces to explore the opulence of colour and tonality within the images but also to give what could be thematically dark and bleak, the luminosity that the subject deserved.

The archival photographs were all scanned, with both exposure and frame corrected and loaded into the edit software. I undertook a

series of tests by incorporating the photographs into the different spaces until I was reasonably satisfied with the results. If I was reanimating the dead, then the film had to have both wit and dignity.

‘...the force of photographic images comes from their being material realities in their own right, richly informed deposits left in the wake of whatever emitted them, potent means for turning the tables on reality – for turning it into a shadow’. (Sontag, 1979:43).

As a project, it is a continuation of the film I produced in 2017, ‘*Close Ups, Let’s Get A Few Close Ups*’. The narrative of that film revolved around my splicing together footage filmed in 1974 of a documentary crew documenting the rehearsals and backstage footage of a gay, off Broadway revue. This collides with footage I had filmed in 2016 of footage filmed by a fictitious BBC wildlife documentary crew.

The film is also an attempt to have an underlying narrative element, one which embeds the idea of circularity and cyclical processes within its structure. The mise-en-scène within the moving frame evokes the permanent spectacle of circularity, orbits within orbits and wheels within wheels. In its narrative architecture, the film maps a *suggested* narrative; that is, it assembles a collection of filmic components that form new narrative interpretations and connections within the viewer, following not a definitive, conventional storyline, but an organic one whose meanings are assembled and stitched together by a cognitive subjectivity.

Nicolas Bourriaud writes around the concepts and practice of what he terms Postproduction. Postproduction is a terminology that is used in film and audio production, also in industrial processes and so is tied to a concept of re cycling and re purposing the cultural and material debris of a consuming society. Bourriaud sees the prime movers in this new creative landscape as the DJ's and studio programmers that fuse musical outputs into a fresh sphere by remixing. In its original musical context, this involves reimagining the sonic architecture of original works or in combining a cross collateral of two or more models. In terms of film, this concept means that it is possible to take the audio-visual elements of a film project and revise, reinterpret and reversion them as a new piece of work. If music can have many different final versions, then so can filmic output. In a creative arena this can gestate into a fresh new aesthetic. Having worked as a freelance editor I have often worked on up to ten different versions of a single advertising commercial, so this was not a new concept. But the appeal of Bourriaud's writing is that he ties in the ideas of utilising found and recycled materials, adapting the aesthetic of the flea market, the land fill and the skip into the digital domain. His theories on remix, combined with the writings of Lev Manovitch have actively resonated with my filmic working practice in refocusing on the significance of the archive.

I recorded and added a voice over for my soundtrack to augment the birdsong and sounds of nature. The text was a Lefebvre *pensé* around

the subject of need and desire and is spoken in French. Once I had synchronized this voiceover into the sound design, I typed the English translation into the software and at the bottom of the screen. I thought that the text was an integral part of the piece. However, I discovered from the audience's post viewing feedback, that the subtitles had distracted from the visual content. They disrupted the visual flow of the film, breaking the bonded elements up into incomplete fractions. The solution was simple; I removed the sub-titles. I then blended the voice over deeper into the mix and became an unobtrusive but essential part of the film. The musicality of the voice over added to the depth of the piece.

*'Everybody Wants to Go Heaven (But Nobody Wants to Die)'* is an attempt at new experiments with time and space but also with structure, (re-)animated performance and to comment on the regular pulse of cyclical consumption. It is a dynamic juxtaposition of a junkyard aesthetic of tangible accumulation and re-appropriation in the form of photographs augmenting the deserted spaces of the dead. Repopulating these graveyards with images of people, themselves gone from this life, illuminates an undertow to the peaceful harmony created within these spaces. The re-animated inhabitants of these final resting places emerge as emissions of energy and imagery. They are in a new process of becoming. Following on from Doreen Massey's idea of 'slices through space', they become nomad light waves and pathways through the everyday, an everyday of wormholes, trapdoors and secret passages. 'In spatial configurations, otherwise unconnected narratives may be brought into contact, or previously connected ones may be wrenched apart. There is always an element of chaos. This is the chance of space.' (Massey, 2005:111).

This process of re-constructing and re-configuration has become a personal new cartography, mapping out uncharted territory of spatial dissonance and zonal harmony. The project plays with the collecting of space and structure, real, constructed or imagined cinematic space and playing with the relationship between them both. With repeat viewing the audience may discover new fragmented and unresolved narrative elements within that frame space. The meta-narratives captured within the filming, those small, moments embedded within the quotidian become re translated with repeat viewing. The film aims playfully towards a rich, re interpreted, interwoven text, both visually and aurally.

Much of my research for this project was based on '*Rhythmanalysis*' (1992), Henri Lefebvre's writings on rhythm and 'cyclical processes and movement'. This continues thematically in materiality and process in Nicholas Bourriaud's marketplace of the lost and fading image re-established in environments of deserted and abandoned space.

