Embodied Landscapes

process & participation in filmmaking

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Embodied Landscapes:
process and participation in filmmaking

By

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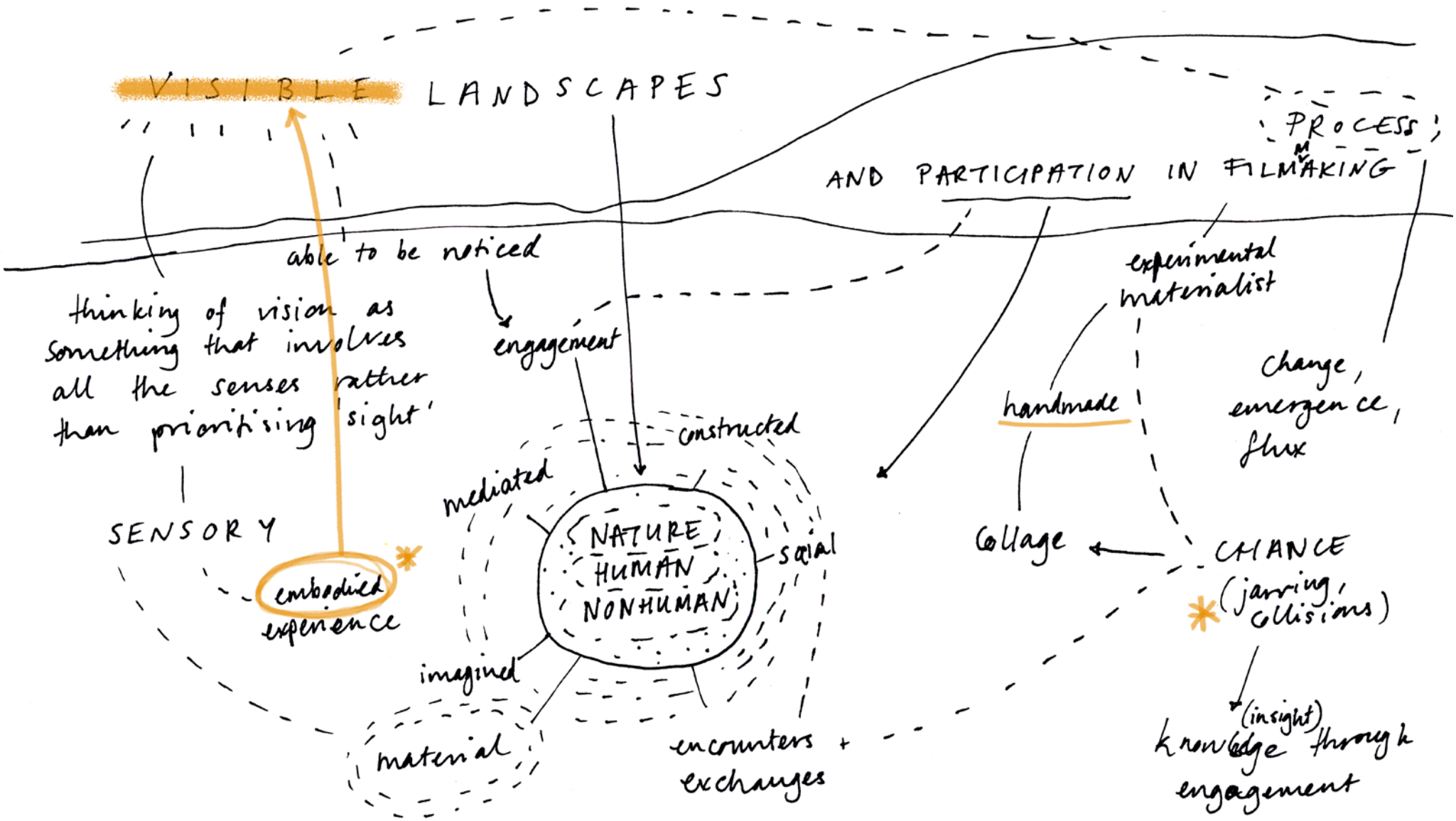
ABSTRACT

This doctoral research project applies experimental materialist filmmaking strategies to explore creative ways of working in landscapes with human and nonhuman participants. The research defines landscapes as multi-vocal gatherings of experiences and assemblages that interact in unfinished stories and therefore applies a 'landscape-based approach'. Comprising filmmaking projects carried out during the PhD, the thesis demonstrates how embodied experimental and material methodologies that focus on process and participation can offer insights into filmmaking-as-research and the researcher-participant relationship. It illustrates how diagrams, handmade approaches and experimental techniques are dynamic methodological tools. An ongoing emergent research practice is communicated using still and moving images, diagrams, collage and writings, all undergone in the spirit of considering ways of being in landscapes, experimentation and curiosity.

Though some of the research projects take on a 'finished form' through past exhibitions and published or presented papers, the emphasis is around mark making to reveal human and nonhuman agency and interaction. This idea follows Kim Knowles' revitalised materialist film theory, where material engagement in film can promote environmental awareness and new landscape-based experiences. Sensuous knowledge (Salami 2020) deprioritises power dynamics and dualistic narratives that stem from a europatriarchal worldview. Filmmaking becomes as much a mark making process as it is a research practice, and by bringing participants into the filmmaking *process*, with specific attention to celluloid film tactility, can instil landscape knowledge and care.

This thesis asserts that participation through interactive process-driven encounters in landscape spaces produce sensory and embodied (or sensuous) knowing. Diagrams, experimental filmmaking methods and techniques, which I define as knowledge *portals*, are woven into the thesis to communicate alternative ways of knowing. Tensions occur in the research practice that give way to embodied (and sometimes jarring) encounters, produced by frictions operating between chance and limitation. Finally, the research aims to explore alternative perspectives on how it might be possible to reimagine 'nature', not as distinct from culture, and through a filmmaking-as-research practice that communicates experiences of human and nonhuman-entangled landscape assemblages.

CONTENTS


VISIBLE
LANDSCAPES
PROCESS
AND PARTICIPATION IN FILMAKING
thinking of vision as something that involves all the senses rather than prioritising 'sight'
able to be noticed
engagement
experimental materialist
change, emergence, flux
handmade
SENSORY
embodied experience
mediated
constructed
NATURE
HUMAN
NONHUMAN
social
imagined
material
encounters + exchanges
collage
CHANCE
(jarring, collisions)
(insight)
knowledge through engagement

INTRODUCTION

Background context and the 'nature' problem

My doctoral research practice explores how experimental methods of recording and documenting landscape spaces in filmmaking can invigorate sensory material connections and create possibilities for *embodied knowing*. What I mean by 'embodiment' becomes clearer with each project traced in the chapters of this thesis, though fundamentally I am exploring ways it can emerge through a research practice that considers experimental filmmaking methods and techniques that foreground process and interaction. 'Process' denotes a series of actions or operations in order to produce something. In my research practice, however, I am interested in focusing on a series of unfinished actions and not the end product. As process can relate to a naturally occurring series of changes with an unknown end result, I am interested in what happens when those stages are revealed and made evident. The writing in this thesis is also part of a process of encounter with my own definition of embodiment that becomes clearer throughout the practice projects (accessible via hyperlinks), and therefore can be seen to emerge more distinctly in Chapters 3 and 4.

However, for the purpose of this introduction, my initial understanding of embodiment relating to an experimental filmmaking practice is that it can refer to ways of sensing and being in the world, undermining a mind-body separation. This idea follows film theorist Kim Knowles' call for a revitalised version of 'materialist film' to open up new forms of engagement and "embodied cinematic experiences" (Knowles 2020: 27). As well as the viewing phase of the filmmaking experience, I am interested in extending a filmmaking practice to involve participants, opening up my practice to other voices and perspectives in order to provoke chance encounters and embodied knowing while film *making*. Chance encounters through tactile engagement and attention to process can help remove structural bias "beyond the controlling hand of the artist" (Knowles 2017: 263). It is my intention to step back from the work and see what happens when participants, both human and nonhuman, are part of its making; to open up the filmmaking process and allow "alternative forms of knowledge that rely on material entanglement and physical connection" (Knowles 2020: 27).

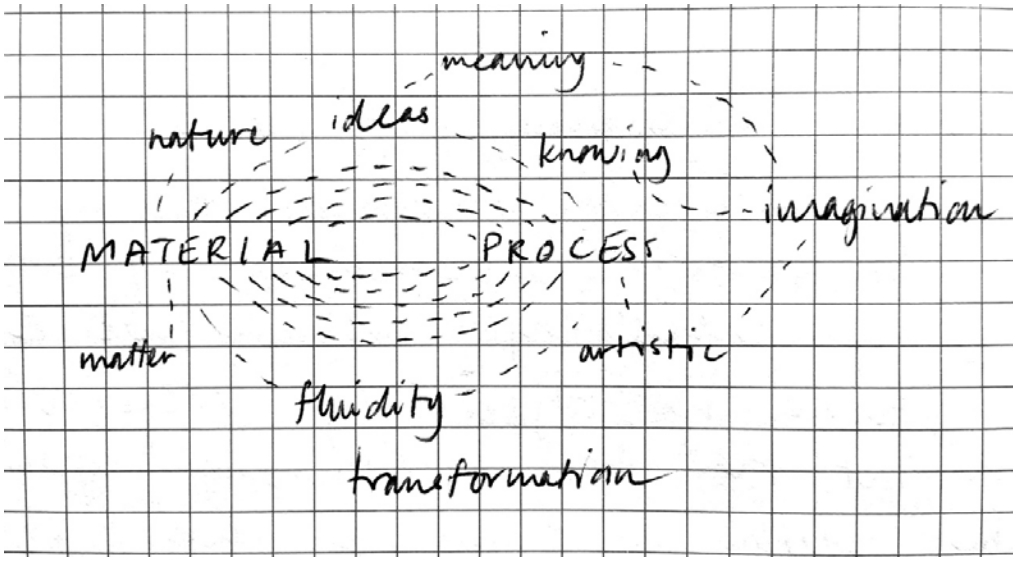
My approaches are interdisciplinary, working between socially-engaged participatory methods and an artistic practice that is underpinned by philosophical and political concerns about the so-called 'natural world'. I use the term 'natural world' in parentheses to indicate an inherent conflict; I want to resist referring to 'nature' as an overarching organism that does not include humans and 'culture'. 'Nature' involves plants, rocks and matter that make up landscapes, along with microbes, animals and humans (of course, we are also animals). The presupposition here is that not only are humans part of nature, but that nature is "culturally mediated", made up of multiple social interactions and therefore cannot be considered as a separate entity to culture (Massey 2006: 36). My feeling is that as human animals, particularly in the West, we seem to be disconnected or disembodied and that 'nature' is not always considered as enmeshed with culture or vice versa (Kimmerer 2020). Grounding my ideas is a philosophical and political standpoint stemming from new materialism: that all human and nonhuman or more-than-human (understood as organic systems including plants, stones and microorganisms) bodies contain their own *vital material agency* (Bennett 2010).

Throughout my research, I am looking for ways to engage myself and others with "enmeshed" (Ingold 2011) 'natural' and manmade surroundings through an emergent process-driven practice that makes space for embodied sensory knowing and chance encounters. This doctoral research project is made up of still, moving image, audio and written work that has emerged from setting in motion two concerns which problematically, I propose, place humans at the centre of experience. The problem, for me, is a disconnect from embodied experiences and human – nonhuman interactions that are reinforced by:

1. **Industry-facing (conventional) non-fiction filmmaking practices retaining a top-down power hierarchy that objectifies those in front of the camera**
2. **Unproductive tensions in dualistic thinking; nature-culture / mind-body, which perpetuate the separation between humans and the natural world, deprioritising being in the world**

My question is whether these concerns can be addressed through an artistic practice that invites participants to have agency in the filmmaking-as-research process. In this light, my thesis has been framed by a set of ideas or hypotheses that spring from the same principal concerns and aim to challenge vertical power structures which privilege certain voices over others. This is underpinned by a core value: there is a need for a multiplicity or "plurality" of viewpoints (Arendt 1958) that can be obtained through collaboration, to consider the nonhuman or *more-than-human* as a participant or collaborator and embrace the messiness and uncertainty of "entanglement" (Ingold 2011). These ideas drive my process-driven participatory practice research with its methodology, which aims to:

- **Map experimental and materialist filmmaking strategies onto research to provide new models for reimagining how humans can connect with 'nature'**
- **Explore and weave in sensory and embodied experiential approaches to encourage emergent knowledge or *knowing* through a foregrounding of process – moving away from (traditional) artistic representation and linear filmmaking**
- **With an adapted flattened methodology (away from a vertical top-down approach), invite and encourage participation in order to produce unexpected insights and transformative knowledge to expand my research practice**



With these aims, in the words of philosopher Jane Bennett, I also want "to promote greener forms of human culture and more attentive encounters between people-materialities and thing-materialities" (Bennett 2010: x). This involves a more sustainable practice that moves away from a dependency on industrial chemistry and processes, using found materials and handmade techniques to make work, which I explore in Chapter 3.

This thesis asserts that participation through interactive process-driven encounters with materials in landscape spaces can produce sensory embodied (or sensuous) knowledge, which is communicated using experimental filmmaking methods and techniques. Films that are made with these sensibilities and methodologies can invite viewers as participants into the filmmaking process to become engaged meaning-makers. By 'participation' I imply interactions (between both humans and nonhumans) that can be elicited by material objects such as film celluloid. Throughout my research practice, participation involves mark making, exhibition attendance and taking part in the methods that inform it. I am interested in participation as a strategy that destabilises potential power dynamics and can flatten knowledge hierarchies. Participation is relational and unbounded, moving between bodies beyond the individual and connecting materially to objects as tools. In my methodology section in Chapter 2, I refer to participation with objects in relation to people living with dementia. In this case, objects are sensory aids to participation as they can assist memory and creativity through touch. I discuss how objects become 'material objects' (Woodward 2020) with the capacity to activate participation through "thing-power" (Bennett 2010: 13).

Throughout my thesis I explore how a focus on materiality in filmmaking using tools and techniques as material objects can bring an embodied experience closer, reflecting on how my own experiences of mark making (in diagrams, collage and films) can produce transformative, unbounded and emergent insights.

In my research aims, I call for embodied approaches to knowledge which can undermine dualistic thinking (Salami 2020) and that can flatten hierarchical relations through participation. In positioning the self, as a human body in the

world, the distance between subject and object or between bodies is shortened to the point of collapse. Separation and simplification are barriers to knowing, but experiential and sensory embodiment; an inner linking of our bodies and minds, or what scientists call 'interoception' (knowing what is going on inside the body, for example, the sensation of hunger), can encourage emergent knowledge. It is not about communicating embodiment via representation (in still and moving images), rather, embodiment is experienced as part of the practice of making.

> Embodiment resists a separation between subject and object; mind and body and can produce works that "aspire not to refer, but *to be*, which attempts to challenge the ontological priority of the object (Sitney, cited in Zinman 2020: 14).

The writer Robert Macfarlane says we are living in a time of *touchlessness*, where our relationship to the natural world is distanced, disembodied and we "forget that our minds are shaped by the bodily experience of being in the world — its spaces, textures, sounds, smells and habits" (Macfarlane 2007: 203). This touchlessness speaks to the Cartesian separation of mind and body, which philosopher and mathematician Alfred North Whitehead challenged in 1920 in *The Concept of Nature* (2015). His view was that nature should not be objectified as it is experienced through the senses (Whitehead 2015). The division between *us* or 'culture' and 'nature' that comes out of a still dominant scientific worldview in the West, mechanises nature and positions humans at the centre of the world (Sheldrake 2012). Like Whitehead, philosopher Edmund Husserl considered a departure from an objective scientific method that did not account for subjective experience. Instead, he argued for a science of consciousness, called phenomenology, which is the description of perceptions as they are consciously experienced.

'Nature' is a perplexing and reductive term. It is also ambiguous: what is often deemed 'natural' has been affected by human industrial activities. 'Nature' is often used in conceptual opposition to the city and civilisation, revealing how it has been mechanised and objectified by western science for about the last four hundred years. This vision of a new kind of science produced an inanimate, mechanised view of 'nature', placing it in the same category as 'matter' as distinct to 'mind' ('matter' becomes synonymous with 'body' — a mechanism for the mind). This body-mind split is known as Cartesian dualism after René Decartes (Sheldrake 2020). In the late-eighteenth century, aesthetic philosopher Immanuel Kant denied the vitality of matter and called it inert stuff. As a reaction to rationalistic thinking, the Romantic movement allowed a human experience of 'nature', however, this relegated it to the private, poetic realm, reinforcing a split between science and art. In an online lecture, *The Rebirth of Nature* (2020), biologist and plant physiologist Dr Rupert Sheldrake outlines the mechanistic view of nature as inanimate machinery that has dominated a western scientific worldview, at odds with direct or embodied experience (Sheldrake 2012). Whitehead similarly understood nature as holistic rather than mechanistic, part of processes and interactions, rather than a 'thing' or object. Sheldrake makes a point that this western mechanised view of nature is unusual, as almost every other culture knows that nature is living, has a body, its own motivations and does not simply exist for human use and consumption.

Recent scientific investigations, however, are showing signs of unravelling these outmoded approaches to frameworks which privilege objective knowledge, giving way to a reappraisal of 'nature' as nonhuman beings. In *Losing Eden* (2021), Lucy Jones explores peer-reviewed scientific reports to demonstrate the different ways 'nature' is vital to humans. For example, the micro bacteria found in soil can have serotonin-like effects that induce relaxation, one type in particular can even help conditions like depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Jones highlights the overwhelming scientific evidence suggesting that we, as humans, need to reclaim our natural connections in order to feel well (Jones 2021). Nature is us; humans are nature — a worldview that many have held for thousands of years though has become lost to many cultures. Anthropologist Tim Ingold writes about how people in non-Western societies, for example, the Ojibwa in Canada, ground their knowledge in experience, which, "does not mediate between mind and nature, since these are not separated in the first place" (Ingold 2000: 11). Being in the world necessitates the view that nature-culture and the mind-body are already in unison.

Looking at this idea from another scientific perspective, environmental scientists have found that isolating 'nature' impacts negatively on attitudes towards global sustainability; cultivating mutual care and responsibility is good for our own well-being as well as that of the planet (Alcock et al. 2020). It is clear that ecological values, a sense of care and collective agency go hand-in-hand.

If the separation between humans and nature is a problem of perception, then perhaps this can be shifted by opportunities for embodied experiences of *being in* the world, to experience ourselves as part of the *landscapes* we are living in. I should make it clear at this early stage, that in using the word 'new' in terms of knowledge that may benefit 'us', I am relating this to eurocentric perspectives on knowledge that pervade dominant western culture. It also feels necessary to move away from the term 'nature' as it is overly static and broad, pointing to outmoded and undynamic mechanised views.

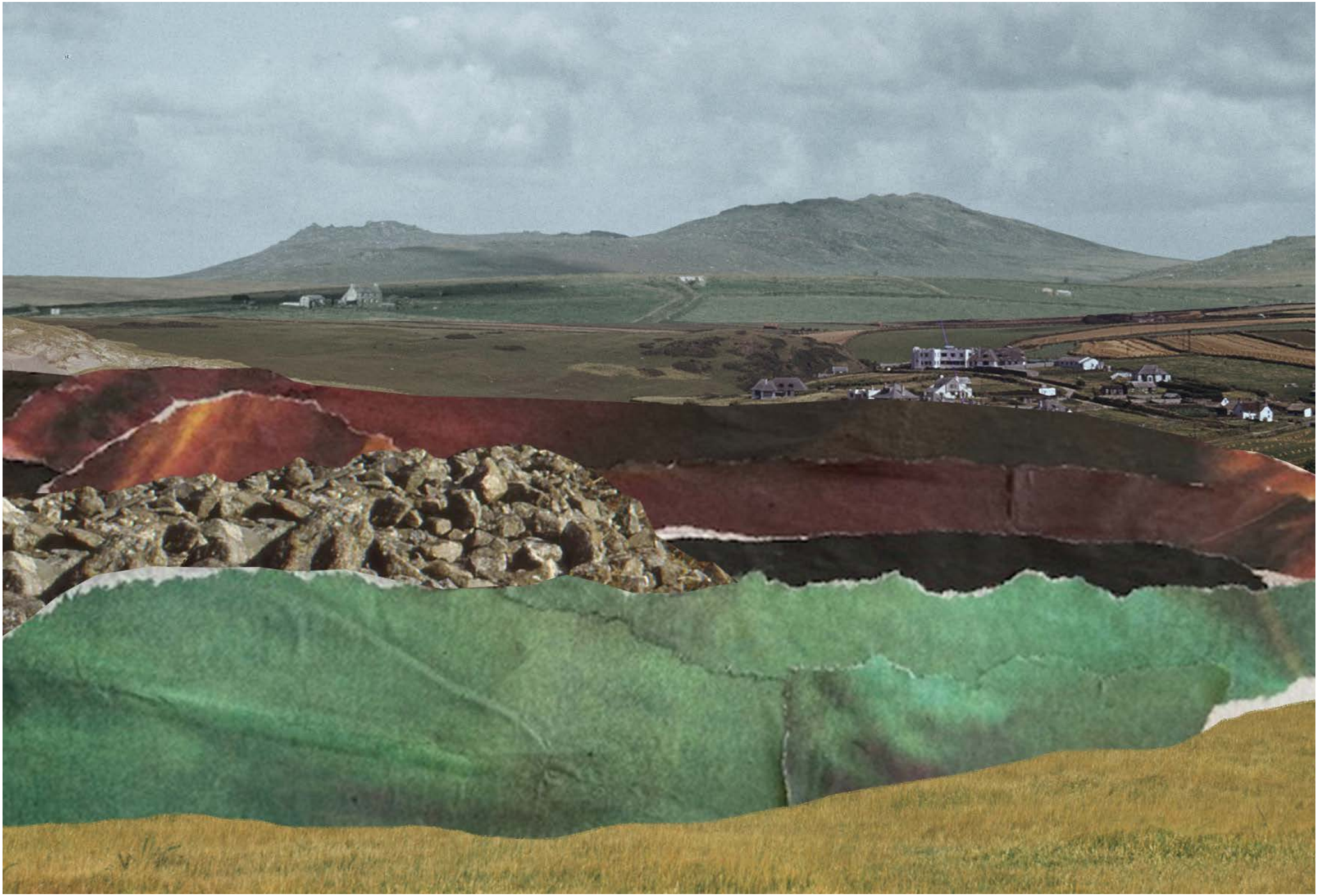
In the last twenty years, trends towards anthropocentric models that structure western knowledge systems have been challenged by 'the ontological turn' or 'nonhuman turn' in the humanities and social sciences. The move towards a more ecological and decentred way of thinking draws on the post-structural rhizomatic non-linear network of knowledge, as introduced in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) by Deleuze and Guattari. Decentred thinking acknowledges the nonhuman experience and how humans have co-existed with plants and animals.

> The nonhuman turn can be understood as a continuation of earlier attempts to depict a world populated not by active subjects and passive objects but by lively and essentially interactive materials, by bodies human and nonhuman (Bennett, cited in Grusin 2015: 224).

Although Deleuze and Guattari provide insights into different ways of thinking about human experience that have been instrumental to modern philosophy, paving the way for the nonhuman turn, particularly in regard to assemblage theory (Grusin 2015), I have chosen to focus my explorations away from post-structural philosophy. As above, I have aligned with the "vital materialism" of Jane Bennett (2010) and a (new) materialist filmmaking theory of Kim Knowles, who I will refer to throughout this thesis. While it is necessary to acknowledge the importance of language in organising structures as a dominant form of communication, this very notion deprioritises not just nonhuman beings but humans who look to other ways to communicate experiences and knowledges. In Chapter 2, I will discuss the methodology of one particular project that involved people living with dementia as participants, whose capability for communication through language has been supplanted by other sensory experiences such as texture, sound and colour. Although language is often the preferred method of communication and is essential to this thesis, I also recognise that my articulated thoughts have emerged through an embodied landscape experience that is communicated in different forms of mark making, which I will foreground in Chapter 1b.

Landscape as a conceptual framework

In my research practice, in order to reconcile nature-culture, mind-body separations I have used 'landscape' as a conceptual site that gathers and holds my ideas, marks and writings. Acknowledging traditional notions of 'landscape' in Western art, landscape painting often depicts a 'natural setting' that appears fixed and distant from the viewer. Anthropologist and archaeologist Barbara Bender, on the other hand, describes the landscape as being in continual stages of process and shaping. Landscapes "are always subjective" places that can create embodied understandings, provoke memories and engage people (Bender 2002: 103). Applying Bender's landscape suggestion to my research practice, *landscape* also describes an approach and framing strategy. Landscape is more than a distanced depiction of nature objectified, rather, it can be a site to experience a re-mingling and co-habiting with other beings. *Landscape*, in this case, is not just an abstract research concept or conceit: it can be activated as a practical strategy for encouraging ways of engaging through embodied connections. My research, like the landscape, contains human participants and more-than-human ones, and, like the landscape, it is "polyvalent and multivocal" (Bender 2002: 143). Another way to put it, borrowing artist-archaeologist Rose Ferraby's term, this research

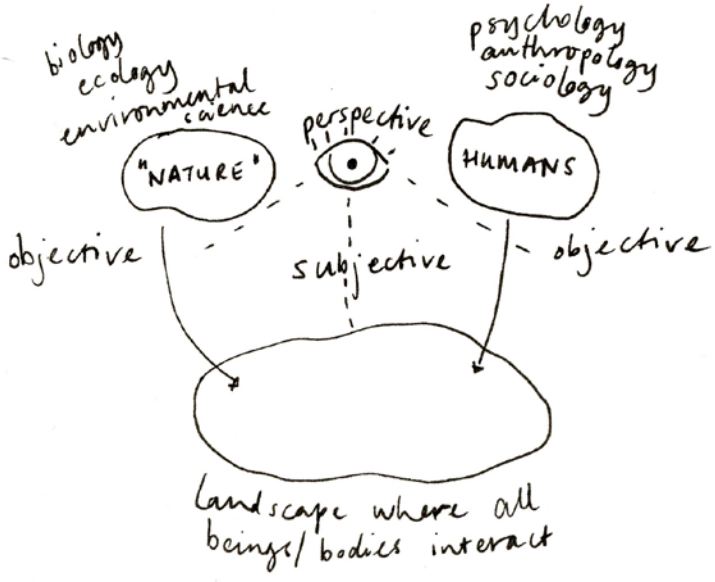


practice is "landscape-based" (Ferraby 2015: 26). I have adopted her term (with her blessing) for my research practice and will use it throughout this thesis.

I often accompany my filmmaking with collage, arranging fragments of different photographs and placing them in the same two-dimensional space to create new imaginings. The same process can be experienced in physical landscapes themselves: they are formed of collaged fragments from human activities where nonhuman activities interact in the same space. Anthropologist Anna Tsing's perspective resonates here: she looks at how weeds can emerge in human-damaged places to form "landscape assemblages" (Tsing 2017: 4), using the term to describe the groupings of soil, plants as "a gathering in the making" (Tsing 2017: 7). She applies her concept to an eco-critical context and it fits with my formal art-based, collaged approach to filmmaking. Curiously, the 'assembly' is also a term applied to the first stage of video editing where all footage is reviewed and assembled onto the timeline. These parallels between ecological and artistic processes in considering and exploring landscapes help affirm my research's unified form and content with a collaged methodological approach. Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory, which has been adopted by other scholars such as Manuel DeLanda, is a philosophical approach and way into thinking about society and speculative realism, which, along with the use of diagrams, resonates with my own research. I will cover their positions and Tsing's in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

In his co-edited book, *Landscape and Agency* (Wall and Waterman 2018), Ed Wall questions whether we have reached a post-landscape condition with regards to visual representation of landscapes, where, today, they are considered more as social concepts than depictions. Throughout his essay, Wall cites Denis Cosgrove, a major influence in the field of cultural and human geography, who argues, "landscape today is unbounded, flexible, and mobile, composed of forms, connections…" (cited in Wall and Waterman 2018: 157). He suggests that landscapes have moved beyond being contained within frames by a single "distanced, authoring eye" (Cosgrove, cited in Wall and Waterman 2018: 157).

According to Wall and Cosgrove, the landscape is no longer a distant view, nor is it reliant on a single perspective – it can be reimagined as a space where social, economic and political relations are performed. It can also be cultural and environmental. However, the concern I have with continuing to frame the landscape through the lenses of various disciplines, from cultural geography to landscape architecture, is that this approach reaffirms a separation between humans and nature; positioning humans at a distance, looking into a framed objectified view. A view on landscapes I do resonate with is geographer Doreen Massey's. For Massey, landscapes should remain "undisciplined" in order to transcend oppositions between nature and culture, and between time and space (Bender, cited in Massey 2006: 34). Although Wall's concept of landscapes stems from a human-centred perspective, he does consider whether we should adopt alternative approaches to landscapes that are defined by multiple and competing relations (Wall and Waterman 2018: 156). Further to this suggestion, as Bender says, landscapes are not static and so a single perspective is unhelpful; rather, they are "gatherings of ways of being in the making" (Tsing 2017: 7).



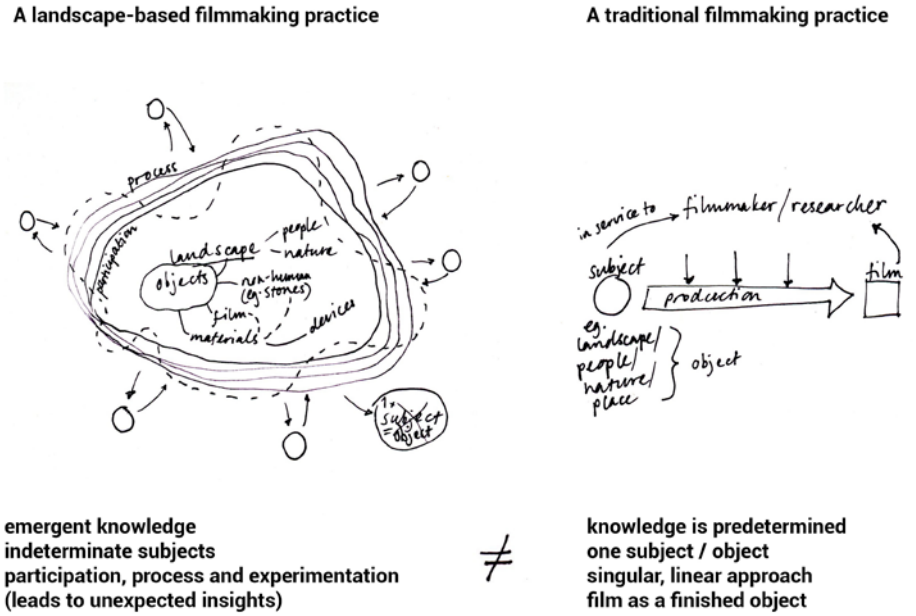
> Landscapes enact more-than-human rhythms. To follow these rhythms, we need new histories and descriptions, crossing the sciences and humanities (Gan, Tsing, Swanson and Bubandt 2017: 12).

These ideas are at the core of my research, that perspectives *in* and *of* landscapes can be repositioned away from human-centred approaches; embodied and involved rather than at a distance and looking *at*. This distinction, between being *in* and experiencing landscapes can obstruct or diminish the perpetuation of nature-culture dualism. In addition, it offers a view of landscapes as how they actually are: in a process of continual change (Bender 2002). Creative or artistic practice provides a very particular way into this view. Sensory and embodied approaches can allow the expression of unspoken, subjective and often difficult to articulate aspects of our complex relationships with landscapes. In a sense, the landscape becomes a 'third space', which, according to philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre, is the 'lived' space where discourse is produced (Lefebvre 1991).

Following Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception, the sensing body cannot be disentangled from perception and so vision becomes inseparable from touch in embodied spaces (Merleau-Ponty 2011). For anthropologist Sarah Pink, the landscape can be a "place" where our "sensory experiences are produced" (Pink 2009: 30). This idea feels closer to my own idea of landscapes, though I am uncertain if the encounter is reciprocal as it does not speak to an exchange or connection, rather it suggests humans are central to the experience.

Perhaps drawing another separation is unproductive here, since place and space are too complex and mean different things to different disciplines. In 'Landscape as Provocation', published in the *Journal of Material Culture* (2006), Massey questions the role of landscape in academic discourse (sociocultural, political and scientific) and its relation to nature, place and space. She explores various disciplinary appeals to ground definitions of landscape and their contrasting temporalities and viewpoints, concluding with the need to be aware of assumptions and hegemonic views (Massey 2006). Rather than "grounding" she argues for an "unsettling" of perspectives (Massey 2006: 40), a shifting hybrid concept of landscape that is congruent with its changeability and is not as limited in its potential to be seen in other more diverse ways. One of these ways, Massey suggests, is to reorientate a view of landscapes as "*events*, as happenings, as moments that will be again dispersed", which requires rethinking the relationship between space and time (Massey 2006: 46). For Massey, space can be imagined as not just the material world but an unfinished story, emerging and intertwining with landscape.

Exploring the landscape as an unbounded emergent space seems a more apt positioning for my research, where social relations are performed and where our sensory perceptions are produced through encounters. What is apparent to me is that while establishing a common ground is necessary for clarity and communication, it is easy to get tangled in definitions that carry their own historical disciplinary weight. The written element of this thesis tests those linguistic constraints and attempts to speak through a landscape-based research practice that is forging its own language, or linguistic framings, merging practice and theory. The thesis then, as a whole, sets out to explore new ways of connecting to landscapes, or rather, being part of them, subverting an objectifying frame.



This is an early diagram and example of my methodological approach to filmmaking as research that is landscape-based rather than one that follows a traditional filmmaking model. However, it is problematic as I imply a binary in framing my approach (left) against a reductive interpretation of a 'traditional filmmaking practice' based on industry-facing commercial models (right). I have left it in as it reiterates my research aims and expresses how a landscape-based approach to practice research can offer the possibilities of non-linear emergent knowledge, aided by the foregrounding of process, experimentation and participation in a hybrid landscape space. By process, I mean the formal artistic strategies that enable the work to happen, such as sketches, photographs and anything that may not traditionally be included in the finished work or film. In my own terms, I also connect process with providing a space that promotes sensory engagement when making, which can be expanded to include participation. These ideas are discussed in Chapter 1 and throughout this written thesis, as focusing on process and participation is central to my research practice.

In her writings, Anna Tsing looks at "landscape assemblages" (Tsing 2015) where humans and nonhumans interact and provide evidence of a "human-disturbed world" (Tsing 2017: 6). They are places in which new life and possibilities can be imagined through fluid transdisciplinary viewpoints intermingling human and nonhuman activities. She asks, "Can I show landscape as the protagonist of an adventure in which humans are only one kind of participant?" (Tsing 2015: 155). Tsing invites awareness of an alternative vision that deprioritises the human at the centre of the story, revealing other participants in the making of landscapes. In a co-edited book, Tsing and others speak of entanglements and "overlaid arrangements of human and nonhuman living spaces" that they call "landscapes" (Gan, Tsing, Swanson and Bubandt 2017: 1). A landscape, here, is a complex assemblage that can hold human and nonhuman interactions, while providing a refocused paradigm through which to consider them. Donna Haraway also speaks of assemblages in the context of "organic species" and "abiotic actors" (2015: 159). Counter to the modern western model of the human individual in the world, humans are a product of all kinds of interactions that are impossible to disentangle. Haraway suggests that new ways of looking at and being in the world (through stories and theories) are needed to accommodate complexities, to "keep the edges open and greedy for surprising new and old connections" (Haraway 2015: 160).

Landscape as artistic sensory communication

The aim of my research practice, through the work in all its guises (film, photography, diagrams, collage and writing), is to explore new ways of relating to landscapes that can promote engaged, participatory and embodied ways of knowing. An artistic research project that, for me, succinctly speaks to this endeavour is Gill and Vangad's *Fields of Sight* (2014). I saw this piece of work as one of a series at an exhibition curated by Nashishibi/Skaer at the Tate St Ives in 2019 and was immediately struck by what the project had achieved through artistic-research collaboration. It is dynamic, featuring layered perspectives on a framed landscape that voice two human interpretations, communicating different visual landscape languages. This particular piece of work is one of a series, where researcher Gauri Gill took photographs of human-disturbed industrial landscapes in northern India that were then illustrated by Rajesh Vangad, Warli tribe member who is indigenous to those landscapes. His interpretations are infused by his own cultural perspective and Warli iconography that tells stories and imaginings of past and future places. His drawings contribute another layer of understanding towards changing landscapes, making visible his minority cultural position and challenging a political system that attempts to deny those voices (Grewal 2015). "His painting constitutes and inscribes the particularity of place… [and] Gill's photographs become both a setting and a match for Vangad's intensities" (Grewal 2015). This is a project whose human participants are integrated into a single frame, layered to overlap their visibility within the landscape they are a part of.

This image (see Figure 1) signals a visual style and approach which speaks to the kind of film work I make. Collage and layering as artistic tools can produce chance encounters and entanglements, new ways of relating and

Fig. 1: Gill and Vangad 2014. *Mountains and Trees* [ink on photographic print]

knowing through a building up of voices and images into a single piece of work, to encourage looking at a scene in a new way. The work of Gill and Vangad is dynamic. The layering of different media places the two formats in conversation with each other. In addition, there is attention and sensitivity in their work, which comes from a slow shaping and embodied understanding of a place.

These reflections on techniques such as collage and layering help articulate a key motivation: my work in this thesis is shaped by embodied understandings and sensory entanglements of landscape through experimental tools and techniques that invite participation. This written element of my thesis takes an emerging research practice, formed by several recent projects, and explores strategies to reimagine our relationships *in* landscapes, developing ways to open up the process for participation. It comprises a collection of images that foreground an artistic process-driven experimental practice, incorporating diagrams, collages and photographs. It is worth highlighting at this point that a lot of the project work of my PhD was carried out during restrictions caused by the Covid19 pandemic, and as such my methods needed adjusting to fit within those limitations. Where I had intended to carry out a project and write about those findings, I have chosen to reshape my thesis so that it incorporates several projects that I carried out during my doctoral research. As a result, I have found this has enabled richer connections around a broader scope of practice research, where a series of projects explore the same underlying concerns but each time with heightened awareness and new knowledge. I have expanded my process-driven experimental practice from making films mostly single-handedly to involving participants in the filmmaking process. My motivation is to create a flattened methodology in order to produce unexpected knowledge that I respond to with mark making, writing, diagrams and films.

Thesis Structure

This thesis reflects and reiterates a unified approach to my research practice: it forms an assemblage of various projects, diagrams, images and writings that have been structured into chapters. The assemblage or collaged approach is relevant to work that aims to weave together different voices, mixed methods and marks of process into one dynamic space. The diagrams relate to the writing and offer additional insights, while images provide further relational insights that would not be held by writing alone. The result is a network of connections that is diagrammatic in itself.

The chapters in this written thesis follow my PhD's progression, moving through the research practice and embracing both human and nonhuman participation. Chapter 1 is divided into two parts forming a field review that examines methods and techniques of other artists and filmmakers. In Chapter 1a, I discuss the underlying artistic, practical and philosophical contexts that have informed my work and describe the practices of experimental and materialist filmmaking. In Chapter 1b, I explore specific tools and techniques, such as diagrams and drawings, that I employ to provide space for participation and landscape-based interactions. Here, participation can emerge through experimental filmmaking, where the constructs of the filmmaking process are made visible in order to 'jar' viewer engagement. Jarring becomes a key term throughout the thesis which I first introduce through sociologist Sophie Woodward in Chapter 1b in the context of collage as a material method, which I further expand on in Chapter 3 to encompass other embodied landscape-based filmmaking techniques.

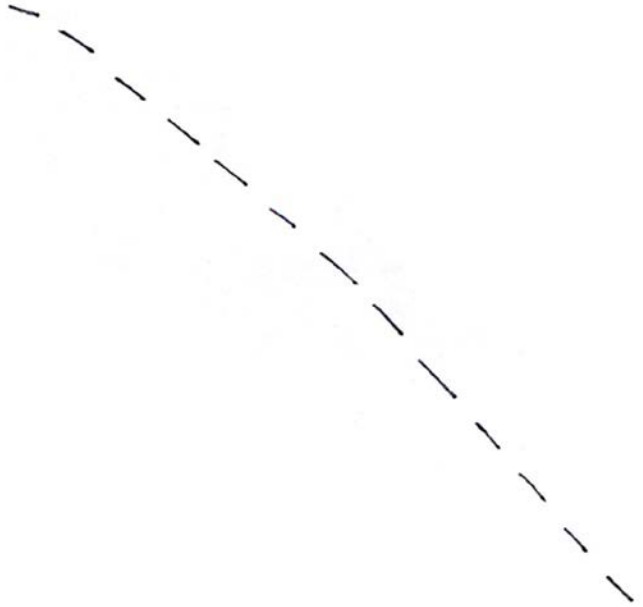
Chapter 2 explores the methodological approaches in the *Moving Landscapes* project as a public facing, socially-engaged aspect of my practice. I experimented with a methodological framework where participants recorded their embodied landscape-based experiences using material objects, creating a guide for sensing and recording the landscape. Using this project as a case study, I consider the tools and techniques I employed to incite embodiment and participation, mobilising an experimental methodology that followed onto subsequent work.

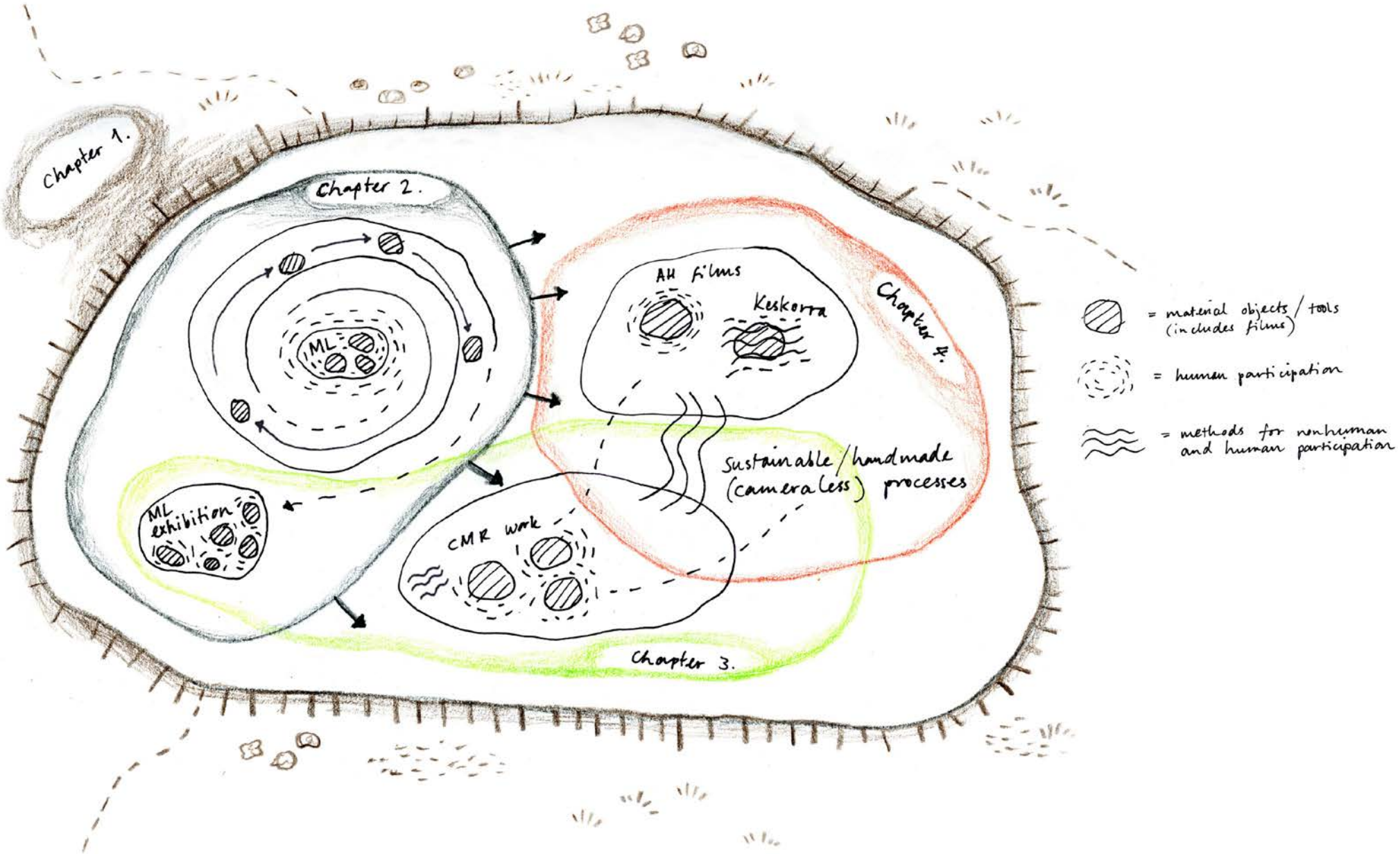
Chapter 3 looks at the Moving Landscapes exhibition and subsequent filmic projects that reduce the gap between bodies and creative processes in the landscape. I consider participatory engagement and the handmade formal processes that can re-evaluate and disrupt power relations in filmmaking and research projects, shifting away from human participation as the central concern.

