A Mapping of the Screen:

Mapping as Bridge between Film and Exhibition-Making Processes

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requirements of the University of Sunderland
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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i. Abstract

> “Mapping is the shared terrain in which the architectural-filmic bond resides”
>
> (Bruno 2002, 71)

Both mapping and non-fiction filmmaking offer subjective translations of reality and strategies to relate to and represent space, sharing analogous methods of production that allow for a useful application of the spatial language of mapmaking to filmmaking. The research posits that immersing the filmmaking process within the language of mapmaking can act as a bridge into the spatial practices of the gallery environment, into curatorial practice and exhibition design. This process is defined here as ‘Filmmapping’ and is intended to offer an approach (i) for curators working with artist filmmakers whose work is anchored in concepts of landscape or sense of place; (ii) for filmmakers to consider how spatial themes explored within their work might be translated into the exhibition space (a reciprocal process that also considers how the space and locational context of a gallery may help shape the production of a work), and (iii) for exhibition architects working in collaboration with either one or both of the former.

Questions:

1. What is Filmmapping and from what context does it emerge?
2. How can Filmmapping be employed by filmmakers, curators, and exhibition architects?

Methodology:

The research adopts an iterative methodology in which a series of filmmaking and curatorial projects are reflected upon, each project helping to inform the intent of the next.

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Chapter One
Introduction to the Research

1.1 Foreword to the Research

My initial interest in looking at filmmaking through the lens of mapping was sparked by a curatorial project I undertook featuring the work of artist Donald Harding. *The Marshes* (2018) comprises a film, audio installation, and wall-mounted text that documents life around residential areas in Thamesmead, London. In making the artwork, Harding chose to work across several mediums to create an overlapping stream of narratives that could generate fragments of truth about a place rather than suggesting absolute ones. The artist was particularly interested in the gaps that might emerge between these streams and how absences of information could reveal the difficulties of producing a documentary portrait about place.

Harding's work was initiated by a set of recorded calls made to phone boxes in the Thamesmead area. Each time the receiver was picked up, Harding asked the person on the other end of the line to describe the view outside. The responses, from roundabouts and green verges to betting shops and an infamous boarded-up pub, create an auditory picture of Thamesmead formed through vivid descriptions of place. As Harding explained this process, my imagination constructed two architectural views of Thamesmead. In plan view, I pictured a map of the area with the location of each phonebox represented by a coloured pin. Tied between each of these pins, a piece of string would demarcate the boundaries of the territory within which the work was being made. In section view, Harding's approach took my imagination to the human scale, the views described from the phone boxes that reveal lives lived at street level. Responding to this duality of representations in the work's curation, the decision was made to hang individual directional speakers in the gallery in an orientation that loosely mapped the distribution of the phone boxes in Thamesmead. Installed across the exhibition space, each speaker looped a single recorded phone conversation.

Mounted between the speakers, a projected film depicted a Thamesmead housing estate shot from the perspective of a horse. Recorded by mounting a small action camera on the animal's head, the horse embarks on a kind of *dérive* across the landscape, creating a psychogeographic mapping of the area. Completing the installation, a wall text questions the discovery of bones by a construction team working on a building site near the area. As the text explains, the bones, originally thought to be human, were eventually identified as equine and originating from the Marsh Cob, a breed whose presence Harding ascribes to the landscape of the area. This wall text orientated the viewer to the work, locating its subject in Thamesmead, while providing the contextual information required to navigate between its distributed audio and filmed elements. Through these qualities, this text began to fulfil similar functions to those we might attach to a map legend. To reflect this authority and the role of the text in unlocking the meaning of the work, a vinyl text was mounted on a wall that was visible from all aspects within the gallery space.

In curating Harding's work I had begun to consider how concepts from mapping might be employed to highlight locational themes within an artist's work. At this point, the application of those thoughts had presented tactics for curatorial gestures in the gallery, such as the use of audio and vinyl texts in the space. Reflecting on the exhibition, I asked myself how these tactics could be expanded upon to create a formal strategy for curating artists' film with locational or landscape themes through practices of mapping. The practice-based research presented in this thesis departs from this point to extend a set of ideas formalised around a concept I have named 'Filmmapping'.

This critical spatial practice[1] draws from the intersection of my interests in architectural design practices, curation, and filmmaking, three fields I have pursued across my academic and professional life for over fifteen years. These interests are reflected in my current positions as: (i) a film curator at *transmediale* festival in Berlin, (ii) co-founder and a curator at South Kiosk artist-run space in London, (iii) freelance art exhibition and installation designer, (iv) lecturer in design and architecture, and (iv) artist filmmaker. Engaging in the research further connects with my Master's level studies in Fine Art (Moving Image) at the University of Arts London, and to my Bachelor's degree in Humanistic Geography and Economics at the London School of Economics. In particular though, my approach to the research is influenced by a background working as a designer in the field of exhibition architecture. Silvio Lorusso argues the identity of the contemporary designer is defined less by the "the things they do" (whether designing an exhibition environment, a product, or a website) and more by a shared approach: one that is defined by "the sensitivity they adopt when they do those things" (Lorusso 2023, 46). This sensitivity is shaped by "a common set of cultural and methodological references" (Lorusso 2023, 46), tenets made apparent in this research through my decision to adopt designer Donald Schön's methodological construct of the 'Reflective Practitioner' (Schön 1984). Like Lorusso, Keller Easterling describes the contemporary designer as one focussed less "on things" and more on "how things interact with each other" (Easterling 2021, 10). Drawing on the Latin root of the word medium as *medius* or middle, Easterling advances the designer as a kind of 'co-ordinator' of mediums; a practitioner who can "shift the relationships between things" to "release agency or get things moving" (Easterling 2021, 38). This middling (or perhaps meddling) position reflects how I orientate myself to this research; as a design practitioner navigating across the disciplinary fields of non-fiction film, curatorial practice, and mapping.

1.2 An Introduction to Filmmapping

This section begins with an abridged definition of Filmmapping. A more detailed definition is presented in Chapter Two (section 2.5), where I respond to the first question of this research – What is Filmmapping and from what context does it emerge? Following this abbreviated definition, I highlight two methodological approaches to Filmmapping, defined as part of this research: Territorymapping and Pointmapping. The section closes with an overview of Filmmapping's intended audience.

1.2.1 A definition of Filmmapping

By bringing non-fiction filmmaking into contact with mapping, Filmmapping offers a framework within which to realign the relations between the filmmaker, their subject, and the spectator in the gallery. The framework applies methodologies from mapping to enable a close reading of the respective locations of each party while drawing attention to the entanglement of relations that exist between them. This map-enabled reading of space can first offer the filmmaker a navigational aid to orientate their own position to relations that unfold in the landscape location. This can be beneficial in shaping both how the filmmaker understands their subject and how they choose to represent it. Further, immersing the filmmaking process in the spatial language of mapmaking offers a bridge to the spatial practices of exhibition-making. This process provides an opportunity for the filmmaker and curator to reorientate this entanglement of relations to take account of the locational context of the exhibition space and the spectator. This site-specificity can foreground the participatory potential of the spectator in helping to realise the work, diffusing documentary narratives shaped by singular authorship and the unidirectional movement of information from filmmaker to spectator.

Filmmapping relies on the capacity for exchange between mapmaking and filmmaking: a translatory potential that stems from the mediums' analogous methods of production and their shared function in offering subjective translations of reality and strategies to relate to and represent space.

1.2.2 A framework animated by a methodology

Offering a framework that acts as a translatory device, Filmmapping asks us to look at one medium (non-fiction film) through the optics of another (mapping) to ask what benefits can be found. This process of 'translation' between mapmaking and filmmaking draws from Walter Benjamin's 1921 text 'The Task of the Translator' (1992) in which the philosopher defines the translation of one language into another as an art form. Benjamin proposes that to produce close renderings of an original, a translator must adapt the translating language to 'match' the original. In essence, this strategy of adaptation means abandoning a word-for-word translation in favour of one that understands the frames of

representation of the receiving language. By setting the conditions through which mapping and filmmaking 'speak', Filmmapping can be understood as a framework that defines these frames of representation. Benjamin's theory points us towards the artistic processes embedded within methods of translation. Filmmapping harnesses the potential that stems from this artistic act, not to frame one language *within* another, but *through* another: an action that recognises that "information is never simply transferred, it is always radically transformed from one medium to the next" (Latour 1998, 425). It is within this space of 'radical transformation' that Filmmapping resides and from which it achieves its energy to shape the potential of its outcomes.

The framework of Filmmapping is animated by different methodological approaches that define the form of its results. This thesis elucidates two 'lenses' or methodologies for Filmmapping that have been designed by drawing on a range of film and curatorial projects initiated by the author: (i) Territorymapping and (ii) Pointmapping. Both methodologies translate the temporal language of film into the geographical language of mapmaking, by offering alternate approaches to parse the complexity of human-landscape relations that define a particular location. In the case of Territorymapping, this is accomplished by drawing on three design principles for mapmaking and translating their meanings into film, the ideas of 'territory', 'legend', and 'modality'. The second methodology of Pointmapping is produced from the intersection of mapping and landscape architecture to construct a representation of a landscape through a series of three graphic layers, 'points', 'lines', and 'surfaces'.

1.2.3 The intended audience for Filmmapping

Filmmapping is intended to offer an approach (i) for curators working with artist-filmmakers whose work is anchored in concepts of landscape or sense of place; (ii) for filmmakers to consider how spatial themes within a landscape might be translated through a work and into the exhibition space (a reciprocal process that also considers how the space and locational context of a gallery may help shape the production of a work), and (iii) for exhibition architects working in collaboration with one or both of the former.

1.3 Questions and Methodology

1.3.1 Questions

i. What is Filmmapping and from what context does it emerge?

ii. How can Filmmapping be employed by filmmakers, curators, and exhibition architects?

1.3.2 Methodology

The investigation adopts Donald Schön's theory of the reflective practitioner, a framework for thinking and making that foregrounds the role of critical reflection within the design process (1984). Schön's model of reflective practice provides an iterative methodology in which each project provides context for the next. A number of arts-based doctoral projects have set a precedent in either explicitly referencing Schön (Ó Murchú (2012) and Bothwell (2019)), or in using an approach that mirrors his iterative approach (Admiss (2020), Bradbury (2020), and Smith (2011)). The theory is applied in two ways within the research. First, it structures the largely sequential process by which the practice-based projects are approached within the research. Second, it defines the means by which this overall body of research has been constructed, with the writing of this thesis itself a process of reflective practice.

Schön defines the research process as a series of actions by which practice is utilised as a method to reveal new insight around a set question. The theory brings together the twin processes of reflecting-in-action and reflecting-on-action.

1.3.2.1 Reflection-in-action

Reflection-in-action is entwined with the process of making. During a phase of practice, a practitioner undertakes a series of actions, guided by their tacit knowledge. Informed by their previous experience, worldview, and the tools of production, this tacit knowledge is not consciously deployed, but is intuitive. In my own practice, this tacit knowledge emerges through my interdisciplinary background as designer, curator, and filmmaker. To bring to the surface tacit knowledge, Schön introduces the concept of 'back talk' (Schön 1992), defining the relationship between the maker and the process of practising as a conversation: "thinking and making are not alternatives to each other. They are forces of reciprocal power within the design process" (Howard, quoted in Noble and Bestley 2016, 11). In this 'conversation' the practitioner makes a move based on their understanding of the materials, mediums and socio-economic context in which they find themselves. This situation in turn 'talks back' to the designer, who should 'listen' before embarking on their next step (Noble and Bestley 2016). To create a process for reflecting-in-action, the research adopts a series of interconnected processes:

i. Texts written during the creation of work
   Penned during the development of each project, a series of curatorial and film texts took shape at a point in the process where "action can still make a difference to the situation" (Schön 1984, 50) These texts can be found in Appendix 7.2 and 7.3.

ii. Reflecting through drawing and filmmaking
   'Material complicity' is a term coined by Petra Lange-Berndt to recognise artistic materials as a key collaborator within the making process

(Lange-Berndt 2015). In the gallery space the curatorial process attends to a number of material forces exerted through elements that include the medium(s) of the work(s), their technologies of display, and the physical architecture of the gallery. Capturing the dialogue between these material forces, a series of my 3D drawings punctuate this thesis, revealing the development and reflection-in-action process as I collaborated with each artist on their exhibition.

Personal film projects created as part of this research were shot on celluloid film, a medium that places a strong influence on the rhythms of planning, shooting, and editing a project and how I reflect-in-action. The processed filmstrip reveals an archive of every decision made while 'in-action', each cut portraying a site of negotiation between myself, the subject of the shot, and the material constraints of film itself. These physical constraints include its finite length once loaded in the camera, its colour temperature and speed – which determine its suitability for the conditions – and its requirement to be processed before the reviewing process can begin. Capturing the intersection between these decisions are a series of film stills placed in context to the narrative of the research.

1.3.2.2 Reflection-on-action

Reflection-on-action takes place once a project phase has concluded. It defines the process of looking back to assess how successful a stage of work has been in achieving its goals. In the research, reflection-on-action has taken the following forms:

i. Artist interviews
Held on completion of each project, these interviews are transcribed in Appendix 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, and 7.7. Approval for the format of these interviews and the process of ensuring informed consent from participants was granted by the University of Sunderland's Research Ethics Group.

ii. Presentations of the research at conferences, festivals, and workshops
These created opportunities for reflection and audience feedback. A full list of these engagements can be found in Appendix 7.1.

iii. Submission of research themes for publication
These presented the chance for further, formal reflections amongst a peer group of curators, artists, and researchers. A list of articles can be found in Appendix 7.1.

1.3.2.3 Limitations and adaptations

The research adapts to limitations commonly articulated in respect to Schön's concept of the reflective practitioner (1984). These ambiguities or vulnerabilities are addressed below through the lens of my own practice as a designer to adapt the methodology to the contemporary needs of the research.

i. Durational requirement

Undertaking sequential cycles of inquiry demands, Schön asserts, both "intensity and duration" (Schön 1987, 311). Bringing together successive film and curatorial projects (each of which came with their own durational demands) necessitated an extended approach to the overall research period. Undertaking the practice-based projects as a part-time student lengthened the first phase of the research from eighteen months to three years, providing opportunity for reflection between each project. Once this phase was complete, I was able to switch to a full-time mode of study to complete the writing-up process.

ii. Open-ended cycles of practice

Carlos Cáceres notes the potentially open-ended timeframe of each cycle of practice, suggesting that while this lack of constraint may satisfy some notion of artistic freedom, it is more likely a reflection on the practitioner's "class attitudes, taste and interests" which can in effect "turn the entire 'experiment' into an arbitrary decision" (Cáceras 2017, 24). Diminishing the potential for this subjective turn, each project or practice cycle in this research had an endpoint defined by an external party. In the case of curatorial projects, exhibition opening dates set by *transmediale* festival acted as the terminus of projects. While for film projects, cycles were defined by premiere dates set by film festivals and evaluation reports mandated by funding organisations.

iii. Ethical considerations

Charlene Tan contends that Schön's process of reflecting-in and on-action fails to foreground the ethical dimensions of practice, positing that the practitioner may successfully apply approaches to reflection while "acting in ways that are morally questionable" (Tan 2020, 7). To mitigate against this risk I have incorporated external feedback into the process of reflection, taking in perspectives from artistic and academic peers through the presentation of ongoing work at conferences and through publication. Where relevant, such as in the conduct of reflective conversations with artists, I have gained pre-approval for my approach from the University of Sunderland's Research Ethics Group.

iv. Reflecting through materials

While highlighting the dialogic potential between practitioner and material, Schön's approach to reflection maintains a subject-object duality that reinforces the "apparent paradox in thinking about matter:

[that] as soon as we do so, we seem to distance ourselves from it" (Coole and Frost 2010, 2). Reconsidering the relationship between practitioner and materials, Tim Ingold contends that "since the artisan is involved in the same system as the material with which he [sic] works, so his activity does not transform that system but is - like the growth of plants and animals - part and parcel of the system's transformation of itself" (Ingold in Graves-Brown 200, 61). This foregrounding of the agency of matter troubles the subject-object duality that animates Schön's process of reflection by asking, "if the subject is the actor, and the object is what is acted upon, what happens when the object acts?" (Allen 2023). The philosophy of New Materialism looks to account for this agency of materials, asserting matter as an active force in a manner Jane Bennett describes as "thing-power" (Bennett, 2010). New Materiality draws focus towards the entanglement between maker and material and its potential for generating new ideas: "matter's dynamism is generative not merely in the sense of bringing new things into the world but in the sense of bringing forth new worlds" (Barad 2007, 170). These 'new worlds' speaks to New Materialism's interest with questions of scale, the philosophy asserting that a material understanding at a micro level can be used as a conduit for re-interpretating a web of interconnections at a macro level. The scaler relations that New Materialism exploits acts as an influence on my own interdisciplinary research as I attend to (micro) material processes within the fields of film and exhibition making in order to establish (macro) interconnections between them. New Materialism extends on Schön's process for reflection, following not only the actions of the practitioner but the materials with which they're entangled: sensing the directions in which they are headed so as to set new potential directions for the research. In this investigation, these potentialities are set in conversation with my own orientation towards the research, as a designer operating across the fields of film and exhibition making.

1.3.2.4 Summary

Schön's theory of the reflective practitioner sets the trajectory of the research, and was adopted for the following reasons: (i) Iterative: the strategies of reflecting-in-action and reflecting-on-action provide key learnings for each project that can help inform the next. (ii) Interdisciplinary: the reflective practitioner emerges from Schön's own experience of applying design practice to diverse disciplines, an approach that speaks to my own practice as a designer working in filmmaking and curatorial practice. (iii) Precedence: the approach follows the precedent of a number of other curatorial practice-based PhDs.

1.4 Key Definitions

1.4.1 Artists' non-fiction film

The research adopts film theorist Dara Waldron's understanding of a genre of non-fiction film that inhabits an area "between documentary, understood historically as an imparting of factual and objectively accumulated knowledge, and 'art' when thought of as an object that seduces and orientates the senses toward the personal (and) subjective" (Waldron, 2018, 25).

The genre is epitomised by the work of artists moving beyond the Sisyphean task of creating films that reflect or represent reality to ones that instead help us to work *through* reality (Balsom and Peleg 2016). Confronting documentary's claim to authenticity, these works apply a range of fictional strategies to nonfiction subjects, demonstrating that fiction, rather than a documentary quality to be disavowed, can offer approaches to reframe dominant narratives around a subject, revealing alternate 'truths' that a fidelity to facts cannot (Sharpe, in Hao et al. 2014).

1.4.2 (Landscape) artists' non-fiction film

A significant genre of artists' non-fiction film (as defined above) in which landscape takes on a function that extends beyond providing a setting for characters and events, instead assuming an autonomous role that directly shapes the film's narrative and form (Lefebvre 2007).

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

In Chapter Two, analysis defines the underlying theoretical framework behind Filmmapping. This section unfolds in two parts: the first draws on the histories of documentary and artists' film, curatorial practice, and mapmaking to define the context from which Filmmapping emerges. The second uses this context to form a definition for Filmmapping. In this way, Chapter Two responds to the first question of the research: What is Filmmapping and from what context does it emerge?

Following this, a series of film and curatorial projects I have undertaken are reflected upon to define two methodologies that can be used to animate the framework of Filmmapping: (i) Territorymapping and (ii) Pointmapping. These investigations unfold in Chapter Three and Chapter Four respectively and respond to the second question posed by the thesis: How can Filmmapping be employed by filmmakers, curators, and exhibition architects?

In the final chapter of this thesis, Chapter Five, I reflect on the findings of the research, outline its contribution to knowledge, and consider its potential future trajectory.

Notes

[i] A term introduced by Jane Rendell to describe projects that sit between art and architecture (2006).

Chapter Two
Contextual Review

2.1 Introduction to Contextual Review

This contextual review responds to the first question posed by the research: (i) What is Filmmapping and from what context does it emerge? The review advances towards a definition for Filmmapping through an engagement with the interdisciplinary position from which it arises, namely artists' non-fiction filmmaking, curatorial practice, and mapping.

The review is split into four sections. The first defines the genre of film around which Filmmapping is designed, locating it within a specific field of artists' non-fiction film concerned with themes of landscape. To elucidate a definition for this category, analysis begins by forging a definition of artists' non-fiction film by navigating the overlap between art and the history of documentary. Exploring "the apparent clash between authenticity that documentary has claim to and the association of experimentation within contemporary art" (Rascaroli 2009, 41), it defines how artistic approaches to fiction-making have been brought into contact with documentary traditions to make this 'clash' productive. Forming a typology for these approaches, the investigation reveals how artists have moved beyond the Sisyphean task of creating films that reflect or represent reality towards ones that instead help us to work *through* reality (Balsom and Peleg 2016), thus arming the viewer with the agency to reshape the present. The investigation concludes with a definition of artists' non-fiction film that is subsequently brought into contact with themes of landscape. Through analysis that takes place at the intersection of filmmaking and humanistic geography, I show how landscape can be understood as a construct of the mind, shaped less by physical topography and more by human consciousness and our relations to space. By employing this characterisation, the analysis establishes how a landscape can adopt the role of a protagonist in film, extending beyond providing a setting towards assuming an autonomous role that directly shapes narrative and form (Lefebvre 2007). The section concludes by defining what a Filmmapping methodology should accomplish when brought into contact with the genre of (landscape) artists' non-fiction film.

The second section probes the interface between artists' film and curatorial practice to locate the role of Filmmapping within the exhibition space. I identify how the art institution and film festival circuit establish pressures that manifest in the demand for a finished, commodifiable art object that can be traded and screened within a gallery or theatrical environment. Creating the specific conditions for its display and reception, the 'completed' art object sets particular expectations in terms of the role of the spectator in realising the work. By exploring modes of spectatorship, I define the potential for Filmmapping methodologies to create more participatory forms for film exhibitions, recasting the relationship between the filmmaker, curator, institution, and spectator.

The third section examines the intersections between filmmaking and cartography. Establishing their common history as tools employed to measure

and categorise the world, these disciplines are shown to share conceptual underpinnings and approaches to production that validate the ambition of the research of using one discipline as a lens to look at the other. Extending from this understanding, my analysis locates Filmmapping within the broader historical movement of map-engaged arts. This process draws focus to art's place in restorative mapping strategies, including the critical mapping and counter-mapping movements that challenge dominant reproductions of space. As a framework anchored to mapping, this analysis concludes by defining how strategies of counter-mapping can animate Filmmapping methodologies.

The fourth and final section draws from the preceding analysis of artists' non-fiction film, curatorial practice, and mapping to explicate a definition for Filmmapping.

2.2 Filmmapping and its Relation to Artists' Non-Fiction Film

This section investigates how artists' non-fiction film exists alongside documentary traditions but also in opposition to them. By focusing on these distinctions I formalise a definition for the genre. Extending from this position, I explore the relationship between landscape and film to reach a definition of '(landscape) artists' non-fiction film'.

2.2.1 Documentary's crisis of representation

Etymologically, the emergence of documentary as a genre can be traced back to 1895 and the Lumière brothers' '*actualités*', micro portraits of life, each under sixty seconds. While the Lumière brothers' films may technically represent documentary's origin, the discipline as we might recognise it today was rooted in the emergence of popular cinema in the early 20th century and, in particular, Robert Flaherty's 1922 film *Nanook of the North*. The film, understood by many to be the first long-form documentary, "established many features of the form" by adding "plot development, suspense, and delineated characters" (Nichols 2001, 581). Performed to a cinematic plotline framed by a Western projection of Inuit culture, *Nanook* perpetuated an ideology that "deprived Indigenous people their culture and agency [...] so that colonial narratives could replace them" (Wente in Jones and Kermode 2022). The film's legacy continues to position it as the "Rosetta stone for debates about documentary ethics, representation, ethnography, [and] orientalism" (Zimmerman and Auyash 2022).

After the commercial success of *Nanook*, Flaherty relocated his camera to the Samoan island of Savai'I. Reviewing the resulting film, British producer John Grierson commented that "*Moana,* being a visual account of events in the daily life of a Polynesian youth, has documentary value" (Grierson quoted in Rosenbaum 2016). "Ninety years later, this terse assessment – the first noted

use of the term documentary – still haunts the genre" (Ribas in Lamas 2016, 4). This 'haunting' can be understood to embody the "perennial struggle between the forces of objectivity (represented by facts) and the forces of subjectivity (the translation of these facts)" (Bruzzi 2000, 39). Imposing a taxonomy onto filmmaking forms that attempt to navigate these tensions, Bill Nichols' (2001) definition of the six modes of documentary (poetic, expository, observational, participatory, reflexive, and performative) established a framework of documentary styles that have since become tied to "the politics of production, exhibition, and distribution of films...[that] determine the way people fund, consume and evaluate cinema" (Minh-ha quoted in Pearce and McLaughlin 2007, 106), reproducing the world as it is according to ideological power relations.

2.2.2 The turn towards fiction as method in documentary practice

Writing in 1966, filmmaker and critic Karel Reisz characterised a documentary industry in which experimentation had become stifled in favour of commercially funded films "tending towards [...] straight propaganda" (Reisz 1966, 170). Documentary had not always been this way: films made in the 1920s, including Joris Iven and Markus Franken's *Rain* (1929), Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), and Walther Ruttmann's *Berlin: Symphony of a Big City* (1927), exemplify the close connection between documentary and the avant-garde, both "sharing the same fertile soil of experimentation and differentiation from the mainstream fiction film" (Nichols 2016, 10). While Dara Waldron argues that there was never a significant moment when art and documentary became separated (Waldon 2018), Scott MacDonald points to advances in technology that were financially unavailable to most artists (MacDonald 2015). Technological transformations have rhythmically punctured the evolution of documentary, helping to shape particular documentary forms. In the 1960s, the development of lightweight 16mm cameras not only enabled the direct cinema tradition of Richard Leacock, Fred Wiseman, and the Maysles brothers, but also opened documentary up to new formats, particularly at its avant-garde margins. Occupying these margins, filmmakers such as Harun Farocki (*Inextinguishable Fire*, 1969) and Chris Marker (*La Jetée,* 1962) adopted essayistic formats in which a spoken discourse mediates between the artists' own subjectivity and the world they encounter (Rascaroli 2009).

Focusing on Marker's work, a shift occurs in how the filmmaker engages with the essay film format that reflects the revision in ideals from the modernist period to the postmodern one. The change in Marker's use of the epistolary device within his works is used here to illustrate this shift (Ibáñez 2023). While *Lettre de Sibérie* (1957) links the letter-text to the film image, in *Sans Soleil* (1983*)* they are autonomous, an evolution of form that asks the spectator to mediate the gaps between text and image. The creation of these voids, or what Gilles Deleuze calls 'the interstice', becomes a significant element in both the production and reception of the work, offering a generative space for ideas to

emerge that can confront the notion of a single, stable reality (Deleuze 1989). Writing in 1935, Walter Benjamin asserted that before the position of a work is assessed in terms of its revolutionary potential, how the work functions within the literary techniques of the time should be addressed (Benjamin cited in Polan 1985). If we imagine cinema as a language system, then Marker's use of the interstice in *Sans Soleil* creates new proximities between fiction and nonfiction that responded directly to the vernacular modality of the postmodern period and its "incredulity towards metanarratives" (Bal and Gonzales 1999, 313).

Today, filmmakers operating at the margins continue to embrace art's less committed relationship to objectivity and its relative comfort with questions of authorial intent and subjectivity. In doing so, they demonstrate that fiction, rather than a quality to be disavowed, is one that can reveal alternate 'truths' that a fidelity to 'facts' cannot (Sharpe in Hao et al. 2014). These works ask the spectator to accept that the filmmaker has approached their documentary subject with sincerity but that the 'truth' has "been fundamentally de-literalized by a whole or partial presence of fiction" (Sharpe in Hao et al. 2014, 141). Rejecting the qualities of fullness and completion (Nichols 1994), these are films that embrace forms of fiction-making that, like Marker, respond to the vernacular modalities of the period. Today, fiction offers filmmakers a method to confront dominant power relations, and to demand alternatives that account for a global intersectionality of experience across race, gender, sexuality, and class. In doing so, these forms owe a debt to the rich histories of feminist and anti-imperialist filmmaking that continue to challenge the male, colonial gaze.

2.2.3 Contemporary notable strategies of fiction-making in non-fiction film include:

i. SPECULATIVE NON-FICTIONS:

These forms adopt fiction as a speculative mode of enquiry by bringing a fictional premise into contact with an otherwise non-fiction form to reframe a subject or contest an established view. Highlighting gaps between the world as it is now and how it could be, these film forms use fiction to reveal the rift between these positions while highlighting the causes that account for their disparity (Agathangelou and Ling 2005). Speculative non-fictions employ the worldbuilding capacity of film and its ability to create storyworlds complex enough that the spectator can invest in their proposal. In return, these proposed worlds can "eat back at reality" (Cheng et al. 2017, 9) by inspiring change in the present. The genre draws influence from related disciplines, particularly speculative design (Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby (2013), Bruce and Stephanie Tharp (2019)), and (science)fiction writing (Margaret Atwood (2011), Ursula Le Guin (2020)).

Example: Hannah Jayanti's *Truth or Consequences* (2020) is filmed in the New Mexico town of the same name. The film weaves observational

footage of five residents together with archival footage of the town. To these documentary materials, Jayanti introduces a speculative premise, that the space port on the edge of town (real) has begun to accept its first space tourists (fictional). These non-fictions and fictions intertwine to create a meditative reflection on human 'progress' at a time of ecological collapse.

ii. SENSORY NON-FICTIONS:
Shaped by observational strategies, sensory non-fictions apply approaches to research and knowledge construction from humanities disciplines, including ethnography (Ilisa Barbash and Lucien Castaing-Taylor's *Sweetgrass* (2009)), anthropology (Che Applewhaite *A New England Document* (2020)), history (Tekla Aslanishvili's *A State in a State* (2023)), and geography (Joshua Bonnetta's *El Mar Le Mar* (2017)) to evoke a sensory experience of being in a landscape.

Example: Jacqueline Mills' *Geographies of Solitude* (2022) follows an environmentalist caring for wild horses on Nova Scotia's Sable Island. Ethnographic in form, the filmmaker punctuates the narrative by introducing vignettes of film produced using materials native to Sable Island. From seaweed used to develop 16mm film to objects the filmmaker employs to directly scratch the emulsion, these practices create alternate experiences of place for the viewer while also alerting them to the construction and fictionality inherent in the film image.

iii. TECHNOLOGICAL NON-FICTIONS:
Films that construct their fiction not within the mise-en-scène of the image itself but in the technologies employed to produce, access, or distribute it.

Example: In Sasha Litvenseva and Beny Wagner's *Constant* (2020), the filmmakers explore the history of measurement and its role in European processes of colonisation. The film employs images created using photogrammetry, a contemporary technology of measurement. In doing so, the artists recirculate the historical fictions behind colonial processes of measurement in order to interrogate them (Litvintseva et al. 2022).

iv. PERFORMATIVE NON-FICTIONS:
A performance can be understood as a fictional act that is bound by particular spatial, temporal, and cultural boundaries (Wilshire, 1990). These boundaries, though, are not sealed, as the fiction of a performance can spill into reality. Institutions from the nation state to the market choreograph performances that generate lasting illusions, in these cases through the fictions of national borders and money respectively. Challenging the power of these illusions, performance offers a fictional methodology that can counter established narratives and present alternate realities.

Example: In Alaa Mansour's *Badlands (the second time as a farce)* (forthcoming), the filmmaker investigates the Fort Irwin National Training Center, where model Afghan and Iraqi villages prepare soldiers for war. Employing 'extras' who are frequently refugees from those very same countries, the centre opens its doors twice a month for the public to watch performances of war. *Badlands* focuses on a never-ending performance of imagined conflicts that unfold at Fort Irwin, performances that solidify representations of the 'Other' in the minds of both the soldiers and the public. In highlighting these performances, Mansour's film asks: are the US military predicting wars at Fort Irwin or are they actually bringing them into being?

v. PARAFICTIONAL NON-FICTIONS:
I employ here Carrie Lambert-Beattie's definition of a fiction the artist introduces as fact (Lambert Beattie in Coles, 2016, 74). In film, parafictions rely on documentary's aura as a genre associated with a truth claim to deceive the spectator, managing the point at which they realise the 'fact' they have been led to believe is instead a 'fiction'. This moment of denouement, when the viewer is forced to question their own beliefs, is where parafictions get their power to reframe the narrative around a subject.

Example: In Noor Afshan Mirza and Brad Butler's *The Exception and the Rule* (2009), a character named Raj Kumar is presented as a collaborator on a film the artists made as part of a residency in Lahore. Kumar was in fact a fictional character constructed by the filmmakers to "fictionalise (the film's) own representation of the Other" (Sharpe in Hao et al. 2014, 145): a response to the problems and power dynamics that emerge when making artworks that respond to place. As the film unfolds, clues about Raj's fictionality mount up for the viewer, creating a moment of collapse where everything so far understood as nonfiction by the spectator must be reassessed through the lens of fiction.

2.2.4 But how much fiction is too much?

Across the forms outlined above, artists are employing fictional devices to raise questions "on ethics and aesthetics, truth and reality" (Waldron 2018, 3). These are concerns that have found new urgency in our current post-truth, post-factual era. Constructing realities not through actual events, but rather through the sharing of information across the screens of our devices, post-truth actively manipulates "symbols, words or images, to achieve changes in consciousness" (Moore 2019). In this landscape, political stakeholders have realised the power of inserting "a particular falsehood at a specific point in a set or system of beliefs, in order to avoid the consequences of having that point occupied by the truth" (Frankfurt 2019, 51). How do these emerging conditions of "truth futurism" (Metahaven quoted in Oddo 2023) align with a documentary discipline whose doctrine is widely understood to be established

upon some kind of "truth claim" (MacDonald 2015, 372), "real phenomena" (Painlevé quoted in MacDonald 2015, 3) or "some set of primary documents that have some relationship with what we could call empirical reality" (Poitras in Dávila 2019, 49). If the vernacular modality of the time is to bring different realities into being, as fast as documentary approaches, those 'truths' change: "what do you do as an artist if you're working in a culture where the reality that surrounds you completely outstrips and out-paces anything that you could even think about, let alone enact?" (Groom in Hao et al. 2014, 53).

In response, a movement of artists' documentary film has emerged that fights the exploitative fictions of post-truth by employing highly synthetic images and increasingly disorientating forms of artifice. The aim, to provide a critical lens for the spectator to access alternate narratives that train them "in skepticism and doubt, but also, oddly, in belief" (Lambert-Beattie 2020). Made as a riposte to the post-truth era, Soda Jerk's *Hello Dankness* (2023) is described by the artist duo as responding to the "RIP of reality" (Angeloro and Angeloro 2023). The film brings together clips from a dizzying array of movies to produce a historiography of American politics from Donald Trump to Joe Biden through the lens of pop culture. "Pushing the limits of what a documentary can be" (Oddo 2023), Soda Jerk employ advanced post-production techniques to insert a range of signs and symbols into archival footage to provide narratives that give new meaning to old images.[1] In the film, Trump is cast as Garfield the cartoon cat while scenes from *Robocop* are used to transition into 2020's Black Lives Matter protests. With a plethora of references to meme culture, from Pepe the Frog to Pizza-gate, *Hello Dankness* manifests the idea that "the best weapon against myth, is perhaps to mythify it" (Barthes 1972, 67) thus challenging "its claim to represent the world" (Wood 2010, 216).

This clamour to communicate authenticity, however, may risk a kind of documentary nihilism (Williams 1993), one materialised through synthetic images that are overly focused on communicating their own self-reflexivity. Rejecting this performativity, Erika Balsom argues that viewers readily recognise that documentary images offer an aestheticised mediation of reality, while Hito Steyerl further contends that the image's representational qualities are not "some shameful lack which has to be hidden" (Steyerl 2008, 2). In their statements Balsom and Steyerl appear to advocate for images in which the viewer can invest faith over those that turn in on themselves and make their own construction the subject. This 'grab for the real' embraces the belief that the imperfections of the documentary genre may still be useful in "mov[ing] us from a worse false belief to a better – but still false – one" (Currie 2020, 80). In 2021 I worked with the artist Maud Craigie on an expanded exhibition of her film *Indications of Guilt, pt. I* for *transmediale* festival, followed in 2022 by a discussion around the work at the Visible Evidence film conference in Gdansk (See Appendix 7.7). Attending a course in police interrogation, Craigie reveals the strategies of fiction-making that underlie aspects of police work, such as the presentation of 'fake' evidence to suspects in the hope of securing a confession. In terms of her own responsibility to the truth, to make the film Craigie co-opted and repurposed the tools she was taught by police: "the attitude of many of the

detectives I met was: this is what is legally permissible, and this is how you can stretch and interpret the boundary – so there was a sort of symmetry in that we were both repurposing a set of rules in different ways" (Craigie in Craigie and James, 2021). This 'mirroring' provides a key to the viewer to navigate the film's representation of its subject, bringing transparency to the way Craigie has constructed her 'evidence' while pointing to the fictional processes involved in police work itself. This allows the viewer to invest in the image and make the kind of 'grab for the real' Balsom and Steyerl advocate for.

While materialised in very different forms of film, Soda Jerk and Craigie both question the role of fiction in shaping our shared 'reality': a reality in which many of our institutions – not only legal and political systems, but also those of marriage, money, and the nation state itself – can be understood as no more than "temporary solidifications" of the popular imaginary (Haiven and Khasnabish 2014, 9). Soda Jerk's and Craigie's works question the orientation of documentary towards 'truth' when the very things documented as reality are themselves fictions, albeit ones widely subscribed to. These questions push against the ontological foundations of documentary and its reliance on being able to categorise what counts as fiction or non-fiction. In film, fiction is understood to interfere with the aspiration of a kind of 'pure documentary' defined by objectivity; "the term non-fiction seems to whisper that representation is pre-eminently fictional – that fiction is always there and must with effort be negated" (Ponech 1999, 2). To achieve this negation, filmmakers must first define what counts as fiction so that efforts can be made to avoid its 'production' or facilitate its 'removal'. The problem with this approach, as philosopher Gregory Currie argues, is that "despite the apparent ease with which we judge that *this* is fictional and *that* is not, and despite the significance that judgements of this kind have for our subsequent experience of the work, most of us are in no good position to answer the question" (Currie 1990, 2). Trevor Ponech advocates for a break in the polarities of fiction vs non-fiction, instead suggesting an approach of assessing films by their "illocutionary force" (Ponech 1999, 159): looking beyond what a film says towards what it means. Adopting Ponech's idea of illocutionary force questions whether nonfiction is even the defining feature of a film when categorising it as such: as Currie states, "fictional works are typically false, but so are many scientific treatises, and they are not to be classed as fiction on that account" (Currie 1990, 9). In response to both these practical and political challenges of categorisation, some artists have resisted the application of the documentary label to their own work. As Jane and Louise Wilson remark, "we are very aware of documentary filmmaking, but it is not something that we see ourselves as doing. We see ourselves as artists who happen to document things. Does that make us documentarists?" (J. Wilson quoted in Pearce and McLaughlin 2007, 68). For the Wilson sisters, existing in ambiguity prioritises a creative freedom in the making of work. Pushing against the documentary industry's clamour for categorisation is a refusal by some artists to recognise the genre at all, such as Academy Award-winning Laura Poitras, who declares, "I don't consider documentary as a genre, per se" (Poitras in Dávila 2018, 49).

Rather than providing closure, this refusal of the documentary label acts mainly as a deferral device towards other forms of categorisation; if a film is not a documentary but it deals with non-fiction materials, then what exactly is it? This question of categorisation is not merely a self-reflexive one for the artist, as it structures relations to the film industry and the spectator. In 1990, Trinh T. Minh-ha infamously asserted that "there is no such thing as documentary [...] despite the very visible existence of a documentary tradition" (Minh-ha 1990, 76); the filmmaker's contention takes aim at an industry for whom the act of categorisation scaffolds commercial interests. At the level of reception, however, this categorisation also conducts the spectator by setting particular expectations of labour. Currie proposes that a key quality of fiction is that it asks the spectator to engage in make-believe: thus, while fiction prescribes 'imaginings', nonfiction prescribes 'beliefs' (1990). These opposing classifications set the "appropriate standards of evaluation" for the spectator by asking them to either 'imagine' or 'believe' (Friend 2012, 181). While both processes may produce the same cognitive or affective impact, the different processes of labour demanded can create "a genuine difference to appreciation" (Friend 2012, 200). This locates categorisation as an act that should be performed before a spectator approaches a work: "the fictional status is acquired by a work, not in the process of its reception but in the process of its making" (Currie 1990, 11).

This section has so far elucidated an understanding of artists' films made at the intersection of nonfiction and fiction through forms that respond to the vernacular modality of the time. The meaning of these works emerges not through a granular categorisation of individual images as either fictive or nonfictive, but in the potentialities of the lacuna between them. It is across this interstice, the space "between two actions, between two affections, between two perceptions, between two visual images" (Deleuze 1989, 180) that new thoughts emerge and where the intentions of the filmmaker can be found. I therefore conclude that any categorisation for this genre of film must also exist in this space in between the fictive and non-fictive.

2.2.5 Towards a definition of 'artists' non-fiction film'

Up to this point, I have used the term nonfiction (or non-fiction) and documentary almost interchangeably, a reflection of what Carl Platinga calls wider "terminological confusion" (Platinga 2005, 105) within film theory. Platinga argues that documentary is a subset of non-fiction that represents a broader category of films such as corporate instructional videos (Platinga 2005). Leaning on Grierson's definition of documentary as the "creative treatment of actuality" (Grierson in Marcus 2012, 190), Platinga argues that documentary – as opposed to nonfiction – is the term that best accounts for filmmakers' fictional turn to reality. Film theorist Dara Waldron advances an alternate line of analysis by highlighting Ben Rivers and Ben Russell's collaborative project *A Spell to Ward off the Darkness* (2013), in which the artists renounce the ambition of creating a representation in the film.

This eschewal of representation is key to Waldron's definition of the work not as documentary but as some form of non-fiction: "Rivers' admission that neither he or Russell are interested in representation is vital to understanding documentary considered as inadequate for addressing what they actually do in their filmmaking practice, but also for understanding why Russell prefers the term non-fiction as a critical descriptor for *A Spell*" (Waldron 2018, 7). For Waldron, the presence of the word 'fiction' in the term non-fiction becomes useful in highlighting its existence within a work. Focusing on the hyphen that exists between the word 'non-fiction' he suggests it represents "a cancelling, as opposed to rejection of fiction" highlighting its role in helping to "get at the truth of the actuality in question" (Waldron 2018, 7, 8). Waldron eventually discards the hyphen, settling on the term 'new nonfiction film' to describe a category of film that aspires towards the subjectivity and poetics of art to challenge the entrenched approaches of documentary.

This research adopts the ideas supporting Waldron's understanding of a 'new nonfiction film' genre that can sit adjacent to, but also separated from, documentary, and thus is one that can account for the turn towards fiction by artists – a categorisation that is grounded in an engagement with artist-filmmakers and their approach to practice, but that is also legible to the spectator as they seek to orientate their labour towards a work. Further, through its use of the term 'film' over 'moving image', Waldron's definition locates the genre within the purview of cinema as opposed to analogous forms of image-making such as animation. While I adopt the ideas behind Waldron's 'new nonfiction film', I make changes to its written expression. First, I reinstate the hyphen in 'nonfiction film'. In doing so I move away from the idea of the hyphen as a form of 'cancelling', instead arguing that it can assert the gap between the nonfictive and the fictive: a representation of the Deleuzian idea of the 'interstice' across which these two qualities meet and from where new meanings can emerge (1989). This creates an understanding of a genre of film that sits either side of the hyphen. Further, I drop the prefix 'new' from Waldron's definition. This is not to discount the historical location of the term as one that applies to the contemporary moment, but rather an acknowledgement that the emergence of these forms began with the documentary turn in the arts that emerged in the period around 2000. I therefore exchange the word 'new' for the word 'artists'' to indicate that it is from this point that the interest of the research begins, one that might be represented by any one of the several factors listed below, but is more likely represented by the confluence and mutuality:

i. Exhibitions that highlighted the documentary turn in art. In Europe this included *documenta X* (1997) and *documenta XI* (2002) which featured works by Harun Farocki, Chris Marker, Chantal Akerman, Fiona Tan, and Shirin Neshat. In the US, Mark Nash's *Experiments with Truth: The Documentary Turn* (2004) at the Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia which included works by Isaac Julien, Zarina Bhimji, Glenn Ligon and Anthony McCall (Balsom 2014).

ii. Symposia including *Truth or Dare* (2007) at the Whitechapel Gallery, London and *Berlin Documentary Forum* (2010–14) at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2010–14).

iii. The publication of texts that traced or recognised the phenomena, including *New Documentary* by Stella Bruzzi (2000), Michael Renov's *The Subject of Documentary* (2004), Hito Steyerl's *Die Farbe der Wahrheit* (2008), Erika Balsom's *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art* (2013), and Scott MacDonald's *Avant-Doc* (2014).

iv. Technologies that helped 'democratise' filmmaking by offering cinema-quality production tools at consumer prices. Examples include the launch of the Canon 5D Mark II in 2008 and Apple's editing software Final Cut Pro 7 in 2009.

v. Film festivals with a history of supporting artists such as Visions du Réel, Rotterdam Film Festival, and FIDMarseille expanding the presence of artists' works in their programmes. This expansion continues today with many of Europe's film festivals now showcasing artists' film through categories including (i) CPH:DOX's "New:Vision", (ii) Sheffield DocFest's "Alternate Realities", and (iii) Berlinale's "Forum" and "Expanded Forum".

2.2.6 Bringing artists' non-fiction film into contact with landscape: Defining (landscape) artists' non-fiction film

The widespread consciousness of landscape in northern Europe as "a synonym for scenery" (Ratheesh Mon 2021, 20) emerged in the 17th century with the work of Dutch landscape artists, including Jacob van Ruisdael, Meindert Hobbema, and Hendrick Avercamp (Balik and Lökçe 2019). In this movement artists placed a deeper emphasis on landscape as the subject rather than the setting of a work, creating "artistic narrative[s] through numerous metaphors" (McTighe cited in Ratheesh Mon 2021, 20). Through painterly responses to the widespread urbanisation and industrialisation of Europe, the genre continued to grow in prominence during Romanticism in the 19th century, with a focus on "atmosphere, spirit of place, [and] heightened moments of awareness" (Alfrey 2011): representations not of "real spaces but, for different reasons, variously imagined places" (MacDonald 2016, 6). This evocation of the imagination locates landscape not as a physical geography, but as an internalised subject of the mind: "landscapes are culture before they are nature, constructs of the imagination projected on to the wood and water" (Schama 1995, 61). In artists' non-fiction film, attending to these subjective and emotional bonds between people and place reveals protagonists for whom there is something at stake in the landscape: a reflection that landscapes are "always for somebody" (MacDonald 2016, 7).

Across his extensive body of non-fiction works, director Werner Herzog has produced images of landscapes that "undeniably recall the work of that

sublime German romantic artist Caspar David Friedrich" (Pradger in Harper and Rayner 2010, 93). While Herzog has been hesitant to acknowledge links between his work and the Romantic tradition, on Friedrich the director has been more forthcoming: "for me a true landscape is not just a representation of a desert or a forest. It shows an inner state of mind, literally inner landscapes [...] This is my real connection to Caspar David Friedrich, a man who never wanted to paint landscapes per se but wanted to explore and show inner landscapes" (Herzog quoted in Cronin 2002, 136). To reveal the 'inner landscapes' of his protagonists, the production of Herzog's non-fiction films would seem to employ a form of mirrored movement in relation to landscape. Initially this is marked by an outward movement, a geographic relocation of the camera to an inhospitable landscape such as the Alaskan backcountry revealed in *Grizzly Man* (2005) or the Antarctic ice packs featured in *Encounters at the End of the World* (2007). This outward movement in turn creates a reflection back onto the film's protagonist(s), an inward movement that Herzog uses to reveal the phenomena of memory, emotion, and sensation: the subject's 'inner landscape' (Johnson 2016). In this role, the landscape adopts a function beyond a mere setting for a film to become an active protagonist in the work, one that helps shape its form. It is this theme that I now explore in more detail.

2.2.7 Defining landscape's 'double' movement: landscape as a protagonist

Combining the "manufactured realities of Robert Flaherty [...] with the ethnographic excavations of Jean Rouch" (Brady-Brown 2016, 15), Ben Rivers creates a filmic form in which "the depictions of peoples [...] are embedded within particular landscapes that are often as informative and interesting as whatever social practices seem to be the focus" (MacDonald 2015, 19). Like the scientists cast in Herzog's film *Encounters at the End of the World* (2007), the protagonist (Jake) in Rivers' feature film *Two Years at Sea* (2012) is real, but elements of his performance are not.[2] This speculative treatment of Jake's life is a negotiation between the director and the protagonist, one that pivots around the remote landscape of the Scottish Cairngorms. In an extended scene, we see Jake construct a raft before taking to water, a shot that lingers so long it places Jake and the landscape into an intimate embrace, one in which the landscape assumes the role of a protagonist. In *Two Years*, this landscape-protagonist offers a foil that brings Jake's own character and personality into sharper relief. It achieves this largely through stasis, the landscape of the Cairngorms providing an unbending foe or antagonist to Jake. This role dissipates the detail in the landscape image, the eye drawn to the characterisation of the landscape rather than its particular aesthetic qualities. The prominent role landscape plays in *Two Years* illuminates the distinction that film theorist Martin Lefevbre makes between landscape and setting in film, one he describes as based on pictorial economy: "as long as natural space in a work is subservient to characters [...] to provide space for them, the work is not properly speaking a landscape" (Lefebvre 2011, 64).

Through the situated experience of one person, *Two Years* demonstrates the intimacy of personal relations to landscape. In contrast, Pablo Alvarez-Mesa's *Bicentenario* (2021) explores collective relations to landscape through an observation of the rituals of Colombians celebrating the 200th anniversary of the country's independence from Spain. As in Rivers' *Two Years*, the landscape adopts the role of a foil in the film, but in this instance to the filmmaker himself. Journeying back from Canada to his native Colombia, this landscape-protagonist triggers an autoethnographic turn in the work, Alvarez-Mesa's pictorial journey across the landscape acting as a temporal meditation by the filmmaker on the emergence of a nation. A 'journey' across a landscape that becomes representative of the 'journey' of a nation, the landscape takes on the role of a symbolic character in the film, a characterisation that employs the metonymic qualities of film – a cinematic landscape of suggestion by one thing of another (Harper and Rayner 2010, 20).

In both Rivers' and Alvarez-Mesa's films the landscape takes on the characteristics of a protagonist. In Rivers' film the landscape-protagonist acts as a foil, a static antagonist that is foregrounded by the filmmaker to reveal Jake's emotional characteristics. This characterisation of the landscape unfolds in the mise-en-scène of the image, Jake physically interacting with the geography of the Cairngorms. In Alvarez Mesa's film, the landscape-protagonist takes on symbolic characteristics, through a role that exists beyond the landscape's own reality (Helphand 1986). Both Rivers and Alvarez-Mesa aestheticise their landscape-protagonist by filming in 16mm. Reminding us that "the material support of film is not inert" (Greenfield et al. 2020, 35), the images of landscapes oscillate wildly across the celluloid's grain, ensuring that these landscapes project out from the film frame rather than receding back to offer mere setting. Further, the use of 16mm creates a timelessness in the images that, if we are to subscribe to the artist Tacita Dean's view, exists due to the film image existing in closer relation to painting then digital cinema (Dean quoted in Greenfield et al. 2020, 86). This timelessness instils an immutability in the landscape-protagonist – a character that can speak to a pre-revolutionary Colombia in *Bicentenario*, or a pre-modern economy in *Two Years*. It is to these kinds of roles – when landscape moves beyond providing a setting for a film to take on an autonomous role as a protagonist – that I refer when I use 'landscape' in relation to artists' non-fiction film.

2.2.8 Defining landscape's double movement: film as a landscape

This section switches from defining the landscape-protagonist to investigating how representations of landscapes in film can shape those spaces in reality.

To formalise an approach to understanding how film shapes landscape, this analysis turns to Henri Lefebvre and his landmark book *The Production of Space* (1991). Lefebvre shifts the understanding of space as a container for human activities towards one that is produced and shaped by social

relations. People's everyday actions, and the power dynamics that shape them, are themselves always in flux, leading to an understanding of space as something that is generative. Lefebvre's theory creates a "dialectical relationship" (Lefebvre 1991, 39) between three theoretical fields of space. The first, perceived space, refers to the physical form and organisation of space through use. The second, conceived space, defines space as imagined, and thus the space of architects and town planners who "pre-determine the conditions of occupation of space" (Nisha 2022, 11). Lefebvre's final concept, lived space, is an ambiguous concept that "embodies both conceived and perceived spaces without being reducible to either". (Zhang 2006, 221). This is the space of individual subjectivity, of "space as real-and-imagined" (Elden 2004, 190). Lefebvre's analysis provides a framework for attending to the relationship between film and landscape. In particular, the idea of conceived space, or 'imagined' space, highlights the ways in which films not only depict physical spaces but can also actively produce and shape them. Underpinning the concept of conceived space is an intentionality to shape space on the part of the professions Lefebvre describes: "the scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers" (Lefebvre 1991, 34). This motivation can be identified within film's colonial history, the Western genre offers an example of an ideology projected onto a landscape that continues to actively shape it, in this case by obfuscating and suppressing Indigenous stories that have emerged from those geographies since time immemorial (Wente in Jones and Kermode 2022). In this role, film shapes space by actively prefiguring widely held beliefs around it. Or, as understood through the lens of Jean Baudrillard's (1994) theory of the simulacra, filmic representations of space replace its reality, which in turn means "the real is judged against its staged cinematic counterpoint" (Aitken and Zonn 1994, 7). Films, then, are active agents, constructing understandings of space that engender their shape in reality.

As far back as the 1960s Marshall McLuhan (1960, 1964) and later Joshua Meyrowitz (1985) argued that forms of media affect us by changing the "situational geography" (Meyrowitz 1985, 6) of social life. This concept speaks to a different relation of images to landscape, one that can realign our contiguity to space and thus our perceptions of it. This reorganisation of geography can be understood by attending to the intersection between space and place and the effect that images have on both. I refer here to space and place as proposed by geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, a phenomenological understanding that anchors 'place' to human experience in contrast to 'space' that describes a locality an individual has little or no social connection to (Tuan 2001). For space to transform into place, Tuan argues that individuals must "get to know it better and endow it with value" (Tuan 2001, 17). This is a process that images can support at a distance, severing the necessity of physical proximity to the production of place. Sitting at the tension point of the relationship between space, place, and images, Chloé Galibert-Laîné and Guillaume Grandjean's 2022 video essay *Geomarkr* unfolds largely within the online video game *GeoGuessr*. Transporting its players to random locations via Google

Street View, the game asks players to guess the location within a given time limit. To progress, players must learn to quickly identify clues from each image made up of the ephemera of everyday life; the shop signs, billboards, vehicles, and clothing of blurred-out protagonists. Grandjean describes the challenge of *GeoGuessr* as "making ourselves familiar with a place that, five minutes earlier, we perhaps didn't know existed. A process of habitation, of ultra-accelerated anchoring" (Grandjean in Galibert-Laîné and Grandjean 2022). Grandjean's use of the term "ultra-accelerated anchoring" points to the role that image technologies can play in prefiguring space by forging a "sense of intimacy that expands, embracing far away things and places" (Brusadin 2021, 13). When contemporary image technologies are facilitating people in one space to create meaningful connections with another, the 'situational geography' within which we live our lives may change so much we might argue that the world is becoming increasingly placeless (Tuan 2001, 5). *Geomarkr* asks how images can shape an understanding of a landscape never experienced in person, a prefiguration of space that links the technology of the Google Mapping vehicle with the technology of the film camera itself.

This section has outlined how the film image can prefigure widely held perceptions of particular landscapes that can go on to shape those spaces in reality. On the one hand this highlights the filmmaker's own responsibility to landscape and to the communities a film may impact. On the other, it demonstrates how the image can be instrumentalised by the filmmaker, extending its aesthetic function to make it one that becomes in some ways 'operational'[3] (Farocki 2000). Harun Farocki's understanding of an image as concerned with "measurement, pattern analysis, navigation and more" (Parikka 2023, vii) can further highlight themes raised by *Geomarkr* – that in changing relations between space and place, new image technologies can further accelerate and disrupt that process of prefiguration in relation to landscape, an effect that magnifies the responsibilities of the filmmaker in their relation to landscape.

2.2.9 Defining (landscape) artists' non-fiction film

The investigation has built on the definition established for artists' non-fiction film by attending specifically to the landscape sub-genre. This process has contextualised the use of the word 'landscape' by anchoring it to art history and humanistic geography. What emerges at the overlap between these fields is a construct of landscape as one not of physical geography but of human consciousness that is shaped by human experience and social connection. This understanding creates the conditions for a double movement between landscape and film. In one direction, landscape can shape the narrative of a film by taking on the characteristics of a protagonist. The landscape thus takes on a function that extends beyond providing a setting for characters and events, rather assuming an autonomous role that directly shapes the narrative and form of a film (Lefebvre 2007). In the other direction, as has been shown, film holds the capacity to shape space by prefiguring relations to landscape

and expectations of place. While it is the former quality that defines a film as 'speaking' a landscape, the latter signals the responsibility that falls on a filmmaker once the decision is made to foreground a landscape-protagonist.