## Pathway Two - Abstraction

### Abstraction: Film One – ‘Some Field Notes on an Arcadian Landscape’



Fig. 119: 'Some Field Notes on an Arcadian Landscape', 2015, 16mm B/W film, hand painted and manipulated 16mm film, 4'56"

After completing the *Bodmin Moor* and the subsequent re-mixed versions, I decided to use the previously discarded blurred footage. It had not been correctly exposed as it slipped through the film gate of the Bolex camera during filming. This accidental intervention had resulted in an automatically abstracted series of moving imagery. This led in turn to a decision to craft another film based on the Bodmin Moor environment.

I slowed the blurred footage down in the digital edit suite. I prepared a film that consisted of clear 16mm film leader as a base. I painted onto the film with inks and then transferred the resultant film into a digital file. Once that process was completed, I ingested the film file into the edit software and experimented with it digitally using various filters. The results were added as a semi-transparent layer on top of the blurred footage.



There is no direct narrative or soundtrack. This project was a formal experiment into the process of combining two abstracted films, one black and white, the other colour. It addressed the screen as a 'moving painting', a fluid canvas that projected both films at 8 frames per second. This deceleration of the imagery was linked with the creative processes in creating the two films, one automated and the other crafted by hand. This film was also an investigation of failure: the failure of the Bolex camera during filming and the re-appropriation of the resultant imagery. The final film was a result of accident and chance as the two films layers slip in and out of time with each other. I included '*Some Field Notes on an Arcadian Landscape*' as a part of my Summer Doctoral show.

'The contemporary work of art does not position itself at the termination point of "the creative process" (a finished product to be contemplated) but as a site of navigation, a portal, a generator of activity.' (Bourriard, 2007: p19).

Abstraction: Film Two – 'A Complete and Utter Waste of Time'

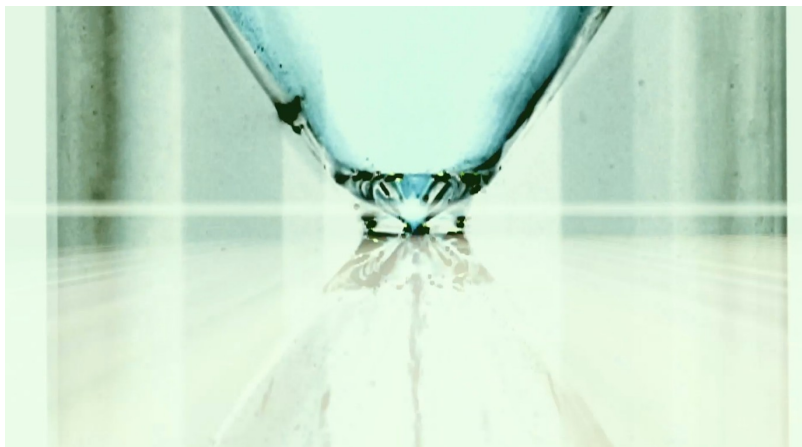


Fig. 120, 'A Complete & Utter Waste of Time', 2016, high speed digital HD video, 5'25"

After completing *'An East End Soap Opera'*, I produced this abstracted moving image as a response to a brief that required a submission for a gallery. It was designed to be shown as a single monitor film, and looped so that, when projected, it became a perpetual, repetitive sequence. As in *'An East End Soap Opera'*, the theory and logic of that previous construct led again to my using a fixed, locked-off camera recording a close-up image in order to set up an abstracted rhythmic pattern on screen. The image is of a sand timer gradually transferring its contents from its upper chamber into the lower one. By filming this action at a higher rate of frames per second, when re-projected, the timing of the moving image is slowed down. In this case I filmed at 100 frames per second, 4 times the accepted rate of 25 frames per second. This was a deliberate strategy integral to the title of the film. The grains of sand pass slowly through the constricted space in the neck of the glass timer. Once established, this set up a rhythm of falling sand grains. The visual rhythm is disrupted by beams of light that burst out randomly and briefly illuminating the image.

This was the first time I had used mirrors during the filming process. They reflect shards of light back onto the neck of the sand timer. The image is often obscured by rays of darkness and light, only occasionally revealing itself in fleeting glimpses of the entire scene.