Finally, Chapter 4 considers a more embodied approach to participation in landscapes that can provide a territory (literal and conceptual) for collaboration with nonhuman or more-than-human participants. Throughout all the chapters, I reflect on the value of a filmmaking practice that foregrounds process as mark making, reiterated in my diagrams where ideas as chance encounters can be experienced.

Following the projects undergone during this PhD period, I recall a slow learning that has taken shape from one piece of work to the other that I reconcile and reflect on throughout my writing. These works include making marks, films and images, but also thoughts and reflections in-between projects that have become rearticulated in this thesis. I have also undergone workshop training to further my skills and deepen my research practice. The work in its entirety, therefore, is not contained by a single project, but ideas that are joined through different media and formats collaged together, producing distributed insights throughout the thesis. The work of the research practice that consists of diagrams and collages that emerged with the writing forms an embedded part of the thesis and therefore those images will remain uncaptioned (or unreferenced), unlike the more illustrative photographs and film stills.

Artistic research practices can promote fluidity across disciplinary boundaries while challenging the structural limitations of top-down approaches: being in and looking out, exploring across. Landscapes, for me, have proven a fertile transdisciplinary ground on which to build my research practice. The work is fluid, in process, unfinished, becoming something else and reshaping through each interaction. Although this thesis marks the end of one phase, beyond submission I hope it will provide a map or, rather, graphic film score from which other films will emerge. The film(s) will interpret ideas produced by the various forms of the thesis, through sounds, written and spoken words, still and moving images. The point is not to have a single output or result, rather, to speak to process and change, making visible ideas, people and things for new knowledge shifts that otherwise could get edited out or hidden if reproduced in one 'finished' form.




Chapter 1.
Chapter 2.
ML
ML exhibition
AH films
Keskorra
Chapter 4.
Sustainable / handmade (cameraless) processes
CMR work
Chapter 3.
= material objects / tools (includes films)
= human participation
= methods for nonhuman and human participation

CHAPTER 1a
Surveying the field: a practice-based research landscape

This chapter has been divided into two in order to fully explore the contexts and philosophies that underpin my research practice. This first part, chapter 1a, takes a look at the wider contexts and implications of practice-related theories and landscape-oriented approaches to knowledge. I explore artistic and embodied approaches to knowledge and discuss materialist approaches in filmmaking which sets the scene for a landscape-based research practice that invites process and participation.

Diagrams are interspersed throughout the writing as a tool where a visual understanding of my explorations can add to an expression of my ideas beyond language alone. I will explain my use of diagrams and other such tools in the following subchapter (1b) in more detail as tools that can reveal further insights. From knowledge frameworks that ground and situate my position as a practice-based practitioner, I will focus on filmmaking practices that deprioritise power relations and foreground more subjective and embodied ways of being in and recording experiences in the world. But first, an overview of my practice and how my doctoral practice-based research has evolved.

My practice is process-driven, experimental and *embodied*. By embodied I refer to an experiential practice but also an alignment between form and content. This merging of form and content means I also consider the physical film body in the practice of making films. I am a filmmaker and researcher with an interest in performing and moving through all areas of my practice, from reading, drawing, photography, filming, recording sound, sound design, editing and writing. I sit still and work digitally with moving images, but I also move into environments or landscapes and take still photographs, which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 3. In short, by 'filmmaker' I refer to a process-driven participatory artistic filmmaking practice that is *landscape-based*. Through my practice, I am exploring what filmmaking that embodies participation through process-driven methods can look like, and how it can encourage connections with nonhuman or more-than-human beings. Experimenting through filmmaking means that rather than planning a film from pre-production through to post-production, I stay open to new possibilities, I am playful and curious, and I allow my research practice to develop through unexpected encounters. I work in a non-linear way that is process-driven rather than goal-oriented, staying open to possibilities rather than thinking of an end point.

I was due to carry out *the* major project associated with my PhD during the first lockdown imposed by the Covid19 pandemic. This meant that 'the film' I had intended to make was not possible due to outdoor restrictions and not being able to work with people, particularly vulnerable adults who were self-isolating for a prolonged period. Instead, during this extended time inside, much of my practice involved diagramming and collage as a way to map my research. When it was possible to go out into the world and film again, albeit with social restrictions, I engaged in participatory research projects, some of which were commissioned and some of which were self-iniated for my research. But whether I was actively filming or quietly diagramming, the same concerns have remained in spite of shifting contexts and limitations. In fact, what the experience of lockdown did for my research practice was to reaffirm what I felt was important and central to what I wanted to draw out and explore. Specifically, how attention to *process* can make ideas and marks made by contributors visible. These limitations additionally reaffirmed the idea that film does not have to represent a finished polished definitive end result, rather, focusing on experimental techniques in the filmmaking process can produce sparks of connection.

> Experimental documentaries allow for – maybe even necessitate – critical subjectiveness, humanist connections, recognition of historical wrongs, and speculation toward more progressive ways of being and representing (Hilderbrand 2009: 8).

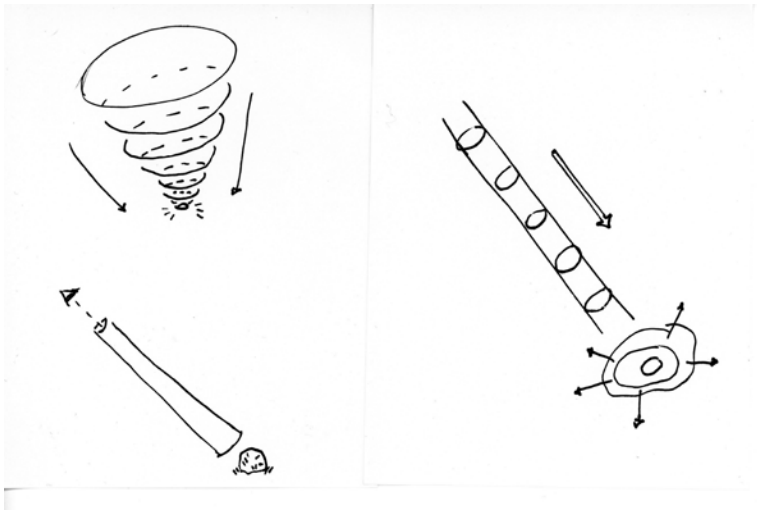
I have included the above quote as it signals a point of departure in my research. While I initially wanted to make an 'experimental documentary' as my research output, I have since decided to move away from that subgenre

label. Although I find the subgenre 'experimental documentary' limiting and unnecessary (why not call it a documentary?), I agree with the essence of a practice I believe film academic Lucas Hilderbrand is referring to as one that can emerge from non-fiction experimental film approaches. "[P]rogressive ways of being and representing" and "critical subjectiveness" underscore a less scientifically objectified way of connecting with a subject that could promote engagement and agency with respect to who or what is being documented. The idea of speculation indicates a not-knowing (yet), being open to possibilities through connections that can be difficult to carry out in a hierarchical top-down or linear approach.

In *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film* (1946), Maya Deren suggests that films that operate under the studio system become products rather than works of art, and that even nonnarrative documentaries are "limited by a set of conventions which originate in the method of scientific film" (Deren 1946: 80). She argues for a vertical approach to filmmaking, rather than a horizontal (or linear) one that moves across the plane of action following a particular character (Deren 2005). The vertical is more aligned with poetry and the layers of meaning and experiences can be communicated as subtle moments, which is what I would suggest is a more artistic and experiential approach.

My research practice involves *process-driven participatory artistic filmmaking*. Process-driven practices give way to emergent understandings, where the making of the work is energised by not knowing what is going to appear, or how, and analytic sense-making can happen when the work is long finished. In my own research practice, the work is brought to life by a fusion of ideas and experiences. From the reading of interdisciplinary texts to sensory embodied understandings of place: my work attempts to invite connections and reflections between place, people and nature, or *landscapes*. Contrary to the above quote, as already explained, I am not (or no longer) making an experimental documentary. Labelling it as such would indicate that I already know what the film(s) will be and how it (or they) will be received, when what I am actually doing is creating and reflecting on a methodological approach that opens up the possibility for a film (or films) through processes of engaged making and embodied connections. Perhaps an unfixing of labels is necessary to encourage undisciplined and emergent understandings.

Soon after the cultural turn in the humanities and social sciences, anthropologist Clifford Geertz called for a softening of boundaries across disciplines, where research beyond "rigid methodological and institutional segregation" could create dynamic rich insights (Jay 2017: 90). Geertz's introduction of "blurred genres" in 1983 (cited in Jay 2017: 90) counters the claim of clarity produced by binary oppositions that thinkers such as Descartes advocate, which produce unhelpful distinctions between mind–body and nature–culture. By 'unhelpful' I mean that binaries are counter-productive to knowledge generation as they encourage limited and static visions of the world (Salami 2023). The act of blurring boundaries, in aesthetic terms, can also indicate movement, where, particularly in photography, action is recorded in time. There is strength in embracing blurred boundaries as "vagueness… can produce a kind of clarity all on its own" (Jay 2017: 99). In his essay, 'Genres of blur' (2017), Martin Jay argues for a creative transgression of boundaries that can promote new awareness or clarity, which is something I aspire to do in my own practice, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4. However, while I fully embrace the blur in my own practice, both literally and figuratively, I also realise the need to focus *in*, which I will negotiate throughout this written component of my thesis.



Sensuous knowledge

In the introduction, I describe my philosophical positioning in the context of moving away from outmoded Western knowledge systems that subjugate and mechanise 'nature'. I say outmoded as framing the diverse scope of life that falls under that term as inert stuff — objects that serve human needs — perpetuates environmental destruction and unsustainable living for capital gain. It is the same knowledge system that promotes other Cartesian dualistic approaches, where binaries of nature-culture, mind-body and matter-mind are separated by a value judgement and imposed power dynamic that privileges one over the other (Salami 2023). This framing reflects a dominant cultural worldview that 'others' difference and deprioritises diversity, creating linear systems and hierarchies, valuing what can be quantified over what can be difficult to articulate such as emotion and artistic expression. A poetic knowing is already embodied, it is *sensuous*, meaning it affects the whole being, mind, body and spirit (Salami 2023).

Feminist author and social critic, Minna Salami, asks for a reimagining of a dominant paradigm that finds its roots in patriarchal and colonial knowledge systems, described by her as a "europatriarchal" worldview (Salami 2020: 2). Her term and title of her book, *Sensuous Knowledge* (2020) offers an approach that is rooted in black feminism, ecofeminism and queer theory, considering "hidden" as opposed to "alternative" perspectives (Salami 2020: 2). Sensuous knowledge provides an interconnected, fluid, non-dualistic space for knowing that is embodied, poetic, exploratory and ecofeminist, a way to transgress binaries and dualisms. She identifies the need to challenge dominant paradigms for the benefit of all beings and environments, while acknowledging the developments in europatriarchal knowledge systems that have led to beneficial technological developments as well as art and poetry. She urges the challenging of "[e]uropatriarchal biases of knowledge, but not at the cost of spirit—that is, wonder, joy, embodiment, poesy, and play, or what we may call the sensuous" (Salami 2020: 10). This point is crucial for my own research practice, as while I intend to challenge a top-down linear way of knowing and being in the world by instead focusing on embodied connections in landscapes, I cannot deny that I am operating in a system that I have benefited from, which is fuelling my own research practice. That said, there should be no contradictions when boundaries and binaries are dissolved, and it is possible to inhabit or *embody* all perspectives at once. As Salami suggests, a "kaleidoscopic method" can both challenge and appraise, helping to transgress boundaries (Salami 2023).

Salami sees the sensuous as something that affects not just the senses but the entire being, incorporating what is perceived by the mind and the senses as one embodied understanding. The sensuous approach to knowledge unifies what other knowledge systems keep separate: the intellectual and emotional, scientific and poetic, imaginative and rational, which, when separated can lead to destructive dualist hierarchies and toxic power dynamics (Salami 2023). Sensuous knowledge calls for embodied explorations of being in the world that can bring about integration through poetry and other forms of creative expression, encouraging participation in a deeper ecology (Salami 2023). Salami argues for creative expression as "a vital form of knowledge production because it aids the development of emotional intelligence" (Salami 2020: 25).

The sensuous, therefore, becomes a point of grounding in my research, a way to consolidate what Western europatriarchal knowledge systems separate. Instead of prioritising linear cultural 'progress' at the expense of nature perceived as mechanised (for human use) and static, the sensuous finds knowledge in the points of connection and interaction, seeing all of life as a fully integrated social organism in continual change and emergence. This is a space that can move across interdisciplinary (or transdisciplinary) explorations following an experimental practice, which seeks to embody participatory interactions by visualising (making visible) mark making as process. Salami offers practical applications of sensuous knowledge in order to help shift awareness outside of a dominant europatriarchal knowledge system. In the methodology section in Chapter 2, I will refer to her 'kaleidoscopic method' (Salami 2023) in the context of my own research practice. In summary, sensuous knowledge is a vital space to reconcile separations between mind and body, nature and culture, form and content, providing possibilities for emergent embodied knowledge that can hold multiple perspectives, a plurality of approaches, techniques and viewpoints.

Materialist and sensory filmmaking approaches

The subject of experimental film as a genre, subgenre or category of filmmaking is a difficult one to pin down as, by its own intent and function, it commonly operates outside the dominant modes of production. It could be said that experimental film roots derive from modern and postmodern art contexts, rather than from cinema history (Rees 2011: 2), and depending on historical context, experimental film has received various associations, including artists' moving image, underground, alternative, oppositional and avant-garde film. According to Fred Camper, its "lack of a stable name is a sign of the movement's health" (Camper 2023), and perhaps its slipperiness could be more of an issue for some film theorists writing about the historical 'traditional' film canon, and who may prefer to pin down filmic trends with a degree of conviction. That said, experimental filmmaking approaches are ideal for responding to theory, creating thought-provoking films that eschew mainstream and Hollywood tropes by foregrounding the potential for active viewing (Rees 2011).

This engaged or active viewing is what James Peterson identifies as a requirement for understanding an avant-garde or experimental film through a set of schemata (Peterson 1994). Interpretative *schemata*, according to Peterson, are a set of strategies that allow "thematic interpretation" that viewers can use to make sense of an experimental film when "basic comprehension is problematic" (Peterson 1994: 10). These strategies encourage a focus on "patterns of textures, colours, shapes and movements" rather than characters and narrative devices in commercial films (Peterson 1994: 23). Instead, experimental filmmaking draws attention to the *construction* of the filmmaking process, which, rather than revealing what would in conventional films remain hidden to promote an illusory experience, demands viewer engagement. Unexpected jarring cuts or slowing down footage and inserting still frames are markers of an experimental film and through these deliberate formal techniques, viewer attention is heightened rather than dulled as it can be when watching familiar narrative illusory promts (Peterson 1994). Instead of narrative plot cues, the viewer might follow visual patterns and movement, in short, the "surface structure" of the film is prioritised (Peterson 1994: 23). "The Hollywood film lulls its viewers into a stultifying passivity; the avant-garde demands the viewer's active participation, and ultimately offers a healthier experience" (Peterson 1994: 1). Although a *healthier* experience is perhaps something to be contested, what I think Peterson is alluding to is that there is something to be gained in moving the focus away from narrative drama that can instil heightened sensory perception and engagement. In other words, accessing the non-illusory potential of experimental film, can encourage creatively engaged active viewers and meaning makers, complicit in the filmmaking process.

In an experimental film podcast, *Into the Mothlight Podcast*, filmmaker Mark Street is interviewed on the origins of his practice. Street describes his transition from going to the cinema as a teenager for entertainment to learning about film at Bard College from Jonas Mekas's brother, Adolfas Mekas. There he learned to see "the human agency in filmmaking", whereas prior to this stage in his life he had only seen films as "a product… made up of production values that were part of a huge capitalist machinery" (Moyes 2022). Street's insight is similar to my own and until I encountered the world of experimental film, I thought I would have to reconcile my artistic filmmaking passion with being a cog in the film industry machine, making films that followed a narrative formula where the physical or incidental "artefacts of the process" are hidden (Ramey 2016: 143). I will discuss how incidental traces as markers of process have become participants in my practice in more detail in Chapter 3.

Inspired by minimalist traditions in the early 1960s, counter-culture filmmakers embraced the constructedness of filmmaking to its fullest, making films that rejected "the cinema of pure vision" (Rees 2011: 79). Coined in the 1970s by P. Adams Sitney, 'structural' or 'materialist' film (Sitney 2002), aimed to create an anti-narrative cinema experience by breaking film down to its bare components and revealing the mechanics of the filmmaking process. This involved drawing attention to the film grain, editing, flicker and camera movements that made the viewer aware of the human-made processes they were watching. Filmmaker and theorist Peter Gidal's introductory essay to his *Structural Film Anthology* (Gidal 1978) outlines a theory and definition of structural or materialist film. Gidal's theory suggests that attention to

the material and physical methods of a film's construction demystifies film production. The deliberate use of filmic devices, such as *visible* cuts, can align form and content, providing a non-representational and "non-illusionist" alternative form of engagement to narrative film viewing (Gidal 1978).

Some of the film experiments that came out of this period were incredibly controversial, designed to subvert mainstream illusory techniques to the extent that they made the viewing experience not only uncomfortable but purposefully confusing and frustrating, causing viewers to storm out of screenings (Rees 2011). Such screenings involved 'flicker films': durational film projections where every other frame is cut out of the film, deconstructing film to the point of absolute abstraction and creating an intentionally difficult viewing experience. While I admire many of the filmmakers associated with this era of boundary-pushing filmmaking, there are aspects of the practice that I find inaccessible. The flicker film is not an easy-going sensory experience and there is no real sense of embodiment while viewing: the inaccessibility of an overtly jarring experience can push the viewer out, rather than invite them in or engage them. Though this can arguably be a positive reaction and preferable to the dulling of the senses, it reveals the potential for filmmaking to invite a conscious active meaning-making experience through its processes made visible. Perhaps there is a balance to consider where film viewing can be engaging, accessible *and* thought-provoking.

One film from this period that, for me, strikes this balance beautifully is Kurt Kren's *Asyl* (1975): "a work in which the idea of landscape develops both through nature, and the nature of representation in the film medium" (Polmeer 2016: 120). His procedural conceit is perfectly simple, structured around a single device, and yet the results offer up a multitude of interpretations and

Fig. 2: Kren 1975. *Asyl.*

active engagement in the viewer (this is from my own experience from years of showing the film to undergraduate experimental film students). On viewing his 8-minute silent film, the viewer is confronted with footage of what appears to be small sections of a scene flickering into view then back to black at varying intervals.

Kren fed the same three rolls of 16mm film into his camera (totalling 300 feet), which stayed in the same fixed position on a tripod and recorded the same view out of a window over a twenty-one-day period. He made a mask with black card over glass to place in front of the camera lens, where various openings could be alternated so that different sections of the film emulsion would be exposed. The results show simultaneous changes in one section of landscape filmed from a static vantage point. In order for it to be effective, there needed to be two constants: the view in front of the camera and the film roll itself. What changed was, of course, the position of the film body inside the film frame over time (at twenty-four frames a second), together with Kren's physical manipulation of the mask in front of the camera lens each day. To plan for this film, as he did for all his films, he created a 'film score': a diagrammatic chart which helped him record exposure times and mask opening positions.

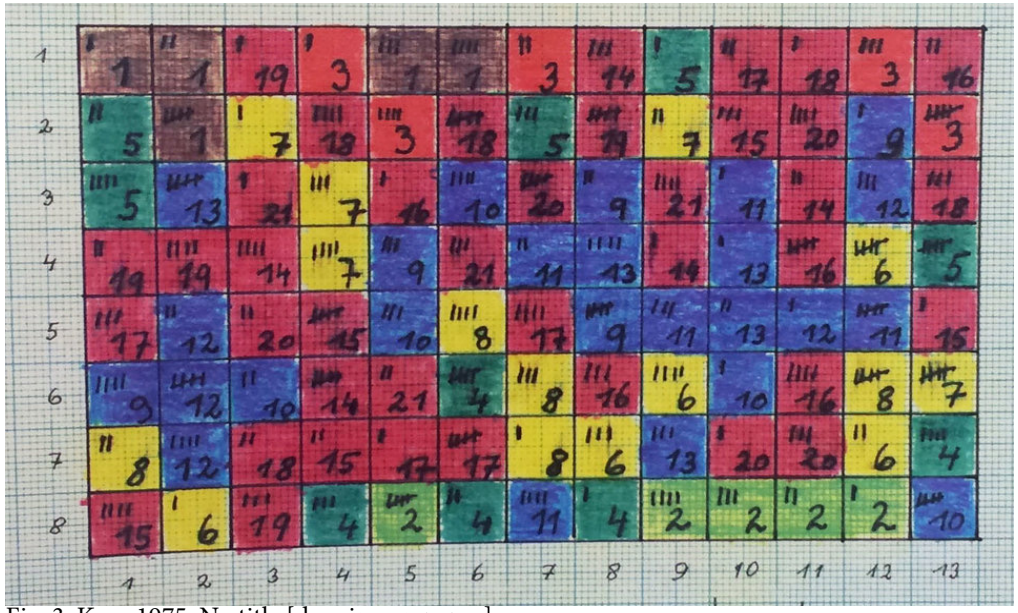


Fig. 3: Kren 1975. No title [drawing on paper]

Kren's film scores are a marks-of-his-process as procedure: they are diagrams whose purpose was to help him realise his film work (Polmeer 2016: 120). For me, they are also a piece of artwork in themselves, material artefacts that demonstrate process and can help make evident his methodology.

Kim Knowles is a senior lecturer in alternative and experimental film and has programmed experimental films for the Edinburgh International Film Festival. She insists on the ongoing relevance for material engagement in film that can open up "new ways of seeing, sensing and experiencing our physical world" (Knowles 2020: 25). Knowles' interest in experimental films began experientially, where watching a 16mm experimental film projected in the cinema moved her research into sensory film theory and embodied and material filmmaking practices. The films she programmes, teaches and writes about in her academic practice aim to elicit rather than answer questions. Encouraging space for interpretation, dialogue and negotiating the visible and invisible, whereby the viewer can engage "on the level of process" (Knowles 2017: 258).

In *Experimental Film and Photochemical Practices* (2020), Knowles identifies the continuing need to explore the value of film as a medium, arguing for a revised theory of 'materialist film'. In other words, she calls for an updated revitalised approach to structural filmmaking that picks up from where Gidal left off in the 1970s. Knowles' own research and interests in materialist film refer specifically to photochemical filmmaking, where processes and procedures are visible in the film itself, such as accidental grain and deliberate scratching on the emulsion coating. She identifies materiality as a broad concept involving techniques that intervene with the surface of the film strip, which can "elicit a sensual form of understanding" (Knowles 2020: 18). Though inspired by Gidal's original theory of structural and materialist film, Knowles expands on his definition and brings materialist film into a contemporary context which has relevance to the material turn and new materialist philosophy (Knowles 2020). She argues that materialist film does not have to be void of representation, as Gidal asserted, but rather, its tangible qualities can open up other forms of representation such as "embodied experience" (Knowles 2017: 260).

New materialism then, according to Knowles, can offer a new and relevant context to materialist film, which understands the limits of vision and has the potential to provide an expanded understanding of the physical world.

> By arguing that the physical world is constituted through a process of continuous change that plays out both within and beyond the realms of human intervention, new materialism forces us to reconsider the physical world as fundamentally unstable and thus unknowable to us through vision alone (Knowles 2017: 260).

Experimental and artistic filmmaking practices then have the capacity to explore embodied experiences of a world in flux, where humans are not at the centre. In today's context, Knowles sees materialist photochemical film as "an artistic tool capable of communicating across multiple materialities: bodily, earthly, human and non-human" (Knowles 2020: 25). She draws a comparison between celluloid film's 'obsolete' commercial status (in the context of consumerism around the digital) and the planet's finite environmental one, calling for a reappraisal of material sensibilities and their "agential capacity" (Knowles 2020). Knowles identifies experimental cinema's role (from Dada to digital abstraction) in exploring alternative ways of understanding the world away from cultural conventions. She sees the potential for a more tactile engagement with the image by foregrounding materials and materiality, employing "strategies of problematising and defamiliarising conventional visual regimes" (Knowles 2017: 257). It is the focus on "material relations" through the instability and chance occurrence of grain on emulsion that can remove structural bias, where the material "asserts its own agency beyond the controlling hand of the artist" (Knowles 2017: 263). In this way, experimental film is the embodied ideal for communicating sensuous knowledges.

The idea that the focus on materials and artistic tools can remove structural bias and assert agency is central to my research practice. The folding in of *process* and *material* to encourage embodied sensuous knowing away from dominant human-centred understandings of the world is completely relevant to my own research concerns. However, where it differs in practice is that I am interested in opening up the experiential part of the filmmaking process to include other participant voices so that engagement happens while making and subsequent viewing.

Part of my filmmaking process involves engaging with tactile arts-based practices, specifically, drawing, photography and collage. I employ artistic tools in my filmmaking practice in an expanded process-driven generative phase that undermines linear production models. I tend to engage with these artistic tools in a similar way to how the Surrealists incorporated 'automatic' techniques. Automatism consisted of a group of techniques that encouraged free association by accessing the unconscious (Tate 2023). These include collage, frottage and doodling or unconscious drawing. Though active at different times, I see a clear line between avant-garde and surrealist techniques of the 1930s and the materialist filmmaking ones that began in the 1960s. There is an interplay between chance and limitation, while attention is given to the film surface as materialist intervention, where the artist or filmmaker foregrounds the materials in the production of the work.

My filmmaking and research practice has associations with artistic non-fiction films, ethnographic and experimental documentaries. However, it is experimental filmmaking's capacity for "alternative forms of vision", using various techniques that foreground tactility, which can "open up a broad experiential range" (Knowles 2020: 17) that drives it. I make films that explore relationships between people, place and landscape, incorporating multiple (interdisciplinary) perspectives through formal experimental techniques such as layering and collage animation. Working in 16mm is a grounding feature of my work, and although I also work digitally, I am more drawn to celluloid filmmaking. It is the grain, the chance element of the process and unexpected results that make 16mm filmmaking an ideal medium for exploring material relations within landscapes.

The history of British landscape filmmakers includes contemporary artists engaging with 16mm and experimental film, some of who, like me, are based in Plymouth and Cornwall. For example, Kayla Parker and Joanna Mayes (Parker works with direct animation while Mayes has a sustainable filmmaking practice). Other practitioners whose analogue moving image practice intersects with landscape filmmaking include Catherine Elwes, Emily Richardson and Chris Welsby. These artist filmmakers have their own unique and often ecocritical approaches to filming landscapes. For Richardson, film can capture traces of interconnectedness or "creative exchange between nature and film", foregrounding an experience of place in her work (Elwes 2022: 123).

Mixing formats, still and moving image; digital and analogue, I am interested in what happens in the edit when different elements are positioned next to or on top of each other. I am curious to see what "sparking of understanding" can be produced "across gaps in the text" (Vaughan 1999: 202). In this way, there are also associations with poetry films, where the rhythm of the film is discovered during the edit and interstitial understandings can be interpreted. These interstitial or in-between understandings refer to meanings that are not restricted to any one characteristic or subject from any particular disciplinary background, differing from a linear narrative or didactic approach that may not leave much room for interpretation.

Other overlaps or blurs across my practice come from (experimental) visual ethnographic films, particularly those that have emerged out of Harvard's Sensory Ethnography Lab (SEL). The SEL produces work in film, video, photography, phonography and installation, which can cross over with perspectives influenced by the arts, the social and natural sciences and the humanities. This crossing-over encourages communication away from the language of dialogue and other didactic narrative methods of storytelling (Sensory Ethnography Lab 2023). Directed by Lucien Castaing-Taylor, their mission is to make films that do not prioritise either vision or language, promoting strategies that do not 'other' their subject as traditional ethnographic films have historically perpetuated (Sensory Ethnography Lab 2023). Rather, they focus on the sensory by incorporating unconventional experimental filmmaking techniques.

Leviathan, for example, by ethnographers Castaing-Taylor and Paravel (2012) is a film that captures multiple vantage points of life on board (and under) a fishing trawler. To say *it's about…* would be tricky to explain as there is no clear narrative, and although we see the crew and hear them talking among the sounds of creaks and sea surges, none of them directly talk to the camera. This is not an "anthropocentric film" (Cousins 2021) as people feature as much as the remains of haul (fish guts) filmed from inside buckets of water or of gulls

Fig. 4: Jones 2021. *Seaweed by Seaweed.*

flying above nets. These multiple shots and perspectives are achieved by the filmmakers' decision to position several GoPro cameras around the trawler, attached to parts of the ship rather than human hands, promoting a sensory experience. One camera is even attached to the end of a long pole that moves between capturing what is above the water line (mainly the gulls) to life below. The use of GoPros undermines what mainstream filmmaking defines as 'good production values', due the use of low quality and widescreen flattened lenses. Their continuous recording potential means that particularly long shots of relatively little action can test viewer patience. The SEL's mission is not to just show the audience an alternative perspective on a subject, "but to show you how that way of life might feel" (Pinkerton 2020).

In an article from *The New Yorker* magazine, Castaing-Taylor and Paravel describe their intention to give the viewer a set of visceral experiences that they may not have had before, making films that are "non-hierarchical" in their productions (Schwartz 2023: 31). They strive to make films that are not overly didactic, as many documentaries and ethnographies can be, and that "exhaust the possibility of words" (Paravel, cited in Schwartz 2023: 33). Their aim is to make films to "activate" viewer imagination without giving too much instruction or context as to how the viewer is meant to feel (Schwartz 2023: 28). The sensory focus of their films, where, according to the article, "the *pwwwsshhh* impact register[s] right in your solar plexus" (Pinkerton 2020), helps present a visceral experience of reality that removes the need for didactic verbal representation.

In experimental and sensory ethnographic filmmaking, as in many artistic practices, there is an alignment of form and content: the way something is made is intertwined and embodied by its subject matter and vice versa, so that the subject cannot be separated by its medium. A rather obvious example of this is in my photographic series *Seaweed by Seaweed* (2021), where I hand-processed photographs of seaweed using a seaweed developer in place of the less sustainable industrial chemical option. The subject becomes infused with the processes that interpret it, confounding representation and a capacity to be 'othered'. The so-called 'subject' passes through all sorts of sensory and material processes and therefore cannot be objectified through a single linear gaze and its referential potential becomes conflated. The potential for merging form with content is that it redirects attention away from object and subject to a more sensory experience. As Scott MacDonald indicates with regards to the SEL films, their experiential sensory approaches do not delineate human and animal, nature and culture; rather, they celebrate the complexity of a world in constant movement and transformation (MacDonald 2015).

Filmmaker and academic Trinh T. Minh-ha has made a lifelong career of work that intends to disrupt and dismantle the colonialist gaze. She refuses documentary and ethnography genres as labels for her filmmaking practice, as these are terms rooted in conventions derived from patriarchal and colonialist epistemologies. Using formal camera and editing techniques such as separating sound and image to subvert an authoritative voice-over and fragmenting long lingering observational takes in the edit, she defies traditional modes of representation (Balsom 2018). In this way, she draws attention to the constructed relationship between filmmaker and viewer, making space for other modes of expression and interpretation.

> Trinh insists on dislodging the illusory purity of inherited categories to make way for the hybrid and in-between. Crucially, this cross-disciplinary practice is not one of simple negation: Trinh breaks down dominant languages in order to imagine other forms of relation and expression (Balsom 2018).

Trinh calls the in-between space, "the interval", forming the foundation of non-traditional films that engage "in the art of life", such as the cine-poem. Her approach to break down dominant modes of expression has a similar function to the intent of experimental films that aim to challenge mainstream illusory filmmaking techniques. She believes the visual study of events through the gaps between film images creates what Dziga Vertov once called, "fragments of actual energy" (Trinh 1999: xii), opening up new ways of knowing.

Rhythm and intervals are embraced in poetic films and can overlap with experimental filmmaking, finding their meaning in-between language and other forms of expression, where feeling through experience is a way of knowing sensuously. Another example of a similar approach can be found in the work of filmmaker-poet, Margaret Tait, who made 'film poems'. Known as

a poet first and filmmaker second, she has been described as a "beachcomber artist" with an experimental spirit (Stevenson 2019), taking inspiration from the landscapes around her native Orkney in Scotland.

In my own practice, I tend to position myself more in relation to those experimental image makers who have a poetic sensibility and perhaps situate themselves in-between and away from conventional representation. In addition, and specifically with respect to one of my research projects in particular, I have formalised an approach that brings people as participants into the artistic process, which can in turn be visualised through filmmaking. As stated in the introduction, a landscape-based approach might help describe what I am attempting, where knowledge sits in the cross-over of ideas and things being explored within a diverse terrain, rather than working within one discipline and applying a single lens to a subject. Artist and archaeologist, Rose Ferraby, calls for perspectives on landscape that embrace dynamic interactive processes and tensions, rather than thinking in the rigid terms of "nature" or "culture" (Ferraby 2015: 27). In an essay titled 'Narratives of change on the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site', she discusses how the photographic process can help convey an unconscious "slow learning of the landscape" (Ferraby 2015: 28).

Photography, as the act of taking photographs, "can thereby become a lens to a wider field of thought and knowledge, opening a wider dialogue and interpretation on the nature of change in the landscape and the individuals with which it is associated" (Ferraby 2015: 29). As suggested by Ferraby, photography can present different visions and perspectives on landscapes, enabling conversations between maker, viewer and other participants. Positioning myself and my research practice within a landscape means to embody the experience of making, rather than objectively record and capture a landscape as a subject of enquiry at a distance. My practice becomes as much about the tools and techniques employed together with the participants I work with, expanding the scope of dialogue and interpretation.

Participation as practice

As indicated above, a materialist, embodied, sensuous approach to filmmaking is ripe for engaging participants in not just the viewing of a finished film, but also involving them at the preliminary research and making stages. Although the concept of a structural or materialist film as posed by Gidal is an excellent starting point, as Knowles identifies in her research, his mid-1970s theory mainly focused on the disillusionment with narrative filmmaking conventions (Knowles 2020). As such, though potentially engaged as witness to the processes of how a film was made, the viewer is essentially an incidental bystander. In addition, their capacity for engagement is limited as they have not been directly involved with making the film. Knowles, however, sees new political and theoretical potentials for photochemical film's tactility to create insights and material understandings of the world in today's material and nonhuman ecocritical concerns (Knowles 2020).

To summarise, in order to fully engage the senses as active viewers, an awareness of the process of filmmaking, or in other words, an experience of the material surface of film, is necessary. I would go further and suggest that involvement in the making or production of a film can instil even deeper understanding through engagement with those processes. Knowles draws a connection between the tactile engagement of film and its "agential capacities" (Knowles 2017: 260) in the context of the current environmental crisis. This capacity of film to embody and activate is something I am concerned with in my practice, which I will discuss further in Chapters 3 and 4. In Chapter 2, I explore other forms of activating participation through tools and techniques as material objects, a ground-up approach where I invite participants to look at landscapes in focused ways before they make their own interpretations. By guiding their attention to draw on the landscape as material for a research project, I hope to encourage insights that will affect the eventual filmmaking process. I am applying the term *landscape*, not just as an experiential site where nature and culture coincide, but as a conceptual idea that provides the grounds for intersections or 'blurs' in my research: people, place, environment and nature. These are all terms that in my mind merge into a single concept or place for embodied knowing, landscape as a physical space where connections

can be made experientially, imaginatively and sensuously. In this first phase of practice research, as will be described in Chapter 2, I invite the interpretation of a landscape with the use of artistic tools. In order to embody or become immersed in a landscape I start by walking, often taking records such as photographs, audio recordings and sketches and then interpret them.

Formal techniques can be applied to subvert hierarchical research and filmmaking procedures, where, in socially engaged projects, the voice of the participant is just as visible as that of the researcher. An artistic research project that I feel achieves this dynamic successfully is Gill and Vangad's *Fields of Sight* (2014), which I discussed in the introduction. Their work embodies an artistic research practice that is not only socially engaged but also ecocritical. The layers of artistic representation do more than subjectively voice both creators of the work, they also tell stories about embodied and imagined experiences of a landscape. The result is a "…collaborative project that attempts to reckon with the many layers of story, time, and space as they intersect with different ways of seeing" (Patel 2018). The layers become relational, flattening the dominant social hierarchies that can exist between researcher and participant; but also, in this case, between indigenous person from the region and renowned photographer-researcher from the city of New Delhi. In a sense, there is a triangle of participation happening where two human participants are equally relating to a landscape as a third experiential agent or participant in their knowledge production. The landscape becomes the grounding force, building the relationships between the two actors or participants.

My speculation, following on from an embodied 'being in' and recording the landscape, is that non-hierarchical or democratised or flattened space recreated in an image can also produce a dynamic relationship between researcher, participant and viewer. One way that this interactive participation can be rendered or communicated is through layering. In the example of *Fields of Sight* (Gill & Vangad 2014), equal importance has been given to drawing and photography as they exist in relation to each other in the same frame or space. Examples of this dynamic can be seen in two recent films, *Vever (for Barbara)* (2018) by Deborah Stratman, and *Apiyemiyekî?* (2020) by Ana Vaz. In *Vever (for Barbara)*, Stratman creates an audio-visual dialogue between

Fig. 5: Stratman 2018. *Vever (for Barbara).*

footage taken by Barbara Hammer and one of Hammer's major influences, Maya Deren. Stratman had been asked by Hammer before she died to create a reimagining of her unused footage, which she shot while travelling through Guatemala in 1975 (Hodgins 2018). Stratman layered the footage with Deren's field recordings, texts and geometric ritualistic motifs that Deren referred to as *communication junctures*, which are symbolic drawings used in Haitian Voodoo, otherwise known as *vever*. Her non-narrative layered film exploration weaves all three women together and binds them to those places, aligning their interests in filmmaking and exploring other cultures in artistic, sensuous ways that honours their cultural significance (Mubi 2023).

One of the first scenes of *Vever (for Barbara)* (2018) shows clear intent in Hammer's footage to engage with the indigenous people who are in the middle of a civil war, where leftist groups consisting of mostly Maya indigenous people

are fighting government forces. A record of her "active participation" (Hodgins 2018) reveals a documented moment of sharing food with a group of people, where Hammer's hand reaches out of the frame for a bowl of soup handed to her by an indigenous woman. According to an online article published by the Walker Art Centre, who also commissioned the film, this inclusion of footage by Stratman positions Hammer's queer political body "into the landscape she is discovering" (Hodgins 2018). This technique subverts the top-down object-oriented gaze of conventional ethnographic and mainstream non-narrative filmmaking, drawing attention to the body of the filmmaker or researcher within the film frame.

Apiyemiyekî? (2020) is a film that traces an Amazon community's first interactions with white people and the subsequent destruction of their lives, villages and culture in the 1970s through drawings as material objects (Bittencourt 2020). In the film, Vaz includes drawings by members of that community which she superimposes over footage of the approximate sites where the atrocities had taken place. These formal strategies are used to voice members of the Amazon community as filmmaking participants; the drawings themselves were originally collected by researcher and activist Egydio Schwade, as part of an official investigative report to document the violence and devastation to the native people. The film contains excerpts of conversations with Schwade, but interestingly, its focus is on collaging the audio extracts with footage and drawings so that the film is "not purely expository" (Bittencourt 2020).

Fig. 6: Vaz 2020. *Apiyemiyekî?*

The formal strategies built into both films along with Gill and Vangad's artistic research project, evidence approaches where dialogues between participants (including the researcher/ filmmaker as participant) are achieved by a physical or material and temporal layering of *voices* (drawings, film or photography and actual vocal sounds). This happens inside the frame. In addition, all examples foreground *place* or landscape as the research interest. The sites of these encounters are intrinsic to the explorations in each piece of work, as are the people involved, because one cannot be separated from the other. According to geographer Doreen Massey, 'space' is not just a physical thing we pass through, but a dimension of multiplicity and co-existence where many things can happen at the same time (Massey 2013). She suggests that space is not just material but also social, and a product of our relations with each other. Here, space is flattened and power structures are subverted, allowing a reading of the image that is not reliant on linear progression.

Contemporary filmmaker Caryn Cline employed a single technique in order to involve three filmmaker-participants in an experimental filmmaking process. In *Light Coins* (2018) she and two others used the same roll of 16mm film that had been mediated by different coin-hole crafted matte boxes. As with Kren's *Asyl* (1975), where a mask with small holes was used to allow light to interact with the film emulsion, the blocked-out light outside the coin-sized holes on the matte in Cline's film meant that there were unexposed areas of the film frame. When the film was passed to the next filmmaking participant, they were able to expose a different section of the film with their footage. The result is not dissimilar to Kren's, the difference however, is that it has been made using participation as experimental process-driven documents of each filmmaker's experiences of landscapes in and around Seattle. Unlike Kren, the filmmaker-participants of *Light Coins* did not use a film score to plan the collected footage, and so the results or contents of the filmmaking experiment would have been completely unexpected and left to chance.

