

LAND2/Land and Water Conference Sessions

Friday 1.45 – 3.45pm – Jill Craigie Cinema, Roland Levinsky Building, Plymouth University

Session 1 (Mobilities/Flows)

1.45: Ignacio Acosta
2.25: Dani Abulhawa
3.05: Louise K Wilson

Copper Geographies

Ignacio Acosta – University of Brighton

Copper is a miraculous and paradoxical metal characterised by high electrical and thermal conductivity. Copper is an essential element for nearly every human enterprise. Hidden in plastic, behind walls, bound into cables, carried as loose change, inside air conditioners, cars, computers, electronics, ‘green energy’ generators, airplanes, mobile phones; copper is everywhere yet rarely seen. Due its unique configuration in the Andean subduction zone, Chile has the world’s largest reserves of copper. Part of the ‘Pacific Ring of Fire’ where the Pacific plate dives below the continental plates producing an invisible geological conflict, which is linked to deadly earthquake and volcanoes activities. The geology and geography of Chile are shaped by these extreme conditions and intrinsically linked to its mineral wealth. As consequence of these geological forces, the land of Chile presents the largest copper mineralisation in the world, having Chile the largest reserves of copper in the globe. Copper Geographies investigates the relationship between capitalism, mining and photography. It explores the notions of hyper-mobility and unequal geographical development, two aspects of the nature of the natural resources industries that are central to globalisation.

Rad Spaces: a Palestinian skatepark as ‘other’ space for play, resistance and exchange

Dani Abulhawa- Plymouth University

During autumn 2015, I spent three weeks in the West Bank town of Asira Al-Shamalyia with SkatePAL, a charity who – for the past three years – have build skateparks and taught young people to skateboard in the Palestinian Territories. I was there as a skateboarder, performance artist, and researcher, to examine how young people were adopting skateboarding as a creative practice.

Due to a variety of challenges, the skatepark took almost twice as long to build as had been planned. This meant that my research became oriented less around the practices of skateboarding undertaken by young people and more around the practices associated with the building of the skatepark.

Academic interest in ‘skateboarding philanthropy’ (O’Connor: forthcoming) has risen in recent years, particularly within an exploration of action sports as part of conflict resolution and ‘peace’ work. My findings from working with SkatePAL are connected with my background as a performance-based artist and researcher and consider how the skatepark functioned as a space that challenged both Palestinian traditionalism and the politics of the occupation.

Silent Service

Dr Louise K Wilson - artist, lecturer in Art and Design at the University of Leeds

This paper explores the materiality and flow of sound as it travels through water (and on the wind) to ask how field recording can tell us about place. Aside from this tangential 'take' on the mobility of sound, the paper touches on the productive dialogues and frictions that may occur when artists venture into Defence-related sites.

It originates from research I conducted into the underwater audio material that could be gathered in and around Plymouth Sound – specifically after gaining access to a (docked) nuclear submarine. Submariners - who detect the enemy by listening - are trained to recognise the occurrence of known and unknown sounds. In the 'Sound room' live hydrophone arrays translate watery vibrations into evocative sounds. Interestingly bio-audible signals (from marine life) can sound like metallic clicks. The sonar can detect sea animals but it can also adversely affect them. Likewise humans detect and are affected by sounds and by the processes of active listening. One submariner described how, when watching feature films, he habitually concentrates on the 'background' of the soundtrack rather than the dialogue. An artwork *Submerged: Silent Service* (2015) realized nine years later, explored the idea of a 'gentle' auditory activism in which background intensities were brought to the fore, resulting in a politically charged ambient soundscape. The legible voices and most obvious 'music' from selected submarine films' sound tracks had been removed. Arguably more than other genre films, the background of the soundtrack conveys (psychological, spatial) information. Aside from the familiar sonic tropes - the pings, drone and low frequency cetaceous song - there is intermittent quiet. Silence is never 'just' silence however.

4.00 – 6.00pm - Jill Craigie Cinema, Roland Levinsky Building, Plymouth University
Session 2 (Temporality/Duration)

4.00: Parker/Moore
4.30: Andrew Cross
5.00: Laura Hopes
5.30: Tony Hill

Reach and Maelstrom: filming the tidal Tamar

Kayla Parker and Stuart Moore- artist film-makers (Plymouth University/Sundog Media)

Our paper explores the affinity between place and inner states of mind, and the material specificities of moving image - repetitive visual rhythms of light and shadow, the perceived illusion of movement, and so on, using two recent moving image artworks, *Reach*, and *Maelstrom: The Return*, as case studies. We critically reflect on the processes of engagement with place and elemental forces, and the materials and materiality of film-making. Our working method is a close reading of our subject and an interaction with it.