2.2.10 Filmmapping and the genre of (landscape) artists' non-fiction film.

Designed around (landscape) artists' non-fiction film, Filmmapping is a framework animated by methodologies borrowed from, or inspired by, mapping. I conclude this section by engaging in reflective analysis to highlight the key functions a Filmmapping methodology should perform in its interface with the genre of (landscape) artists' non-fiction filmmaking.

In bringing strategies from mapping into contact with filmmaking, a Filmmapping methodology should present a distinct approach to interpreting the landscape within which a film operates. This shapes three primary outcomes. First, a close reading of a landscape provides additional information to shape and define the construction of a landscape-protagonist and its role in relation to a film's broader themes. Operating in a function beyond setting, this analysis has demonstrated how the landscape-protagonist can take on the characteristics of a foil or metonymy. Second, defining a landscape-protagonist may help to illuminate the relationship between the filmmaker and the landscape-subject, as demonstrated in Alvarez-Mesa's *Bicentenario,* which in part reflects his own connection to his native Colombia. This information can be used by the filmmaker to help them navigate the distance between reality and filmic representation, the lacuna where fiction and subjectivity can reside. Finally, I have shown how the film image can prefigure widely held perceptions of particular landscapes that can go on to shape those spaces in reality. By illuminating this information, a Filmmapping methodology can highlight the opportunities and responsibilities of portrayals of landscape and their subsequent impacts on communities.

2.3 Filmmapping and its Relation to Exhibition Practices

2.3.1 Introduction

> Since the late 1990s there has been an increasing "absorption of artists' films into exhibition spaces"
>
> (Bovier and Mey 2015, 11).

Around the millennium, a perceptible shift occurred from video art as defined by practitioners such as Bill Viola, Bruce Nauman, Joan Jonas, Nam June Paik, and Dara Birnbaum towards an "emergence of moving image art very much under the sign of cinema" (Balsom 2014, 12). If 1992's *documenta IX*

was the point at which MoMA curator Barbara London argued that video art had attained maturity (London cited in Balsom 2014, 36), then the subsequent editions, *documenta X* (1997) and *documenta XI* (2002) represent the moments when the cinematic language of artists' film began to achieve prominence (Elsaesser 2018). This status was confirmed by the programming of works at *documenta X* and *XI* by artists including Harun Farocki, Chris Marker, Chantal Akerman, Fiona Tan, and Shirin Neshat. Shifting from direct comparisons between the fortunes of video art and film, Raymond Bellour highlights the expansion of artists' film in relation to broader artistic practices, stressing the shift in emphasis of the Venice Biennale in 1999 and in 2001 as moments when traditional mediums, including sculpture and painting, gave way to a greater emphasis on artists' film (Bellour 2013).

Today, artists' film has become pervasive within the art ecosystem – the galleries, symposia, and trade fairs that Tony Bennett defined as the "exhibitionary complex", due to its articulation of power and ideology (Bennett, 1996, 59). In the UK, a signal of this influence emits from its most prestigious contemporary art award – five of the last ten Turner Prize winners have employed a significant film component within their practice.[4] The technology of cinema provides a useful conduit to contextualise the reasons for this expansion, the film theorist Dimitrios Latsis arguing that a film history based on devices is also a history focused on its exhibition (2016). Within the gallery, the technical presentation of film has followed a dichotomy. Following the first of these threads leads to what both Erika Balsom and Thomas Elsaesser define as the institution's self-appointed role in 'saving' the legacy of cinema, a function that makes itself increasingly heard through the rattle of 16mm projectors within the exhibition space (Balsom 2013; Elsaesser 2016). "Freed from utility and market value" (Elsaesser 2018), the projector takes on a sculptural form in the gallery, an "industrially made commodity that can reveal unexpected beauty" (Elsaesser 2018). Commenting on this objectification of the mechanics of cinema within the gallery, curator Clive Gillman asks whether film even ceases to behave as a time-based medium at all once it is brought into the exhibition space (Gillman quoted in Cook & Graham 2010, 113).

Following the second of these technological threads leads analysis away from the analogue and towards its digital counterpart. The expansionist strategies of public institutions in the 1990s and early 2000s culminated with "the opening of Museums of Contemporary Art as an urban magnet in virtually every developed city" (Elsaesser 2018), creating new gallery real estate that needed to be filled. The digitally projected image responded by providing a (relatively) inexpensive way to programme space while offering visitors "the possibility of a fun, special-effects spectacle" (Balsom 2013, 20). In the architecture of the late capitalist institution the kind of immersive projections employed by artists such as Pierre Huyghe, Pipilotti Rist, and Christian Marclay ensure that "spectacle and geometry, fields of activity far from each other, are mixed in the same word" (Païni 2004, 23). Embracing the role of cinema in wider cultural life as a medium of mass entertainment (Balsom 2013; Païni 2004), artists'

film is placed on a "convergence course with Hollywood" (Elsaesser 2018) and the commercial ecosystem that sustains it. This confluence is evident across Europe's film festivals, many of which cater for artists' film practice through specific competitions that include Berlinale's "Expanded Forum", Visions du Réel's "Burning Lights", and FIDMarseille's "Flash". Conversely, it is also evident in the programming of film festivals by art institutions, perhaps most notably MoMa's annual "Documentary Fortnight". Prioritising single-screen cinematic presentation, artists face both creative restraints and technical expectations if they wish to reach the broad audiences these festivals attract.

In the global expansion of galleries, art fairs, and biennales, artists' film, "both as art object and source of information, has become indispensable" (Elsaesser 2018). Art historian Dorothea von Hantelmann argues that the exhibition format has become an international cultural phenomenon that requires artists to work within its rules and paradigms "which depends on the valorization of the individual, the production of material objects, and their distribution through a trading system" (Hantelmann in Bovier and Mey 2015, 6). Applying these priorities to artists' moving image, Balsom identifies this trading system as one that artificially cultivates rarity by placing limitations on the quantity of prints in circulation (Balsom 2013). "Fixing the art to death" (Cook and Graham 2010, 2), these market desires help to engender a preference for material objects that are "finite, portable, commodifiable" (Bishop 2012, 2). The resulting artworks, prescribed by their duration and display requirements, circulate between institutions with the works' contexts shaped by curators. This layer of authorship in turn mediates the lens through which the spectator understands the work. Providing a form of screening facility one step removed from the cinema, "the exhibition's 'artistic paradigm' depends on a conception of the moving image that confines it within four walls" (Bover and Mey 2015, 8). Within these walls the spectator is cast adrift in the darkness of space between the projector and the screen, the image functioning as a portal to an 'elsewhere' that displaces the body from its immediate surroundings and places it in an immobile state: "the institution of the cinema requires a silent, motionless spectator, a vacant spectator, constantly in a sub-motor and hyper-perceptive state" (Metz 1982, 97).

Leaving the spectator with little participatory or collaborative stake in the realisation of the work, the art object becomes representative of a fixed set of relations between the artist, curator, and institution (Bishop 2012). Seeking to realign the links between spectator and the artwork, Nicolas Bourriaud's theory of relational aesthetics conceives the exhibition space as an "arena of exchange" (Bourriaud 2009, 17). Recasting the artist as less a creator of objects and more a "producer of situations" (Bishop 2012, 2), relational models replace the materiality of the art object with a social aspect (Kester in Ali 2020) that engenders "collaboration between artist and audience, audience and works, audiences and other audiences" (Elias 2014, 741). Relational aesthetics emerges from a broader shift in the role of the curator in the 1990s from a "sober judge of a historical period" (Roberts in Misiano 2014, 54) to

a creative agent involved in an active collaboration with the artist. This shift leads curator Dorothee Richter to question whether curators and artists are actually increasingly in competition with one another for authorship around a work (2013). This encroachment has invoked alarm in some: “the curator should no more flirt with the notion of becoming an artist than fancy herself in the shoes of the patron” (Cooke quoted in Graham and Cook 2010, 253). For others, there is a recognition that relations between the two disciplines are dynamic and that curation must adapt to new artistic approaches: art historian Celina Jeffery argues that “much revolves around the definition of curating in a field of expanded artistic production” (Jeffery 2015, 7). The focus Jeffery places on ‘artistic production’ corresponds with the emphasis relational aesthetics places on bringing the processes of artmaking into the gallery.

In contrast, art critic Claire Bishop draws focus away from production and back to the art object itself, highlighting the important role aesthesis plays in the experience of an artwork. Accusing relational aesthetics of obfuscating this function, Bishop draws on Jacques Rancière’s philosophy to argue that the aesthetical function of an artwork creates the conditions for diverse acts of interpretation across audiences (Bishop 2012). Aesthetics can suspend “the domination of the faculties by reason” (Bishop 2012, 27) creating an experience that can reorientate a spectator’s understanding of the world. Further, in the clamour to dematerialise the art object, relational art instead focuses on the work’s production. Within the walls of the institution, there is a shift from art-as-object to art-as-service, these ‘services’ subsequently commodified via labour costs (Steyerl 2017). This shift towards art-as-service reflects the transformation of economies in the West from manufacturing to services under late capitalism. In response to this shift, Bourriaud argues that artists should learn to inhabit and ‘make better’ the current socio-economic moment rather than focusing on imagining tomorrow’s utopias. This conformity contrasts with the ambitions of social activism that reverberate across contemporary artists’ non-fiction film practices, Bourriaud’s theory curtailing the kinds of productive conflict that are necessary in the contemporary moment (Bishop 2012). While a relational artwork may appear to challenge the commodification of art by dematerialising the art object, its real impact is in replacing the idea of art-as-object with art-as-service. Arguing that Bourriaud’s theory highlights relations without addressing their characteristics, Bishop writes: “if relational art produces relations, then the next logical question to ask is what types of relations are being produced, for whom, and why?” (Bishop 2004, 65). These questions pertain to spectatorship and the role of the work of art in triggering different forms of participation. In the following section I explore these issues in order to locate Filmmapping within these debates.

2.3.2 Spectatorship and cognition: demystification of the art object

For Rancière, cinema's motionless spectator does not necessarily equate to an inactive one: he advances an understanding of the 'silent' labour of cognition that recognises that "viewing is also an action" (Rancière 2011, 13). While watching, "she observes, selects, compares, interprets. She links what she sees to a host of other things that she has seen on other stages, in other kinds of place. She composes her own poem with the elements of the poem before her" (Ranciere 2011, 13). Picking through images to construct a particular narrative form for this 'poem', the spectator becomes a gleaner, undertaking a labour-intensive process of gathering together. This analogy recalls the documentarian Agnès Varda's masterpiece *The Gleaners and I* (2000) in which the filmmaker follows individuals from across the social spectrum as they pick through fields, vineyards, and restaurant bins for sustenance. On completing the film, Varda reflected on the analogous processes of filming and gleaning: "filming, especially a documentary, is gleaning. Because you pick what you find; you bend; you go around; you are curious; you try to find out where are things. But you cannot push the analogy further, because we don't just film the leftovers" (Varda quoted in Knegt 2009). Perhaps, though, we can push Varda's analogy further and argue that the role of the spectator is – like the documentary filmmaker – one of a gleaner. Both processes involve looking and sorting through images, relating the making of the documentary image to its reception in the gallery space. This idea of looking positions the spectator as a co-collaborator in its meaning-construction: "the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world" (Duchamp 1975, 140). Elucidating this idea of 'contact', Jonathan Crary surmises that while this act of looking remains unchanged through history, what has changed "are the plural forces and rules composing the field in which perception occurs" (Crary 1992, 6). The role of the spectator is thus always in flux, "both subjected to technological and political change and contributing to their transformation in turn" (Levin 2020, 99). Through this mirrored movement of observing, Crary grants the spectator not a passive role (a 'seeing subject') but an active "right of reply" (Lazzari 2020, 5) to the image.

Not all images, however, offer the spectator the same 'right to reply'. Applying psychoanalysis to film theory, Christian Metz (1974) drew influence from Jacques Lacan (2006) and his concept of the 'mirror stage' by proposing that the cinematic image offers a reflection within which a spectator recognises themselves as an all-powerful ego. Hidden from view in the dim light of the screening room, the spectator sees all without being seen themselves, granted power over the image despite their passive, seated position. Facilitating this sense of authority, the camera seduces the spectator through a panoptic view that obfuscates its absences of information by way of visual 'completeness'. By interrogating the power of the image, psychoanalytic film theory (and the closely aligned movements of Apparatus Theory and Screen Theory) highlights how passive forms of spectatorship have been conditioned by commercial

cinema through a form of linear storytelling that manifests through narrative saturation (Burch, 1982). Offering resistance, Richard Rushton argues that progressive forms of cinema such as artists' film can provide "an antidote to this passive intoxication", eliciting active or more challenging forms of spectatorship, that rupture "the cinema spectator's fusion with the screen" (Rushton 2009, 47). Representing a collapse in the separation between the screen and spectator, fusion is a negation of distance, which Rancière defines as a necessary condition for any communication (2011). Distance, he argued, is the space between two positions that creates the ground across which exchange can take place; it is "not an evil to be abolished but the normal consequence of any communication" (Rancière 2011, 10). Inside the gallery, this distance is a measure between the filmmaker and the spectator, an expression of the equality of exchange between those who present the image and those who receive it. In this relationship, the film object exists as a mediator between the two parties, a "third thing" (Rancière 2011, 15).

To demonstrate his idea of equality in spectatorship, Rancière turned to the classroom, a forum in which the teacher holds power to 'bring' the student closer to their own position by imparting information (2011). Emerging from a perspective set by the tutor, this one-way process treats information as objective, collapsing distance by failing to engage the student in a conversation that might reflect the subjectivities of both parties. Rancière's classroom analogy mirrors documentary's own troubled history as a discipline employed to impart subjective information as objective fact. I employ Rancière's analogy here to pivot away from interrogating the filmmaker-spectator relationship towards the correlative relationship between the filmmaker and their subject, arguing that the latter helps set the conditions for the former. By bringing filmmaking into contact with mapping, Filmmapping can offer an approach to consider distances as they pertain to multiple relations, not only those between the filmmaker and spectator. It achieves this through an engagement with the scalar dynamics that exist between the mediums of film and mapping. In filmmaking, the camera lens determines the distance from the filmmaker to the subject, a fixed scale materialised within the documentary image itself (Horton 2021). Within mapmaking, the concept of scale expresses the relationship between the map and the territory it professes to represent. The larger the ratio set by the scale, the larger the area of the territory the map compacts and the further away the viewer is placed from the landscape[5] (Horton 2021). Scale becomes a representation of distance, in that in the documentary image it constructs particular relations between the filmmaker and subject. Once set, these relations then become subject to different scales once the image is exhibited: the scales between the filmmaker, the spectator and the locational context of the exhibition space itself. I posit that attending to scale as it pertains not only to that captured inside the image, but outside it too, can provide additional information for spectators to navigate a work and understand their own positionality in relation to it. Creating a legibility of scale can in turn make the communication between the filmmaker and the spectator more equal. In this relationship, artists "display their competences and spectators [...] find

what those competences might produce in a new context" (Rancière 2007, 280). The spectator is 'emancipated', provided with the tools to read a work, interpret and demystify it, and retell it through their own lived experience.

To engender a cognitive approach to spectatorship that responds to Rancière's understanding of an 'equity of exchange', a Filmmapping methodology must generate a curatorial approach that establishes distance. This means highlighting or making visible the methods through which the filmmaker has approached their subject and the relations between the subject and the exhibition space. In doing so, these approaches can help to 'demystify' the art object by providing opportunities for the spectator to locate their own positionality within these 'exchanges', making the work more participatory in its realisation.

2.3.3 Spectatorship and embodiment: rematerialisation of the art object

Turning away from the spectator's labour of cognition presents an opportunity to highlight the role of the body and affect in spectatorship. Film is an inherently affective medium, "the elicitation of affect in the audience stands firmly at the core of the film-going experience" (Platinga 2006, 81). The philosopher Brian Massumi defines affect in relation to the body "in terms of its capacity for affecting or being affected", arguing that these capacities move in two ways: "when you affect something, you are at the same time opening yourself up to being affected" (Massumi 2015, 3, 4). Where emotion is conscious and signified by an object or subject, affect is understood as unconscious and a-signified (Massumi 1995). The turn towards affect in film theory in the 1990s can be observed as a reaction against psychoanalytic film theory and its focus on cognition. Steven Shaviro (1993) and contemporaries including Laura Marks (1999) and Patricia Pisters (2003) critique attempts by psychoanalytic film theorists including Metz, Jean-Louis Baudry (1974) and Laura Mulvey (1975) to highlight the unreliability of the image in order to disassociate themselves from it: "the Lacanian film critic [...] warns us not to be deceived by the apparent immediacy of what we see in the mirror" (Shaviro 1993, 16). By prioritising a response to the image formed by cognition, Metz and his contemporaries stand accused of marginalising the role of the spectator's body in the viewing experience.

Writing in her landmark 2002 text 'Atlas of Emotion', Giuliana Bruno sheds the Lacanian film theorist's ocular-centric reading of the image for an ontology of cinema based on "spatiality and motion, with its multiple connotations from travelling to emotion" (Marks 2003, 337). Bruno's 'atlas' presents a series of allegorical cartographies that weave the reader through nearly four-hundred years of visual culture taking in art, architecture, and film. Defining the map's legend, Bruno offers a series of concepts that equip the reader in their navigation, integral to which is her interpretation of the idea of 'haptics'. Bruno cites the work of Noel Burch (1990) and Antonia Lant (1995) before

her who link the haptic with the idea of a 'habitable' image. This principle relies on the film image offering the viewer "a believable deep space" (Bruno 2018, 250) that can be 'inhabited'; an interpretation anchored to an ocular-centric and psychoanalytic understanding of spectatorship. Drawing from the Greek etymology of haptic as a 'making of contact', Bruno instead chooses a kinaesthetic understanding of the term to argue not only for a 'habitable' cinema, but one in which the spectator can 'move': "the haptic nature of cinema involves an architectural itinerary, related to motion" (Bruno 2018, 250). Untethering the spectator from their immediate architectural surrounds, Bruno portrays a viewer who is "a voyageuse , a passenger who traverses a haptic, emotive terrain[6]" (Bruno 2018, 34). This entwining of the act of motion with the production of emotion relies on the terms shared etymological roots. In this case, the Greek origin of the word cinema (*kinema* / *κίνημα*) which implies both motion and emotion: "my view of film as a means of transport thus understands transport in the full range of its meaning...film moves, and fundamentally 'moves' us, with its ability to render affects" (Bruno 2018, 7). For Bruno, the motion in film's moving images produce emotion and that emotion contains a movement within it (Bruno's use of the word emotion here equivalent to what would, in contemporary theory, more likely be called affect[7]). This creates an understanding of an embodied spectator who can 'travel' via images even while seemingly immobile, "there is a mobile dynamic involved in the act of viewing films, even if the spectator is seemingly static" (Bruno 2018, 55). Bruno's argument undermines the act of aligning an embodied mode of viewing solely to bodily movement, thus questioning "the physical peripeteia that celebrations of gallery spectatorship seem to be based on" (Walsh 2003).

Writing twenty years later, Bruno extends her thinking on film spectatorship in the gallery via a focus on the medium of projection (Bruno 2022). In this investigation, the theorist diverts attention away from the film image on screen towards the environmental materiality of projection itself as "light passing through air" (Bruno in Hamburger et al 2023, 3). To bind projection with the body, Bruno contrasts Sigmund Freud's understanding of projection as an expulsion, with fellow psychoanalyst Melanie Klein who believed projection could also be related to a process of introjection, an inner movement. This creates an awareness of a spectator who can not only project themselves "into a physical environment or atmosphere of projection in technical media, but can also absorb sensations from the space itself, sensing the vibrant materiality of nonhuman entities" (Bruno in Hamburger et al 2023, 4). Bruno re-instates the term 'haptic' to describe these kinds of affective intensities as projection and the material of light create a "particularly haptic and textural perception of space" (Bruno 2022, 57). Of particular relevance to aspects of my research (section 3.6) is Bruno's referencing of philosopher Gernot Böhme and his work on the aesthetics of atmospheres (Böhme and Thibaud 2017). Böhme's work introduces the idea that the physical qualities of materials are not always sufficient to explain the way they affect our experience or understanding of space (Böhme and Thibaud 2017). Recently, I am reminded of Isaac Julien's multi-screen installation *Once again... (Statues never die)* (2022), and in particular, to the films denouement in which its protagonist is

shown surrounded by heavy snowfall. Shot in black and white, the visitor sits cocooned amongst the piercing light of snowflakes as they descend across multiple screens. In this moment, the eye acts as a haptic epidermis and "sight becomes a sense of touch" (Bruno 2018, 202). Bruno uses the term 'environmentality' to describe how projection can produce these kinds of architectural and volumetric spaces, ones that advance a certain position or 'mentality' (Bruno in Hamburger et al 2023). The gallery environment is engendered not only as a "physical but also a mental space, a psychic architecture, a psychogeography" (Bruno in Hamburger et al 2023, 5). This language of movement returns us to Bruno's earlier work in 'Atlas of Emotion' and her premise that "what moves in thought must move in bodies" (Parikka 2018). Projection, as an affective material, can mobilise the spectator, its occupation of space not only as image but as projected light offering a "very physical invitation to the viewer's body" (Langdale 2003, 42).

Phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty stresses the significance of the body as the site of consciousness, entwined with – rather than separated objectively from – space (Shengli 2008). Seeing them as mutually constituted, he makes the distinction between a body *in* space and one that is rather *of* space (Merleau-Ponty 2005). Drawing from Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological understanding of being-in-the-world, philosopher and designer Georgia Mota elucidates the difference between 'posture' and 'position' to decipher the significance of space in shaping the labour of the spectator (Mota 2023). A 'position' can be understood as the starting point from which the spectator begins their reading of a work. 'Posture' extends from this position as the spectator begins a process of interpretation: "it is quite literally what bends, [and] stretches" (Mota 2023, 3). Employing the corporeal qualities of the body posture is relational, in that it responds to the exterior environment, but also somatic in that it is subject to the limitations of the body itself. Mota posits that postures therefore act as curators, mediating between an initial position and exterior forces that are shaped "through our interactions with the structural and material specificities of our environment" (Mota 2023, 4). Entangling the spectator within their environment creates an embodied experience, one in which the design and architecture of the exhibition space itself creates affect. This affect can be understood as the body acting and being acted upon within the architectural space of the gallery, promoting a highly personal experience of spectatorship. Writing on Pipilotti Rist's exhibition *Pour Your Body Out* at London's Hayward Gallery (2011), art historian Kate Mondlach notes, for example, how the artist created spaces within which the spectator could lie down and make themselves comfortable (Mondlach in Bovier and Mey 2015). This orientation created a form of bodily resistance against the Hayward's brutalist architecture that changed the affective relations between the spectator, the film object, and the exhibition space.[8] This example draws attention to design and architecture's role in the multiplicity of practices that define exhibition-making (Decter and Draxler 2014). Exhibition architecture helps to determine how the "material conditions of spaces [...] address and position" (Groot Nibbelink 2019) the spectator and the subsequent affects. It achieves this by shaping how these forces might elicit particular behaviours or

actions in the exhibition space and how design may further enable responses to artworks that are unplanned or unexpected (Groot Nibbelink, 2019). Considering the connections between affect and architecture, philosopher Andrej Radman asserts that designing with affect recasts "the architect as an artist and artisan of relational lived experience" (Radman in Frichot and Marko 2020, 64). In this capacity, designing with affect shifts architecture away from a preoccupation with creating objects (such as buildings) towards a practice concerned with creating embodied experience. Designing with affect creates a space in which "our bodies and our environment, are considered as neither contained nor stable, but always affecting and being affected by the other" (Nakai Kidd 2021, 7). Architects, Radman argues, design using not the materials of steel or concrete, but sensation (Radman in Frichot and Marko 2020). The use of the word 'sensation' by Radman links to Deleuze and the idea (in this context) that architecture can generate experiences that transcend representation or communication. For Deleuze and Félix Guattari, affect is separate from sensation because it is a property that does not belong to either the subject or the object but exists in the space between (a relationship they define through the concept of 'becoming')[9] (Deleuze and Guattari 1994). Becoming, like Rancière's concept of distance, draws attention to the spaces between 'things' as productive: "affects always move two ways, in a mutual interaction of something, be it objects, forces, other affects, or bodies" (Brinkema quoted in Anger and Jirsa 2019, 68). In the exhibition space this mutual interaction might occur between the spectator and the image, the spectator and the exhibition architecture, or the spectator and other spectators. Acting as a mediator in these 'in-between' spaces is the spectator's 'posture', a corporeal curator that attends to these relations to open up the artwork and 'rematerialise' it in specific relation to each individual. This foregrounding of the body renders a performance between individual and artwork that unfolds in space, one that challenges a simplified abstraction of a collective 'spectator' (Spurr 2007).

Having emphasised the importance of the 'in-between' spaces between the spectator(s), the work, and the gallery's architecture, I now examine how these kinds of productive spaces might be constructed by drawing on Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction (2016). Derrida's philosophical approach rejected the binaries that structure dominant understandings of thought and language in the West. Challenging logocentrism, Derrida argued that writing, unlike speech, awaits its actualisation through the act of reading. This causes words to be received in different ways and become subject to competing interpretations over time. With signifiers detached from the signified, an endless process of deferral ensues as 'meaning' arises out of dynamic connections between contiguous signifiers. Translated out of its literary context, deconstruction has been adopted as a method of analysis across the fields that relate to this research, namely film, cartography, and the spatial practices of curation and architecture. In this section I want to focus particularly on deconstruction and architecture, and its intersection with exhibition-making. Applied to architecture, the philosophical underpinnings of deconstruction were adopted to confront the discipline's own binaries, such as

form vs function, rationality vs expression, and modernism vs postmodernism (Hopkins 2022). A significant influence on the deconstructivist movement, principles from deconstruction were used to replace the traditional design principles of harmony and unity with expressions of fracture and instability. This rendered a literal translation of theory into practice through the design of buildings that are visibly 'deconstructed' in form, such as Peter Eisenman's Wexner Center for the Arts (1989) or Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin (2001). Mirroring these architectural approaches to deconstruction in the exhibition design process would lead to the 'visible deconstruction' of the static film-art-object, confronting its alignment to traditional models of cinematic presentation by displacing, separating, and expanding the work's components across space. Designer Mark Wigley argues, however, that the deconstructivist architect should be understood as more than just someone "who dismantles buildings, but one who locates the inherent dilemmas within buildings" (Wigley quoted in Hopkins 2022). This design positioning makes visible the "flaws that are intrinsic to structure" (Wigley quoted in Hopkins 2022) in order to resist the values of unity and stability that render singular readings of space. Applying Wigley's understanding of deconstruction to the film-art-object targets the traditional principles of stability and completeness that have historically defined the documentary form and replaces them with expressions of fracture and instability that can reveal the 'flaws' intrinsic to the genre's structure. This act prises the film-art-object apart to repudiate the hierarchies bound up within it, opening the artwork out to a diversity of spectator interpretations that can challenge singular meanings.

Deconstruction's intersection with architecture offers a guiding design principle for methodologies of Filmmapping, one that can help to open up the film-art-object to create the kinds of 'in-between' spaces so productive to embodied modes of spectatorship.

2.3.4 Filmmapping and spectatorship summary

There is a history of theories of cognition and embodiment that utilise one another in order to entrench their own understanding of spectatorship. Lisa Åkervall argues that while Metz and his contemporaries may be accused of overly focusing on cognition, Shaviro and his peers can equally be accused of centring bodily sensation (Åkervall, 2021). Vivian Sobchack argues for realigning cognition with the body: "the spectator is never merely an 'empty' visual body, nor is the film a 'transcendentally' introceptive consciousness" (Sobchack 2020, 261).

Filmmapping methodologies should respond to both embodied and cognitive modes of spectatorship, and in doing so should attend to the 'in-between' spaces. This can be achieved by first attending to distance, highlighting the methods through which the filmmaker has approached their subject and the relations between the subject and exhibition space. By bringing transparency to these relations, opportunities are provided for the spectator to locate their

own positionality ‘in between’ these exchanges (a project of demystifying the artwork). Secondly, through the concept of ‘posture’ relations can be attended to in the ‘in-between’ spaces amid the spectator and the screen, the spectator and the exhibition architecture, or the spectator and other spectators (a project of rematerialising the artwork). I have discussed above how architectural responses to deconstruction could be applied to place the material of the exhibition space in contact with the film-art-object to physically create these kinds of ‘in-between’ spaces.

2.3.5 Filmmapping spectatorship and the role of the curator

Filmmapping’s approach towards spectatorship highlights a particular locational context and architectural space. This site-specificity may act to draw the artmaking process closer to the sphere of the exhibition space and thus potentially recast the role of the curator and their relation to the filmmaker. Reflecting on my own role as a curator and the collaborative strategies I undertook as part of this research has led me to define my own position as one of a Curator-Producer. In assuming this role, the curator untethers their role from the etymological root of curation as an act of ‘care’ to focus instead on assisting the production of new work (Weibel 2001). Adopting this role, I applied my own experience of making (filmmaking, exhibition architecture, lighting design, sound design, etc.) to support the development of other artists’ work in the space. Peter Weibel describes this type of curator as someone with a similar grasp of the modes of production as the artist, which may skew the role towards curators who are, or have been, artists themselves. This grasp of production allows the Curator-Producer to consider how technologies and processes might open up new opportunities for what Weibel terms “new formats” (Weibel 2001). To enable these new formats, the curator’s role is, in part, to bring together different modes of production, materials and skillsets. This kind of collaborative approach is one that Sarah Cook and Beryl Graham contend can challenge the singular vision of the curator and hierarchical models of exhibition production (Cook and Graham 2010). My adoption of this curatorial position is not to imply that it is the sole mode that is compatible with Filmmapping, only that it is the one deemed most compatible with my own practice and skillset, and those of my collaborators. An analysis of alternate curatorial positions to Filmmapping is outlined in Appendix 7.8.

2.4 Filmmapping and its Relation to Mapping

2.4.1 Introduction

Maps and films share a history that intertwines in various ways. Bringing mapping into contact with documentary filmmaking, this section draws out the disciplines’ shared histories and their analogous production processes to locate Filmmapping within the field of map-engaged arts.

2.4.2 Maps in film

Maps have long been used as props to locate a protagonist within a landscape or to provide expository information, such as in the opening credits for *Casablanca* (1942) which pans across a colonial mapping of French and Spanish Morocco. In addition, maps have been employed to help construct a fictional filmic 'world' in which the action unfolds, such as the map of 'New Penzance' in Wes Anderson's *Moonrise Kingdom* (2012). As props in films, maps are employed to both geographically and ideologically situate an audience, mirroring one of the functions of non-fiction film itself (Harper and Rayner 2010). While offering an intriguing opening intersection between the disciplines, the role of maps in film is not the concern of Filmmapping.

2.4.2.1 Maps as films, films as maps

Suggesting that maps can be read as films, Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner argue that "all maps involve stories, in which there is both a narrative and a discourse" (Harper and Rayner 2010, 15). Perhaps it is more accurate, however, to say that maps are like film scripts, hypotheses that are atemporal and might yet manifest in many different ways (Chan et al. 2017). This desire to express the script of the map through film was articulated by Walter Benjamin: "couldn't an exciting film be made from the map of Paris? From the unfolding of its various aspects in temporal succession?" (Benjamin 1999, 83). Today, computer-based mapping technologies such as Geographic Information Systems create kinetic maps, "cinematic landscapes" (Aitken and Crane 2006, 278) that locate the medium of film as an enabler of a new, emotive form of cartography. While mapping is "in effect, the stuff of images", geographers Stuart Aitken and James Craine note that the affective qualities of film have remained largely unexplored by cartographers despite the common language the two disciplines share (Aitken and Craine 2006). The geographer's identification of a shared vocabulary between the disciplines finds kinship within the field of film theory. Writing on André Bazin, philologist Tom Conley asserts the geographic and geological foundations on which the French realist's ontology of film is built (Conley 2006): "a cursory reading of Bazin's writings [...] [reveals] a heightened awareness of the way that cineastes portray – and in portraying, situating, and locating – humans and animals in their ambient world" (Conley 2006, 6). Conley's reading of Bazin leads him to assert that "even if a film does not display a map as such, by nature it bears an implicit relation with cartography [...] maps and films might be said to be strangely coextensive" (Conley 2006, 1).

The coterminous relation between maps and films is one that animates the production process of filmmaker Salomé Lamas who speaks of creating a mental map in order to locate herself in relation to her subject, providing a 'terrain' that she then proceeds to inhabit with her camera. Speaking of her approach to filmmaking, Lamas asserts: "it is a work of curiosity, the work of a mapmaker, no? Firstly you attempt to circumscribe the reality to a terrain

in order not to lose yourself [...] subsequently you occupy [...] the interior of that reality" (Lamas 2016, 169). Invoking mapping's terminology of scale, Lamas speaks of how at times it becomes "necessary to readjust the distance" between herself and the territory, determining what will be left in, and what will be discarded in the territory's filmic representation (Lamas 2016, 12). This relationship between scale and representation sits at the heart of Lewis Carroll's short story *Sylvie and Bruno* (1889). In it, a 1:1 scaled map meets a solemn ending once its owners realise the futility of the map's application in the field. Carroll's tale illustrates that since the "map can never consist of the territory it purports to represent" (Brotton 2013, 7) so it follows that "no map can be wholly objective" (Wright 1942, 527). Carroll's story gently interrogates the Cartesian rationality that underpins notions of cartography as a scientific organisation of information (Dodge et al 2011); an interrogation that continues to animate the practices of contemporary artists today.

2.4.3 Art 'undisciplines' the map: critical mapping

Prior to the Renaissance the map belonged to the arts as much as science, with cartographic canvases "filled with religious cosmology and figures of myth and imagination" (Dodge et al 2011, 2). With the embracing of Enlightenment thought, the subjectivity of art was placed in conflict with the objective aim of science to devise "better approximations between raw data and the map image" (Pickles in Dodge et al 2011, 400), and thus the "imaginative and sensational evocations previously embedded in cartographic inventions were gradually diminished" (O'Neill and Werner 2017, 5). Since the 1960s, however, the connection between art and maps has experienced a substantial revival, its origin most evident in the Land Art movement and the work of Robert Smithson, Nancy Holt, Richard Long, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, and Agnes Denes, among others. Producing site-specific works, often in remote locations, the production of maps provided artefacts that could be displayed within the gallery but by nature of their function largely overlooked the ideological dimensions of cartography (Watson 2009). Reaching further back, Denis Wood identifies the Dadaists and Surrealists as an alternative genesis for art's renewed interest in maps (Wood 2010). Referencing Paul Éluard's *Le monde au temps des Surrealistes* (1929), Wood notes how the artwork distorted the colonial map of the world, undermining the Eurocentric ideas behind its construction (2010). Through this political engagement, the Dadaists and Surrealists can be linked more robustly than the Land Artists to the contemporary motivations of today's artists and cartographers.

2.4.3.1 Critical mapping

In 1989 historian Brian Harley published the landmark article 'Deconstructing the Map', advancing an understanding of the map not as an objective mirror of reality, but as a subjective text whose narratives are anchored to particular socio-political realities (Harley 1989). Harley's text emerged from the conditions

of postmodernism and the period's scepticism towards the types of meta-narratives often bound up in maps. Derrida's concept of deconstruction, "a password for the postmodern enterprise" (Harley 1989, 2), provided Harley with a method of inter-linear analysis to challenge the map's illusion of providing an objective link between reality and representation. Following Harley, publications by Wood and Fells (1992), Crampton (1994), Aberley (1993), and Pickles (1995), continued to trace a path for the critical mapping movement by interrogating "the work that maps do, how they act to shape our understanding of the world, and how they code the world" (Pickles 2004, 12). Acting as an accelerant to the concerns of critical mapping at the time was the rise in the use of GIS mapping, a tool that could be used to uphold the Cartesian notion that creating an objective map of the world would one day be achieved through technology (Harley, 1989).

Speaking to the qualities that imbue the map with its power, Bruno Latour establishes the map as an archetypal instance of scientific inscription. He argues that as such, the map holds the properties of an 'immutable mobile' (Latour 1998). Immutable, because as the map moves through space, the information it captures remains static in time; mobile, because the map is highly reproduceable and shareable. When combined, these qualities engender a map-object capable of preserving and amplifying its "truth claims [...] as they circulate across space and time" (Cosgrove in Dodge et al. 2011, 270). The properties that make the map an immutable mobile also account for its ability to exist on the two-dimensional plane while acting on three-dimensional space; "in politics, as in science", Latour writes "when someone is said to 'master' a question or to 'dominate' a subject, you should normally look for the flat surface that enables mastery (a map, a list, a file, a census, the wall of a gallery, a card index, a repertory); and you will find it" (Latour in Dodge et al. 2011, 69). This reciprocity between the 2D map and 3D territory challenges a representational view of mapping practices that, so famously animated by Alfred Korzybski, isolate the map from the territory ("a map is not the territory it represents" (Korzybski 1941, 58)). With its ability to shape 3D space, the map rather precedes, and produces, the territory (Kitchin et al 2013).

Latour argues that these potent qualities of the map are hidden behind an "aesthetics of plain style" (Cosgrove in Dodge et al. 2011, 270), a diagrammatic form of inscription that coerces the reader into accepting its representations as neutral (Latour, 1988). Through a translation of data, these 'plain' forms of inscription nevertheless embody a creative process that in principle is "no different from that of artistic production of spatial images" (Cosgrove in Dodge et al. 2011, 270). This tension between an objective claim bound to a creative, subjective image finds affinity in the genre of documentary. When a film foregrounds a landscape as a protagonist, it shares with the map an ability to both precede and produce the territory (section 2.2.8). When this representation is enveloped within a film form that is at once stable and transferable, the landscape documentary film can also take on the semblance of an 'immutable mobile'. Defining documentary film as such places the genre into a conceptual

framework with mapping that defines a set of useful shared qualities, ones that reveal how maps and films do their work in the world, shaping realities according to their ideological underpinnings. It further presents a role for the work of art in unmasking those ideologies while questioning the instruments that aid their construction (Latour 1998). While Latour's concept of the immutable mobile facilitates an interrogation of the epistemology of the map (or documentary), it leaves its ontological underpinnings largely intact. That is, while the power of the map to shape 3D space is acknowledged, the map itself remains stubbornly static in response to those active processes, "the map remains ontologically secure at the same time that meaning, and territory, unfold through the work of the map" (Kitchin et al. 2013, 2).

This criticism can be levelled at the broader critical mapping movement which, while moving from a representational to a post-representational understanding of the map, has remained fundamentally bound to the map-object itself. Applying this logic to art highlights works that critique the map while holding onto the map as an art object. This list can include protest maps produced across the 20th century that either (i) confront colonial ways of seeing the world, such as Marcel Broodthaers' *Carte Politique du Monde* (1970), Joaquín Torres' *America Invertida* (1943), or Öyvind Fahlström's *Sketch for World Map Part 1* (Americas, Pacific) (1972), or (ii) challenge the map's fidelity to measurement and proportion over subjective experiences of space, such as Francis Alÿs' *The Loop: Map of the World* (1997), or Guillermo Kuitca's *Untitled* (1992). In addition, the concerns of critical mapping can be used to draw attention to artists engaging with the form and aesthetics of maps to highlight networks of political and economic power, in particular works that employ Fredric Jameson's understanding of 'cognitive mapping'. Writing in the *New Left Review*, Jameson (1984) called for the complex socio-economic networks of late capitalism to be deconstructed into consumable representations for the public. Exemplifying its aims within art, Mark Lombardi's pencil-drawn *Narrative Structures* (1994 to 2000) reveal complex sets of networked connections between political and economic interests in diagrammatic form. Lombardi's drawings have drawn criticism from some. Art critic Frances Richard accuses the works of being "indoctrinated within the symbol system of (possibly pseudo-) scientific notation" (Richard 2001) elucidating their information with a quasi-positivist aura. The artist Trevor Paglen, however, contends they 'fetishise' the mapmaking process for the benefit of the spectator, their diagrammatic form diminishing the potential of artistic affect (Paglen 2009).

Lombardi's *Narrative Structures* reveal power through an aesthetic realisation of map-objects that were bound for display within the art gallery. Indeed, an infographic representing the galleries the artworks have been exhibited in might resemble one of the artist's own drawings, his *Global Networks* exhibition having travelled to nine major institutions alone between 2003 and 2005. Expanding beyond Lombardi's work, Ruth Watson identifies at least twenty major mapping-based exhibitions at Western art institutions between 1990 and 2010, the period when the critical mapping movement was at its peak (Watson 2009). This rise of mapping as a curatorial concern was

interdependent with the medium's increased use by artists. Accounting for this uptake, Watson contends that the creation of map-art objects allowed artists to highlight causes of social justice while maintaining a stable art output suitable for exhibition (Watson 2009). Wood, alternatively, links the rise with the growing penetration of maps into daily life across digital platforms, catalysed particularly by the launch of Google Maps and Google Earth in 2005 (Wood 2010). While these digital cartographic infrastructures have acted to further centralise knowledge and power and thus reinforce the ontology of the map, paradoxically they also enabled artists to engage with practices of mapping. Exploring these intersections between technology, mapping, and activism today, a new wave of exhibitions and symposia have maintained the art institution's entanglement with cartographic practices. This has recently included *Mapping Spaces* (2014) at ZKM Karlsruhe; *a model, a map, a fiction* (2023) at *transmediale* festival, Berlin, and *Temporary Atlas* (2022) at Mostyn, North Wales. With this continued history of institutional oversight and mediation, questions arise as to how map-arts can effectively change the situations they critique and fulfil their radical potential out in the world (Michel in Kollektiv Orangotango 2018). To address this question, analysis reorientates itself outside the walls of the institution by focusing on the counter-mapping movement; a movement that does not reject the aims of critical mapping but transitions its concerns towards new ways of acting.

2.4.4 Art 'undisciplines' the map: counter-mapping

If critical mapping represents a shift from a representational to a post-representational understanding of mapping, counter-mapping represents a further shift towards a processual understanding of mapping (Kitchin et al. 2013). This engagement in processes of mapmaking is aimed at leveraging the map's ability to actively shape space (Dodge and Perkins 2008). Counter-mapping is a term first coined by Nancy Peluso (1995) to describe maps commissioned by Indigenous communities to oppose a series of forestry claims by the Indonesian government. Peluso's term has since been retrospectively applied to diverse, historical forms of Indigenous activist mapping. This includes mapmaking strategies that emerged on Turtle Island in the 1970s to progress title acknowledgment for the Inuit people, a movement that eventually influenced the Nunavut land settlement with the Canadian government in 1999. It also applies to 'bioregionalism', an approach to thinking about place from an ecological perspective that also foregrounded Indigenous ways of knowing the land (Berg 1978, Sale 1985, Aberley 1993). While counter-mapping's deep roots in the struggle for Indigenous land rights continues to manifest in projects today,[10] its ambitions for social justice have fuelled increasingly diverse approaches to activism. These include strategies of deep mapping (Heat-Moon 1991, Bodenhamer et al. 2015), parish maps (Clifford and King 1996), participatory GIS (Bryan 2015, Craig et al 2002), conflict mapping (Srnicek 2010), expanded geography and radical mapping (Paglen 2009).

Adopting a form of 'radical mapping', Charmaine Chua's *Logistical Counter-Cartographies* (2023) employs mapmaking as "a departure point or a tool that can aid in analysis" (Paglen quoted in Dávila 2018, 190). Setting out a series of tools and techniques for workers that "weave an insurgent map" through infrastructures of logistics, Chua (2023a) identifies strategic points along shipping container supply chains where worker resistance might best manifest and spread across sectors and national borders. Chua's approach to mapping logistics seeks to reshape spaces of logistics through the development of a toolset that can be applied by workers operating within those supply chains. By doing so Chua's project draws from disciplines that include not only artmaking and mapping, but also engineering, ethnography, and geography. Artist Trevor Paglen (2009) argues for approaches to art-mapping animated precisely by these forms of interdisciplinarity. Focusing on the discipline of geography, Paglen points to its history of cross-disciplinary thinking across diverse humanistic and scientific fields. By shifting to the vantage point of a geographer, he argues, artists can embrace map art not as a creative process that manifests as an artwork, but as a spatial practice that engages artmaking in contact with activities such as archiving, policy development, and social movement organising. To achieve their activist goals, works become animated by "slow, cumulative, and constant work across many scales of action" (Mogel & Bhagat 2007, 12). With slippery durational endpoints, these types of project resist materialisation as the kinds of stable map-art objects that can be packaged up and mediated by the art institution.

Set up to document and provide a front of resistance against the rapid gentrification of neighbourhoods in US cities, the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (https://antievictionmap.com) brings quantitative data sets, including real estate values and eviction notices, together with qualitative storytelling methods such as recorded testimonies from tenants, to actively resist evictions. This mapping data materialises in forms that include zines, exhibitions, and public installations, depictions aimed at galvanising a social movement that creates alternate shared visions for space. This approach to mapping foregrounds the imagination as the tool at hand for the artist-mapmaker. Max Haiven and Alex Khasnabish describe a 'radical imagination' that emerges from the experience of people working together to imagine alternate futures that can challenge power today (Haiven and Khasnabish 2014). When applied to the field of mapping, the radical imagination can galvanise social movements within spaces of struggle by invoking a speculation that begins with the simple question 'what if?'. This invocation of the imagination suggests relinquishing one of the map's core functions, to orientate and prevent ourselves getting lost. The idea of entering new spaces without knowing where we are, but instead imagining where we want to be, feels boldly at odds with digital mapping apps and devices whose function it is to ensure this very outcome never occurs. By facilitating an alternate way of navigating the world (Firman and Virchow 2021) maps act "like laboratories" (Guattari 2011, 172), by forging new connections. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari argue that it is these qualities that distinguish the map from a 'tracing' that instead replicates existing representations, reinforcing existing ways of looking at the world (Deleuze and Guattari 1980).

In a state of constant 'becoming', the work of the map assumes open-ended qualities as it is "made to do work in the world [...] by inscribing territory, shaping discourse, producing knowledge, informing and framing decision making" (Kitchin et al. 2012, 481). In this role the map shifts from being an object that is representational (Cartesian), or post-representational (critical mapping), to one that is processual (counter-mapping). The ontology of the map becomes distinctly, productively, unstable.

2.4.5 Counter-mapping, Filmmapping, and the gallery

This final section brings analysis together to ask how counter-mapping can animate strategies of Filmmapping in the gallery space.

I have traced the shift in map art from practices that are representational (Cartesian), to post-representational (critical mapping), to processual (counter-mapping). Overlaying these shifts onto non-fiction filmmaking, the movement of practices from representation to post-representation emerges clearly in filmmaking approaches that foreground the subjectivity of the artist and the artificiality of the film image. To extend from this position and mirror the shift in mapping from post-representational to processual requires a reflection back on where this analysis began. Drawing on Latour's framework of the immutable mobile, I established the properties that maps and (landscape) non-fiction film share and the ways in which as 2D objects they do their work on the world by shaping 3D space. To mirror map-art's embrace of a processual practice is to also mirror its ambitions of using the medium as one that can not only represent space but also shape it. As with processual mapping, this extends beyond an interrogation of the epistemology of film to question documentary's ontological underpinnings. Drawing focus away from the film object and towards the processes of filmmaking creates an ontogenetic understanding that the film object is in a constant state of becoming.

Filmmapping is a framework that seeks to deconstruct the relations between filmmaker-curator-institution that are bound up within the film object. In doing so, it prises open the art object and foregrounds the role of the spectator in helping to realise the work. Co-produced at the point of consumption, the film's meanings and its referents are fluid, 'becoming' only at the point of reception (Kitchin et al. 2013) and in relation to factors as diverse as the spectator's worldview, knowledge and fluency in film language, and their locational context (the "frame of representation" they bring to the work (Hedges 1991, 35)). By prising open the art object and keeping the artwork in a constant state of becoming, a Filmmapping methodology can help to challenge the ontological security of the film, a reflection of the processual underpinnings of counter-mapping.

2.5 What is Filmmapping?

This final section of this contextual review unfolds in two steps. The first summarises the investigation undertaken into the context from which Filmmapping emerges, one that sits at the intersection between the disciplines of artists' film, curatorial practice, and mapping. The second uses this context to form a definition for Filmmapping. In completing these steps, this final section concludes my response to the first question of the research: (i) What is Filmmapping and from which context does it emerge?

2.5.1 From what context does Filmmapping emerge?

The first part of this investigation established the film genre around which Filmmapping is designed, locating it within the specific field of (landscape) artists' non-fiction film. To arrive at this term, the research explored art's overlap with documentary to highlight how diverse fictional strategies are employed by artists to reframe or contest narratives around nonfiction subjects. To establish that a film can still be defined as non-fiction despite the presence of fiction, I argued that rather than questioning the fictionality or otherwise of individual images within a film, focus should instead be placed on the meaning that emerges between them. Gilles Deleuze argues that it is from this void, or interstice, that meaning emerges and from where it can be inferred that the authorial intentions of the artist can be found (1989). Responding to the idea of the interstice, I focused on the hyphen sometimes employed to separate the compound 'nonfiction' into the less commonly used terms of 'non-fiction'. I argued this hyphen could function to represent the interstice between the qualities of nonfiction and fiction, creating an understanding of a term that sits either side of the hyphen. I end my analysis by locating new non-fiction film in relation to the genre's arrival in the art institution around the year 2000. This leads me to prefix the term 'non-fiction film' with the word 'artists'' to firmly locate the term within the purview of the arts.

This definition was subsequently placed in contact with landscape to define a significant sub-genre of film I have named (landscape) artists' non-fiction film. Through analysis that took place at the intersection of filmmaking and humanistic geography, I defined landscape as a concept that exists outside of an externalised or objective understanding of physical geography, suggesting it should be understood instead as an internalised subject of the mind shaped by human experience and social connection. This understanding creates the conditions for a double movement between landscape and film. In one direction, I demonstrated the role landscape could play by not only providing a setting for a film but by taking on the characteristics of a protagonist, actively shaping narrative and form (Lefebvre 2007). While in the other direction, it was established that representations of landscape in film could also actively shape those spaces in reality by prefiguring relations and expectations of place. Using analysis from this opening section, I argued that in bringing strategies from mapping into contact with filmmaking, a Filmmapping methodology

should present a distinct approach to interpreting the landscape within which a film operates. This could enable three primary outcomes: (i) shaping and defining the construction of a landscape-protagonist and its role in relation to a film's broader themes (ii) illuminating the relationship between the filmmaker and their chosen landscape-subject (iii) drawing attention to the opportunities and responsibilities that portrayals of landscape on film have on shaping space in reality.

In the subsequent section I attended to Filmmapping and its relation to exhibition practices. I explained how the presentation of artists' film in the gallery has been characterised by one of two technological modes of display. The first embraces the role of the institution in 'saving' the vestiges of commercial cinema, a status reflected in the increased pervasiveness of flickering images in the gallery that emanate from 16mm projectors (Elsaesser 2018). The second leverages the history of film as one of spectacle and entertainment by filling the cavernous architecture of contemporary art spaces with high-resolution, digitally projected images (Balsom 2013). In either of these orientations, the film object prescribes the conditions of its display and reception, in the process setting particular relations between the filmmaker, the curator, and the institution (Bishop 2012). This was shown to leave little participatory stake for the spectator in the realisation of the work, an outcome that manifests itself in the orientation of the screening room. Here, the projected image acts to immobilise the spectator, de-materialising the body from its physical surroundings and transporting it to an elsewhere through the portal of the screen.

To respond to the stasis of the viewer, I turned to an investigation into modes of spectatorship with a focus on both cognitive and embodied approaches. Through this analysis, I constructed the idea of 'in-between' spaces that exist between the spectator and the film object in the exhibition space. In relation to cognitive modes of spectatorship, I applied Rancière's concept of distance to highlight relations between the filmmaker and the spectator, and the filmmaker and their subject in the landscape (2011). I argued that if transparency can be brought to these relations through Filmmapping, opportunities are provided for the spectator to locate their own positionality 'in between' these exchanges. In regard to embodied modes of spectatorship, I outlined the concept of 'posture' (Mota 2023) as a corporeal curator that operates across the 'in-between' spaces astride the spectator and the screen, the spectator and the exhibition architecture, and the spectator and other spectators. Through a process of mutual interaction, the body affects, and becomes subject to affect, in this process. I discussed how architectural responses to deconstruction could be applied to place the material of the exhibition space in contact with the film-art-object to create these kinds of 'in-between' spaces. I concluded this section by arguing that a methodology animated by Filmmapping must attend to both affective and cognitive modes of spectatorship.

In the third section, I looked at filmmaking and its relationship to cartography. I traced the shift in map-arts from practices that are representational

(Cartesian) to post-representational (critical mapping), to processual (counter-mapping). Overlaying these shifts onto non-fiction filmmaking, the movement of practices from representation to post-representation emerges in filmmaking approaches that foreground the subjectivity of the artist and the artificiality of the film image. To extend from this position and mirror the shift in mapping from post-representational to processual draws focus away from the film object and towards the processes of filmmaking. This focus on 'process' shaped my subsequent analysis as I put Filmmapping forward as an approach to deconstruct relations between the filmmaker-curator-institution that are traditionally bound up in the film object. By prising the art object open, I argued opportunities are created to foreground the role of the spectator in helping realise the work. Co-produced at the point of reception, the meaning of the artwork can take on a pliability, 'becoming' only in relation to the spectator's own positionality. By holding the artwork in a perpetual state of becoming, I concluded that a Filmmapping methodology can help challenge the ontological security of the film, a reflection of the processual underpinnings of counter-mapping.

2.5.2 Definition of Filmmapping

With an understanding of the underpinnings of Filmmapping, I conclude this chapter with its definition.

By bringing non-fiction filmmaking into contact with mapping, Filmmapping offers a framework within which to realign the relations between the filmmaker, their subject, and the spectator in the gallery. The framework applies methodologies from mapping to enable a close reading of the respective locations of each party while focusing on the entanglement of relations that exist between them. This information can in turn be employed to re-orientate these relations, providing potential benefits within the filmmaking and curatorial processes. This map-enabled reading of space can, first, offer the filmmaker a navigational aid to orientate their own position to relations that unfold in the subject-landscape. This can be beneficial in shaping both how the filmmaker understands their subject and how they choose to portray it. Further, immersing the filmmaking process in the spatial language of mapmaking offers a bridge into the spatial practices of exhibition-making. This process provides an opportunity for the filmmaker and curator to reorientate this entanglement of relations to take account of the locational context of the exhibition space and the spectator. This site-specificity can foreground the participatory potential of the spectator in helping to realise the work, diffusing documentary narratives shaped by singular authorship and the unidirectional movement of information from filmmaker to spectator. Opening the artwork up to a diversity of spectator interpretations challenges singular meanings: the film-art-object is transformed from one defined by completeness and stability to one that is left in a perpetual state of becoming. This adoption of a fluid and unstable meaning can dispute documentary's historical fidelity to plenitude and completion, thus challenging the ontological foundations of the wider discipline itself.

2.5.3 Concluding note

This contextual review has responded to the first question of this research:

1. What is Filmmapping and from which context does it emerge?

It has created a definition for Filmmapping by attending to the intersection between the fields of documentary and artists' non-fiction film, curatorial practice, and mapping. Further, it has set out the qualities required of a Filmmapping methodology. The research carries this knowledge forward into the next two chapters and the definition of two methodologies designed to animate Filmmapping, (i) Territorymapping and (ii) Pointmapping.

Notes

[1] *Hello Dankness* operates at the bridge between cinema and post-cinema. On the one hand, its focus on cinema's archive offers a love letter to the traditions of the medium, while on the other its reliance on innovatory post-production techniques locates the film within the realm of the post-cinematic. An object "thoroughly transformed by the operation of computational processing" (Denson 2020, 2).

[2] Herzog scripted scenes in the film such as asking the scientists to peer into the ice as if looking at a lost city.

[3] I don't want to draw this analysis any closer to Harun Farocki's concept of the operational image (2000), as these are landscape-pictures produced for cinema rather than for the algorithmic processes commonly associated with today's operational image.

[4] 2012: Elizabeth Price; 2013: Laure Prouvost; 2014: Duncan Campbell; 2018: Charlotte Prodger; 2019: Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Helen Cammock, Tai Shani, and Oscar Murillo (joint winners, Oscar Murillo was the only artist not to employ a film element within their work)

[5] Zachary Horton uses the term 'resolution' to explain this relationship: a cinematic descriptor that links the ability of the map to indicate distance with its ability to show detail (2021, 15).

[6] Including those that Bruno asserts may include the patriarchal binds of particular spaces.

[7] Bruno primarily uses the word 'emotion' over what would in contemporary debate more likely be called 'affect', a decision that can be attributed to the theorist's ambition to forge a link to the idea of 'motion'.