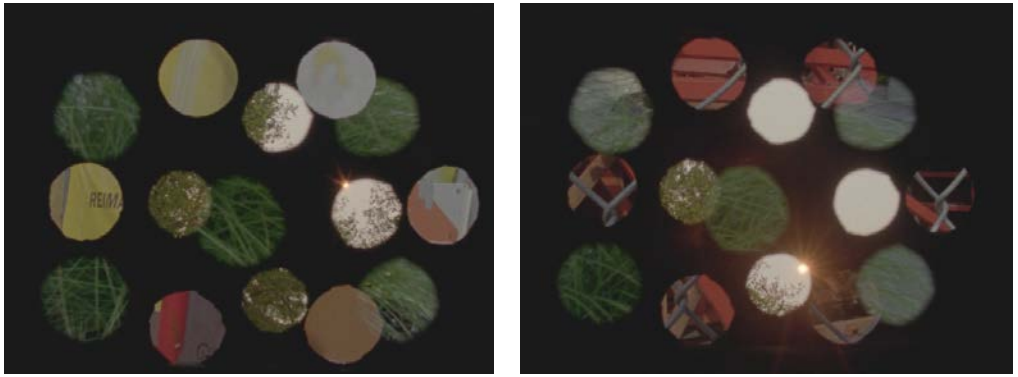


Fig. 7: Cline 2018. *Light Coins*

Kathryn Ramey's *Experimental Filmmaking: break the machine* (2016) is a technical and political book that draws on alternative or hands-on approaches to filmmaking and processing, celebrating experimental filmmakers and sharing their practices and techniques. It is designed to give its readers accessible filmmaking tools and techniques as interventions, so that they can innovate and participate in the creative process. It is a practical guide that contains an incredible range of handmade DIY approaches to filmmaking including eco hand-processing methods such as 'grassenol', which mixes weeds with non-harmful alternative chemistry (Ramey 2016). Ramey's endeavour is to dispel the idea that there are hierarchical barriers to experimental ecological filmmaking and that film can only be accessible to those with money and a space to do it in. Ramey's closing words in her book are a call to community, that experimental filmmaking can create a sense of shared space and connectedness (Ramey 2016: 395).

I have outlined the potential for experimental film to bring viewers into the filmmaking process as "active participants in the production of meaning" (Raban 2011: 100). In addition, that experimental filmmaking techniques can foreground *process* by attention to grain, marks and mechanical filmmaking constructions that dismantle mainstream illusory procedures. But what I am particularly interested in is how an experimental research project can invite participants into the filmmaking process (before a film camera is picked up) and make them, the participants, visible through their own marks, voices and interventions. In short, introducing participants to the beginning and middle stages of a filmmaking process, as well as the end stage where they are also active viewers (along with other audience members). This function could create a film that democratises the production process and promotes embodied knowledge through a multiplicity of approach and "plurality" of viewpoints (Arendt 1958). An experiential landscape-based filmmaking practice can have the effect of freeing the imagination, promoting embodied creativity and engagement, encouraging new ways of seeing.

Productive tensions

I am aware there is a potential jarring around some of the approaches I am considering: experimental filmmaking is often undergone by one person as it draws on intense subjectivity in the work. Socially engaged practices or art projects that invite participants to make the work are often criticised for exercising the researcher's or artist's agenda (Lury and Wakeford 2012). Not to mention working with people whose accessibility to outdoor settings may be limited due to circumstances. That said, a mixed methodological approach that involves participatory arts-based strategies and decentre the researcher can produce unexpected outcomes and chance encounters (Leavy 2015). I will describe participatory and material methods in my methodology section in Chapter 2.

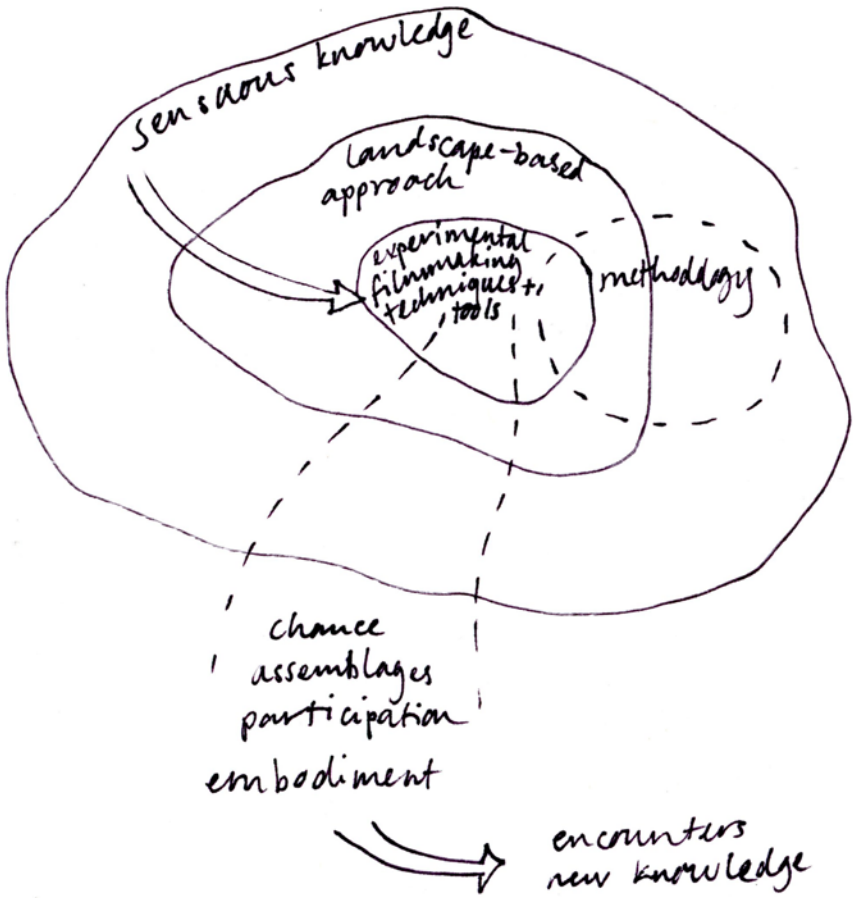
In *Art as Research* (2013), Shaun McNiff weighs up the qualities of arts-based research and artistic enquiry, where "knowing and not knowing are in perpetual tension" (McNiff 2013: 113). He suggests that most arts-based researchers gravitate towards uncertainty and tension as somewhere in this process complexity can be discovered (McNiff 2013). Allowing space for emergent and unexpected knowing is crucial in this delicate balance. Philosophers with art practices Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, create work that both delimits and activates the possibilities for participant interactions. They call these "enabling constraints" (Manning 2015: 52) — which sounds

very like 'productive tensions' — both suggest a real or imagined boundary that paradoxically enables the work.

Many of the artistic practices I have referred to in this field or landscape review, sit quite comfortably in the discipline of social anthropology as they are 'culturally' informed ways of working with and learning about people. This tension, which could undermine my intention to make "undisciplined" (Massey 2006: 34) landscape-based work, is a productive one as in the films I have referred to there is no clear distinction between those that are ethnographic and those that are labelled experimental or documentary. While the Sensory Ethnography Lab is based in Harvard's anthropology department, the work it produces aims to be 'interdisciplinary' and 'experimental', applying multiple perspectives from the arts, sciences and humanities in order to subvert traditional ethnographic representation (Harvard University 2023). Similarly, Trinh T. Minh-ha refuses any category imposed on her filmmaking practice, and instead of ethnographic or documentary, she simply uses 'filmmaking' to describe her practice.

In a book that aims to offer an expanded definition of visual anthropology, Kathryn Ramey has written an essay titled, 'Productive dissonance and sensuous image-making: visual anthropology and experimental film' (Ramey 2011). Ramey finds intersections between two practices, where both experimental and ethnographic filmmakers work in a marginalised capacity, often using accessible cameras and recording devices rather than the unaffordable mainstream industry standard equipment. She suggests that often both types of filmmakers enact their practices in similar ways, self-funding their work through lecturing and artist or humanities grants (Ramey 2011). Rather than considering the avant-garde or experimental film as its own *genre*, it should be regarded as a "social practice", which forms part of a "network of production, distribution, and exhibition that constitutes a community of practice" (Ramey 2011: 259). Ramey refers to Maya Deren as an anthropologically informed experimental filmmaker. Deren was heavily influenced by myth and ritual, which she often interpreted through choreography and performance in her filmmaking. Ramey's essay was written seven years before Stratman's *Vever* (2018) and she describes Deren's previously unedited 16mm footage. According to Ramey, Deren's filmmaking expresses "embodied knowledge" and has offered significant anthropological insights on Haitian Voodoo and dance (Ramey 2011: 265). Ramey considers the potential for ethnographic and experimental films to experiment with collaboration and produce a "third voice" which confounds authorship, where the investigator and person portrayed become interwoven (Ruby, cited in Ramey 2011: 268). This, as I have suggested above, is what I aim to achieve in my own work, and I am also considering that the third voice is landscape-based.

It is clear that exploring multiple ideas and subjects through one lens is unproductive, and that single vision and dualistic thinking are unhelpful for making complex multifaceted connections. As indicated throughout this field review, I am using approaches that ground sensuous knowledge in my research practice: it is necessary to hold multiple views at once in order to appreciate diversity and be open to "different ways of thinking and doing differently" (Salami 2023). It is also clear that prioritising language as rational knowledge carries its own set of limitations that can privilege some humans over others. There are also limitations to what socially engaged research and a new materialist approach can provide a research project when considering the two from separate standpoints; I am interested in how one approach can embed or embody itself in the other. For example, working with others as an active participant myself distances my researcher/ filmmaker voice and allows agency and chance to determine how a response or unexpected insight can emerge using tools or prompts as devices. In the same vein, the balancing of uncertainty and experimentation can produce insight through tension. However, certain constraints need to be applied to provide a clear accessible route into the practice. Within my practice, I feel that this balance of tensions often includes a degree of subversion of mainstream practices that makes visible the processes or mechanics of the film's construction. At the same time, the filmmaking and viewing experience needs to be accessible enough to encourage and engage participants. In the next part of this field review, I will be considering how tools as material objects can activate participation, engaging through those objects and devices to form connections and encounters within landscape spaces.


sensorous knowledge
landscape-based approach
experimental filmmaking techniques + tools
methodology
chance
assemblages
participation
embodiment
encounters
new knowledge

CHAPTER 1b
Surveying the field: tools and techniques

This first chapter contextualises an expanded participatory approach that employs materialist strategies, locating my practice in a focused field of influence that includes philosophical underpinnings and experimental filmmaking techniques. In this subchapter, I will be exploring the tools and techniques I engage with to progress and deepen insights into my research practice, such as drawing, diagramming and collage, which, as analysed in Chapter 2, have become part of my methodology. I am also interested in how tensions can be productive, for example, in a practice that is socially engaged, how material approaches that redirect the focus away from "the controlling hand of the artist" (Knowles 2017: 263) and create a wider scope for participation that is nonhuman-centred. As a starting point, I am exploring ways to reveal insights away from objective representation, as suggested and framed below by surrealist artist René Magritte. I make films that explore relationships between people, place and landscape, incorporating multiple (interdisciplinary) perspectives through formal experimental techniques such as layering and collage animation. Modernist art practices redirect the experience of representation so that it is in the encounter with the artwork that sensation is produced, rather than feelings mimetically rendered as "realism" (Rees 2011: 8).

> Even if our ideas and feelings are extraordinary, they cannot be expressed or represented through painting, unless a convention legitimises a vague expression of ideas or feelings: it is *from* a painted image that ideas or feelings may appear and encounter the image. A painted image does not *represent* ideas or feelings, but feelings and ideas can represent a painted image (Magritte 2016: 179).

The idea of feelings mediating an artwork or being produced by that encounter, makes the proposition of representation ineffective; there is no subject-object, rather an ongoing exchange of feeling.

Certain modernist practices, such as action painting, inserted movement into the artwork, emphasising that "the role of process was as important as the result and should be indicated in the work" (Rees 2011: 56). Between the 1920s and 1940s, avant-garde cinema and modernist art practices intersected in their ideals to foreground form, movement and sensation, however, these practices were often only accessible to a white male elite. Modernism celebrated innovation and modern industry, and though it rejected conservative values (Tate 2023), it also privileged a white Western male-oriented worldview (Lusty & Murphet 2014).

Throughout my research practice as articulated in this thesis, I explore democratic sensuous ways of knowing by moving beyond an objective representation of subjects to understand *the encounter* as part of the experience of art and image making. This approach to engage with objects follows Jane Bennett's new materialist informed "material vibrancy" (Bennett 2015). According to Bennett, understanding 'art-things' as "bodies-in-encounter" draws on their capacity to *affect* (Bennett 2015: 91). In my research practice, I am interested in exploring what encounters can be made in landscape locations and how entanglement with objects and devices can be expressed in the process of filmmaking, bringing people closer to nonhuman interactions through participation.

I am drawn to practices that fold in the methods used for capturing and making with a concern for landscapes, not as static backdrops but as shifting assemblages, which, while in a process of change, can provide space for embodied knowledge. And in the spirit of aligning form with content, I am interested in other practitioner-researchers who find new ways of challenging interpretations of the world and can frame their practices in innovative ways. For example, artist Uriel Orlow identifies his practice as research-based rather than the other way around. His practice, like mine, is "process-oriented and often in dialogue with other disciplines and people" (Orlow 2023). This framing places the research under the practice, prioritising process-driven artistic and non-representational sensuous approaches to knowledge.

The rest of this chapter follows on from Chapter 1a and is a contextual exploration of interdisciplinary artistic and experimental practices in the form of a field review. I am navigating my research practice as if it is its own

landscape and though there are several ways to explore it, I will mainly be focusing on specific tools and devices that enable it to happen.

Zooming in… tools and techniques

I am thinking about tools and techniques as mediums that allow for focused participation within landscape spaces. As my research practice is landscape-based, I could consider this page a landscape space and that writing is a tool that weaves together embodied thoughts and experiences. The tools I employ in my practice are the ones I use to expand it out to others: they are devices that can aid embodied experiences where focus as well as meandering or deviation are all possibilities.

Collage is a technique that specifically allows a different kind of awareness or tuning into alternative ways of looking at the world. The collaged approach is similar to what Derrida calls 'bricolage', which is essentially exploring a subject with the instruments or tools at hand (Derrida 1978). As a technique it is integral to my own practice, and it comes in at different stages. I often use collage to *unstick* or free my imagination and allow new ideas to flow: the tangibility of the material, physically cutting out elements and reframing them to form new juxtapositions and spark unforeseen connections. It is the limitation of materials and their content that makes surprise encounters possible. Working with three cut out pictures holds a multitude of possible interactions and the potential for many distinct assemblages. The act of collaging relies on making connections as well as contrasts to visual and material elements (photographs or printed images), which can prove helpful in creative problem solving and idea generation. Collage artist and photographer, John Stezaker, suggests that "[c]ollage offers the possibility of challenging the hold which pictures exert upon our imagination, perceptions, even our situation (vantage point) in the world" (1978: 5).

Collage is an ideal research tool as it involves exploring, sorting and reinterpreting or making sense of information. It can also produce new ideas, as putting one image next to another can cause a reimagining of contexts. In a similar way, photographer and academic, Liz Wells reflects on how photographers use the complexities and depths of the research process in order to engage with their craft:

> Artists collect, log and sift through a diversity of information about places in order to deepen the insights that will inform photographic method and processes. They are not journalists going in and getting the shot; rather they are storytellers whose depth of research and analysis is reflected in the philosophic perceptions and visual rhetorical strategies which characterise their picture-making (Wells 2011: 10).

Collage can be considered a postmodern practice as it is "not limited to a specific discipline but is transdisciplinary" (Scotti and Chilton 2017: 359). In this way, it is an ideal research tool for arts-based and practice research, inspiring generative emergent knowledge. In *Method Meets Art*, Patricia Leavy illustrates how collage is a particular visual arts-based research practice that can embrace multiple meanings and interpretations. She goes on to suggest that it is not dissimilar to traditional qualitative research in its method of gathering, selecting, analysing and presenting. In addition, it can be used by artist-scholars as a method of addressing macro and micro issues together with their interrelatedness (Leavy 2009: 223). I would add that collage has a unique sensory capacities as it involves working directly with a range of different materials and textures to make new connections and understandings. Through collage, data does not always need to be comprehensive, rather it can be fragmentary, where the positioning of disparate images can allow "material and multi-sensory ways of knowing" to emerge (Woodward 2020: 71).

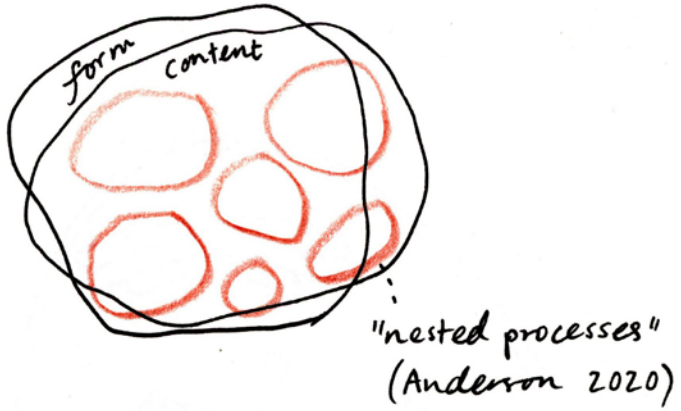
Sociology professor Sophie Woodward sees collage as a "material method" (Woodward 2020) that can produce unexpected insights, suggesting that "[a]lthough some of the possibilities for unusual juxtaposition are particular to the practice of collage, it clearly carries some of the potentials of other material methods, where it can 'jar' people into seeing or thinking differently" (Woodward 2020: 71). This possibility to 'jar' sounds similar to Derek Jarman's "surprise collisions" that collage can offer the maker (Jarman 2018: 22). In *Modern Nature* (2018), Jarman interweaves his reflections on collage with the surprise collisions he encounters with plants in his garden in Dungeness. This

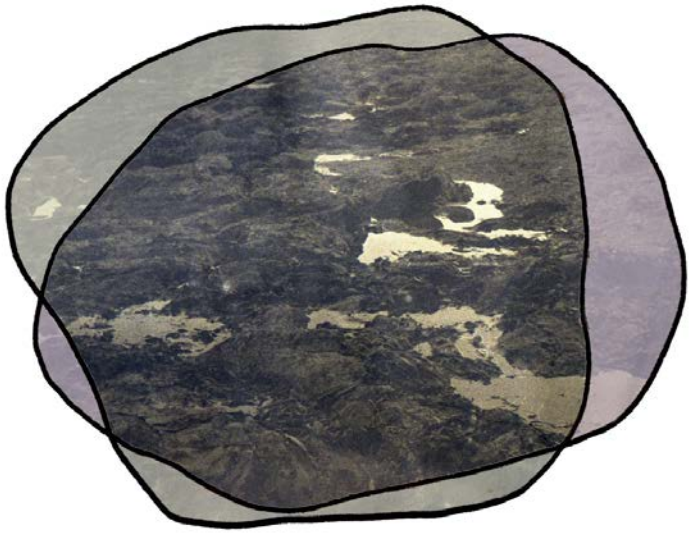
is a transposing of artistic jarring onto a physical environment or landscape which I am attempting in my own research. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing applies the concept of "friction" to unexpected nature emerging in "human-damaged" places (Tsing et al 2017: 4). In her book, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, Tsing considers the potential for natural diversity in post-industrial sites or landscapes that she calls "assemblages", where the human and non-human interact (Tsing 2015: 22). A "landscape assemblage" (Tsing 2017: 10) can also be a place where "ways of being emerge" to shape or reimagine what might be possible (Tsing 2017: 7). Although the idea of 'jarring' sounds abrupt, as it could indicate something that should not be there, it also denotes a surprising encounter between beings and things. Perhaps this is a way to consider artistic processes in embodied landscape encounters, where humans and nonhumans interact.

Landscapes are constructed spaces, always temporal and in the process of change (Bender 2002). In *Landscapes: John Berger on Art*, John Berger reflects on drawing where the lines on paper are traces left behind from the artist's gaze (2016: 22). According to Berger, drawings, as opposed to paintings, are unconstructed and unfinished autobiographical records, or as Bender would suggest, "record*ings*" (Bender 2002: 103, my emphasis), indicating a focus on process. Azevedo and Ramos' work around inter-subjectivity in their research carried out in drawing workshops places a similar emphasis on drawing in relation to visual ethnographic methods. Here, drawing is "… not a finished product or artistic form, but a mark of one's process, coming out of research." (Azevedo and Ramos 2016: 144).

> If we do not concentrate so much in drawings as finished products but as steps in an unfinished – and ending – process, their layered and connecting nature is revealed, be it in the individual drawing itself as it comes into being, in its paradigmatic relation with other drawings in a never-ending flow of (re)invented lines (Azevedo and Ramos 2016: 145).

Drawing then can be a research tool which not only intersects different disciplines from art to science to the humanities but can also produce and make connections as a stage of an unfinished process, rather than simply represent knowledge. Artist and researcher, Gemma Anderson believes drawing is an important tool and process for knowing as relevant to science as it is to art. She undergoes collaborations or 'interdisciplinary exchanges' between artists and scientists with the intention of integrating scientific research into artistic practice, produced through drawing and dialogue. For Anderson, drawing is a tool where visual representation can communicate and lead to process-centred understandings of the natural sciences (Anderson 2018). In addition, drawing can communicate knowledge across disciplines, making visible "relations between things that otherwise remain invisible" (Anderson 2018: 16). Her method, "relational process drawing", involves activating the imagination in the drawing process and imagining the molecular and cellular "nested processes" a plant undergoes in its reciprocal development (Anderson, cited in Buenfeld and Clark 2020: 78). Anderson makes the connection between drawing as an artistic endeavour and biological processes that she understands through drawing; it is a link between imagination and knowledge that activates the drawing process and allows a deepening of knowledge. Process, in this case, is attributed to more than one discipline and is reliant on emergence and unexpected encounters. To be open to chance is to notice, whereas fixing the attention on a finished outcome can deactivate those drives. "We could say that a stable and completely realised image *clips the wings*" (Bachelard 1988: 2). Process denotes flux, an in-between stage where what happens next cannot be known but the possibilities can be imagined.

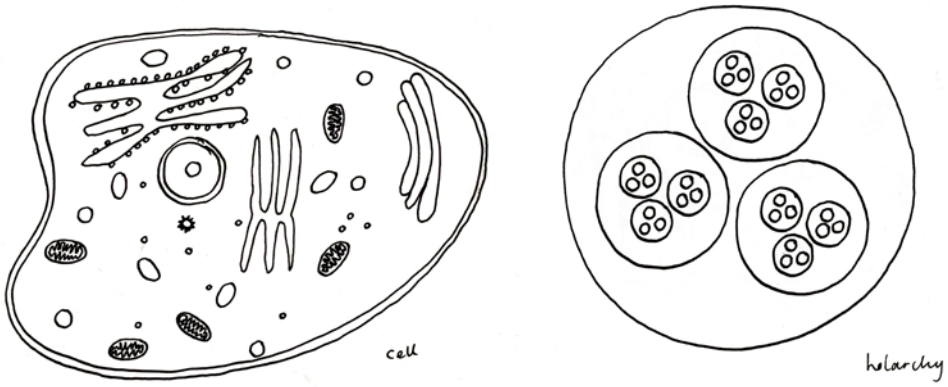




I have made my own diagrammatic interpretation of Anderson's "nested process", which I have incorporated to imagine and map the alignment of form and content. The diagram could just as easily express the merging of practice and theory and other forced dualisms. In the diagram above, I have nested in the Seaweed by Seaweed photograph I used to exemplify form and content combined in the first part (Chapter 1a) of this field review.

I am interested in how a relationship between the thing that is becoming known via the tools that give way to an embodied experience of that same thing, can be expressed in ways that synthesise form and content, mind and body, nature and culture. Hand drawn marks, whether as diagrams or on the filmmaking surface, can reveal indeterminate unfixed connections, where ideas and knowledge can be communicated through, what I describe as, *productive visualised material processes:* relational and embodied ways of experiencing an environment or place. I propose that by incorporating these marks and making them visible in film, in turn, can produce a heightened sense of engagement in the entire filmmaking process, from making to viewing, by focusing on non-verbal and non-didactic expression.

Throughout my doctoral research practice, the diagram has become an invaluable research tool to express and connect my ideas between the various forms of my practice. When I write, though it is part of my practice, I find words can pause the flow of ideas as I stumble over them. I have incorporated diagrams to unstick and express ideas where language feels limiting. Diagrams have helped embody my research practice, aligning form and content, where maintaining a division between practice and theory is unproductive and feels like an inauthentic way for me to frame my work. I find that with diagrams, I am able to express ideas in a more dynamic and nonlinear form. Another point that makes the diagram an ideal model for communicating my research, is that it can depict a hierarchy-flattening model of ideas as depicted in a two-dimensional space, or in other words, a "holarchy", coined by Koestler in 1967 (cited in Sheldrake 2020). A holon and its ordering system, a holarchy, describes parts of a whole that are comprised of smaller parts and cannot be broken down into independent entities, like Anderson's "nested processes" (2020: 78). This ordering model applies across biology and social systems (atoms, molecules, words, individuals etc.) and can best articulate itself in diagrammatic form:



I began consciously and deliberately employing diagrams to help mobilise my research practice at a time when I was unable to do the research as I had originally intended. I find they have a capacity to connect ideas that reach beyond words and iterate a form that communicates and connects. My ideas and knowledge making are produced and embodied in the diagram. As Deleuze explains, the diagram is a possibility of fact that is not the fact itself, therefore, an ideal tool or symbol for research that is process-driven (cited in Mullarkey 2014). Film theorist and author of *Post-Continental Philosophy* (2006), John Mullarkey, promotes the use of diagrams to map theory, producing rather than reducing information (Mullarkey 2014). The diagram can help make connections, sparking knowledge and ideas. In *Deleuze and the Diagram: Aesthetic Threads in Visual Organisation*, Jakub Zdebik argues for the diagram as a methodology (2012). He suggests Kant's concept of the 'schema' is represented in the diagram, a device which is powered by the imagination.

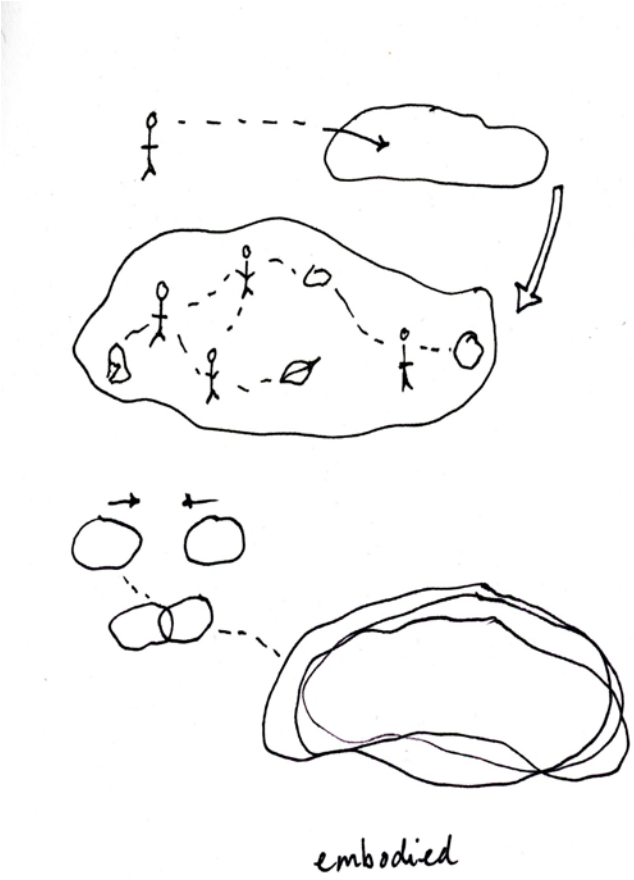
> The schema, as described by Kant, is what permits the movement of thought from empirical intuition to pure understanding, as it is through this device (an incorporeal machine) that concepts are formed (Zdebik 2012: 126).

Interestingly, the above quote calls the schema "an incorporeal machine" (Zdebik 2012: 126) as it is concerned with ideas. My argument, however, follows the holarchy model, where ideas, concepts, organisations can be materially (through drawing) embodied and that those bodies are not separate entities, rather, they are made up of processes and are in continual transformation. The diagram is a "critical mode of representation of an image that is not quite an image or, more precisely, the terrain between the visible and the articulable…" (Zdebik 2012: 139). Literally speaking, 'dia – gram' means through / between – form (writing / drawing / line). It can therefore represent ideas or research in motion, at various stages of being in a non-linear emergent process, deprioritising a static human-centred experience.

> Limits of existence are always under revision, particularly when confronted with a schema that does not place the human at the center of experience (Manning 2015: 60).

Rather than placing humans at the centre of landscape-based experiences, it is the landscape itself that can represent the embodied experience, where dualisms overlap to the point of becoming unified. The amorphous shapes I am diagramming indicate shifting states in continuous movement that can contain multiple (human and nonhuman) interactions.

The diagram is an apt tool for embodying form and content as, rather than merely representing, it *produces* meaning and can aid communication beyond a single human-centred viewpoint. The diagram can describe an embodied landscape experience, interacting with other bodies. My embodied approach to knowing is expressed by amorphous shapes that can indicate shifting states and movement. They can be bodies (human / nonhuman), concepts or landscapes.



Mark making as Knowledge

Deleuze frames the diagram in artistic terms to describe how Francis Bacon applied them in his painting process to mark an act of painting, as a set of lines or a colour-patch or over something already painted (often a face) that could produce new meaning or sensation (Deleuze 2003). For Bacon, the diagram is a "suggestive" nonrepresentational, nonnarrative possibility of fact (Deleuze 2003: 101). Bacon's application of the diagram, which he often called "a graph" (Bacon, cited in Deleuze 2003: 100), was employed partly to introduce chaos into the painting in order to "unlock dimensions of sensation" (Deleuze 2003: 102). However, this chaos is balanced with control and operation: the diagram is a tool, mark or application that is capable of doing two seemingly opposing actions. It can produce abstraction and create "new figuration" (Deleuze 2003: 110). Putting it into the context of Salami's sensuous knowledge, I can say that the diagram is a *sensuous tool*: it is able to hold more than one concept or perspective at a time and communicate on the level of embodiment.

Mark making is perhaps a more appropriate way of describing the tools-as-devices I employ in my research practice. Although it can imply drawing, mark making as a term is not confined to skilled lines drawn by hand, rather, mark making can imply a more *bodily* process of understanding. The body becomes a way to mediate images, both still and moving. Researcher and choreographer Katrina Brown has an interdisciplinary practice that explores drawing and movement as processual activities. She considers *moving-drawing* in the documentation of a performance piece titled, 'Translucent surface / Quiet body, *redistributed*' (Brown 2019), where her body moves across a surface to reframe drawing as material embodied expression. Brown's research can be found documented as a digital 'exposition' on the *Journal for Artistic Research*'s 'research catalogue': an online space allowing her to perform and reperform her research in a way that joins form with content. The space reads like a map, where different forms of expression as information (photographs, videos, writings and marks) are unprioritised in their positioning on a digital canvas. I first saw this non-linear flattened model at the 2019 student symposium at Falmouth University, where Brown delivered her keynote on her then recent research. It struck me that a platform such as the research catalogue was an ideal one for performing my own marks as active and accessible diagrammatic documentation. I have since used a similar but unpublished note-making version of the research catalogue to help place my research marks — photographs, diagrams and writings — in one place on a digital infinity canvas: research mapping.

Experimental filmmakers Rose Lowder and Kurt Kren have both used diagrams in order to visualise and map their films. Their methods follow an almost mathematical formulaic rigour in their diagrammatised relational breakdown of time, helping visualise what information will be on the celluloid before filming. However, neither artist intended for their sketchbook workings to be shown as components of the work: it is only through the research of others that an online public is able to witness those diagrammatic plans as works in themselves. For both artists, these methods have informed their film projects as more of a means to an end (Kren called them 'film scores' as described in Chapter 1a). What is important for my own research is to include the workings, to foreground and visualise the 'means' as process, rather than keep those processes 'behind the scenes'.

Diagrams have "agential capacity" (Barad 2007) and they can move work into new dynamic spaces, helping make connections between filmmaking and writing, research and mark making. Across, between, connections, experience and all the '—ings' (emerging, acting, being, knowing, making) denote *process*. I acknowledge that I have used the term in various contexts throughout this thesis, from phases in making or drawing to scientific ways of understanding the behaviour of organisms. Process philosophy is associated with Alfred North Whitehead, among other philosophers, and it sees the interrelations between things as key, rather than focusing on things themselves as finite stable objects. I embrace these convergences and can see similarities held together by a single term that is unbounded by academic disciplines. *Process* expresses a series of indeterminate actions that may or may not lead to an outcome, where the means to an end are not fixed and mark another stage of transformation. A more limiting concept of process sees it as linear with progressive phases of development towards an end point. Through my practice research, however, I am thinking of process in terms of movement and

embodied experience that does not necessarily follow linear time.

Process can be a way of depicting embodied experience. In her essay 'Artfulness', in Richard Grusin's edited publication, *The Nonhuman Turn* (2015), Erin Manning suggests that art is at once a human and nonhuman activity, reliant on nonhuman, material and immaterial relations that are activated by intuition and sympathy — themselves more-than-human concerns (Manning 2015: 50, 75). She encourages a shift of focus from object-based or "stalling at the object" (Manning 2015: 51) to techniques of relations that can bring about new intuitive understandings, transcending what would otherwise be already knowable:

> The art of time is the proposition art can make to a world in continual composition. Instead of immediately turning to form for its resolution, it can ask how the techniques of relation become a conduit for a relational movement that exceeds the very form-taking art so often strives toward (Manning 2015: 51).

Art is about intuition and not-yet knowing, where "the middling of experience" can be felt at the point "where futurity and presentness coincide" (Manning 2015: 46). To participate in a wider field of potential relations is, according to both Manning and Whitehead, a rhythmic rather than a linear process and can take place in the experience of "artfulness" (cited in Manning 2015: 74).

Tools for activating participation

In his photographic series, *The Pillar* (2015–2019), Stephen Gill's aim was to make work that distanced his voice as the maker by employing a single technical and artistic intervention. His desire was for 'nature' to make the photographs and act as an equal participant in the process. In the middle of a field a couple of miles from his house, he positioned a wooden pillar opposite another pillar affixed with a digital camera with a motion sensor to capture birds as they landed opposite. His intention was to let go of control, to "step back as the author" and see what could emerge from a simple provocation or experiment (Gill 2020). The results reveal a series of 'imperfect' (often out of focus or slightly out of shot) photographs of birds that are the opposite of what "serious nature photographers" might call good nature photography (Gill 2020).

Gill's photographs capture something unique and disruptive: a chance encounter that could only happen by removing the artist's presence. In an interview, Gill explains how his experiment opened a portal to something new, "an entrance point to another world" (Gill 2020), which was only possible because he removed himself from the process and stepped out of having any conscious control. In a sense, he was able to connect with the birds in a way that would not have been possible had he physically been there. Facilitating chance encounters relies on imposed limitations or structure for productive tension. For Gill, his project started with two fixed things: two pillars, one with a camera and the other for the bird to land on. The very simplicity of the idea was key to enabling such unexpected results to occur.

In my research practice, the eventual structure for the research project I discuss in Chapter 2 emerged out of the experience of trying to rethink how to reengage with the work, during and after the disruption of the Covid19 lockdowns. I had to re-evaluate a methodology that had relied on doing in-person workshops with vulnerable adults, where I was planning to work directly with people living with dementia through Sensory Trust, an organisation whose work involves helping people make sensory connections with nature using artistic activities. The effects of lockdown, however, meant those members no longer had the same access to activities and the outdoors, and even as the restrictions eased, many also lost their social confidence and were still unable to join in group activities as they were shielding. Classed as vulnerable adults, they were instructed to be particularly careful. As a result, Sensory Trust restarted their group activities remotely by sending creative packs to individuals and their carers with instructions and engagement materials to carry out at home.

Taking inspiration from Sensory Trust's creative activity packs, I realised this restriction could help produce a methodology that deprioritised a single dominant voice in the research process. Not being in the same physical space

as the participants during the fieldwork process (being in and recording the landscape with them) could, in fact, help distance my voice and flatten the potential hierarchies that can still pervade social research projects (Franzen and Orr 2016). I decided to map circular walks around four different parts of West Cornwall, which I also trialled. I then tested out the new framework by asking friends and colleagues to engage in each walk by following prompts to provide a way into collecting audio-visual artefacts of those landscapes as fieldwork recordings.

This amended methodology meant that people with access to landscape spaces would collect audio-visual materials in the form of fieldwork, and then use those recordings and materials to work with the Stage 2 participants (Sensory Trust members) in the form of activity packs. These materials would then form the content for my own filmic responses and research outputs. To facilitate the production of the research fieldwork and carry out engagement activities I partnered with Megan Beck, director of Grays Wharf, local art space and gallery, to create a commissioned project called 'Moving Landscapes', for which we received Arts Council England funding. The Stage 1 participants were three local artists we commissioned with access to the landscapes, and in addition to working with the participants from Sensory Trust, each made new work that came out of the walks and engagement. The resulting exhibition was held at Grays Wharf in July 2021, exhibiting all audio-visual artefacts, including fieldwork, artworks and the films I made as responses to the fieldwork artefacts and engagement materials.

I feel there needs to be a certain productive tension for the development of ideas and sparks of discovery to happen, which I discuss in the previous chapter. In practice I often engineer this tension by creating limitations. The artist manifesto is a classic example of self-imposing limitations in order to drive artistic production that speaks to collective values. In my own practice, I impose limitations by assigning different devices (camera or audio recorder) to record specific features of the environment. I often carry an analogue stills camera with a limited number of exposures on one film roll (usually 36), and task myself with recording specific sounds for only 20 seconds (or less) at a time. The limitations mean there are fewer conscious decisions to be made, both beforehand and in postproduction or editing, and these can give way to chance encounters, or "enabling constraints" (Manning 2015: 52), in creative projects.

In 2018, I made a film called *Tracing Granite*, a commissioned project that documented a four-day field trip with practitioner-participants who each had an interest in granite, ranging from artists, geologists and cultural geographers. My task was to create a 'creative document' while also being a participant on the field trip and experiencing each location (working and non-working granite quarries) for the first time. Without a recce (or *reconnaissance*, meaning an initial exploration of an area), I could not do any forward planning and so I decided there needed to be some constraints in place to provide a clear path for collecting audio-visuals, giving me enough to work with in the edit without it becoming too unwieldy. I commissioned a sound recordist to capture sounds in each area and at the end of each day, we interviewed one or two participants about their views on granite and what insights they were gaining from the field trip.

Due to the diversity of perspectives, I made the conscious decision that granite needed to be at the centre of the film. I did not want talking-head interviews, the focus had to be on the material in those landscapes. For the visuals, I brought three cameras and to each I assigned a different purpose in order to streamline my approach and provide some 'internal logic', a phrase I often use to make sense of experimental film work. For example, as I did not want the film to be human-centred, or based on humans as subjects, I decided to only film people using a Super8 camera loaded with grainy black and white film stock, rather than a more 'made-for-TV' documentary digital aesthetic. All the images of granite were shot with high-definition digital cameras as well as on film, working across formats to allude to multi-faceted perspectives on granite as a material. How I decided to use each camera was equally practical and in service of the film, merging form and content. Super8 cameras tend to be light-weight and are designed for handheld use, which made practical sense for carrying equipment on long walks. This practical consideration coincided with an aesthetic one, where the use of black and white grainy film stock mimicked the quality of the granite, which is made up of three main minerals (quartz,

mica and feldspar) that together produce its grainy quality.

The design or mapping of a film project is commonly known as pre-production in the film industry. As explained in Chapter 1a, although certain conventional methods in pre-production are sometimes employed in experimental films, such as storyboarding, it is the nature of the structural or materialist film not to follow mainstream normative filmmaking methods and resist or rebuke narrative storytelling. Artist filmmakers often use a sketchbook to sketch compositions in preparation for filmmaking, and others use the camera like a painter might use the paintbrush, without a conscious plan. Since my practice relies on the chance encounters that often occur in the edit, I like to engineer limitations that control what I am filming (what is in the frame) and for how long. It is a similar process to collaging, working with what's at hand with fewer conscious choices to make to allow greater possibility for "surprise collisions" (Jarman 2018: 22).

The film *Asyl* (Kren 1975), as illustrated in Chapter 1a, underwent meticulous pre-production planning in order to make sure the film masks mapped moments in time onto a specific section of the film body. Kurt Kren designed "film scores" to structure a filmmaking process where the edits happened 'in-camera', during production. These consist of preparatory diagrams and charts that indicate the placement of shots, masks and their durations, to structure either the shooting or the editing (Gidal 1978: 58). Kren's film scores offered a structural limitation as well as an instruction to himself, providing a way to control some of the many variables in the filmmaking process. Though fairly formulaic sounding, they also invite imaginative speculation on the "relationship between experience and structure" (Gidal 1978: 58). An insight into Kren's filmmaking process reveals that creating a pre-conceived "ideal" can also give way to mistakes, which he embraces as "sometimes errors give it a new life" (Kren, cited in Hamlyn, Payne & Rees 2016: 223).

As my practice hinges on productive tensions, a negotiation between chance and choice, I designed the methodology to mirror how I go about making my films, inviting others to undergo similar processes. The instructions themselves provided not only practical motivation but acted as a material device or tool to engage participants in the collection and production of their fieldwork. The methods, their theoretical grounding points and the outcomes of my methodological approach will be discussed in the next chapter.

Tools and prompts can encourage a 'tuning in', or perhaps a 'switching off' of the rational mind into a more embodied and receptive sensory state. This is a form of attention that is, perhaps, semi-conscious: a state that the Surrealists aspired to achieve through their automatic techniques to reduce their control or self-awareness during mark making. Taken literally, this action reminds me of a scene in Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943), which has been considered "the best-known avant-garde film of all time" (Ramey 2011: 262). In her seminal film, Deren uses several formal in-camera devices, one of which is used to signal a moment of deepening into the dream state. Accompanied by Teiji Ito's unsettling discordant vocal sound, about three minutes into the fourteen-minute film, the camera frames a familiar recurring scene but this time is pulled backwards through a cylinder or tunnel so that the scene becomes framed through a tube-like periscope. The effect is shot as a POV (point of view) from the perspective of Deren's dreaming character, informing the audience that this time, the scene is to be understood in a new way, acting almost as a portal to a new encounter of the film. The tube as a device along with how the camera moves through it invokes a new experience of the scene for the viewer.


Fig. 8: Deren 1943. *Meshes of the Afternoon.*

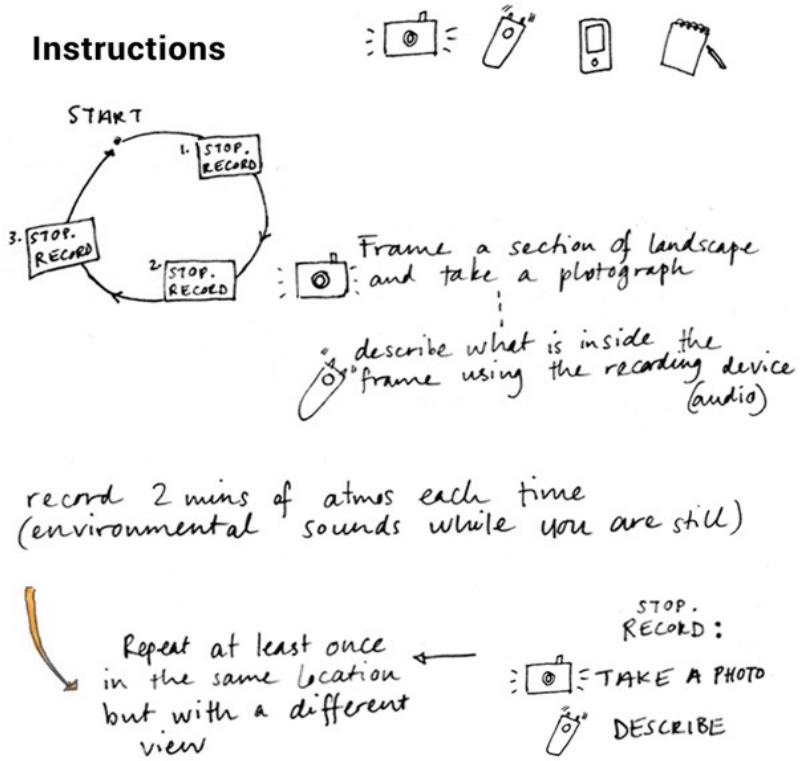
In a similar way, through the mediation of an actual physical device, such as a camera or audio recorder, an experience of a place can become embodied or felt viscerally. Here, a focusing-in of attention and encouraged consideration of

surroundings can deepen an experience of a place or landscape. This premise formed the basis of my methodological approach in the Moving Landscapes project (described in Chapter 2) leading to future engagements with landscape-based work. I am interested in the capacity of a device or tool to aid new perspectives and bring about new awareness. I will be exploring this idea in various ways and techniques throughout the remaining chapters.

