Edith Walks

By Andrew Kötting

WITH A KIND OF PSYCHIC BATHAL GROUP ENERGY, THEY UNFOLD THE MAPS OF AND IMAGINED EVENTS AND LOCATIONS, STIRRING FRESH POETRY ACROSS THE TIRED TIDAL TONES. HISTORIQUES, ACTIVATING UNFINISHED HISTORIES AND UNDOUBTEDLY MISREPRESENTED EVENTS AND MEMORIES

**SARAH LLOYD**

AFTER CHILDBEARING, LITTLE CAN SHOCK ME WHEN IT COMES TO BLOOD AND LIQUIDS THAT SUGAR LIKE OCEANS WITHIN ALL OF US.ОРГАНЫ TOO, LIKE FREAKISH KIZZ CREATURES SPATIAL ON THE BAL BALANCE AND NOT DISTURBING AND I WILL BE THE FIRST TO DASH THEM UP AND RASPBERRY THEM WITH BLOOD AND MANJARAH

**EDITH SWAN NECK**

I IMPRINTED ON HER, SHE THOUGHT. LIKE A GOBBLING LIKE A BIRD SHEER. SHE SEEN ABOUT IMPRINTING TIMES. WHEN SHE WAS HARD UP FOR CASH, SHE'D DONE A PROFILE FOR COUL. MAGAZINE OF A MAN WHO BELIEVED SHE SHOULD BE USED AS A SAFE AND LOYAL SUBSTITUTE FOR WATCHING. IT WAS NOT TO BE THERE YOURSELF WHEN THE DOLLARD CAME OUT OF THE EGGS, HE SAID.

**MARGARET ATWOOD**

NIGHT DESCENDS AND POWER IN RELIGIOUSNESS BACK TO NATURAL FORCES. THE BOY'S HANDS LEANED AND DRANK MEAD INNOCUOUSLY FULL OF WORT. WE BEDDED DOWN IN BLACKCLOTHED, CLOSE TO WHERE I WAS SNOOZED. MY FIRST SCHOOL WAS ACROSS THAT BLACK HEATH. I HAVEN'T BEEN BACK THERE FOR SEVEN. EVEN AS A CHILD, I KNEW IF I EVER DID RETURN, IT WOULD BE AS A QUEEN

**CLAUDIA BARTON**

OUR SEXUALITY ISN'T HUMAN. THIS IS THE DEEPEST SECRET. BEING ALIENED TO WISDOM, IT'S TORN FROM THE MATERIAL BOWELS OF THE FLESH.

**KATHY ASHER**
# Project Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Researcher:</th>
<th>Professor Andrew Kötting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Output:</td>
<td><em>Edith Walks</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCARO link/s:</td>
<td><a href="https://research.uca.ac.uk/3416/">https://research.uca.ac.uk/3416/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output Type:</td>
<td>T – Other (multi-component): a feature-length film (directed and edited by Kötting), performances, an installation and a publication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Contributors:       | Director: Andrew Kötting  
Cameras: Anonymous Bosch, Andrew Kötting, Nick Gordon Smith  
Sound: Jem Finer, Douglas Templeton, Andrew Kötting  
Music: David Aylward, Claudia Barton, Jem Finer, Andrew Kötting  
Cast: David Aylward, Claudia Barton, Anonymous Bosch, Jem Finer, Andrew Kötting, Alan Moore, Iain Sinclair  
Production Manager: Paul Smith  
Editor: Andrew Kötting  
Sound Mix: Philippe Ciompi  
Rigs: Tony Hill |
| Key Words           | Performance, exhibition, installation, feature film, book work, hauntology, psychogeography, documentary |
| External Funding:   | Route 1066 Festival, Hastings: £15,000  
Arts Council England: £10,000  
HOME Manchester: £5,000 |
| Year and mode of dissemination: | PERFORMANCES  
September 2016, KINO TEATR, St Leonards-on-Sea  
November 2017, St Johns on Bethnal Green @ the East End Film Festival  
November 2017, Towner Gallery Eastbourne |
Project Details