[8] Greg M Smith writes that it has been widely established "that body postures can affect emotional experiences" (Smith 2003, 26).

[9] "Affects are precisely these nonhuman becomings of man, just as percepts [...] are nonhuman landscapes of nature" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 169).

[10] Such as in Margaret Pearce's *Coming Home* (2017), a project that restores historic place names to regions of Turtle Island.

Chapter Three
Territorymapping

3.1 Context for Territorymapping

Territorymapping was developed in contact with the production of the work *For the Record* by Phanuel Antwi and Rhea Storr, a film installation commissioned as part of my role as a curator at *transmediale* festival in Berlin (2021). The process for Territorymapping is laid out according to three stages: (1) Compose the Territory, (2) Define the Legend, and (3) Set the Modality.

As a part of my process for reflecting-in-action across the research period, I have previously presented themes from this text within a range of academic contexts. The first of these opportunities arose at the peer-reviewed film conference Visible Evidence, held in Gdansk, Poland in August 2022 as part of a panel conversation with artist-filmmaker Maud Craigie and researcher Rebecca Smith. The second opportunity emerged in December 2022 when I was invited to present my work as part of a residency facilitated by researchers Chloé Galibert-Laîné and Johannes Binotto at HSLU Lucerne University. Finally, an earlier version of this text was accepted for publication in May 2023 for a special edition of the peer-reviewed journal *Arts* edited by Kate Mondlach (James 2023). The text below emerges from these processes of reflection-in-action.

3.2 Introduction

For the Record is a call-and-response exchange between London-based filmmaker Rhea Storr and Vancouver-based writer and artist Phanuel Antwi that resonates from opposing ends of the gallery space (Figure 3.1). Navigating through 150 individual photographs, the two makers reinterpret each other's practice and sense of place, advancing a form of diasporic archive told through the bonds of Black kinship. Commissioned in 2021 as part of my role as a film curator at *transmediale* festival in Berlin, this artist's non-fiction film helped provide a framework around which to develop the process of Territorymapping. *For the Record* emerges from a place of refusal: a rejection of the "fiction of empires and self-creation", the work positions itself "elsewhere to create new centres, foci and spaces" (Antwi and Storr 2021). Mapping is deeply entwined with these ongoing colonial histories and is a discipline that continues to be employed to help control spaces and their people. As a colonial tool, mapping is never representative but is instead productive of power relations (Mason-Deese 2020). Bending, hacking, or subverting the tool of mapping can, however, speak to the refusal manifested within *For the Record*, offering a method to initiate an alternate dialogue with a space. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari draw a distinction between a map and a tracing, arguing that while a tracing replicates power structures that already exist, reinforcing singular ways of looking at the world, mapping can provide a process capable of revealing alternate understandings of space and power. By encouraging us to "make a map, not a tracing", Deleuze and Guattari reanimate mapping as a discipline capable of opening up the new centres and foci *For the Record* points us towards (1980, 13).

Figure 3.1 Phanuel Antwi and Rhea Storr, *For the Record* (2021), *transmediale* Studio. Photo © 2021 Ben Evans James.

The development of Territorymapping draws from the production process of *For the Record* to arrive at three interconnected terms linked to mapmaking: 'territory', 'legend', and 'modality'.

1. The territory of a map can be understood as the relationship between a defined geographical area and its representation. In filmmaking, the concept allows us to consider the relationships that exist between the filmmaker(s), the subject(s), and place(s).
2. The legend of a map is its key. In filmmaking, the legend can be understood as a set of codes that navigate the spectator into and through the work.
3. The modality of a map determines how its data is visualised. In filmmaking, it considers how diverse film production technologies and processes mediate how the territory of a map is aestheticised and the resulting effect on our understanding of its subject.

3.3 Rhea Storr and Phanuel Antwi

Rhea Storr is an artist and researcher whose work explores the representation of Black and mixed-race cultures. Carnival as a site of refusal and subversion is an ongoing theme in Storr's work, surfacing in her films *Here is the Imagination of the Black Radical* (2020), *Bragging Rights* (2019), and *A Protest, A Celebration, A Mixed Message* (2018). In the last of these, Storr addresses the performative role projected upon Black bodies by onlookers at Leeds Carnival; standing against the backdrop of a pastoral scene at the film's *dénouement*, the filmmaker's motionless body, in full carnival dress, refuses and defies the expectations of animation placed upon them by the spectator.

Phanuel Antwi is an artist, writer, and Canada Research Chair in Black Arts and Epistemologies. Antwi works with text, dance, and film, intervening in artistic, academic, and public spaces to explore concerns of race, intimacy, and struggle. After my first meeting with Antwi, the artist invited me to watch a working edit of a film he co-directed with artist Lesley Loksi Chan, *Sort Of* (2020, development title). Taking the form of an African-Asian Futurist work, *Sort Of* features two primary protagonists who land on Earth from a far-off

place and time. In the version of the film I viewed, the narrative unfolds through a succession of vignettes in which the protagonists familiarise themselves with their unfamiliar new environment through a series of conversations with prominent Black and Asian scholars, artists, and thinkers.[1] Located between these dialogically driven vignettes, the pair embark on a range of performances that entangle their bodies with the material of their environment in Ontario, Canada. Through gestures and movements expressed in their stillness, Antwi offers a performance of refusal against the "tendency to read performance and Blackness only in terms of hyperness" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021) and of Black bodies represented through a singular mode of broadcast.

Through clear points of connection between their practices, an introduction between Antwi and Storr quickly developed into a discussion around the potential of the artists to produce a collaborative work for *transmediale* as part of the festival's 2021 programming. The analysis below spans the following eight months as the work was imagined, produced, and installed in our respective roles: Antwi and Storr as artists and myself as curator. The resulting work, *For the Record*, was presented at *transmediale* in the festival's new studio space in Berlin between April and June 2021. The work, which unfolds over 48 minutes, exists somewhere between a film, a performance, and a conversation, which led Antwi to quip, "when we finished the work, we weren't quite sure what we'd done. We were joking saying 'I guess it's a film because it's got images, it's got audio, and it's got dialogue'" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021). The images Antwi mentions take the form of black-and-white still photographs taken in the artists' respective hometowns of Vancouver and London. The dialogue brings together scripted and non-scripted conversations between Antwi and Storr that ebb and flow between the prosaic and poetic. *For the Record* draws from Black scholarship, poetry, and music, including the writing of Christina Sharpe, Dionne Brand, Sylvia Winton, Stuart Hall, Robin Kelley, Édouard Glissant, and Toni Morrison, and the music and dub poetry of Jean "Binta" Breeze, Linton Kwesi Johnson, and Lillian Allen. While analysis of *For the Record* steps into areas of Black arts and epistemologies, the subject of this text is the application of mapping to curatorial practices, and it therefore only draws on these subjects when they are relevant to its core focus.

3.4 Compose the Territory

The ‘territory’ of a map can be understood as the relationship between a defined geographical area and its representation. Transposed onto filmmaking, the territory speaks to relationships that exist between the filmmaker(s), their subject(s), and place(s). There are three stages in this process: Framing the Territory by examining the role of image technologies in surveying; (re)Framing the Territory by exploring the role of editing technologies in forming the filmmakers’ narrative of the territory, and (re)Locating the Territory by analysing the conflicts and opportunities that arise when the rendering of a territory through an artwork is relocated to an alternate location as an exhibition.

3.4.1 Framing the Territory

> “Far away is close at hand in images of elsewhere”
>
> —Graffiti, author unknown, Paddington Station, London, 1970s

Located in London and Vancouver, respectively, Storr and Antwi are based in cities undergoing persistent waves of property speculation, development, and gentrification. Equipping these processes, the architectural site survey adopts ever-new technological photographic processes to produce aerial images that distance the built environment of the city from the people who inhabit it (Brackenbury 2023). Drone photography, lidar scans, and satellite imagery capture the expansive, macroscopic view of the city, rendering its materiality through hyper-real images that leave its localised micro-histories buried below, out of sight, and pixelated at the street level. Through a fidelity to measurement, these technologies attempt to dematerialise the human body that “constantly contaminates the possibility of objectivity and precision, ultimately meaning that the ideal democracy from the perspective of metrology is totally devoid of humans” (Wagner in Litvintseva et al. 2022). In *For the Record*, Antwi and Storr take up this tension between the human and the metric, investigating their subject at street level using portable cameras that challenge the totalising image perspectives of the site survey – photographs produced alongside and in solidarity with local Black communities in their respective cities. The resulting images divulge a space seen from within, a landscape “anchored in human life, not something to look at but to live in” (Lefebvre 2007). These informal photos display the energy and immediacy of the snapshot, capturing “the movement and chaos of modern urban life in visual form” (Fineman 2004) by embracing a photographic style that is sometimes grainy, incorrectly exposed, erratically framed, and with elements out of focus. With the snapshot, Antwi and Storr create an aesthetic form for the territory that brings to the surface a particular set of relationships between the built environment and its inhabitants (Figure 3.2).

In London, Storr took photos using a handheld 35mm film camera; the images capture the dark winter nights punctured by the intense light emitted from streetlights, tube signs, or passing buses. Using a high-speed film (Ilford Delta 3200), the contrast gives a texture and grain to the image that feels 'of' London. These are images in which we cannot always make out what is happening in the shadows, of public spaces where people navigate with purpose through the cold winter night. By comparison, Antwi took his images using a contemporary mirrorless digital camera. Aware of the potential aesthetic discrepancy between the output of the two cameras, Antwi adopted what he called an "analogue" way of working (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021). Ruling out the use of post-production software such as Photoshop, the artist talks about an embodied process of working while taking photos, a Merleau-Pontian presence of the body as he contorts to locate the composition and frame the territory. Antwi's images reveal a Vancouver I have grown to know having partially relocated here, one where glass buildings are razed to the ground to build ever-higher glass buildings and developer speculation runs rife. When Antwi talks of Vancouver as a loud city, he speaks of his camera in terms of a microphone picking up light. By this definition, Vancouver is a deafening city, its glass and steel leaving few places for tranquillity to take hold.

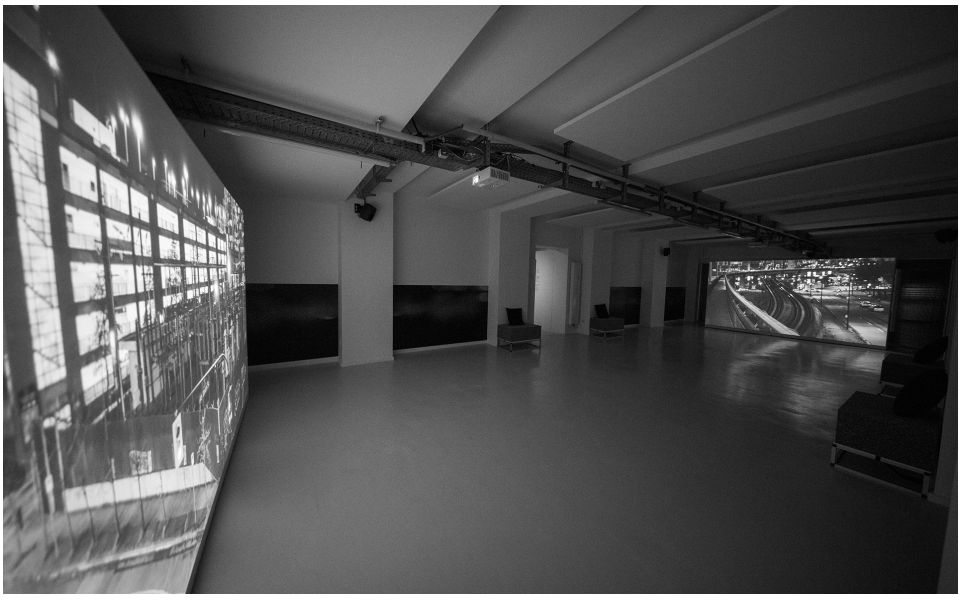

Figure 3.2 Phanuel Antwi and Rhea Storr, *For the Record* (2021), *transmediale* Studio. Photo © 2021 Ben Evans James.

Taking photos at night was an unfamiliar act for both Antwi and Storr, the darkness distancing the artists and causing them to sense their neighbourhoods in new ways while attuning their focus. These are images that are psychogeographic, pacing out the borders of a territory through a Situationist-like photographic *dérive*. The snapshots have the feel of the everyday, of unremarkable spaces that belie the rich strata of Black histories hidden within. The territory gains form through the frame of the lens: a 16:9 aspect on the world whose language stretches back as far as 18th-century landscape painters such as Gainsborough and Turner (Lefebvre 2007). In this photographic landscape, the artists never reveal their own bodies: the camera

separates the experience of the body behind it from those photographed. Storr's works have, in the past, used the camera's field of view to question the visibility of Black bodies in public space; in the production of *For the Record*, Antwi talks about the camera almost as a prop that legitimised the visibility of his own body in public space at night.

Revealing traces of Black history within their home cities, Antwi and Storr map more than the territories' physical attributes. Capturing snatched fragments of life, their images uncover "the various hidden forces that underlie the workings of a given place" (Corner 2011, 90). In this sense, their work is less a practice of data collection and more one of "relational reasoning" (Corner 2011, 89). Demarcating the territory using this method resists processes of erasure by foregrounding markers of Black presence(s) that may not always be immediately visible, "so the archive becomes both official and unofficial, it becomes the space, the space holds the memory" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021). Antwi refers here to a territory that is socially produced and owned. The geographer Henri Lefebvre (1991) argued that space is a social product formed at the intersection of the built environment, the associated discourses, and the lived experience of those who interact within the space. The territory then is defined by a set of relationships between that community and the material reality of the city, a practised place of Black histories that may have "been purposefully hidden or narrated in a way which is not easy to access anymore" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021). For Antwi, building community relationships with those who can speak of local Black histories can reactivate the site by "keeping track of what the city is trying to get rid of" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021).

However, where the camera surveys, foregrounding Black histories that need to be told, it can also surveil. As Susan Sontag has reminded us, "cameras define reality in the two ways essential to the workings of an advanced industrial society: as a spectacle (for the masses) and as an object of surveillance (for rulers)" (1977, 225). *For the Record* resists both these outcomes but, in doing so, must grapple with the question: "how do you move through (neighbourhoods) in a way which is not going to replicate the thing which you are making work against?" (Storr in Antwi et al. 2021). This raises matters of relationships and ethics: is the work extractive, or is it made in collaboration with the community it seeks to highlight? Or perhaps more pertinent to mapping, what of a territory should be revealed and what should remain hidden? Antwi and Storr's snapshots materialise a territory of multi-scaled relationships between the artists, their cities, and the communities that reside (and resided) within them amid gentrification's erasure of histories and displacing of peoples.

3.4.2 Framing the Territory: For the Record design analysis part 1

In response to the artists' use of the analogue 35mm snapshot to frame the territory and its language, the first exhibition plan included a 35mm slide projector (Figure 3.3). The slide projector came into widespread use in the 1950s as a home entertainment device around which communities could gather; its use here was intended to invoke this conviviality and the informality of Antwi and Storr's snapshots.

Temporally, the suggestion of a slide projector in the design implies a rhythm in how the work unfolds, one where photographs would proceed at a consistent speed as they are shuttled through the gate of the projector, the distinctive mechanical sound alluding to the firing of a camera shutter. In this first plan, the images and audio would have drifted in and out of sync, their meanings fluctuating depending on the context of display within the conversation. This automated montage was intended to shape a particular understanding of the territory, an ever-changing, kaleidoscopic representation where each photograph "fragments space, breaks down the setting of the action, and thereby expands it" (Lefebvre 2007). At this early stage of production, the work was considered more dialogical than visual. "We like the idea of single images being an occasional presence in the room", Storr noted at the time (Storr 2020a). These design ideas convey an idea of the work as a piece of audio-cinematography or "expanded audio discussion" (Antwi 2020), with just a single projection shown against a freestanding wall providing a kind of metronome for the conversation.

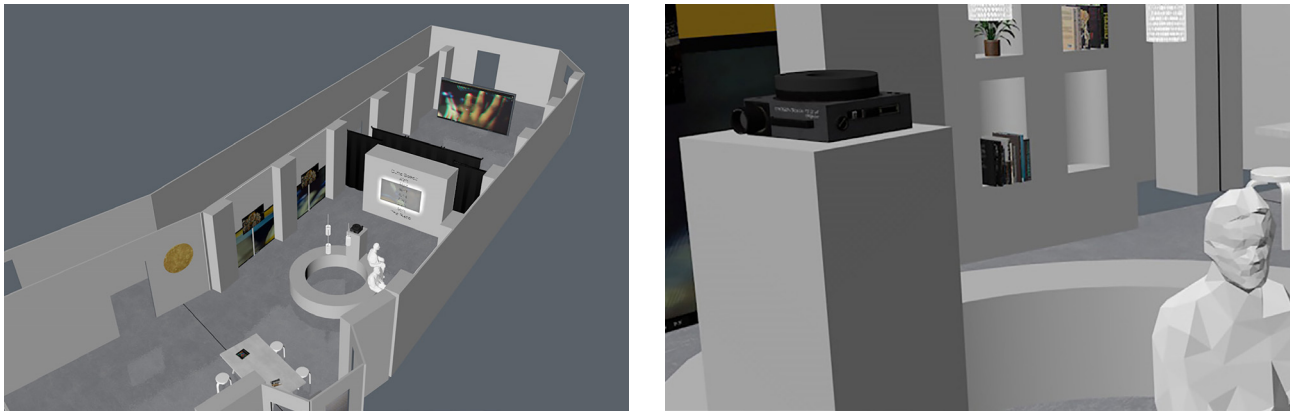

Figure 3.3 The use of a 35mm slide projector in the space. 3D drawing 2021 Ben Evans James.

Spatially, the suggestion of a slide projector created constraints for the size of the image in the space (Figure 3.3a). This size was considered primarily in relation to the low lumen count of the beam it emitted and the ambient light of the space. While the attempt to mirror the technology of Storr and Antwi's 35mm snapshot with a 35mm projector may have created a kind of fidelity to the analogue medium or processes, this would have been at the expense of the form of the images themselves. The framing of the territory, carefully mapped by Antwi and Storr at the human scale, would have been diminished in size, disrupting the parity between the artists' own bodies, the subjects, and the spectators.

These first-stage designs allowed Antwi, Storr, and me to identify the need to re-mediate the image from analogue projection to digital. Through digital projection, a larger image could be presented in the exhibition space, replicating the territory at a 1:1 scale and the specific view of Antwi and Storr when the shutter of the camera was pressed.

This ignited a discursive process in which the 3D renderings of space through CAD drawings and the 2D renderings of time through the film edit ebbed and flowed between one another as the work developed. It is important to clarify that defining this as a discursive process is, in this case, not the same as defining it as a collaboration. The design work I undertook was always in response to, and led by, the themes developed in the work by Antwi and Storr.

3.4.3 (Re)Framing the Territory: The role of image-making technologies in forming the territory

The previous section, Framing the Territory, has outlined the decisions taken by Antwi and Storr to give form to the territory and foreground certain relationships. This section, (re)Framing the Territory, progresses by examining how the selection of certain images and the order in which they appear (through a film-editing process) sets up new relations in which alternate readings of the territory can take place. Deleuze and Guattari show us that when defining a territory, we should not present a mirror image of a space but rather a productive translation of it. Drawing a distinction between a map and a tracing, they argue that a tracing replicates power structures that already exist, reinforcing singular ways of looking at the world, while in contrast, mapping sets forth an exploration where alternate meanings can emerge; “what distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely orientated towards an experimentation in contact with the real” (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, 72). Mapping is “not simply the indiscriminate listing and inventorying of conditions as in a tracing” (Corner 2011, 95) but a strategic process that can reveal relational structures: an artificial construction based on the subjective experiences of what the mapmaker ‘sees’ (or what they choose to see) that mediates between reality and representation.

In *For the Record*, the territory traced through the lens becomes ‘mapped’ through the proceeding selection of images, a process that involves an administrative categorisation of images alongside a speculative, creative act that detaches each photograph from the sequence of the physical film strip or digital memory card. Once detached, photographs can be studied, manipulated, and networked, with other associations constructed; relationships can be attended to. Akin to sculpting down a block of marble, this process removes excess material to find film form, bringing to mind the popular maxim that documentary films are made in the edit (Bricca 2018). Bringing photos together disrupts the individual image’s operation by introducing temporality and the suggestion of narrative. While the editing of photographic or filmic images might be considered an intimate process (here, we can think of the film editor

immersed behind a screen in the darkened editing suite), there is always a silent collaborator wrestling for control of the images and the narrative – the spectator. Within the mode of operation of the work, the filmmaker must consider the agency they wish to grant to the spectator in editing the images within the gallery space and, subsequently, how the physical staging of the space might enable that agency. The question becomes, through exhibition design and staging, is the spectator tracing the territory as defined by the filmmaker, or are they being given the tools to construct their own?

In *For the Record*, Antwi and Storr navigate outwards from their own photographs using the unmarked territory between images as a productive site of inquiry: at one end Storr's grain-pocked images of London and at the other Antwi's digital renderings of Vancouver. The territory between is blank – a non-space. While the decision to shoot at night reduces the distance between the aesthetics of Antwi and Storr, it also acts as a filter that reveals the differences between the artists' respective urban settings. Observing city dwellers walking, phenomenologist Franz Xaver Baier remarked on how it was not possible to see how each individual organised space: "we do not see what is disclosed and closed off to them, what has meaning and what does not" (Baier 2020, 95). Through images, Antwi and Storr explore and reveal each other's interior world, or what Baier would call 'situational space', the "state of space which mediates a given, universal reality with our own specific circumstances" (Baier 2020, 89). Using an edit of images as a context to a conversation and a negotiation, the artists analyse each other's sense of place as a method to assemble their diasporic archive, "built out of a desire, not always to belong but to work through belonging" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021). The territory between the images becomes the scaffolding that holds the diasporic archive, a collaborative, responsive, and pliable space that refuses the physicality of the museum archive and the objectification of the truths it claims to represent.

Through the artists' exchange, the organisational logic (the legend) of the archive unfolds. It is then the spectator's task to decode this logic to navigate between the shared photographic images and draw out their own map. By asking the spectator to draw threads, the work places the spectator in the lacuna between the images, the space of productive inquiry from where the work was imagined. Like treading water, the spectator must labour, constantly repositioning themselves among the images and dialogue between Antwi and Storr. The exhibition design sought to provide navigational devices to define the borders of the territory to the spectator, finding material and spatial strategies that could mirror the physical distance between the artists, between London and Vancouver, and between the celluloid film and projected digital images that represented them.

3.4.4 (Re)Framing the Territory: For the Record design analysis part 2

Analysis in (re)Framing the Territory has explored how the editing process sets out certain relationships as individual photographs are placed in association with the image(s) before them and the image(s) after them. Deconstructing this editing process identifies the organisational logic applied to the work by the artists, allowing us to question how and where the spectator might be let into the work and what role they might have in helping realise its themes. Is the spectator tracing the territory as defined by Antwi and Storr, or are they being given the agency in the exhibition space to draw out their own map? We return here to the initial floor plans: the centre of the space showed seating 'in the round' with three speakers hung above: one for Antwi's voice, one for Storr's, and one for the underlying sound design (Figure 3.4). Separating these tracks within the space prompts a consideration of a sense of spatialisation of the territory, representing the distinct locations of production of the artists in London and Vancouver. The spectator was asked to position their body towards a certain directional speaker, a design decision that enables the spectator to construct their own 'maps' of the territory from which alternate meanings can emerge. With the visitor encouraged to position themselves under different speakers, this floorplan ruptured the traditional cinematic mode of presentation and its sense of spectator immersion. Sound and image would have come together in different formations as spectators would have been empowered to rework the content of the film over and over into new orientations, with agency passing from the artists to the audience.

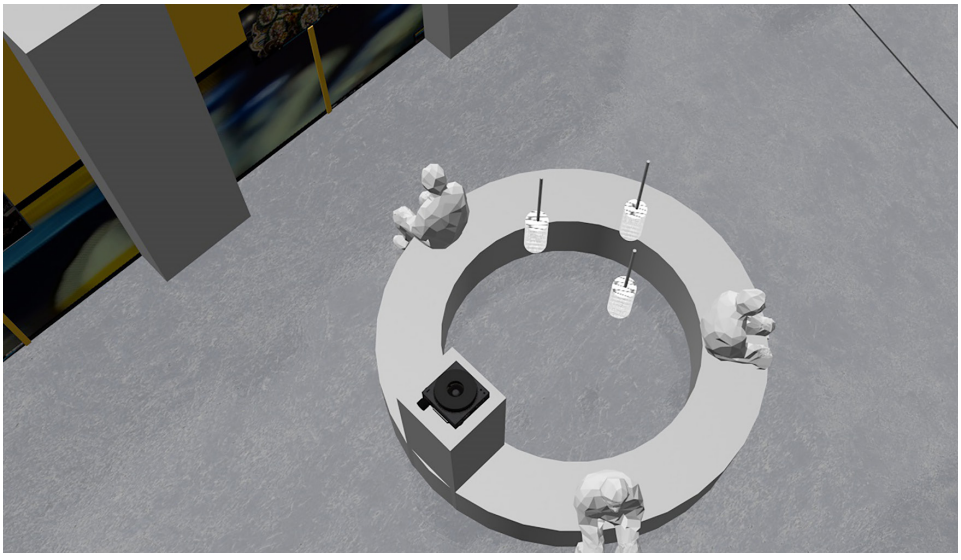

Figure 3.4 Speakers operating in the round. 3D drawing 2021 Ben Evans James.

Reflecting on these drawings, it is clear that the transfer of agency sat uneasily with the intimate conditions within which the work was made. As *For the Record*'s themes unfold through the artists' interpersonal relations, placing these in the background to empower the spectator would not only have changed the operation of the work but also destroyed the very scaffolding upon

which their diasporic archive is constructed. The subsequent design concept handed control back to the artists through the use of a call-and-response mechanism, offering a mode of operation for the work that Antwi highlighted as "a method of exchange that Black folks have mobilised as an aesthetic form of work" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021).

Within the design, the call-and-response mechanism is realised and spatialised through two screens and two speakers facing one another from opposing ends of the gallery (Figure 3.5a,b). The distance between the screens represents a marker of the remote geographies within which the work was produced, as Antwi's voice and images dwell at one end, and Storr's dwell at the other.

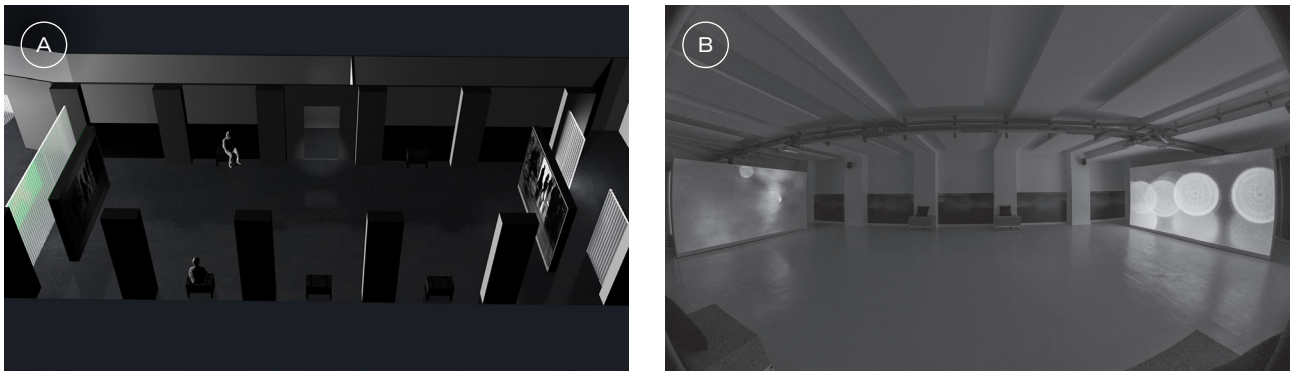

Figure 3.5 (**a**) Call-and-response realised through opposing projections. 3D drawing 2021 Ben Evans James; (**b**) Phanuel Antwi and Rhea Storr, *For the Record* (2021), *transmediale* Studio. Photo © 2021 Ben Evans James.

The geographer Jay Appleton posits that landscape art traditionally frames the territory as a place of refuge and, in doing so, relates a discrete community's survival to a particular aesthetic form, the 16:9 image (Appleton 1996). The photographs that make up *For the Record* maintain a link to this form, projected onto a screen that maintains this landscape format. Like the solid frame around a watercolour painting, the edges of the projection screen in the gallery hold the territory within its bounds (Figure 3.6a,b). There were no curatorial gestures to expand the territory outside this frame and into the architecture of the exhibition space in the manner of objects or artefacts that relate to the territory, for example. For the spectator, the result is a feeling of distance from the territory, of being on its exterior looking in rather than being immersed within.

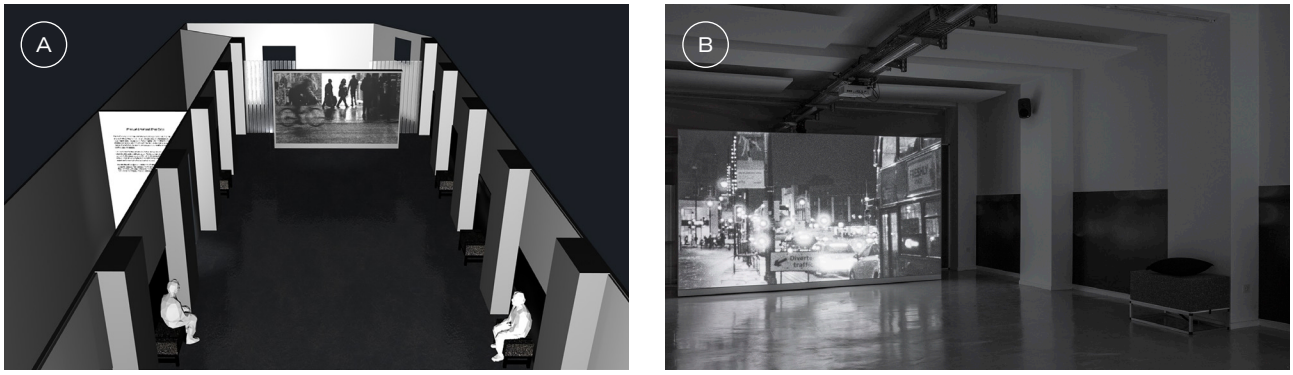

Figure 3.6 (**a**) Landscape view of the territory. 3d Drawing 2021 Ben Evans James; (**b**) Phanuel Antwi and Rhea Storr, *For the Record* (2021), *transmediale* Studio. Photo © 2021 Luca Girardini.

3.4.5 (Re)Locating the Territory

To recap, Framing the Territory showed how Antwi and Storr gave form to the territory and foregrounded certain relationships through snapshots, while (re) Framing the Territory examined how the edit – namely the selection of certain images and the order in which they appear – set up new relationships in which specific readings of the territory could take place subject to the spectator's labour. This third and final section of Compose the Territory looks at the role of the spectator in realising the work by analysing how the territory constructed by the artists relates to that of the location of the exhibition space, which is, in this case, the *transmediale* studio space in Berlin.

In *For the Record,* the territory was defined by Black histories in London and Vancouver, but its articulation at *transmediale* necessitated a consideration of "a triangulation of Black histories" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021) between not only these cities but also Berlin, where the exhibition took place. The intent of *For the Record* was not to project itself onto the Black German experience but rather to activate the site, "I would hope that in each space that it enters, that the work sits in, the traces of the Black histories in those neighbourhoods become more clear, and folks can actually hear those spaces more. So, yes, as much as I would want folks to know about the spaces we have archived, I'm more interested in triggering possibilities, or the awakening possibilities of our work" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021).

In this respect, the materialisation of the archive, not in filmic form, as, let us say, a single cinematic screening, but crucially in exhibition form, provided an object around which people can gather. *For the Record* then activated the exhibition space as an infrastructure that could materialise the archive by making it real for a period of time in an actual place (Midal 2019) – an archive resituated to Berlin where it opened out to a Black German experience and interpretation. This orientated the map, its territory opening out to new directions and bearings, to influence and be influenced by other locations and their particular Black histories.

Reflecting on the postcolonial use of 'haunting', Storr describes a work that, "rather than being overcome by what's happened historically" operated as a "ghost for future encounters" (Storr in Antwi et al. 2021), an archival object that moulds to the situation it needs to be in at that time or a work that can be a "witness to the present, provides information on the past and can mediate with a future" (Wiens 2019, 126). This opens up the possibility that the orientation of the map may change based on who, when, how, and where the work is presented. Such site-specificity exposes the work to conventions and discourse particular to the location, or, in the words of scenographer Sigrid Merx, it defines the "space as host, content as ghost" (Merx 2020, 155) (Figure 3.7). In this role, the gallery exceeds the function as a container of art to provide a social function, an "arena of exchange" (Bourriaud 2009, 17). The artwork is viewed as a relational object in which each element must be considered in

terms of the benefit or harm it may cause to all those entangled (Bourriaud 2009). In the case of *For the Record*, this is a "responsibility to the other that makes life possible for you" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021). Rather than aligning the organisation and staging of aural, visual, and material elements towards a singular message through the display of an artefact that carries only the artist's intention, the gallery can activate a plurality of relationships. The exhibition space, rather than becoming merely a backdrop, also takes an active role in inviting spectators to situate themselves within the work and in relation to their lived experience (Wiens 2019). Treating the design and staging of the space as one that can kindle intersubjectivity rather than as a direct communication has the capacity to generate "understanding through the sensual, emotional and aesthetic responses of the viewer" (Wiens 2019, 11).

Figure 3.7 "Space as host, content as ghost" (Merx 2020, 155). The *transmediale* Studio at Silent Green, Berlin. Photo © 2021 Luca Girardini.

The relationships that *For the Record* foregrounds exist both in time and in space:

- In space, *For the Record* establishes its territory through images that reveal not only a landscape but a set of relationships. It is these relationships that the spectator can translate into their own lived reality. Placing the spectator in the middle of the images orientates the spectator towards this active process of translation. If the exhibition were to take place in a different city (say, Storr's London or Antwi's Vancouver), the orientation of the spectator might need to be revisited to reflect a changed situational context.
- In time, *For the Record* represents the mapping of a territory at a particular point, establishing the territory as a physical space that gives rise to a certain set of relationships. It follows that at some point in the future, the work will represent something that will exist in a different

form. As the physical fabric of the territory changes, traces of former relations may remain while new ones stratify. At this point, *For the Record* becomes an archive of a place that may look to a different mode of presentation to generate a different mode of reception that speaks to future contemporary conditions. We can further elucidate this idea through Walter Benjamin's idea of the image's historical materialism (Benjamin 2010). Through Benjamin's construct, we can understand the emulsion, or pixels, of the image as holding traces of history. These traces can be understood only through the link between the photograph's moment of production in the past and its moment of consumption in the present (Cadava in Parpa 2018). Temporalities collapse, as the past, present, and future cannot be isolated (Cadava in Parpa 2018). Through staging, the exhibition environment presents an opportunity to suggest alternate correlations between these temporalities.

3.4.6 (Re)Locating the Territory: For the Record design analysis part 3

In (re)Locating the Territory, analysis has considered how the staging of space and exhibition design of *For the Record* was tied to specific spatial and temporal conditions. This recognises the artwork as a relational object: its realisation at the *transmediale* studio space site specific not only to the gallery but to Berlin at a particular point in time. In highlighting the artwork's relational capabilities, this analysis has considered how the activation of a filmic archive in a physical form might provide an object around which people can gather, triggering the possibilities that the work may influence, or be influenced by, a location and its particular histories.

The desire to manifest the archive found form in the exhibition environment through scale. In place of two light floating screens, two wooden structures were employed that held significant presence, a physicality that embodied the artists in the space (Figure 3.8). As highlighted previously, no curatorial gestures between the screens attempted to place London or Vancouver in discourse with Berlin. The screens sat adjacent to their host city, projecting elsewheres that relied on the spectators to translate the images into their own lived realities in Berlin.

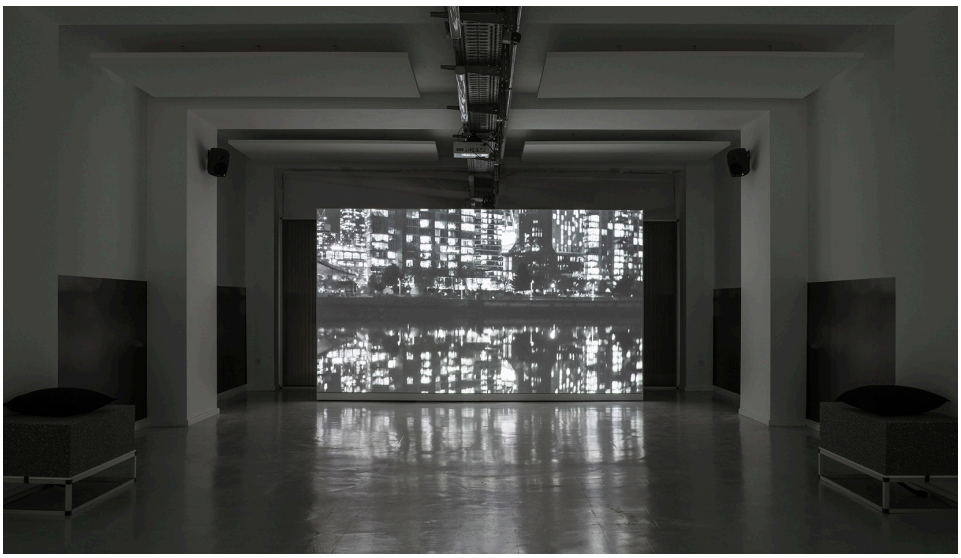

Figure 3.8 Phanuel Antwi and Rhea Storr, *For the Record* (2021), *transmediale* Studio. Photo © 2021 Luca Girardini.

3.5 Define the Legend

For the Record is an archive activated by the spatial and temporal conditions within which it is realised in the exhibition space, and in this regard it opens itself out to the spectator to not only sit alongside the work but to "move together" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021) with the artists. This invitation transports the work away from its existence in the gallery as an immutable depiction of the artists' vision towards a work that the spectator has an active role in realising. This collaboration is defined by the dynamic flow that relates the making of an image to its reception. In this flow, "energy is transmitted from what is filmed, through the camera and through the person who holds it, to the potentially infinite number of spectators who will appropriate the image in their own ways" (Galibert-Laîné 2022). The 'legend', which runs alongside a map, sets the rules of engagement for this interpretation. It is an anchor point that helps to determine the labour required from the spectator to 'read' the map and understand the organisational logic behind it.

3.5.1 Opacity

As a spectator, it is not always easy to find a way into *For the Record*; there are times when there is a feeling of eavesdropping on a personal conversation. When probed on this, Antwi points to moments of intersubjectivity between himself and Storr: "if intimacy is anything it is the sparest gesture that is being communicated between some two people that know each other, and then you access that, it could feel like you're eavesdropping" (Storr in Antwi et al. 2021). The spectator is distanced from the work, which, following Jacques Rancière's thinking, helps to generate the conditions for a subjective reading: "distance is not an evil to be abolished but the normal condition of any communication [...] [The spectator's emancipation] begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting" (Rancière 2007). Antwi speaks of this through

the lens of refusal, a resistance to explain certain ideas to the spectator: “The poet in me can sometimes be an ungenerous writer. And by that, I mean I want to keep doors open for folks to find an answer on their own, as opposed to constantly having the doors opened for them” (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021). In *For the Record*, to think through the work is to engage with the organisational logic behind its composition. “I put codes into the works and through relations, you get access, you get the keys to encode it. Once you have the relationship, you get the key, you get the password to decode something” (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021). In this sense, the ‘key’, or legend, is the mediator in the relationship between the filmmaker, the spectator, and the territory; it defines how transparent or opaque the themes of the work are to the viewer.

This refusal of transparency and realism and the embracing of opacity and artifice is identified by film theorists, including Erika Balsom (2017), Stella Bruzzi (2006), and Dara Waldron (2018) as a (not always to be celebrated) characteristic of modern artists’ non-fiction filmmaking. To contemplate the relationship between the territory mapped out in the images of *For the Record* and the spoken narrative between Antwi and Storr requires labour from the viewer. The viewer is asked to untangle the interpersonal relations that exist between the artists through a myriad of references to Black scholarship, poetry, and music related to the role of opacity in the work. Thinking particularly of Édouard Glissant’s *Poetics of Relation* (Glissant 1990), Storr reflects on her initial aspiration for transparency in the work and the problem this caused: “perhaps opacity is already present anyway, regardless of how transparent you think that you’re being, and so to deny that you’re denying other people access is kind of a disservice to them, because there will always be people who don’t have access to what you’re saying” (Storr in Antwi et al. 2021). Opacity, then, is a residue of the filmmaking process, a condition that radiates out from the filmmakers’ subjectivity. To try to remove it from the work is to try to collapse the distance between subjectivity and objectivity, a Sisyphean task. Being opaque might allow the work to operate in different ways depending on the spectator’s knowledge. Opacity becomes an artistic manoeuvre or device that prevents the work from stalling on matters of representation. “I think with a lot of works, which think about Blackness, they stumble on this initial question of who is it for, and who is it representing. And I think it’s good to not be kind of tied down by that question. Because sometimes it obscures what you really want to talk about” (Storr in Antwi et al. 2021).

In Walter Benjamin’s 1921 essay ‘The Task of the Translator’, the theorist defines the translation of one language into another as an art form (Benjamin 1992). Benjamin proposes that to produce close renderings of an original, a translator must adapt the translating language to ‘match’ the original. This adaptation means abandoning a word-for-word translation in favour of one that understands the frames of representation of the receiving language. Following Benjamin’s theory, an accurate filmic translation should never strive for transparency, a condition of documentary objectivity, but rather, it should ask whether the film is a valid translation: “more than asking what’s credible or authentic, we should think about what interests a documentary

serves" (Lamas 2016, 153). Benjamin's theory of translation implies that the pursuit of transparency, a 'word-for-word' translation of the real into a cinematic language, even if hypothetically achievable, would render it an inaccurate translation. By foregrounding the author's voice or subjectivity in the translation process, Benjamin's theory generates the potential for multiple realities and experiences to be acknowledged. Opacity, then, does not obfuscate truths but can rather provide a device for the authors to "get at the things that we want to get at and not stating it as the fact [...] but leaving room open for those many different voices" (Storr in Antwi et al. 2021). The "many different voices" Storr refers to are those represented by spectators who are given the means to translate the work into their own realities. Progressing Benjamin's argument forward, we should not expect that the filmic object will remain unchanged, as it is spatialised within the exhibition environment, as the flat plane of the video file adopts architectural form. This misrepresentation will occur not least due to one medium attempting to represent another, creating "asymmetries between two [...] the totality of the latter properties are not magically produced by the former" (Ponech 1999, 34).

In *The Emancipated Spectator*, Ranciére draws attention to the unseen labour of the sedentary spectator by defining their potential as "active interpreters, who render their own translation, who appropriate the story for themselves, and who ultimately make their own story out of it" (Rancière 2007). With projections placed at either end, the *transmediale* exhibition space, with its narrow form, presents the spectator with particular sightlines. Sitting on the benches placed against the wall, the spectator can comfortably view one screen while seeing the other only out of the corner of the eye. In this orientation, the spectator is forced to edit the images they see by the direction in which they look to produce meaning and labour as collaborators with the artists. Placing the spectator between two screens that cannot easily be read simultaneously challenges the photographic frame as a container for the artist's vision. Rather than viewing a singular image and working back to the artist's intention (Ingold 2000), the spectator is placed in an active role, producing meaning and labouring as a collaborator with the artists. Moving your eyes and the orientation of your ears heightens the feeling of eavesdropping on the conversation, a key operator of the work, as explored in our earlier analysis around opacity. Furthermore, the requirement placed on the viewer to partially edit together the work means that *For the Record* cannot be wholly experienced in one viewing, says Storr: "you can't see all of the images, some of the text is quite dense. I think it would be hard to really watch it one time through and get everything. So how long as a spectator would you have to spend with this work to really understand the kind of space and the mechanics and every little thing about it, I'm not sure that you could, and that's part of the work that it can't really be grasped or handled or re-contained in its totality" (Storr in Antwi et al. 2021). In my own experience, each time I have viewed the work, I piece together a different sequence of images in my mind, finding new associations and narratives between the over 150 individual photographs that make up the film.

In Sergei Eisenstein's 1945 essay *Neravnodushnaja priroda* ('Nonindifferent Nature') the filmmaker defines landscape as "the most flexible in conveying moods, emotional states and spiritual experiences" (Eisenstein 1987, 217). Drawing on Romanticism, Eisenstein compares the use of landscape in film to music in its ability to conduct the emotions of the spectator (Eisenstein as cited in Lefebvre 2007). Eisenstein's thinking highlights territory as an element that does more than simply provide a film's setting. Starting from this point, Lefebvre shows us that affect in landscape cinema (or we might say in images of the territory) is founded in the mode of spectatorship in which the viewer is placed (Lefebvre 2007). In 'narrative mode', the territory acts as a setting for events to unfold as the viewer is guided through the film in a linear fashion. In 'spectacular mode', the viewer drops out of narrative mode in order to reflect on the wider film spectacle and its themes. In *For the Record,* the interplay between sound and image plays between the tension of these modes. Images move between providing a setting for the conversation and existing as detached from the narrative, providing a broader context to the landscape or territory. It is in these moments that Lefebvre identifies the territory as a space that can exist beyond a narrative or aesthetic function and towards conveying identity and belonging (Lefebvre 2007).

Gaps in the conversation between Antwi and Storr are marked by silence or rhythmical sound design that revert the viewer to a 'spectacular' mode of viewing. Puncturing these *temps morts*, new threads of conversation between Antwi and Storr commence through a short, sharp, sample, '*shhh*', pulling the spectator back into narrative mode. The staging of the visual and aural components in the space draws attention to these modes. Scenographic gestures, including image size and the spectator's orientation to screens and speakers, and even the choice of seating (leaning back or sitting forward), present strategies for highlighting the body schema and pointing the visitor towards different modes of viewing.

3.5.2 Define the Legend: design analysis

The legend brings to the surface the mode of operation of the work. It offers us a translation device between the filmmaker, the territory, and the spectator. As part of this process, it asks us to consider the role of opacity within this translation process, specifically how transparent the themes of the work are and how opacity is being used productively to engage the spectator to interpret those themes. These interconnected themes of opacity and labour find form within the exhibition through design interventions considered in the following 3D drawings. Focusing on the labour of the spectator within the exhibition space, these drawings question how curatorial decisions can foreground the viewer's perception of the work through the relationship of the body to the visual and aural qualities of the work.

Through the use of polycarbonate screens, visitors are prevented from entering the exhibition space except through a narrow passageway that is a

buffer between the work and the gallery reception area (Figure 3.9a,b). This passageway was designed as a threshold space, an architectural strategy that "leads the occupant to question their surroundings, thus leading to heightened awareness of the space as a transformative threshold between distinct spaces" (Zimmerman 2008, iv). The aim is to distance the visitor from the outside world they have just left and to sensitise them to the film world they are about to enter. By asking for a certain mode of attention from the visitor, the threshold space helps to set up the idea of opacity within the work and of a labour of spectatorship.

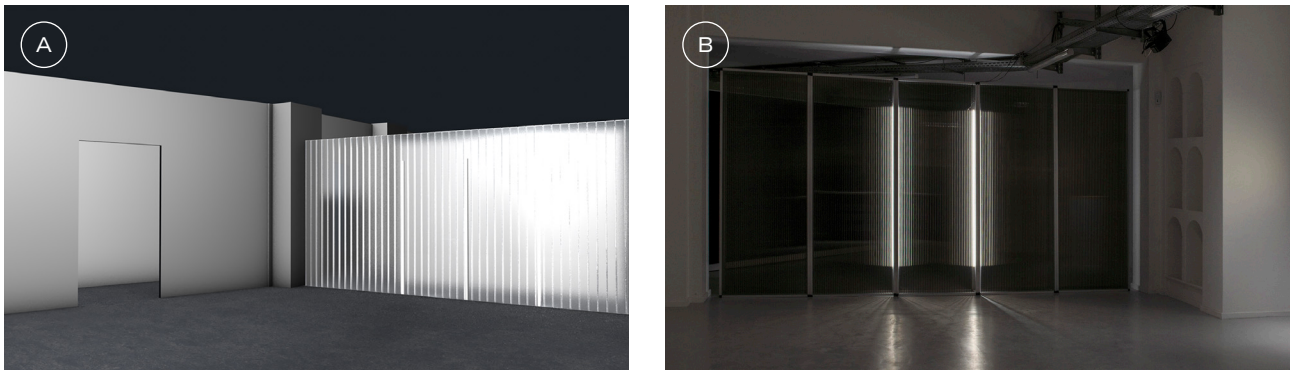

Figure 3.9 (**a**) Polycarbonate screen and passageway. 3D drawing 2021 Ben Evans James; (**b**) Polycarbonate screen. Photo © 2021 Luca Girardini.

At the opening end of the threshold space, a stacked image of Antwi and Storr was placed on a TV screen behind a smoked polycarbonate screen. As the visitor walked by, the still image slowly rippled like a lenticular poster, only coming into focus as they reached an angle perpendicular to it. This concealment of the image spoke to the intersubjectivity of the conversation, the position of the spectator between Antwi and Storr, and the labour required to decipher it (Figure 3.10a,b). The image treatment can also be understood as resistance against the performative gaze placed on the Black body within public spaces, a theme explored through the previous work of both artists.

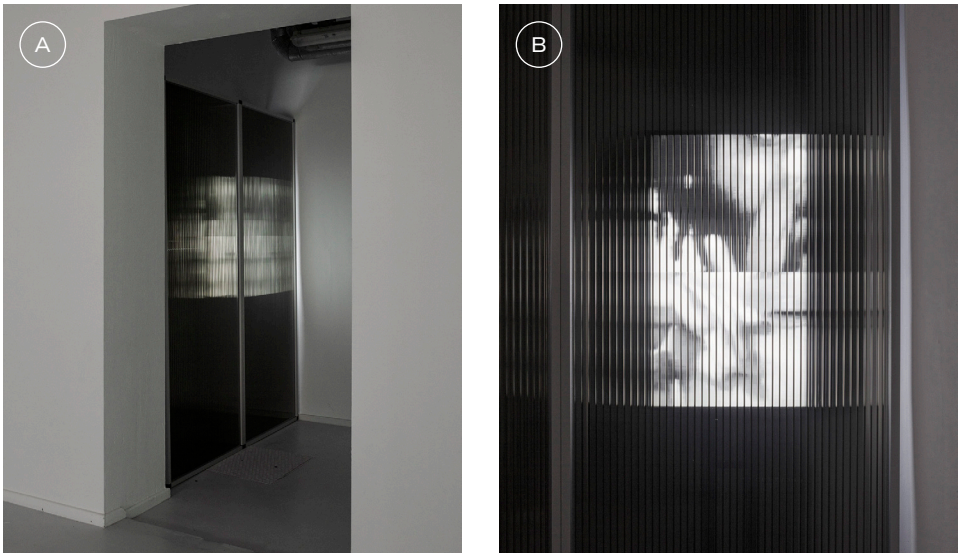

Figure 3.10 (**a**) Polycarbonate Screen. At its origin, the threshold space contains a vertically orientated flatscreen TV whose image is obfuscated by a polycarbonate screen; **(b)** Facing view. Photos © 2021 Luca Girardini.

At the end of the passageway, a vinyl wall text lit by a single spotlight faced the viewer. Presented as a vinyl on a gallery wall, the text took on the customary form of a curatorial text, instilling it with a kind of 'factual' authority (the kind you might expect to see at an archival/collection-based show at a museum) (Figure 3.11). The text itself reflects the organisational logic (the legend) of *For the Record*, employing opacity as a device to open and close the themes of the work depending on the knowledge the viewer brings. Taking on a poetic form, the text signposted the work as a refusal against the Western hegemonic views that the archive represents; the text beginning: "Our archive is not the silent storage room of Truth or History or Reality or Anything Real" (Antwi and Storr 2021).

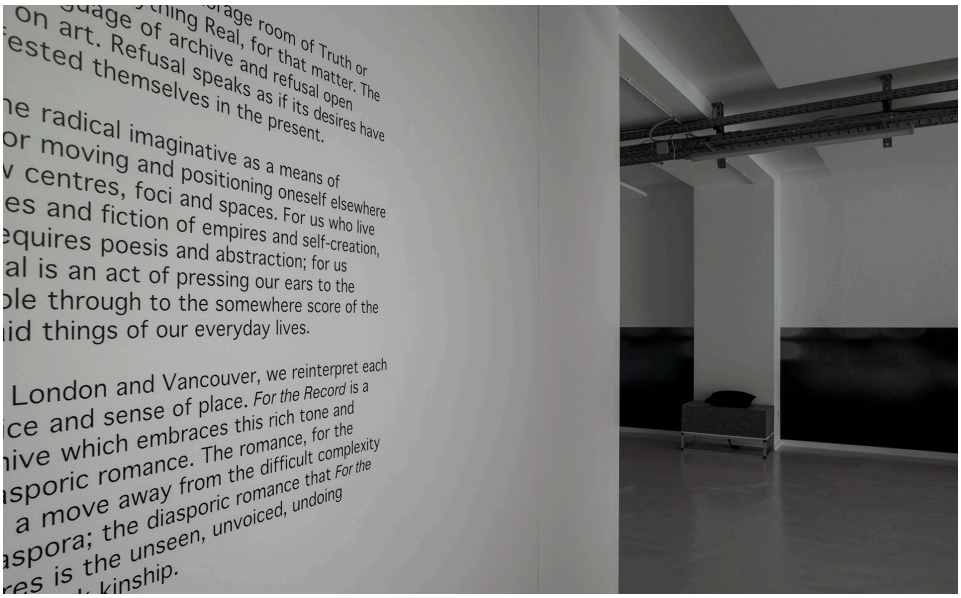

Figure 3.11 End of threshold space opening into exhibition space. Photo © 2021 Luca Girardini.

The threshold space opened out onto the centre of the gallery space (Figure 3.12). From a staging perspective, the designed circulation route prevented the visitor from entering the work from either end, thus avoiding the privileging of one voice over another. Rather, the spectator entered the space through a narrow opening, placing them between the artists' voices. Stepping into this liminal space played into the idea that the spectator was eavesdropping, finding themselves interloping in a conversation in a manner akin to a crossed line on the phone or an unstable radio frequency. Speaking to this idea further, black-and-white vinyl was placed as a horizon line linking the two screens. This horizon line, originally thought of in geographic terms as a latitudinal line, became a space of disturbance, interference, and static – a space of Black noise. The vinyl itself was made by blowing up a single black-and-white 35mm image, with the grain and light leaks providing the requisite visual/sonic texture. This aesthetic was further carried into the seating that used blocks of mottled high-density foam resembling the static of a signal-less CRT TV (Figure 3.13a,b). Acting as prompts to the spectator about how the work operates and the labour required, these design interventions locate the spectator as a receiver, picking up a signal that must be translated and brought down into their own reality.

Figure 3.12 Opening into exhibition space. Photo © 2021 Luca Girardini.

Figure 3.13 (**a**) Black noise of exhibition vinyl; (**b**) Seating. Photos © 2021 Luca Girardini.

In initial floorplans, the seating was designed as a series of high-density foam blocks that the spectator could position themselves on within the space, allowing them to prioritise a particular line of sight or alignment with audio (Figure 3.14a). In later drawings, fixed seating was positioned against the wall (Figure 3.14b). This placed the spectator in a position where all images were visible depending on the way they turned, editing images together with the artists and expanding on Antwi and Storr's dialogue in a multiplicity of ways.

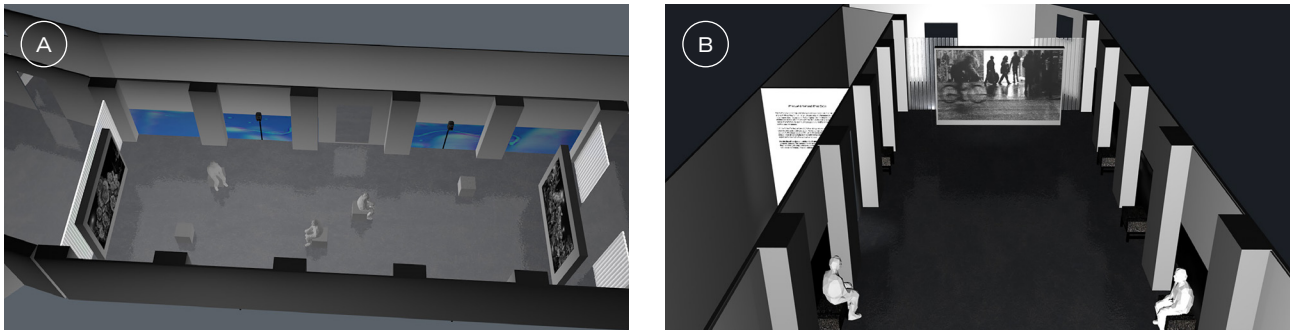

Figure 3.14 (**a**) Original seating design with movable foam blocks; (**b**) Seating placed against wall. 3D drawings 2021 Ben Evans James.