## Abstraction: Film Three – ‘Surge’

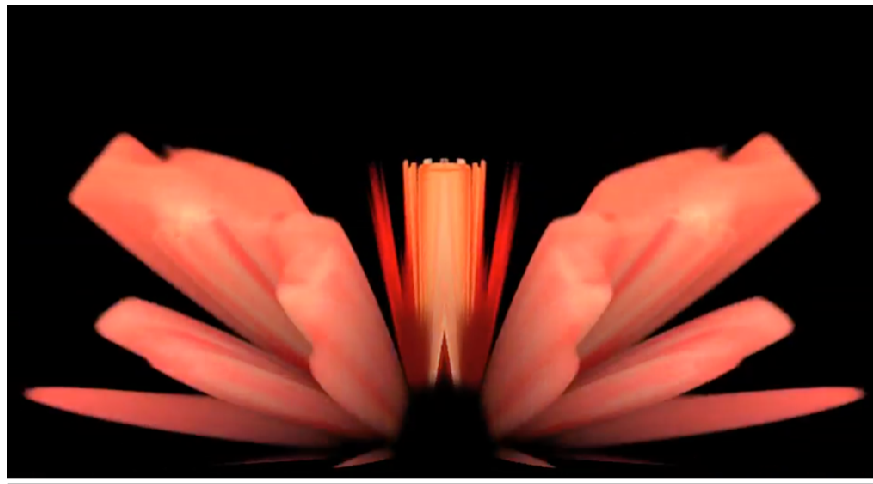


Figure 121: ‘Surge’, 2015, Digitally manipulated 16mm film loop, sound, 3’36”

‘Surge’ (2015), was a linear continuation of my previous exploratory editing and manipulation of appropriated archive film stock. I had previously travelled these digital pathways in the ‘Desert Island Digits’ (page 31) project and ‘Surge’ continued along the new audio-visual landscape of found footage. The final film was the result of a series of research and development tests, mapping out a different regulation of time, space and image within the edit and application of different filters.

Images need a focal point to provide a stronger visual emphasis. These are elements that stress a key point within the composition. The emphasis is usually an interruption in the primary pattern or a break in the rhythmic flow. A rhythmic repetition emphasizes attention to the repeated elements. I used the various filters in the edit software in combinations with each other and added a mirror filter as a final component. This filter splits the image in the centre so that the left- and right-hand side of the screen imitate each other. I then re-configured the frame rate and therefore the timing of the composition; the visual development of the

image was slowed down to 10 per cent of its original speed so that its organic visual progression becomes much more emphatic.

In conjunction with the imagery, I slowed the audio down by the same rate. The audio consisted of the sound of the analogue film projector, recording the physical transfer process of capturing the projected analogue film in conjunction with the images being recorded on a digital video camera. The on-board camera microphone recorded the mechanical sound of the projector by default. The synchronization of its pitch and swell matched the pulse of the film perfectly. When this audio was played back and slowed down in the edit suite it resembled the sound of large iron chains dragging the film through its gate. The decision to alter the speed of the soundtrack was a direct result of the re-appropriation of time I had employed in my film *'Tunnel Vision'* (85) where I had altered the frame rate of the camera to 8 frames per second to accelerate the resultant footage. *'Surge'* was screened at the end of the year Doctoral Show.

Abstraction: Film Four – 'Bought, Sold, Found, Stolen'



Figure 122: 'Bought, Sold, Found, Stolen', 2017, Digitally manipulated 16mm, sound, 4'28"

I produced this film as a further exploration of how I could manipulate and transform archival found footage into a film based on an organic narrative construction. It is rhythmically important as I recorded the soundtrack based on a combination of acoustic drums and percussion. It uses a variety of cymbals and acoustic drums that are de-tuned, sped up and slowed down. Exploring the sonic possibilities of the audio mix, I prepared a sound bed and synched the manipulated footage to it. The material marked another shift in my work by consciously moving away from less visually complex patterns of image abstraction towards a much more figuratively based visual narrative.

However, although this shift was a logical progression, I was unhappy with the final film. In retrospect, I feel that there is not a strong or harmonically balanced audio structure underneath the surface to support the flow of images. This was due to the rather sporadic nature of the soundtrack, which seems to be trying to accomplish far more in a short space of time than is comfortable. The images work by themselves, or could do in a revision or re-mix, but not necessarily in conjunction with the current sonic structure. As such, the film was a lesson in the balance of audio/visual information when approaching the construction of a film.

#### Abstraction: Films Five , Six & Seven

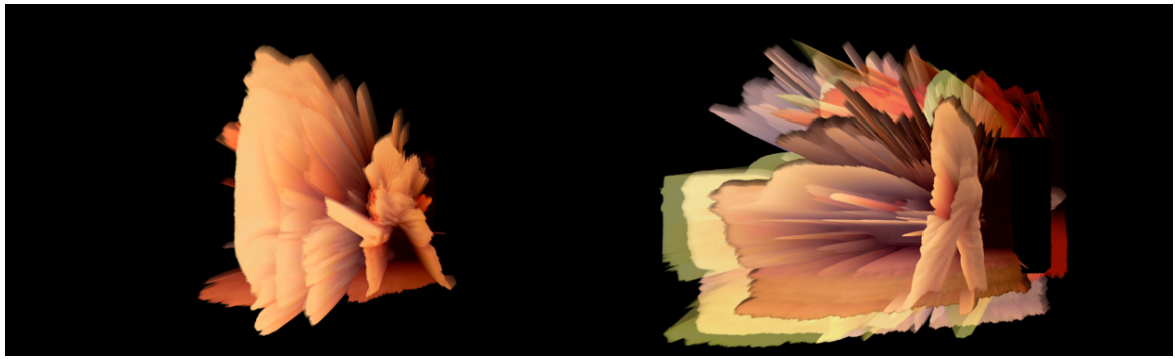
I had obtained 400 feet of 16mm archive film. The original subject matter was a documentary on the Lord's Cricket Ground and the English game of cricket itself. The abstraction of the moving image was a

progression of exploratory postproduction manipulation produced previously in *'Surge'* and *'Lost, Found, Bought, Stolen'*.