Both works are characterised by an uncertain or unpredictable spatio-temporality, which produces mutating forms through the active power of elemental forces and organic processes: upon the material specificities of photochemical analogue film in *Reach*, and via the 'projection' of archival home movie footage upon the substrate of un-still waters and the 'sea of moving image' of *Maelstrom*.

Extract

Andrew Cross- Southampton Solent University

I will present a 10 min section of a 100 min moving image work *Being There..* 2014, commissioned by the National Railway Museum, York. The highly composed continuous-take sequence shows a slow moving freight train pass through a remote rural location in the USA. After showing this sequence I will briefly discuss the work as an articulation a number of intersecting temporalities and spatial considerations that converge at the specific place and time presented in the duration of the scene. As a full work *Being There..* situates a personal practice of train-watching, in a much wider tradition of landscape observation where various methods of mapping space and plotting time are used to measure and record a changing environment.

Lived, conceived, perceived

Laura Hopes – University of Plymouth

My work is defined by place. Place as a theoretical term, as a geographical location, as a psychological state, even as a cipher for myself
Lucy Lippard

Henri Lefebvre has underscored the pluri-dimensionality of space by suggesting that it is important to distinguish between spatial practice (based on how the world is perceived); the representation of space (based on how the world is conceived, or thought about); and representational space (based on how the world is lived by our bodies)

My practice as an artist is preoccupied by place and my own emotional and physical experiences of this. Place is the medium that I use to convey my own sense of identity, my memories and internal imagination: personal physical and mental resilience, and my emotional and physical response to an (often sublime) environment. In my films such as *Breath*, *Walking the line* and *Source* I have explored my own physical limitations in landscape and the associated psychological implications to these durational and highly subjective movements.

Unusual Perspectives on Traffic

Professor Tony Hill- Artist Film-maker and Associate Lecturer in Media Arts, University of Plymouth

I propose to show 3 short experimental films, which look at aspects of mobility and traffic. I will talk about the development of the ideas and the process of making them.

'A Short History of the Wheel', 16mm, 1 minute, 1992
Winner of the Deutscher Videokunstpreis 1993 & the Audience Prize at Chateauroux. Broadcast in Germany, Finland, Holland, Australia, France, Spain and the UK. Screened at many festivals worldwide and in touring programmes.

'Bike', HD Video, 1 minute, 2013
Screened at FLEXIFF, Sydney; Cornish Film Festival; London Short Film Festival & Weiterstadt Film Festival, Germany.

'North Cross', Video, 5 minutes, 2008

Screened at Weiterstadt Film Festival and at venues in the south west of England

Saturday 9.30 – 12.00

Parallel Session 3 (Landscapes/ Borderspaces): Lecture Theatre, Plymouth College of Art

9.30: Elena Marchevska

10.00: Majella Clancy

10.30: Kate Corder

11.00: Helen Billinghamurst

11.30: Andrea Thoma

Performing borderland: Mobility, “European-ness” and resisting the division

Dr Elena Marchevska - Senior Lecturer, London South Bank University

The Europe of the European Union is virtual reality: it's a project that requires hard work and commitment. So far, the results are not splendid, if you consider the debacle in the Mediterranean Sea and the increasing waves of xenophobia and racism that are sweeping across the union. The post-democratic experience of disempowerment at the grass-roots level of many European societies coincides with the urgent need for new visions of social prosperity and mobility.

In the wake of this multiple sustainability crisis, unexpected forms of political art practice have gained momentum and public visibility. This paper will look at two distinct forms of performative political practice: Tanja Ostojic's *"Misplaced women?"* (2009-present) and Rimini Protokoll's *"Cargo Sofia-X"* (2008). These two projects are an aesthetic exploration of artist's experiences of mobility and otherness in EU borderland.

(re)collection: Painting Time and Place in Contemporary Women's Art Practice

Dr. Majella Clancy - visual artist and lecturer at Plymouth College of Art

This paper examines aspects of contemporary women's painting practices. It addresses concepts of time (history) and place (geography) within my own painting practice and in those of the African-American painter Ellen Gallagher and Irish-American painter Helen O'Leary. In their individual practices Gallagher and O'Leary address their own particular histories and cultural identities through fluid notions of space and place. Equally, my own painting practice investigates an Irish rural history through ideas of cultural and geographical space. It traces journeys between Ireland and America to unravel imagery and particular historical narratives as fluid and mobile.