3.5.3 Summary

In *For the Record*, Antwi and Storr adopt opacity as a strategy that refuses transparency. As part of this, an expectation of labour is placed on the viewer, with access to the furthest reaches of the conversation only possible when employing the literary, musical, and theoretical references that underpin the work (even then, access to some parts remain inaccessible, bound as they are to the strong bonds and interpersonal relationships that exist between the artists). As this analysis has worked through the strategies of opacity adopted by Antwi and Storr, it has asked what happens as we spatialise these concerns and how this affects the expectations of labour placed on the spectator. *For the Record* offers a translation of a reality enabled through the organisational logic applied by the artists to an archive of images they have created. The exhibition creates a further translation, transforming the filmic object itself and offering different possibilities in the way the work conducts its themes and the role or signals it puts out for the spectator to engage with them. As we summarise this section, these interconnected themes of opacity and labour have found form within the exhibition space through a range of design interventions demonstrated in the accompanying 3D drawing evaluations.

In summary, to Define the Legend of a work is to think through the opacity of its themes and the labour required from the viewer to read and interpret those themes. As we spatialise a film work by bringing it into the exhibition space, attending to the legend can highlight how the opacity of a work can change (or be changed) and how this asks for different forms of labour from the spectator. This is not a static process, but one that shifts and evolves as a work shifts between different exhibition environments and locations.

This analysis and definition of Define the Legend marks the second of three processes that define Territorymapping.

3.6 Set the Modality

To set the modality of a map is to determine how its data is visualised. Applied to filmmaking, Set the Modality considers how an array of film production technologies and processes mediate how the territory of a map is aestheticised, and the resulting effect on our understanding of its subject. The modality allows us to consider how these aesthetic qualities can be translated and manipulated within the physical space of the exhibition.

3.6.1 Defining the modality

In his concept of ‘lived space’, phenomenologist and architect Franz Xaver Baier draws on the work of Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre to argue that space comes into being through human experience and motivation (Baier 2020). For example, our understanding of the beach as a space might

be defined by our motivation to swim (Baier 2020). Similarly, our initial understanding of the beach as an open expanse might be shattered if we were to step on a shell and cut our foot. At this juncture, the expanse of the beach collapses and "our world dissolves" (Baier 2020, 88). Space, then, is neither entirely objective nor subjective, allowing us to hypothesise that there is no universal spacetime but only a lived space that is forever changing based on our experiences.

Baier goes on to argue that while the concept of lived space allows us to see space as "a human existential" (Baier 2020, 86), we should consider space as something that is brought into being not exclusively by people but also by tangible and intangible materials; "today, we can begin with the assumption that everything participates in the reality of spaces" (Baier 2020, 86). The reality of space might, therefore, include material elements such as light, sound, colours, or smells. In reference to the theatre, scenographer Joslin McKinney references philosopher Gernot Böhme's theory of the "ecstasy of the thing" (McKinney in Wiens 2019, 59), where the characteristics of a 'thing' creates an atmosphere that is not understood solely through the physical attributes of the object itself (e.g., the light, sound, colour, and smell in an exhibition). Within the artistic sphere, we could look to any number of practitioners who use everyday, inexpensive materials in excess to construct an atmosphere. A recent example includes Nina Canell's 2022 installation *Tectonic Tender* at the Berlinische Galerie where visitors were asked to walk across seven tonnes of marine molluscs. Emitting a distinct sound as shells were crushed underfoot, Canell's aim was to draw attention to the use of molluscs in creating construction materials (Canell 2022). We can also think of artists working with less tangible materials, such as Olafur Eliasson's use of light in *Weather Project* at Tate Modern in 2003 (Eliasson 2003). In these examples, there is a temporal as well as a spatial condition of the atmospheres created; none are static over time. This fits Böhme's definition of atmospheres as "a mood hanging in the air" (Böhme 2016, 2) that may be best explained using common expressions that describe intangible feelings, such as a 'serious atmosphere' or perhaps a 'tense atmosphere'. These atmospheres can be produced "with the aid of entirely physical, technical means" (Böhme 2016, 183) – with materials and through the technologies used to deploy them. Böhme argues that by harnessing the external effect of materials, a space can be filled "with tensions and suggestions of movement" (Böhme 2016, 19). In *For the Record,* his theory can help to highlight the qualities of the image and how these are materialised in the exhibition space to create a particular atmosphere via a method for translating the 2D plane of the film strip back into 3D space to bring forth specific 'feelings' and understandings of the territory, processes that re-territorialise a space.

3.6.2 Deploying the modality

For the Record called for a range of production technologies, some of which are unremarkable in the making of a film and some that are perhaps less

commonplace. Most conventionally, the film employs lens-based technologies through the cameras used by Antwi and Storr. As discussed in some detail earlier in our conversation on Compose the Territory, the decision to use photographic cameras and the form of the snapshot has conceptual and aesthetic consequences for the modality of the work. This section moves beyond the scope of these lens-based technologies to consider in greater detail the other technologies that shape the map's modality; this includes the use of the conferencing platform Zoom and the technology of the human body itself.

3.6.2.1 The Zoom image

As the Covid-19 pandemic took hold, the video platform Zoom transitioned in use from noun to verb. To 'Zoom' became a way of speaking with colleagues, friends, and family while being socially distanced. To exist in these spaces, we had to learn new ways of being and of performing. Mediated through technology, our bodies were dislocated, in each other's presence but not present (Antwi et al. 2021). Separated by over 7500 km, Antwi and Storr were not close to one another, but there was a closeness, an intimacy provided by their Zoom conversations that kindled the "bonds of Black kinship" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021) that underpin the work. Over a period of three months, the artists held weekly conversations on Zoom to create an archive on which they could draw; in Antwi's words, "recording a series of conversations that we are having among ourselves, you can call this research; [...] it is the archive of these meetings that we plan to draw from for *For the Record"* (Antwi 2020). In the making of *For the Record*, Antwi and Storr embraced the visual language that stemmed from a technology platform and mode of working we were almost all experiencing but that spoke intimately to their own encounters. "I think the condition of the now forced something out of us, it asked us to use technologies in ways that we are not used to doing", noted Antwi in the summer of 2021 (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021). Taking screenshots and screen recordings as they spoke, Storr later rephotographed the images from her computer screen with the same 35mm snapshot camera she had used to take images of London. Occasionally, the artist would let the Zoom recording play as she depressed the shutter, leaving faces blurred or suspended in movement, creating an almost double exposure effect. Cropping the images, switching them to black and white, and re-composing them back together in Photoshop both removed elements of the digital, such as the poor colour rendition, and emphasised the digital in others, such as the heavy pixelation that occurs when blowing up low-resolution images. These post-production processes revealed the technological mediation of the body in producing the work and of the technology of Zoom in creating its form. The images are both instantly familiar to anyone who was working at the time of the pandemic and also, through their editing, distance the spectator from the familiar. Cut into the final edit of *For the Record*, these fragments of photos never reveal the artists' complete features but instead focus on a hand gesture or eye movement (Figure 3.15). Only on approaching the end of the film do we see the artists' whole faces, laughing with each other in a final moment of levity as Antwi exclaims, "fuck capitalism you mo-fo"

(Antwi and Storr 2021), the giant pixels that make up the images strewn across the screen like the debris of the broken system itself.

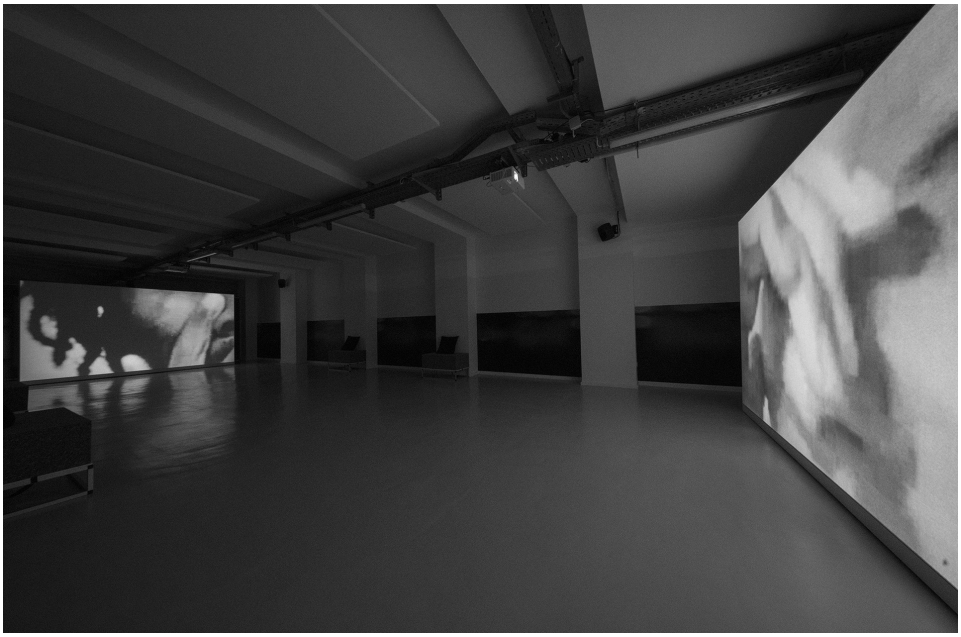

Figure 3.15 Manipulated Zoom screengrabs from *For the Record* (2021) shown in situ, *transmediale* Studio. Photo © 2021 Ben Evans James.

With the artists facing their laptops, the gaze of the camera turns onto Antwi and Storr as snatched screenshots show the pair conversing from their homes. These domestic images show the safety of a world captured 'in here' in contrast to their 35mm snapshots of Vancouver and London that map the instability of the world 'out there'. The decision to use still images of their bodies is a refusal by Antwi and Storr to perform in ways the artists see as habitually equated with Blackness, to adopt the kind of 'explosive energy' that jazz, blues, or hip hop might act as a signpost for (Storr in Antwi et al. 2021). This "over-determined or over-characterised" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021) feature of what Blackness might be is countered by ideas of stillness in *For the Record.* The use of Zoom gave form to this stillness, capturing the artists' bodies suspended at the point of production, providing the opportunity for these images to be renewed when enfolded into the work within the gallery. "It was interesting that those gestures might transform into something else beyond what they could be on the screen in that moment" (Storr in Antwi et al. 2021). This job of transformation continued within the gallery, where the treatment of the images could amplify their themes.

As it is particularly relevant to *For the Record* and its use of photos, we can return to Böhme and his hypothesis of the properties of light in creating atmosphere. The philosopher defines space as a material "not created by the distances between things", an axonometric understanding of the world, but one that is defined only by light: "as things become visible in light, they also appear to us in space" (Böhme 2016, 200). Böhme offers us a way to think about the relationship between light and space, a dynamic that can influence the presentation of the image in the gallery environment. *For the*

Record deploys a range of still images bound within a film format. These are not photographic prints but images rendered through light, whether from the beam of a projector or the pixels of a television. To consider the qualities of this light (size, brightness, colour, and orientation) is to interrogate lightness and, therefore, the definition of the gallery space and its atmosphere. Furthermore, it follows that by exploiting the use of light within the images of *For the Record*, such as by focusing on the oversized weight of pixels and their movement, we can disturb the volumetric space of the screen and the spectator's spatial understanding of the exhibition environment.

Böhme's theory can attune us to the possibilities that arise as the image is staged, re-mediating it from the digital field (video file) into the material or physical field (beamed) such that it might create an atmosphere that further attunes the spectator to the work. In 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Production', Walter Benjamin suggests that the spectator "breathes" in the aura of an artwork (Benjamin 2008, 23). Breathing as a verb here allows us to consider the artwork as an experience that is absorbed through the body (Böhme 2016, 15). It also posits the idea of an atmosphere as something that sits between the art object and the spectator as something that is emitted by a work but only brought into being through the experiencing subject or spectator. It is precisely in this being in between that the value of understanding and manipulating atmosphere emerges because it allows us to "link together what has traditionally been separated as the aesthetics of production and of reception" (Böhme 2016, 183).

3.6.2.2 The Zoom sound

The default audio options in Zoom compress audio into a narrow range of frequencies, stripping the voice of range. Initially embraced by Antwi and Storr as an aesthetic that would communicate the physical distance between them, the poor quality of the audio later led them to abandon this approach for external recorders. Antwi used a variety of recording devices in a range of environments, creating tonal shifts in his voice across the work, transitions embraced by the artist as scratchy and messy, giving form to the audio shaped by ideas of interference and disturbance. Through the accompanying sound design in the work, Storr worked with layers of short samples and loops of radio interference, metallic tones and space sounds that further highlight the physical distance between the artists while also speaking to the audio aesthetics of Afrofuturism.

Sound, through its resonance and echo, is in constant dialogue with space. Sound requires space to materialise, and in turn, sound highlights the architectural qualities of space. This is reflected in the types of language we use to describe sounds, adjectives that describe a material experience of different tones, such as textural, grinding, sharp, or broken. These descriptors provide an understanding of sound that moves beyond the temporal towards the material or spatial – an understanding that Böhme argues allows us to

also bring sound into the "aesthetics of atmosphere" (Böhme 2016, 185). Considering sound in this way locates space between the sound and the body, a translation device that affects the embodied experience: "music shapes the feeling of the listener in space, it intervenes directly in his or her bodily economy" (Böhme 2016, 186). In *For the Record*, the spatial structure of the sound design was invoked in the exhibition through the positioning of speakers, with Antwi's voice emanating from one end and Storr's from the other, conveying the remoteness that was crucial in making the work. Linking the two voices, sounds of interference and space sounds permeated through the atmosphere of the gallery. For the spectator, the sound design and its interpretation in space created the sensation of being caught between Antwi and Storr within the static of a shifting analogue radio dial. The set-up further draws attention to the call-and-response mechanism that defines the work, asking the spectator to edit the conversation between our protagonists. Around thirty minutes into *For the Record*, Antwi and Storr embark on an exchange with one another in which they talk about their bodies as living, breathing archives (Antwi and Storr 2021).

> Our bodies are constantly archiving. Our hearts, (Storr)
> *Our hearts,* (Antwi)
> Our guts, *Our guts,*
> Our feet, *Our feet,*
> Our skin, *Our skin,*
> Our tongues, *Our tongues,*
> Our mouths, *Our mouths*,
> Our anus, *Our anus,*
> Our urinary tracts, *Our urinary tracts,*
> Our bloodstream, *Our bloodstream,*
> In our bodies everything is constantly archiving.
> *Let's find out what we can about each other based on this thing we carry with us all the time.*

Speaking about the passage, Antwi reveals how their long Zoom sessions would often be interrupted by noises emanating from the body, including noises of bellies rumbling or dry coughs – noises he noted represent technologies that are also producing and giving form to the work, the kinaesthetic noises and rhythms of the body archive (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021). In the exhibition space, the spectator is asked to consume the work in a way that, in part, mirrors the artists' production – a position of stillness from which the spectator has to engage in an internal, bodily labour to untangle the meanings within the work and apply them to their own reality.

3.6.3 Set the Modality

The Zoom image, frozen and further manipulated by Storr, revealed a material form that was tied to the conceptual underpinning of the work – images enlarged to the point where faces were cropped to reveal only hairlines, eyes, or

mouths: images that, for the artists, refuse dominant modes of the broadcasting of Black bodies, from states of animation towards images of suspended animation, embracing "the echoes of life that rest in the still image" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021). In the exhibition space, artifice that arises through the use of Zoom as a production platform was employed to invoke these themes.

For the Record utilises black-and-white imagery throughout its 48-minute run time. Edited as a diptych, there are points in the film where just one image was shown on a single screen, when both screens showed an image, and when neither screen had an image and were left black. The gallery was lit by the ambient light of the images, which helped to choreograph the spectator's gaze (Figure 3.16). The impact of the space as screens switched from darkness to bright white amplified the qualities of the image, creating "a meeting between material and a sensation" (O'Sullivan 2006, 56). This meeting foregrounded the relationship of the body in the photos for the spectator, recalling the phenomenological potential of the film experience as defined by Maurice Merleau-Ponty: "[t]he movies are well suited to make manifest the union of mind and body, mind and world, and the expression of one in the other" (Merleau-Ponty 2019, 111).

Figure 3.16 Projection as light source in gallery, *transmediale* Studio. Photo © 2021 Ben Evans James.

The use of an artificial light source (projection) to present the work links the presentation of its images back to a "capitalist, technical civilization" in which nothing "is seen simply as it would appear of its own accord" (Böhme 2016, 203). In *For the Record*, the aforementioned final rallying cry by Antwi to "fuck capitalism" (Antwi in Antwi et al. 2021) might best be served by accentuating the commodification of the image itself, by embracing and amplifying its artificiality and its aestheticisation in the gallery space (Figure 3.17). This reflects physicist Karen Barad's hypothesis that matter has discursive properties and can convey meaning without the use of language (Barad 2007). Perhaps we can even argue that matter itself can go on to convey themes even beyond those originally intended by the filmmakers.

Figure 3.17 Grain. Photo © 2021 Luca Girardini.

Echo-reducing panels were suspended from the ceiling and calibrated to reduce resonance but not to completely nullify it, so as to heighten the sense of distance between Antwi and Storr in the making of the work. Atmospheres are personal, subjective experiences for which we find a common language. In *For the Record*, the conversation between Antwi and Storr takes place in an atmosphere of kinship and intimacy. The exhibition space can seek either to mirror this atmosphere or contrast it (though the decision is not necessarily a binary one as atmospheres are dynamic and can change over time). In Berlin, the spectator was physically placed at the exterior of the conversation, listening in.

3.6.4 Summary

To Set the Modality of a map is to determine how the map's data is visualised; it is to determine its form. Applied to filmmaking, to Set the Modality is to consider how diverse film production technologies and processes mediate how the territory of a map is aestheticised and the resulting effect on our understanding of the map's subject. Carrying this knowledge forward, the modality allows us to consider how these aesthetic qualities can be translated and manipulated within the physical space of the exhibition environment.

3.7 Conclusions: Territorymapping

This investigation into the Filmmapping methodology of Territorymapping has been defined through a three-stage process:

1. COMPOSE THE TERRITORY
   This stage explores the relationship between a defined geographical area and its representation on a map. Applied to filmmaking, the process foregrounds relationships that exist between the filmmaker(s), their subject(s), and place(s).

2. DEFINE THE LEGEND
   The legend represents the key to a map. When applied to filmmaking, this can be understood as a set of signals and codes that navigates a spectator through the work.

3. SET THE MODALITY
   The modality determines how the data of a map are visualised. Applied to filmmaking, it considers how diverse film production technologies and processes mediate how the territory is aestheticised and the resulting effect on our understanding of the map's subject.

For the Record by the artists Phanuel Antwi and Rhea Storr serves as a case study to develop a language around these three processes.

The first of these three stages, Compose the Territory, was itself broken down into three concurrent processes. The first of these, Framing the Territory, examined how particular filmmaking approaches engender certain relationships between the filmmaker and the territory. The second, (re)Framing the Territory, explored how the editing process scaffolds these relationships into particular narratives of the territory. The third, (re)Locating the Territory, looked to the conflicts and opportunities that surface when the rendering of a territory through a film is relocated to an alternate location such as an exhibition. The combined processes described in Compose the Territory reveal relationships at multiple scales: between the filmmakers themselves, between the filmmakers and the communities they have documented, and between the filmmakers and the spectator. By asking us to consider how the representation of a territory has been formed within a work, Compose the Territory provides a method to think through the specific relationships this representation attends to and how those relationships might change as we relocate the work into the gallery space.

The second stage of analysis, Define the Legend, was used to think through the opacity of a work's themes and the labour required from the viewer to read and interpret those themes. As we spatialise a film work by bringing it into the exhibition space, attending to the legend was shown to highlight how the opacity of a work can change (or be changed) and how this can be used to ask for or require different forms of labour from the spectator.

The final stage of analysis, Set the Modality, examined how a map's data is visualised; it examined its form. Applied to filmmaking, Set the Modality considered how diverse film production technologies and processes mediate how the territory of a map is aestheticised and the resulting effect on our understanding of the map's subject. Carrying this knowledge forward, the modality allowed us to consider how these aesthetic qualities could be translated and manipulated within the physical space of the exhibition environment.

Applying the lenses provided by the interconnected processes of Compose the Territory, Define the Legend, and Set the Modality created a spatial understanding of the work carried forward into the exhibition environment – a process demonstrated throughout this paper through accompanying 3D drawings and design analysis. Together, these processes can be understood as creating a translation device or bridge that sits between the production processes of filmmaking and the production processes of curatorial practice, mediating between the disciplines by providing a shared spatial language. While analysis within this paper is intertwined with the development of *For the Record*, the three-step model developed out of the research offers a replicable method for other artists' non-fiction films that have a concern with place and landscape – more specifically, and turning back to Henri Lefebvre, with films that attend to a space formed at the intersection of the built environment, the discourses attached to it, and the lived experience of those who interact within the space (Lefebvre 1991).

Notes

[i] Referencing here Maurice Merleau-Ponty's understanding of a 'body-in-the-world' in which the presence of our physical body within a space alters our perception of it (2005, 164).

[ii] The *dérive* can be understood as an embodied practice of 'drifting' across an urban environment in an unplanned or unstructured manner. Outlined by Guy Debord in 1956 and later taken up by the Situationist International (1957–72), it is a tool associated with psychogeography.

[iii] A reference to the common expression for electrical signal interference as 'white noise'.

Chapter Four
Pointmapping

4.1 Introduction

Anchored to practices of landscape architecture and mapping, Pointmapping is composed of two separate processes, (i) Pointdefining and (ii) Pointtranslating. The first of these, Pointdefining, offers a method for filmmakers to construct a representation of a landscape through a series of three graphic planes or layers, each of which contains specific information bound by particular attributes of an environment. By considering the architectural features, natural resources, and behavioural activities that unfold within a space, Pointdefining allows the filmmaker to map the complex interplay between spatial elements and socio-cultural factors that have contributed to the shaping of a landscape. This approach can act as an aid in identifying the specific relations the filmmaker wishes to highlight and interact with through their work. Transforming the themes of a documentary into a spatial language can further offer a bridge to the spatial practices of the gallery – into curatorial practice and exhibition design. The second process, Pointtranslating, makes use of this bridge, providing a method for building the layers of a landscape back up into new orientations within the gallery. This process can be used to expand the layers of a film out into a distributed form, creating an artwork that is understood through the interactions between its parts. As part of this process, particular themes can be foregrounded and new relations set up that speak to the alternate locational context of the gallery.

Shaping the analysis of Pointmapping, the chapter proceeds through a series of three practice-based projects. In Section One, two films I made during the research period are used to construct a definition of Pointdefining. In Section Two, I switch roles from filmmaker to curator to define the process of Pointtranslating. This section employs a project I commissioned as part of my role as a curator at the Berlin-based festival *transmediale*.

4.2 Pointdefining

In 2020 an experimental feature documentary I co-directed with the artist Emma Charles premiered at the Swiss film festival Visions du Réel. *On A Clear Day You Can See The Revolution From Here* is an expansive journey across the remnants of Soviet technological infrastructures that persist in the landscape of eastern Kazakhstan. Shot on 16mm, the camera takes in locations including coal mines, power stations, military facilities, and the STS decommissioned nuclear test site. Acting as the thread between these industrial locations, the film follows a path along the Soviet-built Ekibastuz–Kokshetau power line. Running for 432km over the expansive grasslands of the Kazakh Steppe, the construction of the line marked the beginning of a massive power distribution system designed to link up the outposts of the Soviet Union. Before the line could be completed, however, the USSR collapsed.

As co-directors of the film, Emma Charles and I share experiences of working within architectural contexts, myself as a designer and lecturer in the discipline, and Charles through her work with the online architecture magazine *Dezeen* (https://www.dezeen.com). In conversations during pre-production, Charles and I began to plan how the power line could provide a structuring device for the documentary. These exchanges focused not only on its physical architectural form, but also the invisible electromagnetic waves that pulse along its length. At the time, Charles and I were particularly interested in the designer Anthony Dunne's concept of the 'Hertzian space' (2001). Every object that carries electricity transmits an electro-magnetic field invisible to the human eye: the Hertzian space is defined as this invisible architecture of wave fields that mediates between an electrified object and human experience (Dunne 2001). A plan emerged between Charles and myself to first follow the physical architecture of the power line, while second use Dunne's concept to focus on the invisible infrastructure of wave fields that link up a series of remote communities along the line. This meant packing not only our film cameras, but also an array of specialist microphones designed to sense and record the electromagnetic spectrum. By adopting this dual approach, Charles and I hoped to reveal a set of relations in the landscape that existed between electricity, fossil fuel mining, and the communities that bind these together.

As the project transitioned into the production phase, Charles and I filmed over extended periods in Kazakhstan, moving along the power line in stages, a process that took us through ever-changing geographies from lush mountainous regions to expansive sections of steppe land. Emerging from these landscapes like steel totems, electricity pylons acted like markers along the line, highlighting the coal mines and generating stations along its route. Mirroring shifts in the landscape, the architecture of the pylons changed their physical form along the way (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Pylons across the Ekibastuz–Kokshetau power line. *On A Clear Day You Can See The Revolution From Here* (2020). Film Stills © 2020 Emma Charles and Ben Evans James.

4.2.1 Establishing a filmic approach to architecture

Once filming was complete, Charles and I began to group shots together that were thematically linked. Into one of these groups we placed a series of static, locked-off shots of the electricity pylons. Looking back and forth through this footage I was reminded of Bernard Tschumi's design for Parc de la Villette in Paris, a public park whose space is defined by a series of bright red steel pavilions placed equidistant from one another (Figure 4.2). This recollection was

not so much triggered by aesthetics, though the steel pylons that thrust from the ground in Kazakhstan did in some ways recall the grid of steel structures at La Villette. Rather, the links took hold as I considered the concept and theories Tschumi employed in the design of the park and the intersections with the approach Charles and I had taken in 'designing' our film. This reasoning is not as chance as it may appear. Tschumi has spoken in detail about the influence of filmmaking methods on his design practice, in particular the approaches to storyboarding developed by Sergei Eisenstein. Tschumi points to the influence of the Russian filmmaker and the theorist's intricate notation systems developed for *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and *Alexander Nevsky* (1938): storyboards that outline the precise relationship between a landscape, the movement of protagonists, and the camera across a chronological axis. Borrowing methods from film notation systems provided an approach for Tschumi to plan how space emerges from the relations between people and the built environment over time. Working at a time before the computational turn in architecture, these approaches first found form in a series of speculative drawings by Tschumi (1981) collectively called *The Manhattan Transcripts* (1976–81). These fictional illustrations provide a series of speculations on how human bodies interact with the built environment across time, challenging the static renderings of space as traditionally represented by orthographic and axonometric drawings (Figure 4.3). Introducing the material of time into the design process allowed Tschumi to shift emphasis away from the design of building(s) to instead prioritise the actions of humans in relation to those building(s). Through *The Manhattan Transcripts*, Tschumi established a symbiotic and emotive relationship between film and architecture: "by adding the dimension of time, space becomes 'alive', so film offers the potential of generating an affective relationship with architecture, a form of empathy" (Haralambidou 2015, 247).

Figure 4.2 Follies at Parc de la Villette. Photos © 2016 Trevor Patt. Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 (Patt 2016).

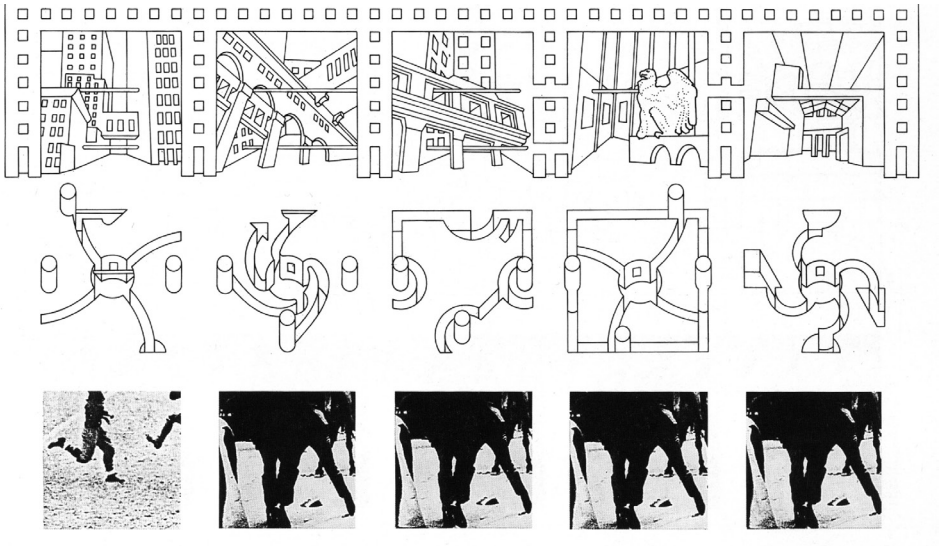

Figure 4.3 Sequence from *The Manhattan Transcripts* (Tschumi 1994, 49) © Bernard Tschumi.

While the drawings that make up *The Manhattan Transcripts* ended up on the gallery walls of MoMA in New York, the ideas behind them were refined and found spectacular architectural form through La Villette. To design the park, Tschumi superimposed three independent, abstract layers onto the site, which he called 'points', 'lines', and 'surfaces' – a reference to Wassily Kandinsky's *Point and Line to Plane* (1926). The first of these layers, points, is made up of a series of nodes, each one objectified by an architectural form that sits somewhere between a building, an installation, and a folly.[1] These follies are placed within a grid, located an equal distance from one another across the park to create what Tschumi called "the largest deconstructed building in the world as it's one building, but broken down in many fragments" (Tschumi quoted in Griffiths 2022). All the follies are constructed out of the same material and painted the same colour, but each takes on a different form, composed as they are "of multiple different fragments, violently forced together in an architecture of aggressive asymmetry and formal rupture" (Cairns 2013, 292). Responding to Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction, the follies resist the creation of a hierarchy between each other as no one building holds a singular function but instead offers a framework for an occurrence of different activities and events (2021). Every day, these follies hold informal and spontaneous events, offering opportunities for children to play, people to meet up, for folks to take in views over the city. Through their multiplicity of use, the follies represent architectures that translate directly between the landscape of the park and the needs or desires of the park visitor. It is this focus on the time-based actions – the events – that together define the 'programme' of the space at La Villette (the programme of the space thus defined as the combination of activities that occur within it).

Highlighting the temporal actions of people across space, filmmaking methods underpin the rationale for the design of La Villette's point grid. The follies, as the structural objects that make this grid visible, bring Tschumi's philosophical ideas into being, animating the designer's architectural approach to deconstruction (Figure 4.4). Akin to the follies, the pylons Charles and I filmed in Kazakhstan are

architectural structures that articulate a grid, in this case one that forms linearly across the eastern Kazakh Steppe. As with La Villette, this grid makes visible a philosophical position that shapes space; a power line originally designed as part of the Soviet political project to extract and transport power from eastern Kazakhstan to the Russian region of the Urals. As this flow of electricity surges through the landscape, it activates the space around it through its co-dependency on the coal mines, the generating stations, and the communities that have grown up around the two. The pylons that mark each point on the grid offer a visual representation of this organisation of space, architectures that speak to the relations between people, electricity, and the landscape. As Tschumi used film to work forwards into designing the programme of La Villette, I now found myself working backwards, using the architecture of the pylons to interrogate the programme of the space in which Charles and I were making a film.

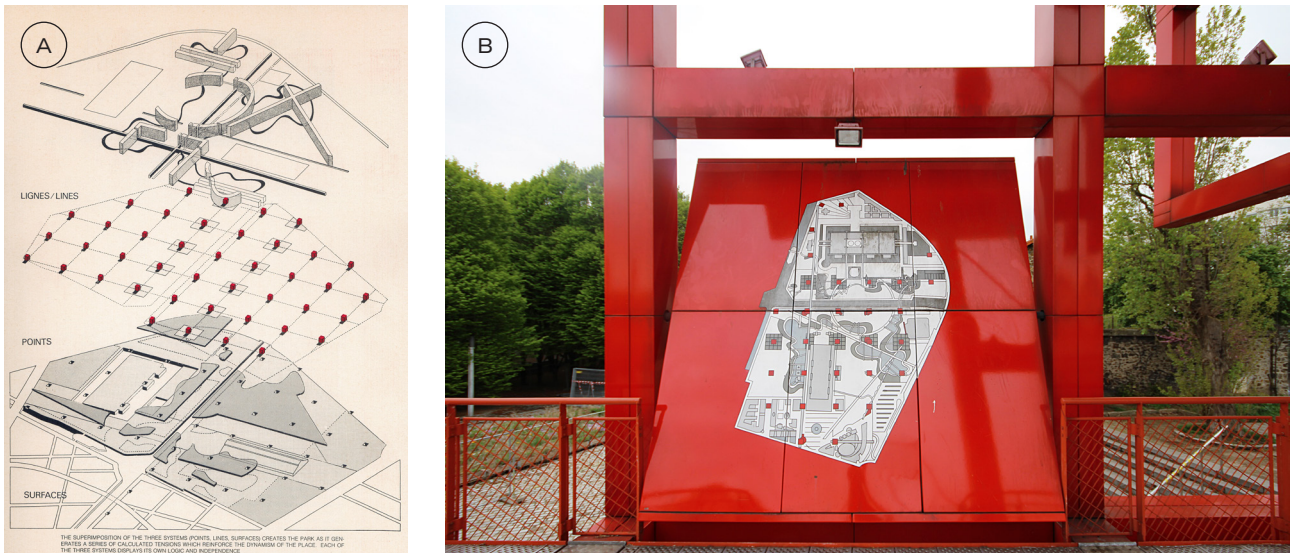

Figure 4.4 The point grid is "the strategic tool of the La Villette project. It both articulates space and activates it" (Tschumi 1996, 179) © Bernard Tschumi Architects. (**a**) Point grid diagram layered view (Tschumi 2023); (**b**) Point grid diagram installed at Parc de la Villette. Photo © 2016 Trevor Patt. Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 (Patt 2016).

Following this thread backwards helped shape the ultimate form of the film, influencing the decision to break *On A Clear Day* into a series of five vignettes (Figure 4.5). By structuring the documentary in this way, the film mirrors the five communities in which we mainly filmed, an approach that keeps the specific relations between localities and the power line intact. This contrasts with the method we had expected to adopt, in which all footage would be edited into a singular narrative arc, with shots from alternate locations cut or juxtaposed alongside one another. Operating as an extended interstitial between each of these five vignettes, the viewer is returned to a series of static shots of the electricity pylons. Accompanying the visuals, a site-specific recording of electromagnetic waves was overlayed, a dissonance of clicks, buzzes, and the sounds of static. These interstitials acted to emphasise the significance of the infrastructure of electricity in mediating relations within communities while further drawing the viewer through the landscape and between each of the locations in which we filmed.

Figure 4.5 *On A Clear Day You Can See the Revolution From Here* (2020). Film stills representing three of five main vignettes © 2020 Emma Charles and Ben Evans James.

4.2.2 Establishing next steps: How might filmmakers borrow back from architecture to develop a spatial approach to film?

The making of *On A Clear Day* had drawn me towards Tschumi's work, shaping how I understood the landscape in which I had filmed and subsequently influencing its translation and representation through the editing process. As the film edged towards its premiere, I knew I wanted to extend this to better understand whether, just as Tschumi had borrowed from filmmaking to develop a temporal approach to architecture, filmmakers could borrow back from architecture – and specifically Tschumi – to develop a spatial approach to film. My interest in this question was specifically anchored to contemporary artists' non-fiction films in which space and landscape are already dominant themes.

4.2.3 The lens of landscape in architecture and film

4.2.3.1 The lens of landscape in architecture and film: landscape architecture

Serving as a bridge between the disciplines of architecture and film, the prefix of 'landscape' points us to specific disciplines within each of the fields. In architecture, 'landscape architecture' escapes a single, neat categorisation, leading Danish scholar Malene Hauxner to declare that it is concerned "with the planning and design of everywhere which does not have a roof" (Hauxner quoted in Thompson 2014, 23). Refining this open definition, one might say that alongside its aesthetic function, landscape architecture focuses on designing physical places that elicit particular socio-behavioural or environmental outcomes (Gieseking et al. 2014). In the Anglo-American system, the design of public parks in New York and London in the nineteenth century acted as a catalyst for the establishment of the discipline; Tschumi's design for La Villette continued this landscape tradition, albeit in a revolutionary form. Picking up on this lineage, James Corner articulates Tschumi's system of points, lines, and surfaces through the lens of landscape architecture to define his concept of 'layering' (Corner 2011). As with creative applications such as Photoshop and Illustrator, the 'layers' in Corner's theory can be thought of as workspaces or planes, separated out from one another like physical sheets of tracing paper. Applied to space, layering constructs a stratified surface in which each layer contains specific information bound by an organisational principle, a process that allows the designer to consider relations between the elements placed upon a single layer, and between layers (Corner 2011).

Using La Villette as a case study, Corner demonstrates how the process of Layering offers an active design approach for architects to programme space, organising information that can rethink the function or operation of a site. To achieve this aim at La Villette, the system of points, lines, and surfaces finds tension across and between the three layers. The first of these layers, points, are represented by the follies, the bright red buildings that have been a focus of this analysis so far. The second layer in Tschumi's plan is made up of lines, represented by a series of criss-crossing footpaths that form the routes between, or respond to, the positioning of the follies or points. The final layer, surfaces, are the organic elements – the trees, planting, paving, and grassland – that form a series of geometric shapes fragmented across the park. When brought together, the combination of these three layers creates in La Villette a space in which no one use, experience, journey, or navigation of the park takes precedence over another. Visitors are rather invited to "chop and change the sequence of their journey across the park" (Cairns 2013, 297) as they navigate surfaces, then come across lines, that then redirect them to points. Constantly asked to defer to the next point, line, or surface, the visitor is navigated not to one centre, but through a "series of substitutions of centre for centre" (Derrida 1978, 353). In this system, everything becomes only through its relations with something else, meaning no one meaning or experience of the park can be placed above another; in being "independent, each with its own internal logic, these three systems (of points, lines, and surfaces) [...] begin to contaminate one another when superimposed" (Tschumi 1996, 187). As a piece of landscape architecture, Tschumi's system of points, lines, and surfaces creates a tension between layers that shapes the visitor's interaction with space. This in turn achieves a distinct set of socio-behavioural outcomes that defines the programme of the space.

4.2.3.2 The lens of landscape in architecture and film: landscape non-fiction film

The lens of landscape on film has been investigated in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.6). To recap, (landscape) artists' non-fiction film describes a genre in which the landscape takes on a function that extends beyond providing a setting for characters and events, rather assuming an autonomous role that directly shapes the narrative and form of a film (Lefebvre 2007).

The German director Wim Wenders posits that while architecture and film share an obsession with space, filmmakers do not bear the responsibility of (or wield the power) to physically intervene in a space, "buildings are very real, after all, and they really determine and condition people's lives. Films sometimes form people's visions and dreams, but don't have such an immediate impact on their reality" (quoted in Macnab 2014). Wenders points to an obvious but important point of difference between the disciplines. While landscape architecture tends to be drawn towards shaping the programme of space, landscape non-fiction tends to be drawn towards presenting a representation of space – to recording a programme that already exists.

4.2.3.3 The lens of landscape in architecture and film: Bridging the gap between landscape architecture and landscape film

Central to Corner's explanation of layering is an architectural process or methodology for programming a site. In his concise definition of layering, Corner refrains from defining the process as one that may be able to document the programme of an already existing site. Creating a layered representation of a current space is a process that can, however, be identified in applications adjunct to landscape architecture, particularly in thematic mapping techniques that bring together a variety of physical and social phenomena across space.[2] For this analysis, I wish to focus on one of these experimental cartographic methods, the process of 'deep mapping'. Deep mapping creates a palimpsest that stratifies "history, folklore, local traditions and natural history alongside geographical and geological data" (Gregory 2018). Providing a process to construct the lived experience of an existing space by bringing a physical landscape together with the human (and non-human) relations that help shape that space, deep maps reveal the complexity of relations that exist in a landscape (Figure 4.6).

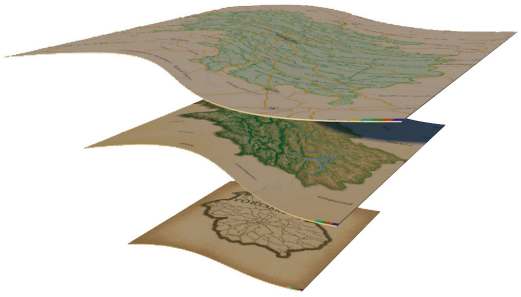

Figure 4.6 Pictorial representation of the layers of a deep map. Drawing 2023 Ben Evans James.

The technique of deep mapping serves to underscore the potential of utilising a layered representation of space not only as an active tool to programme a site but also as a reflective tool to understand the various dynamics and forces that have shaped the development of an existing space. Deep mapping can therefore provide a lens through which to speculate on how Tschumi's system of points, lines, and surfaces might be translated from the context of landscape architecture into the domain of non-fiction film to create a representation of a space. Translating Tschumi's design system through the lens of mapping shifts its focus from creating the 'programme' of a physical world to defining the 'programme' of a film world, shaping how a space is represented on film. This construction sits in conversation with the physical environment and social relations in the landscape below. This approach is achieved as the filmmaker categorises the features of a landscape represented by the points, lines, and surfaces that in turn foregrounds particular relations within that space. These relations emerge not only from what is highlighted, but also from what is missing or lost; the gaps between layers that present productive tensions that can be exploited as part of the filmmaking process.

4.2.4 The lens of landscape in architecture and film: next steps

To apply Tschumi's system of points, lines, and surfaces to non-fiction film requires a translation of those terms into a filmic language. By way of the film project *On A Clear Day*, I have begun to demonstrate how Tschumi's system of points could be translated into a filmmaking context. In this film, the points are defined as the pylons that suspend the power line, infrastructures that help reveal human relations to the landscape by exposing events, happenings, and interactions between people and space over a period of time. I have further considered how this understanding shaped the documentary into a series of vignettes. Looking past *On a Clear Day* I wanted to build an understanding not only for points, but also for lines, and surfaces and their possible application to film contexts. The opportunity to begin that process began when I applied for funding as part of a cross-cultural exchange between the UK and Canada supported by the respective research bodies UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and Mitacs.

4.2.4.1 Points, lines, surfaces, and filmmaking

Awarded in 2020, the grant for cross-cultural exchange provided the opportunity to build upon initial research undertaken through the production of *On A Clear Day* with a new project, *LEAKS*. A short documentary shot at the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) Experimental Lakes facility in Canada, *LEAKS* traverses the watery architectures created by human pharmaceutical secretions – of drugs flushed through our bodies into rivers, lakes, and oceans. By tracing the underwater network formed by waste anti-depressants, the film constructs an understanding of human bodies at the surface that have been rendered exhausted and anxious by contemporary socio-economic conditions. As I write this thesis, the film is in post-production. As part of this research, *LEAKS* is used to define how Tschumi's layered system of points, lines, and surfaces might be translated into the filmmaking process.

A world-leading natural laboratory comprised of 58 lakes set aside for whole ecosystem research, the IISD Experimental Lakes facility in north-western Ontario brings together researchers exploring the effects of various human-induced changes to water ecosystems, including waste water, oil pollution, and the myriad effects of climate change (Figure 4.7). By offering a 'whole ecosystem' approach to research, the facility enables scientists to investigate the knock-on effects of an impact on one part of an ecosystem to another, a causality that cannot always be replicated within lab conditions. While a globally significant scientific facility, I initially struggled during the research to find online images of the lakes and lab amenities. A recce or location scout was out of the question, as not only was I based in Berlin at the time, but the centre was also navigating the complexity of maintaining scientific work during the global Covid-19 lockdown, leaving staff stretched. Faced with these challenges, I began to reflect on the production of *On A Clear Day* and how Tschumi's system of points, lines, and surfaces might help me plan the film's

production remotely, providing a method or system to think through the site and the relations within it that would provide a template for filming when I eventually arrived.

Figure 4.7 Overhead Image of the IISD Experimental Lakes, on the territories of the Anishinabek Nation. Photo © 2023 IISD Experimental Lakes Area.

4.2.4.2 LEAKS: points

Many of the lakes that make up the Experimental Lakes site were human made or have been significantly adapted by humans. While researching in Berlin, I attempted to build up a sense of the size and form of these lakes, picking through social media for any clues. Eventually, this process led me to a short film that showed steam rising from the surface of lake number 33 as the sun heated its surface early in the morning (replicated in Figure 4.8). As I watched this short film on repeat, I began to consider the surface of each lake as a mediator, not only between people and landscape but also between the watery, non-human beings below and the human beings above – a site of continuous exchange where environmental matter shifts from one state to another through the processes of evaporation and condensation. Distributed across the site in a loose grid, these bodies of water create an infrastructure that shapes the scientific purpose of the site, revealing the relations between humans, non-humans, and landscape. By mediating these relations, the lakes hold properties that immediately recall the function assigned to the pylons in *On A Clear Day*: architectural forms capable of revealing the myriad of connections that unfold within a landscape.

Figure 4.8 Steam rising from a lake at the IISD Experimental Lakes, Canada.
Film still © 2023 Ben Evans James.

Translated from architecture to film, points such as the human-made/adapted lakes at the Experimental Lakes or the pylons in *On A Clear Day* can be understood as infrastructures that mediate human (or non-human) relations to a particular landscape; forms that can expose events, interactions, or happenings across a space over time.

4.2.4.3 LEAKS: lines

As part of my research process for *LEAKS*, I held conversations with my supporting professor on the project, Dr. Max Haiven (Lakehead University); and with the co-founder of the IISD Experimental Lakes, Dr. Roger Mollot. Through these conversations I was made aware of several current research projects being held on site.

With the information the pair provided I began to sketch out a diagram of the site, linking the labs, scientists, and lakes together. The pen lines I drew in my notebook represented the movements of scientists between their respective labs and the lakes at which their experiments were taking place. As I continued to sketch, the drawings began to take on the planometric quality of a map, the actions of the scientists resembling pathways carved into the landscape. These movements recalled to me an idea visible in some of Tschumi's early drawings in *The Manhattan Transcripts*. In these drawings, Tschumi traces the actions of a protagonist(s) through space, the path of their movements in part 'objectified' into a 3D architectural form. (Figure 4.9a shows how the paths of athletes running across a field can become extruded as walls, for example). This echoing between the movement(s) of people and the construction of the built environment is a concept that went on to find form in the design of the pathways that link the follies at La Villette. Tschumi reinforces this link through his decision to name the paths or walkways 'cinematic promenades' (Tschumi 1987, 17), an infrastructure that facilitates the movement of people through

space and the related succession of viewpoints they come across that the architect likened to the frames of a film (Figure 4.9b, c).

Figure 4.9 (**a**) Extrusion of movement as architectural form. Bernard Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts* (1994, 48) © Bernard Tschumi; (**b**) and (**c**) pathways at Parc de la Villette. Photos © 2023 Trevor Patt. Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 (Patt 2016).

Like the people represented in *The Manhattan Transcripts*, or the park visitors at La Villette, the scientists are the protagonists of architectural space at the Experimental Lakes. Each experiment a researcher conducts represents a movement between a lab and a lake, events that, when brought together, help to form the programme or 'architectural narrative' of the space.

This idea of an architectural narrative shaped by people translates neatly into filmmaking: the lines within non-fiction film to be understood as narrative flows shaped by a protagonist(s) as they interact with the landscape around them. These narrative flows can provide paths for the viewer to follow particular readings of the landscape that bring cohesion to narrative. Or they can be employed to disorientate the viewer, providing multiple points of intersection that help to deconstruct the hierarchy of a film.

4.2.4.4 LEAKS: surfaces

In Tschumi's architectural design at La Villette, the surfaces represent the natural components of the park's landscaping, elements such as trees, plants, and playing fields. Projecting this understanding onto the Experimental Lakes facility calls attention to the dense boreal forest that separates the lakes from the labs. When assuming this rather static role, the forest or surfaces take on the function of providing a setting for the film. By providing a backdrop in which a narrative unfolds, there is a "subsumption of space to the demands of narrative" (Lefebvre 2011, 64) with the surfaces placed in a subservient relationship to both the points and lines. At La Villette, however, Tschumi does not place the surfaces in this kind of subordinate role but rather sets them in tension with the points and lines as the layer's 'organic' qualities are brought into conflict with the 'artificial' concrete pathways and steel follies of La Villette. To achieve this, Tschumi takes the landscape elements of the park – the trees, planting, playing fields – and designs them into a series of geometric shapes that together create a fragmented mosaic across the park. This places the surfaces in a direct spatial connection with the lines (paths), and points (follies) across the park.

Tschumi's approach to the surfaces at La Villette creates a distinction between an idea of landscape and environment in architecture that is useful for analysis. The surfaces at La Villette contain organic elements shaped by a human design intervention; in this guise they are landscape features that are neither "entirely natural or entirely human" (Baum et al. 2023). A 'landscape feature' is therefore distinct from the idea of an 'environment' in that it describes a humanised space rather than a definition of an environment, "which often refers only to the non-human phenomena that humans interact with" (Baum et al. 2023.). At La Villette, the surfaces are landscape features animated by a design intervention that places them into productive conflict with the points and lines. Through his design, Tschumi turns the organic elements into a kind of 'landscape-protagonist'. This idea of a landscape protagonist translates well to film in considering surfaces not as a setting that is subservient to narrative, but as a character in its own right. To achieve this shift from setting to protagonist means the filmmaker acknowledges that the relationship between the landscape and the character(s) of a film is not the latter projecting itself on the former but is reciprocal. This sets up the potential for the landscape to take on the role of a protagonist, as one that both shapes, and is shaped by, interaction with other character(s).

To create this protagonist at the Experimental Lakes, I turned to experimental approaches of recording sound on site. This included using microphones that could be placed deep within the rocks of a boreal forest to listen for seismic movements, hydrophones that could listen to the sounds of underwater life, and a radio microphone to pick up the landscape's own radio spectrum. Combining shots of the forest with this audio in the edit, the surfaces could be understood as no longer only an environmental setting, but an autonomous, landscape-based protagonist – one that could be placed in dynamic conversation with the points and lines.

4.2.5 Putting the definitions to work: points, lines, and surfaces at the Experimental Lakes

After much planning, my trip to the Experimental Lakes was organised at the last minute. Due to Covid-19 restrictions there was only a short opportunity when I could be hosted. So with three weeks' notice, I found myself pulling into an opening in the dense forest around which a number of prefab buildings fanned out to form a complex. During the production process over the following weeks, I followed the template I had set out, filming and recording the sound of 32 of the 58 lakes (to create the points), scientists as they conducted their experiments across the site (to create the lines), and the landscape (to create the surfaces) (Figure 4.10).

Points

Lines

Surfaces

Figure 4.10 Points, lines, and surfaces at IISD Experimental Lakes, Canada. Film stills © 2023 Ben Evans James.

When I returned home, I carried the system of points, lines, and surfaces into the post-production process to organise and categorise the film and sound rushes I had collected. Typically, when I begin the editing process I add footage to folders through informal means (such as the way a shot feels) or formal means (such as the location or time of day). By sorting through footage for *LEAKS* using points, lines, and surfaces, this reflective process of categorising was replaced with a more active process where clips were bound together based on a pre-existing application. Once categorised into bins, I dragged the footage onto a sequence made up of three tracks that mirror the three layers of points, lines, and surfaces (Figure 4.11). This system allowed me to detach, study, and network images with one another, setting up informal opportunities for me to explore productive clashes or tensions between clips across the three layers or tracks of the sequence.

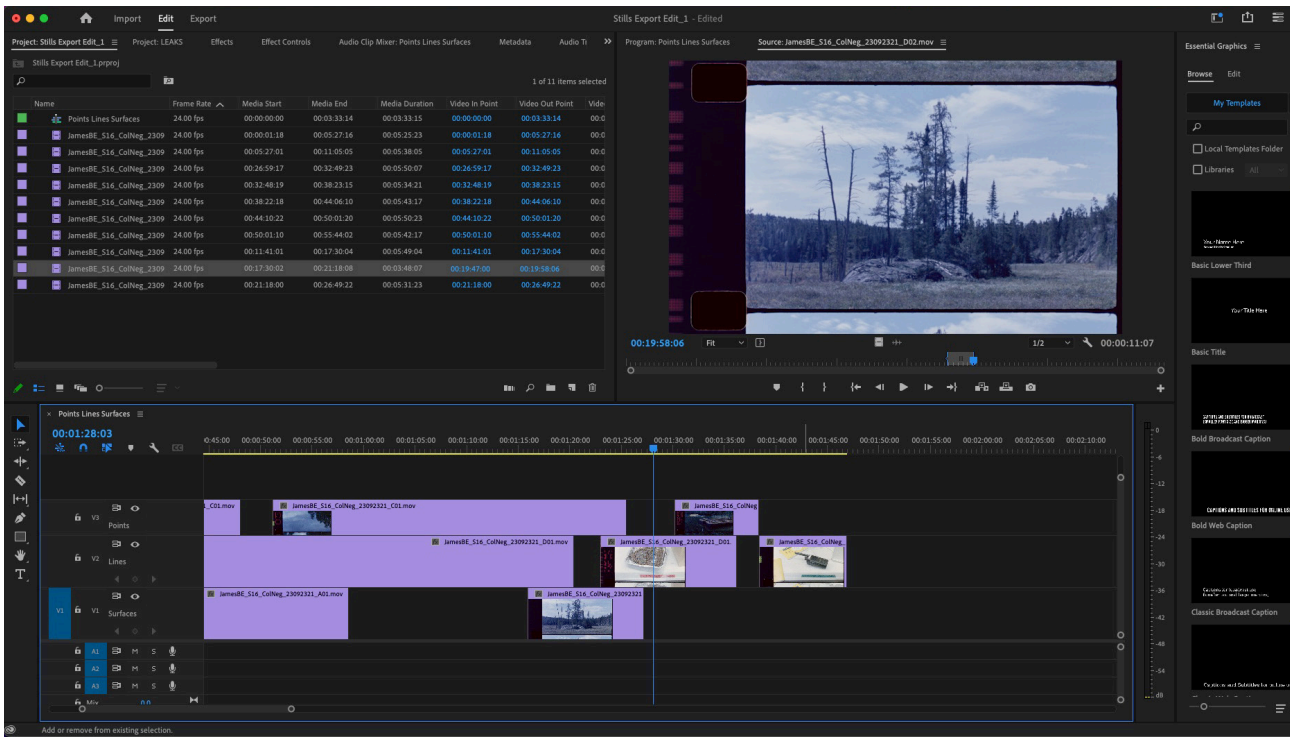

Figure 4.11 Early image of points, lines, and surfaces inside Adobe Premiere. Screenshot 2021 Ben Evans James.

This stage of the edit, in which the succession and superimposition of images is determined, is commonly known as the assembly. It is an active process that draws out possibilities as individual shots are brought together or ruptured apart. Placing content on tracks labelled points, lines, and surfaces initiated a methodical practice in which I continuously questioned how the editing process set up the productive clashes or tensions that define Tschumi's system. The focus of the edit shifted from inscribing individual images with meaning to focusing on the boundaries between images, or more specifically how I could create boundaries between images that would be generative. This process of manipulation and rupture provided a conceptual link back to Eisenstein and his theory of intellectual montage, and, by extension, to Tschumi who was so influenced by him, evidenced by the architect's assertion that "montage implies a form of disruption, where creativity lies in the juxtaposition and even contradiction" (Tschumi 1996, 197).

4.2.5.1 Interlude: Indeterminate Distances

While immersed in the editing process for *LEAKS*, I authored an essay for the *transmediale* festival journal that expanded upon some of these reflections. 'Indeterminate Distances' adopts the format of a fictional conversation between a film editor and images gathered in the filming process. Through the discussion, the editor begins to question their methods of editing and the desire they hold for creating certain types of images.

The images overleaf show excerpts from the work (Figure 4.12).

Figure 4.12 Spreads from Ben Evans James, 'Indeterminate Distances' (2022). Photos © 2022 Ben Evans James and Andrew Mark.

4.2.6 Exhibiting LEAKS

In the process of making *LEAKS*, I started to question the approach of translating the film's themes into an expansive spatial language, only for the work to be condensed back down for single-screen presentation. While *LEAKS* had been funded as a single-screen work for cinematic presentation, I became increasingly interested in the question of how the film might translate into an expanded form across space. This process would employ the spatial language applied to the film as a way to bridge into the spatial practices of the gallery, into curatorial practice and exhibition design. Here in the exhibition space, the layers of points, lines, and surfaces could be built up again into new orientations, expanding the film into a distributed form to create an artwork that is understood through interactions between its parts. As part of this process, I was further interested in how particular themes might be foregrounded that speak to the alternate locational context of the gallery, creating a degree of site-specificity.

To investigate these ideas further, it was necessary for me to transition my role in the research from filmmaker to curator. This opportunity presented itself when I commissioned a new exhibition by the French filmmaker Elsa Brès as part of my work as a curator at *transmediale* festival. That project, *Notes for les Sanglières*, built towards the production of Brès's forthcoming (2024) feature film *Les Sanglières* and forms the basis for the critical analysis that follows in part two of this chapter.