**Year and mode of dissemination (cont.):**

**FEATURE FILM**

**EDITH WALKS (2017) SCREENINGS AND EVENTS:**

**June 2017**
HOME Manchester – Andrew Köttling performance
ICA London – Andrew Köttling and Iain Sinclair readings
Tyneside Newcastle – Andrew Köttling Q&A
Curzon Bloomsbury
East End Film Festival – David Aylward, Claudia Barton, Jem Finer, Andrew Köttling and Iain Sinclair film performance

**July 2017**
Curzon Aldgate London – Andrew Köttling and Claudia Barton performance and Q&A
IFI Dublin
Barbican London
Showroom Sheffield – Andrew Köttling Q&A
Broadway Nottingham
Chapter Cardiff
Watershed Bristol
Queens Film Theatre Belfast
East Dulwich Picturehouse
Glasgow Film Theatre Glasgow – Andrew Köttling Q&A
Edinburgh Filmhouse – Andrew Köttling Q&A

**INSTALLATION**
November 2017 – January 2018, Towner Gallery Eastbourne

**BOOK**

**DVD & ONLINE PLATFORMS**
*Edith Walks (2017)*, DVD distributed by HOME Artist Film
Statue of Edith the Fair,
St Leonards-on-Sea
Stills from Edith Walks
Synopsis

*Edith Walks* is a research output by Professor Andrew Kötting composed of a feature film (directed and edited by Kötting), performances, an installation and a publication. The research commenced with a pilgrimage in memory of Edith Swan-Neck (Edith the Fair), wife of King Harold. Kötting followed a 108-mile walk from Waltham Abbey, Essex (the legendary resting place of Harold) via Battle Abbey, to the statue of Edith and Harold in St Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex.

The research was initially commissioned by Root 1066 Festival as a one-off performance. Arts Council England funding enabled its further development. Kötting extended the walk-performance into a feature film that is a poetic, historical, metaphysical odyssey taking the audience from 1066 to the present day. The project adds to Kötting’s corpus of journeyworks and his collaborations with the writer Iain Sinclair; *Swandown* (2012) and *By Our Selves* (2015). Kötting’s research in *Edith Walks* develops psychogeography in its exploration, through film, of the fictive/factual intersection of histories and their contemporary traces, in a process that embraces openness, contingency and serendipity. The methodology is made accessible through Kötting’s unique filmmaking voice, promoting new understanding of the field.

The realisation of the film was followed by the further development of the research in a live film-music-performance event, incorporating spoken word, music and soundscapes, all set to spectral images from Kötting’s film. *Edith Walks* also included a bookwork which articulated the research through a collage of materials and writings. These further iterations of the original walk-performance and film developed Kötting’s concept of *spillages* between artistic forms.

This supporting portfolio includes evidence of the research aims, context and processes which led to new insights. It includes stills from the film, photographs of the performances and presents the bookwork. The film is submitted and should be viewed alongside the portfolio.
Context

Andrew Kötting has created a rich body of work around the themes of myth, walking and landscape. His re-assembling of information is both an innovative provocation and defiant crusade against the routine notion that time is fixed and impermeable, and that the past is over, never to be experienced again.

Kötting’s work and its engagement with myths of a remembered past is located in the context of psychogeography and ‘hauntology’. Kötting has collaborated repeatedly with psychogeographer and writer Iain Sinclair, and with writer Alan Moore, with previous collaborative works including Swandown (2012) and By Our Selves (2015). These films form part of Kötting’s corpus of journeyworks, his contribution, through film, to the field of psychogeography. Edith Walks added to and developed this contribution.

The term hauntology was coined by Jacques Derrida in the 1990s, and, like psychogeography, it is concerned with the presence of the past in contemporary experience. Mark Fisher has suggested that ‘what haunts the digital cul-de-sacs of the twenty-first century is not so much the past as all the lost futures that the twentieth century taught us to anticipate’ (Fisher, 2012:9). Fisher’s writings are influential on Kötting’s recent works, provoking him to reconsider and re-visit tropes explored in his earlier work with fresh intellectual depth, rigour and coherence.