Hyper-Active Global Travel and a Slow Approach to Art Activism – HOW

Dr Kate Corder - artist

I started HOW - Heathrow Orchard Walks in early 2014. HOW has become a series of ongoing walks, in which I act as a tour guide engaging with place, exploring contested land surrounding Heathrow Airport; the land is currently at threat of airport expansion. During HOW, hyper-active global travel happening at the airport, is normally observed at a slight distance, although sometimes on HOW routes, this distance dissolves and participants are walking on land under flight paths, or close to the airport boundaries observing planes landing and taking off. Experiencing the constant flow of air travel in this way as visitors, highlights everyday life next to an airport; if one is a local one can experience this continuously. This presentation underlines the speculative nature of a walk process and touches on political activism protesting against land disruption.

Paths to painting: how to navigate unstable signs, shifting meanings and fluid landscapes.

Helen Billingham - artist and doctoral researcher, Plymouth University

Keywords: mobilities, walking, hyper-modernity, spectacularisation, recollection, narratives, logos, lived experience, childhood, stories, games, materials.

Referring to Tim Ingold, Giles Deleuze, and physicist David Bohm, the world is understood as continuum; past and future, perception and memory, body, mind and world are exposed as 'entangled', 'enfolded', or 'implicit'. Mindscape and Landscape are common ground.

This paper examines the findings of a series of immersive walks I undertook one summer, crossing the twenty-first century English landscape; increasingly fragmented, urbanised and spectacularised, yet still accessible as a repository of historical strata and story. I use these walks to explore, as a researching painter and visual artist, how walking has potential to inform a studio practice. I also investigate how the theme of 'journey' can be used to draw together the terrain of the mind with the external landscape.

The vertigo of presence - Benjamin's 'Jetztzeit', nomadic dwelling and the constructions of place

Dr. Andrea Thoma - Leeds University

This paper will explore opportunities within audio-visual works to reflect on the discrepancy and coming together of fleeting images with a physical sensation of 'nunc stans' where the viewer's awareness of their own body is engaged in an effort to stabilise these impressions of dizzying uncertainty.

A close reading of Chantal Ackerman's multi-channel installation *Now* (2015) will consider how a recognition of place (contemporary war zones) is conditioned by nomadic dwelling, where place is experienced 'whilst moving', as put forward in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's 'Treatise on nomadology - the War Machine'. This includes a continuous juxtaposition of various 'lines of flight' compounded by the sound of the machineries of combat. Like in a cabinet of mirrors this installation of a virtual/possible place suggesting actual, geo-political places takes different facets, as it is shown in different locations (Venice Biennale and Ambika P3, London) spanning across the 'being-in-place' and absence of its maker.

9.30 – 12.00

Parallel Session 4 (Journeys/Place): Rm T0.7

9.30: Mick McGraw
10.00: Judith Stewart
10.30: Daniel Norwood
11.00: Karen Pearson
11.30: Baskeyfield & Popham

Mick McGraw - Programme Leader, Master of Letters in Fine Art Practice, Glasgow School of Art

Using printmaking, photography, sculpture and artist bookworks, my practice investigates issues related to land use, focusing on our industrial/social integration with land/space. This investigation is linked to an extensive analysis of social, political and historical findings allied, and at times, in opposition to, technological acceleration and advancement. My work is frequently related to my own involvement with the natural landscape, often as result of interaction with a particular place, space or site. Some recent projects have examined the way land has been used historically, looking at ancient agricultural field systems, the structures and roads used to apportion and traverse our landscapes (Roman interventions, military routes, drove roads, coffin routes) through to our current methods of land management, industrial utilisation and social use.

Things I Can't Show You (Because I Was Driving)

Dr Judith Stewart- Norwich University of the Arts

For most of us in the UK, our experience of rural places is mediated through the car windscreen. Travelling from urban centres involves (usually) road travel in order to reach our intended destination and, for those of us living in rural places, the car has become an essential part of our daily routine. It is often the way we experience place.

It is the latter that is addressed in this paper. Taking the form of a 20 minute road movie filmed in Norfolk, my home county, the paper reflects on the way that rural car journeys engender a different sense of time, and hence a different experience of place, to walking or other more leisurely forms of transport. Drawing on historical references such as the 15th century Paston Letters to emphasis a changed sense of time and navigation of place, the film/paper will question how speed and time can affect what we see and what can be experienced.

Psycho-Documentia – stories revolving outside the liberal capitalist infrastructures of leisure culture and mass transit

Daniel J Norwood- photographer

In 2013, as a full-blooded attempt at combining an interest in landscape photography with a course in Photojournalism from the University of Westminster, I embarked on a project to respond to an area of land, and several communities 'blighted' by - what I would soon learn - was an almost constant half-century threat of eradication by the

expansion of Heathrow airport. The project evolved into a body of work, which can be seen here. It was showcased on the BBC, and has recently been joint recipient of the Shutterhub Award.