4.2.7 Conclusion: Pointdefining

The first section of this chapter opened on an investigation into how the production of the film *On A Clear Day* had drawn me towards Tschumi's work, shaping how I understood the landscape of eastern Kazakhstan where I had filmed and subsequently influencing its translation and representation through the editing process for the film. Seeking to expand on this research, I went on to pose the question of whether, just as Tschumi had borrowed from filmmaking to develop a temporal approach to architecture, filmmakers could borrow back from architecture – and specifically Tschumi's work – to develop a spatial approach to film.

Responding to this provocation, the investigation switched to a second practice-based project, *LEAKS*, using the film work to demonstrate how Tschumi's design system for La Villette – the layering of points, lines, and surfaces – could be translated from the context of landscape architecture into the domain of documentary film. This transition was animated by formulating a set of definitions specific to filmmaking for each of the three layers. Using mapping to bridge between the disciplines, the research showed how the layers of points, lines, and surfaces could transform in function from an architectural system applied to the programming of space to a filmic system applied to create a representation of space; the outcome is one that responds affirmatively to the question of whether Tschumi's system can be used by filmmakers to create a spatial approach to film.

I term this overall process as Pointdefining and complete analysis of this first section with its formal definition.

4.2.8 Definition: Pointdefining

Pointdefining offers a method for filmmakers to construct a representation of a landscape through a series of three graphic planes – points, lines, and surfaces – each of which contain specific information bound by the attributes of a space. By considering the architectural features, natural resources, and behavioural activities that unfold within a space, Pointdefining allows the filmmaker to map the complex interplay between spatial elements and socio-cultural factors that have contributed to the shaping of a landscape. This approach can act as an aid to the filmmaker as they seek to identify the specific relations they wish to highlight and interact with through their work.

4.2.8.1 Points

In Tschumi's design for La Villette, points are represented by a series of follies that form a grid across the park. Through public interaction these architectures find a multiplicity of purpose: spatial objects that are linked to temporal events. Applied to filmmaking, points can similarly be understood as infrastructures that mediate human (or non-human) relations to a particular

landscape; forms that can expose events, happenings, or interactions between the protagonist(s) of a film across a space over time. Selected by the filmmaker, these infrastructures could take on any number of anthropocentric forms such as buildings, canals, fields, streets, railways – any infrastructure that "embodies the link between human beings and the Earth, between programme and site: it is a form that is simultaneously human and terrestrial" (Bullier et al. 2021, 19).

4.2.8.2 Lines

In Tschumi's design for La Villette, lines represent the communication points between the points or follies. Set up to sit in visual tension with the follies, the lines are an infrastructure that facilitates the movement of people through space, creating a succession of viewpoints for the visitor that Tschumi likened to the frames of a film (Tschumi 1987). In filmmaking, lines are not created by an architectural design process, but by a filmmaking process. Specifically, lines can be understood as narrative flows carved through the landscape by a film's protagonist(s).

4.2.8.3 Surfaces

In Tschumi's design for La Villette, surfaces represent the park's landscaping – the trees, planting, and playing fields. Designed into a series of geometric shapes that together create a fragmented mosaic across La Villette, the surfaces are placed in direct conversation or conflict with the lines (paths) and points (follies) across the park. This two-way relationship incarnates the surfaces as a kind of 'landscape-protagonist'.

In film, surfaces can similarly be considered as a landscape-protagonist. To achieve this shift, the two-way relationship between the natural features of a chosen landscape and the humans who interact with it, needs to be revealed by the filmmaker. This sets up the potential for the landscape to take on the role of protagonist as an environment that both shapes, and is shaped by, human interaction.

4.3 Pointtranslating

The second part of this chapter focuses on how the system of points, lines, and surfaces can be applied to the curation of (landscape) artists' non-fiction film. This analysis asks two questions to help establish a definition and use case for the process of Pointtranslating: (i) By creating a stratified view of a film's themes within the curatorial process, can the system of points, lines, and surfaces create opportunities to build those layers back up into new orientations within the exhibition space? (ii) As a process defined by deconstruction, can the system of points, lines, and surfaces be used to construct film exhibitions that resist hierarchy and singular readings by the spectator in favour of a multiplicity of viewpoints?

To respond to these questions, I shifted my role in the research from filmmaker to curator, commissioning a new work, *Notes for les Sanglières* by Elsa Brès that was exhibited at the *transmediale* festival (July - September 2021). The following analysis tracks the curatorial process by bringing theory together with conversations held with the artist, and the development of 3D renders. My 3D drawings ignited a discursive process with Brès as she developed the work: "To me we built a dialogue between 2D and 3D. If the studio had been spatially different, the film edit would almost certainly have taken on a different shape" (Brès in Brès and James 2021). It is important to clarify that defining this as a discursive process is not the same as defining the final work as a collaboration; the design work I undertook was always in response to the work as Brès understood it.

4.3.1 Background to the exhibition: Notes for les Sanglières by Elsa Brès

Addressing art's responsibility to conceive new ways of imagining a response to our urgent ecological circumstance*, Notes for les Sanglières* by Elsa Brès challenges the erroneous perspective of human custodianship over nature, disrupting the spectator's interface with traditional images of the natural world and creating space for new and alternate ways of looking at ecology. Constructing a non-human world in which wild boars are the primary protagonists, *Notes for les Sanglières* uses geospatial mapping tools to present new prospects for alliances between human and non-human. In the work, these ideas are brought together under the umbrella concept of *communisme pur du vivant*, or 'communism of the living' – a theory developed by French philosopher Paul Guillibert with whom Brès collaborates and converses as part of the work. Responding to the conditions of capitalism that have helped push us towards our current ecological moment, the collaboration between Guillibert and Brès asks us to rethink communism as a method that can pluralise the concept of nature (Brès 2021) through a call to replace "the modern self with an ecological, nondualist self that reconnects with all beings" (Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone cited in Escobar 2018, 143).

4.3.1.1 Description of the installed work Notes for Les Sanglières by Elsa Brès at transmediale festival, Berlin

Notes for les Sanglières manifested as a mixed-media installation within the *transmediale* studio space in Berlin, the primary focus of which was a seventeen-minute looping film projected centrally in the space (Figure 4.13, 4.14). This film opens with a conversation between Brès and the philosopher Paul Guillibert. The pair, hidden from view, focus on pre-revolutionary France, the practice of gleaning, and the alliances that formed between humans and animals around this grain-gathering process. Between vignettes of Guillibert and Brès conversing, the spectator views grainy infrared pictures of a bucolic landscape shot at night, the French area of les Cévennes where the artist resides (Figure 4.14).

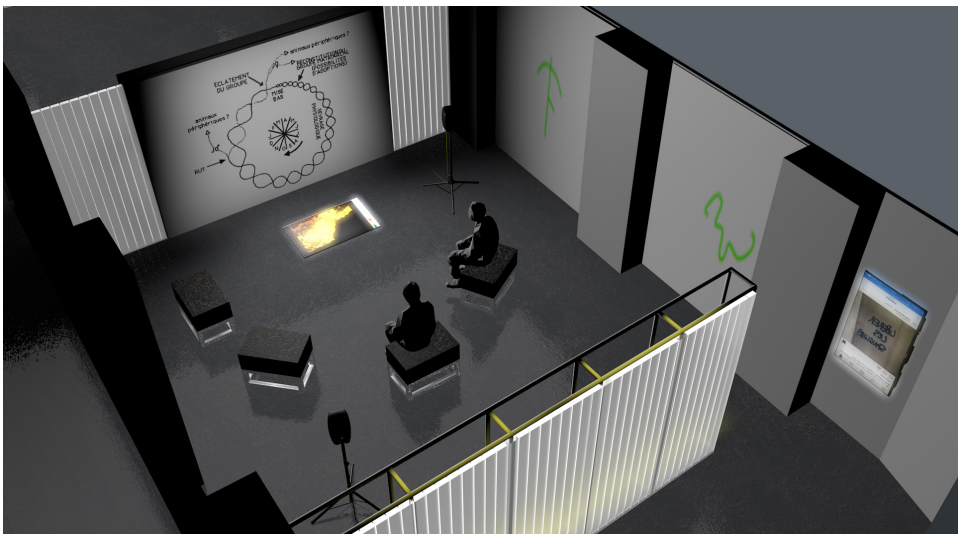

Figure 4.13 Render of final install. 3D drawing 2021 Ben Evans James.

During the film's first vignette, the spectator is introduced to ancient symbols carved on rocks across the region, replicas of which were hand painted in a phosphorescent dye within the alcoves of the exhibition space. As the film continues, a reading taken from a script by Brès grows increasingly animated as it calls for a worker-led revolution while an accompanying electronic music score builds to a crescendo. Delivering this audio, two standing speakers were placed diagonally across the space, their yellow cables visible as they draped down from the ceiling and trailed across the floor. Reaching its denouement, the film cuts to a camera tracking fast through thick grassland; saturated red, the viewer is placed in the eyes of the boar, to see the landscape through its perspective.

Figure 4.14 Elsa Brès, *Notes for les Sanglières* (2021), *transmediale* Studio. Photos © 2021 Luca Giardini.

Underneath the main projection screen, a large flat-screen TV sat propped up on the floor facing the viewer. The flat screen showed a graphic map of les Cévennes constructed using a Geographic Information System (GIS),[3] a piece of computer mapping software used to display and analyse data in relation to a specific location (Figures 4.14). Rendered out, the GIS map in the space

featured a blaze of saturated colours: pinks, reds, and yellows. Each colour of the map represented an environmental resource such as water or forestry whose density (or lack of) would impact the ability for boars to live in the area. Synced to the main projection above, the map was not a constant presence in the space, but instead punctuated the gallery as the work unfolded over its seventeen-minute runtime.

Completing the installation, a portrait-orientated flat screen TV mounted on the wall by the gallery reception area showed an edited scroll of Instagram posts with the hashtag #boars or #lessangliers, #lessanglières (Figure 4.15a). Sealing the work off from the rest of the gallery, a single polycarbonate screen cut across the width of the space (Figure 4.15b). The translucency of this screen created a voyeuristic view of the work from the gallery reception area, as visitors peered into the filmic world created by *Notes for les Sanglières*.

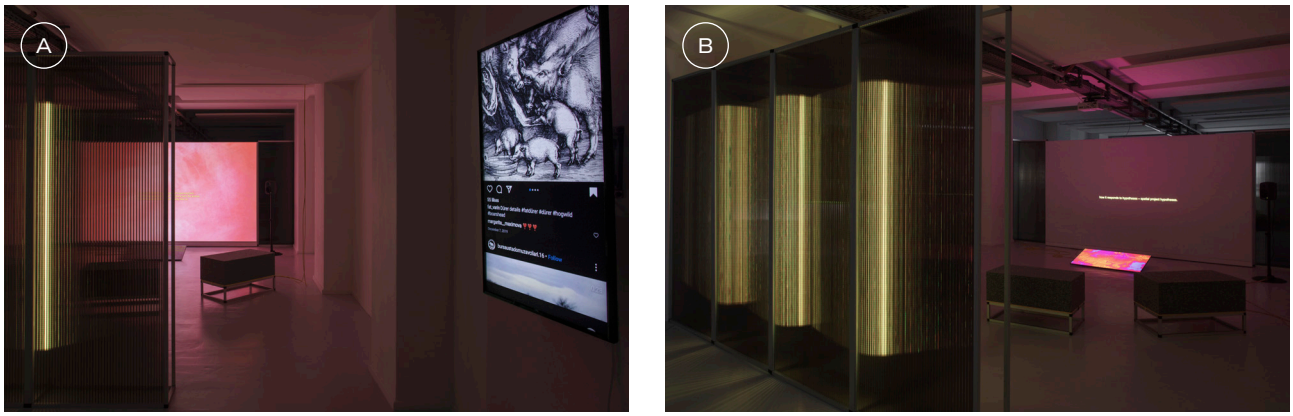

Figure 4.15 (**a**) and (**b**) Elsa Brès, *Notes for les Sanglières* (2021), *transmediale* Studio. Photos © 2021 Luca Giardini.

4.3.2 Applying points, lines, and surfaces to Notes for les Sanglières

There were four factors that shaped my decision to apply Pointtranslating and the system of points, lines, and surfaces to the curation of *Notes for les Sanglières*: (i) to provide a framework for organising research materials; (ii) *transmediale* as a context for exhibition; (iii) Brès's personal background in architecture; and (iv) the centrality of landscape to the work. It is important to note that Pointtranslating was a methodology I adopted to help curate the work, not one adopted by Brès to make the work.

Exploring each of these four factors in turn:

i. TO PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANISING RESEARCH
Traversing the borders between artistic production, research, and exhibition, *Notes for les Sanglières* built towards the production of Brès's forthcoming (2024) feature film *Les Sanglières*; the 'notes for' in the title signposting that this was a project commissioned during the research stage of the filmmaking process. Reflecting on the role research played in shaping her past films, Brès speaks in a language that recalls Donald

Schön's (1992) theory of tacit knowledge, of research making its way into a film not through direct means but indirectly, by guiding her actions as a filmmaker: "The research never gets used in my films in an expository or essayistic way [...] but I'm sure I don't film a landscape in the same way after researching as I would before" (Brès in Brès and James 2021). *Notes for les Sanglières* challenged this process, foregrounding the research and its role in the filmmaking process, "thinking about the exhibition made me take the material more seriously because I wanted to find ways to share it" (Brès in Brès and James 2021). The artist describes the exhibition-making process as liberating, unburdening her from the weight of research materials. Brès initially identified three benefits from this process. First, the exhibition-making process allowed her to construct the world of the film in a material way: "I was interested in finding a form for those methods and that research, to really get a sense and a feeling of what the film could be, to construct the film's world physically" (Brès in Brès and James 2021). Second, by providing an outlet for the research, Brès felt less pressure to account for all of it within her forthcoming feature film on which the exhibition was based, *Les Sanglières*: "the exhibition freed the film to be considered in its proper form" (Brès in Brès and James 2021). Finally, the exhibition opened up new threads of research for the film, most significantly the conversations with Guillibert. Applying the system of Pointtranslating to the curatorial process could provide a method to organise and speak about the research materials Brès was sharing, the components of which would eventually make up the exhibition.

Meeting up with Brès after the project, I remember her joking about a friend who had expressed their astonishment at how the artist had agreed to put on a film exhibition about a film that didn't exist and for which there was no film footage. This anecdote recalled one of the first conversations I had with Brès about her motivations and aspirations for the exhibition. We began to think about how an installation could work as a development tool for the feature film *Les Sanglières*, shifting the traditional function of the gallery space as a place for final presentation towards one constitutive of the production of a work. The strategy would challenge the idea of the exhibition as the final point of production, and a resolved visual outcome "in which the messy trials and tribulations of the research have been removed and the 'findings' or 'facts' presented" (Bletcher 2016, 116). In *Notes for les Sanglières*, it was precisely the "messy trials and tribulations" that we wished to foreground. This ambition spoke to the idea of the gallery operating as a kind of prototyping space. In his global bestseller on business innovation, *Serious Play*, MIT fellow Michael Schrage considers the prototype as a hypothesis for "the future of how the prototype might perform, the future of how potential users might react to it, the future of how it might be produced" (1999, 22). These were all pertinent foundations for questions around the future production of the feature film *Les Sanglières*, to which we were seeking answers through the exhibition *Notes for les*

Sanglières. Replacing Schrage's language of business innovation with a prototyping definition more in line with an art and design context, Bruce and Stephanie Tharp introduce the idea of the 'discursive prototype'. A discursive prototype leverages a creative work as a mode of inquiry for generating discourse, "the ultimate power and goal of the discursive prototype is intellectual rather than practical" (Tharp and Tharp 2018, 38). By stratifying the themes of *Les Sanglières*, the system of points, lines, and surfaces could provide a strategy for setting up tensions and clashes between layers that might generate this kind of inquiry. As Brès remarked after the project:

> From a process point of view, the project initially created some stress in that I thought it was taking away from my script writing time. But then I realised it really helped me to think about the structure of the narrative because I was thinking about it using a different tool or methodology. Put another way, trying to find a sense of the film in the installation helped me find it in the script for the film. When you first wrote to me I had these threads of research, of the history of boars in the French countryside and the ideas of the map and working with Gherardo. But it wasn't really a world, it was just a stream of research ideas (Brès in Brès and James 2021).

ii. TRANSMEDIALE AS A CONTEXT FOR THE EXHIBITION

The festival infrastructure of *transmediale* was significant in providing the flexibility for me to employ an experimental curatorial approach such as Pointtranslating. This flexibility emerged from the frenetic pace of the festival's programming, coupled with the abundance of intersections between *transmediale*'s own programmatic core, a mixed-media approach that includes exhibitions, talks, performances, workshops, and events. Further, as a festival immersed within the culture of digital and new media arts, *transmediale* exists within a field that has historically embraced the exhibition of works that are in progress, ongoing, or that enfold instability and transformation as part of their form. Curators Sarah Cook and Beryl Graham identify a particular "culture of speed" within new media art that requires an approach to curating in which the presentation of a work becomes entwined with the process of its development (2010, 92). The particular framework of *transmediale* and its grounding in new media art therefore helped provide the favourable conditions required to commission the work and adopt the experimental curatorial framework of Pointtranslating.

iii. BRÈS'S BACKGROUND IN ARCHITECTURE

Like Tschumi, Brès is an architect who has been drawn towards film. While her practice has long since pivoted from architecture as a formal concern, this training can be identified across her body of work. Research intensive, Brès's recent films (*Love Canal*, 2017 and *Sweat*, 2020) have all begun with a process akin to a site survey with photographs taken, features of the landscape noted down, sketches

drawn out, oral histories recorded, and maps consulted (Brès 2023). "The thing I learned in architecture school", Brès notes, "is how to try to find tools to understand a space where you're going to make a project" (Brès in Brès and James 2021). Pointtranslating would offer a means to extend out of this architectural approach to filmmaking, a language that could interface with the research methods Brès adopted and her background in design. Through Pointtranslating the curatorial process was placed into a design framework that bridged our shared background in architecture.

iv. THE CENTRALITY OF LANDSCAPE TO THE WORK

The development of *Notes for les Sanglières* is intimately bound to the mountainous landscape of the filmmaker's home, les Cévennes in France (Figure 4.16). As a curatorial method developed for application to landscape-based documentary, it was crucial that any application of Pointtranslating was applied to a film where landscape themes hold significant prominence.

Figure 4.16 Elsa Brès filming in the landscape of les Cévennes. Photo © 2023 Elsa Brès.

In the analysis that follows, I describe how *Notes for les Sanglières* was deconstructed using the system of points, lines, and surfaces and how, by translating the themes of the work into a spatial language, those layers were rebuilt in the context of the exhibition space through a series of curatorial and design gestures.

4.3.3 Defining points

Notes for les Sanglières is set within the French mountainous prefecture of les Cévennes. Distributed across this landscape are various anthropocentric

infrastructures that could be defined as points. From irrigation systems first constructed in the Middle Ages to trails worn by the transit of people, these infrastructures reveal relations between humans and the landscape. Necessitating an extension beyond mere human-landscape relations, *Notes for les Sanglières* required an infrastructure that could speak to the prominence of the boar in the project, a system of points capable of illuminating human-landscape-boar relations.

Photographed by Brès, the images in Figure 4.17 depict a series of carvings on rocks within the landscape of les Cévennes taken from an article written by Jean Salles (1974) in the *Encyclopédie des Cévennes*. These symbols, and others like them, exist across much of the region, crossing an expansive history from the Neolithic period to the middle of the 20th century. Thought to have been carved on the soft rock by illiterate peasants in the 16th century, these signs are found along old transhumance paths (*drailles*) in the region. Placed along the tracks across which livestock were herded, the carvings are entwined with the semi-nomadic lives of those who once worked the land – signifiers of the relationship between humans, animals, and the earth. Due to the carvings' capacity to triangulate these relations, they were carried forwards as the points of the project into the curatorial process.

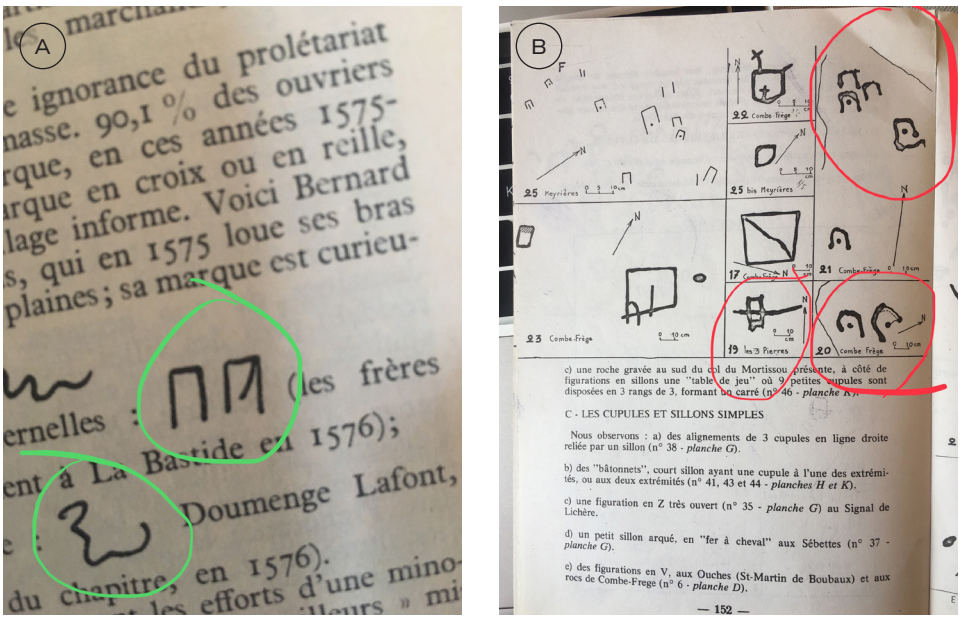

Figure 4.17 Highlighted illustrations of carvings featured in the 1974 edition of the *Encyclopédie des Cévennes* (Salles 1974). Photo © 2023 Elsa Brès.

4.3.3.1 Design analysis: points

Like Tschumi's red follies (the points in his plans for La Villette) the carvings in les Cévennes define a specific landscape, forming a grid of spatial objects that expose relations between bodies and space over time – in this case, across centuries (Figure 4.18).

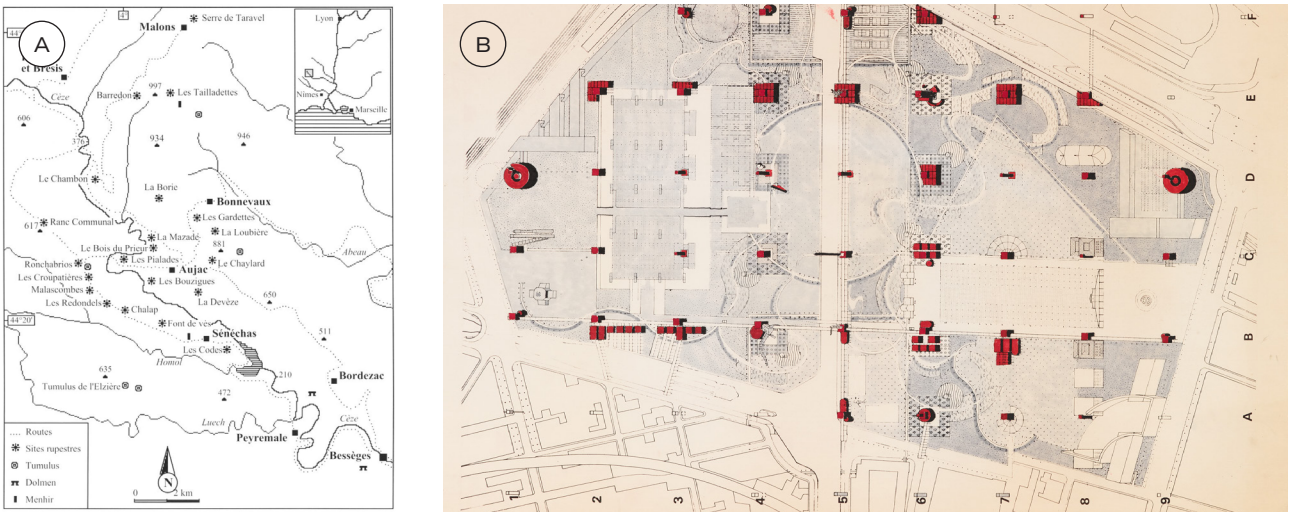

Figure 4.18 Points in the landscape of les Cévennes vs. Tschumi's Points: (**a**) Location of rock carvings in the Haute Cèze region (Oslisly and Tillault 1998, 556), reprinted courtesy of Richard Oslisly; (**b**) diagram of the point grid, Bernard Tschumi (cited in Vidler 2014) © Bernard Tschumi Architects.

Traversing histories from pre-revolutionary France, through processes of enclosure, and up to the present, Brès employs the carvings to think through the area's history of alliance-building between human and non-human. This thought process manifests itself in the completed work through a conversation between the filmmaker and the philosopher Paul Guillibert. Audible as part of a film projected on a central wall in the space, the conversation navigates from the world as it is now to the world as it was then, when – the pair tell us – boars could be understood as allies of humans in challenging systems of private property ownership and feudalism.

> "The (historical) process of Enclosure ensured land-use is governed by private property"

> "Through private property there are a whole bunch of species, individuals, and groups that are excluded from using the land"

> "There would be traces somewhere in these landscapes of these (inter-species) alliances that have been forgotten but which once existed"
>
> (Brès 2021)

Throughout the film, carvings from the rocks of les Cévennes appear on screen (Figure 4.19). In an effort to counteract the carvings' remediation through digital projection, Brès traced the symbols by hand, maintaining a link to their original artisanal qualities. Projected at a large scale, the carvings help to immerse the spectator in the landscape of les Cévennes, their image acting as a portal to another place (Balsom 2014). Brès herself was hesitant about this power of the image, of cinema's ability to effectively 'close down' the physical space of the gallery by drawing the gaze of the spectator into the screen and then

transporting them out to an elsewhere: “when it’s shown on a big projector in this way the language of the space is image first. And the question then is how do you build around it?” (Brès in Brès and James 2021). This question highlighted a particular challenge for Brès, a shift in focus from thinking about a single-screen film towards thinking spatially about an exhibition. Having trained as an architect, Brès experienced additional pressure in wrestling to consider the positioning of the spectator in relation to the image, noting: “it’s a bit scary for me to go back to thinking about space because I’m supposed to be an architect. So it’s a lot of pressure on how you experience space with your body” (Brès in Brès and James 2021). Recognising the significance of the carvings as points in my own design process it would provide an opportunity to think through the power ascribed to the image in the space and its relation to the body of the spectator. Rather than thinking about the exhibition space as a portal to transport the spectator to les Cévennes, focus could be shifted towards considering how the landscape itself could be ‘re-territorialised’ within the gallery – a process that in turn could accentuate the presence of the body of the spectator in the gallery space.

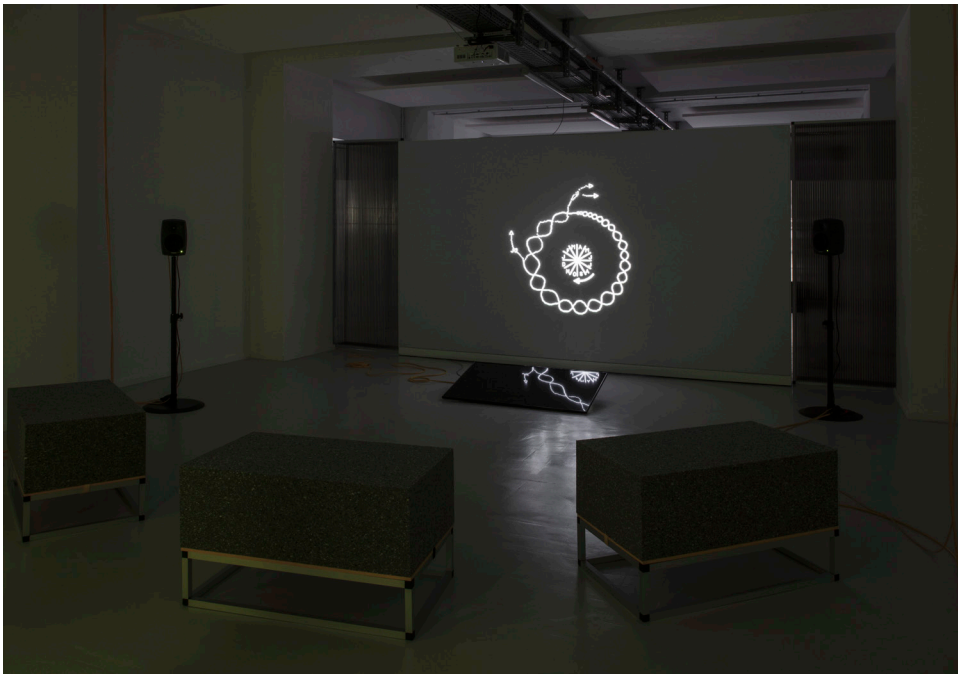

Figure 4.19 Elsa Brès, *Notes for les Sanglières* (2021), *transmediale* Studio. Photo © 2021 Luca Giardini.

Responding to this idea of re-territorialisation, the carvings were extended out from the projection screen, with symbols hand-painted in fluorescent yellow phosphorescent dye directly onto the gallery walls (Figure 4.20). Placed within each alcove in the gallery space, the symbols formed a grid within it. Positioned almost equidistant between these symbols, the viewer not only looked onto the landscape presented on screen but was also firmly placed within it (Figure 4.21).

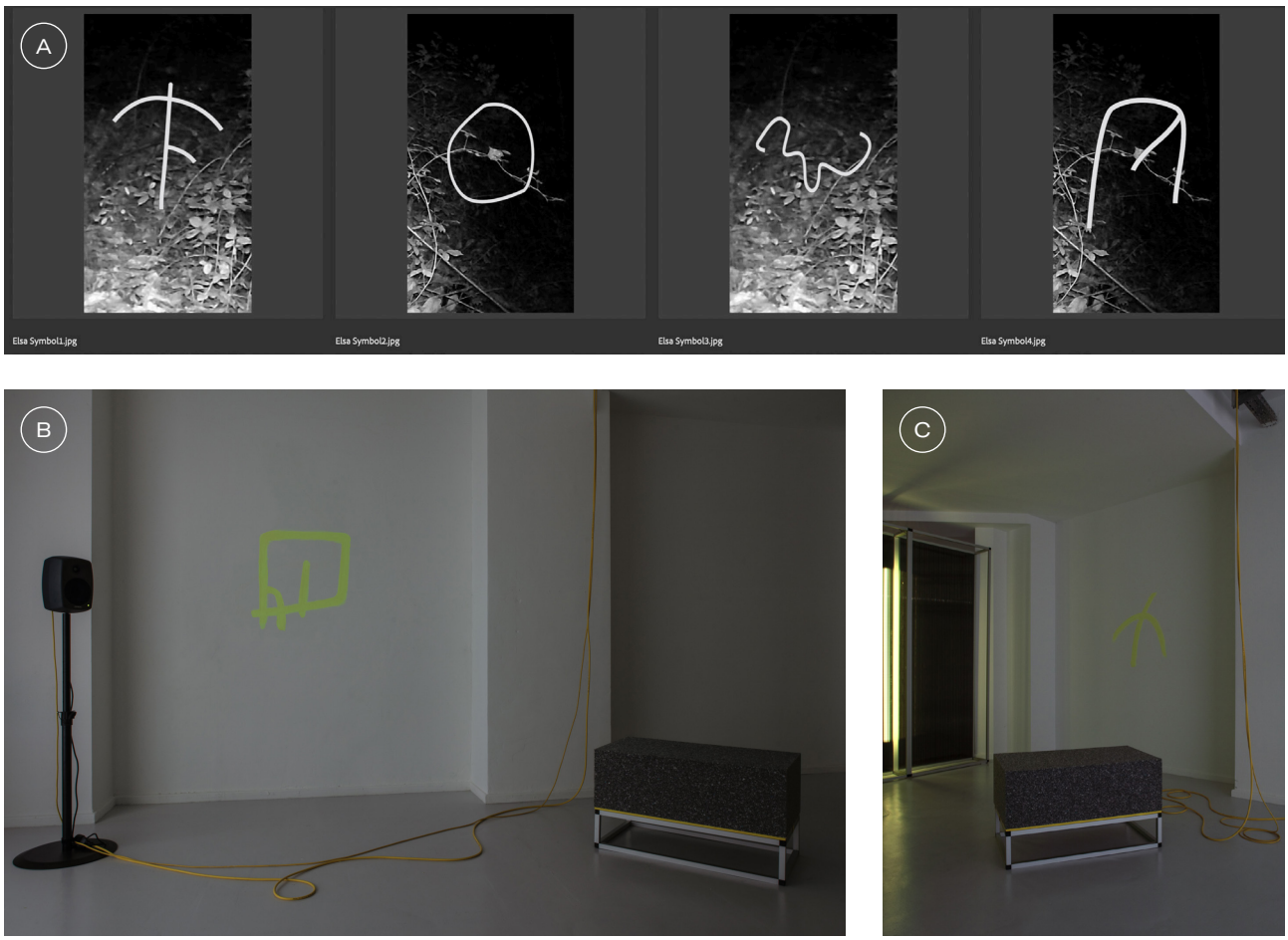

Figure 4.20 (**a**) Original drawings of carvings shared by Brès during the development of the work; (**b**) and (**c**) later translation of carvings onto the gallery walls. Elsa Brès, *Notes for les Sanglières* (2021). *transmediale* Studio. Photos © 2021 Luca Giardini.

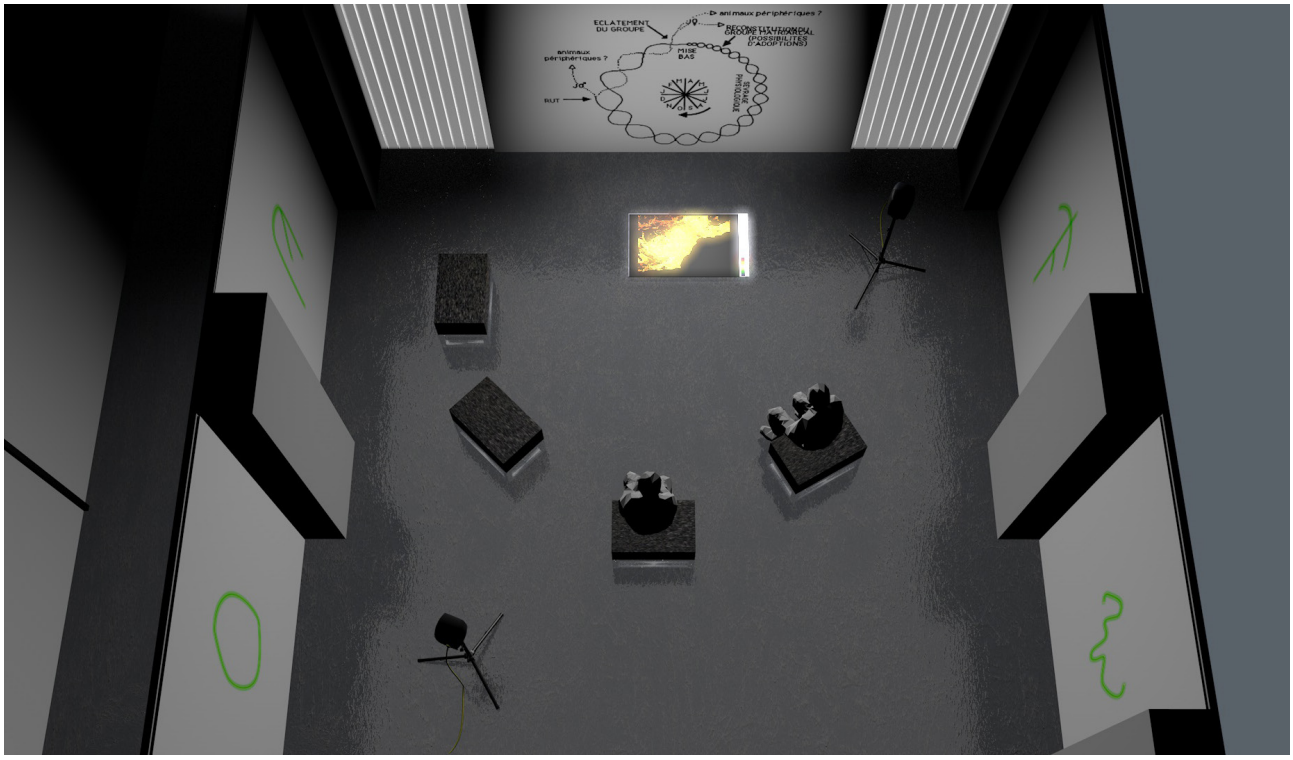

Figure 4.21 Visitors in between symbols painted on the wall. 3D drawing 2021 Ben Evans James.

Prompts within the film further allude to this positioning of the spectator, perhaps particularly when Guillibert, ruminating on how new relations between humans and boars might be formed in the landscape, asks, “what would be at stake in this new alliance? What form would it take?” (speaking in Brès 2021). While addressed to Brès, the question could equally have been addressed to the spectator. Guillibert’s provocation held particular significance due to the Berlin context of the gallery. This exhibition took place in the late summer of 2021, when an increase in people visiting the surrounding lakes and forests during Covid-19 had led to heightened incidents of conflict between boars and humans. This reached a peak when photos surfaced across social media and in the German tabloids of a naked male sunbather chasing a team of wild boars across one of Berlin’s lakeside beaches (Figure 4.22).

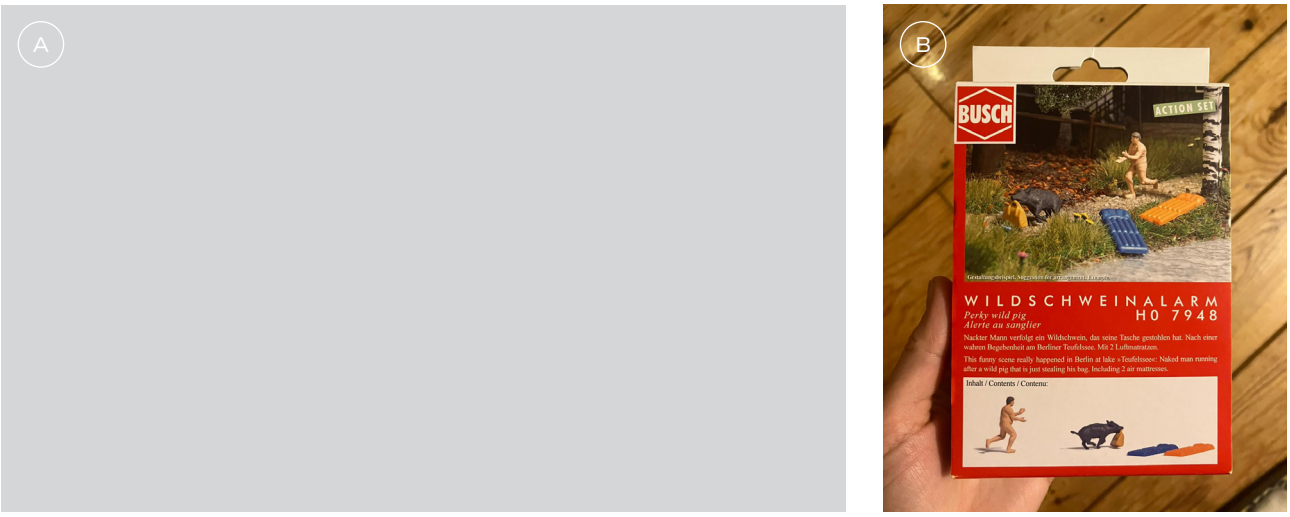

Figure 4.22 (**a**) Photo © 2021 Adele Landauer (cited in Connolly 2020) (image redacted due to copyright); (**b**) photo shared by Brès of a diorama kit developed in response to the event. Photo © Elsa Brès 2022.

Bringing the relationship between the filmmaker and the landscape of les Cévennes into conversation with the spectator and a Berlin context helped ignite the activist ambitions Brès had for the work. For the spectator, *Notes for les Sanglières* offered a mediation between the widely held perception in Berlin of the boar as a miscreant towards its emancipation as a potential ally in the struggle for ecological justice. The phenomenologist Paul Ricœur provides a framework for understanding this re-evaluation through his theory of emplotment (Ricœur 1986). Of specific interest to this analysis is emplotment’s function as a mediator between the stages Ricœur defines as prefiguration and refiguration. Prefiguration can be understood as the assumptions that a filmmaker employs to create a ‘story world’ the spectator can recognise in some broad form (Morny 1997). These assumptions are built from a range of shared human experiences, the overlaps across cultures, histories, belief systems, and science (though not to disregard the plurality of these understandings). The second stage of refiguration can be defined as the point at which the themes of a story are re-animated back into the world of the viewer. Ricœur’s framework first permits an understanding of how the location of the gallery in Berlin shaped how the work would be received, interacting with the prefigured world of the work (an interaction catalysed by the boars’ visibility across news outlets

in the city). Second, one can understand how the process of refiguration began at the point that the spectator engages, or 'reads', the work in the gallery. By providing an infrastructure that facilitates the refiguration of a work within a specific locational context, the exhibition space can be understood as an agit-prop for a localised movement, one that could be capable of setting in motion a transformation of views or social change. By playing this role the gallery could help to advance a change in "reality by bringing new meanings and perceptions to the world" (Ivic 2020, 68).

Notes for les Sanglières presents a landscape in which different pasts are explored to point to alternate possible futures (O'Sullivan 2018). To highlight these shifting temporalities, the use of a yellow phosphorescent dye to reproduce the carvings on the wall helped challenge a conventional interpretation of their historical context. Where the shape of the carvings alludes to bygone eras, their vibrant hue and luminosity suggests something speculative, or future facing. Through the use of phosphorescent dye, the surface of the carvings also interacted with other elements of the work, particularly the light emitted from a projector and monitor. When these screens were emitting bright light, the yellow carvings receded into the background, barely perceptible on the gallery walls. In this state, the pigments of the paint soaked up the light. As the screens switched to content with darker tones, the lighting in the exhibition space dropped and the glow from the symbols became bright, the phosphorescent glow proceeding into the space. Through this giving and taking of light, a reciprocal design relationship was established between various elements of the work within the space (Figure 4.23).

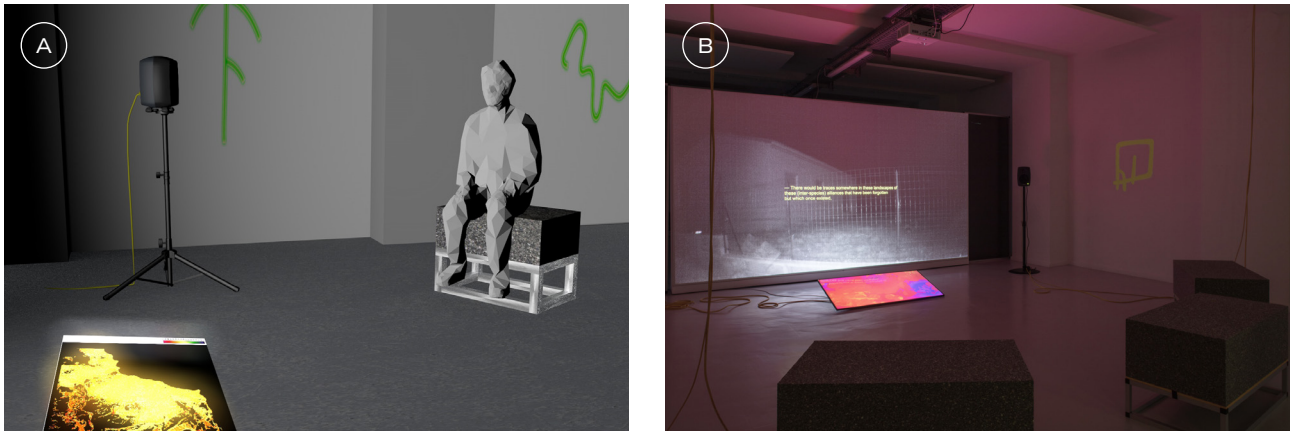

Figure 4.23 (**a**) TV and symbols in the alcoves of the exhibition space. 3D drawing 2021 Ben Evans James; (**b**) Elsa Brès, *Notes for les Sanglières* (2021), *transmediale* Studio. Photo © 2021 Luca Giardini.

4.3.3.2 Summary: points

This analysis began by identifying the points in the landscape of les Cévennes. Adopting an approach established during the earlier investigation into the process of Pointdefining, the aim was to select an infrastructure that could be shown to mediate relations between humans, boars, and the landscape – in this case, ancient symbols carved into the rocks in les Cévennes. As the

investigation moved into the process of Pointtranslating, focus shifted to the gallery and how the designation of points might impact the curation and design of the work in the exhibition space. This influence was felt most strongly through the painting of the symbols onto the gallery walls.

This design decision challenged the hierarchical importance traditionally given to the screen in cinematic presentation. Rather than creating a space in which the projection screen would act as a portal to an elsewhere, the symbols helped to reterritorialise the landscape of les Cévennes within the gallery. This process in turn highlighted the position of the spectator as 'inhabiting' the landscape of the film, rather than simply being transported to it – placing an expectation of labour on the visitor to draw together elements from across the gallery to refigure the work's themes. Pointing to this interrelationship between elements of the work, the design decision to use a phosphorescent dye to daub the symbols on the wall created an intentional connection between the symbols and other parts of the work through the exchange of light. Further, the choice of phosphorescent dye played with the temporalities explored within the film, speaking to histories that never came to pass and speculative futures that may still come to pass in the landscape of les Cévennes.

4.3.4 Defining lines

Writing on the field of non-fiction film, the theorist Simon O'Sullivan (2018) outlines how applications of fiction have been used by artists to create speculations that point to alternate pasts, presents, and futures. O'Sullivan uses the example of Patrick Keiller's film *London* (1994), a work in which ancient carvings are used to point to a past that contrasts with the banality of supermarket buildings and container ports that occupy the outer reaches of modern-day London. O'Sullivan adopts the prevalent term 'docufiction' to describe this approach to non-fiction, identifying how "the docufiction can involve a presentation of landscape, broadly construed, alongside the instantiation of a complex and layered temporality which itself involves the foregrounding of different pasts and possible futures" (2018, 54). Through applications of fiction, the filmmaker can alert us to various histories that are not always visible in the landscape, a circumstance O'Sullivan calls a "haunting of future pasts" (2018, 58). In *Notes for les Sanglières*, it is *le sanglier,* or the boar, that – much like Virginia Woolf's protagonist, Orlando (2024) – provides a constant in the landscape, alerting us to the layered temporalities of history within les Cévennes. In *Notes for les Sanglières* the 'haunting of future pasts' are to be found in the fictional speculations on what the present-day ecological moment might have looked like had alliances between human and non-human taken a different turn, one in which humans better recognised their role in an interdependent ecology. The boar can then become a kind of speculative protagonist, one who crosses space and time by traversing the points of the grid, the carvings on rocks in the region.

4.3.4.1 Design analysis: lines

In Tschumi's speculative drawings *The Manhattan Transcripts*, the designer used singular photographs as a method to denote an event or action that took place in architectural space (1994). These 'event actions' were used to challenge the traditional emphasis placed on the building in architecture, to instead foreground an understanding of space as something that emerges from the actions of people. Each of these photographs turn their human subject into a protagonist; a body that can activate architectural space in a multiplicity of ways. Much as in film montage, a combination of these individual images can then create a sequence that tells the story of a space over a defined period. For Tschumi, this sequence of 'event actions' represented by photographs formed the programme of the site, the link between people and the built environment. These ideas found form later through the architect's design for La Villette, the link made explicit by Tschumi when he wrote that "the park is a series of cinegrams, each of which is based on a precise set of architectonic, spatial, or programmatic transformations (1996, 197) (Figure 4.24).

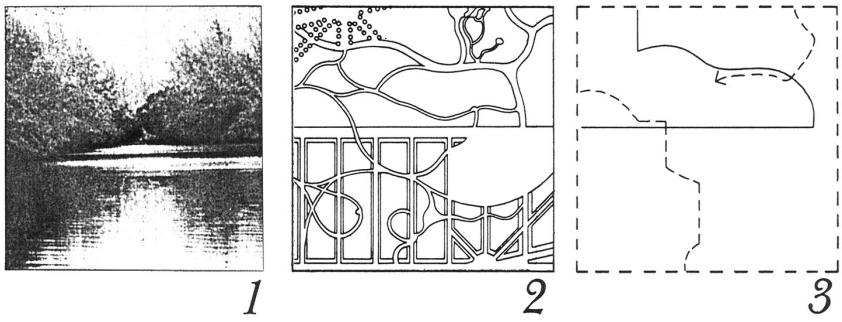

Figure 4.24 'Event actions'. Bernard Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts* (1994, 16) © Bernard Tschumi.

In *Notes for les Sanglières*, Brès similarly adopts a series of still photographs as a method to draw attention to the singular events that together define the 'programme' of the landscape within which her film is set. Distinct from Tschumi, however, these images do not show representations of humans interacting with space, but rather boars. They also differ from Tschumi's in that we do not see the protagonists themselves in the photographs but are rather taken into the boar's worldview through a point-of-view framing (Figure 4.25). Through this method, the images Brès shows point us towards the significance of the boar in the landscape without literally showing us the animal.

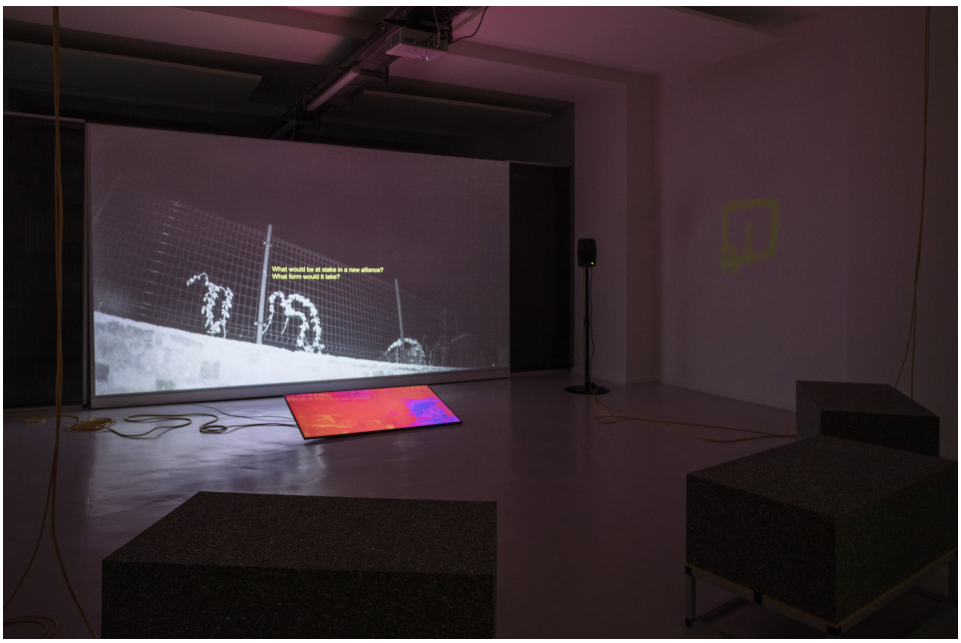

Figure 4.25 Elsa Brès, *Notes for les Sanglières* (2021), *transmediale* Studio. Photo © 2021 Luca Giardini.

Brès's photographs unfold across five of the film's seventeen minutes. Projected onto a central wall within the gallery space, the photos first appear at the end of a conversation between Brès and philosopher Paul Guillibert in which he questions how speculative mapping techniques might be employed to see the landscape through the mind's eye of the boar. As a final thought, Guillibert posits that these methods might offer "something that is not exactly anthropomorphism but rather a kind of biocentrism – or boarcentrism" (speaking in Brès 2021). On screen, the caption 'boarcentrism' is held as a first photograph appears (Figure 4.26). Across the sequence of twenty-five images that follow, the spectator is introduced to renderings of landscapes that sit between the open countryside and spaces of human habitation, edgelands that are "passed through, negotiated, unnamed, unacknowledged [...] those familiar yet ignored spaces" (Farley and Roberts 2011, jacket). These are photographs of scrubland with fly-tipped breeze blocks and wooden pallets, of unfinished outhouses where windows and doors remain uninstalled and the rendering remains exposed. Taken at night, to reflect the nocturnal habits of the animal, the images employ infrared technologies to gently shift one's understanding of the environment away from human perception and towards the idea that one is 'borrowing' the retinas of the animal. Adding to this sense, the photographs are taken mostly at ground level, the crops, shrubs, and buildings taking on an imposing scale in the frame of the image.

Figure 4.26 Elsa Brès, *Notes for les Sanglières* (2021). Film still © 2021 Elsa Brès.

Tomáš Dvořák and Jussi Parikka argue that as a technology, infrared photography owes more to engineering projects such as environmental sensing, measurement, and pattern recognition than it does to the genealogy of photography or cinema (2021, 186). The use of infrared as the mode of capture and its militaristic undertone helps us understand these images as potential sites of conflict between human and non-human. Holding an air of menace, each of these images contains a suggestion that some event is about to happen that imbues them with a certain Barthian 'punctum' (Barthes 1981). This tonality recalls a series of images of medieval paintings Brès and I shared with one another at the start of the project. While one painting features a group of boars marauding menacingly around a sleeping priest, another shows the animal being hunted, its sharpened teeth and bloody gums leaping out from the canvas (Figure 4.27). Contemporary social media posts we also shared pursue a narrative largely similar to those medieval paintings, that the boar is a troublesome animal that is untrustworthy and aggressive.

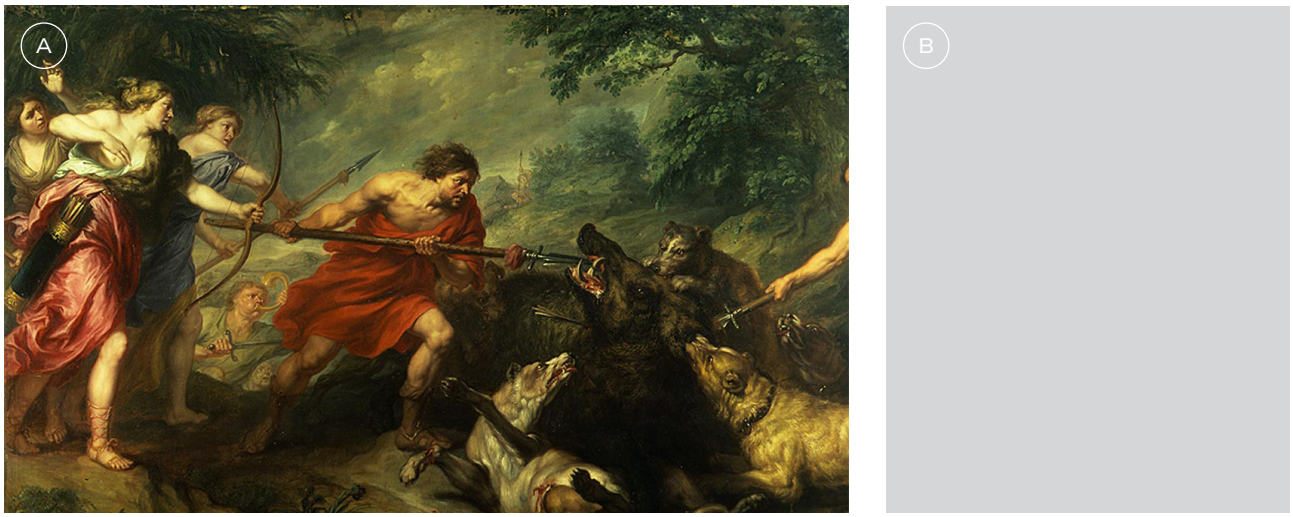

Figure 4.27 (**a**) Theodoor Boeyermans, *Meleager Killing the Caledonian Boar*, 1677 (CC-PD) (PD-Art); (**b**) Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale (The Mirror of History)*, Paris 1463 (image redacted due to copyright).

The decision by Brès to use infrared is an act that contests prevailing modes of representation for the kind of bucolic landscape seen in les Cévennes, the technology serving to create a sense of detachment from the reality of the landscape. As Brès and I considered how to show these images at *transmediale*, it became necessary to think through how the exhibition space could intensify the technological mediation of infrared and this 'detachment' from reality. In response, the exhibition design positioned the spectator at the eye-level of the boar to create a point-of-view framing of the landscape. Directly facing the screen, the spectator was placed at a fixed distance away, an orientation that immersed them within the eyes of the animal, so "that the visitor could actually step into the film" (Brès in Brès and James 2021). The image loomed large in the space, projected at the maximum size the gallery would allow without needing to crop the image. To underscore the mediation of infrared within the exhibition space, additional ambient lighting was kept low. This allowed the projection to act as the primary light source, bathing the spectator in the reflected glow from the screen. The embodied approach used the qualities of the infrared image to draw on the spectator's senses. As the exhibition space was fleetingly darkened between the cuts of each image, moments of pause were created in which the visitor could create a narrative bridge from photo to photo. Speaking to the relations between images within a sequence, Tschumi notes that any singular image can only be understood in connection to the image that came before it and the image that came after, "each part, each frame of a sequence qualifies, reinforces, or alters the parts that precede and follow it" (1996, 163). This idea, drawn by Tschumi from film theory, posits that the space between images is where "invention resides in contrast, even contradiction" (1996, 197). By accentuating the series of cuts between the images, the exhibition design presented opportunities for this invention to occur, for new meanings to emerge in the mind of the viewer.