Finally, there is a productive tension here in deploying a device that mediates an experience between a human participant and landscape materials. The term 'mediation' is slippery in this context as it implies and reinforces a nature-culture divide, whereas I have indicated a need to challenge dualisms by encouraging embodied sensuous experiences to knowledge. However, and as I have expressed earlier, mediating devices or tools can encourage a tuning in and connecting. If, as Massey suggests, nature is always culturally mediated (Massey 2006: 36) then tools can be considered essential sensory aids that promote embodied experiences. The way in which tools-as-mediators are viewed depends on the narrative or context. For example, if mediation is interpreted as 'intervention' it can summon negative connotations where it is "almost structurally impossible to envisage any positive human/nonhuman relation at all" (Massey 2006: 39). Perhaps, another approach is to see tools as devices that activate through their agential potential. According to Maurice Merleau-Ponty in the *Phenomenology of Perception* (Merleau-Ponty 2012), we as human animals mediate all our experiences through our bodies. And if the body is indistinct from the mind, then, drawing on Manning, its intuitive potential can be activated by art, or, as Deren suggests, an art instrument:

> Whatever the instrument, the artist sought to re-create the abstract, invisible forces and relationships of the cosmos, in the intimate, immediate forms of his art, where the problems might be experienced and perhaps be resolved in miniature. It is not presumptuous to suggest that cinema, as an art instrument especially capable of recreating relativistic relationships on a plane of intimate experience, is of profound importance (Deren 1946: 52).

To conclude this field review, the practices of experimental filmmaking involve tools capable of recording and revealing embodied landscape-based experiences. Engaging with the potential of filmmaking in this way means moving away from a narrative linear approach that is goal-oriented and devoid of participant engagement. Tools and techniques can mediate engaged participatory experiences, specifically, the recording of an embodied experience in a landscape; the act of stilling, tuning in and recording the environment is an act of embodiment. This proposition is what I put into practice through a methodological framework and is what I will discuss in the next chapter. Humans, of course, are not the only animals to use tools, which conflates the nature-culture dichotomy even more. Nature and culture are embedded within each other and, as embodied beings, humans require tools to better understand complexity and navigate shifting dynamic relationships. Finally, Knowles suggests that artistic tools such as film celluloid can aid material engagement to help understand the connection between human and nonhuman bodies (Knowles 2020). This interaction is something I started considering after the material objects and devices employed in the Moving Landscapes methodology encouraged human bodies to participate in landscapes, which I will discuss in the next chapter. In Chapters 3 and 4, I will bring my focus to the film body to aid a tuning into nonhuman or more-than-human interactions.



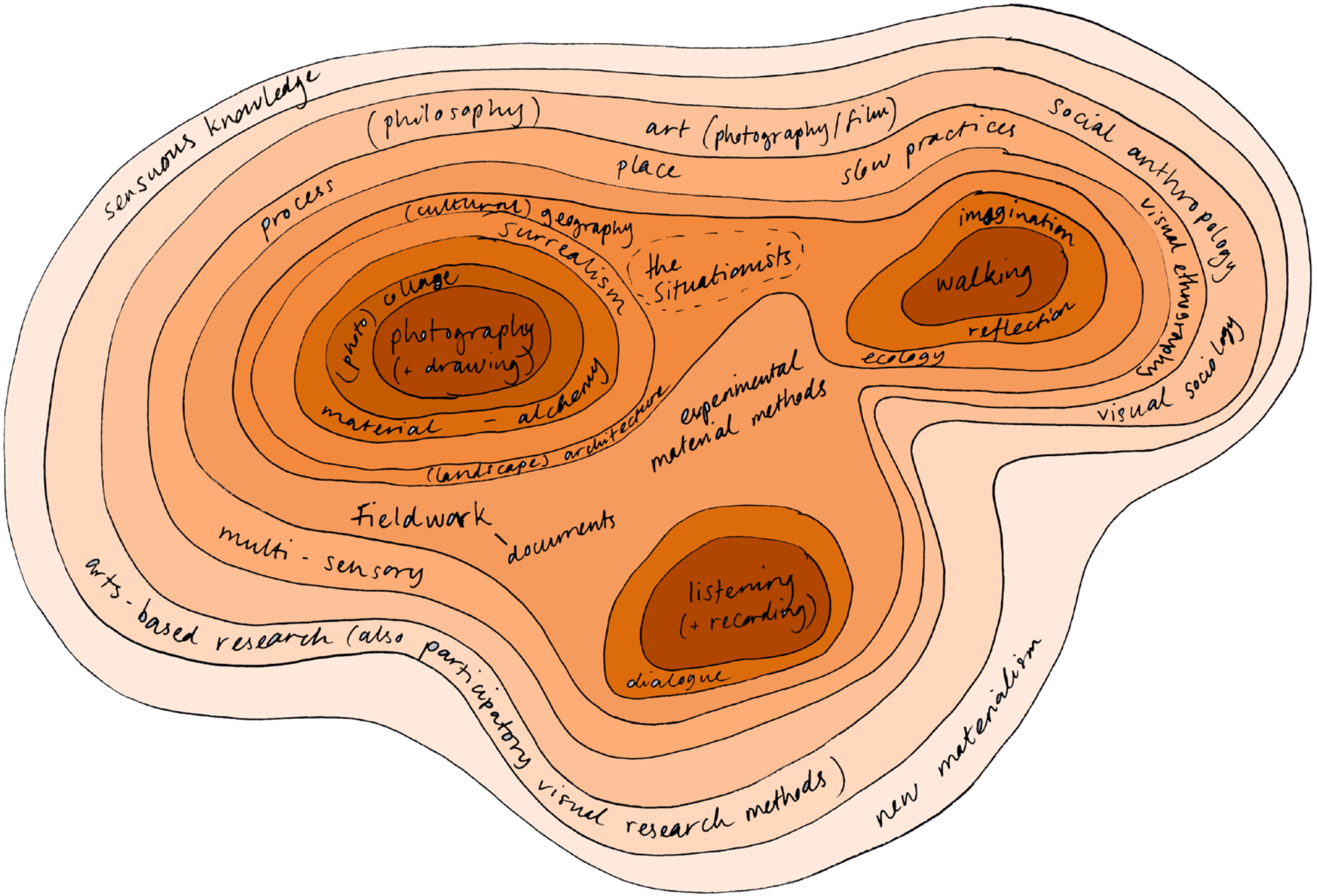
Additional considerations:

- record and/or describe any sounds you find interesting or curious

- zoom in and record/describe any nearby plants (think about colour, texture, etc.)

- zoom out and consider what is in the distance

Fig. 9: Jones 2021. Instructions for recording the landscape.


sensuous knowledge
(philosophy)
art (photography/film)
social anthropology
process
place
slow practices
visual ethnography
(cultural) geography
surrealism
the Situationists
imagination
(photo) collage
photography (+ drawing)
walking
reflection
material - alchemy
ecology
visual sociology
(landscape) architecture
experimental material methods
fieldwork - documents
multi-sensory
listening (+ recording)
dialogue
arts-based research (also participatory visual research methods)
new materialism

CHAPTER 2
Shifting frameworks, mapping a methodology

> I use practice to develop and test theory, and theory to critique practice…
> (Spirn 1998: 8).

The above quote implies a non-linear methodological approach to doing research, albeit one that separates theory and practice. Although I resonate with landscape architect and photographer Anne Whiston Spirn's approach in her own landscape-based writing, I feel that insisting on those binaries are nevertheless problematic for practice-based research or 'practice as research'. By practice I can also be talking about writing and my writing certainly has provoked the creative doing of what I might call my practice, though it is not necessarily helpful separating the two as individual pursuits. As Orlow indicates of his own, "research-based practice" (Orlow 2023), practice and theory cannot be separated.

In *Art & Research: A Journal of Ideas*, Contexts and Methods (2009), Kathrin Busch discusses the entanglement of artistic research and theoretical knowledge that can unfold in a number of different ways. She explores distinctions where art can understand itself *as* research or art *as* or *about* science (Busch 2009), coming to the conclusion that art and theory are two interrelated practices that can provide different forms of knowledge. In contrast to what "scientific knowledge" can offer, art provides spaces for the unexpected and undetermined to emerge, which is beneficial to all types of research (Busch 2009: 2). Tim Ingold, on the other hand, argues that form is everything and uses the term "meshwork" to describe the entangled lines of life and movement that emerge in the world (Ingold 2011). This to me speaks of research as embodied sensuous knowledge, a continually changing emergent artistic practice.

Minna Salami's *Sensuous Knowledge* (2020) shares diverse methods for finding a way into the sensuous, rather than knowledge systems that perpetuate destructive dualistic hierarchies and separate or fragment perspectives (2023). She advocates the "kaleidoscopic method" (Salami 2023) that celebrates multiple viewpoints, curiosity and intuitive knowing. A kaleidoscopic sensuous approach relies on being in the body, feeling and sensing, exploring texture and sounds, requiring a more relational holistic observation of experiences (Salami 2023).

This chapter considers a landscape-based experimental methodology that emerged as a result of the *Moving Landscapes* project. Though the framework for the project itself was pre-determined, as will be explained, what took place within its scaffolds was unexpected and has led to new and unfolding research practices that will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. The Moving Landscapes project provided a test bed for methods and techniques that have gone on to inform further research. The deviation from my original plans as a result of Covid19 meant I placed greater significance on tools and devices to gather, record and communicate at a time of heightened isolation.

As I discussed in the previous chapters, my filmmaking practice involves experimental techniques such as collage and photography as process-driven mechanisms that develop ongoing ideas for film work, and which become works in themselves. Often the processual materials, particularly photographic tests, are incorporated in the final films with the intention to visualise *process* so that viewer engagement is also stimulated, as is the aim of experimental and structural or materialist filmmaking. My intention has been to expand my research practice by including participants in the process-driven phase of filmmaking.

Moving Landscapes is the name of the project that emerged by exercising an expanded experimental methodological approach, whose mixed or collaged methods mirror my own creative practice as research. The research project included participants as collaborators: artists with their own land-based practices and adults living with dementia together with their carers from Sensory Trust. Sensory Trust is a national charity dedicated to helping people make meaningful and sensory connections with nature for enhanced health and wellbeing, employing creative activities and going for walks outdoors as a group (Sensory Trust 2023). Prior to Covid19 I had planned to lead workshops

with creative practitioners and people living with dementia *in* the landscape, to find and develop new ways of working collaboratively with others in landscape spaces. The effects of lockdown, however, meant those members no longer had the same access to activities and the outdoors, and even as the restrictions eased, many had lost their social confidence and were still unable to rejoin the group activities as, classed as vulnerable adults, they had to be particularly careful. As a response to lockdown restrictions, Sensory Trust restarted their group activities remotely by sending creative packs to individuals and carers with instructions and engagement materials to follow at home.

To accommodate lockdown restrictions where it was not permitted to be outside with more than one other person, I partnered with local art organisation, Grays Wharf, to recruit artist-participants who were able to walk a circular landscape route and collect fieldwork. My intention with this fieldwork or data collection was two-fold: the audio-visual recordings would provide materials for the Sensory Trust participants to engage with in the form of activity packs. Secondly, the fieldwork would provide materials to integrate into my film experiment so that I could create visible records of engagement or participation. In addition, it was an opportunity to exercise and develop a flattened-hierarchical structure for carrying out a research project. Although I was the one doing the research and deploying participants, what they engaged with in those landscape spaces and how that information was interpreted was completely up to them.

The reason for working with Sensory Trust participants was to challenge this notion of hierarchical power relations that can be perpetuated in non-fiction or documentary and ethnographic filmmaking. I wanted to not only include mentally impaired participants from an ageing population, but to feature their work in a way that did not draw attention to their 'impairment' or disability, rather, to celebrate the capabilities that can develop with a degenerative disease like dementia. Research indicates that although the language and problem-solving areas of the brain degenerate with dementia, what remains untouched and can still develop is the sensory processing area of the brain (Howard 2021). Not only can people living with dementia develop a heightened sense of touch, but dementia research has also found that memories can be stimulated through sounds and smells (Howard 2021). Working not just with communities but also with the health, care and education sectors, Sensory Trust bases its activities on multisensory research, insisting "the most meaningful and memorable experiences take place when more than one of our senses are engaged" (Sensory Trust 2023). Further to this, building stronger sensory connections with the 'natural environment' helps promote emotional attachments to place, creating longer-lasting memories and a deeper sense of care for "nature" and "us" (Sensory Trust 2023).

Prior to the fieldwork and the engagement activities with Sensory Trust members, the artist-participants, Grays Wharf director Megan Beck and I received a dementia training session with Jayne Howard, founder and director of Arts Well UK. Arts Well is a social enterprise that delivers community activities and works with organisations to develop projects and training with the intention of placing arts and creativity at the centre of health and wellbeing. Arts Well is founded on the evidence that participation in creative activities vastly improves physical, mental, social and emotional health. In relation to working with older vulnerable people, it acknowledges the need to adjust how that right could be practiced at different stages of life, where "a specialised field of arts practice and policy may be necessary to nudge those adjustments into life" (Organ 2013: 4).

In our training session we learned that dementia is actually an umbrella term for a group of diseases of the brain that can lead to the impairment of not just memory but reasoning, understanding and communication. Creativity, through the promotion of sensory stimuli, can provide connections and positive interactions beyond language, whereby new neural pathways can develop and promote wellbeing (Howard 2021). Along with sensory stimulation, Jayne asserted that people with dementia respond well to objects, both those that assist reminiscence and new objects for creating future memories that are not accessible through language alone but require a combination of other senses such as touch.

Jayne's work is based on delivering activities and workshops informed by five key actions from a report published in 2008 by the New Economics

Foundation (NEF 2023). The 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' are a set of actions that call on the importance of social relationships and physical activity. Importantly, the report was republished during social distancing. The five ways are, "connect, be active, take notice, learn and give" (NEF 2020). During the training session, I realised that these ways or approaches align with my own motivations for making films. 'Noticing' is an intrinsic part of the filmmaking-as-research process: doing a 'recce' (reconnaissance) can be an intrinsic part of the filmmaking process and requires *being in* a place with engaged senses and embodied awareness.

At the end of Jayne's training workshop, we had an initial ideas session around what we could be looking out for on our walks in advance of creating the engagement packs. Since objects seemed to have particular importance to someone living with dementia, we decided to be ready to collect any stones or curious-looking artefacts from the walk and include them in the packs. What was already a notable development in the research project, was that before we, the artist-participants, had even started to work with the Sensory Trust participants, we were exploring and discussing how our practices could be more embodied. Commissioned artist-participant Kitty Hillier, inspired by both the landscape from her walk and the dementia training session with Jayne, created an activity that mirrored her own commissioned work, drawing on the importance of muscle memory, sound and texture in the landscape:

> *The shapes and textures of rocks and the weight of objects in your hand… the idea of muscle memory… building blocks – we intuitively know how to play with them.*
> (Kitty Hillier 2021)

In this methodology section, I will discuss specific aspects of the Moving Landscapes project that are relevant to my research practice, where methods mobilised both the fieldwork and engagement stages. The final stage culminated in an exhibition, which showed all the work produced (tools and artworks) including two of my films as responses to both fieldwork and engagement materials, which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 3. In

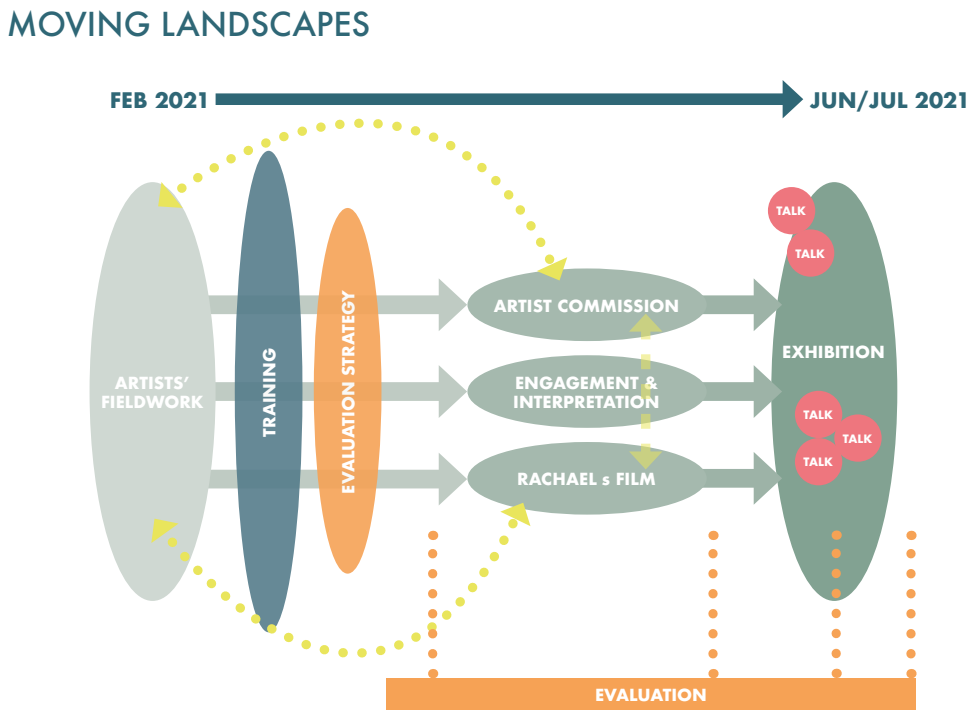


Fig. 10: Grays Wharf 2021. Moving Landscapes timeline.

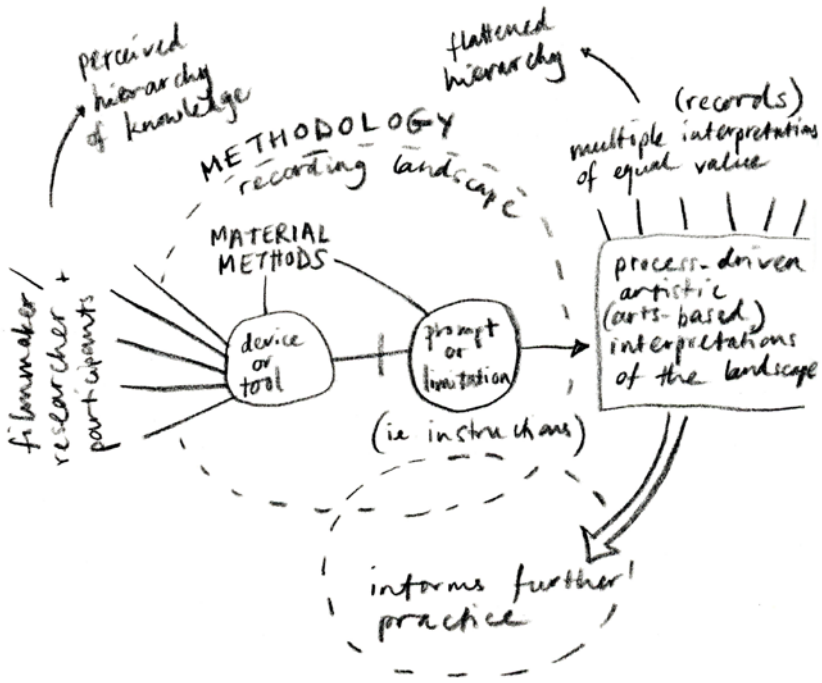
order to carry out the project robustly and successfully I partnered with a local art organisation, Grays Wharf, directed by curator Megan Beck, which meant that although some responsibilities were shared, the project became larger and more complex than I had originally planned. I not only led and delivered a project involving two tiers of participants, but I also co-curated the resulting exhibition at Grays Wharf art space with Megan, where exhibition attendees became participants in an active research project. As the scope of the project is bigger than I originally intended it to be, for the purposes of this written thesis I will be focusing on the instructions and devices as material methods that encouraged embodied participation and engagement in landscapes. The Stage 1 participants, a group I was also in as a participant, were each commissioned to engage with between four and seven members of the Stage 2 participants from Sensory Trust using the collected audio-visual materials from our walks. These materials took the form of activity packs that were delivered to

those participants and the contents of each pack were designed by each artist, mirroring their practice. Rather than evaluate the work produced by the second group of participants, I will consider the engagement packs as material methods themselves.

Apart from the difficulty of looking at every aspect of the project with sufficient depth, there is another reason why I am leaving out the Stage 2 participants from the evaluation of my methodology. Due to the sensitive nature of working with participants living with dementia and engaging with them remotely, it is difficult to evaluate whether the project had a positive effect on their wellbeing through landscape-based creative engagement. Though some of the carers in lockdown commented that it gave them something to do and a way to relate to their loved ones when they felt like they were, according to a Sensory Trust officer, "out of options", whether it was able to replicate an embodied experience of those landscapes is another matter and an impossible one to determine. In fact, much of the feedback indicated the most enjoyable part of the project was when they met each other at the end of the exhibition once lockdown measures had eased. For the exhibition participants, however, overall feedback indicates that they felt like they had gone on a walk and been immersed in those landscapes.

On the subject of feedback, it is worth noting that the comments from all participants (Sensory Trust members, artists and exhibition attendees) were very positive. However, since a textual analysis is beyond the scope of my doctoral research, I will only be highlighting selected extracts that complement and add to my written reflections. Those are indicated by a dotted circular speach bubble around extracts of written and verbal feedback (see Kitty Hillier's feedback, previous page). What provided insights for my research practice, was making visible process and engagement for participation via the inclusion of objects and artefacts in the exhibition. The walking instructions and audio recordings were exhibited for the exhibition participants to engage with, alongside both commissioned and Stage 2 participant artworks. In this respect, the exhibition objects also acted as material sensory devices for exhibition-engagement.

The Moving Landscapes project involved partnerships with local organisations (Sensory Trust and Arts Well), working with artists to engage with Sensory Trust participants and exhibiting the methodological framework of an active research project. As a result, unexpected insights unfolded that impacted on subsequent research projects, to be discussed in the following chapters. Although the project relied on an adaptive framework and emergent methodology, in order for those insights to unfold there needed to be some practical and logistical scaffolding around the project. Alongside Megan Beck from Grays Wharf, we took my research framework and designed a project outline and timeline with milestones to help guide all involved (see Figure 10, previous page). The project's structure or outline also accounted for the necessary training for working with vulnerable adults with Arts Well, while allowing space for conversations and artworks generated through engagement. As my methodology emerged from constraints, it made sense that insights and creative knowledge would come about with a clearly mapped outline that provided a way into the project for all concerned. However, I was keen to see what unexpected deviation, encounters or insights would also emerge.



Method 1: walking with awareness and meandering

Moving, "being active" (NEF 2023) and being in the landscape are a part of my practice and therefore form part of my methodology. I move between sitting at my desk, writing, making or editing, then shift my senses to the world outside. It is often when my body is moving that my mind quietens, and I have deeper insights. Sometimes when I am back at my desk those insights are processed and contextualised through language. Though more often, they turn into something else: a collage or drawing. I try to notice the stage before consolidation, which is a sort of shifting of attention and slow embodied knowing, between still and moving. Attempting to capture this stage, while 'in the world' and recording, means taking several photographs in a semi-conscious sensing way. Often, I take bursts of photographs that capture movement through a set of multiple images, almost like a roaming timelapse, as if those moments of reflection only make sense by experiencing the photographs as a series of single images. When I am in 'the field' or doing my landscape-based practice, I alternate between taking multiple burst photographs and recording environmental sounds with a field recorder. I record those sounds for usually around two minutes at a time, tuning into the surroundings. Artist and archaeologist Rose Ferraby employs a similar method while undergoing a research project, and describes the use of photography for capturing information as knowledge in itself, whereby "[t]he process of photography can also be understood as a slow learning of the landscape – a way of building up layers of knowledge as each photograph is framed, assessed and taken" (Ferraby 2015: 28).

For the Moving Landscapes project, I was essentially asking the Stage 1 artist-participants to engage in a practice that reflected my own landscape-based practice or "slow learning of the landscape" through photography, which could have felt unfamiliar. I decided they would benefit from prompts or instruction (see Figure 9) to facilitate their exploration and recordings (photography and sound) of those landscapes following the circular routes I had assigned them to. These instructions became an intrinsic part of my methodology for the Moving Landscapes project, and those instructions were eventually exhibited alongside other works in the exhibition. The selection process for the four walks was also achieved through participation: I had asked a few people living in different parts of Cornwall to recommend a circular walking route. I then walked those routes myself and came to a final decision based on accessibility, historic interest (from megalithic structures to old and recent remains of industry) and distinction — they needed to feel like four distinct walks, each with their own specific features, such as quoites or abandoned quarries — spaces where different forms of human activity had taken place over time. I must emphasise that I am not interested in romanticising these places, one of the reasons why I chose one of the sites was not just because it was part of Cornwall's historic narrative, but because of a housing development that was under construction at the time I did the walk. I felt this added an interesting contemporary dimension while looking out at ancient stones, slag heaps and development, an undeniable "landscape assemblage" (Tsing 2017: 4).

In *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (2001), Rebecca Solnit makes a case for walking as an essential part of our human experience, where it is not the destination that is important, but the act of "meandering" (Solnit 2001: 7). She suggests that walking, though a physical activity, can provide a means to traverse our inner landscapes:

> Walking allows us to be in our bodies and in the world without being made busy by them. It leaves us free to think without being wholly lost in our thoughts… The rhythm of walking generates a kind of rhythm of thinking, and the passage through a landscape echoes or stimulates the passage through a series of thoughts (Solnit 2001: 5).

Here, there is no distinction between mind and body. This is an embodied experience, the body moves through space and so the mind also walks and wanders. Anthropologist Tim Ingold reflects on Solnit's mind-walking idea in his book *Being Alive: essays on movement, knowledge and description* (2011). He asks what happens when we draw and how much of drawing, like walking, is reliant on vision. He concludes that drawing is perhaps not a visual activity at all as we do not necessarily recall what we have seen. Rather, it is a way of freeing the imagination, where drawing can be identified with "wayfaring—with breaking a path through a terrain and leaving a trace, at one in the imagination and on the ground, in a manner very similar to what happens as one walks along in a world of earth and sky" (Ingold, in Geismar 2014: 106).

In a similar way, the term *dérive* or 'drift' explains a way of exploring an urban environment by getting lost. This concept, along with 'psychogeography' which followed, was developed by Guy Debord in the 1950s to subvert pre-existing maps as objects of power. While I am interested in the practice of *dérive* and can see its relevance to my research, it mainly indicates following alternative routes through a city as a means of wayfaring. In the Moving Landscapes project, on the other hand, I gave the participants the choice of four walking routes (thankfully, each participant was assigned their first choice) in landscapes that had been carved out of so-called 'natural' environments. The possibility of drift could occur, perhaps not necessarily literally off the path, but in a mind-walking embodied way.

Walking through a landscape can have the effect of freeing the imagination, promoting creativity and encouraging new ways of seeing. As Massey suggests, landscapes have material and social opportunities for engagement (Massey 2013). Each of the four landscape walks mapped a route that could be covered in 1 to 2 hours. Apart from the route restriction, I also issued each participant with a set of instructions for recording what they experienced at three intervals (of their choice) on the route. They used a camera and audio device supplied by Grays Wharf to record those observations and were guided to make three stops during the route. At each stop, they were asked to record their observations using the audio recorder. They were further instructed to take at least three photographs at each stop and describe what they could see inside the frame. In addition, they could draw or write down any observations in one of the sections of the walking instructions and mark the points where they had stopped on the route map on the reverse side.

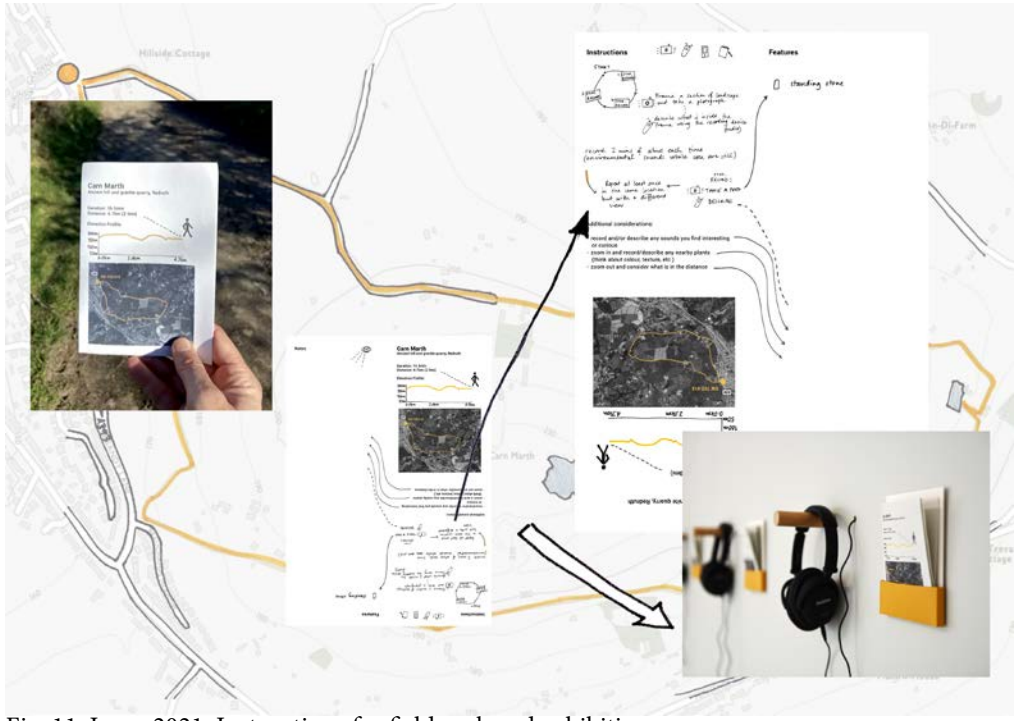


Fig. 11: Jones 2021. Instructions for fieldwork and exhibition

Method 2: Collecting data using sensory and material methods

The restriction of having to make work with people in landscape spaces and guiding them at a distance meant that objects or tools as experiential and connective aids were put to effect, forming an intrinsic part of the methodology for my research project. Walking, as meandering, is "a state in which the mind, the body, and the world are aligned" (Solnit 2001: 5), a form of landscape embodiment. I am also interested in what happens when we direct our focus in between the moments of wandering. In my practice when I move through a location, there are times where I stop and look out and listen to record sounds. These moments are crucial to my fieldwork or

landscape-based film research and often occur in a semi-conscious way. Biologist and environmental scientist David G. Haskell writes about the importance of paying attention through the senses in order to connect with our environments, which, I suggest, is another way into embodied knowing. Listening, connecting through sound, is something all beings do with every part of the body (Haskell 2023).

The Art of Noticing by Rob Walker is a book dedicated to cultivating attention and awareness by offering tools and activities that can help the distracted or anxious mind (Walker 2019). Walker draws on techniques and methods for focusing the attention that have been put into practice by boundary pushing artists and thinkers. For example, Susan Sontag who advocated that attention is vitality and helps create connections with others (cited in Walker 2019). He describes John Cage's *4'33"* (first performed in 1952) as a creative method that allows for chance operations (Walker 2019). Rather than paying attention to the 'silence' during a performance where the pianist sat at the piano and did not play for four minutes and thirty-three seconds, the audience could listen to what was happening outside of that performance, providing an opportunity to engage with environmental sounds. Walker calls this a "structured opportunity to listen to unintended sound" (Hyde, cited in Walker 2019: 64).

For the fieldwork collection phase of the Moving Landscapes project, I created "structured opportunities" (Walker 2019: 64) for collecting materials from the landscape walks. I designed folded instructions for recording the landscape following three 'stops' where the artist-participants were instructed to take photographs and describe, using the provided audio device, what was inside the frame of each photograph. In addition, they were asked to record two minutes of environmental sounds at a time, which gave them the opportunity to pause and tune into their environments. The participants were told that all audio-visual materials would have two purposes: they would serve as activity materials in the engagement packs (see Figure 12) and as audio-visual content for the film I would make for the exhibition. I anticipated that this responsibility would further encourage engaged 'noticing' through recordings, thereby motivating meaningful engagement with the next stage of participants.

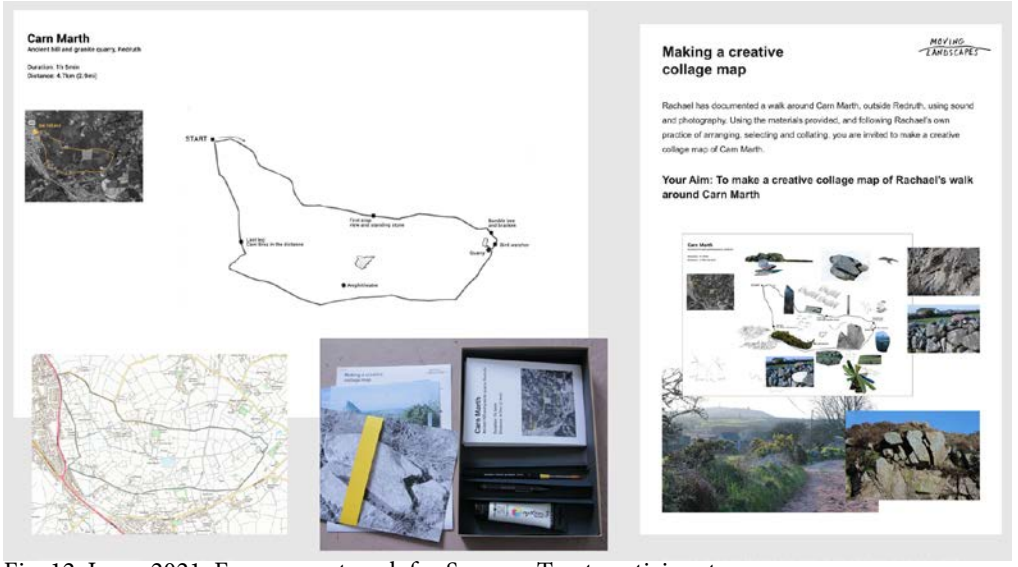


Fig. 12: Jones 2021. Engagement pack for Sensory Trust participants

After the walks were completed, all the Stage 1 artist-participants (myself included) gathered in Gray's Wharf to display photographs, listen to recordings and share our experiences (since there were several individual audio files from each participant I edited them into four individual soundscapes). We then began to suggest how those materials and experiences could be assembled into activity packs for the Sensory Trust, Stage 2 participants. My own activity (above) aimed to encourage those participants to map their own sensory experience of my walk around Carn Marth. Apart from photographs as material objects, the soundscape itself was an instrumental tool that connected with my landscape walk. Here, Stage 2 participants also received a simplified map of the route that they could fill-in or collage with the photographs I had taken on the walk, while listening to and following the soundscape around the mapped route. I also prompted my participants to draw and make marks that could correspond to the bird song or footsteps they heard in the recording. The resulting artworks were diverse in their interpretation, exceeding any expectations I may have had. One participant in particular created a three-dimensional collage of the mapped walk where she depicted me inside the painted paper and collaged folds recording the landscape. The effect is dynamic, with the route almost completely covered over with cut out

photographs and paint due to the involved way the participant seems to have connected with the activity. In addition, it is evident that she had listened to my descriptions of the landscape surroundings, with hand drawn marks and clear signposts that connect to the audio content. Her prioritising of texture and colour helped me see those landscapes in new ways, understanding how the loss of some senses can deepen other forms of knowledge and engagement (Howard 2021).

Fig. 13: Jones 2021. Sensory Trust participant at Grays Wharf exhibition

Fig. 14: Jones 2021. Sensory Trust participant art work

I think listening to the audio tape… and it was the crunching of your shoes and the bird watcher when he's speaking and I could visualise the birds and, yes, it was very helpful. And I hadn't appreciated how an audio commentary can make you see visually as well.
(Sensory Trust participant 2021)

The Sensory Trust participant who made the above collage (see Figure 14), comments on how listening to my walk soundscape engaged her creative response and helped imagine the landscapes I was moving through. This insight reveals the possibilities for embodied and landscape-based creative engagement through tools and techniques. The Stage 2 participant expressed how moving the walks were, and how she enjoyed closing her eyes and "just listening… hearing sounds to visualise an image in my head made me feel connected" (Sensory Trust participant 2021).

Along with the importance of clarity in the instructions in terms of wording, it was important that care and consideration went into their design (for both walking guides and the engagement packs). Designer Bill Gaver developed design devices he called 'cultural probes' that are useful for socially-engaged researchers who follow artistic rather than scientific methods. Cultural probes are an alternative visual and material method for collecting data about people's lives, values and thoughts that are used to inspire a designer (Gaver et al. 1999). His probes comprise thoughtfully designed packages with artefacts (including maps, cameras and postcards) along with a task to elicit responses from research participants, in order for the researcher to better understand their beliefs and culture. He found the creative design of the packs not only enhanced the engagement of the participants but had the knock-on effect of stimulating the imagination of the designer or researcher themselves (Woodward 2020). Reflecting on Gaver's innovative research strategy and how it has since been adapted and implemented by social practitioners, sociologist Sophie Woodward argues that cultural probes are ideal tools for "open-ended research projects" as they can start a dialogue with the potential of uncovering unexpected knowledge (Woodward 2020: 58).

Reflecting on the feedback from the Stage 1 artist-participants of the Moving Landscapes project, it seems that the experience of being directed or deployed to explore a specific location with well-designed instructions actually enhanced their experiences of those places with heightened attention. This level of engagement, the act of listening and describing what they were looking at, even made the memory of the walk for one of the artists markedly vivid after several weeks of having done it. When I asked them to comment on the usefulness of the instructions, all agreed that the walking guides were helpful as they focused their attention while in those landscapes. Another participant commented that the act of focused listening is not something he usually carries out in his practice and having to do it encouraged him to tune into the environment and physically feel part of it. His first photograph, in fact, was taken up a tree looking up and out of the landscape, his body with the tree becoming a single vantage point to record the surroundings.

Fig. 15: Raymond Barker 2021. *Dean Quarry walk*

In her book, *Material Methods: Researching and Thinking with Things* (2020), Sophie Woodward suggests that using objects in social and artistic research can help an understanding of a multi-dimensional and multi-sensory world (Woodward 2020). Grounded in new materialism, this concept promotes a more creative response to doing research, engaging with methods which, "tap into ways of knowing that are more attuned to material, embodied and multi-sensory ways of being in the world" (Woodward 2020: 55). In this sense, the walking guides with their instructions and recording materials were tools or material objects used to stimulate and mediate an embodied experience. As

tools for participatory practice research, material objects can aid social and cultural reflections on participatory meaning making, embedding "knowledge not in the artistic product, but in the process and dialogue of production" (Franzen and Orr 2016: 6).

The engagement packs were also a form of cultural probe and acted as material objects for the Sensory Trust participants, helping to generate insights in the same way as the recording devices and instructions had for the artist-participants. *Inventive Methods: the happening of the social*, tracks the changes in social and cultural research as a result of increasing interest in interdisciplinary work, noting a shift in the way knowledge is perceived and prioritised. Celia Lury and Nina Wakeford suggest that although there has been a notable change in approaches and dissemination in social and cultural research, the methods texts have not necessarily kept up with these changes (Lury and Wakeford 2012). Their book contains a collection of essays from researchers spanning visual arts, anthropology and social psychology, each providing examples of methods for conducting research that centre on "the open-endedness of the social world" (Lury and Wakeford 2012: 2). Such methods or devices include experiment, list, pattern, photo-image, probe and speculation (Lury and Wakeford 2012). For Lury and Wakeford, a device is an essential object for carrying out research. Object and method become not just "mutually constitutive", but their relation can create a new meaningful association or assemblage (Lury and Wakeford 2012: 8).

> The term 'device' is also appealing to us, then, because it helps us to recognise that knowledge practices, technical artefacts and epistemic things (Rheinberger 1997) are encoded in everyday and specialised technologies and assemblages in which agency is no longer the sole privilege of human actors (Lury and Wakeford 2012: 8).

This idea that a device or material object has the agential potential to bring about new insights is entirely relevant to my research practice's methodology. Although this came about partly through circumstance since I could not be present during the artist-participants' walks, the fact that I needed the material objects to engage the act gathering of fieldwork materials actually aligned my research aims, helping distance my researcher voice, as the above quote implies. In *Vibrant Matter* (2010), new materialist philosopher Jane Bennett discusses *things* and their impact on human bodies. She addresses issues of representation in philosophies that only assign agency to humans and disregard the agency of objects. Bennett draws on the vitality of objects and how they interact with human experiences, calling their productive potential "thing-power" (Bennett 2010: 13). It is this reorientation from thinking of an object for the purposes of human activity, to its own capacity as a material agent that can transform a research practice. In my methodology, the 'things' or devices reorientated the participation of human actors in landscapes, creating new associations that I, as the researcher, could learn.

Each of the research tools or material objects were tools or devices that became mediators between me and the participants, aiding embodied connections and providing new associations. The new materialist interventions I employed in my methodology allowed for further interpretations from the participants, who could explore openly and creatively without the pressure from my — the researcher's — physical presence in those landscape spaces. Furthermore, exhibition-participants were able to engage with those objects in an exhibition, expanding the scope of participation.

Method 3: Participatory research methods

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights article 27 identifies the right to "freely to participate in the cultural life of the community [and] to enjoy the arts" (cited in Organ 2013: 4). 'Participation' can be used interchangeably with 'collaboration' or 'co-creation' and is often employed in social research or socially engaged practice research, where insights from participants inform the research findings (Franzen and Orr 2016). In a socially-engaged artistic practice, taking part in collective art making can help encourage conversation and connections around certain issues. In many research projects, however, while researcher-practitioners may attempt to break down hierarchical barriers between themselves and the subjects in their work, pre-established projects that researchers enter into with a preconceived agenda are surprisingly still commonplace (Franzen and Orr 2016).

The participation and engagement felt integral to the project rather than a bolt-on, which can sometimes be the case I think in these kinds of arts community engagement projects, that the two streams of activity – the artist's activity and the participant's activity – can feel separate, but here it felt cohesive.

(Oliver Raymond Barker 2021)

This had been an ongoing concern for my own socially engaged artistic research project: how to distance the researcher-practitioner voice and avoid going into the project with a preconceived agenda or expectations that would affect participant behaviour. Incidentally, the methodological framework that I devised to accommodate lockdown restrictions meant that it was easier to step back from the process and observe what emergent understandings could take place. It is also important to acknowledge that while I was attempting to quieten and distance my researcher-practitioner voice, I naturally had some sense of expectations from the research and investment in the project. However, my main preoccupation was that the participants would feel there was enough space to engage creatively throughout the research project, which would in turn, set in motion my own insights. My intention was to use instruction as an enabling device or material method for participants, in order to allow for chance encounters in the work.