After transferring the film image to a digital medium, I experimented with the results in the edit suite. I applied two or three layers of imagery which were identical sequences that duplicated the initial foundation layer but with different colour palettes, slightly altered timings of on screen delivery, opacity and dimensions. After careful initial testing, I crafted the abstraction of the images towards a more stylised, figuratively orientated abstraction. Within the edit and the confines of the frame, this project transformed into an experimental pathway of digitally engineered moving images, with a strong visual emphasis on a highly colourful illusion of spatial depth.

The medium of analogue film differs from digital video in that the filmic image is formed by a chemical process, with light reacting to the silver nitrate coating of a film negative to form an image, whereas video images are formed by light waves being converted to electronic signals. The visual difference of the resultant images between film and video when captured digitally can be significant. When manipulating and abstracting the image, it becomes a process of working with a chromatically 'smoother' spectrum, a process that could be analogous to painting with oils. However, with the introduction of high definition and 4K video, the colour palette of video now has its own inherent high-quality attributes.'

## Abstraction: Film Five - King Willow



*Figs 123 & 124: 'King Willow' 2018, digitally manipulated 16mm, sound, 2'27"*

The first short film for this project was *'King Willow'*. The title comes from a name given to the cricket bat itself, the cricket bat being made from the wood of the willow tree. Working through layers of cricket match imagery, I decided to visually retain the original figurative elements in terms of abstraction. This pathway of experimentation entailed different tests in terms of processing the imagery until I was satisfied with the dynamics and visual aesthetic.

Whilst researching for the sound design, I came across the historic recordings of the legendary English cricket commentator John Arlott. I was interested in what the arcane rules of cricket represented and what they meant. But listening to Arlott's commentaries it became obvious that they were an esoteric maze of words and phrases, understood only to a very closed and informed circle. The audio phrases that I assembled became similar in its construction to the soundscape I had constructed for *'Close Ups, Let's Get A Few Close-ups'*. I cut out fragments and expressions and looped them. I recorded a short rhythm track with acoustic drums and percussion and added this to the film's audio with the intention of providing a dynamic rhythmic foil for the commentator's

looped phrases. The final film runs for just over three minutes.

Integral to the research into this project was the filmic output of Bill Morrison who works exclusively with archival found footage and nitrate stock. His early work included the restoration of the film *'Spark of Being'* (2011) in which Morrison re-filmed the safety copies of the original films which were printed on paper. He also rescued films that had been discarded years ago and had been buried in Alaskan permafrost in order to reassemble the lost films of *'Dawson City'* (2016), literally reanimating frozen time. His films *'Decasia'* (2008), and *The Great Flood*, (2014), are restorations of decaying and highly inflammable nitrate film archival film.



Fig 125: Bill Morrison, *'Decasia'* (2008), Restored archival nitrate film stock



Abstraction: Film Six – ‘Lazarski Bouenets’



Figure 126: ‘Lazarski Bouenets’ : 2018, digitally manipulated 16mm film, sound, 2’17”

‘Lazarski Bouenets’ was the second film produced using the same source material. After working on a black background for the previous film, I decided to construct my imagery on a white canvas background. The intention was to produce a film that actively researched shape, colour and movement. Again, I explored the use of multiple layers of reprocessed found footage. The overriding deliberations of the film were the design aesthetic and the style of editing. As in my more recent films, ‘Lazarski Bouenets’ includes a much stronger emphasis on figurative imagery, so it is possible to identify faces, individuals, and crowds within the final mix.

The film is synchronized to a performance of ‘Lazarski Bouenets’, a secular choral piece performed by the Bulgarian female choir, Le Mystère Des Voix Bulgarie. I chose this piece because I wanted a vibrant female chorus to match the drive of the film. I was influenced by the choral music

of the avant garde composer György Ligetti who Stanley Kubrick had used in his film '2001'(1968).

Another influence on the aesthetic of this film was the English filmmaker Jeff Keen whose work I had originally seen as part of a retrospective at the BFI on London's Southbank. He produced a large canon of films on shoe-string budgets from his Brighton base for nearly 40 years. They have a handmade, urgent and vibrant feel, that encompass comic books, cartoon imagery, pop culture, 'B' movie iconography and bold use of colour. I wanted to embody some of the fast, dynamic rhythm within '*Lazarski Bouenets*'.