In common with the current practice of 'slow journalism', the paper analyses the working methodology of the project in order to place it within the wider context of the brief 'Traffic' and with a critical intervention into the socio-political landscape. The main area for discussion is focused on Heathrow Airport as a place of significant economic importance, which has its root in liberal capitalist ideology, both local and global, but which also holds significant interest, from an anthropological perspective, as a place of personal histories, intimate stories and myth.

Choreography of urban space: the city walker and the narration of city structures

Karen Pearson – Plymouth University MA Contemporary Art Practice

The writer Michel De Certeau believes that urban walkers create a structured city despite the dispassionate and dictatorial intentions of those who control its physical form. Walkers make their own rhetoric of place and the enforced boundaries and fragmented links created by government, commerce and infrastructure start to define new individual spaces. The reality is that a city, in whatever form, needs people to exist. They position it in time even if this is only fleeting. De Certeau writes about space being a 'practiced place' where planned streets become unexpected narrated places by walkers.

In this presentation, taking De Certeau's propositions and evidence of recent art practice in this area, I propose to place some of the ideas I am exploring around the representation of the spatial forms created through the relationship between the walker and the city. My project 'Counting Place' explores this through playing with the data generated by walkers within specific, tightly defined city locations and is a continuation of initial related work based on the foreshore below Plymouth Hoe.

Cities become something less concrete as walkers develop an alternative spatial form.

Shaped by Stone

Tom Baskeyfield (artist) & Mario Popham (Photographer)

Over Millennia we have chipped, cut, split, crushed and shaped stone – turned hillsides into quarries – turned strata into streets. Like many other towns this process is the foundation of Macclesfield. The pink and blue-ish gritstone of Teggs Nose has been quarried for hundreds of years. The hill exists as fragments around the town – scattered. It sits there in the walls, the facing of buildings and the lining of streets; it embodies the human endeavour to give shape to space through the forming of paths and buildings. It is the fabric of this place.

Once highlighted this link is palpable. It is the living narrative of the human relationship with the land. More directly, the relationship between the people of Macclesfield and their surrounding landscape – the forming of a town from its geological and topographical features. It speaks of an old relationship to place. A relationship based on direct contact with the stuff of place – in this case - stone. It speaks of a time when people worked in the place they lived, not commuting hours in cars, trains and planes, but *walking up 'th'ill'*. It is about what is local and the slow, organic, development of place through graft and toil. A way of life that is uncommon these days...what may we be missing?

2.45 – 3.50pm Session 5 (Migrations)

2.45: Judith Tucker

3.15: Andreia de Olivera

Fitties: Once was Holiday

Dr Judith Tucker- University of Leeds

This paper explores how a painterly exploration of holiday homes at the Humberston Fitties leads to a consideration of both touristic and military travel and to the anxiety of influence in the landscape of post-war British painting.

Fitties originally means saltmarshes. The Fitties plotlands at Humberston were, like much of the low-lying land around the mouth of the Humber estuary, carved out of saltmarsh. They lie low behind marshy beach and dunes, a quirky domestication of land always liable to flood, to a return to its former state. Here, since between the wars, local people and visitors have erected their diverse dwellings with individualistic names and styles, in order to enjoy the simple, restorative pleasures of seaside life. Some of the paintings contextualize the Fitties in the wider marsh and beach land around Humberston, evoking eco-critical considerations while the smaller paintings and accompanying texts by the poet Harriet Tarlo evoke the past and present, exteriors and half-hidden interiors of the holiday chalets. They speak too of the relationships between people and place from the wild and planted foliage to the found poems taken from the names given by the owners.

A place called diaspora

Andreia Alves de Oliveira- Photo artist and researcher based in London

How to witness a phenomenon that is defining an era? Why indeed? Portugal is the EU's country with the highest number of emigrants in relation to its population. It's a country of cyclical emigration; in total, there are more than 5 million Portuguese living abroad, to 10 million living in Portugal. My personal history exemplifies this: my grandparents emigrated, my parents did not (but my partner's did), me (and my partner) emigrated more than ten years ago. It is estimated that half million people have left since the start of the financial crisis and the IMF bailout, the majority of which came to the UK.

How can I as an artist play a role? My own experience of emigration has been traversed by a constant and contradictory sense of displacement: not to be from here/ nor to be from there, to be from two (or more) places/ to be from no place. How do the Portuguese living in the same place as me (London) negotiate these conflicting allegiances? The fact is that our lives carry on, just as our ancestor's did, so the question is rather: what place do we create from the diaspora/ what place does the diaspora create for us?