In a special issue of the journal *Visual Methodologies*, various researcher-practitioners reflect on the uses of photography, film and video as integral methodological tools for practice-based research. In the introduction, 'Participatory Research and Visual Methods', Franzen and Orr clarify that the term 'participatory' defines the methodological approaches in artistic practices and research, where tools can facilitate active engagement.

> By participatory research, we mean there is an explicit recognition that both subjects and researchers are co-creators in an experimental process of knowledge generation… the significance around what is being described here surrounds a deliberately non-prescriptive horizon, one led by practice that is open to what working together might expose (Franzen and Orr 2016: 3).

Participation, they suggest, can be "activated by artistic research" (Franzen and Orr 2016: 2). Not only do the tools used to engage with the research help mobilise it across disciplinary boundaries, but those tools can also help negotiate social and cultural reflections on meaning making (Franzen and Orr 2016). Here, participatory research recognises the status of co-creation belonging to both subjects and researchers, "in an experimental process of knowledge generation" (Franzen and Orr 2016: 3).

> If methods substantiate knowledge claims, then practice is where knowledge lives. We suggest that participatory research underscores the researcher's presence and, further, creates opportunities to make meaning with others (Franzen and Orr 2016: 3).

Franzen and Orr go on to suggest that viewing participation in this way can lead to different types of "knowledge-generating experiences" and produce "alternative forms of representation" (Franzen and Orr 2016: 4). However, there are still ethical implications to consider, and the fact that the researcher and participants are in dialogue throughout the processes of knowledge production does not remove the need for ethical frameworks. It is not just the participant's position that is negotiated, but also the position of the researcher. For Franzen and Orr, this generative knowledge exchange between researcher and participant relies on flexible research categories that can lead to a transformative research experience (Franzen and Orr 2016).

Due to external social circumstances around lockdown restrictions, the methodology for the Moving Landscapes project needed to remain fluid and adaptive. Limitations, in fact, proved fruitful in creating an adaptive framework where time was built-in for slow insights where in-person progress checks were not possible. There needed to be enough time to do the fieldwork, create the engagement packs and support the artists' engagement with the Sensory Trust participants and in addition, time for me to create filmic responses. All of these materials went into an exhibition. It was crucial that these slow sensory methods could be visualised in the exhibition, where landscape interpretations and artistic engagement were displayed non-hierarchically with a focus on making those processes visible. It was also important that with the mediation of material objects, exhibition attendees

became participants themselves and were able to have an experience of being in those landscapes. Aligning with experimental and structural filmmaking strategies, the project's methodology and fieldwork or data collection needed to be visualised.

In 'Method Meets Art' (2015), Patricia Leavy proposes that visual arts-based participatory methods involve strategies to promote collective knowledge construction through experience and interconnections, where researchers can learn from participants' artistic interpretations. These methods have much transdisciplinary potential, moving beyond how conventional research practices understand art as research, reaching broad audiences and stakeholders (Leavy 2015). As it is for Franzen and Orr, the process of knowledge production does not need to be conceptualised as moving in one direction, whether from the researcher or from the participant to the researcher. Rather, knowledge emerges through *interconnections* and overlaps between both (Leavy 2015).

It is so refreshing to see so many diverse approaches to observing and processing one's surroundings, engaging with multiple senses – I enjoyed seeing the many outcomes of these forays and the blending of the distinctive visual languages of each of the artists and participants. The connections to the environments are awesome and meaningful. Brilliant work!

(Moving Landscapes exhibtion participant 2021)

The material objects employed to motivate the fieldwork walks and stimulate creative and sensory engagement were exhibited alongside all artworks and artefacts at Grays Wharf throughout the month of July 2021. In revealing the processes involved in the project, meaningful connections and engagement could, in turn, be stimulated in exhibition-participants. On one exhibition wall, for example, using headphones exhibition attendees could engage with the same soundscapes that both sets of participants had experienced during the first two phases of the methodology (see Figures 16 and 17). It was also possible to look through and handle each activity pack containing materials and instructions. Importantly, it was not obvious where the line between artworks from the Sensory Trust participants and the artist-participants was drawn, as much of the work was intermingled and displayed with equal priority and attention to each. In this way, the exhibition space became a "relational environment" designed to "activate a field of relation" (Manning 2015: 56); its openly spaced distribution inviting participants to interact with the landscape objects. And although it is impossible to actually map the "intensity of engagement" (Manning 2015: 57) onto a single object or body, as philosopher and artist Erin Manning describes of one of her exhibitions, the redistribution of landscapes into that exhibition space made it possible for participants to have some sort of meaningful embodied experience.

This was a key feature: the exhibition displayed all works non-hierarchically, both with respect to the phases of the project work and to the artistic ability of participants. What enabled all the work to sit next to each other without obvious signs of skill or experience was, I argue, that the exhibition focused on *process* where pieces as 'works in progress' could be viewed, touched and experienced. I wanted the exhibition to mark a middle *active* stage of a research project rather than feel like a finished piece of work, where a methodology in-action could be engaged with. This, in turn, would bring the exhibition-attendees into the project and allow them to engage with the knowledge produced from those recorded landscapes as participants themselves.

> The process of conducting research is always a meaning-making activity. Whether conducted within a paradigm based on "discovering" and "revealing" meaning, or one that posits the "creation" and the "construction" of meaning(s), *social research is about generating meaning from data* (Leavy 2015: 243).

Leavy cites cases in social research where maps, diagrams and models are employed to allow information or data to become visible so that a researcher can see her research differently "during multiple interpretive moments" (Leavy 2015: 244). Leavy explains how these visual methods or tools can also provide a multi-media space for research participants to make meaning through visual art, where data or information is represented as subjective experience

Fig. 16: *Moving Landscapes* exhibition photography: the walks

(Leavy 2015). It felt important for all involved that we (all participants from me the researcher through to exhibition attendees) could see and *experience* the richness of the project, with its various degrees of engagement and participation, through the artefacts, materials and artworks in their equally prioritised presentation.

Fig. 17: Jones 2021. *Engaging with the walks*

Just as the material objects aided sensory engagement during the fieldwork, artistic and exhibition engagement phases, another method that has helped me bring the project and my overall research together has been the use of diagrams. Diagramming has proved a vital creative research tool and material method to help make up the network of connections between reading, writing and doing.

Method 4: Diagrams and collage as dynamic processes

A significant aspect of my research practice has involved opening up my methods to others so that their insights can contribute to my own and help create multivocal landscape-based films. Where this opening up was formalised in the Moving Landscapes project, in other projects carried out over the course of this doctoral research practice contributions take place in a less overt and more fluid, less formalised way. I will discuss how these projects have emerged from a methodological framework imposed by Moving Landscapes and expanded to include nonhuman participants in the following chapters.

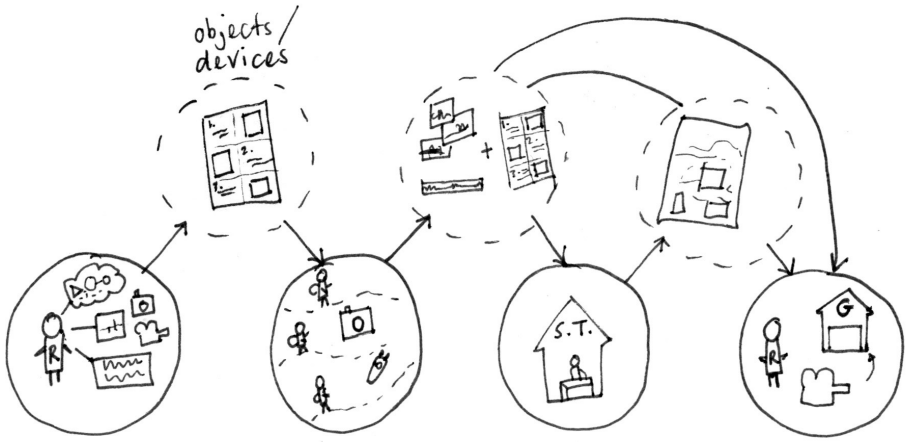
Although Leavy discusses the use of film in artistic research in more of a performance context, she considers "dialogical performance" as a method for enabling multiple perspectives and new ideas to come about (Leavy 2020: 209). Considering the possibilities for a 'film as research', whether that means as narrative film or documentary, the data and *how* it is collected in the methodology is what informs the research (Leavy 2020). For my research, however, which is rooted in experimental filmmaking and embodied sensuous artistic methods, what is also important is how the knowledge is communicated so that it expands the scope of participation. I include collage and diagrams as impositions, both here in my writing and in my film work. In both cases, I have found that drawings and diagrams do not merely represent but can generate multiple perspectives and relational knowing.

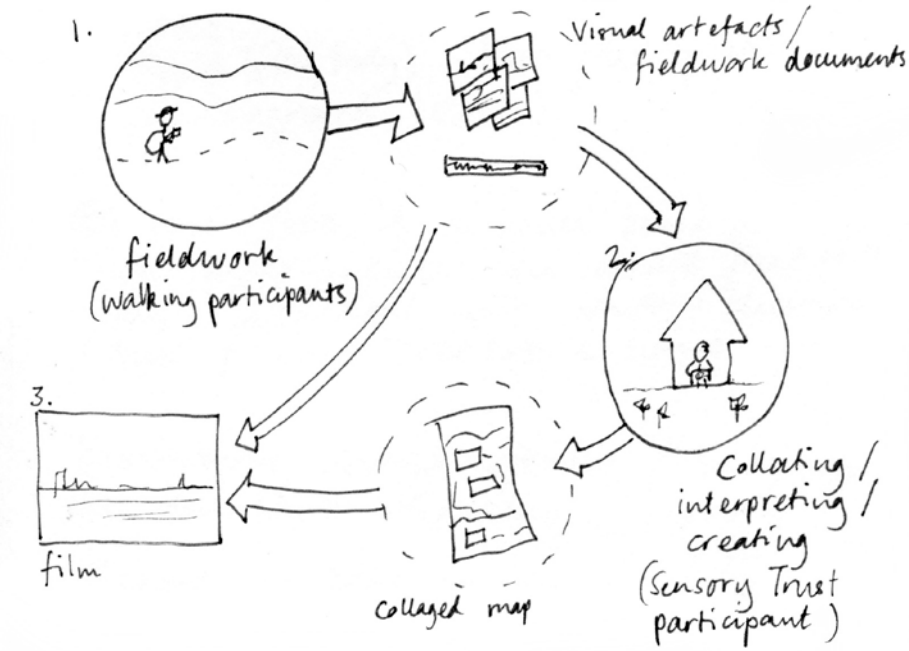
> … we suggest that collage is particularly suited to arts-based researchers who seek to uncover, juxtapose, and transform multiple meanings and perspectives and to integrate different aspects of a person or phenomena through embodied, multisensorial processes (Scotti and Chilton 2017: 360).

According to Leavy's edited *Handbook of Arts-Based Research* (2017), collage is a technique and visual art method. It is also a "very accessible method of data generation, analysis, and representation for both researchers and research participants" (Scotti and Chilton 2017: 361). As discussed previously, I use collage as a way to work through ideas while making, whether on paper or

digitally in the editing process, to open myself up to unexpected ideas and chance encounters that can provoke new and transformative understandings. My own application of collage during the Moving Landscapes project was as a technique or device to engage participants and encourage them to produce sensory and embodied understandings of landscapes. As described above, the diversity of the collages made by the participants revealed embodied engagement with the fieldwork materials: through listening and tactile involvement with materials, they constructed their own landscape-based experiences.

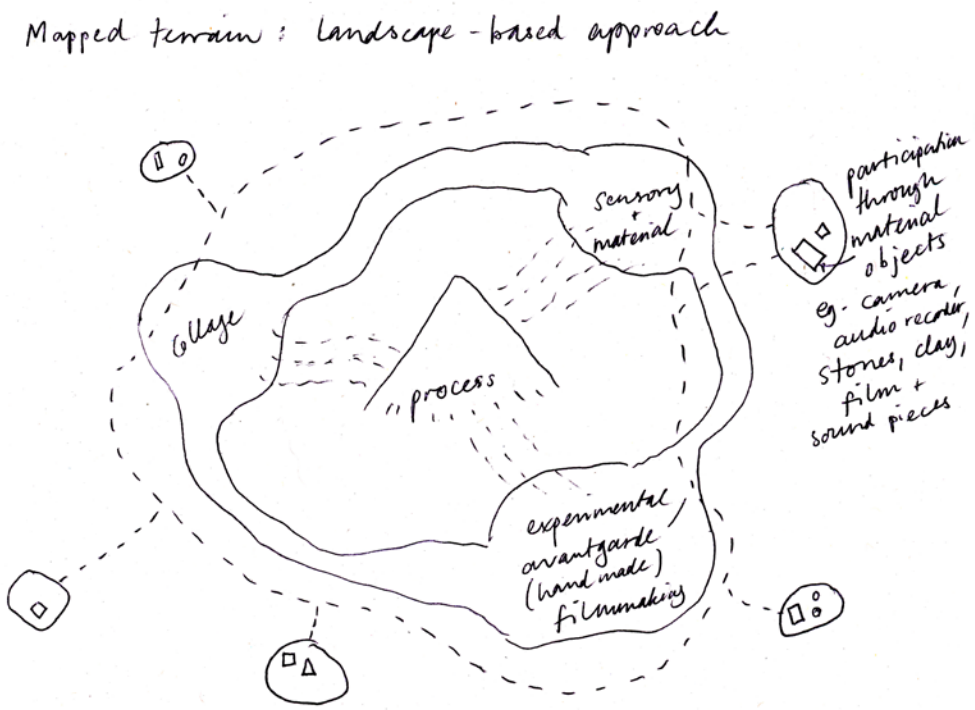
During my research practice, as discussed in Chapter 1b, diagrams proved an invaluable methodological tool to mobilise my ideas when I was unable to go outside and film. I found them to be material objects in that they have the capacity to mediate or communicate knowledge. When working with collaborators and participants during the Moving Landscapes project, I found diagrams a critical resource for visually communicating how the project would be carried out. They have not only helped me visualise the project's methodological framework, but they have helped to accessibly inform participation, bringing participants into the project and therefore becoming a key method.





I consider my diagrams in this thesis in the same manner as the material objects in the exhibition. The intention is to make visible all the integral methodological elements of my research practice, made explicit by the foregrounding of process. Together, they visualise an assemblage of lanscape-based approaches to research.

In his essay 'Visible materials, visualised theory and images of social research', Jon Wagner questions the disregard that social researchers have towards 'visualised interpretations', even when they do inform a large part of their work. He makes a case for the reflexive relationship between ideas and visible materials that can stimulate additional visual perceptions by the people who view them. Wagner suggests visible materials can help social researchers enrich their research by visually communicating ideas with others, and "make visible some elements of culture and social life that we might not otherwise be able



to see" (Wagner 2006: 57). My use of diagrams has helped enrich my research in a similar way, rather than discount them I have deliberately included them within my writing in order to stimulate further associations.

Making visible what is often dismissed or hidden challenges dominant power structures. Foucault's ethics of aesthetics focuses on achieving freedom by resisting power relations through lived experience, reflection and creative endeavours, where lived artworks can provide practical forms of transgression (Oksala 2005). Freedom for Foucault, "refers to the contingency of structures and limits—including the limits of our present field of experience" (Oksala, cited in Taylor 2014: 93). In her essay, 'Freedom and bodies' (2014), Johanna Oksala analyses Foucault's ideas on power and its relation to freedom, identifying that although we cannot completely remove ourselves from the networks of power that set boundaries around our experience, there are possibilities for thinking and being within them.

> The way to contest this normalising power is by shaping one's self and one's lifestyle creatively: by exploring possibilities for new forms of subjectivity, new fields of experiences, pleasures, relationships, modes of living and thinking. It consists of creative activity as well as critical interrogation of our present and the contemporary field of possible experience (Oksala 2005: 168).

This quote epitomises the intentions of my creative research practice and my motivation for sharing a practice with others. It speaks to sensuous knowledge, where creative activity should not exist either below or in isolation to other ways of being or knowing, moreover, that creative activity should not just be carried out by artists and creative practitioners. How we live can be creative, whether it simply involves noticing, listening and reflecting or walking through different spaces and imagining.

Fig. 18: Moving Landscapes exhibition photography

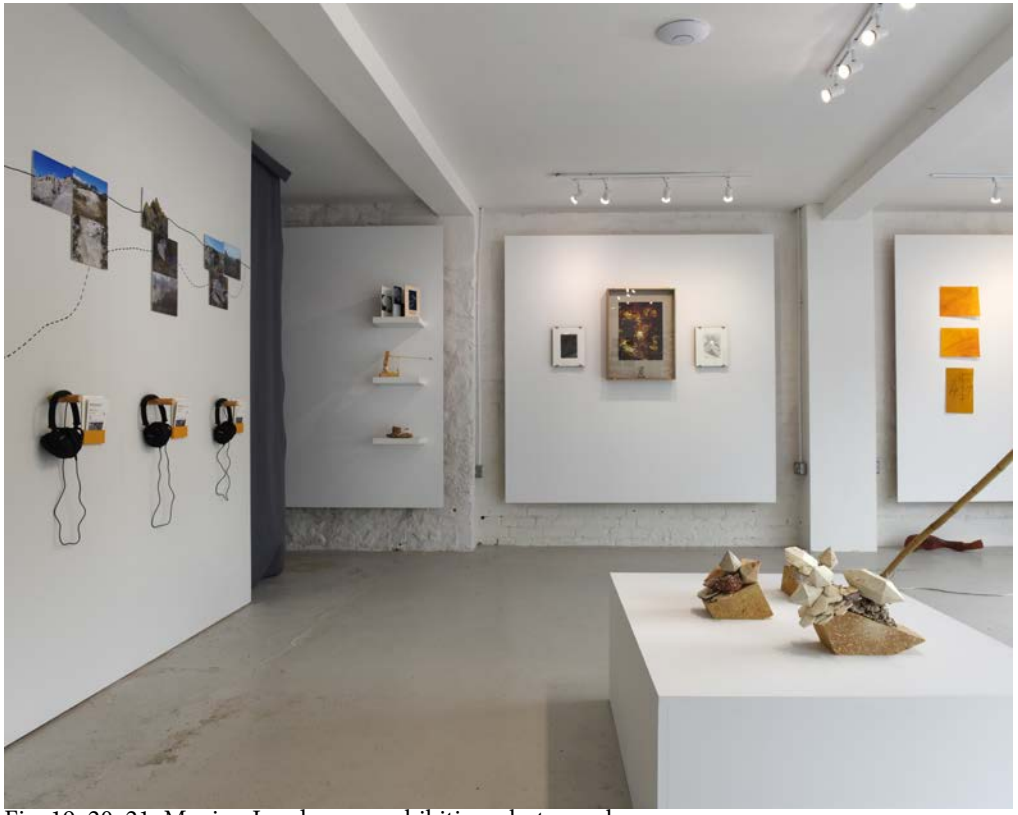


Fig. 19, 20, 21: Moving Landscapes exhibition photography

It really brings the outside in.
(Moving Landscapes exhibition participant 2021)

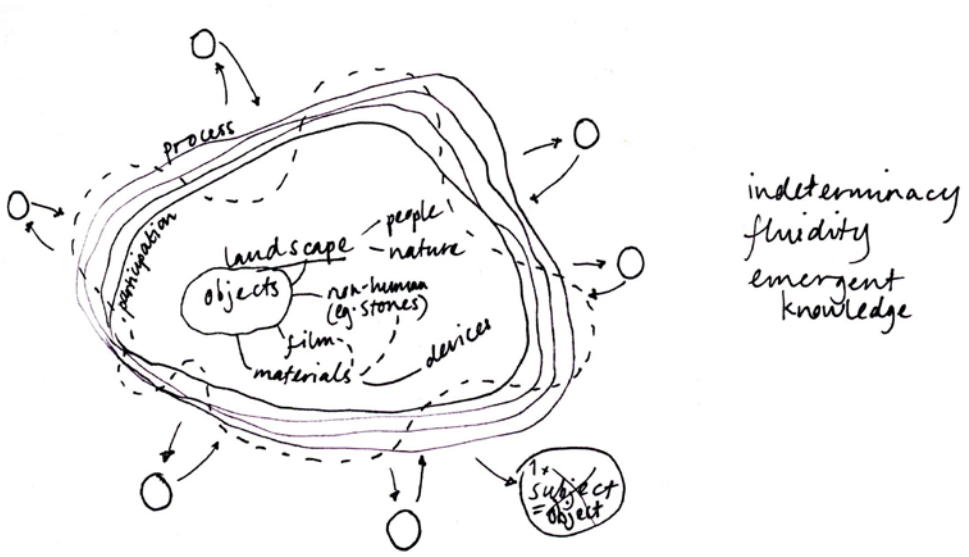
This exhibition is amazing – allows you to use all sensory elements of mind, body appreciation and how you pulled all the elements together and the appreciation of our ecology and nature and past history of stone clay and textures. Well done.
(Moving Landscapes exhibition participant 2021)

The Moving Landscapes exhibition made visible the integral elements of my research practice: participation and embodied experiences of landscapes, which were made explicit through a focus on process. The importance of making visible the processes and methods that went into the research project was necessary for reasons of accessibility and also to make visible the participants involved in that process. I chose to work with an older group of participants living with dementia, often invisible members of society. And yet they have a unique way of communicating and being in the world that challenges dominant verbal modes of communication, which creates opportunities for new ways of knowing, as "[f]orgetting, in itself, remakes landscapes, as we privilege some assemblages over others" (Gan, Tsing, Swanson and Bubandt 2017: 6).

Placing attention on landscapes as a unifying democratised space also provides a way into visualising the ways in which identifications to nonhuman forms can materialise. Challenging dominant modes of knowledge production and finding new participatory ways of knowing and communicating can be enlivening. My argument, here, is that a focus on chance processes can undermine limited dualistic thinking and make space for emergent knowledge. Ingold acknowledges existing in a state of process and fluidity that is in alignment with the environment itself:

> …the environment is never complete. If environments are forged through the activities of living beings, then so long as life goes on, they are continually under construction. So too are the organisms themselves… not a bounded entity but a process in real time: a process, that is, of growth or development (Ingold 2000: 20).

The Moving Landscapes project exercised an experimental methodology that aimed to create embodied experiences in landscapes through participation with material objects. This meant taking a non-linear approach and making space for process-driven findings. Ironically, however, the practices of editing and curation can put power relations into effect, as the curator / editor / researcher chooses what to show or make visible. While I fully admit to retaining the authority to make those decisions as a researcher, filmmaker and project facilitator, it has also been my intention to explore spaces for insights through participation to emerge that can undermine those potential hierarchical power relations. For socially engaged projects to work and for deep insights through participatory research to emerge, I believe there is a need for a flattened approach to participation rather than a vertical top-down approach. Highlighting the need to make visible or audible a multiplicity of voices, which, in conventional filmmaking practices can often be dismissed or othered, creates space for a freedom of expression. In addition, knowing that our human bodies are interacting and connected to natural nonhuman bodies is not only a form of resistance, but a form of advocacy; empowerment through a heightened sense of engagement and agency in the body as it intermingles with nature, its own nature.



In the next chapter I will move away from social engagement as one aspect of my research practice and consider my own landscape-based filmmaking practice, starting with the films I made for the Moving Landscapes exhibition. While the public-facing side of my work is contingent on participation, so is the slightly more introspective way of working. I will reflect on the embodied engagement that my films instilled in exhibition participants and the unexpected productive outcomes of sensory jarring. The rest of this thesis is dedicated to reflecting on and developing further possibilities for participation and creative collaboration with human and nonhuman bodies in landscapes.

CHAPTER 3
Between still and moving — materials, processes and engagement

This exhibition is beautifully displayed, and sensitive to the space. Such interesting and visually arresting objects – and then the deeper engagement for the visitor, learning about the connections between the people.
(Moving Landscapes exhibition participant 2021)

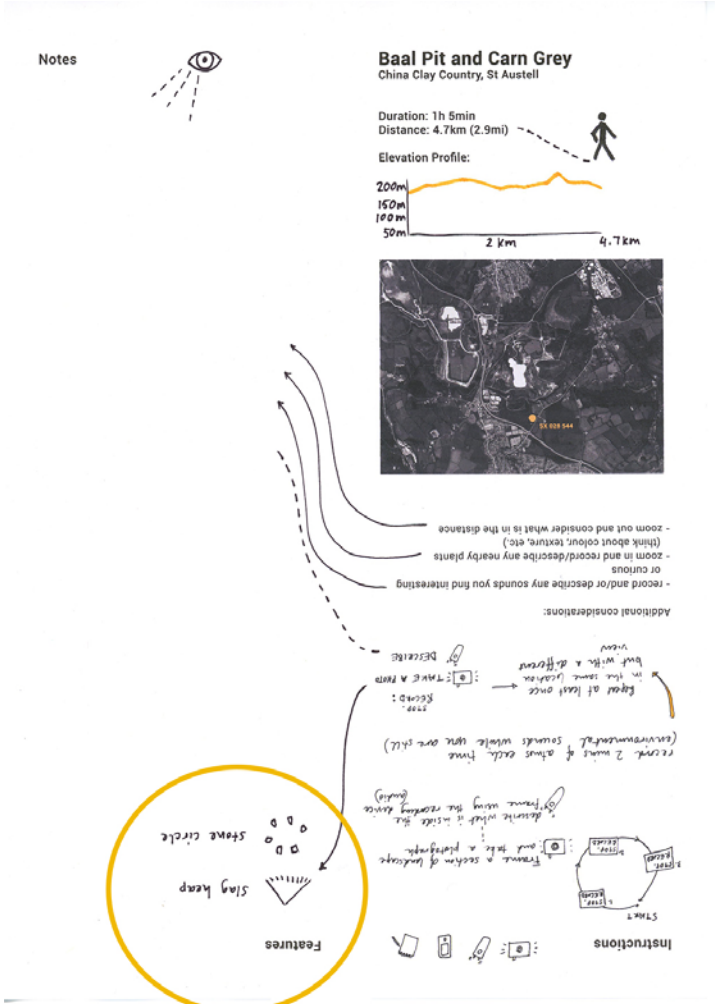
In this chapter, I will be reflecting to a greater degree on the Moving Landscapes exhibition and the subsequent participation experiments and projects that it generated. I will consider how the deprioritised, or 'flattened hierarchical', display of objects led to further landscape participation and engagement in the exhibition or a "relational environment" (Manning 2015: 56). In the exhibition, fieldwork objects or artefacts used in the data collection of the live project with its two phases of participants were positioned on display alongside artwork generated by both sets of participants as a result of their walks and engagement activities. This inclusion of process and deprioritising or flattening of potential power relations in a research project meant that exhibition participants could engage with (handle, listen to and observe) the materials collected. Responses from participants have been encased in text bubbles and are dispersed to complement specific points in the text. My assertion is that, from all materials encountered in the exhibition, the positioning of artefacts of process can spark or generate knowledge and thereby go on to inform further critical research, as Graeme Sullivan suggests:

> At its core, the artefacts created in practice-based research are located in critical and creative contexts that are deconstructed, braided, and repositioned around other informing contexts during the inquiry process (Sullivan 2006).

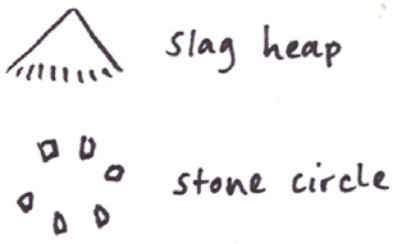
Repositioning and braiding contexts is an apt way to reflect on my own research practice as described in this written thesis, which has not followed a linear route. As I have suggested in previous chapters, I have walked, written, drawn, written again and made films; I have not made the practice then reflected on that 'doing' through the writing in a linear order. Insights to knowledge have arrived at all stages of my research practice, in watching my own film work back, in reflecting on work with participants, while editing my films and drawing diagrams, in short, making marks.

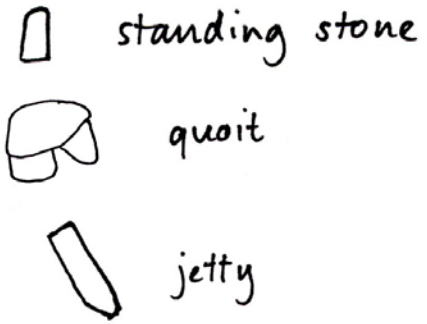
Throughout this chapter, I will illustrate those knowledge claims with a diagrammatic symbol that aims to evoke a sense of *jarring* in the writing. Albeit accidental, this sensory form of jarring has emerged as a dominant device in my work and is relevant to my research practice in ways that will become clear. Since its first encounter in Chapter 1b, in the context of collage as a material method that has the potential to "jar people into seeing or thinking differently" (Woodward 2020: 71), I have stumbled onto its capacity to embody new ways of knowing through my landscape-based filmmaking practice.

I am making my knowledge claims evident pictorially as a more congruent way of signalling that when insights are encountered, they can be communicated not just through language alone. I considered using a topographical symbol to connect back to the walking guides where I gave the option for participants to plot landscape features on the guide, either in a designated section or on the route itself:



OR (from other walking guides):





After researching topographic map symbols from various cartographic publications and seeing how much they can vary, I realised it made sense to invent my own. I arrived at a symbol that is a collage of three different landscape-based symbols: rock, rough grasslands and broken ground: This symbol will be introduced at moments in my writing where I have stumbled across a knowledge claim or *spark* of insight throughout this and the next chapter.

Process, participation, agency

For the Moving Landscapes exhibition, it was crucial that the driving forces in my research practice were made visible: artefacts of process that reveal connections between people and the land in landscape spaces. By exhibiting the behind-the-scenes and inner workings of my research, I was attempting to deprioritise finished outcomes and disrupt or flatten a research hierarchy that may not otherwise openly acknowledge process and participation. The material objects, for example the soundscapes that I had put together of each circular walk, could be engaged with by an exhibition attendee, or exhibition participant. With its associated walking guide of that circular route, the field recording edited as a soundscape could also be listened to. Here, I was performing an experimental methodology which opened itself up to encourage further participation, expanding the field of participation and engagement in those landscapes.

My other role in the Moving Landscapes project, apart from co-curating the exhibition with Megan Beck, was to make film work that engaged with the walking routes and that also aimed to make engagement through process and participation visible. For both films, I employed experimental filmmaking approaches where I collaged some of the artefacts of the engagement materials and animated the work the participants had produced. I ended up making two short films, one that was a response to the walk I had carried out following my own fieldwork instructions, *Carn Marth walk*, while the second film marked an initial attempt at an alternative document of engagement, titled, *Experiments in Engagement*. Both films used collage and animation techniques to incorporate media across different formats, in particular *Carn Marth walk*, where I revisited the route with my Bolex 16mm camera after having completed the initial fieldwork. I integrated this footage with scanned photographs from the fieldwork and included elements of the route map to connect it back to the activity I had carried out with the Sensory Trust participants. All the sounds were comprised of the audio recordings I had captured as fieldwork for the participants' activity packs.

Curiously and unexpectedly, in bringing together 16mm film, audio and photographic documents into a collaged assemblage, the film not only recreated an embodied experience of being in a landscape, but it also evoked a sensory exploration of place through layered material objects such as photographs, sound and maps. This spark of embodied knowledge came as a welcome surprise: although I had intended for the fieldwork artefacts to generate those knowledge claims, the level of sensory engagement was felt viscerally by exhibition participants, as described below. It was installed in a separate darkened space to the rest of the exhibited work.

Fig. 22: Moving Landscapes exhibition photography

My filmmaking and editing process started by experimenting with collage techniques and placing them on top of and inside moving images, where unusual placements inside the frame could "open up space for interpretations of the landscape and thoughts on materiality" (Jones 2021). What I mean by 'interpretation' is that there is enough space in the films for the viewer to have a personal, spontaneous experience; I left moments of blank space in the edit, with sudden jumps to 'low quality' scanned-in laser prints and unusual placements of these and other images within the frame. My proposition here was to put into motion the jarring potential of collage, where the juxtapositions could "jar" the viewer into thinking differently and produce a sensory experience (Woodward 2020: 71). Applying the idea to sound and images in motion, I wanted the jarring to be felt in the body and activate the senses so that an embodied experience of a landscape could be invited. For example, there is a moment in my film where the images fall into black just as the audio recording reveals me tripping (an audible fumble followed by a gasp as I lose control of the audio device), then, as I stumble into the landscape the images clumsily (not all at once) fall back into place on the screen. This was an accident that I had not expected to encounter while editing but the effect is both satisfying and jarring: the mistake is visceral, and it jogs the attention or engagement of the viewer.

I found the film jarring, but in a good way.
(Moving Landscapes exhibition participant 2021)

This 'jarring' first emerged in my research in the context of collage, through Woodward's reflections. Coincidentally, an exhibition-participant also made the comment about the work, finding it to be a positive experience (above). My proposition, then, is that jarring *produces* embodiment through unexpected encounters. Mistakes can be redefined as part of the process, particularly when that process is already contingent on experimental techniques. Such a process opens up opportunities for sparks of knowledge or insight. Here, rather than 'mistakes' I can use the term 'happy accident'. Similarly, Jarman's "surprise collisions" (Jarman 1991: 22) evoke a sense of the happy accident with the unexpected encounters that can take place with collage. I will add an additional term that is offered by anthropologist Anna Tsing for the title of her book: *Friction* (2005). Encounters of friction are described by Tsing as physical and unexpected landscape occurrences as caused by human and nonhuman interactions. The concept aligns with experimental landscape-based filmmaking. Here, unexpected landscape encounters that produce friction (or jarrings) as embodied knowledge undermines a traditional distanced view of a landscape.

Friction, jarring, collision indicate something that happens in an embodied state of awareness. They are terms that suggest unexpected encounters and are felt or experienced in the mind-body, producing sensuous knowledge. Filmmaker and post-colonial theorist, Trinh T. Minh-ha, purposefully fragments sound and image in her films to disrupt normative viewing expectations embedded in a Western colonial gaze. Her fragmented jump cuts and mismatched sound-images dissolve binaries and challenge categories of 'documentary' or 'ethnographic film' (Jovanovic 2022). These methods subvert dominant filmmaking production expectations, offering alternative ways of engaging with other cultures, not as objects or subjects but as bodies on a film body. Minh-ha's seemingly obvious or *visible* treatment of editing resists Western narrative illusory tropes, offering something new. As previously discussed, I am interested in how landscape forms can be embodied and presented in film so that a viewer can get a sense of being in and participating in a landscape. Considering my unexpected research findings and the work of Trinh T. Minh-ha, in order to achieve a level of embodied experience in my films, I could *intentionally* instil mechanisms such as jarring for deepened engagement in the editing process.

Where *Carn Marth walk* was more of a personal interpretation of my own landscape engagement, *Experiments in Engagement*, an 8-minute looped video, offered audiences an experience of how an active research project around participation and landscape encounters could be visualised. It contained elements brought together from the audio walks, including photographs of material artefacts such as stones and drawings, which were scanned, collaged and animated. In a sense, this film offered an alternative experience of the

project that complemented all exhibition elements. It was also my first real attempt at visualising my research methodology, suggesting what a 'film as research' could look like.

Beautiful colour, texture and mood that connects us to the place – a feeling of being there. Visceral, authentic and every day, this feels as if something ordinary is becoming extraordinary through the lenses you have used.

(Moving Landscapes exhibition participant 2021)

Graeme Sullivan underlines the complexity of art practice as research, where the artist-researcher creates a critical insight, whose meaning is interpreted by the viewer within the unfixed contexts that inform the artistic encounter (Sullivan 2006). Here, knowledge is not just contextual or interpretative, it is also fluid, and "meaning" as a way of understanding is "not static but open to multiple views" (Sullivan 2006). In *Art Practice as Research: inquiry in the visual arts* (2010), Sullivan describes art making in the context of different systems. For example, a "static system" may be used to describe predetermined mechanical processes that promote causes and effects (Sullivan 2010: 154). On the other hand, "dynamic systems" are a result of continual interactions that adapt depending on their environment. In this way, what is produced is "transformative" and always changing, a concept he describes as "emergence" (Sullivan 2010: 154). He goes onto suggest that these complex adaptive systems are found "at all levels of our natural and human worlds" and provide a framework "within which artists create ordered forms from chaotic schemata in a transcognitive encounter with their surroundings" (Sullivan 2010: 155). The interactions between artist, viewer, artwork and environment are in continual negotiation and fluidity. Sullivan's descriptions resonate with my own landscape-based research practice that is rooted in experimental filmmaking and sensuous knowledges, where dynamic systems are non-linear and emergent.

The documentation of their filmmaking process in the journal *Moving Image Artists*, reveals filmmaking duo's, Daniel and Clara, intention to make films "whose meaning is not fixed, instead their meaningfulness unfolds when encountered by each viewer" (Daniel & Clara 2020). In *Experiments in Engagement*, I documented the objects and artefacts that came out of the fieldwork and engagement activities to evidence process and an active methodology. My intention was to open up the process to a viewer so that they would have the opportunity to experience the materials and artefacts of those landscape spaces. The viewer or exhibition participant was privy to the processes that went into the activation of the project's methodology, and they could not just listen to the walks as soundscapes, but they could even engage with some of the creative activities that took place after the walks. My intention was to present images, textures and sounds in dialogue with each other to activate the imagination and allow space to give way to new landscape-based embodied experiences.

An additional outcome of the project that has led to further research has been the possibility for nonhuman participation. Through the Moving Landscapes' methodology, I discovered that the material objects that had prompted insights between all participants (including me), could have their own "agential capacities" (Knowles 2017: 260). Material objects could become participants themselves as their interactions with each human-participant was unique. For example, the inclusion of stone artefacts from a quarry that one of the artist-participants, Oliver Raymond Barker (see overleaf), included in his activity pack to inspire creative tactile engagement in the Sensory Trust participants. This pivotal insight is what encouraged subsequent projects and experiments that relied less on humans as participants and more on the use of the film body as an agential material, capable of "dialogue with other tangible matter" (Knowles 2017: 260).

Alchemical participation

Through the experimental participatory methodology of the Moving Landscapes project, several insights emerged that sparked my attention and encouraged further development. One of the most significant developments

has come from working with the materials produced by landscapes in order to create landscape-based work. In her fieldwork collection walk around Baal Pit in the clay country, artist-participant Rosanna Martin used the white clay in her engagement activity with the Sensory Trust participants, as well as in her own commissioned ceramic work. Similarly, Oliver Raymond Barker collected gabbro and granite stones from Dean quarry to engage his group of participants, drawing attention to their physical weight and texture. Those stones were exhibited alongside his photographic work in the exhibition. For his engagement activity, he encouraged his participants to use a camera-less alternative photography method using cyanotype paper to capture the objects they encountered on their own walks.

I was inspired to record these material objects in my film, *Experiments in Engagement* (2021) and feature their participation. I used stop-motion techniques to animate the collected objects with other fieldwork artefacts such as photographs. The aim of depicting those objects physically, as whole textured animated things, was to suggest their agential potential. As discussed in Chapter 2, material objects can "tap into ways of knowing that are more attuned to material, embodied and multi-sensory ways of being in the world" (Woodward 2020: 55). In highlighting their materiality through filmic processes, the viewer would have the possibility of engaging in embodied knowing and landscape participation.

Fig. 23: Jones 2021. *Experiments in Engagement.*

Collectively, the work of the participants and the objects themselves informed the films I made for the Moving Landscapes exhibition. Once the project was complete, I pursued the insights I had received from the project and started making work that was informed by the materials from those explored landscapes.

To explore this phase of work and produce film work for a group exhibition I was part of in April 2022, I took part in a residency at an artist-led project space, CMR, in Redruth. One of the reasons why I chose that space was because it is in walking distance to Carn Marth, the walking route I had explored for my fieldwork engagement during the Moving Landscapes project. My intention was to reengage my attention in those landscape spaces and explore more ways of connecting to the land or landscape materials as participants. This time, I was keen to incorporate the landscape beyond simply filming or recording its artefacts: I wanted to invite it into the process of image making.

Using a 35mm stills film camera, I took black and white photographs of some of the familiar environments around Carn Marth while also collecting natural matter in the form of soil, rocks and leaves. Back at CMR, I brewed all the landscape ingredients in a jar then placed the roll of film inside for four days. This alternative analogue film technique is known as 'film soup' and is an experimental filmmaking intervention used by photographers, both amateur and professional, interested in disrupting the film surface for chance encounters between materials (organic and chemical). After the four days of immersing the film canister, I then developed the photographs using a combination of black and white film chemistry and the same watery ingredients. Though I was familiar with what effects the technique could produce, the actual results were unexpected. The photographs were streaked, blotchy, and in some cases the emulsion had started lifting off the celluloid surface revealing a ghostly residue layer. The landscape objects had interacted with the previously invisible latent images of those landscapes, in a collaboration that reminded me of Gill and Vangad's work in *Fields of Sight* (2014), pictured below (see Figure 24), above two of my landscape-affected photographs (see Figures 25 & 26).

Fig. 24: Gill and Vangad 2014. *Mountains and Trees* [ink on photographic print]

I had inadvertently encouraged a visible layer of participation, although it was not obvious that those same specific landscape objects had affected the film emulsion, they had in fact left their traces in the form of an incidental physical effect. The photograph now carried the participation of something other than the artist-researcher, away from "the controlling hand of the artist" (Knowles 2017: 263). This in itself was a notable success as my newly discovered experimental technique achieved something I had attempted to implement at an earlier stage in my research practice: to distance my 'voice' or influence as artist-researcher. The visibility of the additional layer, which emerged out of human and nonhuman interactions, I argue, displaces the dominance of the human participant, revealing a multi-voiced landscape interaction.

These outcomes, produced by 'accidental' (where human agency is unintended) processes, together could have the effect of jarring the viewer-as-participant into experiencing something new or unexpected. That new

Fig. 25 & 26: Jones 2022. *Film soup experiments*

thing or insight therefore emerges from a non-binary encounter; there is a third operation that expands the scope of engagement and participation, an intermingling of events. I was keen to try the technique with moving image film.

Bill Morrison, best known for his feature length film, *Decasia* (2002), makes films out of archived and discarded film footage where decay has emerged on and interacted with the film's surface (until 1948, films were made with a nitrate base susceptible to organic deterioration). Although by filmmaking standards the film is no longer 'fit for purpose', he reframes the decay as a central element or character in the work. Slowing down the film and digitising it using a high-definition scanner, reveals an additional textured entity creeping onto the emulsion. Often, the degree of the decay is such that it interacts with the images below it, moving the emulsion and distorting the figures captured inside the frame, rendering the effect ghostly, as if the film itself is haunted. He plays on the accidental rhythms that he finds in the varying degrees of decayed materials by cutting the film to a pre-conceived soundscape or score (Eagan 2015). The single aspect of artistic agency or control is in the edit, which is informed by the collaboration between nonhuman and human contributors.

> On one level *Decasia* is a celebration of decay, a sort of time-lapse look at deterioration, enhanced by Gordon's austerely minimalist score. But *Decasia* is more than an account of physical effects. Morrison's choice of material—his use of montage and *mise-en-scène*—adds narrative layers to the footage (Eagan 2015).