This emphasis on the filmic cut as the point of 'rupture' where an emotional response could manifest in the viewer owes a debt to Russian filmmakers including Dziga Vertov, Lev Kuleshov, and of course, Sergei Eisenstein. As established, Tschumi's architectural practice has been heavily influenced by Eisenstein, while çonversely Eisenstein was also influenced by architecture. This influence is visible in the essay 'Montage and Architecture' in which Eisenstein highlights the "visual multidimensionality" of the photograph as evidence of the camera's kinship to architecture (Eisenstein in Eisenstein and Bois 1989. 117). Creating an analogy between the spectator of a building and that of a film, Eisenstein takes the reader on a 'journey' around the Acropolis in Athens, the filmmaker noting how the site is "to be viewed and appreciated in motion" (Eisenstein quoted in Bruno 2002, 56). Trapped by a state of immobility, Eisenstein argued that the film spectator should instead be taken on a filmic path, "the word path is not used by chance. Nowadays it is the imaginary path followed by the eye and the varying perceptions of an object that depend on how it appears to the eye" (Eisenstein in Eisenstein and Bois 1989, 116). For Eisenstein, this construction of a path could imbue architecture with the characteristics of a filmic protagonist. While not focused on any one

individual building, the images Brès uses form a representation of a 'path' leading the viewer across the landscape of les Cévennes, infusing the landscape (and the buildings that are a part of it) with the characteristics of a protagonist.

Further animating the role of the boar in the landscape, a conversation unfolds within the film between artist Brès and philosopher Guillibert exploring human and non-human alliances and the role of the boar in French rural history. This exchange occurs neither within the filmmaker's studio nor the philosopher's academic institution but rather in the rural landscape of les Cévennes. As the pair walk across the landscape, the setting remains hidden from the viewer, who is instead presented with a scene that has been heavily redacted using a software blending effect, leaving only the finest outlines of trees and shrubland visible. Through the discussion, the artist and philosopher embody the protagonists as they trace the boars' movements along the area's transhumance paths. Left to imagine the landscape, the spectator is orientated only by sound and occasional images of carvings that appear on screen. This approach encourages the viewer to form a mental depiction of the environment, stitching together the memory of images shown on screen with a sonic picture of a space built-up through the muddied footsteps of Brès and Guillibert. The sonic qualities of this part of the work played a significant role in defining the placement of speakers in the space. The work itself is mixed in stereo, an audio configuration that would typically lend itself to an installation in which two speakers face out towards the spectator. The speakers were instead placed opposite one another, across the space (Figure 4.28), with one speaker in front and one behind the viewer, making footsteps audible from both sides. Spatialising the footsteps in this way accentuated the idea of being on a journey across the landscape of les Cévennes, following a 'path' from speaker to speaker. This design decision further shifted the function of the two speakers away from being simply pieces of audio equipment towards existing as sculptural objects in the space – navigational objects that represented the start and end point of a walk.

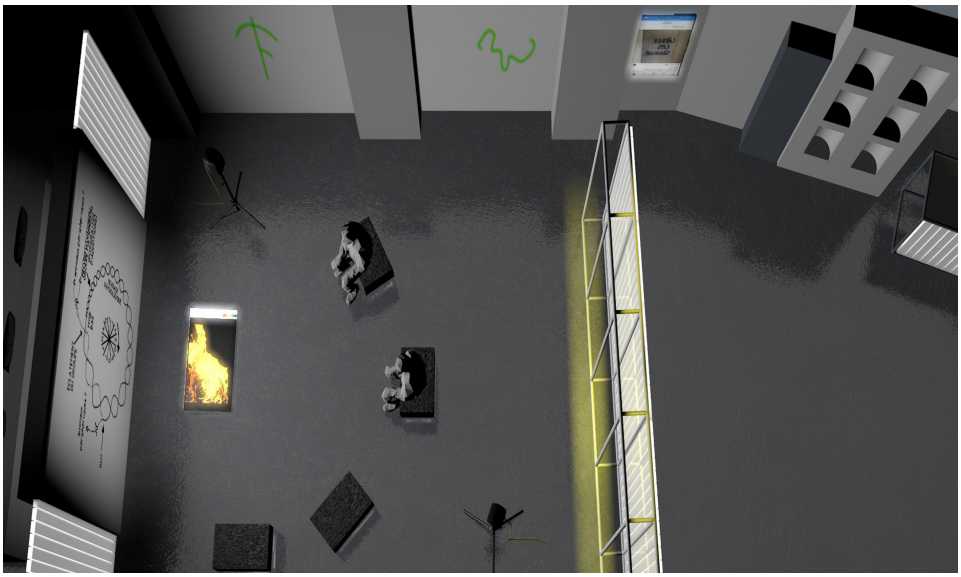

Figure 4.28 Speakers orientated within the space. 3D drawing 2021 Ben Evans James.

4.3.4.2 Summary: lines

In *Notes for les Sanglières*, Brès defines the boar as the protagonist of space, with their actions defining the 'programme' of les Cévennes. While the centrality of the boar is clearly evident in the project, defining the animal as the lines nevertheless presented an opportunity to interrogate how this protagonist is represented through the work and how this portrayal might be translated to the exhibition space.

The analysis has traced the etymological routes of Tschumi's design at La Villette to his earlier body of work *The Manhattan Transcripts* (Tschumi 1981). As part of that project, the architect used individual photographs to denote the movements of people in space that would later influence how Tschumi approached the design of the pathways or lines at La Villette. The role of these photographs in Tschumi's work led me to a sequence of individual images in *Notes for les Sanglières*, photographs that place the viewer into the eyes of the animal both by their choice of framing and by the technology of their capture. To highlight these qualities in the exhibition space, the images were projected as large as possible, their light bathing the spectator in the glow of infrared. Emphasising the "cuts" between the images (the space where Tschumi argues new meanings can emerge) ambient lighting in the space was kept low thus creating brief pauses of darkness between each photograph.

I was also keen to understand how I could use my understanding of lines to expand the themes of the work out from the central projection screen to reterritorialise the landscape of les Cévennes and immerse the spectator within the landscape. This opportunity was presented through the decision to spatialise the audio, turning the speakers into sculptural objects at either end of the space. This orientation of the speakers placed the spectator 'inside' the landscape as filmmaker Brès and philosopher Guillibert traced the footsteps of boars across the region's *drailles*.

4.3.5 Defining surfaces

Formalising the connection between film and landscape, architect Kenneth Helphand (1986) defines people's personal relations with landscapes as bound up in the 'encounter': a meeting between person and place that has already been prefigured through representations familiar on film. Through this analysis, Helphand defines four categories for how shared understandings of landscapes are shaped or prefigured by film, two of which are relevant to my analysis: (i) As 'setting', landscape acts as a backdrop to a story; (ii) As 'character', a landscape becomes a protagonist (or antagonist) in the film (Helphand 1986). Drawing similar distinctions to Helphand, the film theorist Martin Lefebvre explains: "the distinction between setting and landscape, one might say, is one of pictorial economy: as long as natural space in a work is subservient to characters, events and action, as long as its function is to provide space for them, the work is not properly speaking a landscape" (2011, 64). Based on

Lefebvre's analysis, one might infer that a 'setting' transitions into a 'landscape' only when it assumes the role of a protagonist, existing on an even footing to other 'characters' within a film. Applying the dual classifications of setting and character to *Notes for les Sanglières*, the bucolic landscape of les Cévennes – with its mountains, forests, and *maquis* – provides the setting within which the work unfolds. Through the decision to remediate this landscape through GIS, however, Brès transforms our understanding of this landscape from being solely a 'setting' to becoming an active participant or 'character' in its own right. By using GIS software to manipulate environmental factors such as tree density and water availability, the artist learns how these changes impact boar behaviour within the landscape. In this way, the 'setting' becomes personified as it assumes characteristics that place it in direct dialogue with the film's other characters or protagonists. These GIS maps can thus be considered as the surfaces (or landscape protagonist) of the work.

4.3.5.1 Design analysis surfaces

Using specialist software, GIS mapping emerged in the 1960s to "analyse and display geographical data in solving problems in the planning and management of resources" (Brotton 2013, 413). Collating large data sets that represent the natural resources in a region, GIS systems plot this information onto the Earth's coordinates allowing users to analyse the relationship between resources. Originally developed in Canada, the GIS system was designed at scale with farming and resource extraction in mind, an ambition that speaks to mapping's colonial history as a tool to transport knowledge from one space to another governing place (Dávila 2019).

In *Notes for les Sanglières*, GIS mapping is employed not as a method to control a space but to initiate a dialogue within it – between human, non-human, and the landscape. Bending, hacking, or subverting the tool of GIS itself, Brès uses the tool to highlight forces of resistance in the contemporary landscape of les Cévennes while also attending to its histories, seemingly responding to the geographer Simon Ferdinand's clarion call that "calculable spatiality remains the dominant ontological horizon of contemporary mapping cultures, which critical forms of GIS and arts practice must strive to contest and transcend from the margins" (2019, 23). Working with the spatial data scientist Gherardo Chirici at the University of Florence, Brès first worked to plot the resources of les Cevénnes region in the software, including key elements such as tree cover, arable land, water resources, and buildings. Once complete, the artist then inserted a team of algorithmically animated boars into this landscape, mirroring a group of animals she is familiar with who roam the region. Chirici and Brès then used the mapping software to change the distribution and density of resources in the landscape to gauge the boars' reactions, the algorithmically animated animals responding to each change in circumstance. Removing houses and replacing them with forest cover, for example, grew the resources available for the wild pigs to thrive, increasing their numbers: "one of the first questions any species is going to ask if they are in a new area is whether the

habitat can support them [...] . Boars are very adaptable, so if you try to adopt the perspective of the boar, it can also provide strong insight into how humans occupy a territory" (Brès in Brès and James 2021). Using GIS this way initiated a dialogue between the boars and the landscape, providing Brès with a method to prototype or speculate with ideas that would influence the development of the script for her film. The maps that resulted from this approach represented the landscape through blocks of lurid colour including pinks, yellows, and greens, each indicative of a feature of the environment (Figure 4.29a). Exported from the GIS software IDRISI, the maps panned across les Cévennes, with new amorphous shapes of colour bubbling up to the surface, creating an almost chiaroscuro effect.

Placing the GIS maps within an immersive film setting responds to Stuart Aitken and James Craine's call for a more emotional geography: "if cinema is more concerned with engaging emotions than celebrating computerised visuals, then why should this not also be the case for geovisualisations?" (Aitken and Craine in Dodge et al. 2011, 278). These layers produced a map that at first glance was unreadable even to Brès, a long-term resident of the area: "I've been doing a lot of research on ancient maps from the region and those made during the religious wars, and even with these I can understand the language of them. But this one, it's very difficult to read because it's a very different language" (Brès in Brès and James 2021). These maps, though, are made not to show human compatibility with the land but to put us in the eyes of the animal, and in that sense Brès goes on to argue, "they read very well" (Brès in Brès and James 2021). Showing a landscape from the perspective of the boar, the GIS map is set in dialogue with traditional maps of the region by Brès, "so when we compare this map, to a more standard map of the area, there exists a space in between – an imaginary space that we can find between the land and this representation of the land" (Brès in Brès and James 2021). The maps can then challenge human-centric understandings of landscape, inviting us to imagine new alliances and scales of resistance in the rural landscape. The exhibition design spoke to this idea of an imaginary or in-between space through the position of the GIS map in the space. Placed directly under the main projection screen on a large flat-screen TV, the spectator was caught between the abstracted images of the GIS map and the images of the landscape shown on the main projection (Figure 4.29b). While the conversations, photographs, and filmed footage on the main projection screen unfolded *in* the region of les Cévennes, the GIS map offers us a speculation *on* the landscape. Placed on top of one another, the orientation of the two screens acted like the tracks of a film editing programme, images stratified on a timeline, waiting to be cut together by the spectator. Aiding this process, the two screens were placed in dialogue with one another through syncing devices. This ensured that the 'landscape protagonist' as represented by the GIS maps, was brought into conversation with the main projection screen at specific points.

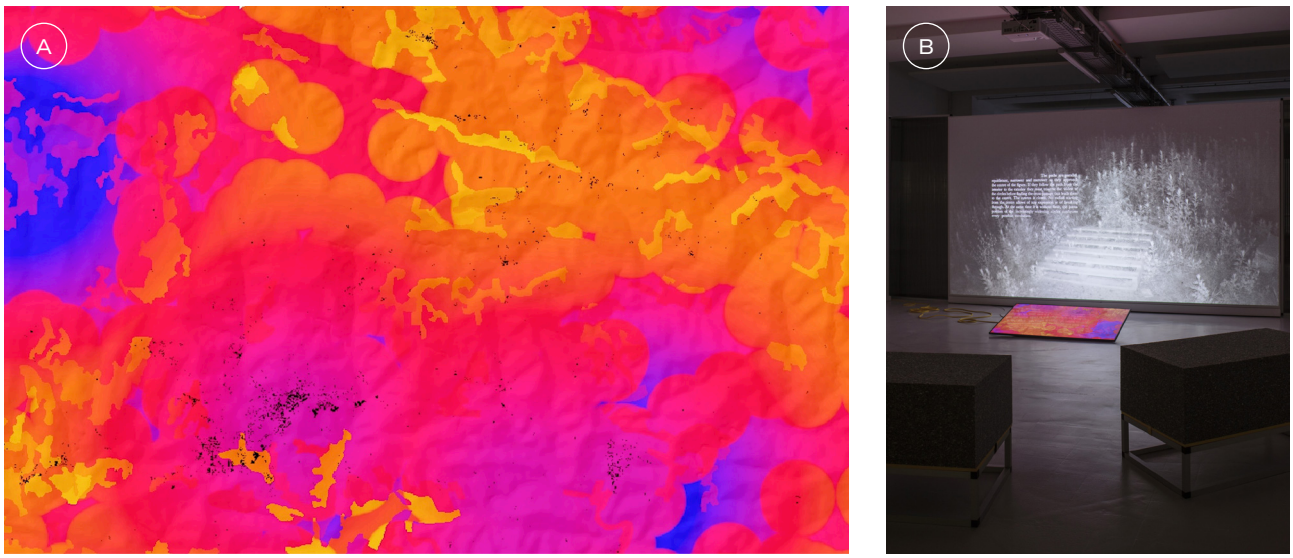

Figure 4.29 (**a**) GIS map taken from *Notes for les Sanglières* (2021). Film still © 2021 Elsa Brès; (**b**) Elsa Brès, *Notes for les Sanglières* (2021), *transmediale* Studio. Photo © 2021 Luca Giardini.

Switching on and off at different points during the cycle of the work, the brightness and saturation of the maps punctured the space, announcing the arrival and subsequent departure of the image. Encouraging a dialogue between the main projection screen and the TV placed underneath it, the flat screen was tilted gently upwards. This ensured that when the TV was off-cycle, the blank, shiny screen provided a mirror to the projection screen, reflecting the content above in the opposing orientation.

4.3.5.2 Summary: surfaces

Applying the idea of surfaces to the curatorial process presented the opportunity, first, to identify how Brès had shaped the landscape of les Cévennes into a protagonist through the use of GIS mapping techniques. Second, we could consider how this landscape protagonist interacts with the other protagonists in the work: the boars, other non-human forms, and humans. Looking at these interactions spatially and temporally:

i. Spatially, abstracting the environment through GIS created a kind of speculative landscape, an imaginary, or in-between, space where new alliances between humans and boars and scales of resistance could exist. This idea of creating an in-between space was supported in the exhibition space through the decision to place the GIS renders on a TV screen under the main projection screen.

ii. Temporally, using syncing devices between the projection screen and the TV ensured that ‘characters’ were brought together at distinct points or scenes within the film, ensuring that the GIS maps were in direct conversation with the content unfolding on the projection screen above.

Asked to edit content between the two screens, the spectator became engaged in a form of labour across space and time. Complicit in the activation of the

work, they became a kind of protagonist themselves, interacting with the work's deconstructed form across the gallery.

4.3.6 Establishing interrelationships between the layers of points, lines, and surfaces in the exhibition space

The analysis has so far focused on separating out the individual layers of points, lines, and surfaces to demonstrate how the system helped to structure the research materials for *Notes for les Sanglières* while establishing guiding principles for the curatorial and design decisions within the exhibition space. The final stage of this analysis draws these three layers back together, a process that is animated through the role of the gallery visitor. Specifically, it looks at how modes of spectatorship can activate dynamic relationships between these separate layers within the gallery space.

4.3.6.1 The art object, deconstruction theory, and the spectator

In the gallery, the film object or artefact is bound by what film theorist Erika Balsom identifies as the institution's continued valorisation of the 'black box' for presenting film (2014). Balsom attributes this circumstance to the institution's self-appointed role in 'saving' cinema, a task it fulfils "by memorializing the products of its history and/or by sponsoring its new, high culture variants" (2014, 40). Certainly, the mind does not need to wonder long to recall exhibitions that fetishise the 'obsolete' relics of commercial cinema, of rooms resonating with the clatter of 16 or 35mm projectors. In this form, the film artefact becomes defined not only by its image, but by the technologies of its presentation. Navigating to the opposite end of the technological scale, multi-screen digital projectors in the gallery ply their image across the exhibition space, providing a kind of immersive experience for the spectator: "bathing their visitors in an artistic wonderland of projected images and soundscapes spread throughout cavernous exhibition venues" (Mondloch 2022). These experiences, Balsom (2014) argues, tie back to cinema's commercial roots as a medium designed to entertain. Whether priority is placed on the very latest digital technologies, or the relics of 'old' cinema, the film takes on architectural qualities, an object that defines the space within which it is installed. In this scenario, the relationship between the curator and film might even remind us of the relationship between the architect and the building, practitioners who employ objects to define a space.

Employing principles from deconstruction theory to reduce this hierarchical emphasis placed on the building, Tschumi challenged the relationship between object and space through the framework of points, lines, and surfaces. This design framework relinquished control from the architect by handing the day-to-day authorship of the space at La Villette over to its visitors. Translating this conceptual framework into a curatorial context, Tschumi's approach can similarly be interpreted as dismantling the notion of the art object, separating its various themes out through the layers of points, lines, and surfaces.

Claire Bishop (2012) argues that through this process of deconstruction we also unravel the complex connections between the institution, curator, and artist that are intertwined within it. This process presents possibilities for spectators to actively engage with and contribute to a work in a co-authorial capacity. The question then emerges: in what ways did these opportunities manifest in the install of *Notes for les Sanglières*?

4.3.6.2 Design analysis: interplay of points, lines, and surfaces

Drawing connections between the design of Parc de la Villette and the exhibition design of Tschumi's retrospective at Centre Pompidou in 2014, architect Jeffrey Kipnis notes how both create a sense of "social theatre"; in that space, he argues, the "audience is understood as an active actor" (Kipnis 2014, 31). This requirement for an "active actor" was established through the exhibition design of *Notes for les Sanglières* as the application of points, lines, and surfaces created an expanded film installation in which the narrative and meaning of the work resided in the conflict and associations between its parts. Within this deconstructed format, the refiguration of the work by the spectator occurred not through the reading of a single screen but through the interactions between its distributed elements – a framework for reading the work that responded directly to Tschumi's assertion that "invention resides in contrast, even in contradiction" (1996, 197). This contrast occurred across the gallery space as Brès used the expanded form of the installation "to think through how materials can exist on their own but also in relation to one another, for example, the Instagram feed alongside the ancient symbols carved into rocks in the landscape" (Brès in Brès and James 2021). Oscillating between a single-screen, narrative-driven work and a multi-screen presentation created moments in which the abundance of choice placed the viewer in a constant state of deferral. As with La Villette, this deferral occurred as the visitor was systematically navigated between the layers of points, lines, and surfaces, a system itself animated by deconstruction theory. While this reads as a disorientating experience for the visitor, in reality the result can be better understood through the French architect and theorist Jean Nouvel's concept of an "experiential act", an embodied encounter in which all the "senses are continually moving from one 'object of attention' to another" (Nouvel quoted in Cairns 2013, 284).

This interaction between layers of the work was not left entirely to chance or without any kind of language in the gallery. As with La Villette, a syntax for the design of the work was established from which the viewer could interpret their own meaning. This was established through connected media players that bound each of the individual layers of points, lines, and surfaces together across the gallery. For instance: (i) in terms of points, the carvings on the walls glowed at specific times after their phosphorescence was exposed to light; (ii) in relation to lines, the sequence of infrared photographs of les Cévennes were synced with other elements in the gallery being switched off, and (iii) for the surfaces, the GIS map that animated the landscape from the boar's perspective

toggled at specific points across the duration of the work. The decision to sync elements of the work together brought to the fore its temporal qualities. The exhibition space is not bound to the same sense of permanence as the architecture at La Villette. Rather, the temporary nature of most exhibitions provides a flexibility for experimentation, creating the kinds of clashes or unscripted moments Tschumi was so keen to script in La Villette (Kipnis 2014). Thus, while the programme of La Villette continues to unfold over the days, months, and years, the exhibition space creates a temporary environment in which the programme of a space might unfold over minutes or hours: "despite the adamant efforts of curators [...] the exhibition is the one form in which unscripted events, the sine qua non of Tschumi's architecture theories, are most likely to occur in very short order" (Kipnis 2014, 32). At *transmediale*, the length of the 'programme' of *Notes for les Sanglières* was most obviously set by the length of the work, around seventeen minutes. This temporality was explored in the installation through two main curatorial gestures:

i. The first of these was the decision by Brès to loop the work, which in turn placed an additional expectation of labour on the visitor as they were asked to piece together an entry point into the looping narrative. To help 'onboard' the visitor into this narrative, a TV screen was mounted vertically at the entrance. Prefacing the main installation, the screen provided a curated feed of film and image content taken from social media that introduced the key protagonist (the boar) to the viewer – an establishing shot of sorts that succinctly communicated an important backstory while further negating the requirement for a curatorial text. This provided the spectator with a 'key' to the work, the foundations that would allow them to navigate between elements distributed across the exhibition environment. Showing the boar as a miscreant, an animal that steadfastly refuses to conform to human ways of seeing the world, the curated feed established the protagonist across temporalities through images of boars in urban environments, in art history, and in shakily captured smartphone movies (Figure 4.30).

Figure 4.30 Elsa Brès, *Notes for les Sanglières* (2021), *transmediale* Studio. Photos © 2021 Luca Giardini.

ii. The second of these curatorial decisions was the selection of bright yellow cables to link together AV elements. Draped from cable trays in the ceiling and wound into loops on the floor, the arrangement spoke to a work in development, a prototype where the cables might be moved or reorganised by the artist at any time, a speculative film world still under construction. The decision to use yellow cables further provided a visual link between the distributed elements of the work linking, for example, the fluorescent yellow symbols painted on the wall with the digital maps playing on the TV screen (Figure 4.31).

Figure 4.31 Elsa Brès, *Notes for les Sanglières* (2021), *transmediale* Studio. Photos © 2021 Luca Giardini.

4.3.6.3 Summary

The concluding stage of this analysis has focused on how the framework of points, lines, and surfaces can deconstruct the art artefact, in the process untangling the relations between the institution, curator, and the artist to open up diverse opportunities for spectator involvement and co-authorship.

Using the installation of *Notes for les Sanglières* as an example, the analysis has explored how curatorial decisions shaped by the framework of points, lines, and surfaces can activate forms of active spectatorship by creating dynamic relationships between the layers within the exhibition space. In the case of *Notes for les Sanglières*, synced media players provided a syntax for the work from which the visitor could establish their own viewing experience, or interactions with the work. Establishing this fluency in the viewer, the installation of a scrolling social media feed at the entrance offered the spectator the necessary knowledge to read between elements of the work, refiguring its themes.

4.3.7 Summary: Pointtranslating

To create a use case for the process of Pointtranslating, I set out to respond to two questions: (i) By creating a stratified view of a film's themes, can the system of points, lines, and surfaces create opportunities within the curatorial process to build those layers back again into new orientations within the exhibition space? (ii) As a process defined by deconstruction, can Tschumi's

system of points, lines, and surfaces be used to construct film exhibitions that resist hierarchy and singular readings by the spectator? In relation to Elsa Brès's *Notes for les Sanglières*, the identification of points, lines, and surfaces was used as a method to guide the curatorial process and direct design decisions within the exhibition space.

Responding to these questions, applying the process of Pointtranslating to the work meant first identifying each of the three layers of points, lines, and surfaces. As a work commissioned during the pre-production stage of a film, this process helped me personally navigate through research materials and better understand the central components that defined the operation of the work. Through 3D drawings, I hypothesised how to expand each of these layers back up across the gallery, responding to feedback from Brès at each stage. Throughout this design process, the system of points, lines, and surfaces helped to challenge the hierarchy of the cinema screen in the exhibition space, ensuring that the exhibition would take an expanded form rather than one defined by the orientation of a traditional 'black box' cinema space. As Brès remarked at the end of the project: "the space became the time of the film" (Brès in Brès and James 2021).

This deconstruction of the art object opened up the relationship between the curator, the artist, and the institution. At La Villette, the decision to deprioritise the building was an exercise in which the architect relinquished control, handing authorship over to those who would go on to use a space. Just as Tschumi gave control to the park visitor, so the system of Pointtranslating helped to foreground the role of the spectator in reconstituting the work and defining the 'programme' within the gallery. In this role, the spectator became a co-collaborator with the artist, navigating between layers of the work in the space to create a myriad of narrative outcomes. To achieve this complexity, the distribution of points, lines, and surfaces opened up narrative threads across the exhibition space. To bring those layers back together again created demands on the viewer in terms of labour but also created the space for these alternate readings of the work to manifest, ones that could bring a local, Berlin context to the work.

4.4 Conclusions: Pointmapping

Pointmapping is a process developed for filmmakers and curators working within a field of non-fiction film that engages with themes of landscape and sense of place. Pointmapping is itself defined by two separate processes, (i) Pointdefining and (ii) Pointtranslating.

The first section of the chapter focused on Pointdefining, using two of my film projects to demonstrate how Tschumi's design system for La Villette – the layering of points, lines, and surfaces – could be translated from the context of landscape architecture into the domain of documentary film through the lens of mapping. This transition was animated by formulating a set of definitions

specific to filmmaking for each of the three layers. By crossing disciplines, the research showed how the layers of points, lines, and surfaces could transform in function from an architectural system applied to the programming of space to a filmic system applied to create a representation of space.

The second section of the chapter focused on Pointtranslating, using a project I commissioned as part of my role as curator at *transmediale* festival: *Notes for les Sanglières* by Elsa Brès. In this analysis, the identification of points, lines, and surfaces was used not as a way to guide the filmmaking process (as with Pointdefining), but as a method to guide the curatorial process and direct design decisions within the exhibition space. I demonstrated how the process of Pointtranslating could be used to deconstruct the art object, providing opportunities within the curatorial process to build up those layers back out again into new orientations within the exhibition space. Considering the interactions between those layers further helped centre the role of the spectator in refiguring the work.

Notes

[1] The term 'folly' references an architectural form within a garden that serves no single function.

[2] Corner (2011) originally chose to elucidate his theory on Layering in a book on experimental mapping principles, *The Map Reader: Theories of Mapping Practice and Cartographic Representation* (Dodge et al. 2011).

[3] GIS bring together a location with data sets that might include human variables (e.g., population, income), the built environment (e.g., buildings, power girds), or geographic variables (e.g., forestry, plant life, bodies of water).

Chapter Five
Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This research emerged out of an exhibition I curated featuring a non-fiction artwork about the Thamesmead area of London, *The Marshes* (2018) by Donald Harding. The show marks the first time I applied concepts from mapping as a tactic to respond to the strong locational context of an artwork. In the gallery, these tactics manifested as the work's constituent parts were installed in a spatial configuration inspired by a map of the Thamesmead area. Reflecting on the exhibition, I began to question how these tactics could be developed to establish a structured approach for curating (landscape) artists' non-fiction film through practices of mapping. To formalise this inquiry, two questions were defined to set the trajectory for the research:

1. What is Filmmapping and from what context does it emerge?
2. How can Filmmapping be employed by filmmakers, curators, and exhibition architects?

Structuring the response to these questions, Donald Schön's (1984) theory of reflective practice provided an iterative methodology in which each stage of the investigation provided context for the next. In this conclusion, I reflect back on the response of the research to each question, outline the contribution to knowledge, and close with a view for its future direction.

5.2 Reflection on research Question One: What is Filmmapping and from What Context does it Emerge?

In response to the first research question, Chapter Two constructed a theoretical framework through an analysis of contemporary debates within documentary and artists' film, curatorial practice, and mapping. By focusing on the intersection between these disciplines, the context for Filmmapping and its definition were established.

5.2.1 Defining (landscape) artists' non-fiction film

The first part of this investigation established the film genre that filmmapping is designed for, (landscape) artists' non-fiction film. To arrive at this term, the research highlighted how artists are contesting documentary's claim to authenticity by applying fictional strategies to explore nonfiction subjects. Outlining a contemporary typology for these forms (section 2.2.3) I demonstrated that fiction, rather than a documentary quality to be disavowed, can offer an approach to reframe dominant narratives around a subject by revealing alternate 'truths' that a fidelity to facts cannot (Sharpe in Hao et al. 2014). I argued that the classification of these works as documentary or otherwise should emerge not from a granular categorisation of their individual

images as either fictive or nonfictive, but in the interstice between them. Gilles Deleuze argues that it is from this void, or space, between images that meaning emerges, and from where it can be inferred that the authorial intentions of the artist can be found (1989). Responding to the idea of the interstice, I addressed the hyphen sometimes employed to separate the compound 'nonfiction' into the less commonly used term of 'non-fiction'. I argued that this hyphen could function to represent this gap or interstice between the qualities of nonfiction and fiction, creating an understanding of a genre of film that sits either side of the hyphen. After adopting the term 'non-fiction' I proceeded to add the prefix 'artists'' to cement the genre as one embedded within art's traditions of experimental filmmaking and its foregrounding of authorial subjectivity. Completing the definition, the term 'film' was affixed to create the definition artists' non-fiction film. The choice of the term 'film' over 'moving image' was taken to locate the genre within the field of cinema as opposed to analogous forms of image-making such as animation.

The genre construction of artists' non-fiction film was subsequently placed in contact with the concept of 'landscape'. Drawing from humanistic geography, I established a definition for landscape anchored not to the physical attributes of a terrain but to a subjective understanding of space shaped by individual experience. Through an analysis of artists' works, I demonstrated how this understanding of landscape can create a form of 'mirrored movement' in the relationship between film and landscape. In this dynamic, placing a protagonist[1] within a particular landscape can create a 'reflection back' or foil that can bring that person's personality, or mindset, more vividly into view. When adopting this role, the function of landscape extends beyond providing a setting for a film towards one where it performs as a protagonist (Lefebvre 2007). Like any actor, a landscape can be cast to 'play' different roles; a point I established by further defining the characterisation of a metonymy, a role in which the presence of a landscape in a film becomes symbolic of a theme or subject beyond its own reality. With the idea of the landscape-protagonist established, I illustrated how particular characterisations of landscapes on film can go on to shape those spaces in reality. This is an outcome that occurs when a film contributes to a commonly held view of a particular landscape, one that defines how individuals approach and interact with those spaces in reality.

In bringing the concept of landscape into contact with artists' non-fiction film, I established that a Filmmapping methodology should present an approach for a filmmaker to shape and define the construction of a landscape-protagonist. In doing so, it could further draw attention to the opportunities and responsibilities that portrayals of landscape on film have on shaping space in reality.

5.2.2 Filmmapping and exhibition practices

I began by outlining how the presentation of artists' film in the contemporary art institution has tended towards replicating a cinematic orientation of presentation – one that establishes a linear alignment between the projector, the spectator, and the screen. Using the technology of cinema as a conduit, I attributed this trend to two factors: first, to the art institution's assumption of a role in 'saving' the vestiges of analogue cinema and its modes of display; second, to the institution's use of large-format digital projection to create a cinematic spectacle that draws on the established language of the medium as one of mass entertainment (Elsaesser 2018). Within the subdued light of the gallery or screening room, these cinematic orientations transport the spectator to an 'elsewhere' through the portal of the screen: an act that immobilises the spectator by dematerialising the body from its immediate architectural surroundings. To respond to this stasis of the viewer, I investigated cognitive and embodied modes of spectatorship. Through this analysis, I constructed the concept of the 'in-between' space, an idea that found distinct meaning within each mode. In relation to cognitive modes of spectatorship, I argued that mapping's attention to scale could be used to bring transparency to the 'distance' in relations between the filmmaker, their subject, and the locational context of the exhibition space. My application of 'distance' referenced Jacques Rancière's understanding of the term as the space between two positions across which a dialogue of exchange takes place (2011). I argued that by bringing transparency to the distance between filmmaker, their subject, and the gallery, opportunities could be provided for the spectator to locate their own positionality 'in between' these exchanges, in turn creating the conditions for a dialogue between the spectator and the artwork. Switching focus to embodied modes of spectatorship, I established a spectator animated by a 'somatic curator' that moves in relation to an installed artwork, the physical conditions of the gallery, and other bodies occupying the space (Mota 2023). I argued that through curation and exhibition design, an attention to creating these 'in-between' spaces can position the body in space, eliciting particular responses from the spectator while providing opportunities for unanticipated, generative outcomes.

I concluded this section by positing that a Filmmapping methodology should attend to both cognitive and embodied modes of spectatorship. To achieve the former, a methodology can employ mapping techniques to bring a form of transparency to the 'distance' in the relations 'in between' the filmmaker, the subject, and the exhibition space. To achieve the latter, meanwhile, a Filmmapping methodology should define an approach to exhibition-making that can account for the way the body acts, and is acted upon, within the architecture of the exhibition space – an attendance to creating and defining the 'in-between' spaces that position the body in space.

5.2.3 Filmmapping and mapping practices

This section brought the characteristics of (landscape) artists' non-fiction film into conversation with mapping. I traced the emergence of the critical mapping and counter-mapping movements that challenged a Cartesian belief in the map as an objective link between reality and representation. Examining art's intersection with the critical mapping movement revealed a critique of the epistemology of the map through works that confront the ways in which maps create representations that shape the world according to ideological power relations. Despite their often-radical subject, I demonstrated how artworks that engage with critical mapping and its forms of post-representational critique have typically appropriated the visual language of cartography, an artistic outcome that leaves the ontological security of the map intact.

My discussion continued by focusing on counter-mapping, a movement that does not reject the aims of critical mapping but transitions its concerns towards new ways of acting via an engagement with the processes of mapmaking. This approach leverages the ways in which mapmaking can shape a space in reality, particularly in its ability to galvanise particular perceptions of a space. I revealed how artists, motivated by causes of social justice, are today engaging with strategies of counter-mapping to remake space through interdisciplinary processes that brings map-arts into contact with (often durational) activities such as archiving, policy making, and social movement organising. Rhizomatic in form, the amalgam of these processes leaves the map in a constant state of 'becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980), an un-fixed state that can challenge the ontological security of the map-object itself.

I proceeded to bring this analysis into contact with the documentary genre, exploring how a comparable transformation from the post-representational approaches of critical mapping to the process-based methods of counter-mapping might manifest within the genre. I proposed, first, that by employing strategies of fiction to explore nonfiction subjects, artists' non-fiction film exhibits a post-representational stance that questions the epistemology of the documentary form. To extend from this position, I argued that Filmmapping can offer a tool to hold a work in the 'process' of being made. When used to deconstruct a film-art-object in the exhibition space, Filmmapping provides opportunities to foreground the role of the spectator as a collaborator in the realisation of the work. This leaves the artwork in a perpetual 'process' of being made and remade by the spectator. The different forms these 'remakings' take challenges the traditional status of the documentary object as one bound to the qualities of completeness and stability, troubling the ontological underpinnings of the discipline itself.

5.2.4 A definition for Filmmapping

To recap, the first research question asks: (i) What is Filmmapping and from what context does it emerge? Through my investigation into contemporary

debates within artists' non-fiction film, curatorial practice, and cartography (summarised above), the context for Filmmapping was established. By drawing further on this analysis, I created a definition for Filmmapping, completing my response to the first research question.

Abridged Definition for Filmmapping: By bringing non-fiction filmmaking into contact with mapping, Filmmapping offers a framework within which to realign the relations between the filmmaker, their subject, and the spectator in the gallery. The framework applies methodologies from mapping to enable a close reading of the respective locations of each party while drawing attention to the entanglement of relations that exist between them. This information can in turn be employed to re-orientate these relations, providing potential benefits within the filmmaking and curatorial processes. This map-enabled reading of space can, first, offer the filmmaker a navigational aid to orientate their own position to relations that unfold in the subject-landscape. This can be beneficial in shaping both how the filmmaker understands their subject and how they choose to portray it. Further, immersing the filmmaking process in the spatial language of mapmaking offers a bridge to the spatial practices of exhibition-making. This process provides an opportunity for the filmmaker and curator to reorientate this entanglement of relations to take account of the locational context of the exhibition space and the spectator. This site-specificity can foreground the participatory potential of the spectator in helping to realise the work, diffusing documentary narratives shaped by singular authorship and the unidirectional movement of information from filmmaker to spectator (section 2.5.2 for full text).

5.3 Reflection on research Question Two: How can Filmmapping be Employed by Filmmakers, Curators, and Exhibition Architects?

Filmmapping is a framework animated by different methodological approaches that define the form of its results. In Chapters Three and Four I elucidated two separate methodologies for Filmmapping designed by drawing on a range of my own film and curatorial projects: (i) Territorymapping and (ii) Pointmapping.

5.3.1 Territorymapping

Territorymapping draws on three design principles from mapmaking – 'territory', 'legend', and 'modality' – and translates their meanings into film. These principles set up a corresponding set of processes that define Territorymapping: (i) Compose the Territory, (ii) Define the Legend, (iii) Set the Modality. The development of these processes, and the demonstration of their application, was entwined with my curation of the work *For the Record* (2021), by Phanuel Antwi and Rhea Storr (section 3.2).

i. COMPOSE THE TERRITORY

The territory-map association explains the link between a defined geographic area and its representation on a map. Attending to the territory-film association, Compose the Territory provides an approach to parse how a film constructs its representation of a territory. It achieves this by way of a three-staged approach[2] that helps to reveal the complexity of relations that exist between filmmaker(s), their subject(s), and place(s). In the curation of Antwi and Storr's work, I outlined how analysis of these relations could be used to draw out the curatorial possibilities that surface when a filmed representation of a territory is relocated to the alternate locational context of the exhibition space. Through the use of 3D-drawings, I demonstrated how this process manifested in a range of curatorial and design decisions in the gallery, such as the positioning of projection screens at either end of the space to amplify the distance between the 'territories' in which the work was made. This orientation positioned the images of Storr's London at one end of the space and those of Antwi's Vancouver at the other, in order to place the Berlin-based spectator between the two (section 3.4.4).

ii. DEFINE THE LEGEND

The legend, which typically runs alongside a map, determines how a map is read and the organisational logic behind its construction. Define the Legend draws from the role the legend plays in setting the intelligibility of the map to interrogate and specify the information provided to the spectator as they 'navigate' an artwork. This process can be employed to determine the spatial and temporal staging of a work as it is brought into the exhibition space, influencing when, where, and how a spectator is orientated towards the themes that underpin a work. These are decisions that help to define the expectations of labour a work places on a spectator. In the analysis of *For the Record*, I demonstrated how the process of 'Define the Legend' impacted on curatorial decisions such as the design of the circulatory flow of spectators through the exhibition space. This circulatory plan guided spectators through a narrow walkway towards the main installation, providing an opportunity to present a series of key themes that underpinned the work (section 3.5.2).

iii. SET THE MODALITY

The modality determines how a map's data is visualised. Set the Modality considers how film production technologies mediate the way in which the territory is aestheticised by the filmmaker and the resulting effect on its representation. Carrying this knowledge forward into the curatorial process, Set the Modality considers how these aesthetic qualities can be translated and manipulated within the exhibition space. In the case of *For the Record*, this led to decisions such as using the projection of the work as the dominant light source in the space, a design outcome that highlighted the image qualities of the black-and-white photographs that make up the work (section 3.6.2).

5.3.2 Pointmapping

Pointmapping consists of two sequential processes: Pointdefining and Pointtranslating. The development of both processes was underpinned by the concepts behind Bernard Tschumi's design for Parc de la Villette in Paris. In the analysis, I demonstrated how the architect assigned the architectural functions of the park (its buildings, walkways, and green spaces) to a series of layers he defines as 'points', 'lines', and 'surfaces' (1987) (section 4.2.3). Tschumi's design system sets up a form of interplay between the layers that can be animated by the everyday actions of the park visitor (walking, playing, picnicking) challenging a singular experience of the park. In placing emphasis on the movement of people in space, rather than on buildings, Tschumi adopted a temporal approach to architectural design that was influenced by filmmaking. Emerging from my analysis of La Villette I asked whether, just as Tschumi had borrowed from filmmaking to create a temporal approach to architecture, could filmmakers borrow back from architecture – and specifically Tschumi – to define a spatial approach to filmmaking? To respond to this question, I began by specifying the process of Pointdefining.

5.3.2.1 Pointdefining

Using the development of two of my own films I established how Tschumi's layers of points, lines, and surfaces could be translated from an architectural system applied to the programming of space at La Villette to a filmic system applied to create a representation of space. This process began through an analysis of points.

The points at La Villette take the form of thirty-five architectural structures or follies distributed in a grid structure across the park. With no one defined function, these follies find a multiplicity of purpose through public interaction, activating the park's space by providing a framework for a daily occurrence of different events and activities. Translating these properties into filmmaking, I argued that points can comparably be understood as infrastructures that mediate relations between a protagonist(s) (human or nonhuman) and a landscape. To arrive at this understanding I drew from the production of a film I co-directed with Emma Charles, *On A Clear Day You Can See The Revolution From Here* (2020). This (landscape) artists' non-fiction film traces the path of a power line across eastern Kazakhstan, an electrical infrastructure that shapes the surrounding landscape through its co-dependency on the coal mines, generating stations, and communities that reside along its route. I inferred that, like Tschumi's follies, the pylons along the power line could be understood as points that both organise and activate the space around them. I proceeded to demonstrate how defining these architectures as 'points' influenced the form of the film, leading to the decision to divide it into chapters, each of which highlights a specific community located along the power line. Operating as an interstitial element between each of these vignettes, the viewer is returned to

a static shot of the power line, highlighting its significance in shaping relations within the immediate landscape.

Extending from my interpretation of 'points', I drew on the production of my film *LEAKS* (forthcoming) to define how Tschumi's layers of 'lines' and 'surfaces' could also be translated from their architectural context at La Villette into a filmmaking one. I began by utilising Tschumi's characterisation of the pathways, or lines, at La Villette as "cinematic promenades" (Tschumi 1987, 17): an infrastructure that facilitates the movement of people through space and the related succession of viewpoints they come across that Tschumi likened to the frames of a film (Tschumi 1987). Based on his observation, I argued that lines in filmmaking could comparably be understood as the movements of people or protagonist(s) through a landscape – flows that when brought together create a narrative for how a space is occupied. To define surfaces, I examined how Tschumi created a mosaic of landscaping features to create a visual conversation with the 'points' and 'lines' within the park – a two-way relationship that incarnates the surfaces as a kind of protagonist in space. Translated to film, I argued that surfaces could similarly be understood as a form of landscape-protagonist, a feature of the landscape the filmmaker chooses to place in conversation with the film's points and lines.

I proceeded to deploy these definitions, demonstrating how the system of points, lines, and surfaces provided an approach to identify the specific relations I wanted to highlight and engage with as I made the film. This process was shown to directly shape how I planned, produced, and approached the edit of my film *LEAKS* (section 4.2.4.1). For example, after defining the surfaces of the work as an area of dense boreal forest within which the work unfolds, I considered how I could translate this film setting into a film-protagonist. Responding to this challenge, I employed a range of experimental microphones that could pick up sounds inaudible to the human ear, ones that could be used to 'give voice' to the forest as a character.

As I began to consider how *LEAKS* might be displayed in the gallery, I reflected on how the process of Pointdefining – and the spatial language it had constructed for the film – might act as a bridge to the spatial language of exhibition-making. To explore these ideas further, I went on to specify the process of Pointtranslating. Before doing so, however, I first summarised Pointdefining, determining it as a method for filmmakers to construct a representation of a landscape through a series of three graphic planes – points, lines, and surfaces – each of which contain specific information bound by the attributes of a space. By considering the architectural features, natural resources, and behavioural activities that unfold within a space, Pointdefining allows the filmmaker to map the complex interplay between spatial elements and socio-cultural factors that have contributed to the shaping of a landscape. This approach can act as an aid to the filmmaker as they seek to identify the specific relations they wish to highlight and interact with through their work. Finally, in demonstrating how the layers of points, lines, and surfaces could transform in function from an architectural system applied to the programming

of space at La Villette to a filmic system applied to create a representation of space; I argued the research had responded affirmatively to my original question of whether Tschumi's design system could be employed to the filmmaking process.

5.3.2.2 Pointtranslating

Extending out of the filmmaking process and into the exhibition-making one, I defined the concept of Pointtranslating during the course of curating *Notes for les Sanglières* (2021) by Elsa Brès. I began the analysis by outlining my motivations for applying the process of Pointtranslating to the curation of the work (see 4.3.2). This included Brès' background as an architect, and the subject of the work as one intimately bound to landscape, in this case to les Cévennes in France. Perhaps most significant of these factors, however, was the status of the project as one I had commissioned during the research phase of the artist's forthcoming film *Les Sanglières* (The Boars). This established the exhibition as a mode of inquiry that Brès could leverage to generate ideas for the subsequent production of her film. In my analysis, I demonstrated how applying my film-based interpretation of points, lines, and surfaces offered an approach to structure the various research and artistic materials Brès had collected and produced for the exhibition, establishing guiding principles for curatorial and design decisions within the gallery.

i. Points are infrastructures that mediate relations within a space, revealing the events that unfold within it. In *Notes for les Sanglières*, I attributed this role to numerous ancient symbols carved onto rocks across the region of les Cévennes. Located along transhumance paths where livestock have been herded for centuries, the carvings provide signifiers of the changing relations between humans, animals, and the landscape. Defining these symbols as the points of the work resulted in the decision to transcribe their forms onto the walls of the exhibition space. Daubed using phosphorescent paint, the shape, colour, scale, and location of the symbols in the space created a reciprocal relationship with other elements of the work. Amongst other functions, this choreography animated the symbols as the foundation of the work, grounding the narratives of its distributed parts (section 4.3.3.1).

ii. Lines represent the movements of protagonist(s) that shape the narrative of a space. In *Notes for les Sanglières* it is the boar that determines how the spectator views and understands the landscape of les Cévennes. Defining the boars as the 'lines' of the work presented an opportunity to interrogate how this protagonist would be portrayed within the exhibition space. This designation highlighted a set of still infrared images taken by Brès that appear to place the viewer into the eyes of the animal by nature of their framing at ground level and their nocturnal setting. To highlight these qualities, the exhibition design adopted strategies including placing the spectator at the eye-level of the boar. Positioned facing a

large-scale projection, the spectator was immersed in a point-of-view framing of the landscape (section 4.3.4.1).

iii. Surfaces are feature(s) of the landscape the filmmaker turns into a protagonist. In *Notes for les Sanglières,* Brès uses GIS mapping technologies to investigate the interrelationship between the environmental features of les Cévennes and its hospitality as a habitat for boars. This computer mapping process establishes the landscape as a form of protagonist, one that is placed in a direct dialogue with the boar. Defining the GIS maps as the surfaces of the work led to a series of curatorial and design decisions in the space, including the decision to place the rendered-out maps on a TV below the main projection screen. Synced to turn on and off at certain points, these maps were placed in a conversation with images of boars projected on the screen above (section 4.3.5.1).

Through my analysis, I demonstrated how the specification of points, lines, and surfaces had created a spatial understanding of *Notes for les Sanglières*, one that directed a set of corresponding curatorial decisions that shaped the work's expanded form within the exhibition space. Completing the enquiry, I revealed how these three layers were placed in a dynamic relationship with one another across the gallery, helping to locate the narrative of the work in the conversations or conflicts between the layers. This placed an expectation of labour on the spectator to draw themes together, an approach that reflected Tschumi's use of layering to foreground the actions of the visitor at La Villette. To catalyse these connections between layers in the exhibition space, a series of additional curatorial decisions were outlined (section 4.3.6). This included the use of syncing media-players that provided an underlying syntax for the work by timing its sequencing across the exhibition space.

In summary, Pointtranslating uses the system of points, lines, and surfaces to guide not the filmmaking process (as with Pointdefining), but the curatorial one. In doing so, it takes the spatial language that points, lines, and surfaces establishes around a film and employs it as a bridge into the spatial practices of exhibition-making. Through this process, Pointtranslating provides an approach to reconstruct those layers into new orientations within the exhibition space, an expanded install that can respond to factors such as the architecture and locational context of the gallery. Further, by defining the interactions between those layers, the process can be used to foreground the role of the spectator in refiguring the work.

5.3.3 Territorymapping and Pointmapping: summary

Territorymapping and Pointmapping offer two methodologies to animate the framework of Filmmapping. Both translate the temporal language of film into the spatial language of mapmaking to offer (i) an approach for filmmakers and curators to consider the spatial themes that underpin a work and (ii) a process

for how these themes can be translated to the alternative locational context of the exhibition space.

Through the specification of these two methodologies the investigation has responded to the second question posed by the research, (ii) How can Filmmapping be employed by filmmakers, curators, and exhibition architects?

5.4 Use of Specialist Terms

Specifying the label of Filmmapping is an act of design, one intended to create a perception of its operation as a lens for looking at filmmaking through the act of mapping. Silvio Lorusso defines the act of designing as one that establishes "a magic circle that produces an orderly inside and a chaotic outside" (Lorusso 2023, 17). The 'design' of Filmmapping established within this research is thus an act that establishes a border between those two territories. However, in recognising the 'chaos' that exists outside, this line is – by design – porous and unstable. To prevail within this volatility, the label of Filmmapping should be understood not to represent a set of fixed ideas (an act that would cement its prompt irrelevance) but as a framework that exists "beyond nominative expression to [the] infinitive expressions of activity and interplay" it may afford (Easterling 2021, 6). In this research, two of these 'interplays' have been defined as the methodologies of Territorymapping and Pointmapping, themselves terms for 'magic circles' that, it should be inferred, represent temporary solidifications against the 'chaos' that erodes their borders.

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

This research was initiated from a hypothesis: that approaches from mapping could be employed as a translatory device between the temporal practices of non-fiction filmmaking and the spatial practices of exhibition-making. The intention, to define a process for filmmakers and curators to interpret the themes of a non-fiction film through a spatial language, a vernacular that I posited could create a bridge into the spatial practices of exhibition-making.

My contribution to knowledge responds to this hypothesis through the conception of Filmmapping, a translatory framework through which filmmaking can be brought into contact with mapping. Filmmapping has been developed around a genre I define as (landscape) artists' non-fiction film, the prefix establishing a category of artists' film in which a landscape helps shape a film's narrative and form. The framework offers a map-enabled reading of space to highlight the entanglement of relations that exist between a filmmaker, their subject, and the exhibition space. This reading can be employed, first, in the production process as a filmmaker seeks to orientate their own position to relations that unfold in a landscape location. Second, as a bridge into the spatial practices of exhibition-making, determining how a work is presented in

respect to the alternate locational context and architecture of the exhibition space. This site-specificity can be used to foreground the participatory potential of the spectator in helping to realise a work, diffusing documentary narratives shaped by singular authorship and the unidirectional movement of information from filmmaker to spectator.

Defining the form of its outputs, the framework of Filmmapping is animated by different methodological approaches. As part of the contribution, the research outlines two methodologies that have been designed by drawing on a range of film and curatorial projects initiated by the author: Territorymapping and Pointmapping. Their development and application have been tested within:

i. Artistic contexts through (i) two curatorial projects undertaken at the *transmediale* art and digital culture festival in Berlin, and (ii) two film projects that have been exhibited internationally at film festivals (eg Visions du Réel, Nyon), and within gallery contexts (eg MoMA, New York). These prominent settings have brought the creative outputs of the research into contact with both peer groups and broad publics. (See Appendix 7.1 for full list of artistic contexts).
ii. Academic channels, with components of the research presented in (i) peer-reviewed publications (in the journal *Arts* as part of a special issue edited by Kate Mondlach (James 2023)), (ii) peer-reviewed conferences (Visible Evidence XXVIII, Gdansk), and (iii) artist residencies and workshops (HSLU Futures of Audiovisual Research, Lucerne). (See Appendix 7.1 for full list of academic channels).

The framework of Filmmapping, and the methodologies I put forward to animate it, provide replicable approaches for: (i) for curators working with artist filmmakers whose work is anchored in concepts of landscape or sense of place; (ii) for filmmakers to consider how spatial themes explored within their work might be translated into the exhibition space, and (iii) for exhibition architects working in collaboration with either one or both of the former.

5.6 Areas for Future Research and Reflections

5.6.1 Future research

My ambition for the next stage of the research is to develop a third Filmmapping methodology, ‘Materialmapping’. This draws from cartographic processes of ‘deep mapping’ and its approach of tying the geological features of a space to the histories, memories, and folklore that help define the complexity of relations to place. In Materialmapping, I propose that an excavation into the ‘geological’ material of the image can attend to the relations visible on its surface: an excavation into the image aimed at revealing the spectacle at its surface. Continuing the precedent of defining methodologies through practice-based projects, Materialmapping extends from a collaboration with the filmmaker and researcher Chloé Galibert-Laîné (2021).

5.6.2 Reflections

I end on a final reflection that departs from the framework of Filmmapping and the learnings and associated impacts to my practice that I have articulated across Chapters Three and Four (sections 3.4, 4.3) and here in this concluding chapter. Instead, it briefly considers the influence that developing this body of work will have on my future plans as a researcher.

I undertook this research with the intuition that my practice as a spatial designer and curator influenced my approach to filmmaking and that the opposite was also true. This sense could be understood as tacit, implicit to my own practice but not explicit in a manner I fully understood or that I could coherently describe to others. Defining the framework of Filmmapping helped externalise these tacit acts of practice while providing a foundation upon which I could construct the methodologies of Territorymapping and Pointmapping. Significant to my future ambitions as a researcher, this process has taught me how to apply my background as a designer to move across disciplines: to unpick their alternate practices, histories, and technologies and set potential trajectories for the research to follow. This approach to practice-based research, one tied not only to Filmmapping but to a heterogeneity of potential contexts, provides learnings that will significantly transform my practice into the future.

Notes

[1] In certain forms of non-fiction film, such as the essay film, the role of protagonist may extend beyond those in front of the lens to include the filmmaker(s) behind it.

[2] Framing the territory, (re)Framing the territory, (re)Locating the territory.