Fig 127 & 128: 'Marvo Movie', GAZWRKX, 35mm stills, drawings, 1970 - 2000

## Abstraction: Film Seven – ‘Rhythmanalysis’



Figure 129: ‘Rhythmanalysis’, 2018, *digitally manipulated 16mm film, sound, 3’11”*

‘Rhythmanalysis’ is the last of three short films produced through the self-imposed grid of manipulating footage by taking the same source material of the cricket match documentary as used in the previous two short films.

Again, this third film of the project explores the visual pathway of manipulated film combined with a cohesive internal rhythm. The abstraction is far more nonfigurative in this third film, concentrating on the dynamics of the colour palette and the materiality of the subject matter. This time the audio consists of a slow percussive performance that the deliberately slow-moving images are synchronized to. The vigorous construction of the soundtrack prompts the edit points, with the final film’s origins lying within the earlier *‘Desert Island Digits’* project, where the synching of the audio with abstracted imagery provides a reciprocal visual dynamic.

## **Chapter Four: Conclusion**

'Rhythmic Abstraction and Uninhabited Space' is a record of detailed analysis and an academic reflection of the twenty-seven films that I produced for the Professional Doctorate in Fine Art by developing a working model of research through practice as an independent fine art filmmaker. It is a critical interrogation of visual and sonic components employed in producing moving imagery within the context of my own personal creative practice. It is an investigation that explores key components within the filmic production cycle under the rigour of a freshly constructed methodology of filmic production.

This initially involved a scholarly deconstruction of my then current practice and gradually rebuilding a new and restructured model. I used the general terms of space, abstraction and rhythm as the three main pathways to explore and analyse within the subsequent investigations. These elements were then segmented in turn into sub sections. In reconsidering my own technological means of production, I reduced my recording equipment to a digital DSLR camera, a portable audio recorder and uncomplicated edit software. I filmed in the mediums of both Digital High-Definition Video and analogue film. In conjunction with this I developed a digital film archive of found footage used throughout film productions.

With these audio-visual experiments, academic research continues to inform the development of my work. I examine both historic and contemporary practitioners and writers, beginning with the spatial theories of Lefebvre and Bachelard. I continue to integrate and develop Bourriaud's theories of postproduction and the remix throughout my creative output.

Adopting a reduced and condensed system of film production has resulted in a clarity of objectivity in terms of assessing and evaluating the preproduction, production and postproduction of each of the films. Each film and its results have informed the next. With the incorporation of a new working methodology, the analytical grid that has developed has become less rigid and more elastic in assimilating previously unforeseen possibilities. This is evidenced in the creative applications of the 'slipped' 16mm film footage from 'Keep the Homefires Burning' (page 38).

Within the exploration of elemental pathways, abstraction referred originally to a deconstruction of images that were then reconstructed in a non-representational form, the fragmented manipulation of imagery within the confines of edit software. As my research progressed, that methodology was also incorporated in sonic exploration and a more organic approach to narrative construction. The imagery has become more figurative in reference to its original source material. The creative experiments in uninhabited space have progressed from architectural and site-specific locations into broader spectrums embracing hodological and screen space. This expanding context explores the immersive space of 'An East End Soap Opera' (page 54), the domestic space of 'Home Movie' (page 49) and the sub-atomic space of 'Big Al's Supercollider' (page 59). Exploring rhythm within the moving image incorporates the length of shots, the flow and frequency of audio-visual information delivery and the expansion and compression of time within a film: not merely the mathematical application, but also in terms of the aesthetic results. The examination of sonic elements began with the initial sampled audio re-mixes of 'Desert Island Digits' (page 28) and continue through the field recordings incorporated in 'Keep the Homefires Burning' (page 38), the

voiceovers of 'The Letter C' (page 90) and the mechanical and rhythmical sound beds of 'Spacer' (page 64) and 'Close Ups, Let's Get a Few Close-Ups' (page 96).

In developing informed production techniques, the juxtaposition of elements has led to the mapping of new audio/visual channels of research. By combining two spatial elements, the *unheimlich* (uncanny) and domestic space in 'Home Movie' (page 49), in tandem with a recording technique of stop motion photography and combining historic archive footage of the homeless, a new screen space emerges. In 'Spacer' (page 71), the barren, black and white Cornish landscape is transformed into a different temporal zone with the juxtaposition of 1950's television archival science fiction colour footage.

My parameters of practical film production exploration were initially limited by self-imposed production and post-production restrictions. It was always the intention of this thesis to engage in an essentially empirical analysis of the films produced but the unexpected diversity of the additional information created has led to more continuous avenues of research. However, each film has organically informed the next, and, in doing so, these constraints have revealed more complex and stimulating results to pursue.