In Edith Walks, Kötting develops psychogeography and hauntology, embracing contingency and happenstance, and drawing on the absurd. He synthesises varied materials in a bricolage that includes the script of the film La Jetée (Chris Marker, 1962), the poems of Heinrich Heine and William Makepeace Thackeray, archive footage of a 1966 schoolchildren’s re-enactment of the Battle of Hastings, and references to James Joyce.

REFERENCES


## Research Aims and Questions

### Research aims:

To investigate the creative potential of research inspired by and structured around a journey responding to distant but evocative historical events and memories.

From this journey, to produce performance, film and diverse other outcomes through a process of collaboration with other researchers across multiple artistic forms.

To explore notions from psychogeography, hauntology and autobiography within the context of contemporary art.

### Research questions:

How can nostalgia be connected to hauntology, and used as a provocative catalyst in connecting the past with the present?

Can the negative associations of nostalgia and ‘heritage’ be challenged in using it as a creative tool to reconsider personal and wider histories?
Designs for music box with boom microphone

To be built into a trolley or clamping to any wheeled vehicle

Cylinder

Rotated by belt from wheels

Axle

Clamp:
Distance between them and cylinder adjustable to accommodate different lengths of "instruments"

Cylinder is like cylinder of a music box but instead of pegs sticking out there are threaded holes to screw in pegs (bolts to play the "instruments")

Soundbox: a box to resonate sound of instruments that are clamped on to it.

Instruments are bits of rubbish collected on a journey: metal, plastic, springs, etc.

Holes: 8 across
8 around

(depending on size)
'Here he comes, the wayfarer, walking on gilded blisters, dragging his trolley behind him.'
Research Methods and Process

JOURNEY
The research documents a pilgrimage made on foot by Kötting and 5 others in memory of Edith Swan-Neck, ‘hand-fast’ or common-law wife of King Harold, who was reputed to have taken his body (or at least parts of it) from the battlefield at Hastings and secured its burial at Waltham Abbey in Essex. The journey was commissioned by the Root 1066 Festival in Hastings. Other aspects of the research developed from this initial performance-walk, following Kötting’s notion of spillage, in which ideas provoke outputs in multiple artistic forms.

The group walked from Waltham Abbey to St Leonards-on-Sea via Battle Abbey (108 miles in 5 days, 3 - 7 June 2016). The walkers, Kötting’s collaborators in the research, were David Aylward, Claudia Barton, Jem Finer, Anonymous Bosch and Iain Sinclair. The group performed as they walked, playing and singing, under the assumption that the ‘angels of happenstance’ would provide for them on their journey.

Kötting has collaborated with Sinclair on a number of ‘journeywork’ projects. In the course of these journeys conversation, discussion and the discipline of walking long distances to hard schedules produce opportunities to develop ideas and to think differently in their related research practices.

Sound and music are used by Kötting to establish atmosphere and to achieve triggers that resonate back to the past. Recordings were made by Jem Finer as the group walked and performed, using a specially-constructed music box with a boom microphone. Such simple technologies can be manipulated, edited and re-formatted by Kötting in post-production to make order and meaning of elements which might at first seem disparate. In addition to the film, a limited-edition CD by Finer and Kötting presented the walkers’ musical performances from the journey chronologically.

Kötting’s methodology is organic, with writing following filming in a sculptural process informed by the materials or ‘ingredients’, from which unexpected themes can then emerge. This approach is the antithesis of the film-industry model, and yet its outcomes are disseminated and judged using the same tools, i.e. cinema, streaming and DVD. Kötting’s work thus draws attention to and challenges the cultural and industrial separation between experimental/independent and ‘mainstream’ filmmaking.