Chapter Six
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Chapter Seven
Appendix

7.1 Chronology of Works and Activities

7.1.1 Exhibitions curated

Exhibition: *The Theory of Concentric Spheres*
Artists: Rosie Carr, Jayoon Choi, Oliver Laric, Naheed Raza, Alan Warburton
Dates: 14.03.19 to 31.03.19
Locations: South Kiosk, London
URL: southkiosk.com

Screening: *As Above / So Below*
Artists: Emma Charles and Ben Rivers
Dates: 21.03.19
Locations: South Kiosk, London
URL: southkiosk.com

Screening: *Terror Nullius*
Artists: Soda Jerk
Dates: 18.07.19
Locations: South Kiosk, London
URL: southkiosk.com

Exhibition: *A Street Loud With Echoes*
Artists: Shaun Badham, Donald Harding, Maebh O Neill
Dates: 04.10.19 to 07.12.19
Locations: South Kiosk London, The Old Waterworks Essex
URL: southkiosk.com // theoldwaterworks.com

Programme: *Rehearsal Letter*
Artists: Frances Scott and Tom Richards
Dates: 09.02.21 to 31.12.21
Locations: transmediale online
URL: transmediale.de

Exhibition: *For the Record*
Artists: Phanuel Antwi and Rhea Storr
Dates: 08.04.21 to 30.04.21
Locations: transmediale Studio, Berlin
URL: transmediale.de

Exhibition: *Notes for Les Sanglières*
Artists: Elsa Brès
Dates: 10.07.21 to 06.09.21
Locations: transmediale Studio, Berlin
URL: transmediale.de

Exhibition: *Indications of Guilt, pt. 1*
Artists: Maud Craigie
Dates: 10.07.21 to 06.09.21
Locations: transmediale Studio, Berlin
URL: transmediale.de

Programme: *Out of Doors*
Artists: Bassam Al Sabah, Frank Sweeney, Patrick Staff, Salvatore Arancio, Frances Scott
Dates: 19.08.21 – 22.08.21
Locations: transmediale at HKW, Berlin
URL: transmediale.de // hkw.de

Exhibition: *Free Falls into the Image*
Artists: Chloé Galibert-Laîné
Dates: 15.09.21 to 24.09.21
Locations: transmediale Studio, Berlin
URL: transmediale.de

Exhibition: *Heads May Roll*
Artists: Katerina Suvorova
Dates: 15.09.21 to 24.09.21
Locations: transmediale Studio, Berlin
URL: transmediale.de

Programme: *For Refusal (film programme)*
Artists: Che Applewhaite, Elsa Brès, Patricia Dominguez & Nicole L'Huillier, Effi & Amir, Sabine Gruffat, Sasha Litvinseva & Beny Wagner, Katerina Suvorova
Dates: 28.01.22 – 29.01.22
Locations: transmediale at Akademie der Künste, Berlin
URL: transmediale.de // adk.de

Programme: *a model, a map, a fiction (film programme)*
Artists: Tekla Aslanishvili and Evelalina Gambino, Che Applewhaite, Hannah Jayanti and Alexander Porter, Solveig Qu Suess, Alaa Mansour, Graeme Arnfield, Basma Alsharif, Nina Davies, Bahar Noorizadeh, Vivienne Griffin, Anna Engelhardt and Mark Cinkevich, Ryan Jeffery, Simon Ripoll Hurrier, eobchae, Lex Brown, Sungsil Ryu, Chloé Galibert Laîné and Guillaume Grandjean
Dates: 01.02.23 – 05.02.23
Locations: transmediale at Akademie der Künste, Berlin
URL: transmediale.de // adk.de

7.1.2 Exhibitions designed

Exhibition: *I Heard Talking is Dangerous*
Artist: Lauren Lee McCarthy
Dates: 24.03.22 to 14.05.23
Locations: Eigen + Art Lab, Berlin
URL: eigen-art.com

Exhibition: *Surrogate at Data Relations*
Artist: Lauren Lee McCarthy
Curated: Miriam Kelly and Shelley McSpedden
Dates: 02.06.23 to 09.07.23
Locations: Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne
URL: acca.melbourne

Exhibition: *Broken Machines and Wild Imaginings*
Artists: Sarah Ciston, Sara Culmann, D'Andrade & Walla Capelobo, Petja Ivanova, Pedro Oliveira, Sahej Rahal, Aarti Sunder, SONDER (Peter Behrbohm and Anton Steenbock), Natasha Tontey, Tin Wilke & Laura Fong Prosper
Curated: Clara Herrmann assisted by Nataša Vukajlović
Dates: 02.06.23 to 09.07.23
Locations: Akademie der Künste, Berlin
URL: adk.de

7.1.3 Films

Name: *On A Clear Day You Can See The Revolution From Here*
Directed: Emma Charles and Ben Evans James
Composer: Simon Goff
Sound: Sebastian Kite and Michał Maletz
Colour: Natalia Jaeger
Year: 2020
Time: 64:00
Format: 16mm
Premiere: World Premiere, Visions du Réel; North American Premiere, MoMA New York; European Premiere, Sheffield DocFest
Funded: Arts Council England, Elephant Trust
Distribution: Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre

Name: *LEAKS*
Directed: Ben Evans James
Composer: Simon Goff
Year: Forthcoming
Time: approx. 20:00
Format: 16mm and digital animation
Funded: Mitacs Canada, UKRI

7.1.4 Conferences, workshops, and residencies

i. 2023

February . . . . . transmediale festival, Berlin, Germany

ii. 2022

January . . . . . transmediale festival, Berlin, Germany
June . . . . . Sheffield DocFest, UK
August . . . . . Visible Evidence, Gdansk, Poland
October. . . . . AI Anarchies, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Germany
December. . . . Futures of Audiovisual Research and Teaching, HSLU Lucerne University, Switzerland

iii. 2021

January . . . . . Survival Festival, Wroclaw, Poland
March . . . . . MoMA, Documentary Fortnight, New York, USA
April . . . . . Athens Film & Video Festival, Ohio, USA
June . . . . . Sheffield DocFest, UK
Architecture Film Festival London, UK
August . . . . . Experimental Lakes Artist in Residency, Ontario, Canada
October. . . . . Rotterdam Architecture Film Festival, Netherlands
December. . . . Royal College of Art, ADS 7 Research Trip to Iceland

iv. 2020

February . . . . . Curating After New Media, Dr. Beryl Cook, London, UK
April . . . . . Visions du Réel, Nyon, Switzerland
June . . . . . Edinburgh International Film Festival, UK
Sheffield DocFest, UK
EAVE Workshop, Galway, Ireland
October. . . . . Astra, Sibiu, Romania
Dharamshala International Film Festival, Nepal
December. . . . Confirmation of funding for Experimental Lakes Residency
(Note: some of these events moved online due to the Covid-19 pandemic)

v. 2019

November. . . . BANFF Centre, Calgary, Canada

7.1.5 Publications and papers

i. 2023

James, Ben Evans. 2023. A geography of the screen: mapmaking as bridge between film and curatorial production processes. *Arts*. 12(3):94. https://doi.org/10.3390/arts12030094.

ii. 2022

James, Ben Evans. 2022. Indeterminate Distances. *A Book for Research that is Art*. AHRC. ISBN 9781399911757.

Craigie, Maud, and Ben Evans James. 2022. It is Difficult to Insult a Guilty Person. *transmediale almanac: For Refusal*. https://202122.transmediale.de/almanac/it-is-difficult-to-insult-a-guilty-person. Accessed 29th January, 2024.

7.2 Exhibition Texts

7.2.1 Exhibition text: A Street Loud With Echoes

Exhibition: *A Street Loud With Echoes*
Artists: Shaun Badham, Donald Harding, Maebh O Neill
Dates: 04.10.19 to 07.12.19
Locations: South Kiosk, London; The Old Waterworks, Essex
URL: southkiosk.com/A-Street-Loud-With-Echoes-1 // theoldwaterworks.com

A Street Loud With Echoes continued a long-running art project about the pioneering work of architecture critic Ian Nairn whose 1955 edition of *Architectural Review* revolutionised planning policy in the UK. Tracing a path along the Thames as it flows towards the estuary, the exhibition sought to unravel the constructed identities and foundation myths of new towns and developments that epitomised post-war planning in the UK.

7.2.1.1 Under the guidance of truth. Text by Ben Evans James

Donald Harding's *The Marshes* unfolds across the former marshlands of Erith and Belvedere and around the Thamesmead area. Harding describes this edgeland as "neither urban nor rural, caught in the machinery of economic regeneration. A landscape rearranged by real estate values where developer's plans are marked up and ways of life marked down" (2018).

While there is no set path for the visitor to navigate the work, the most immediate entry point comes from a series of directional speakers installed throughout the gallery. Here we encounter recordings of Harding's phone conversations with local residents, who describe their view from various points in and around the Thamesmead area. These recordings are the result of Harding's improvisation with the public phone boxes in the area where he would call and wait for someone to answer. The description of this landscape by its inhabitant's echoes Nairn's subtopian polemic 'Outrage', around which this show is based – "the doom of an England reduced to a universal subtopia, a mean and middle state, neither town nor country, an even spread of abandoned aerodromes and fake rusticity, wire fences, traffic roundabouts, gratuitous notice-boards, car-parks and Things in Fields" (Nairn 1955, 14) Harding's recordings from Thamesmead reveal additions to this list that include betting shops, fast food takeaways and an infamous now boarded up pub, where a shotgun was once fired into the roof.

Woven alongside the essayistic form of these audio stories, Harding intersperses a separate narrative through a first wall text that questions the discovery of bones by construction workers employed on a building site within the Thamesmead area. At first thought to be human, the bones are eventually identified as equine and originating from the 'Marsh Cob' – a breed of horse whose presence Harding ascribes to the landscape of the area. Mounting a camera on a horse and allowing it to wander freely, Harding creates a filmic component to the work that takes the form of a kind of psychogeographic

dérive where the camera drifts across the landscape. Occasionally, the horse appears to interact with individuals or elements in the landscape causing the animal (and the camera) to alter its course.

Placed in opposing spaces within the gallery, the audio story, wall text and film begin to build a narrative of place for the viewer through the communities who reside there. In the final part of the work a second wall text historicises the Marsh Cob, tracing the relationship of the horse to the area through key historical junctures. From the Saxon kings of Kent to the filming of Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), one constant in the landscape is demonstrated – the Marsh Cob horse. It is around this threshold – where the gallery visitor is caught between film, audio, and wall texts - that questions around the veracity of the Marsh Cob might surface. Caught between hearing snippets of the sound work and seeing short flashes of the film – the visitor is left to piece together the fragments of their experience and to assess the plausibility of the facts being communicated.

In *The Marshes*, Harding constructs the Marsh Cob as a breed of horse animated by another, well worked horse within the *an lucht siúil* or Traveller communities of Thamesmead. Providing a fictional character that mediates between reality and representation, the Marsh Cob is used as a conduit through which the artist explores the erasure of histories brought about by the landscape's cycles of economic development. Making visible Harding's subjectivity and his status within the communities around Thamesmead as both an insider (a Londoner) and an outsider (a North Londoner), the fiction highlights the difficulty Harding felt in creating an appropriate response to a temporary context as complex as Thamesmead. His use of the Marsh Cob acknowledges this dislocation without undermining his attempts to uncover truths and facts through the work (Sharpe in Hao et al. 2014).

The Marshes creates a lie with a focus; a fabrication designed to uncover truths (Frankfurt 2005). As such, it requires a labour from the viewer to think both fictionally and factually at the same time; the installed work managing the plausibility of truth across space, leaving the visitor to piece together the fragments of their experience and to assess the veracity of the facts communicated (Sharpe in Hao et al. 2014).

7.2.1.2 References

A clockwork orange. 1971. [Film]. Directed by Stanley Kubrick. Burbank: Warner Brothers.

Frankfurt, Harry G. 2005. *On Bullshit*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hao, Sophia Yadong, Edgar Schmitz, Tobias Berger, and Li-Hsin Hsu. 2014. *Hubs and fictions: on current art and imported remoteness*. Berlin: Sternberg Press.

Harding, Donald. 2018. *Conversation between Harding and Ben James*. London, UK. 16th December.

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7.2.2 Exhibition text: For the Record

Exhibition: *For the Record*
Artists: Phanuel Antwi and Rhea Storr
Dates: 28.05.21 to 04.07.21
Locations: transmediale Studio, Silent Green, Berlin, Germany
URL: transmediale.de

For the Record was presented as part of the *remote. response. request.* series of film exhibitions at *transmediale* festival 2021. Crossing the lines between cinema, exhibition, and performance, *remote. response. request.* offered a distinct film-festival format through a series of commissioned works extended across the *transmediale* studio space and website.

For the Record is a call-and-response exchange between London and Vancouver that resonates from opposing ends of the *transmediale* studio space. In the commissioned work, filmmaker Rhea Storr and writer Phanuel Antwi reinterpret each other's practice and sense of place, advancing a form of diasporic archive told through the bonds of Black kinship.

7.2.3 Exhibition text: Notes for Les Sanglières

Exhibition: *Notes for Les Sanglières*
Artists: Elsa Brès
Dates: 10.07.21 to 22.08.21
Locations: transmediale Studio, Silent Green, Berlin, Germany
URL: transmediale.de

Notes for Les Sanglières was presented as part of the *remote. response. request.* series of film exhibitions at *transmediale* festival 2021. Crossing the lines between cinema, exhibition, and performance, *remote. response. request.* offered a distinct film-festival format through a series of commissioned works extended across the *transmediale* studio space and website.

In *Notes for les Sanglières*, Elsa Brès constructs a non-human world that exposes the erroneous fiction of human sovereignty over nature. With a pack of algorithmically animated boars as protagonists, Brès reveals the fallacy of anthropocentrism, until the idea of our primary place within the Earth's ecology becomes a delusion.

7.3 Film Texts

7.3.1 Film text: On A Clear Day You Can See The Revolution From Here

Directors: Emma Charles and Ben Evans James
Year: 2020
Score: Simon Goff
Genre: Artists' non-fiction film
Format: 16mm
Length: 64 minutes
Funding: Arts Council England, The Elephant Trust

Screened:
World Premiere: Visions du Réel, Switzerland
North American Premiere: MoMA New York (USA)
European Premiere: Sheffield DocFest (UK)
Others: Abandon Normal Devices (UK), Astra Sibiu (Romania), Athens Film & Video (USA), Dharamshala International Film Festival (Nepal), Edinburgh International Film Festival (UK), London Architecture Film Festival (UK), Rotterdam Architecture Film Festival (NL)

On A Clear Day You Can See the Revolution From Here is an expansive journey across the remnants of Soviet technological infrastructures that haunt Kazakhstan's landscape. Shot on 16mm, the camera is drawn across the landscape taking in locations that include mineral mines, the Eurasian Steppe, the STS decommissioned nuclear site and the newly constructed city of Nur-Sultan (Astana).

7.3.2 Film text: LEAKS

Directors: Ben Evans James
Year: Forthcoming
Score: Simon Goff
Genre: Artists' non-fiction film
Format: 16mm
Length: Approx 20 minutes
Funding: UKRI and Mitacs Canada

LEAKS traverses the watery architectures created by human pharmaceutical secretions; of drugs flushed through our bodies into rivers, lakes, and oceans.

By tracing the underwater network formed by waste anti-depressants, the film constructs an understanding of human bodies at the surface that have been rendered exhausted and anxious by contemporary capitalism. In order to visualise alternate futures unbound from these conditions, the film traces the chemical trail deeper into the marine ecosystem into microbes and fish. As the drugs we consume transforms their bodies into ours, the film questions how new forms of alliance between human and non-human might bring alternate social realities into being.

7.4 Artist Interview: Phanuel Antwi and Rhea Storr

Speakers: Rhea Storr (Artist), Phanuel Antwi (Artist), Ben Evans James (Curator). Recorded 25th August 2021.

A reflective conversation on the making of *For the Record* by Rhea Storr and Phanuel Antwi, produced for *transmediale* festival 2021/22. Transcribed using AI 6th September 2021. Corrections and light editing by Ben Evans James 12th April 2022.

This conversation begins with Phanuel Antwi asking Ben Evans James to revisit some of the ideas of spectatorship that they'd touched upon while walking around Vancouver together.

BEN EVANS JAMES
I made some questions or starting points based on our conversations:

- For me, the experience of being in the work in the gallery was almost one of an onlooker, looking into the conversation or eavesdropping. Being in Berlin felt like I was in the middle of the two of you physically. This feeling of spectating was heightened by the way as a visitor you sit on the sidelines in the space, with your back against the wall on benches. This orientation means you can just see both images through the corner of each eye, but you have to edit as a spectator and make a decision about where you're looking and at what point. So you're forced to choose as a visitor, and this creates a very active mode of spectatorship. Playing with the mode of spectatorship, you know at one point I downloaded the work and listened to it on my phone when I was walking around Berlin at night. In this setting I felt in a very different mode of spectatorship, one where I was inside the conversation rather than an onlooker to the conversation.
- When I first saw the work, and it existed as a diptych on my laptop, it felt like an audio first work due to the size of the images. Then when I went into the gallery space, and the images were at a large scale, it felt like an image first work. Now, I understand you are thinking of turning the work into a book and in this format, it may exist as a 'written word' first work. So there are these different modes that the work operates in.
- What does it mean to have a film made across London, Vancouver and to be installed in Berlin? In *For the Record*, you say you're avoiding the use of the word 'haunting' but are there any resonances or echoes with Berlin itself?
- *For the Record* is described as a diasporic archive, created through the bonds of Black kinship. I'm wondering about the kind of physicality the exhibition space may have brought to that archive. So what if anything, does it mean to have a space where this archive physically manifested itself or existed for a period of time?

– *remote. response. request.* was designed as a programme to bring film, performance, and discourse together. This installation wasn't an exhibition that presented a pre-existing work, it was an exhibition that emerged alongside, or in conversation with the development of the work itself. And so I began to think about how exhibition design has perhaps functioned at different points in the filmmaking process. So, for instance, at first we were talking about a single screen install, but then as the format of the conversation, and the production process of the film became clearer, it changed to a diptych and the space mirrored the production process of the film itself. This can also be seen in the vinyls, which take the form of highly abstracted blown-up black and white images, physically linking both the screens together. They created a space of interference between the screens with a kind of Black noise, which I think also links directly to the audio or sound design of the work and your previous works (Rhea Storr) as well.

RHEA STORR
I think a lot of those things, though, thinking about the way that this space functions, is tied so much to how the work is made, so hopefully we will cover both. I don't know, what do you want to start with? Phanuel?

PHANUEL ANTWI
I'm struck by the last point about the three modes of the work and how space changes it. Or how one encounters that work, and how that changes a person's relationship to it, or how they think about the work. So on the computer screen, as a gallery installation, and possibly as a book. So that's something I'm really thinking through, this separation that we avoid. Separation allows it to be foregrounded, what do I mean by that? So when we finished the work, we weren't quite sure what we'd done. We were joking saying, I guess it's a film because it's got images, it's got audio, and it's got dialogue. And the composition of that makes the film but then there's this idea you bring up of calling it a piece of audio cinematography. So all of a sudden, we began with a possibility of that, and then it became a film; and that's because of the inseparability of the visual and the sound and the words, One of the decisions we made was to take photographs at night and that decision alone allowed us to think through the visual sonics of where we lived or rather, the how sound is operating at night within our neighbourhoods. And you can see that in terms of the light, which I think I mentioned to you at one point, I was surprised at how loud Vancouver was, for such a very small city in some sense. With my camera at night, it was such a loud city. So that's why the last question kind of struck me; thinking about how, once engaging with work, one could actually separate the very things that I think we struggle to keep separate.

RHEA STORR
I think it's perhaps in the work too, in that we talked about being in the in-between space, and perhaps a malleability. And in the medium that we're choosing is a kind of Black aesthetic work almost in that it's able to change to the situation that it needs to be in. So I like the idea that we transformed

our discussions into a written text and then that was edited, so there's lots of different ways of speaking and moving and thinking going on at the same time. So Vancouver is a very light city, a very noisy city and that made me think of the common and Streatham Common (in London) and how there's no lights there. And yeah, it's a place in the day where you can be very visible because it's not built up because it's common, it's grassland, and at night-time, it's not visible at all. So I think being able to work through different media. And also thinking about these concepts, like the idea of noise, not only as auditory or visual, allowed us to respond to each other in a better way as well.

PHANUEL ANTWI

And equally, the embodied, I'm thinking of that moment in the film, when we talk about our guts and our tongues. So in those moments, sound became also embodied in some sense, we started remarking on the sonic quality of the body, not only in terms of it being a makeup, the body as a sound archive, not simply about that. But, actually, the body produces sounds, it's noisy. So I was thinking back to days that we were working together, and we've been on Zoom for so long that our belly starts growling, and then one has to go, it's late for you there, but you have to go grab a snack or something like that. So there's ways that we say it is visual, and also auditory, but there's something about the kinaesthetic nature of that noise means that we need to kind of think about other ways that other technologies that are also producing, including our body parts, as well. And I found that interesting,

RHEA STORR

Which is also such a challenge, because it was made virtually, it was made without the body and yet it so much is almost an inventory of body parts that part in the film, it's itemising, or it's, I'm not sure if it made it into the final textbook, and collecting the receipts or looking at your wallet and treating it as an archive of your life.

PHANUEL ANTWI

When you say that, I think our bodies are so present, even though we were in each other's presence. By which I mean, we are thankful for the mediation of Zoom or Skype as a way to bring us closer in a moment when we are so far away, or when we have to be so far away from each other. So for someone who I'm embarrassed to say, is maybe not good with technology, new media, maybe I should say, this work really kind of forced me to work through that. First, you know, the pandemic has also forced me to reckon with the necessity for new media. I think I seem to have developed an unhealthy, allergic to that. And don't get me wrong, I'm not going to be joining tik-tok anytime soon, or anything like that. But I have to admit that this work wouldn't be possible without these new media and ways that it made us feel a heightened intimacy with each other in ways that I think would have taken a long time for us to get to where we are now. Also, in terms of thinking about that embodiment again, I think this moment has asked us to rethink about ways that technology or new media particularly mediates notions of embodiment, and I think it is not a new topic, in fact, for many folks with a disability and so on. But I think it is becoming part

of the weather around us, that Zoom is now a word that everybody knows once you say, it is become the answer. That's what I'm thinking about when I hear you speak about embodiment, and, and how we are not close, but at the same time, I'm feeling so close.

BEN EVANS JAMES

Picking up on what you say about Zoom, this was the first time where, from a curatorial perspective at least, I have worked so closely using 3D or CAD software as well. While we would have all appreciated meeting in the space, in the context of the pandemic, and being so far apart there's no way either of you would ever be able to make it to the gallery and trying to think through ways that we could all inhabit a space, even if it was virtual. And the conversations that came out of that in terms of working through what you were doing in Zoom and in Premiere and Audition, versus what I was doing in 3d was definitely a new way of working for me.

RHEA STORR

And it was interesting, in that sense, as well, because I think in a real-life space you wouldn't have that freedom to imagine the different scenarios that we were afforded virtually. So the ability to think about how is a person going to interact with this space, and to be able to kind of change it quickly, through a digital medium, I think is really shaped how people would experience the exhibition too.

PHANUEL ANTWI

What goes through my mind is the cost, the cost of every technology. And in some sense, I think, what we were afforded through the digital is also something that costs us to be in that space. What do I mean? I mean, I'm sad, I didn't get to experience the larger-than-life scale of these images in that space. Sad we didn't get to hear our voices fill up the room. There's such a meditative quality to the work that we've done, particularly with the still images that looped with Blackness. And this moment wasn't experienced, I'd have liked to have been able to be there to feel it as it's being installed or being there to kind of think through the work. So I completely agree with you but just hearing you made me think about other things I wished we were afforded.

RHEA STORR

I was just gonna say I think that time and scale and positioning, because the work thinks about our positioning, to have seen that embodiment at the end and to have heard our physical presences in this space, that is something that we missed out on. But we also played around a lot with that virtual live. Like we photographed our Zoom images, for instance. For me, anyway, it meant that I had to spend quite a bit of time with our faces and how we interacted on a Zoom screen. And that's quite interesting, not from a narcissistic point of view, but to see how you're reacting to someone and to see how your image projects, especially now in these times. Further, it was interesting to then redact those images by taking small parts of them such as our two eyes, to isolate a gesture or to take a photograph over a long exposure so that we might see your laugh over a period of 10 seconds. It was interesting that those gestures might

transform into something else beyond what they could be on the screen in that moment.

PHANUEL ANTWI
I couldn't agree more. I think I want both. I want us to have been able to have been, I think the condition of the now forced something out of us, or it asked us to use technologies in ways that we are not used to doing, so I agree with you.

RHEA STORR
Technology is being used differently.

PHANUEL ANTWI
I want to ask you a question. You said something that piqued my interest early on, around the relationship between editing, moving, and thinking, which I think in some ways is in the process that you just described. Which is in taking an image, exposing it, redacting it, removing, or isolating the gesture. So I'm interested in that maybe we can think through some of that even process. I mean let's just talk about editing for a little bit, because there's something in that process that I think that have also been changed as a result of working with you on this project.

RHEA STORR
The way that how we might be treating time as well in relation to how it might be theorised in Black scholarship and a disruption of time or thinking about slow time or taking time, as a kind of resistance. I think that has something to do with the way that we edited too because it wasn't linear. As such in it, it was something that could be reworked over and it was almost refined, like you would carve something from stone that's very poetic, but it's almost revealed through this process of taking away and changing and responding live to the other person making edits too. So I think that process is a really important one in the film, because it's not the way that you might edit a commercial film, let's say, it's looking backwards and looking at what it could be at the same time and bringing in other edits and thinking about other forms that the work could take too.

PHANUEL ANTWI
Maybe we should reveal a little bit. You said something that, aside from you and I, others might not know what you mean. So one of the things that we did and please correct me if I'm misremembering, because I've got COVID brain. What we did is that we began by recording a series of conversations, maybe for one hour or two and, and then we transcribed that conversation into written form, and then we re-edited that conversation. And then we recorded it as a sound file. So that's the editing that we did because we would do this on a Google Doc with each other. Thinking through together "Oh, this is what you meant. Actually, no, we don't like that now, what if we, what if we changed it" but at the same time, we didn't change it by adding, we changed it by taking things away. So the process of reduction we were trying very much not to rewrite things. So, if we take some words away, how does it become a new thing?

So one can say maybe a found poem, So that's what I'm hearing we're taking things away. Am I remembering correctly?

RHEA STORR

Yeah. And that process I think became more like a game to me, to see how you think and maybe what you would do. And sometimes I would wait for you to finish some words that I might be able to insert. To me, it was a way of making something that I think should be encouraged more - like a kind of play rather than looking for a particular outcome. And it was also very freeing not to, I mean, sometimes there were very particular academic references that we wanted to include, and then I think the mode of attention shifted. But other than that, it is very freeing to not be tied down to a particular idea, and yet the kernel of what we were talking about still remained throughout the film.

PHANUEL ANTWI

On the topic of academic thought, we also were not interested in always explaining certain kinds of ideas, not out of a politics of un-generosity, and more, perhaps the politics of refusal, in the sense of - this is a conversation between you and I. There are moments of opacity, I think that's where I'm trying to get at, there are moments for some listeners, or some viewers will feel like they are not invited in or it will feel obscure. And I'm interested maybe if we can maybe meditate on why that decision was important to us.

RHEA STORR

Yeah, I think you wanted more opacity than I did sometimes. Because I think it's also connected to poesis as well, and how open but also how closed the metaphor can be.

PHANUEL ANTWI

No, and you are right. The poet in me can sometimes be an un-generous writer. And by that, I mean, I want to keep doors open for folks to find an answer on their own, as opposed to constantly having the door opened for them, I will point you to the door, and you might decide to open it by pushing it or you might decide to open it by just, slashing it open. So I think I'm interested in giving options to folks in terms of how they encounter language, my tendency is to shift a bit away from the preoccupation with meaning. What does this mean? Be open to the encounter and be undone and be surprised so I think that's my tendency towards capacity. But you're right, yes. And I shifted.

RHEA STORR

Perhaps opacity is already present anyway, regardless of how transparent you think that you're being, and so to deny that you're denying other people access is kind of a disservice to them, because there will always be people who don't have access to what you're saying. So yeah, I do concede, that opacity is important in the work.

PHANUEL ANTWI
I still don't know, I know what we've done.

BEN EVANS JAMES
I'm wondering at this point, while you're on that thread, whether it's a good point to talk about the spectatorship of the work. So we mentioned the screens and not being able to see both at the same time, and whether the work is image led or audio led and now thinking about the work as a book - how do you think those modes of spectatorship might lead to different types of capacities.

PHANUEL ANTWI
I think it has to do with really talking, speaking about the technology early on. And one thing about the call and response format of the work for me, it's also something that I would have liked to have been present, to feel how being on the opposite sides of the room, the projectors being on the opposite sides of the room. I think call and response as a method that Black folks have mobilised as an aesthetic form of work. One doesn't always know the shape of that response. I think that's one thing that I wanted to experience - this is back to our earlier point about being in the room and what technology made possible, and what it cost us. And I think I'm making it sound as if we get a chance to always experience the work that you make when it's been installed. You don't. I think this was a particular work that I was interested in. And I wonder whether I wanted to experience this particularly because of the moment we are in where we are not able to travel. So I don't know, I'm just gonna call out my own logic here, I'm feeling the isolation of the moment and it is now informing the pressure that I'm putting on wanting to be there.

RHEA STORR
But also the way that we made the work was quite, I don't want to say intuitive because I think sometimes that can be misconstrued as not working with intention. But it was being led by the things that we wanted to make. So I don't think it's really an accident that the idea of a presence that isn't really fulfilled, found its way into the work somehow. The idea of embodiment is that it's not really an accident that it's at a time when you can't experience it and, in that way, but I think even being there thinking about the modes of spectatorship; it's impossible for someone to go and see everything in one sitting anyway. You can't see all of the images, some of the text is quite dense. I think it would be hard to really watch it one time through and get everything. So how long as a spectator would you have to spend with this work to really understand the kind of space and the mechanics and every little thing about it, I'm not sure that you could, and that's part of the work that it can't really be grasped or handled or re-contained in its totality. So I like that about it in fact.

PHANUEL ANTWI
I think one point we toyed with is possibly making it episodic, and maybe breaking it up into two different works as a way to work with the modes of attention of spectator in that space. Because we ourselves were also preoccupied with modes of attention, as we are thinking through the

economies, how much can one engage? How much can the image account for, how much can the audio account for. And in fact we began with wanting the audio to be foregrounded and the image almost be like the backup dancers to the audio! And, and so it's actually quite exciting to hear Ben speak about the work and the different modes of his reception of the work, as an audio first work when viewed on his computer and as a visual first work when in installation form. And so I was shocked and pleased by that, the decision that the spectator had to make is a form of agency, in some sense. One need not be literate in the kinds of things we are talking about, in order for them to engage. So in the absence of the literacy, one with eyes could see the screen. And sometimes there's a juxtaposition between what we are seeing and what is being seen. And at times those two are aligned. And those are often done as a way to kind of puncture through something. So we're interested in that, whether you want to call it a puncture, or rupture, maybe rupture is a better way to rupture through an idea that we were grasping at ourselves. So bringing those two images together, those images on different screens, or sometimes saying those things but not getting that it - it ruptures the image. So those methods were a way for us to get closer to the work that we've made. So we, in some sense, do not also grasp the extent of what we were trying to do. We were trying to get at something. And we were mobilising all the methods that were available to us in this moment to get closer to that thing. Like how do we think through Black kinship? In a moment like now, in a moment, visually, aesthetically, through the visual through the audio? How do we think about this moment where the ratio of violence is where we see all around us, but not let that be the focus of our conversation, that's what, that's what required us to play with multiple approaches and methods and whatever is available to us now.

RHEA STORR

Yeah, I agree completely. I mean, I think that it's kind of a function of thinking about diaspora, to be able to think through all those different ways of working in order to be able to get at the thing that we want to get at and not stating it as this is the fact of things and this is the way it is but leaving room open for those many different voices. I like the idea that there's different levels at which you might access the work depending on the knowledge that you bring to the work. But I think it becomes a question of, as I think with a lot of works, which think about Blackness? They stumble on this initial question of who is it for? And who is it representing? And I think it's good to not be kind of tied down by that question. Because sometimes it obscures what you really want to talk about. And I guess what we wanted to think about was aesthetics, more than anything, and noise and how the sonic and visual might work together. But I wanted to ask you as well about the decision to show only still images, as we expect a person to want to move around the space.

PHANUEL ANTWI

I think one of the things that we spoke a lot about, to interrupt this idea of stillness as a lack of movement, or, as a lack of motion. And we were interested, particularly in, in playing with the echoes of life that rest in the still image. That's something that I think was of interest. So maybe an aside, but I'm

thinking I'm working a lot on dub right now, with the Dub Poets, and I think of someone in your country, Linton Kwesi Johnson. And he said that poetry is a poetics that is seen as very heavily performative. But one thing that always shocked me, when I saw Linton perform, was how still he moved. He offered a different understanding of performance when I watched him when. He was not moving a lot. But you moved, when you heard him read, and so I'm interested in those differences of movement within Black performance. And there's a tendency to read performance and Blackness in terms of hyperness. There's this over embodied attention to movement. And I think oftentimes, that leaves us to not pay enough attention to the other kinds of movements that are happening in the zones of still, in the zones of quiet. So that's something that I think we wanted to also think about. If we were interested in hearing the noise in the image, we also wanted to see the movement in those still images. And so if you can see some of the images there are transparencies, and these transparencies are gestures that we have in there that are almost trying to almost recall the idea of the fact that an image is ever moving. In some sense, it requires a different kind of mode of attention to hear, the movement that it's making, the sound is making when it's moving, to actually feel the texture, the seemingly meaningless textures of those things and be wanting to kind of almost animate them back alive in some sense. Animate it back alive.

RHEA STORR

I think I totally agree with what you're saying about Blackness being equated often with this explosive energy and perhaps jazz or blues being like the kind of easy signpost of that, let's say. And I don't know, perhaps this is a leap, just saying it now, but it's quite over-determined or overly characterised as a feature of what Blackness might be. So I think the idea of stillness, but not death is really interesting in that sense. And I think you can see that in our film as well, because we talk a lot about plants and the earth and things growing, which obviously happens very slowly. And I'm thinking about the sound. The plants are very present, but also present in the sound and in the kind of wrestling in a very quiet unassuming way. And I'm thinking also of the interlude in which the resonator, like the sound has been processed to resonate the sound of the soil and so this kind of slow Earth is in the film, but it's not really shouting at you, it's just quietly there in the background.

PHANUEL ANTWI

I remember when I was stepping on the soil in my flat, trying to record, I wished someone could see me on the floor with the mic, I looked really mad.

RHEA STORR

So that's also how you were using your camera as well, some of the shots on the side, and I remember you talking about how physical it was with your body to try and kind of contort into those ways to make the photograph that you wanted to make.

PHANUEL ANTWI

And I think I was trying to respond to you because you were using analogue and I was using digital. And there's the way with digital, many of us tend to want to do all the work in the editing room, in some sense. And the composition is a different mode of composing when you work with the digital, I suppose to the analogue. And so I tried as much as possible to manipulate my camera as if I were working with an analogue. And that required me to be really embodied in terms of the pictures that I took. Because I wasn't interested in processing the work as much as I typically would. Because then it'll be too out of sync with you. And so the body is again so present, even though the work feels mediated, the production of the work is so embodied in ways that it's always there, but it's not always foregrounded in my thinking of what I've done. Whereas with this work, I felt I was always hyper aware of the body's production in this production.

RHEA STORR

I think also there are a lot of bodies that aren't present there, or perhaps they're present but not explained in the sights and the histories that we documented. I know, there is a kind of reluctance to really explain them.

PHANUEL ANTWI

And it's also about our relations, right, there are relations that we've documented that made things possible.

RHEA STORR

I think it's more like a protection. It's more like a care. But I'm aware how fine that line is between appropriation and refusal, like it would be easy. The only thing we have to go on is a kind of ethical conviction, it would be easy to think that we were being careful when actually we were stealing, which I don't think that we've done, but just to say that, I think the way people sort of consider that they're dealing with a subject, which often is quite personal, can be harmful, when in fact, they've gone with the attitude of helping or protecting or raising awareness of something.

PHANUEL ANTWI

I remember this conversation where we wrestled with this very much at the end, do you remember how there was something that happened in your neighbourhood, and you called me? And like, "we have to take out this line" And actually, no, and we didn't know what to do, because of the ethics of what it means to walk around with our camera. And night, oftentimes in neighbourhoods that are already surveilled, neighbourhoods that we are part of, but are also heavily under surveillance. So what do we do with that right? And so that's an earlier part of the conversation where we meditate. There's a line, which I cannot remember exactly now, about "what good is this image going to do?" Something along those lines, do you remember that? Maybe to be a bit more transparent, some of the images that we don't name, or some of the things that we've identified are some of our friends who permitted us or who joined us on some of these photo shoots, because it's late at night, and want to keep you company and also know the danger of you possibly walking

late at night by yourself. And you know them well, they just didn't want to be there, but they didn't want to be in it, but they are there. And so those relations, are also in the work as well. Some of them, you see, because they don't mind being in there. Some of them you don't see, but they were there with me on nights when I was doing the shoots, whether beside me or sometimes on the phone-call with me just to keep me safe, because I'm shooting a night in some of these neighbourhoods. So those are some of the things that we don't always identify. And then there's also the neighbourhoods that we are in are also neighbourhoods that are heavily surveilled by police. So what is the ethics of taking images within these neighbourhoods that are already overly surveilled? So those are some things that we have to kind of think through in those places? Do we still want to mark the fact that these are Black spaces with without contributing to this state violence of civic surveilling these neighbourhoods? So we have to think through those questions quite a lot.

RHEA STORR

And how do you move through them in a way which is not going to replicate the thing which you making work against? Almost, I think, yeah, is a big question.

PHANUEL ANTWI

Relations really do matter. And I'm talking relations on many scales, relations are the micro, and also relational, the macro, but the macro in terms of what's your relationship to this neighbourhood that you're going into? Who are the folks in that area who know you. What's your commitment to this place? Is it one of extracting from the community and making something for yourself or for your benefit? Or are you trying to be in dialogue with the community? And if this is your aim, sometimes people actually tell you where to go, which happened in this neighbourhood with folks telling me "you need to go to this alleyway", or "you need to speak to this particular theme". They will tell you where the histories are that need to be documented, or that you don't even know yourself. So that's what I mean by the scale of relations. My friends, who are just worried about my own safety, and then we're members of that community that you want to work with - what do they want you to show and not show? These are all part of the ethical considerations I'm hearing you invoke when you say that. And also be prepared that you could be wrong. You could do it one way and the committee could also say this is not actually what we think, it is not what we had in mind.

RHEA STORR

And also people who are not there anymore, like figures from history that you could learn from. I'm thinking of going to Railton Road and being in the presence of the house that CLR James died in - that has specific meaning, or seeing where Brixton Black Women's Group was born, and the house that was squatted for it to exist, and it just makes those things more real when they have a physical presence. Even alongside having people being able to inform you, I think it's also about being able to gather sources around you too historical sources. And when you're writing academically, I've been told, who are your friends, who are you writing with? Who are you writing alongside or speaking in

the realm of? And I like to think that way about a lot of the books and authors and theorists that we're talking about too. That was one of the really exciting things for me is that although we have very different experiences of where we live and everything, it is really interesting to have common ground across say, talking about Christina Sharpe, Édouard Glissant or something and to be able to have a shared language with those sources, but each of us brings something slightly different to them was really exciting for me.

PHANUEL ANTWI

Writing is the most isolated practice, but it is also the most crowded practice out there for me in the sense that if your interlocutors and your sources, to use your language, that you gather around you are with you, then it ceases to be a lonely activity. It might be solitary, but lonely definitely it is not. The richness of a work is when you can hear the conversations that bubbles beneath the lines, right? And I find those really quite humbling to just keep on gathering my sources. In relation to something you said with which I agree, and that has to do with those who are no longer here. When you speak of CLR James and we are thinking about the relationship between, for me, that relation is always between the living and the non-living. What do I mean, what am I trying to say here? I think, given the pace at which Black spaces are revitalised or gentrified, or being bulldozed, or being cleared, I'm using the language of clearing to invoke the logic of space making. It means then that for some of us who move into new spaces, we often do not know these historical sites. And so when we move into these spaces that appear to not have Black spaces or Black presence, for me, it is building relations with others who've been there longer and who might be able to direct me in a way to kind of reactivate the site. For me to be in relation with those gone and to gather those sources around me. So for example, now, when I walk in specific neighbourhoods after finishing this film with you, I cannot walk through specific neighbourhoods without thinking about certain communities. So Benny's market, for example, I would not have known that that was also a meeting space, a meeting place for Black folks, had it not been me talking to someone like Vanessa, who was able to kind of like, show me historical archival photographs of herself as a kid when she was in the space. So the archive becomes both official and unofficial, it becomes the space, the space holds the memory. So there's a way that when I went into that market space to talk to the people working there, yeah, they knew - they welcomed me as if they were expecting me, in some sense. So my questions, were not foreign to them. So I enjoyed that way of bringing both together. Both those not here, but they left a mark, and given Vancouvers perpetual redesigning of itself, which means then that it has to repeatedly break things down and put things up. This child like way of growing, right? It means then that we don't always have those markers available. And it is that for me, relations become also very important to kind of like keep track of what the city is trying to kind of get rid of.

RHEA STORR

And that's, I think, what you're talking about in terms of burying or unearthing and you've also made other work about. This sort of revealing what's already there. So it's not discovering in the kind of colonial attitude that you might

discover something, but unearthing in the way that you might be able to encounter something which has been purposefully hidden, or narrated in a way which is not easy to access anymore. And that's, I guess, as well what we're talking about. I know Tony Morrison sites of memory was quite a big influence. And thinking of the ability of language to fill in the gaps where those kinds of histories might be missing.

— Break as Rhea answers the door and Ben changes batteries —

PHANUEL ANTWI
One of the things that Ben mentioned around the physicality of the exhibition space, the space where the archive sits, both architecturally, and also maybe one might even add psychically of some sort. And then linking that to the archives that we document, and also make. The work that we have now made as an archive. But in order to produce this archive, we've had to assemble different archives to produce this archive. So we have both, we've assembled an archive of Vancouver, of Black spaces in Vancouver and in London, that now sits as a Black diasporic archive in Berlin. And so what does that do to thinking about the diasporic archive?

RHEA STORR
Yeah, I think it's more difficult not being able to see that immediate feedback of people who've experienced that exhibition to know the context, but I am very interested to know, particularly because I feel that I'm very interested in the way that experimental film exists in Germany, and, I think I feel a kind of affinity with the way that the possibilities for filmmaking in a German context, that I think are quite different to the way that they exist here in a London or a British context. So that's something that's very interesting to me.

PHANUEL ANTWI
I'll use this moment to maybe bring forth a conversation we thought a lot about. So link this question about the space the work is installed in, and the history of filmmaking - in this case the issue of experimental filmmaking within that space. Taking this to a conversation we had were ways that Black experimental firms are often expected to take and we were trying to work through those. So there were these questions, these expectations of Black experimental work. And the kinds of Black experimental work if that makes sense. Where the experiment does not have a predetermined shape, or form. So when you say the way experimental film exists in Germany, opens up possibilities that you are interested in, it makes me want to revisit that conversation and here you speak more about the work that you are primarily interested for your PhD, which is thinking through these experimental filmmakers, and what they make possible, particularly of how we can think about these experimental film collectives. Maybe I'm pushing a bit into your research, but it makes me think through your research and I wanted to hear more about.

RHEA STORR

I guess the way we've talked through some tropes of what I've termed Black Experimental Cinema, that we didn't want to replicate, and also some tropes of scholarship and writing as well. Particularly thinking around I suppose, the sea and transatlantic crossing that, I guess we do allude to in some ways, Joe Forte and the sounds of water as well, but wanting to kind of skirt around because they're so well worn in some, in some ways. So I completely agree our approach is trying to find something which seems like our own navigation through histories, which might, in some areas, exist in a very clear way. But in terms of it might relate specifically to Berlin. I can't speak for an Afro-German point of view because I think it's actually quite different, but I know that it exists. And the work that was also in the show, *Here Is The Imagination Of The Black Radical*, that I made about Afrofuturism, I've had the privilege to have some German viewpoints on that work and I think it's interesting to think about what resonates and what doesn't. For instance, my interest in Carnival, and the kind of parallels that people might seek to find with other German carnivals, the German festivals. So I think when you speak across cultures, I'm not speaking specifically to the show, because I don't know exactly how people have received it in Berlin. But I think when you speak across cultures, people automatically want to find those kinds of resonances within their own culture, like it's a natural thing to want to relate it to your own experience in some way. And, I wouldn't want to discourage that ever, I think that's important for kinship or an understanding. But it doesn't mean that either culture is kind of subordinate, it is not making what we're talking about subordinate to whatever a viewer is bringing in their experience to the work, they can exist alongside with this kind of form of opacity. But my research, deals more with the aesthetics of those experimental ways of working and I've just found that perhaps using the aesthetics as a way to tell the narrative is something that's really being embraced in my work in a German arena. So thinking about all those like, cuts and abrupt stops and interruptions, and the analogue and how that might be a sort of refusal, or the kind of things which might be seen as aberrations usually, like grain, and noise, is something that's often embraced.

PHANUEL ANTWI

Okay we were trying not to talk about what it seems like we are talking about, it's a word that Ben brought up early on, that we were trying to refuse in the film, the word 'haunting'. So I want to bring this to the conversation as well, in terms of the triangulation of histories, that meet when the work is installed in a space, by which I mean, the Black histories from London, the Black histories from Vancouver that I'm learning and trying to bring and then in this case, the Black German or particularly African German histories, that the work being installed in Berlin, necessarily gets activated. So when you say earlier on about the resonance of things that might be picked up, things say from your work, that might be picked up, or things from our work that might get picked up in that space. The resonance of it means that something here is triggering something to come up so I'm interested in that. So, of course, the easy way to think about all of this is what Paul Gilroy calls the Black Atlantic, right? So the movement of people and ideas between spaces. Often in London, and

from your angle, the Caribbean in terms of that movement, from my end from Vancouver, you got the African connection. And from Berlin, who knows what the connection was. It could easily be anywhere from the Mediterranean, Black Mediterranean Africans, and particularly East Africans in Berlin. But there's a lot more, or maybe a different way to also put that, Paul Gilroy focused on the West African aspects of the Black Atlantic. And the migrations that are happening now are coming a lot from Eastern Africa and coming from different parts of Africa now than what he narrated, which means then that the histories that meet there are not always going to meet. In some sense, there's going to be a clash.

So what happens to a diasporic archive when it physically moves into a different space. So this diasporic archive that we've created when it enters into this space, something (to use your language) gets activated.

The diasporic archive requires reinvention. The diasporic archive gets built out of a desire, not always to belong but to work through belonging. There's a way that the geopolitical environment makes this such that diasporic folks appear to be always looking for home. This is because they have left home and are in a new space. But I think we make a lot out of home, that we don't actually get to think about what they're making is not always about homemaking. That's something I've been kind of meditating upon. That, yes, making a living requires a home. But we make living - we are in the making of home wherever we are. So I think that when we turn to the diasporic archive, and we preoccupy ourselves with that sense of, "how do I belong to the space?" we miss something. Ok, let me get particularly to the question of the diasporic archive in the exhibition space, I would hope that in each space that it enters, that the work sits in, the traces of the Black histories in those neighbourhoods become more clear. And folks can actually hear those spaces more. So, yes, as much as I would want folks to know about the spaces that *we* have archived, I'm more interested in the triggering possibilities, or the awakening or possibilities of our work, in spaces, awakening thoughts about Black spaces in the places that this work goes. That's one of the things I'm interested in, as opposed to I guess, if you are interested in Vancouver, or London - cool you can learn about that. But of importance to me is where you are when you are engaging with this work, what do you understand about Black spaces in that space? That is where if we were able to move, and there was a programme attached to the work, I'd be interested in programming around that. What would be the interaction of both the space but also makers, Black makers of experience or filmmakers in the space? How are they thinking about modes of thinking through the place that they are in? That'd be something I'd be interested in that sense. Yeah, that's a long-winded fucking answer.

RHEA STORR

No, but I think it clarifies the way that we're thinking about haunting and that is not a haunting looking to the past, it's more "how does the past inform something that's happening now", and I think that's important. It's more about embodiment, and about utilising what exists in a space, rather than being

overcome by what's happened historically or it being involuntary or, or not caring in some ways, who do you want to be alongside, like we were saying earlier. But then I do have a question, so you're talking about the work as if it is the ghost for future encounters, so in what way do you want people to take the work for themselves? Or to appropriate the work? How do you want people to sit alongside it? How do you want it to be used?

PHANUEL ANTWI

I like ghosts because they have matter, or rather, the ghost of their matter is presence, when you encounter a ghost, you know what I mean? So when you say, "think of the work as if it is the ghost for future encounters", then in many ways, the 'as if' preposition - I'm interested in what that question does. "As if it is the ghost for future encounters?" In that sense I think you've answered your own question, in many ways. Then you also go on and say "and sit alongside the work", then yeah I would love for folks to sit alongside the work and sit along where you sit, to be beside, to sit along. So it's funny you use these words that are doing multiple works. Alongside it's not the same as 'beside' as a preposition - it is not the same as beside. But you just said, sit alongside - when I'm thinking about alongside, I'm thinking of moving together, right? But then you're sitting, which then loops us back to stillness. And when you sit, you're still moving in stillness, the movement might not be in terms of a distance, a physical distance or journey, but it could be a whole-body re-composition, of being, of moving, of going alongside something, you're thinking changes in that sense. So for me, that is more than ample in terms of engagement, like if one is open, to sit alongside the work, then I think we've done it. They have possibly changed their emotional makeup or their physical makeup, something in that landscape changes. And so if the work can be an energy, a force to kind of loop back to your earlier idea about Blackness as thought about in terms of this exuberant energy, if the work in quietude can be a force to move people along or to get people to sit alongside it, I think we've done enough. I'll be happy with that.

Because I think I mean, this is what I'm preoccupied with my cuddling book (2023). Like, maybe that's where my obsession is right now. Like I do say somewhere very early on [in a draft of the book], "the haptic characteristic of cuddling may insist a privilege, presence and proximity over absence and distance. Yet, because of the big stress, I put on this practice, how deliberately I upset my own sense of this cosy, homey, snuggling practice. I am interested in attending to the absence of tenderness and cuddling done by the state as I am in the violent caress in the ratio embrace" (unpublished). So for me this idea, I'm constantly grasping for things that don't make sense. So that's why maybe I like paradoxes and juxtapositions. Because what appears to be jarring, to jam the mind is an opening to somewhere that I don't always know. And I'm interested in jamming the mind, of course, there's a violence in that practice. Like that's what the Formalists taught us with language. But I'm interested in constantly thinking, when does proximity not always mean closeness? And I'm interested in bringing these things and thinking them alongside, not privileging one over the other. (Brackets are themselves a form of cuddling right?)

— Break as internet connection drops —

BEN EVANS JAMES

Often that idea of an archive is a collection of objects, or physical things, and with the conversation that you two had about forming this idea of a diasporic archive, what actually happened when that archive switches from being in conversation form to it actually existing as an object in in the gallery, over a period of time, does it maybe materialise it in some way?

RHEA STORR

I think in some sense, materialising, especially something that you've made around a form of identity is quite satisfying, because you can see a concrete depiction of where you've been and what you've done. And I think that can be quite gratifying, especially, I don't know, for me, I often feel kind of between places. So I think being able to express that in some kind of concrete form brings a sense of comfort to it. But on the other hand, that sense of comfort is false. Because how could you possibly characterise all these different ways of knowing and histories and influences upon you that you're not even aware of in one work? So in a sense, the task that you've embarked on is kind of impossible in that it will never be foreclosed or finished and that's the nature of an archive. It is constantly re-worked. That's just what an archive is. So it is an impossible problem, that can't really take the form of an object in the end. So if you look at the object as satisfying some kind of need, it's never going to achieve that. But at the same time, I think where an object is exciting and interesting is that other people can then gather around it. So like Phanuel is saying, the function of the object for me is to be able to facilitate more conversation. But that being said, I hope that the work will take the form of different kinds of objects, like the tech still exists, and I hope that we can work it in some kind of other way to make a different kind of object that's not necessarily filmic. And so yeah, objects are a form of matter that the work happens to take, for me.

PHANUEL ANTWI

We didn't want to fetishize the archive, even as we were trying to produce an archive. So if there is a tendency to maybe appear not concrete, it is an attempt to move away from how easily consumable Black archives or Black objects have on the market. And so, I'm constantly trying to make it difficult for the work to be easily consumable without thinking with it, or without working through it. So as long as one is working with it, or to sit alongside it in some sense, then what comes out of it is fine. But if it's not it becomes this thing that can readily be taken up, then for me, it becomes a problem that I want to interrupt. So I think sometimes students find me really obscure and they think that I'm not giving them what they're asking for. And I'm like, "I don't know how to give you what you are asking for in a world where Black lives and anything related to Blackness becomes food for the capitalist machine". So we need to find a different way of engaging with Black art or Black archives or Black objects. It's not just for Black folks, it's just good for the bloody world, in the sense that we develop different aesthetics. So I put codes into the works and through

relations, you get access, you get the keys to encode it. Once you have the relationship, you get the key, you get the password to decode something.

Maybe one last thing that I'm seeing here that I would like to maybe hear a bit of conversation about - so can we maybe talk a little bit about the spectatorship, Ben?

BEN EVANS JAMES

We spoke about the spectator almost eavesdropping on the work, being sat on the sidelines in the gallery space, having to edit together fragments of the work depending on the direction they face. Alongside we spoke about the different ways I'd been able to engage with the work as a spectator in relation to my role as curator - firstly viewing rough cuts on my laptop where the work felt 'audio first', which is to say the audio proceeded and the images felt like they followed due to their scale. Secondly, how I downloaded the audio and listened to it on headphones walking around Berlin at night, when of course you both photographed your images. And finally, how after installing the work and seeing it in the gallery, my mode of attention changed from audio first to image first, with the image proceeding and the audio following.

RHEA STORR

Well, I suppose Initially, the two things (image and sound) did come very separately. And sound came before images, which I think did have an effect on the work, but later we came and we edited sound and re-edited images. So everything eventually became intertwined. But I like the idea that you could take either one element or the other and kind of forge your own path through the work in a way we've constrained people and how they would encounter the work and that you have to sit in a particular place to get both viewpoints or to try and get both viewpoints on both screens. And you have to be in a particular place to get our voices equally because our voices are coming from separate places as well. But I like that, perhaps listening just to the sound through earphones that you might be able to impose what we're saying onto your own kind of view of your own location as Ben was doing and that it might facilitate thinking beyond even what we had originally intended for the work?

PHANUEL ANTWI

Absolutely. I am both interested and not interested in myself at all. I'm serious in the sense that I'm more interested in what becomes possible when you hear this and watch this, as opposed to what you think I'm trying to do here. What we are trying to do here. Because for me, that's co-creation, right. And so maybe if we can loop-back to your question. As if the work is for future encounters, then I'm hoping that in the future folks will co-create with us. Thinking about dub. I guess I'm really, really fascinated by how analogue technologies oftentimes get around almost they are meddlers in some sense. Like they move through things and they get us to kind of like, and yeah, so the way Ben describes what he is doing is almost meddling with the work in some sense. And he's able to do that, because of the set of skills that he has, right? That allows for a different engagement with the work. So when he says he is

eavesdropping, if one is walking with a sound image, and listening to us, and he is in motion, his body is moving. And almost as if our voices and you have the freedom of moving your body and walking and turning whatever you want, then there's something that happens. I'm thinking here as a dramaturg, just imagining you in that space, then something happens here and we co create something. You are eavesdropping Ben only because you are in the creation process with us in some things. So it's not about eavesdropping. You are actively moving your body through space, physical space, not the gallery space, and listening to a web that is made for the gallery, but you are doing something with it. For me, that's collaboration of a different kind.

BEN EVANS JAMES

It feels a bit like the idea of consumption as production, especially in relation to how you speak about the body, which loops us back again to the start of this conversation, when you're talking about your mouths as an archive, your stomachs as an archive, your nails as an archive etcetera.

RHEA STORR

I think listening to our voices through earphones is an altogether different experience, it is a more intimate experience because it's only you that's listening to us. And so I think that also adds to the feeling, perhaps of you eavesdropping in that. We are like ghosts, we're recorded to be accessed at a specific time that the user wants. So I think it is a closer experience when you're listening in that way, when you're listening too at an individual, personal level.

PHANUEL ANTWI

On the other hand, what I was thinking you're also right to feel like it's eavesdropping. Because I remember the day that we were talking and my mom called, and that ended up finding its way into the script, so to speak. And Rhea, yeah, so there is that intimacy that you are accessing, as a result of the intimacy shared between you and I, it's almost as though the experience with me stretches onto you. This is what's fascinating about intersubjectivity, so I'm not going to go into it. But I want to say our inter subjective relations, reveal our vulnerabilities to each other. And those vulnerabilities can have different names and what some of them could feel like, you are overstepping eavesdropping. So for me vulnerabilities or accessing someone's vulnerabilities - because if intimacy is anything it is the sparest gestures of communication, right? And so if you are seeing the sparest gesture that is being communicated between some two people that know each other, and then you access that, it could feel like you're eavesdropping, it's about those moments of intersubjectivity. Like, truly, it's a subjectivity where we untangle in some sense, like, well, so if we don't want to use that language, the language that is easy is eavesdropping. Yeah. That's one way to think about it.

RHEA STORR

But then I think also it's a point of interest for the film and how it engages with other people, and that it's interesting for the film to be used in these different

ways. There's a way in which those intimacies which you're talking about, as revealing vulnerability between intersubjectivity. There's a way in which those intimacies can be harmful, like there's a way in which I wouldn't want the film to engage with people in some way, like I want it to engage people, but there are also ways that I don't want it to engage with people too.

PHANUEL ANTWI

Yeah, absolutely. So the kinds of opacities that are in here are also about ethics. It's not about refusal, but almost an ethical mode of being with others, so that you can continue to be with those others outside when the film is done, in some sense. So the ethics of opacity is the responsibility to the other that makes life possible for you. When you think of eavesdropping it is hearing on the surface, right, I actually think what you also hear is the lower frequency of what's happening in this work too, so you might not be able to name it. So eavesdropping becomes an easy way of identifying things. So for example, when things that didn't make its way into our conversation, for example when I was talking to your parents and your mum, particularly, there are other things that you are accessing, but it's not in the film. So it's not that you're eavesdropping, but there's something that we don't have language for it yet.

BEN EVANS JAMES

So you mentioned the physicality of eavesdropping, and it makes me think of the material things in work that also enhance the idea. So you have like the sound design, which at times feels like radio static for example. So that idea of eavesdropping is kind of physically manifested in the work.