The combination of these elements, the accidental and unexpected nature of the decay shaped into a poetic experimental film, is what makes Morrison's work so compelling. It is located both in past and present, recontextualising and reforming itself through the "collaboration of time and matter" (Herzogenrath 2018: 83). The minimalist scores add to the intrigue of his work, allowing an audience into a sensory experience through his films, rather than a didactic approach that tells them how to feel.

The visibility of layers calls attention to the materiality of film: in Morrison's films you can almost see how the film is constructed, its layers are like strata forming their own filmic landscapes. Morrison discusses the found films as having multiple relations including "archaeological layers of time" and the interaction between digital and analogue formats (Morrison, in the Louisiana Channel 2013). He suggests the decay could be seen as transcendent: moving beyond a linear notion of death by refocusing on the possibility for new life and new states, encouraging further interpretation. In addition, the focus on the decay as a new character or participant in a story helps "deconstruct the linear time of classic film" (Herzogenrath 2018: 87). Through the experience of Morrison's work, a linear concept of time becomes complex and confounding.

This point is particularly relevant to my own research, where focusing on a layer of interference, or perhaps, 'interplay', through process can activate engagement and the potential for new non-linear filmic imaginings. On the other hand, work depicted as a finished thing, or a landscape depicted as a setting or backdrop is static and can no longer be interacted with. Although our intentions are similar, unlike Morrison who happens upon those accidental agents of participation, I am interested in *intentionally* introducing nonhuman participants into the process of landscape-based filmmaking to see what chance encounters can emerge. With the film I processed using landscape materials, although I created a similar effect to the decay on Morrison's found footage, I was unable to predict where and how it affected the film. I am interested in exploring the potential of alchemical processes that can align film with landscape-based encounters. Here, it is about intentionally setting in motion a process, which, in a sense, undoes the intention as it invites a new layer of participation and agency. I am curious to see what deviations and transformations can be produced in working between chance and control and to test out Knowles' vision of materialist film:

> … a new conception of materialist aesthetics that does not presuppose the existence of material specificities but rather redirects attention towards film as an alchemical process with indeterminate outcomes (Knowles 2017: 265).

This marks the next phase of my research practice which, at the time of writing, will soon be put into effect. I will be burying the 16mm film I shot at Carn Marth for the Moving Landscapes project into the ground somewhere

inside that same landscape. This concept of burying and submerging film and allowing nonhuman elements to affect its composition is not new, there are several artists who have undergone these experiments, including German filmmaking collective, 'Schmelzdahin' (meaning "melt away" in German), who made these ecological film experiments between 1983 and 1989. For example, in *Aus den Algen* (1986) bacteria and algae act on the film surface after its lengthy submersion in a pond (Zinman 2020: 113).

Direct animation, direct engagement?

Laura Marks's *The Skin of Film* (2000) describes tactile nonvisual experiences as a material form of mimesis, which are mediated through the body. As a film philosopher, Marks relates her idea of a material film skin to sensory perception, however, she does so in order to theorise that the "haptic visuality" of a film is what evokes sensations as memories of touch and smell (Marks 2000: 162). Her notion of physical material film relates to intercultural cinema, providing a vehicle for cultural memory. In this instance, the film skin, though material, has more symbolic applications that relate to photo-filmic representation, or in other words, films as films whose production is not necessarily affected by hand or other materials.

While I have a deep regard for Marks's writings and can see exciting possibilities with the 'film skin' analogy for embodied sensuous knowledge, I am more interested in what capacity for embodied experience the affected physical layer on top of the already present material film structure can encourage. As an example, where incidental marks can appear as intrusions on the film composition but also create an additional physical layer that adds to an embodied experience. This next photograph (see Figure 27) is one of my film soup experiments around Carn Marth. I like how the incidental marks caused by landscape matter are almost indistinguishable from the marks of the actual landscape fragments depicted in the photograph: the rock strata and lichen have become intermingled with the added landscape solution. To see how the physical film layers operate, I have included a diagram I interpreted from Kathryn Ramey's book, *Experimental Film: Break the Machine* (2016). The diagram describes the physical layers that constitute black and white film. In the photograph it is possible to see those individual layers that make up the image, where marks on the protective layer interact with the affected emulsion layer, interfering with what is inside the frame:

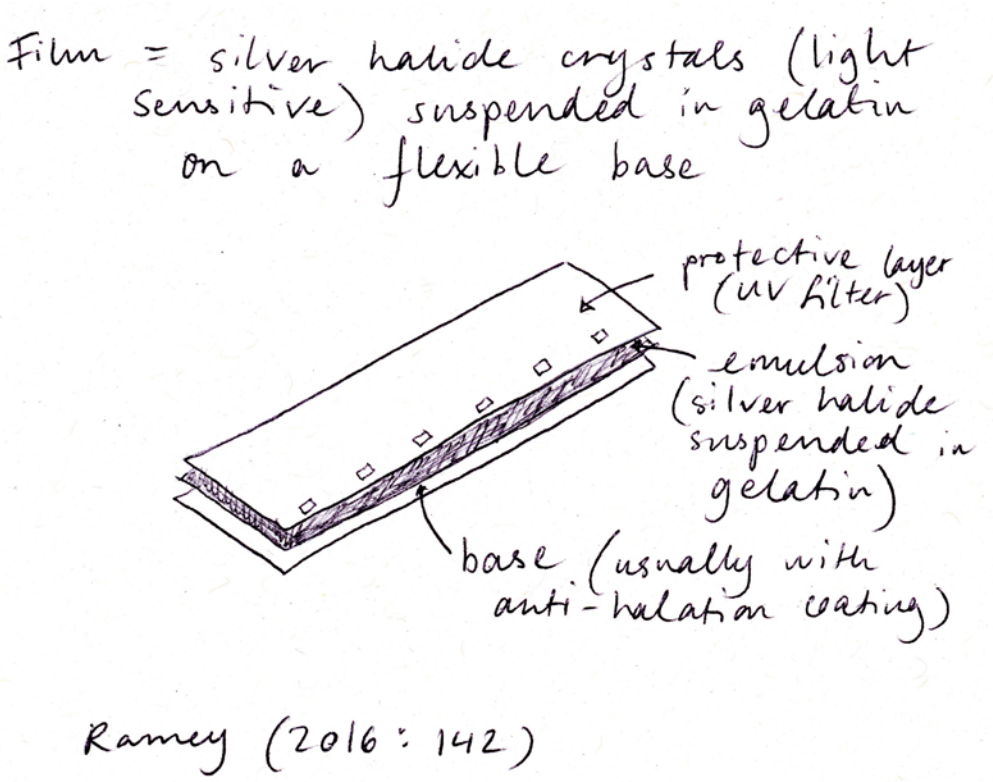
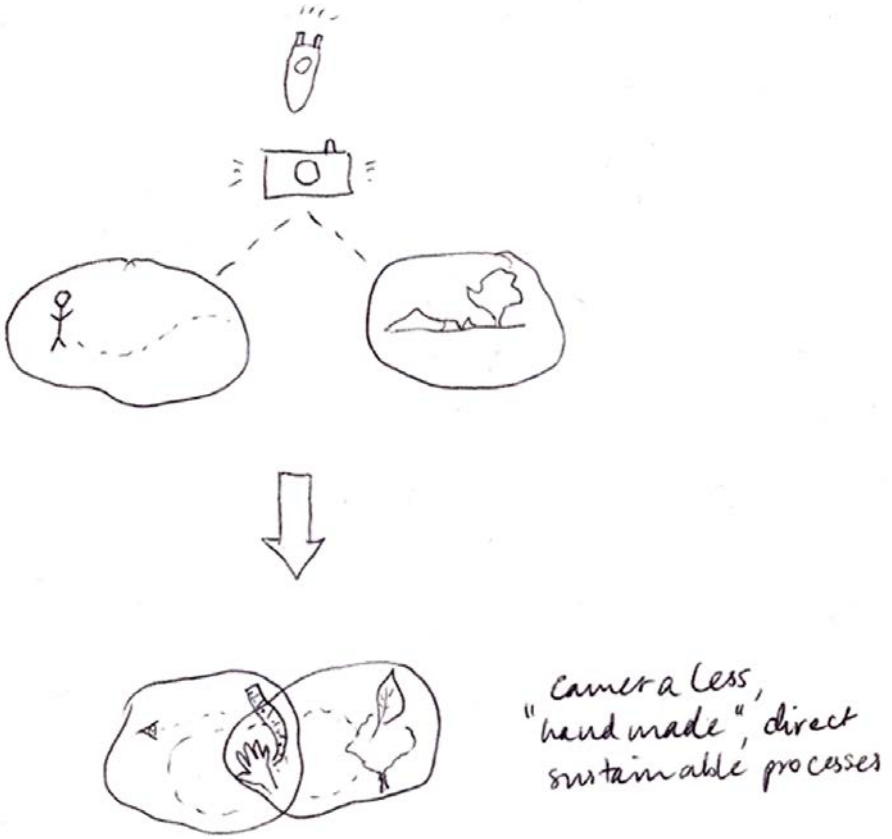


Fig. 27: Jones 2022. *Film soup experiment*

In *Making Images Move* (2020), Gregory Zinman charts a reappraisal of the handmade, which, after mass production and digital dominance, can reconnect people to the physical world (Zinman 2020). He describes the "handmade" as both an artisanal practice and "a celebration of tactility as a particular mode of direct experience" (Zinman 2020: 5). Rather than confining his analysis to direct animation, a cameraless technique that involves painting or scratching directly onto the film strip, he is interested in "handmade film" as an expanded time-based form of painting (Zinman 2020). Zinman's definition of handmade film is distinct from industry practices that foreground narrative storytelling and require a team of people to make the work. Instead, the handmade can be an oppositional practice involving methods and processes that are "manipulated by hand", "hand-processed" or "hand-assembled", which are carried out by the artist in the design and production of their moving images (Zinman 2020: 8).

The notion of 'direct' involvement or experience, for me, distances the device or apparatus from the procedure, inviting the body (or hand) into the image-making process. The distance between process and experience then becomes more immediate or "direct", "hands-on" or "handmade" (Zinman 2020). This idea, though it slightly undermines my methodological approach to doing research with material objects and devices to bring participants closer to landscape-based experiences as knowledge, nevertheless is still relevant as it places attention on tactility. The body, after all, mediates experiences and this can be aided by a device or tool. However, a more 'direct' experience between human and more-than-human bodies is worth investigating and can narrow the gap between dualisms.



Perhaps this needs to be a generative process, as overcoming dualisms is not a straightforward proposition. The direct experience could initially be prompted by material objects and tools which can then lead to experimental sustainable techniques for direct embodied engagement.

Generative handmade processes can encourage direct, deviated or embodied experiences. This is reflected in the assemblage of the film's agential components: the handmade film is often made up of "chemical and natural processes that purposefully decay the film" (Zinman 2020: 23), an idea that I am putting into practice in my own work. Contemporary artist-filmmakers

who make their marks using human and nonhuman materials "articulate the materiality of both film and the physical world" (Zinman 2020: 103), and include Thorsten Fleisch, Vicky Smith and Jennifer West. For experimental film theorist Kim Knowles, such work can provide new ways of seeing and sensing the world, "capable of communicating across multiple materialities: bodily, earthly, human and non-human" (Knowles 2020: 25). This idea holds transdisciplinary research potential, where film can demonstrate ways of knowing that are not just human-centred. Using the film body in this way can dissolve those mind-body and nature-culture dualisms.

One of the films I made during the CMR residency was Carn Marth collage (2022), which was subsequently installed in a group exhibition at Auction House in Redruth. This film comprised several handmade collages and photographs, shaped into animated sequences and informed by another walk around Carn Marth. Apart from the landscape-affected black and white still photographs I captured in those landscapes; I also took several digital still ones to later experiment with. Some of the photographs were taken in quick succession, using the multiple burst technique I often employ when taking recce or fieldwork records which later, often, become incorporated in my film work, as discussed in the methodology section in Chapter 2. What taking a burst of photographs does, is it allows me to imagine movement slowed down into several separate moments. It also allows me to switch off something in my brain that wants to capture *the* ideal moment and I often fall into a semi-conscious state of image making.

One of these multiple burst sequences was particularly intriguing to me as it followed a flock of jackdaws circling around a quarry. I had followed these birds with my camera as they flocked around the perimeters of the quarry and behind my friend's head, momentarily including a human in the photographs who came in and out of focus as the camera lost sight of the flock. I decided to work with this image group and printed out the 19 photographs using an old colour printer. I then rephotographed each image but covered every image of a bird with cut out bits of card. The combination of hand-affected and nature-assembled work gave the sequence additional texture, adding a layer of interpretation through the actual physical layers imposed (a mix of manmade and plant materials) and rephotography. I was also letting the birds decide how I took the photographs and inform where my interventions would be carried out, as Stephen Gill attempted with *The Pillar* (2019), allowing "nature" to "guide the work" (Gill, Louisiana Channel 2021).

The following images, arranged left to right in order of when they were taken, lay bare a state in-between stillness and motion. Here, they are shown in redigitised form, through a combination of rephotography and stop-motion and prior to being imported into the editing software that will animate them into a sequence. They are also in another stage of in-between, or as Zinman suggests of Moholy-Nagy's photograms, in "a play of material and immaterial, body and indexical trace, fastened in place by light… in a liminal state between the handmade and the machine-made" (Zinman 2020: 29). I will add a third aspect to this interplay and suggest that my photographs also reveal a *collaged assemblage of human and nonhuman interventions*.

Stop-motion is an animation technique used to reveal animated objects without any human trace in the movement of those objects before and after the shutter opens. I often incorporate stop-motion in my films, for example in the segment above I used the series of photographs as a rephotographed backdrop and included other materials such as the cut-out bits of card and a small plant. I animated these by taking a photograph then moving each material slightly then taking another photograph, repeating the process several times. This collaging of two different techniques, I feel, creates a more layered experience compared to the more straight-forward stop-motion experiments I put into effect in *Experiments in Engagement* (2021) with Oliver's collected gabbro stones. Experimental animator, Vicky Smith argues the value of an experimental stop-motion animation practice for new materialism, where random groupings of objects can exert liveliness and produce unexpected results (Smith 2018: 80). Although there is human manipulation, the effects of those interventions are unpredictable and surprising results can emerge when viewed as a sequence.

In the handmade *land*-altered (my own term) film, there is an embodied documenting taking place that conflates ideas of authorship and objective

Fig. 28: Jones 2022. *Carn Marth animation*

representation, as Zinman suggests of abstract paintings (Zinman 2020). Apart from being an accessible means of filmmaking production (in other words, the hierarchies and hidden protected methods of conventional filmmaking practices have been removed from the equation and so there is a more *direct* experience of process through handmade techniques), mixing the material and metaphorical muddies the agency of the human and nonhuman. Film, therefore, can become the embodiment of all kinds of participation and recreate an embodied experience of landscapes. Embodiment resists a separation between subject and object; mind and body and can produce works that "aspire not to refer, but to *be*, which attempts to challenge the ontological priority of the object" (Sitney, cited in Zinman 2020: 14). Going back to Knowles' appeal for an updated theory of materialist film; acknowledging the film body itself provides "a potential site of sensuous exchange" (Knowles 2017: 260).

Before the Covid19 pandemic changed my research course, I was keen for some of my workshops with participants to involve direct animation onto 16mm negatives, where they could manipulate frames of footage and make marks onto printed out frames on paper. Since then, and on opening up my practice to previously discounted participants such as plant-based solutions and areas of knowledge practices outside of my original scope, I am now moving into a different kind of participation-in-landscapes-through-filmmaking that includes nonhuman participants. Some of these additional participants are ones I introduce to the filmmaking process, for example, earth and other organic materials, though *how* they affect the film is always unexpected. Other participants are entirely chance encountered and *incidental* to the production of light sensitive images, for example, dust and scratches that may appear on the film surface after development. These are what Ramey calls "artefacts of the process" and usually appear through the DIY practice of hand-processing films (Ramey 2016: 143). Whatever the intention of these artefacts of process, the important thing for me is *how* they can reveal something new in chance encounters, and therefore can instil sparks of engagement in the viewer, who then becomes an additional participant in the filmmaking process.

Karel Doing is an independent artist, filmmaker and researcher, whose practice is concerned with ways of bringing people and plants together using photochemical processes. During his doctoral research project, he devised a technique he calls "Phytography" (Doing 2017) in which plants are instrumental agents in the image-making process. His intention was to move away from traditional human-centred cinematic approaches that promote single vision (Doing 2020). His method is incredibly simple yet impactful: the plants (selected leaves, petals, and stems) are dipped into an organic alternative chemistry and applied to a photosensitive surface, such as paper or film. The internal chemistry of the plants then interacts with the photographic emulsion to create the images, adding "phytochemical adhesions" (Doing 2020: 28). This is where the plant activity comes into play to make what would otherwise be a '*photo*gram', which is simply the light-cast silhouette of an object after it has been placed onto photosensitive paper or film. The phytogram, however, is the result of the plant's internal chemistry, which together with sunlight creates unexpected results and "spontaneous animation" (Doing 2020: 30). Some plants are more responsive to the process than others, depending on their hydrophilic nature and whether their structure allows them to lie flat on a surface for a period of time (around 45 minutes to an hour).

Fig. 29: Phytography experiment on 35mm film

In March 2023 I attended one of Doing's phytography workshops, which involved an introduction to the technique followed by hands-on experimentation using foraged plants and applying them to various light sensitive surfaces (photographic paper, 35mm and 16mm film). I found the experience incredibly engaging and enjoyed carrying out the creative experiments in the open air next to some of the living plants (that could be classified as weeds), whose leaves and petals we used in our experiments.

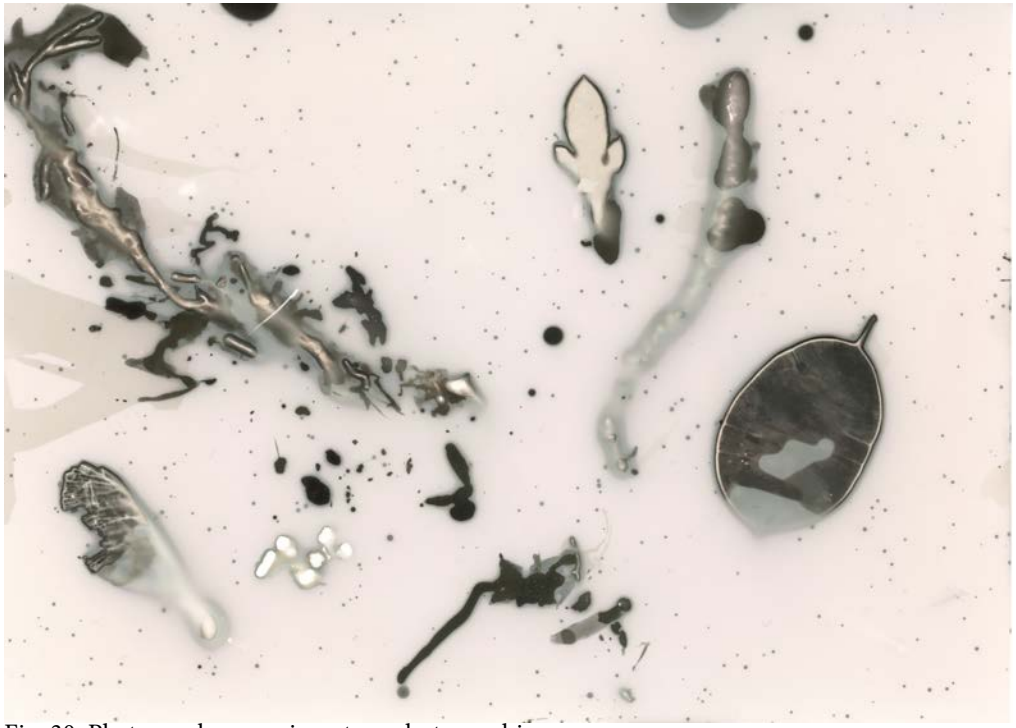


Fig. 30: Phytography experiment on photographic paper

The technique, developed by Doing, takes its historical context from early Victorian methods of scientific innovation and botanical recordings. In the middle of the nineteenth century, John Herschel and Anna Atkins pioneered photochemical methods of recording plant data using cyanotypes. The name 'phytogram' derives from 1920s modernist photographic experiments developed by László Moholy-Nagy who coined the term *fotogram* but was mostly interested in capturing light and artistic form using the cameraless technique. Man Ray, another modernist photographer testing the limitations and capabilities of new technology, applied the same technique to moving image film, which he called *rayographs*.

Doing's practice emerged out of scientific and artistic experimentation; however, he has added an ecological and posthumanist twist. His research frames the Victorian tradition of scientific documentation, which aimed to preserve and classify living things, rendering 'nature' a static, unchanging object. Doing, on the other hand, is more interested in artistic formal and ecological experiments that activate new ways of engaging in environments with an awareness of the plants being interacted with, breaking away from those traditional western knowledge frameworks that separate 'us' and 'nature' (Doing 2020). In Doing's practice, although the plant material is documented, it has not been rendered a representational object as it is the plant matter itself that makes the work together with human intervention: this is therefore an interactive operation. The phytogram becomes a "tool", though a limited one, that can mediate a human "understanding of the sensation that a plant might have" (Doing 2020: 31). This is a practice that prioritises texture, form, and rhythm in place of language and realism, subverting the notion of photography as a scientific tool for accurately and objectively representing nature (Doing 2020). It is not about the finished result, whether projected in a cinema space or scanned onto photographic paper, rather, Doing encourages human collaboration and contact with plants, carrying out his workshops in order to engage participants more deeply and actively with their surroundings. He calls this an expanded cinematic practice, where:

> Participation flows from the plants to the artists and further to the audience, who in turn might feel encouraged to look differently at their direct surroundings, connecting plant life with cinema culture (Doing 2020: 33).

This expanded form of participation acknowledges agency of all beings, human and nonhuman, via a creative process. Rather than seeing each as its own separate entity, Doing's research practice acknowledges the interconnections and interactivities that flow between bodies: plant, film and human, something the western world has spent a long time dividing.

Braiding Sweetgrass (2020) is a book concerned with indigenous plant life knowledge which it explores in the context of western knowledge systems. Botanist and ecologist Robin Wall-Kimmerer has a background that encompasses both western science and ancient indigenous knowledge. Her attentively attuned understanding of plants places them not as separate

bodies, whose meaning comes into being when extracted and labelled, but as species that are behavioural, in phases of flux and dependent on interrelations with other nonhuman and human beings. She draws on the differences in approaches to knowledge frameworks where western scientific objectification can be unhelpful as it tends to look at plants in fixed static states. In contrast, indigenous names for plants can change depending on the plant's phase of development or other plants they are interacting with. This crucial difference allows an understanding of symbiosis, change and different ways of knowing and engaging with plants.

> There is a barrier of language and meaning between science and traditional knowledge, different ways of knowing, different ways of communicating… To me, an experiment is a kind of conversation with plants… Experiments are not about discovery but about listening and translating the knowledge of other beings (Kimmerer 2020: 158).

Like Doing, Kimmerer advocates engagement with plants and an openness to understanding new ways of interacting and communicating. For Doing, experimental practices such as phytography can create a shared space between humans and plants and encourage deeper awareness and agency within our environments (Doing 2020).

Reimagining space for participation

Space is a slippery concept to pin down and as philosopher Henri Lefebvre suggests, space is not confined to the physical realm but is social, mental and experiential (Lefebvre 1991). Its definition will also vary depending on which disciplinary vantage point it is being considered in or from. In the Moving Landscapes project, I considered bringing landscape spaces into a physical artistic space that encouraged the possibilities of participation and embodied knowing to emerge. The gallery space was where I exhibited all the artistic and fieldwork artefacts non-hierarchically and in conversation: some were rough works in progress or formed part of the methodology for the fieldwork collection phase of the project, whereas others were 'finished' (glazed, screened and framed) works. All were concerned with foregrounding process to create *space* for embodied participation. In terms of space and time, although I conceived the framework for the project one year prior, the project itself was actively carried out with participants over a six-month period. This started with the first online meeting with all the artist-participants, Megan Beck from Grays Wharf and Sensory Trust officer, Ellie Robinson Carter, and finished at the end of the exhibition. However, I also made an evaluation film of the project as the final output in October 2021 to satisfy the Arts Council England commissioners.

For Knowles, academic and curatorial work cannot exist in isolation: they are perpetually in dialogue with each other and always in a phase of idea development that extends to audiences (Knowles, cited in Moyes 2020). Knowles refers to Marks' essay on 'The Ethical Presenter', where it is the responsibility of the curator to offer up a position or argument in their selection of works for an audience to experience (Marks 2004). In relation to programming, Knowles believes the curator should allow space between the works for a dialogue to happen, bringing the audience into the conversation as the third participant (Knowles 2020). This is something I attempted with the Moving Landscapes project: in the phase of fieldwork collection, I offered the participants prompts or instructions for recording their experiences. In the exhibition, objects that had been collected from explored landscapes and their audio-visuals recordings were offered up alongside pieces of artwork from both the commissioned artist-participants and Sensory Trust participants. All work was displayed non-hierarchically, with equal visibility given to sketches and collected objects as to framed photographs and ceramic sculptures.

The breadth of time and space the project offered in order to engage in the activities of the work, which included the walks, making the engagement packs and offering support to the Sensory Trust participants, was necessary to make space for embodied sensory engagement. With regards to the fieldwork and those landscapes covered by the artist-participants: they had a two-month window within which to experience and record their walks, process those experiences and plan their engagement packs for the Sensory Trust participants. On the walks themselves, structured space was offered as a framework to enable their engagement, and they were prompted to record

those landscapes through devices that could provide a paused sensing of their surroundings. The prompts pre-empted this pause and a sensing of the landscape in order prepare to take in information about the environment and listen. Apart from the straightforward prompt of asking them to frame a section of landscape and describe what was inside the frame using the audio device, additional prompts encouraged noticing and recording any sounds that were curious and zooming in to consider any nearby plants, paying attention to their colour and texture. These considerations fold in the landscape spaces with the pausing of time to offer embodied landscape engagement. As was demonstrated in artist-participant Kitty Hillier's work, Kitty took the opportunity to engage in her paused experiences of those landscapes and listen to the subtle sounds of insects, noticing the shapes and textures formed by lichen on rocks.

Cultural geographer Doreen Massey understands landscape and space as emergent dimensions of multiplicity and co-existence with other ways of thinking (Massey 2006). Her essay titled, 'Landscape as provocation' (2006), places the landscape at the centre of her enquiry and as a way to consider notions of space and place, ungrounding or unsettling disciplinary thinking and moving away from nostalgic human-centred perspectives concerned with memory and time. She suggests that landscape and space are not just material but also social, both a product of our relations with each other and a way of relating through intertwined "unfinished stories" (Massey 2006: 46). In this context, landscapes and their relation to space align with the practice of filmmaking as a social and situated time-based medium, constructed through interrelations.

Assemblage theory is a posthumanist philosophical approach that looks at agency beyond just the human, framing social complexity through relations between all kinds of things, living and non-living, concepts and fluid structures. Though its original definition was developed by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* in 1987, I am interested in Manuel DeLanda's updated *Assemblage Theory* (2016), in part because of our shared experimental filmmaking practice, but also because he attempts to cohere several different definitions of assemblage theory that the authors put forward in their text. Like Deleuze and Guattari, however, DeLanda argues that the term *assemblage* goes beyond a concept and is more a process that involves the action of fitting together of a set of components (DeLanda 2016). Further to this, DeLanda highlights the inadequacy of its translation, noting that the original French *agencer* refers to the *action* of fitting together a set of components (DeLanda 2016: 1). This suggests active agency and process, rather than a finished state. For an assemblage to be an assemblage rather than just a collection, the parts need to interact with each other so that the properties of the whole are irreducible to the properties of the parts (DeLanda 2011). Political theorist, Jane Bennett also adopts the term 'assemblage' to account for diverse elements and vibrant materials all interrelated in the same "event-space" (Bennett 2010: 23). This description is evocative of Gemma Anderson's "nested processes" that are found in her method of "relational process drawing" (Anderson, cited in Buenfeld and Clark 2020: 78), as described in Chapter 1b.

As a modified version of the Deleuze and Guattari concept, DeLanda explains that an assemblage can be made up of many other parts that together form their own assemblage, "equipped with their own parameters" (DeLanda 2016: 3). Mapping this theory onto my research, Moving Landscapes was made up of an assemblage of methods and participants each with their own role and parameters within the research project. The project as an assemblage, fits into a larger research practice, an assemblage in itself, which is being discussed here. As a technique or tool used in my research practice, film editing is a process made up of active relations between different components that are brought together. Here, the edit is an assemblage of interrelated parts that come together to form a whole that can exist in its own self-contained form. An assemblage, though it can still be subject to change, is reliant on the relations between its components that determine how it can be understood or interpreted (DeLanda 2016). According to film theory, specifically, the experiments that inspired Soviet montage theory (Dancyger 2019), it is the emotional relationship between the images that influences how a scene is interpreted. In a landscape-based research practice, work cannot exist without any participation, human or nonhuman social relations. These relations are, as DeLanda suggests, "intrinsic" (DeLanda 2016: 2) and so the work depends on the interrelation between landscape-process-participant interactions.

Physicist Karen Barad applies her term "intra-action" to describe causal relationships, deprioritising individual agency and pre-defined bodies (Barad 2007: 139). Intra-action has its own "agential potential" as a dynamism of forces, rather than an inherent property to be exercised (Barad 2007: 141). Barad's perspective offers a consideration of agency as an ongoing reconfiguration, in which unseparated things or 'phenomena' are constantly changing, exchanging and working inseparably. This is a posthumanist performative approach, which undermines traditional ideas of representation, objectivity and the notion of a fixed atomised state.

At the beginning of this chapter, I discussed how jarring and collisions can be what produce embodied experiential sparks of knowledge. Jarrings can also create conflicts, such as describing a research practice that is non-linear while understanding and insights are explained through the progression of sequential chapters. However, it is my intention to embrace these conflicts as productive tensions and allow them to inform my work. These unexpected encounters (between concepts, bodies or objects as phenomena) are not only productive, but intrinsic to process-driven projects; it is important to include all the marks of a process and make embodied understandings evident. Throughout the Moving Landscapes project, I focused on the material objects as separate to human bodies, which in the context of moving into a posthumanist approach is conflictive. If I acknowledge this conflict, however, then what I am saying is that all perspectives are possible at any one time, as Massey suggests of the multiplicity of perspectives on landscapes (Massey 2006). There are productive tensions, but that is what shifts a practice into new areas of engagement, where the focus can move between bodies or objects and into other spaces in-between, the assemblages and relationships themselves. In fact, by focusing on *process* and *participation*, I am deprioritising agency as something that is produced by an individual (human or nonhuman), rather, the intra-action has its own force and operates relationally. In any case, the jarring, which I suggest is a sensory challenge to expectations, is necessary to move my research into its next phase.

In the next chapter, I will be considering the frame as an unfixed boundary and exploring how it can be subverted through my own filmmaking practice, challenging the digital screen frame. I will also be reflecting on my ever-emerging research practice and considering ongoing expanded participation in embodied landscape spaces, providing new insights through process-driven landscape-based work.

CHAPTER 4
Landscape-based embodied filmmaking

This final chapter considers the further possibilities for landscape-based filmmaking through various cameraless and 'direct' processes that can produce embodiment, with both the body *in* the landscape and interacting with experimental photographic techniques. I consider the body as unbounded to the film frame, acknowledging perceived and constructed boundaries. I reflect on experimental artefacts from my own practice and ongoing research into human and nonhuman participation, where a focus on material processes can bring the two together into fluid unison. This fluidity of interaction between the human and nonhuman brings together form and content and can be expressed by a softening of boundaries, both physically and philosophically. Throughout this final chapter, I consider ongoing emergent research interests and explore the further possibilities for how those can become embodied in an ever-developing landscape-based practice.

Assemblages and entangled boundaries

At the beginning of 2022, I collaborated with researcher Laura Hodsdon to make a film that visualised aspects of her research paper on a coastal town in Devon, Wembury. Her paper, 'Landscape Stories – an investigation of organisations' and diverse audiences' narratives of the countryside to advance landscape justice' (Hodsdon 2020), was supported by the National Trust and commissioned by the Landscape Research Group. The research concerned accessibility and inclusivity in landscape spaces. My filmic response in the form of a 'research film' led to a paper that was published by the Landscape Research Group, called *Assembled Landscapes: Wembury*. The edited extract can also be found in the appendices of this thesis.

The project began at a time soon after I had completed the Moving Landscapes project, and I was full of thoughts on making visible marginalised perspectives on landscapes through experimental filmmaking devices. The paper I wrote, *Assembled Landscapes: Wembury* (2022), emerged as a reflection of a filmmaking practice in action, embodied in a landscape, expressed through filmmaking techniques using fieldwork artefacts and archive photographs. The most impactful and unexpected insight to come out of the Wembury project was that some of the landscape objects held their own stories. They were made up of 'natural-looking' physical traces of human presence, objects made up of rock, metal and concrete that told their previously lived landscape stories, which, it seemed the National Trust was attempting to conceal (Hodsdon 2020). In my writing (see appendices) I call these objects enmeshments, after Ingold's "meshwork" (Ingold 2011), which describes entanglements of organisms, materials, culture and history. They are, as Laura and I remark during our fieldwork excursion, "literally the manmade colliding with the natural", creating a fluid unbounded blurring of nature and culture. I decided to place these objects at the centre of my film, using collaging and animation techniques that place them into the foreground of a landscape assemblage, spilling over the frame where human activities become a background setting (see Figure 31).

The Wembury project helped mobilise the next phase of my research practice, which was beginning to work with the nonhuman as a participant and focused on bringing these entangled relations into the foreground. This inspired the next film, *Quarry-hedge conversation* (2022), which started as a simple editing experiment that became part of a group show in April 2022 titled, *The only thing more slippery than the elbow* (2022), at Auction House in Redruth. *Quarry-hedge conversation* (2022) is a one-minute looped single channel video with no sound. It is made up of only five assets on two different formats: one is comprised of four static shots of the quarry at Carn Marth shot on 16mm and digitised into video and is the same piece of footage I used at the beginning of *Carn Marth walk* (2021) for the *Moving Landscapes* exhibition. The other four components of the film are digital photographs I had taken on my phone in March 2022.

Fig. 31: Jones 2022. *Assembled Landscapes: Wembury.*

Quarry-hedge conversation is inspired by my growing fascination with hedges, the boundaries teaming with diverse forms of life that act as a boundary to humans and refuge to certain nonhuman species that may be classified as 'weeds'. Apparently, the preservation of hedges is encouraged for those same reasons, to promote diversity and help sustain ecosystems. I had taken a few digital photographs of a hedge wall in early spring and placed them in the second film I put into the exhibition, Carn Marth collage (2022), which is a film I discuss in Chapter 3 in relation to a specific animated segment. Although *Quarry-hedge conversation* is a relatively straightforward piece of work in comparison, I found that digitally overlaying the hedge photographs onto the 16mm analogue quarry footage created an intriguing interplay. Here, I discovered a quiet conversation between two very different culturally informed, land-altered sites across digital and analogue formats. The quarry: a carved out former industrial space where plants had grown out of cracks between rocks, and the hedge: a small-scale version of nature finding its way into the edges of divided landscape spaces.

When filming on 16mm, even though the shot itself may be static, an inherent wobble occurs as the film physically threads itself through the camera, since there needs to be some space for it to pass through smoothly. The effect creates a subtle but lively sense of movement that, when combined with the absolutely static digital image, adds life, dialogue and interactivity or intra-action (Barad 2007). Although I did not process the film myself, there are nevertheless traces or "artefacts of the process" (Ramey 2016: 143) as dust and scratches have been recorded on the film strip. "This dynamism is agency", Barad affirms, understanding the world and reconfiguring it is an "agential intra-activity" (Barad 2007: 141).

This film is an assemblage where different bodies or phenomena are brought into relation with each other to create new understandings. While making the work I was keen to reveal the outer edges of the 16mm film frame, which is physically produced by the camera's aperture, and make the hedge material more visible in its black outer spaces. Revealing the hedge at the borders of the film frame was a way to align form and content: physically speaking, hedges come into existence on the unused land edges or borders between land and

Fig. 32: Jones 2022. *Quarry-hedge conversation.*

Fig. 33: *The only thing more slippery than the elbow* exhibition photography.

road. This is an example of experimental film form and content reiterating itself by drawing attention to its own construction (Rees 2011).

I increasingly find the idea of the film frame frustrating as it is like working with a canvas you have not necessarily chosen, and often follows one of two (though there are more) standard aspect ratios due to predetermined screen or monitor shapes. In the edit, when I shrink a video down inside its set canvas or frame, the edges of the video are harshly delineated: one side of the boundary is a coloured pixel of footage and on the other side are pixels of the darkest digital black, binary 1s and 0s. This has not happened with the digitised 16mm film (see Figures 32 and 33) as it was purposefully scanned to include the aperture of the camera it was shot on, physically revealing where the light has touched emulsion and where it has not. Sometimes, light spills into the boundaries outside the frame producing a 'light leak'. Such an effect can be seen in both Cline's *Light Coins* (2018) and Kren's *Asyl* (1975), which I explore in Chapter 1a. I feel a need to redefine what the physical boundaries of the film frame can be and move out of it like the hedge pushes out of the quarry film frame. In a sense, this is what I have been doing in my research practice by exploring new participatory non-linear filmmaking methods, pushing past pre-determined limitations of filmmaking expectations or what film 'is for', as set by the dominant mainstream commercial film industry.

In Chapter 1b, I discuss Stezaker in relation to collage offering the possibility to rearrange and imagine different situations or perceptions (Stezaker 1978). Collage can challenge the perimeters of the frame and redesign its boundaries. In his essay, 'Merce Cunningham and the Aesthetic of Collage' (2002), Roger Copeland explores how collage can complicate the boundaries of "the frame", analysing it in artistic performative contexts (Copeland 2002: 12). He suggests that collage is an "organising strategy" that has been used in the work of prominent theatre, music and filmmakers, and, he claims, most influentially in performance by the singular choreographer, Merce Cunningham (Copeland 2002: 11). Cunningham was the first choreographer to apply 'musique concrète' to performance. Developed by Pierre Schaeffer in the 1940s, musique concrète is a sort of musical collage derived from pre-existing sounds that are placed into new formations. Cunningham called this dance *Collage* (1952) and his performance juxtaposed sounds and movements into "found movement" taken from everyday actions, such as combing hair, creating a single, but fragmented, piece of work (Copeland 2002: 12).

> Within the universe of collage, seemingly unrelated elements begin to 'resonate' off one another—across gaps of both space and time—resulting in protean, unstable, and wholly provisional relationships (Copeland 2002: 15).

Copeland, in this section of his essay, goes on to discuss how collage and its "discreet fragments… '*resonate*' in the eye and mind of the viewer" (Copeland, my emphasis, 2002: 15). He uses the word 'resonate' in two consecutive paragraphs, each time in inverted commas. Perhaps he wanted to draw attention the word or maybe it indicates his uncertainty of his use of it in this context. Either way, to me it sounds like similar notions of 'jarring' or 'collision' that have been attributed to collage, which I refer to throughout my thesis. Copeland, in the same sentence, goes on to describe the effect of collage as "a perceptual/intellectual 'flicker' that draws one's attention in conflicting directions" (Copeland 2002: 15). He concludes this paragraph with an assertion that "[t]he gaps or spaces—sometimes physical, sometimes merely perceptual and psychological—between the disparate fragments are essential to this resonating effect" (Copeland 2002: 15).

While I agree with Copeland's concluding statement of that particular section of his essay, I am not sure I agree with his next claims that collage has been pushed to its furthest incarnation in performance. He defends his statement by indicating singular qualities of performance: that it is "dynamic", which he relates to motion, and that it allows those gaps in temporality and space to be more pronounced (Copeland 2002: 15). I argue that is not the context within which collage is carried out that makes it dynamic, but that collage is a technique that is intrinsically dynamic due to its ability to flatten time and space and communicate the potential for new meanings and interpretations.

Similar to landscape assemblages and diagrams, collage is a tool that, in Bender and Massey's landscape thinking is "undisciplined" (cited in Massey 2006) and can subvert hierarchical notions of high and low art (Copeland

2002). It challenges knowledge frameworks as it can spark thinking outside of pre-determined boundaries. It also allows a playful reimagining of space and engagement through chance encounters. Although the term 'collage' is useful in order to communicate ideas that have been explored by other artists and scholars, I have recently started questioning its literal meaning. *Collage*, like many modernist terms, is French and comes from the verb 'coller' meaning to stick or glue. Its origin has been attributed to both Picasso and Braque who both started experimenting with collaged works in 1912 (Copeland 2002). In my practice, however, I aim to create work that is in flux or a state of transformation, focusing on process rather than a fixed outcome. I have considered whether *placing* rather than sticking is more congruent, as when I make my films, I consider my editing practice as an extended dynamic process which involves placing one piece of footage next to on top of another. Editing, for me, is often an unfinished process, and therefore 'sticking' is perhaps too binding and encourages the fixing of ideas. The French verb 'to place' is poser (though it can be other words in different contexts) and following a tendency towards unfixed placing, I am considering renaming 'collage' and calling it *posage* to align better with my research practice.

With collage, as Copeland suggests, "the eye of the spectator tends to fluctuate freely between disparate points on the same shallow plane" (2002: 21), but this action of the eye is reliant on fixed fragments that are stuck down onto a flat surface; what if the spectator could also physically change the orientation of those fragments to form new understandings? This is something I attempted in the Moving Landscapes project with the Sensory Trust participants. I gave them a selection of printed out photographs from my walk along with the route map, which aligned with the audio soundscape I had made out of field recordings of that route. I offered those participants a collaging activity using my photographs, where they could cut them up and paste them onto different sections of the route (see Figures 12 and 14). They could do this as they listened to my descriptions of what I was seeing, along with atmospheric sounds from those landscapes.

In future work, I am keen to make what might resemble an *assemblage*, in terms of its original modernist definition as relating to something that has the same intentions of collage but is three-dimensional or structural (Copeland 2002). I am also interested in making connections to Tsing's "landscape assemblages", referred to in previous chapters (Tsing 2015), and experiment with ways in which film and landscape artefacts can interrelate. I am considering a moveable installation that plays with two-dimensional and three-dimensional physical space, where materials can be interacted with and placed in and around a projected film. Collage and assemblages can provide tools to understand the shifting nature of landscapes and I am keen to explore this in future projects.

I am interested in what happens when the frame boundary takes on a new or unexpected form, whether as a picture frame, film frame or viewing apparatus, in other words, the structure through which a landscape is viewed. The normative act of viewing can become disrupted if the presentation of that image takes on a new shape, and, as discussed in Chapter 1a, subverting the normative act of viewing is what experimental films often do, where such a subversion can encourage "active sense-making" in the viewer (Peterson 1994: 21). In my recent work, I have been experimenting with the idea of the wobbly-edged shifting shape that I have been using in diagrams and collages throughout this thesis. I am considering a frame that embodies its subject, both literally and figuratively, merging form and content. My suggestion is that the experience of what's inside the frame is given new meaning, or can lead to wider interpretations, when the frame itself does not adhere to expectations:

The effect of the wobbly-bodily non-rectangular frame makes it evident that there are unseen contents and that those are being obscured by an inconsistent shape. This particular shape or amorphous form indicates change and even in this static still form I can see movement, as if it is about to be animated. This is something I will be experimenting with further in my filmmaking practice. Furthermore, I feel the effect entices curiosity and attention to what is inside the frame's contents. This particular photograph was taken by me at Baal pit in the clay country where artist-participant, Rosanna Martin, performed her fieldwork for the Moving Landscapes project. The photograph shows two stones on top of a ridge built-up from deposits, marking a boundary around the quarry where the background is on the other side of the quarry's perimeter. Due to the depth produced by a huge hole in the ground creating a wide distance between foreground and background, the effect of those foreground and background lines makes the image look like it is collaged: a visible landscape assemblage. What is also interesting about this effect is that the middle ground, which is actually the quarry hole of displaced materials, is completely hidden. I am interested in whether these ideas would be more engaged with or considered due to the shape of the frame, creating a sort of portal-like effect to jar the experience of noticing.