One example is my use of found footage. Originally a practical solution to budgetary limitations, the archive was primarily a source of film for research into image abstraction. It has become integral in the exploration of narrative and narrative structure, combining analogue with digital video and materiality, colour, and tone. Juxtaposing found footage with abandoned space at first in a primitive layering process has led to new explorations in digital compositing. Using home

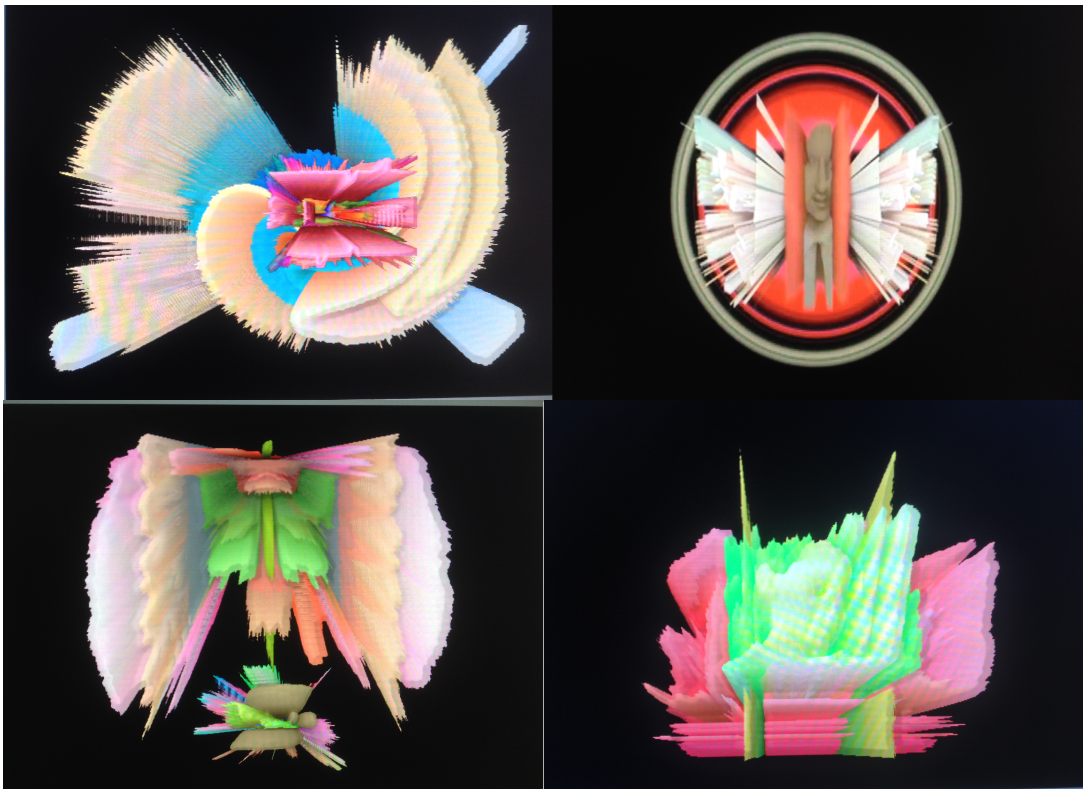
movies as a source has also led to the dynamic potential of cognitive perception, phenomenology, and memory as future conduits of investigation.

This thesis expands on the importance of developing a methodological analytical structure for re-examining fundamental elements, both physical and perceptual, in film production. In doing so, I have acquired a reflexive and intuitive decision-making process as a fresh catalyst of informed spontaneity. Most importantly, it has re-defined my research and practice as a fine art filmmaker and has led to new, continuous pathways of exploration and creative invention.



## Exhibitions

I entered the 'Desert Island Digit' films for screenings in both Hackney and Taalin, Estonia. 'Scars on the Landscape' was screened for Armistice Week in Saint Barnabas Church, London. I also entered films for screenings at the University of EastLondon AVA gallery. A long form project that I had developed as a producer, cameraman and editor, '*Beside Bowie: The Mick Ronson Story*', was screened by SkyArts during the doctorate.