PHANUEL ANTWI

It's a method, but what I get closer to is to think of the sense of eavesdropping as dropping into the method of this work in some sense. If the work is about the relationship between sound and images, just to be loosey goosey, then the eavesdropper is literally dropping into it. The eavesdropper here is actually the attentive, curious spectator listening. So we can think of the eavesdropper here as an invitation for curiosity as opposed to an uninvited meddler. We are inviting meddlers into this work in some sense.

7.4.1 References

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7.4.2 Reading list compiled by Phanuel Antwi and Rhea Storr

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7.5 Artist Interview: Elsa Brès

Speakers: Elsa Brès (Artist), Ben Evans James (Curator).
Recorded: 9th August 2021.

A reflective conversation on the making of *Notes for les Sanglières* by Elsa Brès, produced for *transmediale* festival 2021/2. Transcribed using AI 6th September 2021. Corrections and light edits by Ben Evans James 14th April 2022.

BEN EVANS JAMES
You recently asked me about why I originally contacted you regarding your film project *Les Sanglières*. I remember coming across your website and I think there were maybe only two or three sentences on the project at that point. These sentences really drew me into the work because of the subject of the boar and this notion of it being a non-human being that helps reveal some of our human anxieties living under capitalism. For example, the way the boar challenges constructions of private property by happily wandering around not only 'out there' in the countryside, but across spaces such as gardens and down thoroughfares in towns. An example that leads you and one of your collaborators in the project, (Paul) Guillibert, to discuss the idea of 'communism of the living', a system or methodology that advances human and non-human alliances against those who control money, property, and the means of production.

When we first talked, you were very much in the early, pre-production stages of the film. I think at that point you had just come up with this idea of using GIS mapping as a speculative scripting tool.

> *Working with geographer, Gherardo Chirici, Elsa Brès defined a map of the les Cévannes region where she lives in the south of France. On the map, a team of algorithmically animated boars wander across the landscape responding to changes the filmmaker makes to the landscape – such as increased housing or reduced forest covering.*

So, we met at this early pre-production stage and we quickly began to discuss how an installation or exhibition at *transmediale* festival could act in a similar capacity to the map – as a research tool or speculative scripting tool. So moving away from the exhibition space as a place for the final presentation of a work towards it being integrated in the production of a work.

ELSA BRÈS
I think it has happened this way for me once before, though that film was already in production. In that case the installation offered a way to present a part of the film, but it was also a way to source funding, to have the gallery fund an element of the film, such as the music.

But this is the first time that it's happened in the pre-production phase of the film. In my work I always try to find methods that can help me write the script, such as here with the speculative maps. And there's always a lot of research materials – just recently I've been collecting drawings and photos of old signs carved into rocks in the les Cèvennes region, paintings of wild boar hunts in the middle-ages and recent Instagram posts of human encounters with boar. I was interested in finding a form for those methods and that research, to really get a sense and a feeling of what the film could be, to construct the film's world physically. This isn't about just showing the research. If we were doing that we would have simply shown the maps which we talked about a lot at the beginning of this collaboration. As the project evolved it became more of an autonomous subject. At the same time, the installation forced me to be clear about all this research and to link threads together. This is something I might do myself as part of the development of a film, or maybe as part of a funding application, but I've never really shared it before. And this has actually been quite liberating.

BEN EVANS JAMES
This idea of being liberated from you research materials is really interesting.

ELSA BRÈS
Yes because it's always a question for me, since the research never gets used in my films in an expository or essayistic way. For example, the landscape and the history of that landscape, they're not directly spoken about but I'm sure I don't film a landscape in the same way after researching as I would before. Thinking about the exhibition made me take the material more seriously because I wanted to find ways to share it that isn't, you know, a pile of books or some images from the internet. It has to have shape and be an autonomous work, so the research is a little autonomous from what the film will eventually be. And this process also frees the film up from me wanting to put all the research in because that temptation is always there because you don't want to lose anything. The exhibition frees the film to be considered in its proper form.

BEN EVANS JAMES
When you are making a film you build up the image. All the research on the landscape and history of landscape reveals itself by the way you frame the image, the way its shot and the components you layer on top such as sound design or music. Whereas perhaps the exhibition environment presents us an opportunity to pull some of these elements back apart. In the exhibition, for example, we have the GIS map on a TV screen placed directly underneath a film projection. Those components are broken apart but are in conversation with one another in a way that would be hard to achieve in a cinematic presentation.

ELSA BRÈS
Exactly. At the centre of the exhibition we have this film now which would never have existed without this exhibition format.

BEN EVANS JAMES
So this process has allowed you to understand what research might be relevant to the film?

ELSA BRÈS
Yes, because by considering how to break apart the image here in the exhibition environment, I've been able to think how materials can exist on their own but also in relation to one another. For example, the Instagram feed alongside the ancient symbols carved into the rocks in the landscape.

I wanted the installation to give a sense of what the world of the film is going to be like; a feeling or an experience of what it could be when it's finished.

BEN EVANS JAMES
When you talk about the film world it makes me think back to one of our earlier conversations and particularly when we were talking about Ian Cheng who lists four qualities of how to create a world in his project *Emissaries* (Cheng et al. 2017).

Firstly, choose a present; secondly, story tell its past; thirdly, simulate its future and finally nurture its changes.

When I think about this exhibition format, you've chosen a present, and that feels quite clearly demonstrated in the Instagram feed which shows a collection of images and short films tagged with the hashtag #sanglières or #sangliers. Across these posts we see boars refusing to adhere to the rules that define human legal and social landscapes. From a team of boars stealing a laptop from a naked sunbather in Berlin to a single boar diving into a swimming pool to join a man bathing in Italy in the summer heat.

And you've story told the world's past through the myths of the boars in the landscape, through the symbols you've collected across the French countryside in les Cèvennes and through your conversation with Paul Guillibert where the two of you discuss the subject of gleaning during the period leading up to the French Revolution.

And then the way you're using Idrisi and the GIS mapping to simulate possible futures for the world.

I was thinking about these worldmaking approaches and I was interested in whether the exhibition reflects the world you're building in the film. Does it feel like a physical manifestation of the world you're trying to create?

ELSA BRÈS
I think it's interesting to think about these qualities that make up a world because now that I'm writing the script, it's completely related to this idea of past, present and future and in the different aspects of how I'm going to shoot. And I think the exhibition has brought these things together and clarified the

narrative to the film in a way I didn't really expect. So one part of the film is based in the present and will probably take on quite a traditional documentary form, with my neighbour in Les Cèvennes. As for the future of the world, I am using GIS mapping to write the most speculative part of the film. And then I like the idea of storytelling the world's past, because that's exactly what I'm trying to give a sense of in the film and I think I did a lot of this by talking with Paul Guillibert

And actually, this relationship is also interesting because it's someone I've been talking with on an intermittent basis about the film but when this opportunity at *transmediale* came along, I asked him if we could have a more formal discussion. So this element is a direct result of the exhibition.

BEN EVANS JAMES
Coming back to this idea of the exhibition breaking the image down. Films create worlds in and of themselves; worlds that open up with the establishing shot, and close back down when the credits roll. In this space though you certainly feel like you're entering into the physical world of the film rather than being ported to it through the medium of the screen.

ELSA BRÈS
Totally. Actually, this was my initial concern. If you remember at the beginning of this process, I just wanted the GIS map and the discussion between Paul (Paul Guillibert) and I. Then I added in the infrared pictures of the site of the film, and then other elements from that site, like the site carvings. So that the visitor could actually step into the film. I think it was exactly the point in the end to have this physical space that would be the fictionalised place of this film.

BEN EVANS JAMES
That's interesting, because when I think about making a film I certainly go through this process of thinking about how the viewer enters this world. And in this case, the exhibition perhaps provides us with a methodology to consider that.

ELSA BRÈS
Yeah, I think this is also just making its way into my mind.

BEN EVANS JAMES
When we first talked, we were talking about this idea of doing a project that was like a cross between, like a film, a performance, and a conversation. And the way you did that was kind of incredible, though, because it's not like these three elements unfold in a linear way, like in a series of vignettes. Rather, you've created a space that allows the visitor to flow between those three things.

ELSA BRÈS
Because when I was working on it, I was trying to figure out how to give the sense of a film that doesn't yet exist. A film that at this point had no images.

BEN EVANS JAMES
Yes, reflecting back, this was a hard brief!

ELSA BRÈS
Friends were asking what I was shooting and when I said I had nothing they asked me what can a film exhibition be without a film!

BEN EVANS JAMES
I remember when you first send the footage over of the boars that you'd captured on the camera in your garden. And that was one of those moments straight away where I go very excited. And then there was the moment when you put the infrared stills in and that was like another key moment. So there were almost these two or three key points where this film world got constructed.

ELSA BRÈS
It's interesting because you talk about images but actually the images came into the project really quite late on. I remember capturing the boars, it was the beginning of January 2021, but it took me time to share those images because I was scared of making a video installation with images I wasn't sure about. So the images had to come at the final moment, once I was happy with the content around them and I could be clear on their role.

BEN EVANS JAMES
That's right, the project was essentially 'audio first' for a long time, based on your conversations with Paul (Paul Guillibert).

ELSA BRÈS
Yes, because the image is so powerful in this kind of space. When it's shown on a big projector in this way the language of the space is image first. And the question then is how do you build around it?

From a process point of view, the project initially created some stress in that I thought it was taking away from my script writing time. But then I realised it really helped me to think about the structure of the narrative because I was thinking about it using a different tool or methodology. Put another way, trying to find a sense of the film in the installation helped me find it in the script for the film. When you first wrote to me I had these threads of research, of the history of boars in the French countryside and the ideas of the map and working with Gherardo. But it wasn't really a world, it was just a stream of research ideas.

BEN EVANS JAMES
I know that we have both joked in the past about being failed architects. The architect Bernard Tschumi once spoke about architecture being very good at dealing with space but not time, and film dealing with time but not space. It's the intersection between time and space and architecture and film that gave life to his speculative set of drawings in *The Manhattan Transcripts* (1981).

And I am interested in, with your architecture background, in speaking about intersections between film time and architectural space as you were making both this exhibition and began filming for the final film itself. So did any kinds of possibilities and opportunities come from thinking about time and then space, or space and then time?

ELSA BRÈS

The thing I learned in architecture school is how to try to find tools to understand a space where you're going to make a project. So we can start with maps and then talk with residents, take pictures, engage with the history of the land - the political story of the landscape. So there are all these different tools that help us imagine something a bit more speculative and I guess that's what that's how I've been working in film. Since the beginning. And then the space becomes the time of the film.

I spent a lot of time when I was studying architecture researching the links between architecture and cinema but I never actually really tried to call on that hen thinking about this installation, because it's a bit scary for me to go back to thinking about space. Also, because I'm supposed to be an architect. So it's a lot of pressure on how you experience space with your body.

BEN EVANS JAMES

There were points where we would get on a call and you would share footage from Premiere and I'd be showing 3D renders in CAD. A process where we were combining these two tools and it was the first time for me at least that the production process was happening completely at the same time across time and space.

Yeah. Yeah. So is this sort of workflow across 2d and 3d? Yeah. Same time.

ELSA BRÈS

Yeah, to me, we built a dialogue between 2D and 3D. If the studio had been spatially different, the film edit would almost certainly have taken on a different shape.

BEN EVANS JAMES

I remember as well as discussing Bernard Tshumi we also talked about the geographer James Corner and his essay on mapping (2011). In the short essay he talks about how when you make a map you are making a subjective reading of a landscape, deciding what to leave in and what to take out in order to make the information legible or useful. So I was interested in talking about how you use maps in your work.

And then subsequent to that, I'm interested in the context of the work here in Berlin. So here, as in the south of France, the personality of the boar is well understood. They are animals with which we come into contact. However, thinking about a place like London, this backstory would need more explanation – perhaps the nearest equivalent in a UK context is the seagull which is equally

seen as an animal that does not respect the limits set by humans as anyone who has tried to eat hot chips at the British seaside will attest too.

ELSA BRÈS
I always work with maps in my films. This is not pre-planned but it always comes back in a way to my architecture background. I think I'm always interested in how ancient maps were used as a way of controlling but also how maps in the present adopt sophisticated technologies such as AI and machine learning often with the same aim of tracking and controlling.

So Gherardo (Gherardo Chirici), the person I am collaborating with on the maps, he was really into computer strategy games and that is how he became mapmaker. So maps for him are certainly a form of world building. For me, when I was an architect, I was doing some GIS mapping and I became interested in how, rather than a tool of control, GIS and mapping can became a tool of dialogue. At this point the idea for the use of the map means it doesn't even have to be in the film but it can be used as a mechanism for scripting. And this is something I'm starting and the maps here in this exhibition are the first maps we've worked on, they are the start of this process.

BEN EVANS JAMES
When Emma (Charles) and I went to Kazakhstan to film (our film, *On A Clear Day You Can See The Revolution From Here*) we didn't use a map but we did use a powerline as a structuring device for the film. And in your previous film from 2021, *Sweat,* and now in *Les Sanglières* there is a map acting as like a territory of occupation. It is the lines or the spatial limits that define where you are filming and how you're filming. And for me, in Kazakhstan, I remember the power lines being like a security blanket. I actually think I would have had a lot of anxiety going to film without knowing that we had this architecture to follow.

ELSA BRÈS
Totally. And what is interesting with this map in the exhibition, is that it brings together a series of maps that individually show elements such as water accessibility, forestry, and built-up areas. Crossing these maps, what's interesting to me, is that we get a map that is full of colour and, this is a region I know well, but it looks so abstract even to me.

I've been doing a lot of research on ancient maps from the region and made during the religious wars, and even with these I can understand the language of them. But this one, it's very difficult to read because it's a very different language. Of course the purpose of the maps for this project is as a speculative tool for writing and in that sense they 'read' very well. They show a landscape as seen only from the perspective of boar habitability. So when we compare this map, to a more standard map of the area, there exists a space inbetween – an imaginary space that we can find between the land and this representation of the land.

BEN EVANS JAMES

So at one point in the film you and Guillibert talk about the maps acting like a translation device that's placing you in the mind of the animal, of the boar. Not through their eyes in terms of actually how they see it, literally, but through the way that they might translate the environment in terms of habitability.

ELSA BRÈS

Yes, one of the first questions any species is going to ask if they are in a new area is whether the habitat can support them. That is also the maybe the basic question of architecture from the perspective of the boars. Boars are very adaptable so if you try to adopt the perspective of the boar it can also provide strong insight into how humans occupy a territory. How they use it.

BEN EVANS JAMES

With the boars themselves, how are they actually animated on the map technically?

ELSA BRÈS

Habitat modelling. By the information you have on the landscape. The slope, the altitude, the form of the landscape, fences etc.. So we cross a lot of data to create a scale – 1 best habitat 10 the worst. Then the idea now is to change some parameters on the map and try to understand how that might lead to different relations between humans and boars. How might different conditions lead to different alliances. But when we think about changing the map, the first thing we need to think about is what questions do we want to ask the boars. And that's what we're working on now in terms of the script.

BEN EVANS JAMES

This makes me think about Walter Benjamin and 'The Task of the Translator' (1992), Thinking about how humans see landscapes, boars see landscapes, the translation of those into digital tools, and then back into film.

I was really interested in the symbols. You were saying that some of them you adapted from maps and some are carved on rocks?

ELSA BRÈS

It's interesting, because some are very old and some have been redrawn or supplemented by shepherds in the 19th century, or even, last century.

BEN EVANS JAMES

They're almost handed down, people are reinterpreting the symbols and making new maps with them.

It makes me think of the film itself and these mixed temporalities from these ancient symbols to modern machine learning driven maps. I can't place like the film's temporarily, is this deliberate?

ELSA BRÈS

Yes. It's the world building thing again. Because the whole idea of the film comes from the historic stories that I heard from my neighbours and the relation to ideas of private property in the present. Thinking about mixing temporalities, this region of France has a very big history of revolt and uprising and the idea is to shoot a scene like that's from the time of the peasants revolt.

BEN EVANS JAMES

It makes me think of your past film *Sweat* where as a viewer you would often feel like you were going across different time periods. I remember the tourists going for a walk and seeing the main protagonist who feels like he's from a very different time and space like.

Final question, do you think it would go back into installation form for once it's finished?

ELSA BRÈS

Oh, yeah. I think making this installation made me really think about what it can be to. Like, you know, in an almost meta like question to think about this now.

7.5.1 References

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7.6 Artist Interview: Donald Harding

This interview was conducted over email between the 3rd and 23rd of December 2019 between Ben Evans James and Donald Harding.

A reflective conversation on the making of *The Marshes* by Donald Harding, produced for the South Kiosk exhibition *A Street Loud With Echoes* 18th October to 17th November 2019.

BEN EVANS JAMES
In your work you introduce us to a breed of horse, the 'Marsh Cob'. The existence of the horse is established through an initial wall text that tells the story of a discovery of bones unearthed at a construction site. Your wall text weaves the horse into the fabric of the Kentish landscape with stories of Saxon kings, *an lucht siúil* or Traveller communities, American zoologists and Stanley Kubrick.

The facts are entirely believable, but the text is actually a fiction. Yet it's unlikely the viewer will realise this in the first instance. Can you talk a little about the way your work manages plausibility and fiction across its three elements (audio, text, film)?

DONALD HARDING
I struggled a lot to find a combination and of elements that I thought might function together. The fictional text was the last component of the three to be made.

The first was the video, which came out of a photographic project looking at the ponies in Thamesmead that were grazing in and around the concrete structures of the housing estate. Video and photography of 'real' events always have (for me) a tension due to their indexical nature – an inherent claim to veracity.

The audio of people describing their surroundings also falls into a similar category of 'recording reality'. And in both cases I tried to off-set that by – in the case of the video - shifting some agency to the horse, and – in the case of the audio – by introducing a remoteness, a distance, and an anonymity to the process.

So I hoped that there would be a strange, perhaps dream-like quality to the horse-eye view of the area in the video, and even in some impressions that it might not be horse but some camera mount made to look like a horse's nose (or head and ears). And with the audio recordings, whilst they sound like eyewitness accounts, they lack any grounding or fixed point in time or place and so they could be anywhere, floating, and as such are pulling away from any claim to be 'true' in a documentary sense, and on top of that their anonymity escapes any possibility for corroboration or verification.

But even so the project still felt too documentarian and also the elements were quite disparate and I wanted to write something that would somehow contextualise the parts but also fuse it all together, but I also knew that it had to be fictional.

In the text I hoped that there might be enough commonly know 'facts' about the area that would sustain the fiction while hoping that some of it just didn't sound quite right – like Kubrick's dreams for example.

So I hoped that altogether it might seem like it was a set of documents but that somehow it all didn't quite add up or that it would feel just a bit off.

BEN EVANS JAMES
I guess our usual interaction with wall texts within gallery environments is curatorial statements or forms of interpretation. That is, as a viewer we tend to perhaps approach the wall text as a truth. But in your work, it's the lie. Can you talk a little bit about that? Did you deliberately choose the medium of the wall text as your lie?

DONALD HARDING
It was a big decision to put a fiction on the wall in black text on white background with a standard-looking font, etc. I hoped that the text would read a bit like a story. It never talks about 'the work' it just tells a tale of some bones and a breed of horse. The 'Case Notes from the Investigation' begin with the words, 'the story goes…' and it never says the bones belong to the Marsh Cob, so I hoped that there was enough in there to make it all sound a bit odd. It was in part a reaction to the didactic nature of museum and gallery wall texts but also a failure on my part to find anyway round its often very useful and explanatory function. Since I think the work tries to deal with minor histories and draw from and point towards marginal narratives, I did want to challenge the authority of gallery and museum writing and putting a story of a fabricated horse breed onto the wall of a gallery hopefully did in a small way interrupt the usual relationship we have with those texts.

BEN EVANS JAMES
The Marsh Cob is a kind of technical support to the work, a fictionalised character that is used to reveal truths. Can you talk a bit about your process in creating this fictionalised character and how you utilised it to uncover truths or documentary elements while you were creating the work?

DONALD HARDING
With the invention of the Marsh Cob it allowed me to freely wander across the historical and social landscape of the area. It could reorder priorities by noticing things or events according to its own value system (the value system of the story I mean). And at the same time by framing it in terms of a 'lost' or 'disappearing' breed, it could bring in the idea that these changes, these events come at a cost – that some of the moments of human existence (progress) – eradicates other living things and their histories.

It was definitely a way of bringing forth lost or disappearing 'truths' not in the sense of the facts (lost or otherwise) related in the story but in the sense that there may be other events, stories, truths out there.

I had been trying to find ways into the stories and narratives that I was hearing or reading about the area. I was using the ponies in Thamesmead, Cobs that belong in the main to local Travellers, to try and disclose other and othered histories that seemed to me to criss-cross the whole area of Belvedere and Erith. So my idea was that the horse as a non-human other might be a vehicle to explore the othering of human social groups. Part of me knew this was kind of impossible but also that its failure as conceptual framework could also be interesting. At the time I was just taking photos of the ponies and through this activity I could try to think through the ideas and also it meant that people would come and chat to me and I got to know a couple of the owners of the ponies. At this time my friend Patrick Henry joined the project and it was great talking through ideas together. As some point I suggested we put the GoPro on the horse's head and walk it through the estate. Major, one the owners, had become a regular acquaintance and we asked him if he would collaborate with us to put the camera on and to walk it through the area and the estate.

So the horse-eye view video was in part an attempt to destabilise the grammar of video-making by handing over the cinematographic reins to the horse. Of course the horse needs to be led (or pushed), and Major, Patrick and I had fun trying to get her to go ahead and not just stop and sniff the ground. And also attaching the camera was a collective effort that involved lots of trial and error. In the end I think we did about three or four walks.

BEN EVANS JAMES
It feels like the Marsh Cob is a gesture towards capturing your subjectivity as a film maker – a kind of way to recognise the failures in striving for objectivity. Also, a response to your temporary relocation to the area and the problems that can cause – trying to create a snapshot of an area when you're essentially an outsider?

At this point it feels right to bring up the audio component to the work which has this role in creating a sense of place, an understanding in the viewers mind of the landscape.

DONALD HARDING
I think the work is largely about a kind of failure or perhaps about an impossibility. How do you ever tell the complete (his)story of a place and the human and non-human animals that act upon, within it, not to mention 'natural' events like floods, etc., that act up on them. So any re(telling) is always incomplete and originates from your own position, which as an outsider, is necessarily one of objectification – (an outsider in social economic (class) terms as well).

My temporary relocation was both spatial and also social and is fraught with problems of exploitation familiar to artists working in the social sphere. It is not enough to have just good intentions. The fiction of the Marsh Cob was a conscious intervention in this dynamic and a way to signal the subjective hand in all of it. By objectifying a horse, and a fictional one at that, could I circumvent the imbalance of power relationships at play when one engages with marginal communities? I think the creation of the fiction is the only thing I could add to make the overall effect something that was beyond any attempt at authenticity or Truth. The appearance of the Marsh Cob casts all of the elements of the work into a place of questionable veracity. In truth though I am not sure if that problematics of objectification can ever be fully resolved.

This allowed me as an outsider to talk about the area in its wider sense because I also realised that I was interested in the many different forces that act across a particular locale to turn it from a nowhere, just a space, into a somewhere, a place. And also, what was my power relationship to a former marshland?

The phone box calls I had first tried in other parts of London, but without any consistency and never as part of any work, so I decided to use the device in the Thamesmead area to try and find a way of bringing people – the human voice - a little more into the work. By calling the phone-boxes I had almost no control over who would eventually pick up and no idea who they might be. I did not ask for any personal details only gave my own – and tried to keep the conversation to the descriptions of the view from the box. As well as introducing different voices of the people who may inhabit the area (although they also might be outsiders passing through), I tried to suggest a multiplicity of lived experiences and also importantly I wanted to reemphasise the subjective nature of what we (choose to) see and what we choose to retell. I kept my voice in so the viewer/ listener would know that I was asking questions and inviting the descriptions – i.e. that this also had a 'constructed' aspect to it. Without these recordings I felt the work would be too much about the horse and the non-human animal and might be in some way read as a disavowal of the human in this landscape and its histories. And by bringing 'live' and contemporary voices into the work it would avoid the work lapsing into a kind of nostalgia for an imagined past free of all the problems of humanity.

BEN EVANS JAMES

Returning to the spatial dimension of your work - its realisation within the gallery environment. You've broken the work out into multiple audio streams, text and movie image which inhabit the gallery space. There's an unfolding of fiction and fact across space - but it's not linear. So in a single screen cinema environment, there's a defined moment when the filmmaker might reveal a character or element of the film to be fictional. The filmmaker is in control. But here, you've somewhat handed control back to the viewer because you don't really know how they'll navigate the work and where that moment of understanding about the fiction might happen – indeed it might never happen?

So can you talk through the interplay of these elements and how you as an artist seek to control or not control the realisation in the viewers mind of fiction. Is there an ideal way for people to navigate your work, and if so how?

How does your work interplay with Shaun C Badham and Maebh O Neill's work in the space?

Could your work operate as a single-screen film?

DONALD HARDING

It was in collaboration with (you) the curator that audio components were spread throughout the space, and I really liked this. It tied in with the text, which is also split and has no real need to be read in any particular order. I really was hoping that people might wander around and pick bits from one part and then another and then slowly form a cohesive impression. In our everyday lives, I think the way we encounter narratives and histories is most typically in a disrupted and piecemeal way in. We read a bit, listen to people talk, hear things second or third hand, catch a glimpse of something, watch a video, and I this dispersed installation could echo that to some degree. And because the work tries to talk about a place – having elements spread across the gallery also made sense to me. There is a risk that some part might be missed or that the connections between the elements might not be fully realised but I think that is a risk I am willing to take.

I thought that the interplay with Maebh and Shaun's work was great. On one level all three works are concerned with place and who or what gets to claim those spaces, and essentially that all space is subject to contesting demands. The fact that Shaun had a sculptural piece that allowed viewers to pass through and into it was thrilling and it also allowed us to place a speaker inside which worked well. And one of my favourite things was to listen to the phone recordings and look at Maebh's photos and allow the two to merge in my mind. I felt it was a success combination of works.

I think the video itself could work as a single screen because I think it is able to establish its own context and has an autonomy. The audio recordings and the text cannot really be taken out of the whole work and I would not be keen to have them stand alone or used out of context. However, combining all three into a single screen film is an interesting thought and something I will have to think about.

BEN EVANS JAMES

Where do you see the boundaries here between artist and curator? So it occurred to me that in the install of your work the curator becomes complicit in your lie. And I guess from an audience perspective there's probably a feeling that the curator is someone who tells truths?

DONALD HARDING

I have not done a lot of thinking on this but I think curators are necessarily complicit in the works of art they show – especially with installation works when so many decisions need to be made about the 'how and where' of the installation. Probably with the gesture of wall text, which is usually the domain of the curator, being used to instil a fiction in the mind of the audience there is a possible charge of being deceitful and some people may feel that. But I think that part of the function of that gesture is to ask the viewer about what they believe or are willing to believe – many of us want to believe stuff that is just clearly not true because we wish it was true and one point about the Marsh Cob story is that it *could* be true in as much some species have been lost some way of life has been (is being) erased as a result of the establishment of Thamesmead as Thamesmead or Erith as Erith or Belvedere as Belvedere.

BEN EVANS JAMES

Would you describe your work as a documentary?

DONALD HARDING

Documentary sets out to be a faithful document of whatever it is trying to capture. There are thankfully lots of exceptions but essentially as a form it is freighted with this duty to encapsulate a reality. Whereas art works are freed from that burden and declare themselves contingent, partial and in pursuit of some autonomous truth. The materials and methods in the work are of the documentary world but I hope there is too much improbability and ambiguity in the work for it to sit happily in a documentary category.

7.7 Artist Interview: Maud Craigie

This conversation was conducted as part of the exhibition programme *remote.response.request.* held as part of *transmediale* festival 2021/22.

The text was originally published in print and online under the title 'It is difficult to insult a guilty person' as part of the *transmediale Almanac for Refusal*. Available at: https://202122.transmediale.de/almanac/it-is-difficult-to-insult-a-guilty-person. (Accessed 4th January 2024).

In *Indications of Guilt, pt. 1*, artist and researcher Maud Craigie examines the structures of American police interrogation and their relationship to fictional screen representations of law enforcement. The film asks what it means to be familiar with legal processes through television before experiencing them in real life. Bringing together interviews with detectives, false confession experts, footage from TV series, and police training videos, Craigie reveals the interplay between fact and fiction in detective work and the subjectivity that constructs 'truth'.

BEN EVANS JAMES:
Through the themes explored in *Indications of Guilt, pt. 1* it seems that police-led interrogation has a complicated relationship to reality?

MAUD CRAIGIE:
The apparent purpose of psychological interrogation is to get the truth. However, the meaning of truth has to be defined, moulded, and reduced down into something manageable. Under US law, truth can become 'probable cause'. This means interrogation can shift from a truth-seeking exercise into a process of constructing a coherent narrative.

> "Once a law enforcement officer has 'probable cause' he is under no duty to continue the investigation to determine whether exculpatory evidence existed, and is under no obligation to investigate, or give credence to, a suspect's story or alibi"
>
> (Mich 2008, 574)

BEN EVANS JAMES:
The purpose of interrogation then appears to be to create a story-driven 'world' for the courts to consume and legitimise (one based not necessarily on 'truth' but on the altogether hazier concept of probable cause). Shaped in the interrogation room, this story-world goes on to be actualised through the legal system and is given tangible power in reality by the significant effect it has on people's lives. Can interrogation in this form be viewed almost as a type of worldbuilding?

MAUD CRAIGIE
There is a phrase, ‘bad evidence’, which is used by police in the US to describe evidence which goes against their theory of the case. So in this way, worldbuilding is overtly built into the interrogative process. Similarly, police are legally allowed to lie to suspects and imply they have evidence, even when they don’t.

Take the idea of the dummy file which comes up in the film. The dummy file is a folder filled with papers — it might include a DVD or a forensic lab results envelope — which is placed in the room during an interrogation. The dummy file is the implication of a body of evidence. Real details about the crime are written on the paperwork. The suspect is not allowed to touch it; its purpose is to legitimise and intimidate. I was interested in what this performative paperwork does - not only to a suspect’s understanding of reality but also to a detective’s. The same style of evidence bag might hold a blank DVD to imply evidence or a DVD with incriminating footage on it — everything gets very blurry.

BEN EVANS JAMES
In this role, the dummy file appears to operate like Donald Winnicott’s definition of a “transitional object” (Winnicot 1971, 1) Working in the field of child psychology, Winnicott pointed towards toys such as building blocks or plush bears as examples of objects so steeped with imagination that they can be seen as neither entirely fictional nor entirely real. Here, perhaps the dummy file is loaded with so much imagination from the suspect that it exists in a similar kind of inbetween state?

MAUD CRAIGIE
Winnicott talked about the appearance of transitional objects as being at a moment of realisation of selfhood in child development. It’s around this time children realise they can withhold information and lie. The purpose of the dummy file is almost a reversal — to make someone feel like everything about them is known.

In the US police system, guilt should be determined prior to interrogation. Therefore, an interrogation is meant to be conducted when there is a reasonable degree of certainty that the suspect committed the crime. The purpose of the interrogation is to get the suspect, who is believed to be guilty, to confess. The dummy file is a tactic in that process. Other tactics include the ‘alternative question’. Here, the suspect is offered a morally acceptable and an unacceptable reason for committing a crime. For instance “did you steal money because you’re greedy? Or did you steal money because you wanted to feed your kids?” Whichever answer the suspect gives, they are still legally admitting responsibility. Here, the detective appears to offer them two alternative worlds — where the actions they are accused of have different moral meanings — but ultimately it’s a false choice.

BEN EVANS JAMES

If the idea of false choice attaches different narratives to the same 'truth' outcome, I wonder if we can think about the ways we construct narrative around an 'untruth' - so how do we as individuals form and communicate stories when we're trying to hide a 'truth'? In his text, *On Bullshit*, Harry Frankfurt explores the difference between lying and bullshitting. He suggests that bullshitters create a kind of aura around their personality where claims about truth and falsity become almost irrelevant. Bullshitters, Frankfurt says "quietly change the rules governing...the conversation" (Frankfurt 1986, i)

The dummy file in this sense perhaps feels like a strategy employed by a bullshitter? In contrast, lying is said to be "an act with a sharp focus" (Frankfurt 1986, 51), a strategic action aimed at removing the space occupied by a truth. While both tactics might be used to obfuscate the same truth, they achieve it in different ways — and maybe with different morals?

> "Telling a lie is an act with a sharp focus. It is designed to insert a particular falsehood at a specific point in a set or system of beliefs, in order to avoid the consequences of having that point occupied by the truth. This requires a degree of craftsmanship, in which the teller of the lie submits to objective constraints imposed by what he takes to be the truth. The liar is inescapably concerned with truth-values. In order to invent a lie, he/she must first think he knows what is true. And in order to invent an effective lie, he/she must design their falsehood under the guidance of truth"
> (Frankfurt 1986, 52).

MAUD CRAIGIE

That's interesting - how a good lie has to coherently fit with the truth. The dummy file is not an outright lie, so in that sense feels closer to bullshit. Frankfurt argues that "bullshit is unavoidable whenever circumstances require someone to talk without knowing what he is talking about" (Frankfurt 1986, 63) The dummy file fills in the blanks of real evidence.

It makes me think of another approach commonly used by detectives. In America, police are taught that following a confession, when they write up the details of the crime, they should purposefully insert minor errors. For instance, describe a car as the wrong colour or misdescribe the layout of a house. They should then get the suspect to read the statement and if they notice these errors, correct and initial them. All this sounds fair enough - a final check to make sure the suspect is engaged and telling the truth. However, police are taught that if the suspect doesn't notice the errors, they should point them out to them and still get them to initial the changes. So then the process becomes

about creating a document that looks more truthful through the purposeful insertion of these corrected errors. If a judge or jury sees a statement like this, they might assume the suspect has verified the details they gave and that consequently the confession is true. False confessions expert Saul Kassin describes how this "creates an illusion of credibility regardless of whether the confessor is guilty or innocent" (Kassin 2008, 9). In other words, it is a performance of truthfulness.

> "To the naïve spectator, such statements appear to be voluntary, textured with detail, and the product of personal experience. Uninformed, however, this spectator mistakes illusion for reality, not realizing that the taped confession is like a Hollywood drama—scripted in accordance with the police theory of the case, rehearsed during hours of unrecorded questioning, directed by the questioner, and ultimately enacted on paper, tape, or camera by the suspect"
> (Kassin 2008, 8).

BEN EVANS JAMES

The idea that a fiction - in this case a manipulated statement - is released into the world as fact could be viewed as parafictional? (Where a parafiction is defined as a fiction we experience as fact). Especially in its performed truthfulness, which is almost theatrical in application (Lambert-Beattie, 2009).

> "When we extend the idea of the theatrical beyond its traditional confines of artistic performance we are crossing the line which divides fiction from fact and attempting to apply categories of fiction to the domain of fact"
> (Wilshire 1990, 169).

It also casts our interrogator in the role of a "parafictioneer, who produces and manages plausibility" (Lambert-Beattie 2009, 72).

MAUD CRAIGIE

The narrative construction of a crime is sewn into real events. Often, actions that did occur and objects that do exist are shifted into new roles and given new meanings - it is "the one foot in the field of the real" (Lambert-Beattie 2009, 54). that makes a false narrative or a false confession so hard to disbelieve.

BEN EVANS JAMES

The idea of truth is also a troublesome one in documentary filmmaking. While revealing some of the strategies of fiction-making that underlie forms of interrogation, the film also appears to point towards the idea that a 'truer'

world can exist? How did you control your own responsibility to 'the truth' when making the film? I'm thinking of a reference you've mentioned in the past from film theorist Stella Bruzzi, who compares the construction of a documentary as following similar conventions to that of a trial (Bruzzi 2016).

MAUD CRAIGIE
I shot a lot of footage and sound recordings without a defined outcome either in terms of the length or shape the final film would take. I viewed this process like evidence-gathering: you don't necessarily know the importance of a certain piece of material until you have all the constituent parts.

Mike Ware, executive director of the Innocence Project of Texas, told me how even forensic evidence is open to interpretation. Forensic investigators are often told who the police believe committed a crime - and this knowledge can influence their reading of, for instance, a fingerprint or a hair sample - making them more likely to find a match. So, I was encountering this material that revealed the unreliability of what appears to be hard evidence.

In terms of my own responsibility to 'the truth', I wanted to foreground an awareness of the construction of narrative by drawing a parallel between the making of the film and detective work - which was something that naturally developed through the editing process.

BEN EVANS JAMES
You describe the editing process almost like an interrogation room for the film. Where each cut creates an incision that can act as a site of inquiry, but also transform the overall meaning - allowing different worlds or outcomes to emerge.

> "An image is never alone, it only exists on a background (ideology) or in relation to those that precede or follow it"
>
> (Godard quoted in Bourriaud 2006, 52)

MAUD CRAIGIE
This quote from Godard and the idea of an image never being alone could also be applied to the roles we enact - such as that of the interrogator. The interrogation process exists on a background of ideology, which is itself informed by images. Like the flattening of events on an editing timeline, there is the flattening of events in a written statement.

The image's dependence on context has direct repercussions for criminal justice. For instance, the camera angle used to record interrogations has been found to play a role in how likely jurors are to believe whether a confession is coerced or voluntary. Research shows that if the camera focuses on the suspect, jurors are more likely to think they are guilty compared to a camera angle that shows both the interrogator and suspect in profile (Ware et al. 2008).

I was interested in how many of the issues that arise during the interrogation process directly relate to the process of filmmaking.

BEN EVANS JAMES

I'm currently sitting here staring at a DCP, or Digital Cinema Package, on my desk. The production of a DCP represents the end of the editing process, the time when the boundaries of this world constructed within the edit are set and closed. The DCP I'm looking at takes the form of a small, hard plastic case with a handle and protective foam inside - in itself it feels like the presentation of documentary 'evidence'.

Moving onto the install of the work - here at *transmediale*, fragments from your research are used to extend the film out from the cinema space into other areas of the gallery. This results in the visitor being led through a series of artifacts taken from (or informed by) the interrogation training you undertook as part of the making of the film. The first thing the visitor is likely to come across is a PowerPoint presentation given to you by a retired detective you met in Texas, who trains new police recruits in interrogation. It is made up of a series of statements, some of which are almost funny until you consider the forum within which these are usually presented and viewed.

Wandering on from the PowerPoint presentation, the visitor is met by a partially redacted, framed certificate hanging on the wall that shows your successful graduation from the course. Finally, there's the nervous sound of someone frantically clicking a pen, which permeates the space. This reminded me of a scene in the film where a fellow student in your class is nervously and frantically twitching their leg, which also has a gun strapped to it.

The PowerPoint and graduation certificate, while real, seem to take on a different quality in the exhibition environment. Within this space, I'm already questioning their authenticity or validity, something I probably wouldn't be doing if I saw them in a different context – if I saw the certificate hung up in an office, for example. The experience of walking through this part of the install feels like a transition zone in which the viewer is asked to leave one world behind and enter into another – one where we're asked to question what we see and hear. I felt a little like I was being asked to consider your role as a filmmaker entering what must have been an unfamiliar environment.

MAUD CRAIGIE

There's something inherently performative about the gold embossed certificate: its purpose is to denote knowledge and power. Just as props like the dummy file are used in the interrogation room, the certificate seems to operate in a similar way.

With the pen click, a retired detective I met told me a story about a woman who had confessed to him during an interrogation. At the trial following her confession, she told the court how unbearable she had found him constantly

clicking his pen. The detective said he'd had no idea at the time, but remembered it from that point on, as it was something that could set someone on edge. A pen click is so mundane and ostensibly unthreatening. To me it feels a bit like a raised heart beat - like someone else is in control of your internal tempo.

You're right that bringing the certificate and the PowerPoint into the exhibition environment makes you question them in a way you probably wouldn't in their original context. With the PowerPoint - the new context seems to heighten the absurdity of some of the statements - one slide states the unsubstantiated statistic that people who arrive (presumably at a police station) with crosses or a bible are deceptive 90% of the time.

BEN EVANS JAMES
Or that you can judge guilt by how long it takes a suspect to stub out a cigarette!

Perhaps these objects in the exhibition environment also reveal something of your role in the film as someone who moves between learning interrogation, but also being an interrogator. There's this magic point in the film where a detective you're interviewing congratulates you on your line of questioning. I think at the end you ask her if there's anything else she wants to add and she responds with something like, "oh I always end my interviews with that question too" (Craigie 2021).

MAUD CRAIGIE
Yeah, she draws an analogy between our roles, suggesting I should become an interrogator based on my line questioning. This feeling of mirroring occurred in many of my interactions with detectives.

During the training we learnt a lot about reading nonverbal behavioural cues. There's something intuitive about this information - and there's something compelling and perhaps even reassuring about the idea that someone's outward appearance can reveal their inner self. More widely in society, we are taught through films and television that we are able to recognise innocent and guilty people. In fictional crime dramas, every facial expression we are shown has significance and we are often rewarded for identifying the signifiers of guilt (the person looking 'shifty' in episode 2 turns out to be a serial killer in episode 5, for example).

The interrogation training aimed to heighten our awareness of how people present themselves. At the same time, I was researching and speaking to psychologists about how unreliable nonverbal behavioural cues are for establishing guilt - how, for instance, in a study comparing police investigators and college students, police were found to be more confident and less accurate at identifying whether a confession was true or false than the untrained students (Kassin et al 2005). So I was learning and unlearning simultaneously - becoming an interrogator and questioning the role at the same time.

BEN EVANS JAMES

At points in the film you show us clips from glossy US cop-shows and legal dramas such as HBO's *The Wire*. In my experience of watching your film, I felt like you were helping me understand how to question or refuse the power of these images; to almost bring down the aura of the image. If these manufactured images of interrogation are influencing police work out in the 'real' world, we need to know how to decode and deconstruct them. To find the spaces between and within the image that open up the space for refusal to manifest.

MAUD CRAIGIE

The narrative beat of these highly produced TV shows and Hollywood movies can be so beguiling and powerful, I had to work out how to balance them within the rest of the film, so that they didn't take over. The pixelated video and compressed audio of the YouTube clips was an important aspect of this distancing process - of attempting to remove some of their potency.

At the same time I was also thinking about how we are taught to distrust highly produced images. How lo-fi phone footage feels more direct and honest. The immediacy of phone footage has a different kind of aura?

BEN EVANS JAMES

Yes, this is really interesting. How truth perhaps manifests itself or exists differently across mediums. In your research you talk about the use of different materials employed in the interrogation process; such as written notes or the use of cameras and audio recorders. Whenever evidence is remediated across these formats, there is a chance that some form of misrepresentation will occur due to one medium attempting to represent another. Each medium has different qualities and perhaps 'holds' truth and fiction in different ways. I wonder what this means for the interrogation process? And for the filmmaking process?

MAUD CRAIGIE

There is a legal maxim, *Perspicua vera non sunt probanda,* which academic Peter Goodrich translates as - "Things that can be seen clearly do not need to be proven" – which is in many ways true (Goodrich 2011). For instance, if you confess to a crime on video tape and then later recant your confession, a jury will find it very hard to watch the video taped confession and find you innocent - even if that is the only evidence of your supposed guilt and your attorney is able to pick holes in its accuracy (Mnookin 2014).

There are still many US states where the electronic recording of custodial interrogations is not mandatory, despite widespread agreement amongst wrongful conviction experts that such recordings are beneficial ("False Confessions"). However, as videotaping becomes more widespread, it seems important to recognise that moving image evidence is particularly compelling - and learn how to improve the visual literacy of those evaluating the footage. Interestingly, research shows that people are better judges of whether a

confession is true or false when they are given an audio recording rather than an audio-visual recording of the confession (“False Confessions”).

BEN EVANS JAMES

Returning to the theme of this year’s *transmediale*, the filmmaking strategy you adopt for *Indications of Guilt, pt.1* also seems to speak to ideas of refusal. For example, in the way you adopt certain approaches and tactics of police interrogation that you come across within the filmmaking process itself. There’s one particular moment where a police officer informs you that there is no legal requirement to tell a suspect they are being recorded in the state of Texas. At this point, you then inform us - the viewer - that the officer is unaware he himself is being recorded by you. It’s such a brilliantly incisive moment in terms of the themes of the film, but also delivered with such deadpan humour.

MAUD CRAIGIE

I was really interested in how I could co-opt and repurpose the tools used by interrogators. The attitude of many of the detectives I met was: this is what is legally permissible, and this is how you can stretch and interpret the boundary – so there was a sort of symmetry in that we were both repurposing a set of rules in different ways.

Indications of Guilt, pt.1 exhibited at transmediale 2021–22 as part of the remote. response. request. film programme at transmediale festival. The work was made with the support of the Boise Travel Scholarship, 2016 and South West Showcase, 2020.

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7.8 Essay: The Artist-Curator

7.8.1 Introduction

This research draws from the intersection of my interests in artists' filmmaking, curation, and exhibition architecture. To formalise my position towards the practice-based components of the research, I proceeded to define my interdisciplinary approach through the lens of the artist-curator. In this investigation I outline four typologies, orientating my own role towards the research as one of 'Artist-Curator: The Producer'.

7.8.2 The artist-curator

By undertaking an exploration of case studies rooted in art history and within specific institutional contexts, this investigation articulates four models for the artist-curator.

Artist-Curator: The Scenographer
Artist-Curator: The Archivist
Artist-Curator: The Exhibitionist
Artist-Curator: The Producer

7.8.3 Artist-curator: the scenographer

A role in which the artist extends their practice into the art environment, "treating the exhibition as an artistic medium in its own right, an articulation of form" (Filipovic 2017, 8). This architectural or scenographic turn is evident in the work of Mark Dion. In exhibitions including *Curator's Office* at Minneapolis Institute of Art (2013), and *Theatre of the Natural World* at Whitechapel Gallery (2018), the artist creates an assemblage of objects meticulously organised across space. Like a cabinet of curiosities unfolding at an architectural scale, Dion employs the exhibition space as a medium through which to work: a space where objects are juxtaposed to create points of tension, discussion and humour. The arrangement of Dion's own work becomes a form of artmaking through curation, with the performance of one analogous to the other: "I honestly don't see a vast difference between exhibition making, in a curatorial sense, and art making" (Dion quoted in Radley 2018). Traversing between disciplines, Dion renders the borders between curation and artmaking so porous, that the processes become almost indistinguishable (Jeffery 2015).

Taking over Palais de Tokyo in 2014, artist Thomas Hirschhorn invited the spectator into his artistic production process by turning the exhibition space into his own temporary studio. Bringing the public, together with over two hundred selected guests including poets, musicians, and philosophers, into the space as collaborators, Hirschhorn created a civic space within which encounters could occur: "a space in which to be, to stay, to spend time and a space in which to think" (Hirschhorn quoted in Azzarello 2014).

Facilitating exchange, Hirschhorn created areas for congregation including a bar and communal sofas. The title of the work, *Eternal Flame,* was chosen by Hirschhorn to represent a piece that is ever evolving: "*Eternal Flame* is not an interactive exhibition, it is an active work, a work whose activity never ceases" (Hirschhorn quoted in Azzarello 2014). The generative nature of the interactions between the artist, gallery visitors, invited guests and artistic materials created a space within the institution that could evolve without the framing of a curator. Hirschhorn may not have chosen to call himself the artist-curator, but by creating a public space within the walls of an institution, he reduced the role of (or even cut out) the institutional curator. One effect of this approach was to hand-over part of the curatorial responsibility for the artwork to the public. Present in the space for each of the fifty-two days of the exhibition, Hirschhorn invited visitors to collaborate on the development of works in the space; this included banners, sculptures and murals which were then "aggregated to the whole" (Higonnet 2014) of the exhibition space. In addition to these physical outputs were the intangible outcomes from conversations held between participants, invited guests and the artist himself. This entanglement of artist, institution, invited guests, and publics raises questions around authorship of the work. While the infamy of *Eternal Flame* offers compelling evidence of what Hirschhorn gained from his approach, we can't know what might have been lost by eliminating the skillset of the curator. Traditionally adopting the role of the translator between artist and audience, the removal of the curator may have created the prospect of disconnections in that relationship, the likelihood of this outcome diminished in this case by the show's relatively short duration (52 days).

7.8.3.1 Summary: artist-curator, the scenographer

A role in which the artist-curator extends the artmaking process into the exhibition space. Concerned primarily with the presentation of an artist's own work, this model can engender new models of collaboration between artist, institution, and publics.

7.8.4 Artist as curator: the archivist

During the 1970's a trend emerged in major Western institutions of extending invitations to artists to curate exhibitions based around their permanent collections. Highly visible early examples include long-running programmes such as *The Artists Eye* at the National Gallery in the 1970's and *Artist's Choice* at MoMA in the 1980's.

Lewis Kachur identifies a series of reasons for institutions to invite artists to curate exhibitions, including the idea that non-specialism within a subject and a subjectivity born of practice can "result in potentially subversive types of display" (Jeffery 2015, 8). Speaking in 1989, the MoMA curator Kirk Varnedoe placed less focus on the gain to the institution, and instead to the possible benefits to the artist's themselves: "a crucial part of the modern tradition is

the creative response of artists to the works of their peers and predecessors" (Varnedoe 2024). During and after Varnedoe's overseeing of the *Artist's Choice* series at MoMA, we can identify a series of exhibitions in which artist's, including Cy Twombly, Trisha Donnelly, Jean Baldessari, Amy Sillman and Peter Fischli, engaged with the institutional archive through the lens of their own works, creating "points of affiliation, contrast and the unanticipated" (Jeffery 2015, 10).

In 2016 Cornelia Parker curated the exhibition *Found* at the Foundling Museum in London. Inviting over seventy artists, writers and musicians, Parker created a dialogue between their work, her own work, and objects within the permanent collection. Performing this task was a natural extension to Parker's practice: "I'm always curating little groups of works like this – the meanings change depending on what they're paired with. It's quite an exhausting process but ultimately it's very rewarding" (Parker quoted in Barnard 2016). Seeking "evocative juxtapositions" (Parker quoted in Barnard 2016) the artist considered how her works would speak to other artists' works and the domestic-scale space of the Foundling Museum's space. Parker describes her role as an artist-curator as one of an 'interventionalist'. This idea of an interventionalist allows us to view the artist-curator as a kind of protagonist who intrudes into the permanent collections of institutions in order to challenge archives and the histories they claim to represent. In 1992 the artist Fred Wilson curated *Mining the Museum*, an intervention into the archive of the Maryland Historical Society. In the show, Wilson juxtaposed objects that speak to the history of white America – silverware, chairs and even babies' cots – with objects that speak to its violent and racist past-present – including masks worn by white supremacists and shackles of enslaved people. Wilson describes his approach to artistic practice as one that is rooted not in the production of new works but in creating new paths through what already exists: "I get everything that satisfies my soul from bringing together objects that are in the world, manipulating them, working with spatial arrangements, and having things presented in the way I want to see them" (Wilson quoted in "art21 Structures").

7.8.4.1 Summary: artist-curator, the archivist

In this role, the artist acts as an interventionalist in an archive, using their own approach to practice as a pivot point around which to recontextualise the objects and ideas held within that archive. In this sense we can think of the role of the artist as curator as a kind of protagonist around which the exhibition, or the story of the exhibition, develops.

7.8.5 Artist-curator: the exhibitionist

In his afterword to the Mousse compendium *Artist as Curator: an Anthology*, Hans Ulrich Obrist argues that "it is becoming an increasingly open secret that artists are, in fact, the best curators" (Obrist in Filipovic 2017, 390). However, epitomised by the work of so called 'super curators' such as Obrist, we can

identify new forms of dialogue between curating and artmaking in which the curator becomes a significant cultural producer. Staged in 1993, Obrist's unannounced exhibition *Chambre 763* was inspired by the French gallerist and anarchist Félix Fénéon who, when travelling, would always carry with him a painting by Georges Seurat. Inviting a series of 70 artists to exhibit within his hotel room in Paris, Obrist's Chambre 763 foregrounded the exhibition framing while placing the curator in a performance at the centre of the works; one in which he presumably ate, slept and showered (Murgida 2018). This performative turn by Obrist, highlights how permeable the line between curator and artist can be, a theme picked up on by the curator Dorothee Richter when she questions whether curators and artists are actually in competition with one another for authorship or whether "artists and curators (exist) in an area in which attributions are uncertain, and therefore also more flexible and negotiable?" (Richter 2013). Looking at the period from the 1990's to the present, John Roberts identifies a shift in the role of the curator from being discreet and invisible and a "sober judge of a historical period" (Roberts in Misiano 2014, 54), to that of a creative agent involved in an active collaboration with the artist. Instinctively, the encroachment of curatorial practice onto artistic practice has invoked concern from some including Lynne Cooke who argues "the curator should no more flirt with the notion of becoming an artist than fancy herself in the shoes of the patron" (Cooke quoted in Graham and Cook 2010, 253).

The bilateral relations between curatorial and artistic fields leads Celina Jefferey to question how expanded forms of artmaking and expanded forms of curatorial practice might lead to new relations and dialogues between the practices. Recognising that relations between the two disciplines are dynamic, she views curating as a practice that must adapt to new artistic approaches, "much revolves around the definition of curating in a field of expanded artistic production" (Jeffery 2015, 7). Within this relationship, the exhibition space may offer a medium to explore and define a shared process between artist and curator: a "means of achieving a creative praxis of sorts and a purposeful transgression of the disciplinary boundaries of art, curation and institution" (Jeffery 2015, 7).

7.8.5.1 Summary: artist-curator, the exhibitionist

John Roberts points to the emergence of a two-way ideological movement emerging, of curators aspiring to control new forms of artistic production, and the rapid technical transformation of artistic production itself. This movement challenges older, established modes of working which, as Paul O'Neill writes, "deem artists to speak on their own behalf, (and) the curator on behalf of some abstract notion of culture" (O'Neill 2005, 10). This artist-curator model allows us to account for new forms of dialogue between curating and artmaking where the curator themselves becomes a key figure within the creative development of a work.

7.8.6 Artist-curator: the producer

A role in which the artist as curator is applying their experience of artmaking not to their own practice, but in the support of others. Austrian artist and curator Peter Weibel defines the role an artist-curator adopts in this relationship as one that is closer to a film producer. Here, to curate is an action untethered from the etymological root of the word, from 'curare, to care for', and is rather a role concerned with commissioning and assisting with the production of new work (Weibel 2001). In exploring this approach, Weibel describes the curator as someone with a similar grasp of the modes of production as the artist, as someone who can 'see it from the other side'. This allows the curator to consider how technologies and processes might open up new opportunities for what Weibel terms "new formats" (Weibel 2001). To enable these new formats, the curators role is, in part, to bring together different modes of production, materials and skillsets. This collaborative approach can help challenge the singular vision of the curator and hierarchical models of exhibition production. This is particularly visible within practices of image making and new media, disciplines Weibel places at the forefront of this approach. Within new media these methods can in part be traced back to DIY histories and technologies that have helped provide democratic agency to the user such as open-source software and online publishing platforms. Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook consider these collaborative approaches as conducive to a field in which the realisation of projects requires multiple skill sets, where the networked tools of production naturally engender communication and where the final output of work is often open and unfixed (2010).

My approach to the curation of projects in this research assumes a number of qualities defined by the 'Artist-Curator: the Producer' mode. This is demonstrated, first, by the application of my own filmmaking and design experience to the curatorial process, a point evidenced by the 3D drawings that punctuate the analysis of each project. Second, by nature of the works being commissioned. Third, by the development and exhibition of the works through *transmediale*, a digital arts festival that has historically embraced collaborative modes of curation and the presentation of works that are in progress, or that enfold instability as part of their form.

The curatorial projects within this thesis thus demonstrate an approach most closely aligned to the 'Artist-Curator: the Producer' (see chapters three and four).

7.8.6.1 Summary: artist-curator, the producer

In assuming the role of the producer, the artist-curator untethers their role from the etymological root of curation as an act of 'care' to focus instead on assisting with the production of new work (Weibel 2001). With a potentially similar grasp of the modes of production as the artist, the artist-curator supports the development of other artists' work.

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7.9 Statement on Situated Knowledge

While I refer to literature and artworks from non-Western contexts, the core of this research is related to philosophies and creative practices that emerge from a Western positionality. As such, I acknowledge the problems of its biases and the limitations that these place on its applications.

7.10 Statement of Collaboration

Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented was generated by myself under the supervision of my advisors during my doctoral studies. The material listed below was created as part of a collaboration:

On A Clear Day You Can See The Revolution From Here (2020), (landscape) artists' non-fiction film co-directed by Emma Charles and Ben Evans James.

I would like to acknowledge that the curatorial projects presented within this thesis were the result of collaborations with the artists Phanuel Antwi, Elsa Brès, and Rhea Storr, with additional projects referenced by Maud Craigie and Donald Harding. Approval for the format of the artist conversations I conducted as part of these collaborations, and the process for ensuring each individual's informed consent, was granted by the University of Sunderland's Research Ethics Group.

Benjamin James, May 2024.

End