In Chapter 1a, I discussed the concept of blurred boundaries in relation to the cultural turn in the social sciences, which prompted anthropologist, Clifford Geertz's advocacy of 'blurred genres' in the opening essay to his book written in 1983, *Local Knowledge*. In an edited book on cinema and its relation to human perception, *Indefinite Visions* (Beugnet, Cameron and Fetveit 2017), Martin Jay's essay on 'Genres of blur' begins by discussing the softening of boundaries across disciplines as advocated by Geertz. He then moves beyond the metaphor of the blur to reflect on the visual experiences produced by the literal blur as captured by film and photography, in order to better understand what it means to blur scholarly genres (Jay 2017). Jay encourages a deprioritising of certainty and clarity, where vagueness can be a way to "escape the imperative to work with crisply defined categories and firm conceptual boundaries" (Jay 2017: 96). As discussed throughout this thesis, in terms of artistic practice and disciplinary thinking, Cartesian dualism is unhelpful in understanding nuanced subjective experiences or for producing new unbounded knowledge (Salami 2020). I would argue the same of digital binary, as on either side of the digital film frame the world of the film is either there or not there. No light is detected that has spilled over into the darkness beyond the frame as can be seen in the analogue image. Strict boundaries and dualisms are unhelpful when they play out in physical, philosophical and abstract contexts, whereas blurring boundaries can "refresh our encounter with a world that is far more interactively dynamic than the static classifications we impose on it" (Jay 2017: 96).

Further play and experimentation with the idea of a so-called fixed boundary or frame encouraged me to produce the series of images below. Though they were taken as a series, they can be experienced as one image as the frame has been interrupted and exposed over by an inaccurate rewinding of the stills 35mm camera to produce double exposures:

It was my intention to rewind the camera to see what would happen, however, I did not predict the photos would emerge the way they have. The effect of the plants appearing as if they are growing over the film frame encouraged me to think deeper around blurred boundaries, conflating distinctions between bodies, agency and matter. It is curious how the plant body becomes unbounded and spills out of the frame, like so-called weeds growing over cracks and interacting with other plants, and then with me through the camera device. David Abram describes the interactivity of the bodily function in *The Spell of the Sensuous* (1996), where the physical act of breathing is what entangles materials and beings:

> The breathing, sensing body draws its sustenance and its very substance from the soils, plants, and elements that surround it; it continually contributes itself, in turn, to the air, to the composting earth, to the nourishment of insects and trees and kin, ceaselessly spreading out of itself as well as breathing the world into itself, so that it is very difficult to discern, at any moment, precisely where this living body begins and where it ends (Abram 1996: 46).

Although in his essay, Jay makes a case for visual and conceptual boundaries, he concludes that the absolute removal of them is equally unhelpful. There is a productive tension here: without the constructed boundary it is difficult to know how to transform and push beyond it. Having a sense of an in-between space and being open to opportunities for crossovers and blurs that spark new knowledge is exciting and engaging. Perhaps this is why the amorphous image I often employ in my research practice depicts an overlap between two forms.

Bodies, human, nonhuman, more-than-human, animal, plant and film are unbounded to disciplines, and like landscapes they are "undisciplined" (Massey 2006: 34). Bodies exist as components that make up a larger assemblage or organism and not as distinct entities. Even though the human body interacts with others, it is still impossible to fully access the experience of the more-than-human. In *Plant-thinking: a philosophy of vegetal life* (2013), Michael Marder asks what it might mean to learn from more-than-human beings, to become apprentices in plant knowledge and wisdom. His book aims to build a philosophical model, or 'vegetal ontology', that can explain plant wisdom, challenging the limitations of western philosophy and metaphysics that marginalise vegetal life. Marder describes plant wisdom as distributed and unbounded, where human experience and learning can only be approximated by an "unmooring" away from anthropocentric human-centred knowledge (Marder 2013: 152).

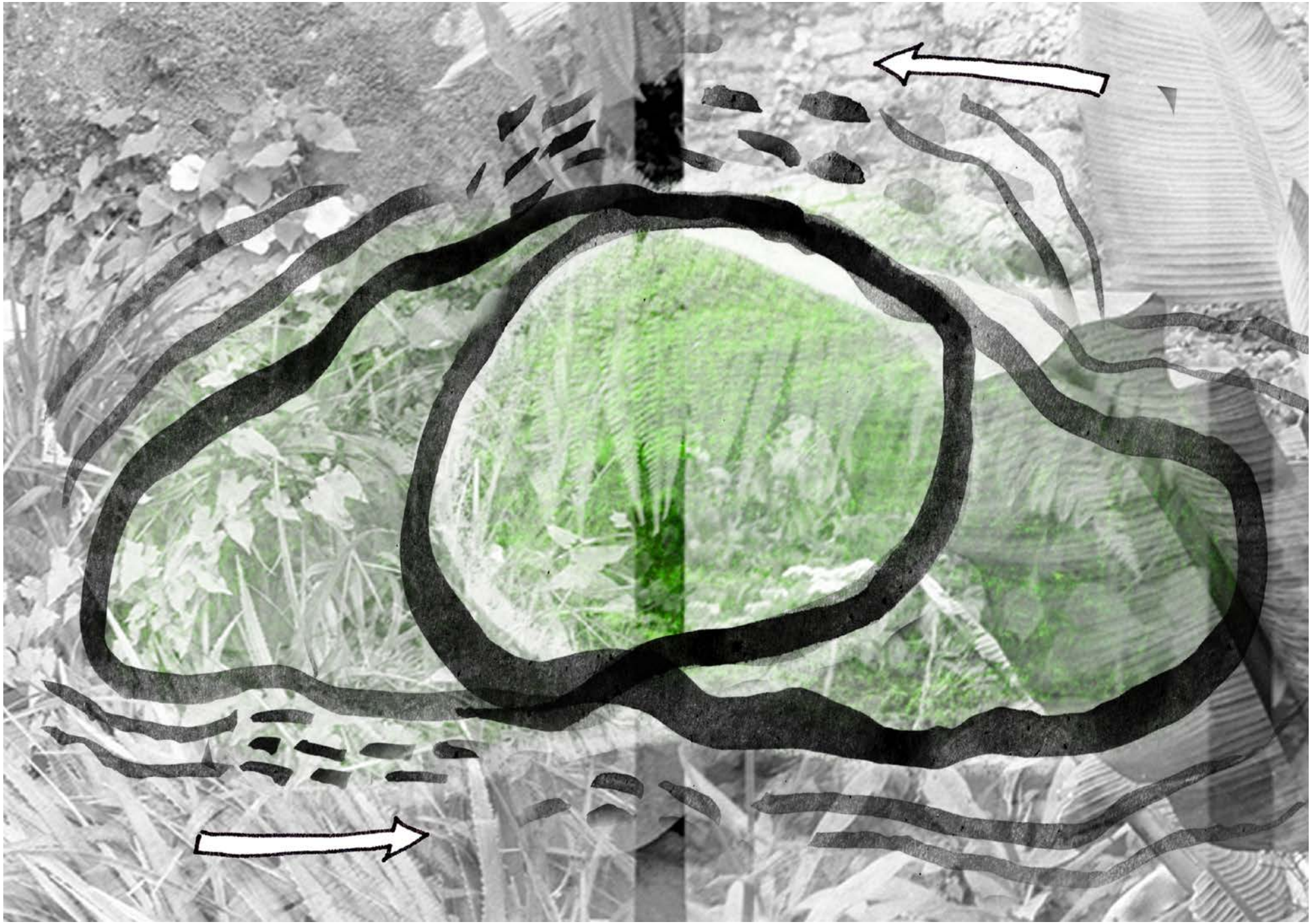
> All we can hope for is to brush upon the edges of their being, which is altogether outer and exposed, and in so doing to grow past the fictitious shells of *our* identity and *our* existential ontology (Marder 2013: 13).

Knowles' suggestion, that artistic tools such as film celluloid can encourage embodied knowing and interaction between human and nonhuman bodies (Knowles 2020) is something I learned through my own participation and encounters in landscape spaces. Through this experimental research practice, I got an insight into what it might be like to embody and embed myself collectively in an environment as plants do.

The body in the landscape

When considering a physical body moving through landscape spaces, it is difficult not to acknowledge other bodies. While traversing a terrain, all the senses are activated as there are many landscape features to navigate. Tools can both help and disrupt an experience of being in landscape spaces, and, as I suggest in Chapter 3, the multiple burst photograph technique can have the effect of disrupting and fragmenting the experience of time. Here, experimental film strategies exercise "material techniques" that draw attention to film as a "material construct" (Rees 2011: 7). The effect of experiencing the materiality of film invites sensory engagement or embodiment: the effect of watching a film that is made up of visible components and constructs can insight a bodily response and sometimes a sense of jarring.

Working with plants has allowed me to consider taking my cameraless photography experiments further by infusing organic materials with a plant-based developing solution. In future experiments, I would like to combine



different techniques such as processing plant-infused film negatives onto paper and then coating the same paper with plants in the form of an expanded phytogram. There is something satisfying about these processes that can instil more immediate or *direct* contact between both humans and nonhumans in contrast to an individual 'capturing' natural objects with a camera from a distance. In plant-based alternative methods, there is increased tactility and engagement between people and plants through these slow processes, allowing deeper moments of connection and insight. In addition, the plants seem to decide how they lie on the photosensitive surface, infusing their own chemistry onto it (Doing 2020). And because surprise encounters are brought together through artistic interactions that decentre the human from the process, the experiments can "elicit a sensuous form of understanding" (Knowles 2020: 18). These textures layer themselves and build into the image through human and nonhuman or more-than-human interactions, becoming visible material traces of collective mark making, as indicated by Knowles:

> Texture, in the form of material presence, is the means by which the film communicates, as it represents the meeting point of the chemical transactions and transformations – a process that, whilst invisible to us as viewers, is nonetheless contained in the images we see and also sense (Knowles 2017: 263).

In April 2023 I became part of a group of artists all with land-based practices called 'Keskorra'. Meaning 'to assemble' in the Cornish language, Keskorra's mission is to explore local landscapes and to encourage artistic collaboration within them, connecting, exchanging ideas and using outdoor locations for inspiration and experimental making. In May 2023, on an excursion to Botallack mines in far west Cornwall, I led a phytography workshop and introduced the process Karel Doing had taught me two months earlier using photographic paper, described in Chapter 3. I was keen to take Doing's lessons further with the Keskorra group and combine other landscape materials onto a single piece of film. In an experimental landscape-based collaboration, we produced a large-scale piece of work using 50 feet of Super8 film laid onto the path through the mine ruins.

Together we rolled the film out onto the path, placing it in the grass, at times digging it into the earth and applied leaves and other organic materials to the film surface. Those materials were dipped into the sustainable solution recipe that Karel Doing had shared in the workshop two months before. The imprecise method of working with available light and what the plants have to offer (Doing 2020) allowed all participants to sink into the activity and become engaged with senses activated, as we gathered, assembled and experimented. The process was playful and results surprising: the layers of the materials and their own internal chemistry combining with the sustainable one we made. One participant applied pieces of rock that may have contained copper or iron residue from what had been mined there almost three hundred years before (see Figure 34, below). The next example (see Figure 35) is a more 'traditional' plant-based phytogram using plant materials, made after the rocks had left their residue in the solution, creating an incidental mineral-infused participant.

Fig. 34: Phytography experiment on photographic paper with *Keskorra*

Fig. 35: Phytography experiment on photographic paper with *Keskorra*

After the workshop, we gathered on a more open surface where the remains of mining structures and depressions in the ground indicated what had been there before. Another participant introduced her activity which involved a set of instructions where our bodies could become landscape-recording-devices using a basic digital camera:

> FOCUS – use fingers to block out sections of the frame.
>
> ZOOM – find a frame of the general landscape. Run towards what you want to zoom in on.
>
> TRIM – look for repeated feature in the landscape. Cover the lens when searching, when found, uncover.

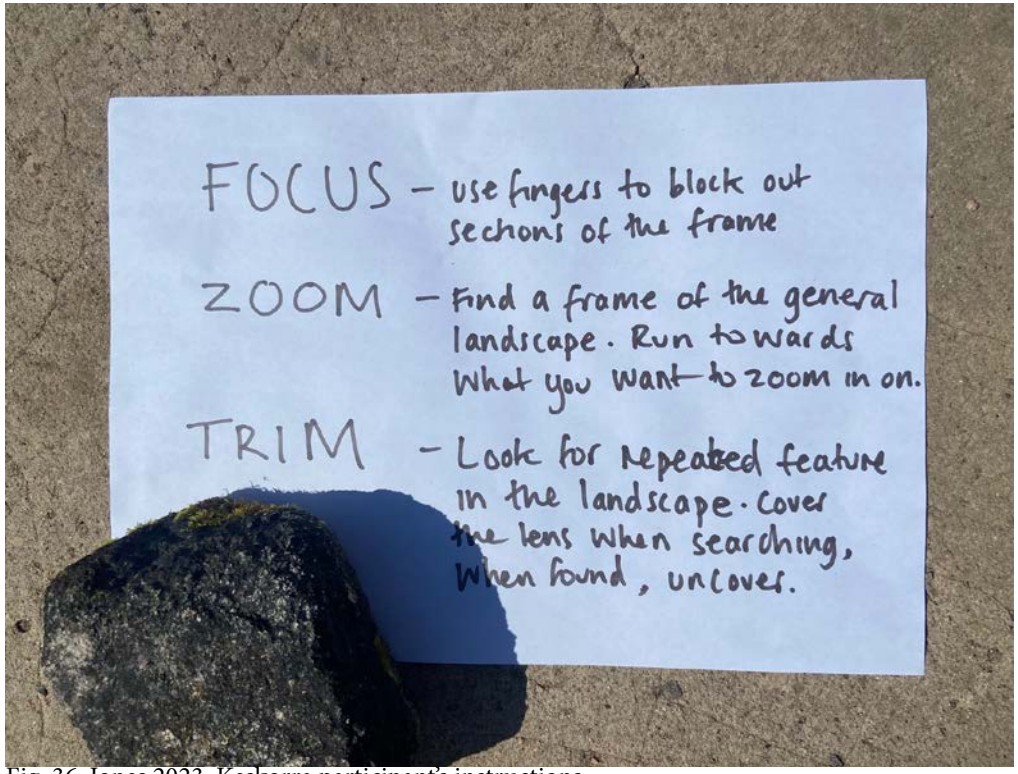
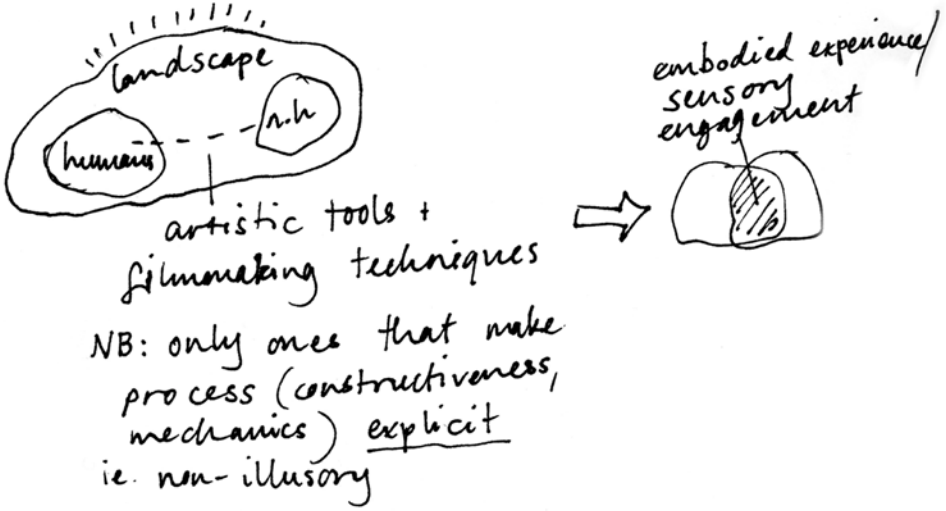


Fig. 36: Jones 2023. Keskorra participant's instructions

Fig. 37: Bestwick 2023. *Keskorra.*

Instead of the camera, we used our fingers to focus in – almost as a vignette that singled out details in the landscape in front of the camera lens (see Figure 37). The instruction to zoom by running towards the thing in the landscape we were framing had a very surprising and expected result: one of the participants literally flung herself into the activity, tumbling into the landscape. Her body was only slightly damaged as she prevented the camera body from impacting the ground. Her accident makes me reflect back on my own stumble into the landscape and how its jarring could be felt viscerally and sensorily by people watching my film in the exhibition, as described in Chapter 3.



As I engaged in my fellow Keskorra participant's activity I felt my body meshing (see Ingold's 'meshwork') with the landscape, aided by the connection between the camera body and my own and becoming more attuned with what I was recording. I found myself extending the scope of the activity to mimic the movement of what was directly in front of the lens, for example, following the back-and-forth movement of small flowers in the wind with my own body and the camera body in unison. I was effectively using technology in a way it had not been intended, challenging the separation between the camera body and human body to find an embodied connection with the landscape. This subversion of a practice, for example, not using a piece of equipment as it was designed to be used and embracing a more embodied experience of making is similar to how filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha edits her films, as previously discussed. Minh-ha deliberately fragments the edit to stir audience engagement, subverting the intentions of a dominant hegemonic film industry. These ideals are important as they encourage different ways of seeing and knowing that are not derivative of knowledge systems from colonial roots (Balsom 2018).

Filmmaking as weaving

My own approach to editing is at times similar to Minh-ha's, applying jarring cuts that call attention to act of editing, dispelling the illusion of the filmmaking process. I also think of editing as weaving, where audio-visual layers blend into other layers and form a richly textured sensory, sometimes poetic, experience. Layered audio-visuals, still and moving; digital and analogue images, field recordings and affected soundscapes blend together to create textures, "in the form of material presence" (Knowles 2017: 263), that ultimately become digitally collaged. As editing is often the final phase of my practice, it seems contradictory to frame it in such a way in the context of a thesis that lays claims for *process* as generative knowledge making. However, editing is a process in itself and can reveal additional sensory sparks or jarrings when placing one image, or sound, next to, or on top of, another. As I suggest in the previous chapter, editing holds possibilities for the interrelations of individual parts to produce engagement through their placement or juxtaposition. It is the relations that become important, for example, the sensory and emotional affect produced by two components jarring or being juxtaposed together.

Using layers in my editing process has been a mark of my practice as a filmmaker for some time, a sort of poetic embodied rendering of my own experiences and a means to voice different materials and perspectives within the digital film frame. When I work with analogue film, even though I know it will eventually be digitised, I find I am less pulled to make cuts: there is

so much information held in the grain as it jumps around the surface of the film that I sometimes feel compelled to leave a film intact, as it was when it originally passed through the camera. This resonates with Deren's vertical approach to filmmaking, which I describe in Chapter 1a, where the layered film contains subtle meanings that can be digested experientially rather than the narrative logic of linear character progression.

Viewing the projected 50 feet of Super8 film I made collaboratively with organic materials and the Keskorra participants, it feels incongruous to inflict human manipulation on that artefact of landscape participation. In his essay, 'Lines and Interruptions in Experimental Film and Video' (2018), Simon Payne discusses the contradictions where cinema is often labelled a linear time-based medium. Experimental films or animations can challenge a notion of linearity through their grain, pixels and segmentation between frames. He goes on to discuss the uncut filmstrip as a thread, as epitomised in the film performances of Annabel Nicholson and William Raban (Payne 2018: 28). In addition to being used in performance, uncut films that interact with organic matter promote film as a direct medium or means of recording traces (Payne 2018).

The 50 feet of uncut film threads itself via electrical winding mechanisms that pull the film through the projector using cogs that hook into the sprocket holes on one side of the length of the 8mm film. The moving image is made up of consecutive single frames and is projected onto a vertical surface by a lamp inside the projector and magnifying lens. The interaction of the film, which itself embodies chemical impressions of plants, minerals, soil and human fingerprints, with so-called 'obsolete' technology (it may no longer be in production, but it is still in use and therefore has value) is a subversive performance of experimental animated mark making. Watching a continuous thread of uncut film performance on the wall is particularly engaging knowing that the entire length of that film wove its way 50 feet down a path in the landscape we had immersed ourselves in. This landscape-based film is a single piece of material where participation in the landscape — human and nonhuman — is unified and embodied onto the film itself. As there are many threads that make up a film, images, sounds, multiple forms of participation and ingrained materials, then filmmaking can be described as weaving.

Fig. 38 & 39: Bestwick 2023. *Keskorra.*


Fig. 40: Jones 2023. Landscape-based filmmaking with Keskorra participants.

A portal to a sensuous knowledge practice

Throughout this doctoral research practice, I have been experimenting with devices and techniques that can bring bodies together to make landscape assemblages. Those techniques, including collage, diagrams and sustainable cameraless processes, are woven into films in order to communicate different ways of knowing and thereby integrating sensuous knowledges.

In *Braiding Sweetgrass* (2020) Robin Wall Kimmerer explores how different types of knowledge and wisdom are woven together to create a fuller understanding of a relationship with the natural world. In one of the chapters in her book, Kimmerer discusses traditional basket weaving through indigenous knowledge that reconnects her to her own Potawatomi heritage. She learns that the craft's process is not just about the making, but about forming a reciprocal relationship with the living black ash tree, which is dependent on humans for their protection. There is a balance of tensions to consider in the process of reciprocity and she learns that a strong framework is needed to allow creativity to flow out of the act of weaving (Kimmerer 2020). A strong framework is key to my research practice and, as I exercised in the Moving Landscapes methodology, it can lay the grounds for creative ideas and unexpected insights to emerge. The underlying message of Kimmerer's basket weaving lesson is that all beings, human and more-than-human, are interrelated and interact, relying on each other for survival.

I have started to consider how collage and other alternative framing devices can provide new ways into sensuous knowing. In his essay, 'Eleven ways of smelling a tree' (2020), David G. Haskell describes the interplay between memory and the sensory environments entwined with our early lives: "tree aromas are portals, flying us back into our experience of the culture that raised us" (Haskell 2020). Haskell makes a connection between humans and trees, suggesting that the sensory can be a portal between bodies and experiences (Haskell 2020). Portals are openings that can create an almost instant connection to something that may have been otherwise inaccessible or felt to be far away. While Haskell ascribes sensation in the form of aroma as a portal, I am thinking about a portal in terms of a device, tool or material object that

can bring an interaction with something else into contact with the body, so that it can be experienced in an embodied sensuous way.

A portal can allow embodied connections, bringing about multiple simultaneous experiences and sensations. A portal can make an experience feel immediate or direct, bringing it into the body so that knowledge is felt viscerally. Going back to Mark's 'film skin' (2000), Zinman considers how handmade film practice is more than a metaphor as it can literally embody on the level of its material structure, "as well as more abstract evocations, including environments, politics, and cultures" (Zinman 2020: 103). He suggests that handmade films can offer not just a recording of bodily processes, but that they are inherently oppositional as they operate differently from 'industrial film products', focusing instead on process and formal innovation (Zinman 2020). There is the potential for the handmade to be political when viewed in the context of digital technologies, mass production and global commerce, celebrating tactility as "a particular mode of direct experience" (Zinman 2020: 5). Furthermore, artist filmmakers who work with handmade film "apply the materials of the human and nonhuman, earthly and synthetic, to articulate the materiality of both film and the physical world" (Zinman 2020: 103). Direct experience with handmade film can then disrupt power dynamics and dualistic knowledge, offering a more immediate, sensuous and embodied experience that is communicated on the film body.

Shifting perspectives on what knowledge is for, other than power, can mean seeing and experiencing knowledge as a lively creative endeavour, or "an artwork", that is not static or unchanging (Salami 2020: 21). Salami's sensuous knowledge chimes with Knowles' view of photochemical filmmaking where visible traces of process can "elicit a sensuous form of understanding" (Knowles 2020: 18). A more sensuous understanding of the world can give way to affective encounters, which is a necessary experience in order to shift perspectives from mechanised nature in this time of global tensions and environmental depletion.

> Theories of democracy that assume a world of active subjects and passive objects begin to appear as thin descriptions at a time when the interactions between human, viral, animal, and technological bodies are becoming more and more intense (Bennett 2010: 108).

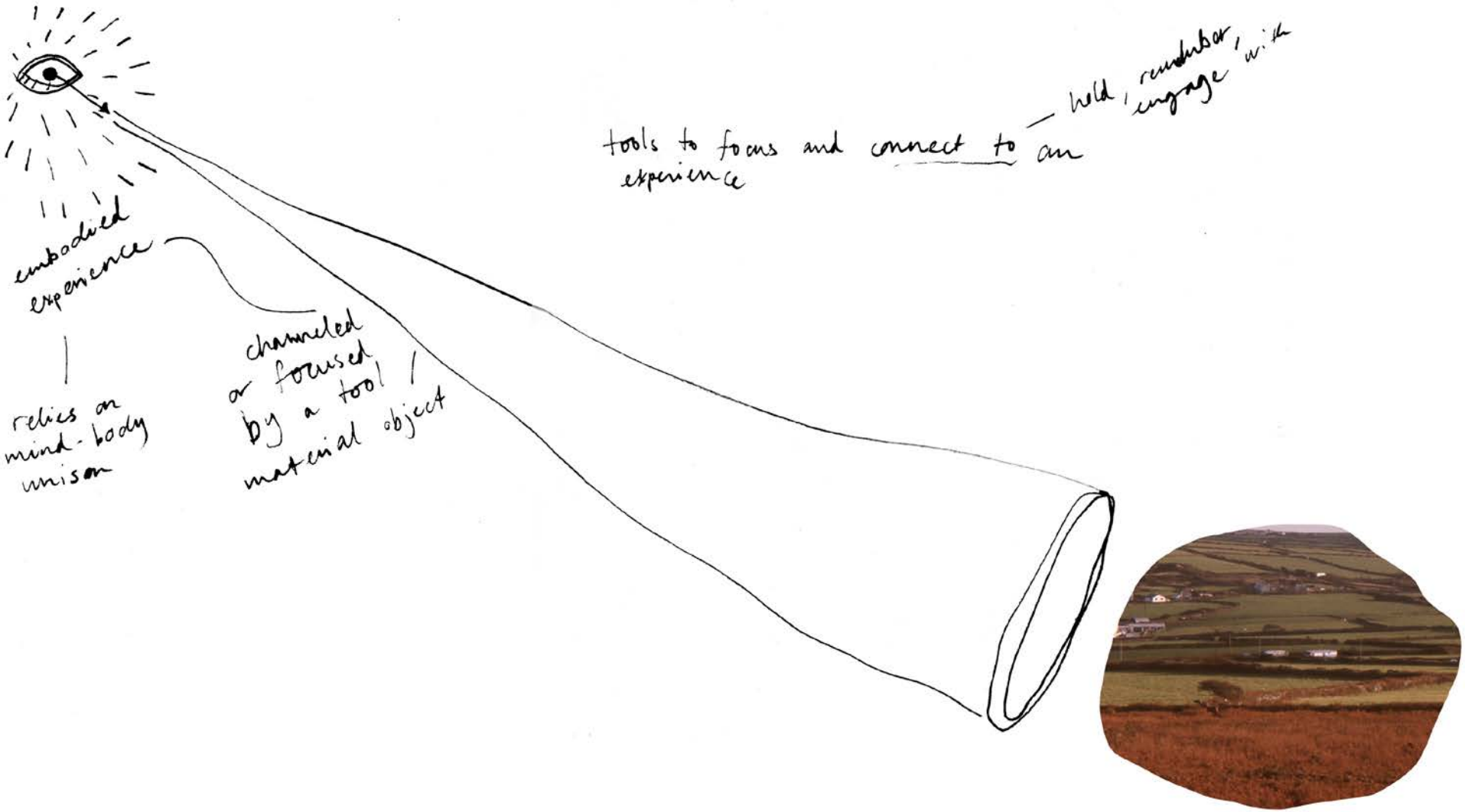
In *Vibrant Matter*, political theorist Jane Bennett argues for recognition of the vitality and liveliness of matter: an awareness of the agency of nonhuman bodies that shifts the focus away from human-centred experience. This might, she considers, encourage more sustainable engagements and attentive encounters between humans and nonhumans (Bennett 2010).

Sustainable engagements evidently need to operate on a collective level, away from the self-serving individualism that capitalism encourages. In her recent book on *Experimental Film and Photochemical Practices* (2020), Knowles identifies the importance of interconnected networks of knowledge sharing and alternative communities, where sustainably connecting with the materiality of film is an act of capitalist resistance (Knowles 2020: 176). She attended filmmaker Phillip Hoffman's Film Farm in Canada, where participants have the opportunity undergo DIY hand-processing techniques and share skills. At the heart of Hoffman's Film Farm approach is the desire to move away from a final product and enjoy "being in the moment and responding instinctively to one's surroundings" (Knowles 2020: 145). Hoffman calls this approach 'process cinema', which promotes play and discovery as opposed to technical skill and perfection: happy accidents are encouraged.

There is a productive tension emerging from a shift into more sustainable ways of image-making, where photographic and filmmaking practices sit on top of extractive industries, reliant on toxic chemicals and digital waste. A truly sustainable practice is almost impossible. Although the sustainable photographic practices I have trialled with participants have not contained harmful chemicals, those practices have relied on using celluloid (formed using plastic) in which gelatine (an animal product) is embedded. Perhaps mediation that is not "direct" (Zinman 2020), for example, that puts into practice new ways of using a familiar device could be just as beneficial for engaging participants in embodied sustainable practices? Although the device itself is born out of extractive industries, buying second-hand older equipment is another way of lessening impact.

I am interested in using techniques and tools to facilitate or mediate experiences, an idea I explored and contextualised in Chapter 1b, which I put into practice in my experimental and emergent methodology for the Moving Landscapes project, described in Chapter 2. But more than the potential for tools to mediate experience, I am curious as to how they could become portals that enable new insights and knowledge. A telescope focuses in on a subject and becomes a channel that connects and offers clearer more accessible information. Similar to the telescope-like tube in Maya Deren's dream sequence, described in Chapter 1b (see Figure 8), the act of looking through something to gain insight is made explicit in the movement of narrowing and encircling coming in from the film frame edges. This is experientially driven information informing the viewer or participant that they are being offered a new experience, allowing access to a new or different perspective. A knowledge telescope or portal can funnel the attention, making it possible to imagine new perspectives that are not bound to conventional or received understandings from frameworks that privilege top-down dualistic, human-centric and linear approaches. This experience, like a memory, can spark the imagination and give a sense of being part of a process which can bring about new awareness and insight.

I am interested in bringing care and attentiveness into landscape-based experiences. In the Moving Landscapes project, I wanted to reconnect people who had been disconnected from outdoor experiences in landscapes and engage them with and within outdoor spaces. I intended this to happen both physically and mentally using creative activities to activate the imagination and encourage experiential embodiment. Process becomes embodied in the techniques that are employed through creative activity, encouraging slowing down to listen and observe. With the handmade techniques I have more recently been using, I am interested in the tactile physical nature of film and the level of care required to attentively select a flower or leaf and then lay it onto the film surface. There is a weaving together of form and content that solicits greater attention, enmeshing ecological thinking with creative practice to produce embodied perspectives and sensuous knowledge. This level of attentiveness can bring the human and nonhuman experiences closer together in sensitive, embodied and transformative ways.

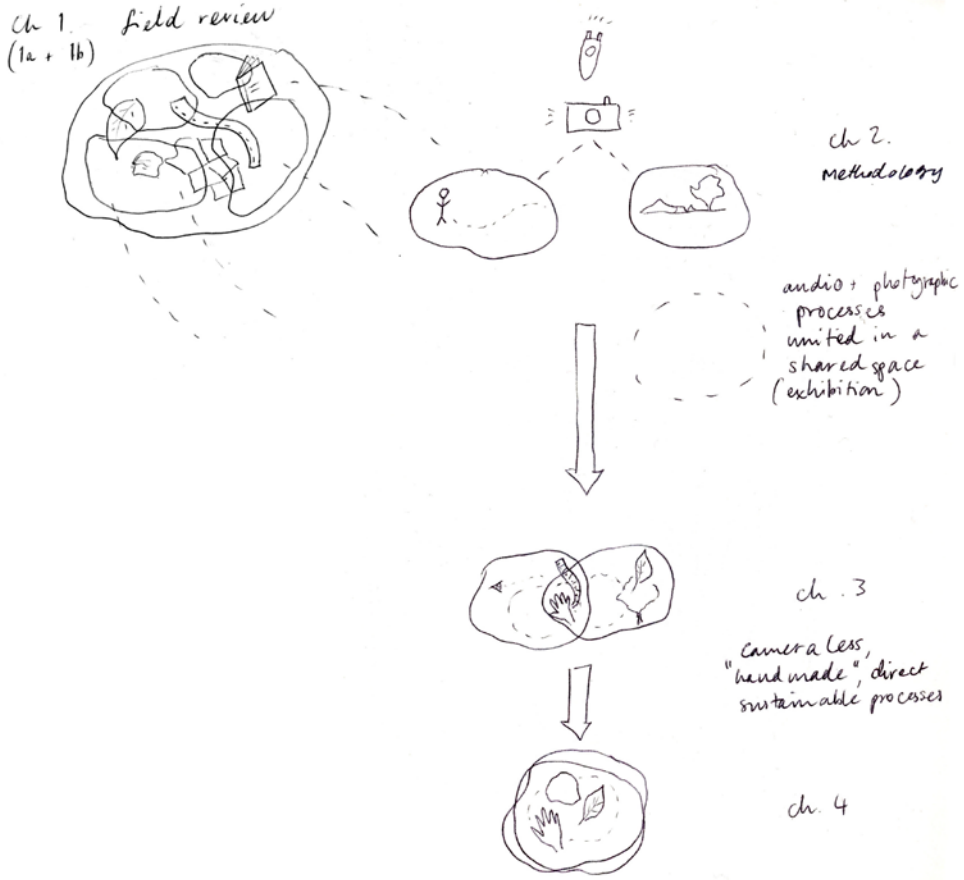

tools to focus and connect to an experience
hold, remember, engage with
embodied experience
relies on mind-body unison
channeled or focused by a tool / material object

CONCLUSION

Tracking a landscape-based research practice

Looking back over my doctoral research documented and explored in this thesis, in spite of disruptions, and in a way, thanks to that "unsettling" (Massey 2006), I can see distinct patterns that have emerged from a consistent rationale and motivation. I had been feeling a separation or *touchlessness* (McFarlane 2007) with 'natural' environments and with other human and nonhuman bodies. I had also been grappling with the idea of 'nature' as not being an adequate term to hold a multiplicity of interpretations and interrelations, from a concept of human nature to organic nonhuman bodies in so-called 'natural' settings. I had a sense that an objective approach to viewing and recording 'nature' that places the human at the centre of the story, together with illusory mainstream filmmaking approaches, reaffirms this separation and makes it difficult to understand how human and nonhuman agency can operate together in landscape spaces. Thinking of landscapes as "subjective and relative" spaces (Bender 2002: 105), I decided to explore ways of encouraging participation using landscape-based approaches that could unfold through techniques and processes related to experimental filmmaking. Here, I was applying the term landscape in both a practical and conceptual way, letting it create a space for embodied interactivities to unfold, instead of denoting a distanced objectified view for capturing or recording. A *landscape-based approach* then became a model or way into a participatory embodied research practice, foregrounding process and sensuous knowledges.

The diagram below shows how this approach has been generative, where the use of techniques such as collage and recording devices as material objects has led to further experimentation, progressively producing an overlap of human and nonhuman interactions in landscape spaces. Initially, it was the tools and devices that aided those connections, then handmade techniques provided further embodied interactions where it became difficult to see the separation between human and nonhuman agency. This observation indicates the progression of my landscape-based creative participatory explorations and research practice as a whole.

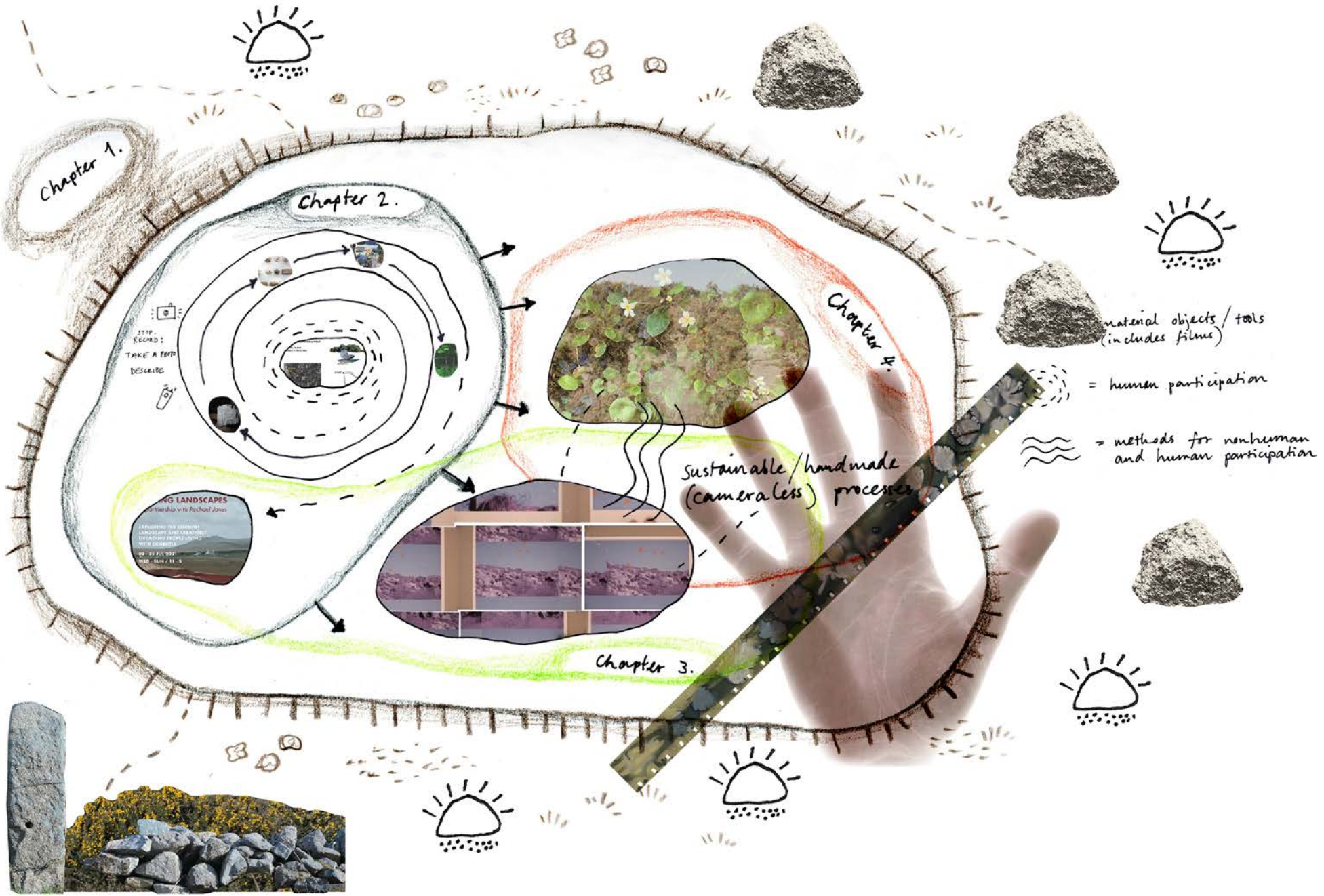


My aim was to bring an experience of filmmaking in landscapes to participants, so that they might engage in the processes of experimental filmmaking that can, as Knowles' suggests, allow communication "across multiple materialities: bodily, earthly, human and non-human" (Knowles 2020: 25). The urge to make work that connects or interacts in landscape spaces was amplified over the course of the Covid19 pandemic, when it became even more difficult to have those embodied experiences. My first step towards remedying this obstacle was to redesign my research framework so that it could operate within those restrictions. Chapter 2 maps specific aspects of the Moving Landscapes project, applying arts-based methods to activate participatory engagement in specific landscape spaces in Cornwall, where traces of human and nonhuman interventions could be experienced with the aid of recording devices. The techniques, devices and recording instructions were "material methods" (Woodward 2020), playing an intrinsic part of my methodology. Extending collage as one of my experimental filmmaking techniques to others revealed its potential as a material method, creating unexpected and "jarring" (Woodward 2020) results. The landscape recording instructions also became a material method to activate participation when I could not be in those same spaces with the artist-participants. The idea was to encourage noticing, moving and sensing within those spaces and focusing that attentiveness using material objects, which also served as materials and records for future sharing and collective participation.

In October 2021, on signing-off the Moving Landscapes project, I found myself wondering whether it had actually served my research practice. I do not feel that exhibition co-curator or project facilitator fall under what I would call my practice, and yet I had effectively spent most of that year in those roles. I felt the limitations of that project and could not initially see how it could support an entire doctoral thesis or contribute to my filmmaking research practice. Once I began engaging in other work, however, I realised what I had learned from testing out an emergent methodology. The project's constraints imposed by the lockdowns, together with my own deliberate constraints through the instructions, served as productive tensions for focusing attention and gaining unexpected insights. I could see how objects can be "vital" and have "thing-power" (Bennett 2010: 13), capable of affecting and interacting with human bodies. Although I wanted subsequent work to be fuelled by other people and be multivocal in order to challenge potentially oppressive knowledge hierarchies, I also saw the opportunity to engage more critically with plants and other landscape bodies as another way to challenge power dynamics and make work that is less human-centred. I was interested in discovering how nonhuman objects and materials can be participants in the filmmaking process.

The other unexpected result lockdown had on my research practice was that the quieter less active indoor conditions prompted me to draw diagrams in order to activate and connect with what I was researching. It was a way of relating with my research practice through mark making when I was unable to go outside and film or work with people. I felt compelled to make diagrammatic marks that could both interconnect and transgress the disciplinary boundaries of what I had begun researching. Realising that the diagrams were no longer happening at the edges of my research practice, I decided to place them alongside my writing, allowing them to become a way of interrelating, accessing and communicating sensuous knowledges, challenging power dynamics and disturbing dualisms (Salami 2023). This discovery, that the diagrams can be vital material methods in themselves was a pivotal insight.