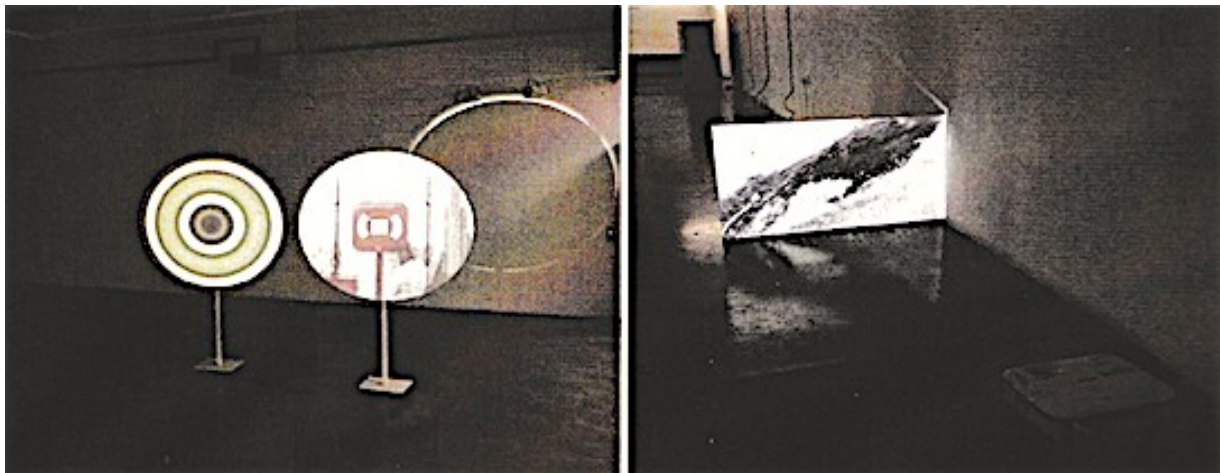
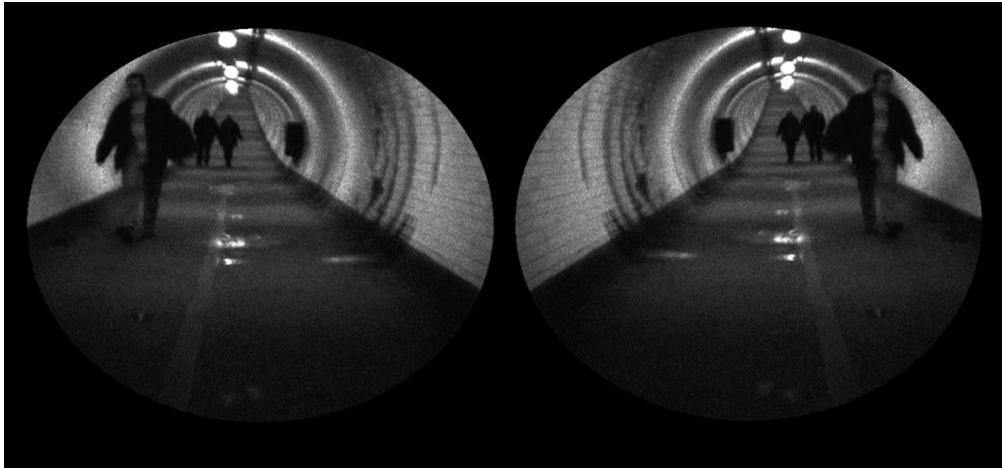


Figs : 130-133 : Stills from ' Stinkfoot/Acid Carnival ' & "Skank/Upsetter" 16mm manipulated found footage, from the ' My Top Ten/ Desert Island Digits ' Series, 2014

Five selected films from 'My Top Ten' Single screen (45'x30'), Three Day media event, The Old Public Baths, Eastway, Hackney Wick, London E12, 2014

'My Top Five: Desert Island Digits', 4'09" Looped, 2014, Five selected films from 'My Top Ten' Single screen (45'x30'), eight consecutive shows, Mutant Music, The Submarine Pens, Taalin, Estonia, 2015





Figs 134, 135 & 136 : 'Clearing The Ground', Solo Exhibition, AVA Gallery, ' *Tunnel Vision*', 2015, 4'6" 16mm film loop installation, "After The Rain" 2014, 9'25" 16mm film loop installation Spring 2015

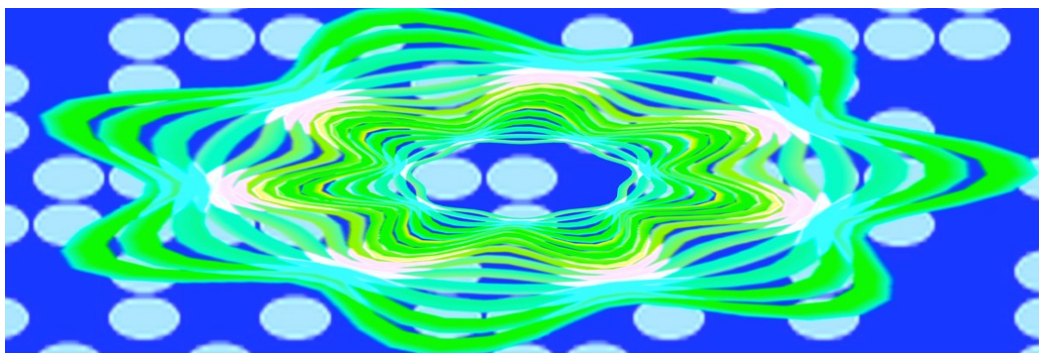


Figure 137: River, Staff Exhibition, AVA Gallery, 'GoWithTheFlow', 1 minute looped installation, HD video, 2016



Figures 138 & 139: 'Experiments in Time and Space', 'Close Ups, Lets Get A Few Close Ups' 2016, & 'Home Movie', 2016, Solo screenings, one week, Container Space, AVA, October 2016,