PERFORMANCES
The research started with the performance of the original walk commissioned by Root 1066 Festival, became a film, and was then further presented as a series of live art performance events. This allowed the work to engage with new audiences outside the traditional cinema or gallery space, and broadened Kötting’s research methodology through further collaboration with curators and programmers. Iain Sinclair’s writing folds Kötting’s projects into his own research, and as a result Kötting and Sinclair are increasingly invited to be ‘in conversation’ at screenings and presentations, so that their individual approaches are further developed through public discussion of the research.
Research Insights and Contribution

New insights: *Edith Walks* furthers Kötting’s contribution, through film and performance, to the fields of psychogeography and hauntology.

It contributes thematically in its original subject matter, and methodologically in its film and sound technologies and its montage of new footage of a self-reflective pilgrimage with archival materials.

It questions and interrogates nostalgia and heritage and their relationship to national and personal identity and history, using approaches inspired by dada and the absurd.

As with several of Kötting’s other journeyworks, *Edith Walks* puts a female presence at the centre of psychogeography, in this case the overlooked and little-known figure of Edith Swan-Neck.

The research challenges the separation of mainstream and experimental cinema by combining an organic methodology with industry dissemination.

Kötting’s trilogy of *journeyworks* to date, including *Edith Walks*, were presented in an installation at the Towner Gallery in Eastbourne in 2017-18. The rich imaginative scope of the psychogeographical works was fully realised as they were displayed together.
Still from Edith Walks

‘Taking his violin bow from a huntsman’s tote bag - David asks permission to play the spokes of well travelled bicycle wheels to sound the tension.’
Research Dissemination and Recognition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dissemination</th>
<th>Edith Walks has been widely disseminated and viewed, with approximate figures as follows</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ONLINE</strong></td>
<td>MUBI: 1,800</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BFI Player: 800</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amazon Prime: 250</td>
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<td>Just Watch: 200</td>
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<td></td>
<td>YouTube trailer: 5,800</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mark Kermode Film Review: 5,000</td>
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<td><strong>INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVALS</strong></td>
<td>800</td>
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<td><strong>UK CINEMAS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BOOK AND CD SALES</strong></td>
<td>200</td>
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GALLERIES
Kötting's trilogy of *journeyworks*, including *Edith Walks*, were presented in an installation at the Towner Gallery in Eastbourne in 2017-18. Visitors: 6,000.

Follow-on-activities: Edith Walks continues to be programmed or curated into festivals around the world. For example:

*Mobilities Literature Culture* conference, University of Lancaster, 2017: Kötting was invited to present at the conference’s closing session and *Edith Walks* was screened, followed by a Q&A with the audience (https://moblitcult.wordpress.com/)

*Analogue Ensemble* film programme, Ramsgate, 2018: *Edith Walks* was screened and Kötting engaged in post-screening discussion with the audience (https://www.analogueensemble.co.uk/2018/11/sound-image.html)
Research Dissemination and Recognition

Influence of research: The film received positive critical reaction, with a 100 per cent rating on Rotten Tomatoes. The Observer gave it 4/5 praising its ‘eccentricity’ and Kötting’s ‘anarchic lawlessness’. Peter Bradshaw in the Guardian rated it 3/5, noting its very low budget and lack of ‘conventional production values’. The Skinny called the journey ‘at once piss-takingly absurd and profoundly resonant’. Sight and Sound chose it as their film of the week and remarked on the timeliness of its discussion of English identity at the time of Brexit and new debates over England’s role in the world. The National noted its refusal to fit into any single genre and praised Barton’s performance.

REVIEW LINKS
BFI / Sight and Sound review by Hannah McGill:
The Guardian Review by Peter Bradshaw:
Radio Times review by David Parison:
Kermode and Mayo’s film review:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pQiadVZZN0
BFI 50 films to watch list:
Mark Kermode review, BFI Player:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5KDh7mgAr4
MUBI review:
https://mubi.com/notebook/posts/no-longer-need-she-seek-close-up-on-andrew-kotting-s-edith-walks
Live performance (sold out) at KINO TEATR St Leonards-on-Sea, September 17, 2016
Live performance at St Johns on Bethnal Green, East End Film Festival