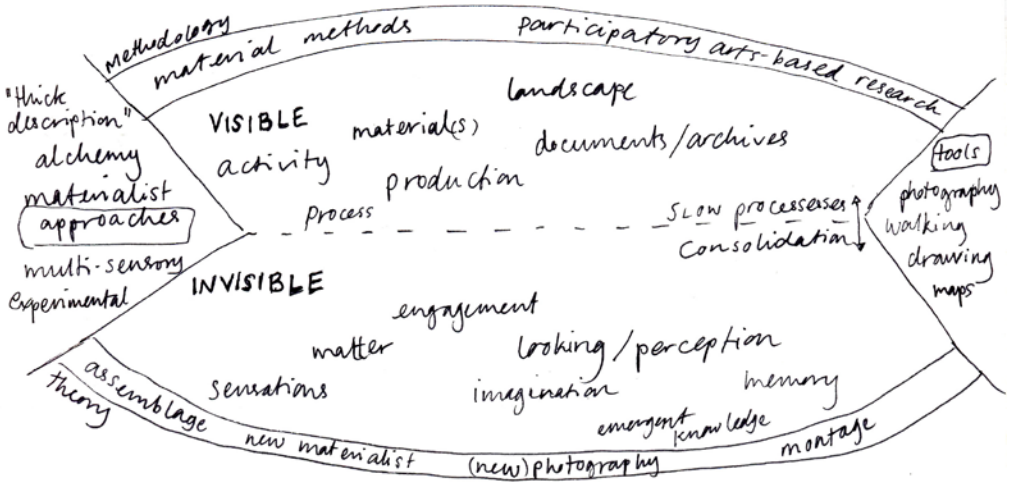
The effect of those restrictions, both imposed and self-imposed, opened up the possibilities for a practice that is more embodied, material-focused and exploratory. In my methodology section, I was laying the grounds for an experimental practice where material methods bring people into landscapes and, in turn, fold them into the filmmaking process, flattening a hierarchical top-down approach. In a sense, Moving Landscapes provided a methodological test bed. Since then, as explored in Chapters 3 and 4, I have moved away from an imposed structure and experimented with a variety of new techniques, which by virtue of their process-driven land-based approaches provide space for 'direct' and 'handmade' (Zinman 2020) participation between human and nonhuman bodies. The techniques themselves have not just become material objects but they have enabled me to step back and let go of control in order to allow chance encounters into the process of making. In a sense, I have become embodied by my research practice.


Chapter 1.
Chapter 2.
STOP.
RECORD:
TAKE A PHOTO
DESCRIBE
Chapter 4.
Sustainable / handmade
(cameraless) processes
Chapter 3.
material objects / tools
(includes films)
= human participation
= methods for nonhuman
and human participation

What was encountered: knowledge claims

Being still and without access to being in landscapes in the way I had intended, gave me the opportunity to find other ways of accessing embodiment in landscapes. I was able to consolidate the things that, when separated, perpetuate reductive and limiting ways of knowing the world. These dualisms include theory and practice, form and content, nature and culture, mind and body. Diagrams have helped me embody and express all aspects of my research that are often difficult to articulate with words alone. In a drawn gesture, I can express the above statement with this (often used throughout this thesis) overlap of two wobbly shapes that are consolidating into one:

Embodiment, as expressed in the diagram, then becomes a way of consolidating and expressing alternative ways of knowing. Diagrams can relate to landscapes as embodied, visualised and material processes, which I explain in Chapter 1b. Landscapes can also become places to experience embodied understandings and the consolidation of assemblages. Looking back at an early diagram in my doctoral research practice, before I activated my methodology in the Moving Landscapes project, I can see that I was already thinking of tools, experimental techniques and slow (sustainable) processes as ways to consolidate what knowledge is visible and what tends to be kept hidden. What aids this shift in perceiving landscapes as places of consolidation, is the opening up of the concept of filmmaking through attention to experimental processes, rather than a linear cause and effect format. What I mean here, is that by pulling apart and opening up an experimental film structure, the space for interactive participation and attention to process can be experienced. In visualising a film as poetic or experimental, according to Deren, "a logic of ideas and qualities, rather than causes and events" becomes visible (Deren 2005: 255).



I have discovered how incidental marks and sounds become "knowledge sparks" (my own term), calling attention to process by way of their existence. Like the natural-looking forms at Wembury, described in Chapter 4, they are not intended (by those who manage the landscape spaces) to be visible and yet there they are, existing as vital parts of those landscapes. In Chapter 3, I considered the possibilities for *jarring* to be a sensory way of knowing, which can be felt suddenly and viscerally, shifting awareness into an embodied experience. Jarring is a term used by Woodward, as described in Chapter 1b, to suggest the capacity of collage as a material method but which I have extended to apply to unexpected, embodied knowing through creative landscape-based encounters. Noticing can also be a form of embodied knowing, of 'being present' (Haraway 2016), favouring process over outcome, rather than knowledge that is fixed; knowing and noticing encourage movement, openness to change, fluidity and multiple perspectives. In the Moving Landscapes project, I provided "structured opportunities" for noticing (Walker 2019: 64), where insights from participants helped shape the project and inform my own work, leading to subsequent project-based embodied landscape research.

My thesis maps an exploration of social, embodied land-based practices, with the intention of being guided by material objects, participation and techniques

that foreground process, the unfinished or in-between experience of making, inviting chance encounters. I have documented these stages with mark making, which include, diagrams, photographs and films that communicate fluid unfixed process. These are then processes of embodied mark making, and from here landscape actors have literally found their way into my work, both intentionally and incidentally (for example, fragments of earth and stones becoming part of the film work, as described in Chapter 3). To say my work is landscape-based acknowledges the potential for artistic research and experimental film to communicate form and content across disciplinary boundaries, contributing to transdisciplinary research. The body of the work contains landscape bodies that mediate it: both human and nonhuman participants that have engaged in processes of mark making. Framing my research practice in this way offers a contribution to practice-based research, where alternative handmade artistic transdisciplinary approaches can provide new and unexpected insights for relational knowing within landscape spaces.

One of the main driving forces of my research is challenging power structures, informed by the way in which mainstream knowledge is often communicated. Ideals that encourage individual wealth, abuse of natural resources, consumerism, youth culture and constant distraction are perpetuated by the mainstream media and products of late-stage capitalism (Zinman 2020). My interests in embodied sensuous understandings through making, working with people from an older, neglected — socially and culturally — demographic using processes that encourage slow noticing and working with nonhuman participants, are all interconnected. Sharing the work through accessible lo-fi homemade techniques further politicises the practice. There is something empowering and subversive in reactivating so-called 'obsolete' equipment: methods of filmmaking and viewing that were widely practiced decades ago can be restored and reframed to create new understandings rather than be labelled as *nostalgic*.

Process-driven arts-based research hinges on sensory embodied experience for knowledge generation as a series of encounters. This refocusing from goal-oriented outcomes to emergent poetic understanding is what Minna Salami puts forward in *Sensuous Knowledge* (Salami 2020). What I have gleaned from my work is that in order to allow the experience of jarring or knowledge sparks, I have had to step back from the work and immerse myself in process, handing over conscious control to techniques that invite other (human and nonhuman) actors. I have also had to do what I have encouraged human participants to do in the Moving Landscapes project and Keskorra experiments, which is to *be in* landscapes and find ways to learn about them in hands-on, bodily ways.

The experiments I performed with fellow Keskorra participants in the post-industrial landscapes of west Cornwall have literally continued to develop: the alternative chemistry that was immersed by nonhuman bodies (stones, leaves, petals, earth) has carried on interacting with the light sensitive paper. Colours are richer and material and mineral traces are even more apparent.

This is a sort of jarring of the unexpected but productive encounter with materials and other bodies. It is perhaps the best way to learn something new that can radically unstick and divert a previously held perspective. For example, in Chapter 4 where I describe the Keskorra participants' bodily collision with the landscape, which, though abrupt and painful, is one way of embodying it. Or where I trip into the landscape, as described in Chapter 3: a sensory jarring that communicates itself to the viewer through the film's audio with a sudden visual cut and collapse of images within the frame. This is an experimental technique that jolts the attention and can encourage a viewer to think in a new way via that shared experience.

Landscapes are made up of intersections and multiple temporalities that are in a constant state of change (Massey 2006). It seems necessary to expand engagements with landscape and place, to acknowledge Western humancentric positions that render landscapes as static settings for human activities, where a perception of "the setting sun" is actually the earth turning by its own force (Massey 2006: 43). An *unsettling* (Massey 2006) or *jarring* (Woodward 2020) of perspectives is needed to evoke new imaginings and experiences of landscapes so that we can "learn to be affected" (Latour, cited in Massey 2006: 43). Understanding landscapes as sensuous assemblages that can be communicated through direct or handmade filmmaking techniques is one way to learn.

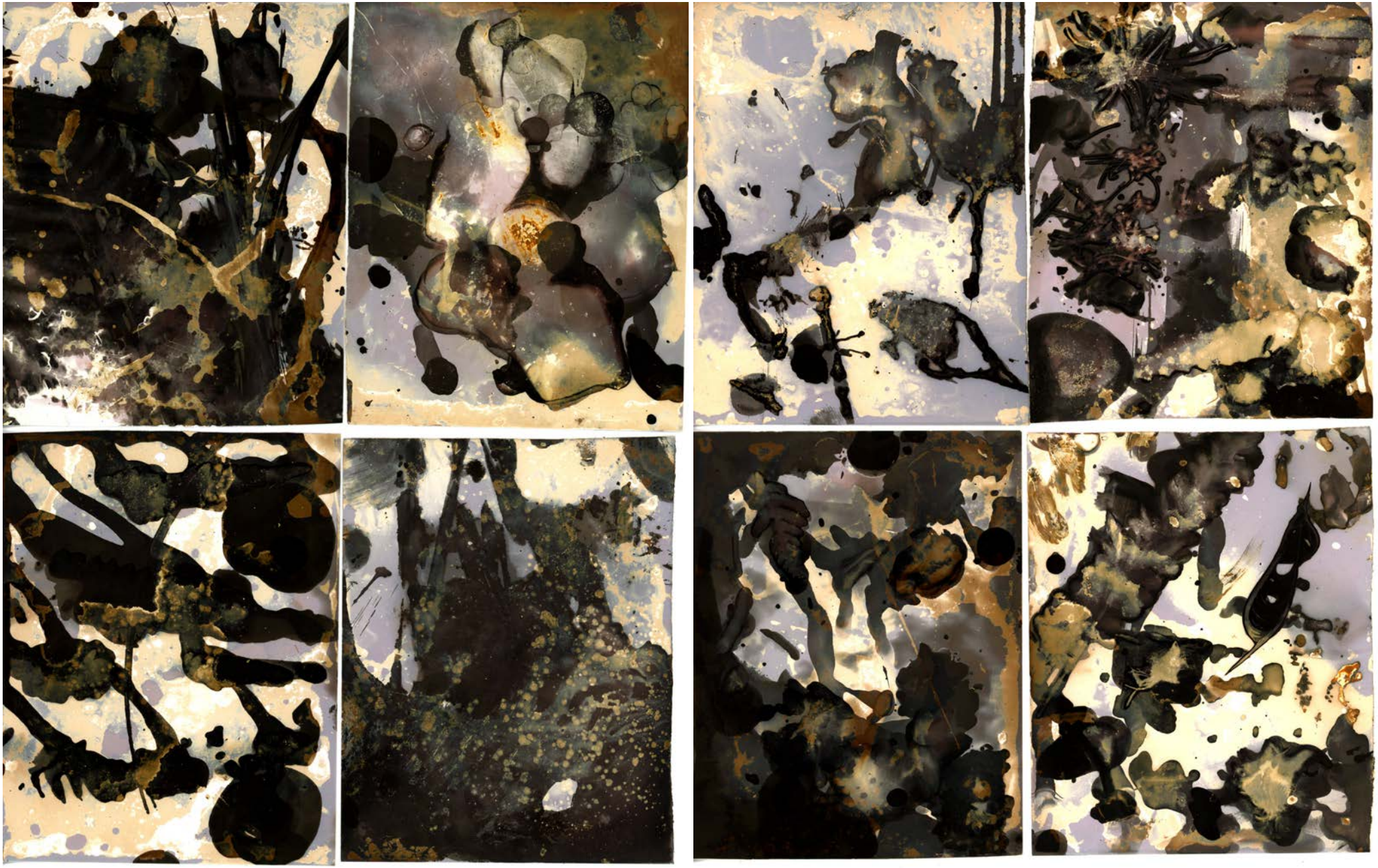


Fig. 41: Rescanned phytography experiments on photographic paper with *Keskorra*

A focus on process allows the unexpected to emerge in the gaps and spaces that can be left unnoticed in the work, where new knowledge or jarrings can occur. By 'focus on process' I refer to the tools and methods used to engage in an embodied activity. For example, the potential for collage (or *posage*) to produce an effect of resonance within those gaps, according to Copeland, as a perceptual "flicker" (Copeland 2002: 15) or, as Tsing describes, the friction that unexpected physical landscape assemblages can incur (Tsing 2015). I employ tools to enable artistic embodied experiences in landscapes. It is a way to understand landscapes as shifting assemblages, where chance encounters are felt in the body and would not be possible without a willingness to engage in those spaces with curiosity and creativity. Or even perhaps, without a shedding of preconceived ideas about what landscape spaces are for: there is a need to shift inherited knowledge frameworks and make work that is vibrant, where emerging knowledges can be shared.

Throughout my writing I have avoided the use of 'we' as it carries too many assumptions that stem from a western socio-political standpoint. However, I have perhaps wrongly assumed the separation with nature is omnipresent. It is a question of narrative and though I cannot say that my own narrative perspective stands for the majority of people by any extent, what I can say is that there is a narrative at play that suggests 'we' (mainly in the West) are losing a vital connection to nature. What 'we' determine as 'nature' might be subjective or might fall under a dominant cultural narrative, or as Salami prefers, a "europatriarchal worldview" (Salami 2020). Massey considers that "we need to unlearn our privilege as loss" (Demeritt, cited in Massey 2006: 40), suggesting a reframing of how change is perceived and the need to view collective responsibility towards the environment. With the rapid rates of environmental change that we (humans and nonhumans) are all experiencing, it seems critical that ways of confronting loss by bringing about a transformational shift in perspectives are put into practice. Artistic practice-based research and emergent sensuous knowledge can create dynamic and transformative results, where artistic tools and techniques can help jar new perspectives, behaviour and an acceptance of change. As Sullivan argues, these dynamic systems must denote change, as they result from multiple micro and macro interactions and interrelations:

> Dynamic systems, on the other hand, are transformative. By this I mean that as a consequence of continual interactions among the elements in a system and among features of the environment, things change (Sullivan 2010: 154).

There is a big word I have only indirectly mentioned through the work of Anna Tsing, Donna Haraway and Karen Barad in this thesis but that probably should be mentioned more explicitly, particularly because it is controversial: the Anthropocene. This period refers to a geological epoch marked by human activities, enough to constitute significant geological change. The issue many have with the term is that it perpetuates a world where nature is subordinate, placing humans at its centre. While I do not want to dismiss the term entirely, I also have not known how to accommodate it within my research practice that aims to dissolve those dualisms. However, a perspective I have recently come across through Salami's sensuous knowledge teachings is 'enlivenment' (Weber 2019). In his book by the same name, philosopher and biologist Andreas Weber offers a new way of thinking about the Anthropocene through poetic understanding and "intersubjectivity" (Weber 2019). This approach can transgress divisions between objects and ideas, nature and culture, and embed humans in nature's continual transformation (Weber 2019). Adding to this, I feel that creative curiosity and noticing can help shift priorities to make space for new relationships and ideas.

I started my landscape-based exploration by firstly considering the landscape as a space to perform or trial an experimental methodology in *Moving Landscapes*, as described in Chapter 2. In subsequent research projects, landscapes have come to be interactive spaces for participation embodied in physical film, made up of strata or layers of information that can hold human and nonhuman activities. The landscape as an "event-space" (Bennett 2010: 23) is an assemblage and is made up of several other assemblages as "ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts" (Bennett 2010: 23). These ideas have led me to consider this document of my research practice as a thesis landscape, where ideas are consolidated in diagrams, which in turn give rise to further ideas and connections that can be explored in filmmaking. This, for me, is an embodied research practice: moving myself in and through landscapes, producing sparks and jarring encounters with

other bodies that can provide further insights and generate new knowledge through a multiplicity of emergent processes. Doing research in this way can also help map a 'research film' which is reliant on a combination of structured opportunities for chance encounters; a film that is dependent on productive tensions and creative curiosity to explore ecologies from diverse human and nonhuman perspectives.

Going back to my initial thoughts in this thesis on how there is a distancing between bodies within landscape spaces, perhaps an "artfulness", as described by Manning (2015) can mediate the *touchlessness* (MacFarlane 2007) between bodies, both human and nonhuman:

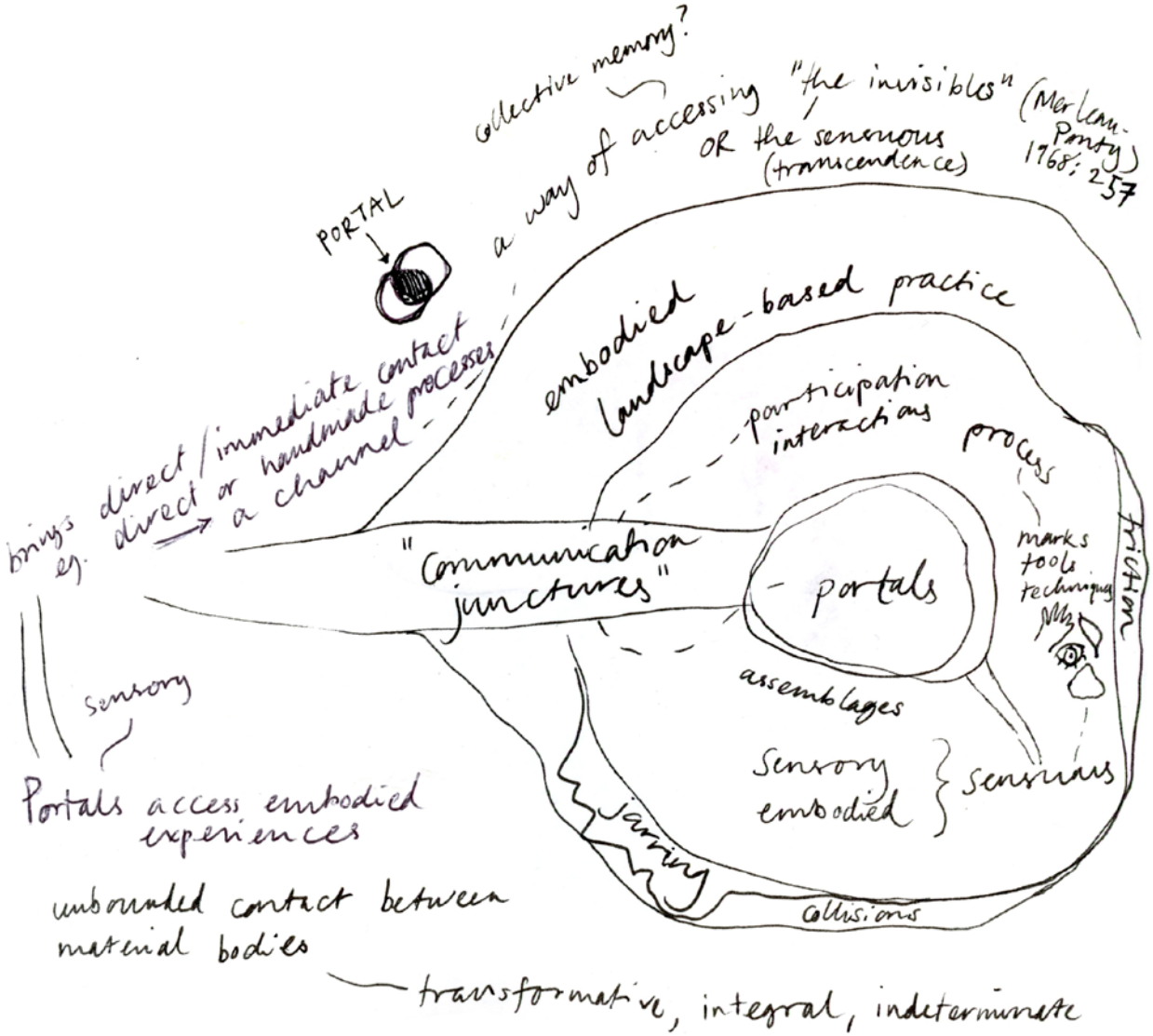
> For artfulness depends on so many propitious conditions, so many tendings, so many contemplations, so many implicit linkages between intuition and sympathy. And more than all else, it depends on the human getting out of the way of a process underway that exceeds us, allowing art to do the work it can do within an ecology of practices that, while often directed by us, does not find its resting place solely in the world of the human (Manning 2015: 75).

Tendings is a word that evokes a sense of care. I have endeavoured to carefully and sensitively followed approaches and techniques that decentre the human from landscape-based work to make it possible to imagine other conversations that do not follow a linear single-perspective trajectory. The possibility to artfully, or sensuously, tend and reflect has come from imagining landscape spaces as opportunities to make multiple connections across disciplines and temporalities.

The negotiation of what *I* mean by terms such as 'landscape' and 'practice-based research' has been a significant part of my doctoral practice, which has at times felt productive and at other times conflictive. My interest in a process-driven practice where a sort of thinking-in-action is left visible has led to an emphasis on the tools and techniques that have driven my practice research, such as diagrams. I have found that diagrams and experimental techniques are dynamic methodological tools for generating and communicating transdisciplinary knowledge.

I have come to think of productive tensions as necessary stages in the journey to new knowledge, where new encounters collide to produce friction. Jarring is necessary for new understanding; it can be felt, perceived and considered all at once or gradually and interpreted artfully. Moving between chance and control, for me this is *embodied landscape knowledge*, connecting the body sensuously to place. I have described those connection points, material objects or visual devices such as irregular framing, as *portals*. Portals provide direct access to the embodied experience.

Referring back to an early example in Chapter 1a, the ritualistic motifs superimposed onto Stratman's film *Vever (for Barbara)* (2018) create an opportunity for engaged viewing that operates on a more sensuous level and that can communicate across different perspectives and cultures. These symbols are what Maya Deren termed *communication junctures* (or 'vever'): they are a sort of portal in themselves and are concerned with communication, making them diagrammatic. My conclusion is that diagrammatic portals are devices that can provide a way into an embodied experience, making the distance more direct or immediate and sensuously known. The productive tension sits in the not-knowing-yet as opportunity for embodied chance encounters that can emerge as new knowledge.


collective memory?
a way of accessing "the invisibles" OR the senseuous (transcendence)
(Merleau-Ponty 1968: 257)
PORTAL
brings direct/immediate contact
eg. direct or handmade processes
a channel
embodied landscape-based practice
participation interactions
process
marks tools techniques
friction
"communication junctures"
portals
assemblages
sensory
Portals access embodied experiences
unbounded contact between material bodies
Sensory embodied
sensuous
jarring
collisions
transformative, integral, indeterminate

Where can an embodied landscape-based research practice lead?

In ongoing and future work, I will continue to develop ways of being in and communicating landscapes with others, confronting loss and change while finding new ways to express creatively and know artfully or sensuously. I will continue to develop a filmmaking practice that can both instil and celebrate diverse ways of interacting with and communicating landscape experiences. In the broader perspective of the world, understanding climate change and the loss of biodiversity can be mediated through artful, sensuous, landscape-based approaches. I want to explore an experimental landscape-based filmmaking practice and emergent sensuous knowledges with other filmmakers, not only to broaden my understandings and perspectives, but to expand the use of film in communicating academic research. Throughout the course of my doctoral research, I have explored ways of filmmaking as a method that is accessible, engaging and community driven. In this way, it has huge value for those undertaking engagement with communities dealing with landscape change. For example, in the growing area of nature recovery projects, where there is potential for ground-up community engagement. Here, the making and being in those landscape spaces is as valuable, if not more, than the finished film as an output.

I am considering the potential for animated diagrams to be mapped onto films to embed conceptual ideas and embodied knowledge in motion. The film becomes a moving diagram, capable of communicating complex ideas and feelings at once. Animation is a form of filmmaking and as *film* itself is formed by a series of animated images that can be embodied on a celluloid base, it can extend the possibilities for film as a sensory material medium. I began to explore these ideas in *Assembled Landscapes: Wembury* (2022), using animation to open up different ways of experiencing landscapes through animated moving assemblages.

In *Experimental and Expanded Animation*, experimental filmmakers Vicky Smith and Nicky Hamlyn provide insights into diverse methodologies for thinking through experimental animation practices in an interdisciplinary post-human context (Smith and Hamlyn 2018). Animation methods can include the use of found materials, where, in the "re-invigoration of decayed and obsolete things, a reversal of the trend towards proliferation is effected" (Smith and Hamlyn 2018: 16). They examine practices that remove dependency on homogenised industry ones, like, for example, the sustainable practices I explored in landscapes with participants, where materials are introduced to found or expired celluloid. Their assertion is that such practices ensure a strong connection between artist and artefact, where engagement with materials makes the work visible (Smith and Hamlyn 2018). Smith and Hamlyn call for an expanded vision of animation as a medium of invention capable of examining complex challenges and ecological uncertainties (Smith and Hamlyn 2018).

> Animation expands when put to the task of giving form to otherwise invisible entities, forces and mutations, when it imagines places outside of the human senses but not beyond our reach, such as the seabed and a planet void of human activity (Smith and Hamlyn 2018: 16).

It is my ambition to continue my explorations with an expanded landscape-based research practice and form a community in Cornwall that has this (the above quote's) ethos or pedagogy at its centre. Marginal sustainable collective practices are necessary as they offer an alternative to a single approach or formula that the mainstream often perpetuates. It is important to imagine diversity in knowledges, practices and ecologies, to encourage deeper care and consideration on all levels, in all ways of life.

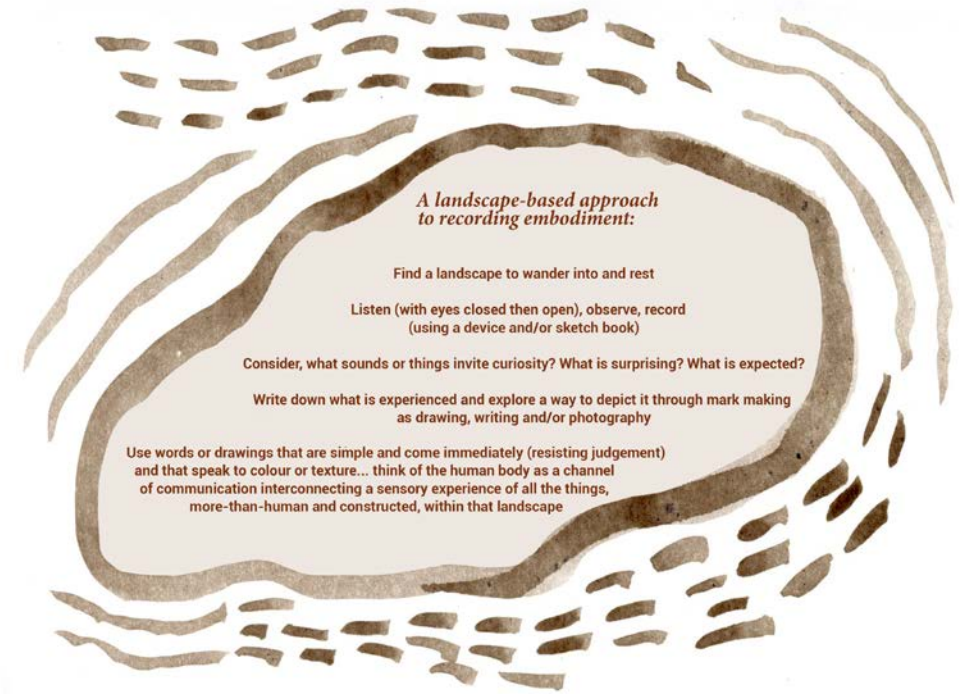
Most films constitute sound and image, and, while there are only so many areas of filmmaking I can cover in this doctoral thesis, I do want to suggest some ideas for sound in my ongoing landscape-based research practice. The film strip that has been affected by human and nonhuman chance interventions, filled with all kinds of intermittent marks, offers itself up as a sort of graphic film score that is ready to be interacted with. I am considering an exhibition or workshop set-up that allows people to interact with a projected film and follow its landscape-based film score using a selection of basic instruments, perhaps even rocks or a bowl of leaves and sticks, held and knocked together when indicated by certain marks on the projected film.

Where this experiment of viewer-as-participant is different to the version I attempted in the Moving Landscapes exhibition, is in the engagement with vital objects that can constitute an unfinished and ever-changing film. The participant would directly experience that middle stage of the filmmaking process that would have the effect of transporting them sensorily or sensuously into a landscape as it unfolds on the projected film body. Another participant would have a different experience, partly based on their choice of interaction with those vital objects. These ideas reflect my ongoing desire to bring other voices and modes of participation into my work as a shared landscape-based experience.

To summarise, through this doctoral research project I have embraced an experimental filmmaking practice that brings human, nonhuman beings and materials into landscape spaces to help reframe loss, separation and change. I have discovered what an embodied landscape-based practice entails for me and could entail for other practice-based researchers: an experimental embodied practice can activate ideas, generating new insights through dynamic tools and processes including handmade techniques and material objects. It invites others into the artful act of noticing, sensing and making, without the necessity for finished outcomes. An embodied practice contains tensions as being open to unexpected encounters can viscerally disturb what was known before. These tensions or jarrings, however, can be productive and lead to new transformative knowledge. I am also interested in further exploring the transformative potential of alchemical processes with plant-based developers in my continuing research practice.

I discovered that diagrams are sensuous knowledge portals, capable of transcending paradigms and disciplinary boundaries. I experienced the potential for diagrams and collage to mediate the limitations of language and contribute to my own knowledge, and in addition, I can see their potential to communicate and inform other research projects. Aside from working towards building a community of practices, I am also exploring different forms of filmmaking that are cyclical, away from linear human-centred approaches. My sense is that to profoundly build a filmmaking research practice that is landscape-based, participatory and embodied, all sorts of spaces, knowledges and rhythms need to be explored. “Landscapes enact more-than-human rhythms…” and so we need to find new ways of communicating those rhythms (Gan, Tsing, Swanson and Bubandt 2017: 12). Cyclic rhythms could provide a structure to further explore being in and embodying a landscape-based sensuous practice. Landscape-based filmmaking tools and techniques can transcend perceived boundaries and filmmaking formulas, building communities across humans and more-than-humans and bringing landscape experiences closer, into the body.

Final consideration...



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APPENDICES

Assembled Landscapes: Wembury

This exposition is designed to give context to a film produced as part of a research project that was funded by the Landscape Research Group in 2020: *Landscape Stories – an investigation of organisations' and diverse audiences' narratives of the countryside to advance landscape justice,* led by Dr Laura Hodsdon at Falmouth University with the support of the National Trust S&E Devon team. The film, or 'research film' as I am calling it, was intended to not simply provide visuals for Hodsdon's discourse analysis of a particular site, but to produce an alternative and complementary audio-visual interpretation of a landscape. My practice is concerned with using formal artistic and experimental filmmaking strategies to explore a subject, mostly collaboratively and concerning the landscape. I make dialogue-free nonnarrative films as research, revealing 'ideas in motion', employing techniques such as animation and collage. I find that these artistic and experimental strategies can go further than a conventional and didactic non-fiction film format in producing polyvalent understandings and interpretations of a subject. The conventional narrative and in some cases, commercial format, tends to deliver its information to the viewer in a singular direction through the guise that knowledge can be objective; whereas experimental films can challenge perception and cognition, promoting "active engagement" (Peterson 1994).

Placing my practice closer to experimental filmmaking rather than a more mainstream filmmaking approach, means embracing fluidity, which is affordable when working alone or minimally with one or two others. This fluidity applies to the traditional film roles (producer, director, cinematographer, etc.) but also in maintaining a sense of creativity and playfulness by not being 'too prepared' and remaining open to possibilities. The experimental film, according to Michael O'Pray, has a lot in common with visual art practices and although it might position itself in the margins of commercial cinema, its history is nuanced and fluid with considerable overlaps with video art, poetic and avant-garde films (O'Pray 2003). Framing my work as a "research film" that employs experimental filmmaking strategies, should encourage a more fluid and nuanced understanding of place through active viewing. Such experimental filmmaking strategies, involving animation and collage, will be discussed in more detail below.

The site, Wembury, is a rural coastal location in South Devon and, as in most natural locations, has experienced many (told and untold) interactions with people. It is a National Trust site; the mill and cliffs were acquired in the 1930s and the rest of the land from the beach to the point in 2006. In 1928 it became a holiday camp and in 1940 Wembury Point, the site of the camp, was requisitioned by the Royal Navy, when a radar station and observation posts were built. In 1956 the HMS Cambridge Gunnery School was established then decommissioned in 2001.

I made two visits to Wembury, the first was led by Dr Hodsdon which I treated as a preliminary visit or a recce. Though already influenced by her research, I tried to maintain a blank slate and have little expectation of the site. I brought with me a light-weight DSLR camera to ease the pull of certain shots and encourage spontaneity in my image making. After a few initial photographs, I soon found myself taking multiple bursts, something I often do when exploring a new place: it is as if a single picture is not enough to capture a scene that transforms as I move through it. Or, maybe I feel compelled to instil movement into what I make, and am never quite satisfied enough with a single photograph. I was in fact thinking of multiple layered images when Dr Hodsdon explained the layers of history and stories attached to the place. They (the National Trust) want us to know some of these stories through signboards that colourfully draw the attention to a particular feature, *"Why is the mill on the beach?"* – we are told *what* to notice (perhaps the NT are directing us there because it is now their tea room?). But what was more interesting to me, was what we are encouraged not to notice. Further along the track there is another signboard titled "Demolition for Nature". One side of the board is labelled "an ugly place" showing pictures of the former Gunnery School and fences, among them is a picture of a bulldozer returning the headland to its natural, "truly wild" state. On the other side of the signboard are pictures of the marine, bird and plant life the National Trust are protecting.

The springboard for the exploration of the landscape was the multimodal critical discourse analysis of the landscape at Wembury (Hodsdon 2021: "Picture perfect' landscape stories: normative narratives and authorised discourse', *Landscape Research*). In the article, Hodsdon pulls out some of the language from National Trust signboards and media reports, which reveal some of the "discursive constructions" formed by hegemonic narratives (Foucault 1972). At Wembury, as in other places, not only do landscapes set the stage for social practices, but they are themselves socially constituted (Meinig 1979), and these narratives are reinforced by signboards and media, full of drama and victory. For example, one media report indicates the National Trust's *saving* of a landscape that almost fell prey to the ravages of developers (Hodsdon 2021). On another signboard, Wembury Holiday Camp is described as being 'sprawled' across the landscape, "evoking urbanism and unchecked development" (Hodsdon 2021: 11).

> Of course, there are reasons to prefer a rural landscape to a housing estate or docks; but while these broad ideologies of preservation and loss are not explicitly exclusionary mechanisms, what they are also not is neutral, since they draw on rural as good, urban as bad binaries, which are themselves layered over assumptions of who belongs in those respective environments (Hodsdon 2021: 11).

Hodsdon argues that the binaries created by this language draw on the dualism, "urban = bad; rural = good" (Cresswell 1996) while framing the National Trust as the hero of the story. Moreover, the concept of returning Wembury Bay to its "former glory" (BBC 2019, cited in Hodsdon 2021: 11) is, as Hodsdon points out, an imagined and contradictory fantasy. For nearly a century, military buildings and a holiday camp were part of the landscape, and before that, a medieval furnace and pilchard fishery. Ironically, military presence has meant the return of seabirds thanks to areas like the Great Mewstone being off-limits to visitors.

The second Wembury visit took place about two months after the first, in January 2022. Between the visits I had let the first impressions of the landscape and subsequent reading of Hodsdon's paper sink in and inform how I might approach the task of filming. I had been thinking a lot about the constructed landscape: both in terms of how we perceive it culturally and its actual physical or geological construction. According to James Corner, landscape architect and theorist, landscapes are culturally constructed places made distinct from 'wildernesses'. This is a view that places the landscape as nature that is already entangled with the human. Corner's research reveals that landscapes, as the name implies, are realms of human activity and that the Old English term *landskip* originally referred to an image or a picture of the land (Corner and Hirsch 2014: 241). This picture or image – he terms "eidetic", meaning mental image – varies depending on the position or intent of the viewer on that landscape. He draws a distinction between the "insider's" eidetic image experience of the landscape, relating to phenomenology, and the "outsider" (for example the tourist, an administrative authority or planner), who sees the landscape as an object, not only scenically but instrumentally (Corner and Hirsch 2014: 243).

In Hodsdon's discourse analysis, there is a particular relationship to the landscape being put forward by an authority that is imposing its institutional view of the landscape as an image or object of enjoyment. It is evident that there are "… discourses that cohere and (re)produce ideologies based on normative narratives of the rural." (Hodsdon 2021: 19). This authoritative voice is singular and dominant with its signposted suggestions of how to experience Wembury, reaffirming stereotypes for who and for what purpose the landscape represents.

Curiously, traces of rusted posts remain in this multi-layered landscape, despite the National Trust's plan to remove all evidence of what had been there and, paradoxically, return the site to nature. Signboards indicate that erasing Wembury Point's military history will restore it to a "truly wild, natural headland". There is a narrative in place and what is left over from the past creeping into the present does not fit with the current story. However, it is the bits of poking out metal and conglomerate stones that I found most fascinating. In some cases, it appeared as if nature had impacted with culture with such a force that it forged new entangled entities. On that first visit I had brought my audio field recorder and was recording the environmental sounds when Dr Hodsdon and I started a conversation about these strange objects:

Fig. 1 & 2: Jones 2022. *Assembled Landscapes: Wembury*

Me: "It's literally the manmade colliding with the natural"

LH: "Yeah, and sometimes you genuinely can't tell… what a weird line to be drawn because you would think it would be really obvious, but it's actually quite fluid"

I have placed this conversation quietly under other sounds somewhere halfway through the film. In this process, I enjoyed the idea that I was hiding something or perhaps entangling it with the natural sounds of the wind and sea. I decided to repeat this formal strategy at other points in the film with other materials as artefacts. Hodsdon had discovered some archive images of Wembury from the 1930s which we acquired from the Francis Frith archives. In the edit, I hid (by digitally cutting out and placing) the image of the old ballroom, formerly part of Wembury Holiday Camp, under some rocks and enmeshed objects that I animated so that the image ends up appearing nestled inside.

Fig. 3: Jones 2022. *Assembled Landscapes: Wembury*

I have applied the word 'enmeshments' to describe some of the strange leftover objects that evidence a past where culture appeared to have collided with nature. It seemed fitting and a form of tribute to anthropologist Tim Ingold, whose use of the term "meshwork" describes entanglements of organisms, materials, culture and creativity (Ingold 2011). In other words, the term itself illustrates the world we inhabit without binaries.

> This tangle is the texture of the world. In the animic ontology, beings do not simply occupy the world, they *inhabit* it, and in so doing – in threading their own paths through the meshwork – they contribute to its ever-evolving weave (Ingold 2011: 71).

For Ingold, the animic world (relating to animism and the agency of all beings) is in constant change and interchange with the participants that move within it. In my film, I wanted to suggest the agency of some of these enmeshed objects through experimental animation, but also by incorporating them in the final scene's composition, which layers and recontextualises the picture postcard shot of Wembury Beach and church above it.

On that second visit to Wembury, I brought two cameras and had a sense of the location of each of the four archival landscape images (the ballroom was the only indoor image). My idea was to attempt to reframe those wide landscape shots using moving image cameras, specifically, a digital SLR and a 16mm Bolex. I often work between digital and analogue, enjoying the interplay and conversation the two formats can have. Using analogue, however, means more than evoking a sense of nostalgia. Rather, it is about reconstituting an idea of a subject or place or landscape with an image quality that may confuse or disassociate the time we are in.

In *A history of experimental film and video*, A. L. Rees discusses the idea of film as a time-based medium, which is particularly central to the avant-garde or experimental film (Rees 2011: 6). Just as duration and fragment were introduced to modern art through cubism, he suggests that material techniques, such as rapid camera movement and the long take, become central elements in the experimental film, which, "direct attention to film as a material construct and as a time-based medium" (Rees 2011: 7). As indicated above, I was interested in disrupting a sense of associated time by layering, reframing and collaging. There are some scenes where this is more obvious and an archive image is placed on top of a moving image one, rectangle within rectangle. Then there are longer durational takes where the 16mm moving image film slowly dissolves into the digital, taking up the whole frame and depicting the exact same landscape scene recorded moments apart.

"Landscape and image are inseparable." says Corner, "Without image there is no such thing as landscape, only unmediated *environment*" (cited in Corner and Hirsch 2014: 241). Though it would be impossible to know or be in an environment without mediating it in some way, Corner's implication is that we only ever interpose our experience of the landscape through images, whether physical or eidetic. My idea with the film was to present multiple images of the same landscape, each interacting and intervening with each other in different ways, through still photographs, archives and the two moving image formats. Further to this, to reveal those hidden enmeshments that can only really be detected in the close-up. With some of these, I have isolated and recontextualised them into larger scenes through collage. The motivation, in a sense, is to voice the landscape in multiple ways, presenting an alternative to the voice of authority's singular narrative.

Fig. 4: Jones 2022. *Assembled Landscapes: Wembury*

Throughout this writing, I have discussed my filmmaking process in terms of being physically in the landscape on location and then thinking through the edit while being informed by research and collaboration, though not necessarily in any particular order. In fact, this is a realistic reflection of my practice, where I often conceive of the edit while I am filming and research happens at various stages, before, during and after. I tend to think of editing and filmmaking as a collaging of ideas and images, and literally make collages that form part of the work. Collage artist and photographer, John Stezaker, suggests, "Collage offers the possibility of challenging the hold which pictures exert upon our imagination, perceptions, even our situation (vantage point) in the world" (1978: 5). With my work I am attempting to offer up the possibility of multiple vantage points and stories about a subject, so that it can, in turn, be interpreted in more ways than one by viewers. In a sense I am thinking through filmmaking and filmmaking as research, presented by ideas in motion, revealed through processual understanding.

> Space by itself is neither sensible nor imaginable, but is instead created in the act of imaging. Such eidetic constructs effectively bind Individuals to a collective and orient them within a larger milieu. Thus, a highly situated and subjectively constituted schemata, eidetic mappings lie at the core of shaping an invisible landscape, one that is more an unfolding spatiality than surface appearance, more poetic property than the delineation of immediate real estate (Corner and Hirsch 2014: 247).

What I have gleaned over the course of this research project, is that the landscape, in conventional and normative western culture, is often perceived as an object designed for human enjoyment. This view is a distanced one, literally and figuratively: we are not encouraged to imagine ourselves as enmeshed or entangled with nature. Such a view is disorderly and unmanageable from an objective hierarchical perspective. The idea that we are separate from nature and, furthermore, above it, is perpetuated by the voices of authority who tell us how to engage with landscapes. But how does this view instil a deeper experience of nature or sense of care? In my mind it does not do either. If nature or the landscape are managed sites that have been constructed for our own enjoyment, then there is no agency instilled in caring for them, let alone "being in" those environments (Ingold 2011). Perhaps if the story of how we are historically bound up with nature was made more explicit, then we might feel entangled and bound and therefore more responsible for the landscape and natural world?

I would like to imagine that some of the enmeshed objects that have been left behind at Wembury will go unnoticed by those that want to restore it to its "wild and natural" state, and continue to tell their own story in spite of the narrative that tries to make those objects invisible. Binaries are damaging, to us as the natural world; seeing ourselves as part of nature can help reshape the discourse around our experience of natural environments, replete with visible culture.

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List of figures

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