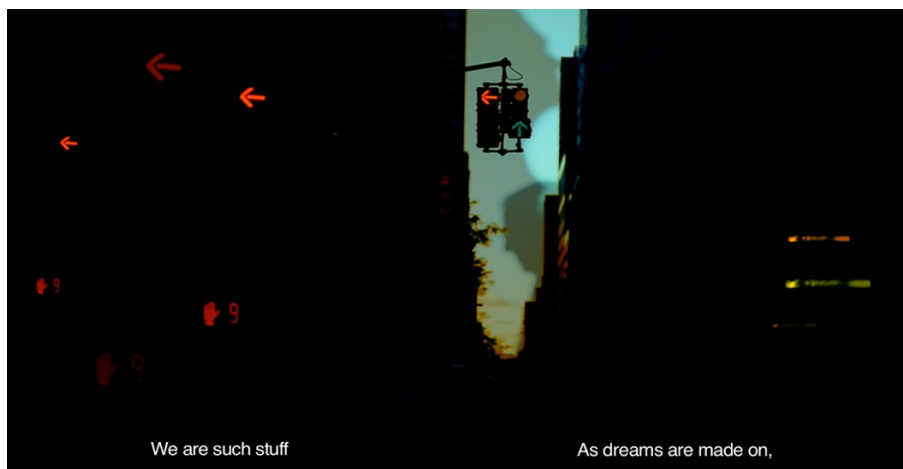


Figure 140: 'Tempest', Staff Group exhibition, AVA Gallery, 'Prospero's Song', time lapse multiple exposure loop, New York, 2017, Feb 2017

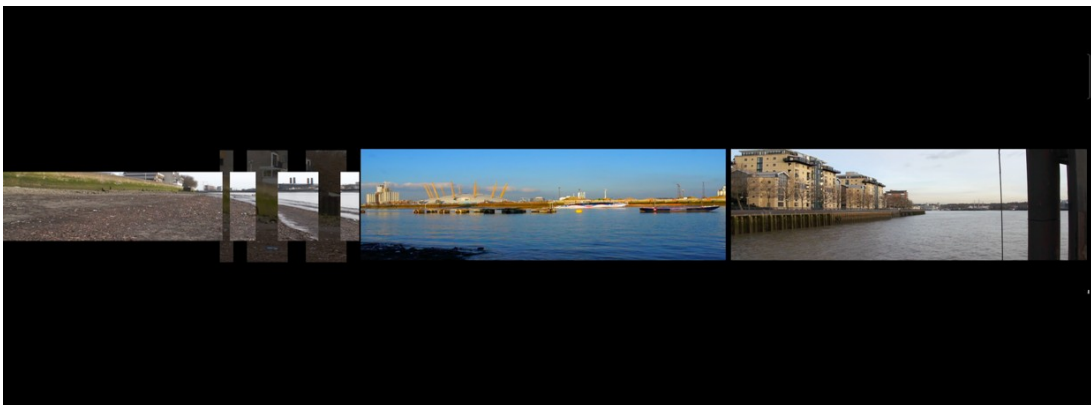


Figure 141: "Scars On The Landscape", 2014-17, from the East End Bomb Site project, Looped silent 30 minute three screen film on large monitor, HD video & Super 8 film, Saint Barnabas Church, Grove Road, London E3, Armistice Week, November 2017.

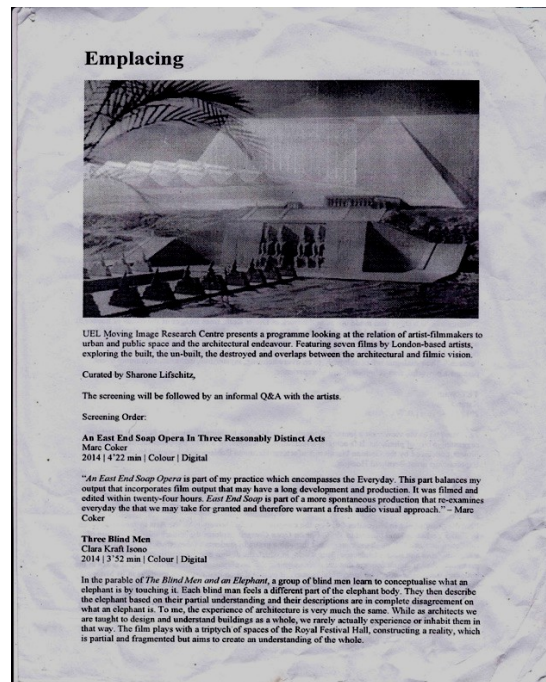


Figure 142: 'Emplacing' – screening 'An East End Soap Opera in Three Reasonably Distinctive Acts' 2015, as part of a programme looking at the relationship of artist film makers to urban and public space and architectural endeavour. A member of the Q&A discussion panel post screening, The Close-Up Cinema, Brick Lane, London E1 February 2018



Figure 143: 'Beside Bowie', Producer, Camera, Editor Broadcast 2018, SKYARTS, Sky Television, Feature length music about the life and career of Mick Ronson, David Bowie's guitarist and musical partner, 90 mins

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